

+ACM Second Vinculum Formation Class, October 24th, 2015 by Fr Chris Foeckler, MJ

Introduction: Greetings from Phoenix, Arizona on this Feast Day of our special Miles Jesu patron: St Anthony Mary Claret! Happy feast day to everyone! Let's recall his motto: "Caritas Christi urget nos" (The love of Christ urges or compels us.)

1. We are presenting today the second formation class for the Vinculum of Miles Jesu. These classes are part of our very charism as an Ecclesial Family of Consecrated life approved in the Church in which "We participate in the Church's mission principally through the new evangelization: Led by the spirit of the Gospel for the sanctification of the world from within as leaven LG4. Our goal is to provide specific means for the laity to recognize and live out the call to become saints, not only by work but by family and social commitment, and to help others become saints. This call is for leaders in seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God. "

2. This 30 minute class will be a follow up to the first class to give us an opportunity to deepen the message of the most important theme on the call to holiness of all the lay faithful of whom our vinculum friends and members are a part. We plan to spend at least a couple of classes on each theme as we go so as to help deepen the ideas - not only in our minds but also in our hearts and in our lives by reflection and example of others –especially the Saints who embodied these teachings so as to help us live them as well.

We offer this as an aide to your ordinary means of being fed by your local church and parish and not as a substitute.

3. There will be a time for **intercessory prayer** for each other, vinculum members at large, all of Miles Jesu including the specific intentions you have sent in since our last class together.

4. There will be time for announcements and news at the very end of the program.

Prayer: So let's get started with a prayer: Come Holy Spirit...Dear Lord guide our thought and our words now so that our lives may reflect your life and goodness. Hail Mary...Immaculate Heart of our Lady of the Epiphany, pray for us. St Anthony Mary Claret. Pray for us.

Teaching this month:

I. We tried to explain in our last class how the Popes and the Church teach so clearly and abundantly that **personal Holiness is for all and is a prerequisite for doing any work in the Church including the most fundamental duty of all members to Evangelize.** "17. ...The vocation to holiness of the lay faithful must be

recognized and lived by the lay faithful, first of all as an undeniable and demanding obligation and as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in his own life of holiness. Such a vocation, then, ought to be called an *essential and inseparable element of the new life of Baptism*, and therefore an element which determines their dignity. At the same time the vocation to holiness is *intimately connected to mission* and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. In fact, that same holiness which is derived simply from their participation in the Church's holiness, represents their first and fundamental contribution to the building of the Church herself, who is the "Communion of Saints". Christi Fidelis Laici

II. The call to holiness is both "an undeniable and demanding obligation", but certainly not impossible! The call to perfection almost overwhelmed the Apostles on one occasion when they exclaimed to the Lord, "Then who can be saved?!" Jesus reassured them saying, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God". Lk 18: 26-27. We have to trust in God and have faith that "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me". Cf. Phil 4:13 It is Christ who reminds us: You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you to be my disciples and to bear much fruit that will last. Cf John 15:16

So, consider the call of our Lord to you to be holy like this: "As the Father has loved me, so I loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments even as I have kept my Father's commandments... I know longer speak of you as slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is about. Instead, I call you friends, since I have made known to you all that I heard from my Father". Cf John 15:9-14

III. But let's consider an event that happened just recently which should give everyone encouragement in the pursuit of holiness. On World Mission Sunday on October 18 in St Peter's Square, during the Synod of Bishops on the family, the Pope created the following new saints as examples of joyful servants who completely trusted in God:

— *Louis Martin (1823-1894) and Marie Zélie Guérin Martin (1831-1877), the parents of St Therese of Lisieux. They had nine children; four died in infancy and five entered religious life. During their 19-year marriage, the couple was known to attend Mass daily, pray and fast, respect the Sabbath, visit the elderly and the sick, and welcome the poor into their home.*

They are not reputed to have done any miracles in their life time, they did not preach to the multitudes, they didn't even leave their home town, but were faithful spouses, good parents, and everyday practicing Catholics. They were ordinary faithful Catholics. Their circumstances are similar to yours as married couples raising or having raised families. Their canonization is to demonstrate that you can be holy in those circumstances.

IV. *The canonization of the Martins brings to mind their saintly daughter St Therese of Lisieux who at the end of her short life her companion nuns wondered what they "could write about this poor little creature". Therese did not raise a family, she built no schools or hospitals, she didn't even leave her monastery and only lived there for nine years. Yet, she is one of the most popular saints whose*

devotion is practiced by millions of Christians today. Her popularity and the reason why the Church declared her Doctor (or teacher) of the Church is because of her teaching of the Little Way to holiness.

The starting point of her little way is the mercy of God according to a Carmelite commentator. "We have to trust God's mercy in the face of our neediness and weakness. Trust or surrender into God's arms is the bridge that connects Divine Mercy and human inadequacy. Our task in life is to accept God's love and our own powerlessness and in the strength of that love to let God heal us. Then we can get on with life." One of St. Therese's favorite quotes was 1 John 4:10 "The love of God consists in this, not that we have loved God but that God has loved us." God initiates the process and brings every good work to conclusion. Our part is to trust and obey. (If you love Me keep my commandments)

St Anthony Mary Claret's motto implies the basic teaching today: Christ's love urges us and then our love for Christ in response compels us.

This is the starting point for the pursuit of holiness: letting God work in our lives- surrendering to Him. The rest of the steps are for other days formation classes: Daily duty, love of neighbor and self-sacrifice, etc.

V. For now the best thing we can do in striving for holiness in each one of our lives is to make an act of surrender, of faith, and of love for God. In his Apostolic Exhortation: Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis offers each one of us this opportunity. Let me read his words and each of us in our place, from our hearts respond to it.

3. I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord".^[1] The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: "Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace". How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another "seventy times seven" (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!

Intercessory Prayer time:

Now for our prayer intentions: *you can send in your prayer intentions through the website and facebook page.*

For the Holy Father health and intentions, especially as the Synod of Bishop on the family comes to a close.

For the Bishops in communion with him and in particular for those at the Synod of the family and for the Bishops of the Dioceses where Miles Jesu is present

For all consecrated persons in the Church in this Year of Consecrated Life, especially for the members of Miles Jesu and for vocation to all the forms and Institutes of Consecrated Life in the Church

For all the Faithful who are offering a supreme witness to the Faith by their sacrifices of liberty and goods, of their own safety and even the supreme sacrifice of their lives for Christ and Faith in Him

For all our family members, especially those who need it the most: for Matt creen who is suffering the last stages of als disease and for his family.

For the needy in the world that the Lord will provide for and protect them and inspire many good people to come to their aid

And for the repose of the soul of Mr. Elmer Vota, the father of Fr Paul Vota.

For the requested special intention for the healing of Shalom's foot.

And finally now in a moment of silence for each ones to pray for their own personal needs and intentions

We conclude with the prayer that the Lord taught us as children of God, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...

Announcements and News:

Let there be an unwritten agreement between us here behind the microphone and you in your homes. Each month one of us priests of MJ including also Fr Nicoletti and Fr Cahill will present this formation program on the 4th Saturday of the month at the same time, we simply ask you to consider these benefits and expectations:

Benefits we hope to provide for our listeners

1. Gives me a chance to deepen my Catholic Faith, nourish my soul, mind and heart and help guide me along the path of holiness that the Lord has pointed out for me.
2. Gives me support and encouragement and guidance in the most important aspect of my life, my Faith and the striving for holiness in my state of life by meeting (virtually for now) with like-minded people also in the path to become better Catholic Christians.
3. Answering questions about the “faith in the headlines”, current events of the Church and the world and helping to spread the faith and answer questions about it.
4. Join in prayer for others and my own intentions.
5. Having a sense of not being alone in my personal struggle to be a good Catholic while helping to support others in the same struggle as a member of the Miles Jesu Faith Family.

and Expectations we hope from our listeners:

1. Participate as regularly as possible and invite at least one other to participate in the call each class.
2. Strive to put into practice what is presented in the classes and give feedback.
3. Pray with and for the intentions of those who also participate in the call.
4. Pray for the needs and intentions of all of Miles Jesu members and projects.
5. Ready to give a BRIEF testimony about living my Catholic faith.