

OCTOBER X.

## ST. FRANCIS BORGIA, C.

[His life, compiled by F Ribadeneira, who was nine years his confessor, is the master-piece of that pious author. The Latin translation of this life by F. And. Scot is looser than that extant in old French, made by the Lord of Betencour. This valuable work is exceedingly improved by F. Verjus, a French Jesuit, who has retained the entire spirit and piety of the original, in the life he has compiled of this saint; in which performance he had also recourse to the life of St. Francis Borgia, wrote by F. Eusebius of Nieremberg, in 1644, to a third life, which was only in MS. though wrote the first in time, soon after the saint's death, by F. Dionysius Vasquez. See also F. Orlandini, Hist. Societ. lib. viii., and chiefly F. Sachi, ib. t. iii. or Borgia. Likewise F. Bartoli's curious additional anecdotes of this history collected from the archives of the Processed House at Rome.]

A.D. 1572.

MANY Christians seem afraid of following Jesus Christ with their whole hearts, and live as if they were for compounding with God and the world. These persons have a very false idea of virtue, which they measure only by their want of courage. If they once opened their hearts to the divine grace, and were sincerely resolved to spare nothing that they might learn to die to themselves, and to put on the spirit of Christ, they would find all their pretended difficulties to be only shadows; for, by the omnipotent power of grace, the roughest deserts are changed into smooth and agreeable paths under the feet of the just man. This St. Francis Borgia experienced, both in a private life in the world, at court, in a religious retirement, and in the functions of an apostolic life. The family of Borgia, or Borja, had long flourished in Spain; but received a new lustre by the exaltation of Cardinal Alphonso Borgia to the pontificate, under the name of Calixtus III., in 1455. St. Francis was born in 1510, at Gandia, a town which was the chief seat of the family, in the kingdom of Valencia. His pious mother had a great devotion to St. Francis of Assisium, and in the pangs of a dangerous labour made a vow, that if she brought forth a son, he should be called Francis. As soon as he began to speak, his parents taught him to pronounce the

holy names of Jesus and Mary, which he used often to repeat with wonderful seriousness. At five years of age he recited every day on his knees the chief parts of the catechism. All his diversion was to set up pious pictures, make little altars, imitate the ceremonies of the church, and teach them the little boys who were his pages. From the cradle he was mild, modest, patient, and affable to all. The noble sentiments of gratitude and generosity which he then began to discover, were certain presages of an innate greatness of soul; the former being inseparable from a goodness of heart, and the latter, when regulated by prudence and charity, being the greatest virtue of a prince who is raised above others only that he may govern, and do good to mankind.

Francis, at seven years of age, could read his mother tongue, and the Latin office of the Blessed Virgin very distinctly. His father, therefore, thought it time for him to learn writing and grammar, for which purpose he appointed him a preceptor of known prudence, learning, and piety, who was called Doctor Ferdinand. At the same time he was furnished with a governor, whose business it was at different hours to fashion the young prince to the exercises that were suitable to his birth, in proportion as his age was capable of them. It was the first care of the parents, in the choice of the masters whom they placed about their son, that they were persons of uncommon piety, whose example might be a continual lesson of virtue, and whose instructions should all ultimately tend to the grafting in his mind true sentiments of morality and religion, without which all other accomplishments lose their value. Our saint was blessed by God with such dispositions to virtue, and so good a capacity for his studies, that in all parts of his education his masters found this task both agreeable and easy. Before he was ten years old, he began to take wonderful delight in hearing sermons, and spent much time in devotion, being tenderly

affected to the passion of our divine Redeemer, which he honoured with certain daily exercises. In his tenth year his pious mother fell dangerously ill; on which occasion Francis, shutting himself up in his chamber, prayed for her with abundance of tears, and, after his devotions, took a sharp discipline a long time together. This was the first time he used that practice of mortification which he afterwards frequently made part of his penance. It pleased God that the duchess died of that distemper in 1520. This loss cost Francis many tears, though he moderated his grief by his entire resignation to the divine will. Her pious counsels had always been to him a great spur to virtue, and he took care never to forget them.

At that time Spain was filled with tumults and insurrections of the common people against the regency. The rebels, taking their advantage of the absence of the young king, Charles V. (who was then in Germany, where he had been chosen emperor), plundered the houses of the nobility in the kingdom of Valencia, and made themselves masters of the town of Gandia. His father fled, with his whole family. Going to Saragossa, he left his son Francis, then twelve years old, under the care of the Archbishop John of Arragon, who was his uncle, being brother to his deceased mother. The archbishop made up a household for his nephew, and provided him with masters in grammar, music, and fencing, which he had begun to learn at Gandia. The young nobleman laboured at the same time to improve daily in grace and in every virtue. Two sermons which he heard an Hieronymite friar, who was his confessarius, and a learned and spiritual man, preach—one on the last judgment, the other on the passion of Christ—made strong impressions on his mind, so that he remained ever after exceedingly terrified at the consideration of the divine judgments, and, on the other side, conceived an ardent desire to lay down his life for the love of his divine

Redeemer, who died for him. Going to Baëza, to see his great-grandmother, Donna Maria de Luna, wife of Don Henriquez, uncle and master of the household to King Ferdinand, and great commander of Leon, with several other relations, he was confined there six months by a grievous fit of illness; during which time he gave great proofs of admirable patience and humility. From Baëza he was sent to Tordesillas, to be taken into the family and service of the Infanta Catharine, sister to Charles V., who was soon after to be married to John III., King of Portugal. The marriage was accomplished in 1525; but when the infanta went into Portugal, the Duke of Gandia, who had greater views for his son in Spain, recalled him, and engaged the Archbishop of Saragossa to reassume the care of his education.

Francis was then fifteen years old, and after he had finished rhetoric, studied philosophy two years under an excellent master, with extraordinary diligence and applause. The prudent archbishop was particularly careful to make his pupil active and laborious, by seeing that he went from one employment to another without leaving any void, or unprofitable time, between them; nor did his masters fix the end of their instructions in the letter of his studies; but made use of every thing in them to frame his judgment, and form in him true taste; and they taught him to refer every thing to virtue. This seemed the natural bent of the young nobleman's soul, and in the eighteenth year of his age he had strong inclinations to a religious state. The devil raised up instruments to second his attack, and assailed the servant of God with most violent temptations of impurity, in order to profane that pure soul which God had consecrated to himself. Francis opposed to this dangerous enemy very frequent confession, fervent prayer, reading pious books, mortification, humility, distrust in himself, and a firm confidence in God, whose mercy alone bestows the inestimable gift of

chastity, and to whom this glorious victory belongs. By these means the saint triumphed over this passion, and had preserved his virginal purity unspotted, when providence fixed him in the holy state of marriage. His father and uncle, to divert his thoughts from a religious life, removed him from Saragossa to the court of Charles V., in 1528, where they hoped his thoughts would take a different turn. The ripeness of his judgment and prudence were such as seldom appear in a more advanced age; and by his virtue, and his unaffected obsequiousness and assiduity in serving his prince, he could not fail of gaining a high place in his favour. Francis had a heart not insensible to the motives of such an honour, and full of tender sentiments of gratitude and generosity; but, still more, of those of religion. He considered his duty to his prince as his duty to God; and though he willingly accepted of every mark of his prince's regard for him, he was very solicitous in all things to refer himself, his actions, and whatever he received from God, purely to the divine honour. The perfect sanctification of his own soul was his great and constant aim in all he did. As religious exercises themselves, without regularity, can never be steady, and without this advantage lose a considerable part of their lustre and merit. Francis was extremely exact in regulating both his personal devoirs, and the principal duties of his family. In it hours were appointed for every one to go every day to mass; for evening prayers, for pious reading, and meals. He heard sermons as often as possible, and conversed much with pious persons, went to confession almost every Sunday, and on all great festivals. It was also a part of his care, that his whole family should spend well those days which are particularly set apart for the divine service. It is indeed from the manner in which a Christian employs them, that we may form an idea of his conduct with regard to his general practice and sense of religion.

St. Francis, though he delighted chiefly in the company of the most virtuous, was courteous and obliging to all; never spoke ill of any one, nor ever suffered others to do it in his presence. He was a stranger to envy, ambition, gallantry, luxury, and gaming—vices which are often too fashionable in courts, and against which he armed himself with the utmost precaution. He not only never played, but would never see others play, saying that a man commonly loses by it four things: his money, his time, the devotion of his heart to God, and his conscience. One of his servants discovered, that on the days on which he was obliged to visit company in which ladies made a part, he wore a hair-shirt. In him it appeared that there is no readier way to gain the esteem of men, though without seeking it, than by the heroic practice of Christian virtue.

The empress had so great an esteem for him, and so high an idea of his merit, that she fixed her eye on him to marry Eleanor de Castro, a Portuguese lady of the first rank, a person of great piety and accomplishments, her principal favourite, who had been educated with her, and whom she had brought with her out of Portugal. The emperor was well pleased with the proposal, and concluded a treaty with the Duke of Gandia for his son's marriage. The great qualities and virtue of the lady, and his deference for the emperor and his father, did not allow Francis long to deliberate upon so advantageous an offer, which opened to him a road to the highest favours of the court. The marriage was solemnized in the most Christian manner, to which state the saint brought the best preparation, innocence of life, with un sullied purity, and an ardent spirit of religion and devotion. The emperor, on that occasion, created him Marquis of Lombay, and master of the horse to the empress, and having had experience of his wisdom, secrecy, and fidelity, not only admitted him into his privy-council, but took great delight in conferring often

privately with him upon his most difficult undertakings, and communicated to him his most important designs. The marquis to rid himself of the importunities of those who followed more dangerous diversions, spent some of his time in music, played on several instruments, and sung very well; he also set poetical pieces to music, and composed cantatas which were sung in some churches in Spain, and called the compositions of the Duke of Gandia. But he never could bear any profane songs. The emperor studied mathematics, and Francis made use of the same master to learn those sciences, especially the branches which are most useful for fortifying towns, and the whole military art, on which subjects his majesty frequently conversed with him. The emperor made him his companion in his expedition into Africa, against Barbarossa, in 1535, and in another which he undertook against France, into Provence, in 1536, whence he dispatched him to the empress, to carry her news of his health and affairs.

Under a violent fever with which the marquis was seized, in 1535, he made a resolution to employ for his ordinary reading no other books but those of piety, especially devout instructions, the Lives of Saints, and the holy scripture, particularly the New Testament, with a good commentator, in reading which he often shut his book to meditate on what he had read. In 1537, being at the court, which was then at Segovia, he fell sick of a dangerous quinsy, in which he never ceased praying in his heart, though he was not able to pronounce the words. These accidents were divine graces which weaned Francis daily more and more from the world; though, whilst it smiled upon him, he saw the treachery, the shortness, and the dangers of its flattering enjoyments, through that gaudy flush in which it danced before his eyes. Others receive the like frequent admonitions, but soon drown them in the hurry of pleasures or temporal affairs in which they plunge their hearts. But

none of those calls were lost on Francis. His life at court had always appeared a model of virtue; but as he had not yet learned perfectly to die to himself, a mixture of the world found still a place in his heart, and his virtues were very imperfect. He even feared, and bitterly accused himself, that he had sometime in his life been betrayed into mortal sin. But God was pleased to call him perfectly to his service. In 1537 died his grandmother, Donna Maria Henriquez, called in religion Mary Gabriel. She was cousin-german to King Ferdinand, and married John Borgia, the second Duke of Gandia. By his sudden death she remained a widow at nineteen years of age, having had by him two children, John, our saint's father, and Isabel, who became a Poor Clare, at Gandia, who was afterwards chosen abbess of that house, and was eminent for her extraordinary devotion, and love of extreme poverty and penance. Mary, her mother, after having brought up and married her son, and seen the birth of our saint, entered the same austere Order, in the thirty-fourth year of her age. The physicians declared that if she embraced so severe a manner of life, she could not live one year; nevertheless she survived in it thirty-three years, living the most perfect model of humility, poverty, recollection, and penance, under obedience to her own daughter, who was abbess of that monastery. The marquis used to say, that from the time that his grandmother went to heaven, he found his soul animated with new strength and courage to devote himself most perfectly to the divine service. God blessed his marriage with a numerous and happy offspring, five boys and three girls: Charles, the eldest, who was Duke of Gandia when Ribadeneira wrote the life of our saint; Isabel, John, Alvarez, Johanna, Fernandez, Dorothy, and Alphonsus. Dorothy died young, a Poor Clare at Gandia: the rest, all married, enjoyed different titles and posts of honour, and left families behind them.

The death of the pious Empress Isabel happened on the 1st of May, 1539, whilst the emperor was holding the states of Castile, at Toledo, with the utmost pomp and magnificence. His majesty was much afflicted for the loss of so virtuous a consort. The Marquis and Marchioness of Lombay were commissioned by him to attend her corpse to Granada, where she was to be buried. When the funeral convey arrived at Granada, and the marquis delivered the corpse into the hands of the magistrates of that city, they were on both sides to make oath that it was the body of the late empress. The coffin of lead was therefore opened, and her face was uncovered, but appeared so hideous and so much disfigured that no one knew it, and the stench was so noisome that everybody made what haste he could away. Francis, not knowing the face, would only swear it was the body of the empress, because, from the care he had taken, he was sure nobody could have changed it upon the road. Being exceedingly struck at this spectacle, he repeated to himself, "What is now become of those eyes, once so sparkling? Where is now the beauty and graceful air of that countenance, which we so lately beheld? Are you her sacred majesty, Donna Isabel? Are you my empress, and my lady, my mistress?" The impression which this spectacle made on his soul remained strong and lively during the thirty-three years that he survived it—to his last breath. Returning that evening from the royal chapel to his lodgings, he locked himself up in his chamber, and passed the whole night without a wink of sleep. Prostrate on the floor, shedding a torrent of tears, he said to himself, "What is it, my soul, that I seek in the world? How long shall I pursue and grasp at shadows? What is she already become who was lately so beautiful, so great, so much revered? This death, which has thus treated the imperial diadem, has already levelled his bow to strike me. Is it not prudent to prevent its stroke, by dying

now to the world, that at my death I may live to God?" The next day, after the divine office and mass in the great church, the celebrated and holy preacher, John of Avila, made the funeral sermon, in which, with a divine unction and energy, he set forth the vanity and deceitfulness of all the short-lived enjoyments of this world, false and empty in themselves, and which entirely vanish when death cuts the thread of our life, and overturns at once all those castles which our foolish imagination has raised in the air. He then spoke of the eternal glory or misery which follows death, and of the astonishing madness of those who in this moment of life neglect to secure what is to them of such infinite importance. This discourse completed the entire conversion of the marquis, who, that afternoon, sent for the preacher, laid open to him the situation of his soul, and his desires of bidding adieu to the world. The holy director confirmed him in his resolution of quitting the court, where a soul is always exposed to many snares, and of entering upon a new course of serving God with the utmost fervour. Francis determined upon the spot to forsake the court, and soon after made a vow to embrace a religious state of life, if he should survive his consort.

At his return to Toledo, the emperor made him viceroy of Catalonia, and created him knight and commander of the Order of St. James, or of the Red Cross, the most honourable in Spain. Barcelona was the residence of his government; and no sooner had he taken possession of his post, but he changed the whole face of the province. The highways were cleared of robbers; against their bands the viceroy marched in person, and caused the criminals to be rigorously executed, having first provided them with the best spiritual assistance to prepare them for their punishment and death. He carefully watched the judges, obliging them to administer justice impartially, and to dispatch lawsuits with all reasonable expedition. He set up, in all

parts of the province, schools and seminaries for youth, and assisted debtors and all distressed persons with extraordinary charities. The great duties of his charge, to which he applied himself with unwearied diligence, and which made him at once the judge, the father, and the protector of a numerous people, were no impediments to his exercises of religion. Four or five hours together were devoted by him to mental and vocal prayer every morning as soon as he rose, without any prejudice to public affairs or neglect of his family. He added to every hour of the divine office, which he said every day, a meditation on a station of our Saviour's passion, so as to accompany him every day through all its parts, from the garden to the sepulchre. He performed daily devotions to our Lady, in which he meditated on the principal mysteries and virtues of her life. At the times in which he gave audience or applied himself to business, he had God always present to his mind. When he was obliged to assist at public entertainments or diversions, his mind was usually so absorbed in God, that if he was afterwards asked about them, he could give no account of what had passed or been said at them. Tears of devotion often gushed from his eyes, even in the midst of business, and he would sometimes thus address himself to God: "Who could ever soften this heart of mine, which is harder than flint or adamant, but you alone, O Lord! You, O God of mercies, who could draw fountains of water from a rock, and raise up sons of Abraham out of stones, could change a stony heart into one of flesh." His austerities were excessive. He entirely laid aside suppers that he might employ that time in prayer. Having passed two Lents without taking any other sustenance than once a day a mess of leeks, or some pulse with a piece of bread, and a cup of water to drink, he was desirous to fast in that manner a whole year. At the same time he kept a table suitable to his rank, for the lords who visited him,

and the officers that attended him; dining with his company, he ate his leeks or pulse very slow, and conversed facetiously with them, that no one might observe him, if possible, though at table his discourse generally turned on piety. He used often to say, "We must make our way towards eternity, never regarding what men think of us or our actions, studying only to please God." Knowing the obligation of dying perfectly to ourselves, this he endeavoured to effect from the beginning of his conversion by humiliations, and a sovereign contempt of himself. He had formerly been accustomed to communicate only once a month; since he had altered his manner of living, he confessed his sins once every week, communicated in public on all great festivals, and privately every Sunday, generally with wonderful spiritual consolations and delights. He sometimes considered the peace, serenity, and solid joy with which divine love fills a soul whose affections are disentangled from earthly things, and the inexpressible pure delights and sweetness which the presence of the Holy Ghost infuses into hearts which he prepares by his grace to receive his communications; and comparing these with the foolish, empty, and base satisfactions of worldlings, he was not able to express his astonishment, but cried out, "O sensual, base, miserable, and blind life! is it possible that men should be such strangers to their own happiness, such enemies to themselves, to be fond of thy false enjoyments, and for their sake to deprive themselves of those that are pure, permanent, and solid!" This was the life of the devout viceroy when F. Antony Aroz, the first professed Jesuit after the ten that were concerned in the foundation of that Order, came to preach at Barcelona. By his means Francis became acquainted with this new institute, and the character of its holy founder, to whom he wrote to consult him whether so frequent communion as once a week was to be commended in

persons engaged in the world. St. Ignatius, who was then at Rome, answered him, that frequent communion is the best means to cure the disorders of our souls, and to raise them to perfect virtue; but advised him to make choice of a prudent and pious director, and to follow his advice. Pursuant to this direction, Francis continued his weekly communion, employing three days before it in preparatory exercises, and three days after it in acts of thanksgiving.

During this interval died John, Duke of Gandia, his father, a nobleman of singular virtue. Francis was much affected at the news of his death, by which the title and honours of Duke of Gandia devolved upon him. Shortly after, he obtained of the emperor, as he passed through Barcelona on his road to Italy, leave to quit his government; but his majesty insisted that he should repair to court, and accept of the office of master of the household to the infanta, Maria of Portugal, daughter to King John III., then upon the point of being married to Philip, the emperor's son; but the death of that princess before the intended marriage set our saint at liberty to follow his own inclinations to a retired life. He therefore returned to Gandia in 1543, which town he fortified, that it might not be exposed to the plunders of the Moors and pirates from Barbary. He built a convent for the Dominicans at Lombay, repaired the hospital, and founded a college of Jesuits at Gandia. His duchess, Eleanor, who concurred with him in all his pious views, fell sick of a lingering distemper, during which Francis continued to fast, pray, and give large alms for her recovery. One day, as he was praying for her, prostrate in his closet, with great earnestness, he was on a sudden visited with an extraordinary interior light in his soul, and heard, as it were, a voice saying distinctly within him, "If thou wouldst have the life of the duchess prolonged, it shall be granted; but it is

not expedient for thee." This he heard so clearly and evidently, that, as he assured others, he could not doubt, either then or afterwards, but it was a divine admonition. He remained exceedingly confounded; and, penetrated with a most sweet and tender love of God, and bursting into a flood of tears, he addressed himself to God as follows: "O my Lord and my God, leave not this, which is only in thy power, to my will. Who art Thou, but my Creator and sovereign good? and who am I but a miserable creature? I am bound in all things to conform my will to thine. Thou alone knowest what is best, and what is for my good. As I am not my own, but altogether thine, so neither do I desire that my will be done, but thine; nor will I have any other will but thine. Do what thou pleasest with the life of my wife, that of my children, and my own, and with all things thou hast given me." From that day the duchess grew every day sensibly much worse, and died on the 27th of March, 1546, leaving the duke a widower in the thirty-sixth year of his age. A few days after her death, F. Peter Le Fevre, or Faber, St. Ignatius's first associate in founding his Order, came to Gandia. He was then leaving Spain to go into Italy, and was ordered by St. Ignatius to call upon the Duke of Gandia in his way. Our saint made a retreat under his direction, according to the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, and rejoiced exceedingly that he had found in this experienced director such a spiritual master and guide as he wished. With him the saint agreed upon the execution of a design he had formed of founding a college of Jesuits at Gandia, and F. Le Fevre, after having said mass, laid the first stone, the duke the second, and his sons each another, on the 5th of May, 1546. In favour of this college the duke procured that Gandia should be honoured by the pope and emperor with the privileges of a university. F. Le Fevre died on the 1st of August

the same year, 1546, soon after his arrival at Rome. After his departure from Gandia, St. Francis, from the conferences he had with him, composed several small treatises of piety, which show by what exercises he began to lay the foundation of a spiritual life. The two first of these books treat of the method of acquiring a true knowledge of ourselves, and sincere humility.

In the mean time, the good duke took a resolution to consecrate himself to God in some religious Order, and having long recommended the affair to God, and taken the advice of learned and pious men, deliberating with himself whether to prefer an active or a contemplative state, he made choice of the active, and determined to embrace the society of Jesus. He sent his petition for admittance to St. Ignatius at Rome, by a servant. The holy founder received his request with great joy; but, in his answer, advised the duke to defer the execution of his design till he had settled his children, and finished the foundations he had begun, advising him in the mean time to study a regular course of theology at Gandia, and to take the degree of doctor in that faculty. The duke punctually obeyed his directions, but was obliged to assist, in 1547, at the cortes or general state of three kingdoms, of which that of Arragon was then compounded, and which were assembled at Monson. The reconciliation of the nobility, both among themselves and with their sovereign, was the important and delicate affair which was to be there settled. The emperor, who by former experience was well acquainted with the extraordinary integrity and abilities of the Duke of Gandia, had enjoined his son, Prince Philip, who held the states, to take care that he should be appointed tratador or president. By his dexterity and steady virtue, matters were settled to the satisfaction of all parties, and the saint delivered himself this last time in which he spoke on the public affairs of



state, in such a manner as to move exceedingly all who heard him. In the same year he made the first vows of the Society before private witnesses in the chapel of the college he had founded at Gandia: for St. Ignatius, knowing the earnestness of his desire to complete his intended sacrifice, and considering by how many ties he was held, which it was difficult for him to break at once, obtained a brief of the pope, by which he was allowed to spend four years in the world after he should have made his first vows. By them the saint consecrated himself with his whole heart as an holocaust to God; and, leaving his castle to his eldest son, retired into a private house, where he studied the positive and scholastic theology under the learned Dr. Perez, whom he invited from Valencia to settle in his new college at Gandia. The rule of life which he prescribed himself was as follows:—He rose every morning at two o'clock, spent six hours in private prayers till eight, then went to confession, heard mass, and received every day the holy communion. At nine o'clock he received his theological lesson, and studied till almost dinner-time, when he took some moments to give audience to his officers of justice, and dispatch business; he dined at twelve, very temperately; after which he spent an hour in giving useful directions to his children, servants, or others; the afternoons he gave to his studies, and the evenings to his devotions, without ever taking any supper or collation. In his night examination he was remarkably rigorous in calling himself to account, and punishing himself for the least failings that he apprehended.

Having finished his affairs, though the four years which were granted him were not expired, he set out for Rome in 1549, being accompanied by his second son John, thirty servants, and some Jesuits, who went from their convent at Gandia to a general chapter which was then held at Rome. In going out of the town of

Gandia, he sung those two verses; "When Israel went out of Egypt," and, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped." In his journey he observed the same rule of life which he had followed the three last years, spending as much time in prayer, and going to confession, and receiving the communion every day. Notwithstanding his repugnance, he was obliged to submit to the magnificent receptions he met with at Ferrara, that of the Duke of Florence, and at Rome, where he arrived on the 31st of August, 1550. He refused to lodge in the pope's palace, or any other, which he was earnestly pressed to do, and chose a mean cell in the convent of the Jesuits. St. Ignatius waited to receive him at the door; and the duke, throwing himself at his feet, begged his blessing, and honoured him as his father and superior. After paying his obeisance to the pope, and receiving and returning the visits of all the great men at Rome, he performed his devotions for the Jubilee. From Rome he sent a gentleman, who was a domestic client, to the emperor in Germany, to beg his license to resign his duchy to his eldest son. He laments, in his letter to that prince, and accuses himself that, by the scandalous life he had led in his court, he had deserved hell, and even the lowest place in hell, earnestly thanks the divine mercy for having borne with him with infinite goodness and patience; he expresses a humble and tender gratitude to the fathers of the Society, who, out of compassion for his soul, had admitted him amongst them to spend the remaining part of his life in penance and in the divine service. He promises his imperial majesty to pray that God, who had made him victorious over his enemies, would give him the more important victory over his passions and himself, and enkindle his pure love in his soul, with an ardent devotion to the passion of Jesus Christ, so that the cross should become

his delight and his glory. This letter was dated at Rome, the 15th of January, 1551.

Upon a rumour that Pope Julius III. was resolved to promote our saint to the dignity of cardinal, he obtained the leave of St. Ignatius, after having stayed four months at Rome, to withdraw privately into Spain, where he lived some time concealed in Guipuscoa (a small province in Biscay), at the castle of Loyola, then retired to a small convent of his Order at Ognata, a town about four leagues from Loyola. In this place the emperor's obliging answer was brought him, in which his majesty expressed how much he was edified at the exchange he had made of the world for heaven, and how much he was afflicted to lose him, but ratified his request, and promised to take his children under his special protection. The duke having read this letter, retired into an oratory, and, prostrate on the ground, made the most perfect consecration of himself to God, and desiring no other riches or possession but him alone, and renouncing in his heart the whole world, he earnestly begged the grace perfectly to die to himself, that God alone, or his love, might live and reign in his soul, and that he might deserve to carry the cross of his Redeemer by the practice of mortification and poverty. Coming out of his closet, he made a solemn renunciation of all his worldly dignities and possessions according to the legal forms, in favour of his eldest son, who was absent; then cut his hair, put off his ducal robes, and put on the Jesuit's habit. This being done, he went again into the oratory to renew his offering of himself to God, and to beg his grace that his sacrifice might be made entire, and he sung with great joy those words of the psalmist, "I am thy servant." This passed in 1551. After the most devout preparation, he was ordained priest on the 1st of August the same year, and said his first mass in the chapel of Loyola.

The saint begged of the magistrates of Ognata a small hermitage dedicated in

honour of St. Mary Magdalen, a mile from that town, and with the leave of his superior retired thither with certain fathers of the Society, that he might more heartily devote himself to the practices of humility, penance, and prayer. With great importunity he obtained leave to serve the cook, fetch water, and carry wood; he made the fire, and swept the kitchen; and when he waited at table, he often fell on his knees to beg pardon of the fathers and lay brothers for having served them ill; and he frequently kissed their feet with extraordinary affection and humility. He loved and coveted the meanest employments with a sincere affection of humility, and was delighted to carry a wallet on his shoulders to beg, especially where he was not known. He often went through the villages with a bell, calling the children to catechism, and diligently teaching them their prayers and the Christian doctrine, and instructing and preaching to all ranks, especially the poor. At the earnest request of the viceroy of Navarre, Don Bernardin of Cardenas, Duke of Marquede, the saint preached in that country with incredible fruit, and the duke regulated his whole conduct and all his affairs by the saint's direction. St. Ignatius also sent St. Francis an order to preach in other parts of Spain, to which he was invited with great importunity. The success which every where attended his labours is not to be conceived; and many persons of the first quality desired to regulate their families and their consciences entirely by his advice. After doing wonders in Castile and Andalusia, he seemed to surpass himself in Portugal, especially at Evora and Lisbon. The most learned doctors acknowledge that the spiritual wisdom of this saint was not learned from the books which he was accustomed to read, but from secret humble prayer, and a close communication with the divine wisdom. St. Ignatius, augmenting the provinces of the Society in Spain to the number of five, besides the

Indies, appointed St. Francis commissary-general of the Order in Spain, Portugal, and the Indies, in 1554, but obliged him, in the practice of particular austerities, to obey another; for such had always been the fervour of our saint in his severe penitential exercises, that the holy general had found it necessary from the beginning of his conversion to mitigate them by strict injunctions. Amidst the numberless conversions of souls, and the foundations of new houses, St. Francis found time and opportunities for his accustomed devotions and humiliations in serving his brethren and the poor in hospitals and prisons. When any one was fallen into any fault, he would say to them, "Through my unworthiness God has permitted such a misfortune to befall you. We will join our endeavours in doing penance. For my part, I will fast, or pray, or take a discipline so and so; what will you do?" On the like occasions such was his patience and humility, it seemed impossible for any one to resist the force of his example and charity. St. Ignatius dying in 1556, F. Laynez was chosen second general of the Society, St. Francis being at that time detained in Spain by a fit of the gout.

The Society sustained a great loss by the death of John III. the most valiant and pious King of Portugal, who was carried off by an apoplexy in the year 1557. The crown devolved upon his grandson Sebastian, then only three years old, his father, the Infant John, son to the late king, and his mother, Joanna, daughter to Charles V., being both dead. His grandmother, Queen Catharine, was regent of the kingdom, to whom St. Francis wrote a letter of condolence and consolation, tenderly exhorting her to praise God for all his mercies, to be resigned to his holy will, and to have no other view than to advance in his grace and love. Afterwards the emperor deputed St. Francis to make his compliments of condolence to the queen-regent, and treat with her about certain affairs of

great importance. A dangerous pestilential fever, and her majesty's great respect for his person, detained him a considerable time in Portugal; but before the end of the year he went back to the emperor to inform him of the result of his commission. His majesty soon after sent for him again, and discoursed with him on spiritual things, especially prayer, works of satisfaction, and penance, and the making the best preparation for death. St. Francis left him to go to Valladolid, but had not been there many days before news was brought of the emperor's death. That prince, after devoutly confessing his sins, and receiving the viaticum and the extreme unction, holding a crucifix in his hands, and repeating the holy name of Jesus, expired on the 21st of September, 1558. St. Francis made his funeral panegyric at Valladolid, insisting on his happiness in having forsaken the world before it forsook him, in order to complete his victory over himself.

The true greatness of our saint appeared not in the honours and applause which he often received, but in the sincere humility which he took care constantly to nourish and improve in his heart. In these dispositions he looked upon humiliations as his greatest gain and honour. From the time that he began to give himself totally to the divine service, he learned the infinite importance and difficulty of attaining to perfect humility. The most profound interior exercise of that virtue was the constant employment of his soul. At all times he studied most perfectly to confound and humble himself in the divine presence beneath all creatures, and within himself. Amidst the greatest honours and respect that were shown him at Valladolid, his companion, F. Bustamanti, took notice, that he was not only mortified and afflicted, but more than ordinarily confounded, of which he asked the reason. "I considered," said the saint, "in my morning meditation, that hell is my due; and I think that all men, even children,

and all dumb creatures ought to cry out to me, away; hell is thy place; or thou art one whose soul ought to be in hell." From this reflection he humbled his soul, and raised himself to the most ardent love of God, and tender affection towards the divine mercy. He one day told the novices that, in meditating on the actions of Christ, he had for six years always placed himself in spirit at the feet of Judas; but that, considering that Christ had washed the feet of that traitor, he durst not approach, and from that time looked upon himself as excluded from all places, and unworthy to hold any in the world, and looked upon all other creatures with a degree of respect, and at a distance. When the mules and equipages of many cardinals and princes preceded him, to show him honour in the entry he made at Rome, in 1550, before he had laid aside his titles and rank in the world, he said, "Nothing is more just than that brute beasts should be the companions of one who resembles them." At all commendations or applause he always shuddered, calling to mind the dreadful account he must one day give to God, how far he was from the least degree of virtue, and how base and execrable hypocrisy will appear at the last day. Upon his renouncing the world, in his letters he subscribed himself "Francis the Sinner," calling this his only title, till St. Ignatius ordered him to omit it, as a singularity. In this interior spirit of humility he laid hold of every opportunity of practising exterior humiliations, as the means perfectly to extinguish all pride in his heart, and to ground himself in the most sincere contempt of himself. When a gentleman whom John, King of Portugal, sent to compliment him upon his first coming to Lisbon, used the title of his lordship, the saint was uneasy, and said, he was indeed tired with his journey, but much more with that word. He used to say that he had reaped this only advantage from having been duke, that he was on that

account admitted into the Society; for he should otherwise have been rejected as unfit and incapable. His greatest delight was to instruct the poor in places where he was unknown, or to perform the meanest offices in the convents where he came. It was his ambition at college to teach the lowest class of grammar, and only dropped that request upon being told he was not qualified for the task. At Evora, when the whole country assembled to receive from him some instruction, he threw himself on his knees, and kissed the feet of all the fathers and lay-brothers; with which act of humility they were more affected than they could have been by any sermon. At Porto, though commissary of his Order, he took the keys of the gate, and served as porter. A certain postulant who was sent thither to him from Seville at that time, in order to be admitted to the noviciate, found him at the gate among the poor. St. Francis told him there was a great heap of filth near them, which he was to carry away, and asked if he would help him. The postulant readily assented, and they cleansed the place. When he had ate something very bitter and very ill-dressed, on a journey, his companion, F. Bustamanti, asked him how he could eat it. His answer was, "It would seem delicious to one who had tasted of the gall with which the damned are tormented in hell."

In travelling he generally lay on straw, or, in winter, in barns. A nobleman, who had been his friend in the world, asked him how he could rest so ill accommodated, and entreated him to accept of better lodgings, and, in journies, to send a messenger to prepare necessaries before he arrived. The saint replied, "I always send a faithful messenger before me to do all that." "Who is that?" said the other. "It is," replied the saint, "the consideration of what I deserve for my sins. Any lodging appears too good for one whose dwelling ought to be in hell." Being once on a journey with

F. Bustamanti, they lay all night together in a cottage upon straw, and F. Bustamanti, who was very old and asthmatical, coughed and spit all night; and, thinking that he spit upon the wall, frequently disgorged a great quantity of phlegm on his face, which the saint never turned from him. Next morning F. Bustamanti, finding what he had done, was in great confusion, and begged his pardon. Francis answered, "You have no reason; for you could not have found a fouler place, or fitter to be spit upon." Trials which are involuntary are much more profitable than humiliations of choice, in which self-love easily insinuates itself. Such, therefore, as Providence sent, the saint most cheerfully embraced.

By the extraordinary humility of St. Francis, we may form some idea how much he excelled in all other virtues. No one could be a greater lover of holy poverty than our saint. This he showed in all his actions. From the day of his profession he never intermeddled in money concerns, thinking it his happiness that he was never employed as procurator or dispenser in any house of his Order. How sparing he was in fire, paper, and clothes, is altogether incredible. One pair of shoes often lasted him two years. The same cassock served him in journeys and at home, in all seasons; only in travelling he turned the wrong side out, that it might be kept neater and last better. No one could ever prevail upon him to use boots, or any additional clothing, in travelling in sharp or rainy weather; and he never seemed better pleased than when he came in wet and fatigued to a place where neither fire nor any refreshment was to be had. The Marchioness of Pliego having sent him a present of a pair of warm stockings, they were laid by his bedside in the night, and his old ones taken away, in hopes he would not have perceived the change; but in the morning he was not to be satisfied till the brother had brought him his old darned stockings. The oldest habit and the meanest cell he

sought. The Spanish ambassador's sister at Rome once said to him at table, "Your condition, Francis, is wretched if, after exchanging your riches for so great poverty, you should not gain heaven in the end." "I should be miserable, indeed," said the saint; "but as for the exchange, I have been already a great gainer by it." A perfect spirit of obedience made him always respect exceedingly all his superiors; the least intimation of their will he received as if it had been a voice from heaven. When letters from St. Ignatius were delivered to him in Spain, he received them on his knees, and prayed, before he opened them, that God would give him grace punctually to obey whatever orders they contained. When he served in the kitchen, he would never stir without the leave of the brother who was the cook; and when for a long time he was ordered to obey a lay-brother, called Mark, in all things that regarded his health and diet, he would neither eat nor drink the least thing without his direction. He used to say, that he hoped the Society would flourish to the divine honour by three things: First, the spirit of prayer and frequent use of the sacraments. Secondly, by the opposition of the world, and by persecutions. Thirdly, by the practice of perfect obedience. Penance is the means by which every Christian hopes to attain to salvation. St. Francis usually calls it the high road to heaven; and sometimes he said he trembled lest he should be summoned before the tribunal of Christ before he had learned to conquer himself. For this grace he prayed daily with many tears. His hair-shirts and disciplines, with the cloths with which he wiped off the blood, he kept under lock and key whilst he was viceroy of Catalonia, and whilst he was general of the Society. Sometimes he put gravel in his shoes when he walked; and daily, by many little artifices, he studied to complete the sacrifice of his penance, and to overcome himself. When the cook had one day by mistake made his broth with worm-

wood, which he had gathered instead of other herbs, the saint ate it cheerfully without saying a word. Being asked how he liked it, he said, "I never ate any thing fitter for me." When others found out the mistake, and the cook in great confusion asked his pardon, "May God bless and reward you," said he; "you are the only person amongst all my brethren, that knows what suits me best." To his daughter, the Countess of Lerma, when she complained of pain in a fit of illness, he said, "God sends pain to those that are unwilling to bear it, and refuses it to those who desire to suffer something for the exercise of patience and penance." St. Francis once said to his sister, the Poor Clare, at Gandia, "It is our duty in a religious state to die to ourselves twenty-four times a day, that we may be able to say with the apostle, 'I die daily,' and be of the number of those of whom he says, 'You are dead.'"<sup>1</sup> In sickness he chewed bitter pills, and swallowed the most nauseous potions slowly; and being asked the reason, he said, "This beast" (so he often called his body) "must suffer, to expiate the delight it formerly took in immoderately fluttering its palate. And can I forget that Christ drank gall for me on his cross?"

Much might be said on this saint's singular prudence, on his candour and simplicity in all his words and actions, and on his tender charity and humanity towards all men. Though all virtues were eminent in him, none appeared more remarkable than his spirit of prayer. Dead to the world and to himself, and deeply penetrated with a sense of his own weakness and spiritual wants, on the one hand, and of the divine goodness and love on the other, he raised his pure affections to God with unabated ardour. His prayer, even before he left the world, seemed perpetual; but much more so afterwards. Amidst the greatest hurry of business, he kept himself in the actual presence of God, and often in company appeared quite

(1) Col. iii. 3.

absorbed in him. Five or six hours which he dedicated together to prayer in the morning seemed to him scarce a quarter of an hour; and when he came from that heavenly exercise, his countenance seemed to shine with a dazzling light. His preparation for mass often held him some hours; and in his thanksgiving, after offering that adorable sacrifice, he sometimes so much forgot himself, being transported in God, that it was necessary to force him from church, almost by violence, to dinner. Such were the devotion and modesty which appeared in his face, that many, whenever they found their souls spiritually dry, were excited to devotion by seeing and conversing a little with him. The news of the sudden death of the saint's dearest daughter, Isabella of Arragon, Countess of Lerma, a lady of singular piety, and of the greatest endowments, was brought him whilst he was in the streets of Valladolid, going to court. He stopped, shut his eyes, prayed secretly for about the space of four minutes, and then went on. At court, he conversed with the princess as usual. In taking leave he recommended to her prayers the soul of her late servant Isabel. "What!" said the princess, "has a father no more feeling for the death of such a daughter?" "Madam," he replied, "she was only lent me. The Master has called her hence. Ought I not to thank him for having given her me so long, and for having now called her to his glory, as I hope in his mercy?" On the same occasion he said to the Constable of Castile, "Since the Lord hath called me to his service, and hath required of me to give him my heart, I have endeavoured to resign it to him so entirely that no creature, living or dead, should ever disturb it."

F. Laynez, second general of the Jesuits, dying in 1565, St. Francis, notwithstanding all the precautions he could take to prevent it, was chosen to succeed him, on the 2nd of July. He made tender exhortations to the fathers who composed the general assembly of the Society, and kissed

the feet of every one amongst them before they departed. His first care in this new charge was to found a house for the novitiate in Rome. He promoted the interest of the Society in all parts of the world with such success, that he might be called a second founder; and the zeal with which he propagated the missions, and instructed and animated the labourers in planting the gospel in the most remote countries of the eastern and western hemisphere, entitles him to a great share in the conversion of those countries to the faith. He was not less active in directing his religious brethren in Europe, and in animating them with the zealous spirit of their institute for the reformation of the manners of Christians. In 1566, a pestilence broke out, and made great havoc in Rome; upon which occasion St. Francis procured, both from the pope and magistrates, plentiful alms for the relief of the poor, and commissioned the fathers of his Order, two and two, to attend the sick in all parts of the city, with imminent danger of their own lives. In 1570, the year before the victory of Lepanto, Pope Pius V. sent St. Francis, with his nephew, the Cardinal Alexandrin, on an embassy into France, Spain, and Portugal, to engage the Christian princes to send succours for the defence of Christendom against the Mahometans. The saint had been for some time in a bad state of health; his infirmities, inclination to retirement, and a deep sense of the weight of his post, which he had filled five years, put him upon a design to procure a discharge from that burden in 1570: but this his brethren would by no means listen to. During this legation his distempers increased upon him insomuch, that when he arrived at Ferrara in his return, the duke, who was his cousin, sent him from thence to Rome in a litter. During this state of his illness, he would admit no visits but from persons whose entertainment turned on spiritual matters, except physicians. The fathers of the Society begged he would name his successor, and

allow them the satisfaction of taking his picture: but he would do neither. When he had lost his speech in his agony, a painter was introduced to his bedside. The saint perceiving him, expressed his extreme displeasure with his dying hands and eyes, and turned away his face, so that nothing could be done. St. Francis closed a holy life by a more holy and edifying death, a little before midnight, between the last of September and the 1st of October, in 1572, having lived sixty-two years, wanting twenty-eight days; Cardinal Buoncompagno, under the name of Gregory XIII., being pope, having lately succeeded St. Pius V., who died on the 1st of May, the same year. F. Verjus gives a history of several miracles, predictions, and raptures of St. Francis Borgia. His body, which was buried in the old church of the professed house, was afterwards, in 1617, by the care of the Cardinal and Duke of Lerma, the saint's grandson, first minister of state to Philip III., King of Spain, removed to Madrid, where it is honoured at this day in the church of the professed house of the Jesuits. St. Francis was beatified by Urban VIII., in 1624, and canonized by Clement IX., in 1671, and his festival fixed on the 10th of October, by Innocent XI. in 1683.

The active and contemplative life in an ecclesiastical person are two individual sisters, which must always go together, and mutually assist each other. Every pastor owes to God the homage of continual praise, and to his people the suffrages of his sacrifices, and supplications in their behalf. How diligently soever he acquits himself of his external duties towards them, he fails essentially if he ceases to recommend earnestly to God their public and private spiritual necessities being appointed the mediator betwixt them and God. Moreover, recollection and assiduous pious meditation are the very soul of an ecclesiastical spirit. A life of habitual dissipation strikes not

at particular duties only, but destroys the very essence and spirit of this state; disqualifies a person for all its functions and leaves him a stranger to the spirit of all its sacred employments and obligations. The most essential preparation, and the very soul of this state, is a spirit of prayer; without this, a person is no more than the shadow of a pastor, or a body without a soul to animate it, and can never deserve the name of a clergyman, or a religious man.

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