



THE TWELVE-STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



Spring 2014

Dear friends,

Here is a listing of some future missions and retreats, although changes are sometimes made, so it's best to phone the hosting entity.

- * Retreat: Our Lady's Missionaries of the Eucharist (www.olme.org), Birdsboro, PA, July 14 - 16.
- * Parish Mission: St. Joachim Church, Lummi Reservation, Whatcom, WA, August 18 - 21.

* Retreat: Our Sorrowful Mother's Ministry, Vandalia, IL, September 5 - 7.

* Retreat: Casa Maria, Irondale, AL, September 12 - 14. (www.sisterservants.org).

* Parish Mission: Saint Joseph Morello Parish, Granite Bay, CA, September 22 - 25.

* Parish Mission: St. Andrew, Colchester, CT, September 29 - October 2.

* Parish Mission: St. Anne cluster (i.e. Baltic, Occum, & Taftville, CT), October 6 - 9.

* Women's Retreat, Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC, Oct. 10 - 12.

* Parish Mission: St. Joseph, Sandpoint, ID, October 20 - 23.

* Parish Mission, Holy Family, Kirkland, WA, October 27 - 30.

*Proper self-love is Theo-centric,
not ego-centric.
Saint Augustine*

The Proper Love of Self

Many people are often confused about both the need to stand up for oneself and the need to love oneself. Some think that to do so is somehow selfish. It must always be kept in mind, however, that proper self-love is a part of the Gospel call: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27) implies that the love of self comes before the love of neighbor. If a person does not love himself properly, he can never love his neighbor rightly.

St. Catherine of Siena offers an important insight when she says that we love other people with the same love we see ourselves loved with. Is it any wonder that there's a relationship between the breakdown of the family and society's major problems? Children learn security and self-worth through their parents, but with so many broken homes, love is manifested as a feeling that wanes with time.

For example, recently a father (we'll call him Mr. Smith) spoke out in anger because his son,

Jeffrey, had been bullied at school and took his own life as a result. The father focused on "the law that is supposed to protect people and the schools that are supposed to deal with bullying." But is bullying something new? What is new is the many children incapable of dealing with the bullying and destroying themselves as a result. When I was a child, we were taught to say, "I'm rubber, you're glue; everything bounces off me and sticks to you, you moron!" And then we'd run like hell!

Research has now established a clear link between the breakdown of the family and the major problems plaguing our society. And anything that weakens the family, eventually weakens a free society. But what is the deeper issue behind bullying that results in self-destruction? The article notes that Mr. Smith learned of the suicide when Jeffrey's mother called the him to say that Jeffrey left a note about being bullied at school and then shot himself *with her boyfriend's gun*. Isn't that the

real issue? The boy is living with his mother and her new boyfriend, while Mr. Smith lives elsewhere with his new wife. In fact, he had not even seen his son in two years. Why wasn't Mr. Smith caring for his son and teaching him how to deal with life's troubles? It was the same with Adam Lanza, the young man who killed 26 people at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. He was living with his mother while his father lived in another state with his second wife. Adam was nine when his parents separated. And Adam, too, is said to have been bullied.

We are told by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development that divorce is the leading cause of childhood depression. Note the following statistics:

- * 75% of adolescent patients at chemical abuse centers are from single-parent families.
- * 63% of youth suicides are single-parent children.

Continued on the back page.

INSPIRATION FROM THE SAINTS



Saint Riccardo Pampuri was born August 2, 1897 in Pavia, Italy. He was the tenth of eleven children. As with St. Therese, Mother Teresa, and Pope John Paul II, he lost his mother at a young age. He was only three. His mother's sister and her husband, both devout Catholics, took him to live with their family. When Riccardo was only 9 his father died in Milan. As a young boy he wanted to join a religious order and serve as a missionary priest, but was dissuaded because of ill health. After graduating from high school, he enrolled in the Medical Faculty of Pavia University. While at the university he became an active member of Catholic Action and also joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Attracted by the Franciscan charism for the corporal works of mercy, he also became a secular Franciscan.

When World War I broke out, he served as a sergeant and later went into training as an officer in the Medical Corps. During his military service, he suffered from an outbreak of tuberculosis. After the War he finished his studies and graduated at the top of his class in Medicine and Surgery from Pavia University. After three years' practical experience with his uncle (also a doctor), and a short time as temporary assistant in the

medical practice at Vernate, he was appointed a practice in Milan. In 1922 he passed his internship with high honors at the Milan Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 1923 he was registered at Pavia University as a General Practitioner of Medicine and Surgery. When he began his practice, he also helped his parish priest to set up a Catholic Action Youth Group, of which he was the first president. He was also secretary of the Parish Missionary Aid Society, a long-time interest which reawakened his youthful desires of giving his whole life to God under religious vows. And so at the age of 29 he joined a group of religious men who were founded to give medical care to the poor: the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God.

After his initial formation he was appointed director of the dental clinic attached to the Brothers' hospital at Brescia. This was mostly frequented by working people and the poor. Brother Riccardo untiringly gave himself fully to serving them with such deep love that he was admired by them all. They found in him a loving servant whose gentle manner eased their sufferings. His operating principle that he had formulated upon entering religious life was similar to Mother Teresa's: "To do the least of things with great love." It was the love that he put into the care of the poor that was most important to him and so healing to them.

Not too long after his vows, the outbreak of tuberculosis which he suffered during the War returned. In 1930, in his 33rd year, he died in sanctity. After his death, his reputation of sanctity, demonstrated throughout his life, expanded to all parts of the world. Many miraculous graces came to the afflicted and sick poor through his intercession. The two required miracles were accepted and he was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 4, 1981. Later on, a miraculous healing through his intercession took place on January 5, 1982 at Alcadozo, Spain. This was approved as a miracle and thus, on the feast of All Saints, November 1, 1989, he was solemnly canonized.

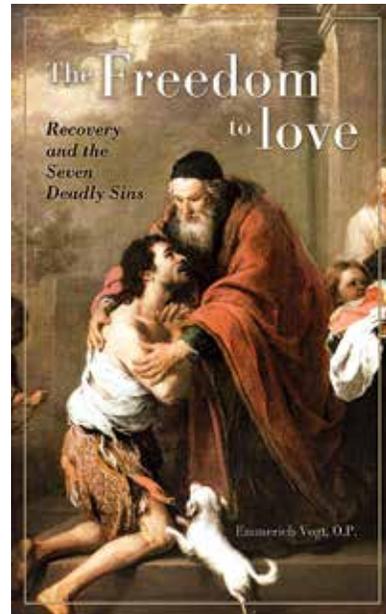
Saint Riccardo Pampuri demonstrates that the loss of a parent, and in his case both parents, need not handicap a person throughout his life. What is needed is a surrogate parent—like Riccardo's aunt and uncle—to fill the void, in addition to moral and spiritual formation in a Christian environment. The devastating lack of a good parent or substitute parent is seen in the life of notorious atheists. Dr. Paul Vitz writes of this in his book, *Faith of the Fatherless*. He surveys the lives of famous atheists throughout history and notes the absence of a good father figure, as with Freud, whose father molested his own children, and Madeleine Murray O'Hare, whose son tells of how they could never get together as a family when he was young, "because of my mother's hatred for her father." The same was the case with Christopher Hitchens, a contemporary atheist (may he rest in peace) whose dislike of Mother Teresa was universally known. Hitchens' mother abandoned his weak father and she took off with an Anglican priest. Later the two committed suicide. Mr. Hitchens held the priest responsible for his mother's destruction.

How important is family life where a child can learn the true meaning of love and find a certain stability in knowing himself as loved. Only then, by loving himself properly, can he love his neighbor rightly. And love is the foundation of immortality. *

FATHER EMMERICH'S NEW CD SETS

DETACHING WITH LOVE: RENEWED AND UPDATED. The original set of *Detaching with Love* was done years ago and Fr. Emmerich has added so much new material that we recently rerecorded it with the updated material in front of a live audience. It is now somewhat longer than the original set and in addition, the talks address what's right and what's wrong with modern psychology. It also gives a Christian understanding of the virtue of love and examines the play of emotions in our lives. Fr. Emmerich presents the principles of the spiritual life, addressing the nature of true detachment, self-righteous behavior, the necessity of self-knowledge, the role of the passions, problems of purity, and the need for appropriate boundaries. In this series we learn to "detach with love." \$35.00, plus shipping and handling.

THE RULE OF OUR WARFARE is a relatively new series given in a retreat format at Casa Maria Retreat House. It continues where "Detaching with Love" leaves off; i.e. it examines the spirituality of each of the 12 steps from a Catholic perspective, giving examples from Sacred Scripture and the lives of the Saints. After a discussion of the origin of the 12-step spirituality, the conferences focus on the importance of each step and how to live them in the fullness of Catholic life. \$35.00, plus shipping and handling.



Father Emmerich's book, *The Freedom to Love*, explores the need for virtue in the life of the Christian. It examines not only the seven deadly sins, but since virtue is the mean between extremes, it studies the opposite extremes. For example, chastity is a virtue that corrects the sin of lust, but to be chaste doesn't mean a person lacks warm affection. Those who overcome lust but are as cold as ice are disturbed by the opposing extreme, prudishness. The book takes a look at the following capital sins, their opposing virtues and opposite extremes, all in the context of recovery.

Capital Sin	Opposing Virtue	Opposite Extreme
Pride	Humility	Self-loathing
Envy	Kindness	Pusillanimity
Avarice	Generosity	Wastefulness
Anger	Patience	Servility
Sloth	Diligence	Workaholism
Gluttony	Temperance	Deficiency
Lust	Chastity	Prudishness

If people are serious about having an authentic prayer life in hopes of recovering from the effects of sin in their lives, good understanding of the virtues and their extremes is a necessity. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. The paradoxical nature of true freedom is highlighted by St. Augustine when he comments on Christ's teaching that to die to oneself is to find oneself. Augustine notes that to part with one's will does not mean we lose freedom; it means we gain freedom in the loss. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin" (Romans 6:17; CCC 1733). *The Freedom to Love* explores these issues and shows the path to the freedom that enables a person to love properly. By the time you receive this newsletter, it should be available in an e-form from our website (www.12-step-review.org) for \$6.99. The hardcover can also be ordered from the website for a donation of \$19.99 plus shipping and handling.

Order from The Twelve-Step Review

- * 70% of teenage pregnancies are single-parent children.
- * 75% of juveniles in youth correction facilities are from single-parent families.

However, having single-parent families often cannot be helped. Mother Teresa was from a single-parent family (her father died when she was a child); it was the same with Pope John Paul II and St. Therese, and the Saint featured on page two. However, they had the grace of coming from a solidly religious family with strong moral and spiritual values—and cultures which supported those values. Many of our children don't have those blessings. In the 1990s William Bennett released his index of leading cultural indicators wherein he noted, "Over the years teachers have been asked to identify the top problems in America's public schools." In the 1940s teachers identified chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, dress code infractions, and littering. But in the 1990s it was radically different. Teachers identified "drug abuse, alcohol abuse, suicide, rape, pregnancy, robbery, and assault." And since then we've had to add mass murder in our public schools.

Good spiritual and psychological health come from doing what is right—the good thing, the moral thing. To the extent that we default on our humanity, we end up with deep psychological consequences that open us up to addictive and codependent behaviors. The devastating impact on marriage and family life is only too evident.

Saint Augustine, looking at the fall of the Roman Empire, noted, "The origins of its decline date from the decadence of its way of life." It is to be feared we are headed in the same direction. The famous Jewish author, Viktor Frankl, who (along with his wife and parents) was arrested by the Nazis, noted as a psychiatrist that it was those prisoners who had lost their hold over moral and spiritual values who were the ones who fell victim to the dehumanizing influences of the camps. This is my argument for contemporary culture. People need to build up moral and spiritual antibodies to protect themselves from the poison of sin and evil. And the queen of the virtues is love. Love is man's origin and love is our fulfillment in heaven. It is the only reality of life on earth that will continue to exist as it is in heaven. But without moral laws, love is not possible.

Pope Benedict has noted, "Love is the foundation of immortality, and immortality proceeds from love alone." It is the essential principle of the spiritual life. If children do not experience themselves as truly loved, and they bring this lack of affirmation into adulthood, healthy loving relationships with others become difficult, to say the least. Proper self-love is a part of the Gospel call. It is the love

of self that wishes good for itself by loving God above all else. God always wills what is universally best. He has our best interests at heart. He is not out to get us, as the gods and goddesses of pagan Rome were portrayed. God is love. And so proper self-love is Theo-centric and not ego-centric. If a person does not yet know how to love himself, then his love of others will be hampered. He may appear loving, but is it love? Often it is codependency—as with nurses who marry alcoholics because they confuse being needed with being loved. St. Augustine stressed that only as we learn to love ourselves rightly can we properly love others. If a person loves iniquity, he does not properly love himself, for iniquity is detrimental to his well-being as a human person. Such a person offers only the appearance of love.

In his great work, *The City of God*, St. Augustine distinguishes between this distorted love of self and holy charity, saying, "These are two loves, the one of which is holy, the other, unholy; one social, the other individualist; one takes heed of the common good; the other reduces even the common good to its own ends because of a proud lust of domination; the one is subject to God, the other sets itself up as a rival to God; the one is serene, the other tempestuous; the one peaceful, the other quarrelsome; the one prefers truthfulness to deceitful praises, the other is utterly avid of praise; the one is friendly, the other jealous; the one desires for its neighbor what it would for itself, the other is desirous of

lording it over its neighbor; the one directs its effort to the neighbor's good, the other to its own.

"These two laws were manifested in the angels before they were manifested in men: one, in the good angels; the other, in the bad. These two loves have created the distinction between the two cities, the one the city of the just, the other the city of the wicked. Established among men in accordance with the wonderful and ineffable providence of God which governs and orders all His creatures, and mingled together, they live out their life upon this earth, until separated at the last judgment: the one, in union with the good angels, to enjoy eternal life in its King; the other, in company with the bad angels, to be cast along with its king into everlasting fire."

Our spiritual life should be an organized campaign to develop lives of moral and spiritual values without which love of self, and thus love of neighbor, are not possible. ✱

Love is not blind; that is the last thing it is.
Love is bound; and the more it is bound,
the less it is blind. G.K. Chesterton

He who loves not his neighbor abhors God.
Saint John of the Cross

No one can be a friend of Jesus Christ who
is not a friend to his neighbor.
R.H. Benson

THE 12-STEP REVIEW

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