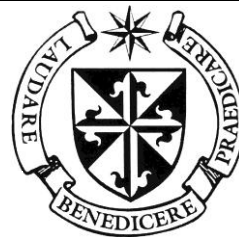


# Christus Victor!

FROM THE ANGELIC WARFARE CONFRATERNITY  
AN APOSTOLATE OF THE DOMINICAN FRIARS



Volume 1, Issue 2

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

It gives me great joy to announce many new enrollments in the Confraternity! On September 24, twenty-two young men and women were enrolled from the parish of St. Thomas Aquinas in Zanesville, Ohio. On October 3, forty-nine young adult women were enrolled at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters in Nashville, Tennessee. On October 31, five young adults were enrolled at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC. Also, on October 31, seventeen people, a group of teenagers and adults, were enrolled in Batesville and LaPryor, Texas. In the United Kingdom, on October 30 and 31, four young adults were enrolled – one at Blackfriars in Oxford and three at the Monastery of the Poor Clares in Much Birch, Hereford. And on November 6, thirty five teenage young women were enrolled at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters in Nashville, Tennessee. The young women were from John Carroll Catholic High School Birmingham, AL) and Knoxville Catholic High School (Knoxville, TN).

In addition to all of the group enrollments, there have been individual enrollments in Washington, DC, California, New York, and Hungary. All of these enrollments together make for more than one hundred new members in two months! And each new member is a reason to rejoice because each new member adds to the prayer power of the Confraternity.

Let us remember always to pray daily the two prayers for purity and the fifteen Hail Mary's not only for ourselves but for each other. Some of the testimonies of people who have joined are amazing. There are people who are reporting deep emotional healings from past sexual sins, others reporting renewal in their marriages, and others speak of a sense that something is palpably different for them now that they belong to the Confraternity. You will find some of these testimonies inside this issue.

The Holy Spirit, members say, is with them in a new way. And indeed He is. For the members of the Confraternity pray for it. When we pray in the name of Jesus, God the Father is ready to give us "The Gift" (a traditional name for the Holy Spirit) and is ready to do something great through the Angelic Warfare Confraternity. We are now seeing just the beginnings of what God has in store. The warfare of the Saints is won by means of prayer, prayer, and more prayer. "Pray always" (1 Thess. 5:17).

-- Fr. James Dominic Brent, OP

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From the Director
- 2 How to Deal with Impure Thoughts
- 3 The Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia
- 3 Rosary Meditation
- 4 Enrollment Pictures and Testimonies



*Left: 35 young women were enrolled into the Angelic Warfare Confraternity on November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Dominican Motherhouse in Nashville, TN.*



*Above: Matthew John Palmer, Leo Primavesi and Catherine Ellen Murphy were all enrolled by Rev. Dom Antony Tumelty OSB, at the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of the Angels, Much Birch, Hereford on Sunday 31st October 2010.*

# HOW TO DEAL WITH IMPURE THOUGHTS

BY FATHER JAMES BRENT, OP

All sexual sins are either sins in thought, word, or deed. Sinful words and deeds are rooted in impure thoughts. If by God's grace we grow in the purity of our thoughts, then we will grow greatly in chastity. Jesus offers to all members of the Confraternity a special grace to grow in the purity of thought. But in order to go along with these graces, we need to know a bit about impure thoughts, and how to deal with them. So, how should one deal with impure thoughts?

It is important to note first that not all thoughts about sexual matters are impure. Human beings cannot always avoid thinking about sex. Sometimes we have to think about it. For example, one may be taking a biology class, or be learning about sexually transmitted disease, or be studying sexual morality (such as this article). Wisdom tells us that in such cases humans can and should think about sex, but in ways that are discreet and never intended to tempt oneself or others to sin. If however such legitimate thoughts or conversations about sex are not discreet, or become tempting unto sin, then one needs to switch the train of thought or the course of conversation (more below on how to do so).

Second, many thoughts about sexual matters are involuntary. Often, we only become aware of having thoughts about and desires for sex right in the middle of our having them. For example, driving down the freeway one may see a billboard with images designed to arouse, or one may land on a website, overhear a joke, see an immodestly dressed person, or in some other way stumble into images, words, or other things that trigger such thoughts. In such cases, we did not choose to start having these thoughts, and we may not even want to be having them, but alas we are having them. Such involuntary thoughts are not yet sinful. Only free choices are sinful. If one suddenly becomes aware of having sexual thoughts without first choosing to have them, then one has not yet sinned. Sin is a possibility only once one freely chooses to deal with sexual thoughts in one way or another. If one recognizes a certain sexual thought as impure (as contrary to chastity) and nonetheless freely chooses to initiate or prolong the impure thought, then one sins against the virtue of chastity. The road to an unchaste words and deeds

begins with such free consent to impure thoughts. But if one recognizes a sexual thought as impure and resists it, one does well. One grows in chastity. That is why God sometimes permits temptation. It can be an opportunity to grow in virtue. So, it is important to resist those sexual thoughts that we recognize as impure. But precisely *how* does one resist them?

When it comes to sexual thoughts, it is better to take flight than to fight. If I say to you "don't think about pink elephants", then what will you think about? Pink elephants. Similarly, if one fights impure thoughts by saying to oneself "don't think about sex", or "don't think about him", or "don't think about her", then what will one think about? Sex, or him, or her. In the face of tempting sexual thoughts, one should

instead try to escape the thought. But how can anyone escape his or her own thoughts? We carry our thoughts with us wherever we go.

One escapes a tempting sexual thought by *distraction*. When bombarded with tempting sexual thoughts, one should distract oneself by thinking of something else. *Calmly* turn to another thought. Although any other thought might do, Confraternity members should think ahead and plan to

turn their thoughts to Jesus, Mary, and St. Thomas Aquinas the next time they find themselves tempted with impure thoughts. In fact, we should even speak the names "Jesus" and "Mary" and call upon St. Thomas Aquinas for help. It is important to turn to thoughts of Jesus and Mary, and speak their names, because these two names are known to cause demons to flee. And some (but not all) sexual temptations come from demons. In fact, the best way to deal with impure thoughts is to make the sign of the cross, call upon Jesus, Mary, and St. Thomas, and remember Christ and him crucified. If in some cases impure thoughts persist and it is not easy to escape them simply by turning one's thoughts to something else, it is good to turn one's whole body to something else by some sort of change of physical activity, e.g. washing one's face in cold water, going for a walk outside, doing some exercise, playing a musical instrument, or kneeling down to pray the Rosary – especially the mystery of the Scourging at the Pillar.

*"In fact, the best way to deal with impure thoughts is to make the sign of the cross, call upon Jesus, Mary, and St. Thomas, and remember Christ and him crucified."*



The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, founded in 1860, were first admitted into the Angelic Warfare Confraternity under Father Vincent Jandel, O.P. (Master General of the Dominican Order from 1850 to 1872). Every year, the young women entering our community to give their lives wholly to God in poverty, chastity, and obedience, are inducted into the Angelic Warfare Confraternity. Each of our sisters, then, beginning from this day, wears either the St. Thomas cord or the medal for the rest of her life. Every day we pray the Angelic Warfare Prayer to St. Thomas Aquinas. We pray it together with and for each other as well as for all the members of the Confraternity worldwide.

As Brides of Christ, we are dedicated to pursuing “the perfection of charity,” growth in perfect love. Our three vows—the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—help to make us more free in the pursuit of that perfect love. Just as an excessive attachment to money and things will make our hearts closed and selfish, taking us away from God, so will a disordered or impure life. On a daily basis we encounter things, thoughts, and temptations that can attack our purity,

yet these very things can become invitations to choose God, who is Love, instead. This struggle is difficult, especially at first. We need God’s help. Through the sacramental of the St. Thomas cord or medal, we invite God into our lives and our struggles—and He comes. We need the help of the angels and saints. The same angels who girded St. Thomas can help us. St. Thomas himself can help us. All the members of the Confraternity, members of the Communion of Saints, can help us.

We pray to St. Thomas each day for purity, but St. Thomas is also known as the Universal Doctor of the Church because he wrote what are perhaps the most profound, clear, and brilliant works about God and the truths of our faith. It is said that when Blessed Reginald, St. Thomas’ confessor, was testifying at St. Thomas’ canonization, he declared that Thomas committed no sins beyond those of a seven-year-old child, such as his innocence and purity. This is why he knew God so well and could speak and write about God so beautifully—he was pure of heart. Purity opens the way to *the fulfillment* of the rest of our lives, because it enables us to see and to love with the fullness of our hearts. Purity is freedom to love.

## SECOND LUMINOUS MYSTERY: THE WEDDING AT CANA

Our Lady’s words at the wedding at Cana “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5) are beautifully intertwined with her example of such feminine virtues as receptivity, attentiveness, compassion, and patience as she makes known the needs of the wedding guests to her Son, the Heavenly Bridegroom. It is with the same care she displays at Cana that she acts as our Mother and supreme intercessor, example, and guide who will lead us to the Heavenly marriage banquet.



Yet, to arrive at the Heavenly wedding feast, we must know what it is our Lord is telling us to do. Our Lord directs the waiters to fill the jars with water and they do so “to the brim” (John 2:7). Likewise, our Lord asks us to fill our hearts and minds with that which is true, good, and beautiful and to be diligent in the practice of virtue. It is in our striving for the sainthood of which we are called that we find true wholeness, happiness, and freedom. But, this cannot be an effort of ours alone; we must cooperate with God’s grace. The Gospel narrative continues with our Lord turning the jars filled to the brim with water – the work of human hands – into wine worthy to be served first. Therefore, our Lord makes perfect our efforts for holiness through grace. With our water turned into wine, we participate in His Divine Life in the present while waiting to join Him in at the Heavenly feast!

In times of trial and temptation or when our jars are not filled to the brim, may we have immediate recourse to Mary our mother, who is full of grace, most pure, most prudent, and most powerful. May we trust she will intercede for us with the same love and concern she showed for those at the wedding at Cana in order that we may respond to God’s grace and rejoice in the fullness of life.

*Written by Sr. Teresa Christi Balek  
 Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist*



Photos at top and right are from the LaPryor enrollment on October 31<sup>st</sup>.



Photos at bottom and left are from Nashville Motherhouse in November.



“The induction ceremony was powerful. I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I have since prayed the two prayers for purity everyday and 15 Hail Mary’s asking for the grace of purity for myself and as well for all of the members of the confraternity. Each day that I pray for the grace of purity, I feel better equipped to go into battle against the enemy for the sake of my purity. It has also been encouraging knowing that we are all praying for each other. Stay strong, for we can do all things through Him who gives us strength. Christ is victorious!”

- Katherine Rapp

“As I may have mentioned, I’m a convert.... I strongly affirm the Church’s teaching on the saints. However, I’ve often struggled to develop a relationship with them. The Confraternity has really helped my relationship with St Thomas. He’s personally looking out for me and I personally look to him. He’s someone I’ve begun to call on, including in specific situations.”

- Nathaniel

NEW HOPE, KY  
 PERMIT NO. 2  
 PAID  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 NON-PROFIT ORG.

AWC  
 PO Box 10  
 New Hope, KY 40052

CHRISTUS VICTORI  
 FROM THE ANGELIC WARFARE CONFRATERNITY  
 AN APOSTOLATE OF THE DOMINICAN FRIARS

