

## IS THE MASS INFALLIBLE IN ITS EFFECTS ?

BY REV. DAVID BARRY

IN a former number of the I. E. RECORD<sup>1</sup> I discussed the question whether the effects of the Mass are of indefinite extent in their application to us. So at present it may not be out of place to consider how far their incidence is infallible; in other words, how far the person that a Mass is intended to benefit, invariably and as a matter of course, receives the favours of which it is so bountiful a store. And as the teaching about all of the effects is not the same, we can best arrive at the truth, or a fair approximation to it, by taking them *seriatim*; and examining what degree of certainty we can have that each will be realized in the case of a particular person; supposing, of course, that the priest validly directs his intention on his behalf.

Well, as regards *adoration* or *worship* of God and *thanksgiving* to Him, they are infallibly and unconditionally the outcome of every Mass; and showing them forth as a supremely acceptable offering in His sight is, accordingly, treasured up in merit for those associated with, or to any degree responsible for, the celebration of the holy sacrifice. And the reason of what I may call its automatic efficacy as regards these results, is that they are the primary objects of sacrifice; inasmuch as they would be always due from creatures to their Creator in any conceivable view of the relations between Him and them; and quite irrespective of the facts that the beneficent scheme of Divine Providence in our regard was marred by sin and evil, and that our various needs consequent on these were

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Series, Vol. xxxii., pp. 481, sqq. (November, 1928).

greatly increased. While, on the contrary, *propitiation*, *satisfaction* and, to some extent, *impetration*<sup>2</sup> are only in the present order, that is contingently on sin, the fruit of sacrifice. Because were it not for sin, there would be no question of propitiating God; or of supplicating Him to give special helps—*medicinal* graces—to aid and strengthen our natural powers, depleted and hampered in their operation by it—which is a most important province of the prayer of petition.

Moreover, as the latreutical and Eucharistic effects have the glory of God directly and exclusively within their purview, there is no reason on our part why they would not invariably, and to their full extent, accrue to Him from every Mass. Whereas *impetration*, *propitiation* and *satisfaction* have reference to, and are conditioned by, the capacity or dispositions of those they are intended to benefit.

Now, we shall in the first place consider the circumstances in which *impetration* is infallible because, as will appear later, according to many *propitiation* in its essence is nothing but *impetration*; though it is true, indeed, that some<sup>3</sup> look on *propitiation* as the more fundamentally important of the two. Well, the Mass in so far as it is *impetratory* is very closely analogous to an ordinary prayer of petition, and, accordingly, its efficacy is to a degree limited by the same conditions and confined to the same range of favours. Indeed, the authorities, or at least many of them such as Suarez and Archbishop Walsh, appear to limit its operation in respect of this effect to the fact that it sustains, supports, or enforces a prayer that is distinct from it; and they do not allow that it has any *impetratory* power that is quite independent of this. Suarez says:—

*Impetration* is, properly speaking, the result of a petition, and of other good works only in as far as these are joined on to the petition, and done in the service of God . . . so that we thereby incline Him to grant us what we seek or wish; however, this sacrifice is a great act

<sup>2</sup> Vermeersch, *Theologia Moralís*, iii. n. 281 (1923).

<sup>3</sup> Billot, *de Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, i., p. 585, note (ed. 1900).

<sup>4</sup> *De Eucharistia*, disp. 79, sec. 2, nn. 5, 7.

of homage to God, and most acceptable to Him, and it can be attached to any petition or desire of obtaining any benefit from God. . . . No good work is of itself impetratory, unless in as far as it is joined on to a prayer.

The same authority says again<sup>1</sup>:—

It [sacrifice] can always be offered in order that any just prayer be heard, and it will give to this efficiency and the power of impetration.

According to Dr. Walsh<sup>2</sup>:—

If performed in sustainment of a prayer of petition, they [works and acts] thus become indirectly efficacious for impetration.

And also<sup>3</sup>:—

The impetratory efficacy of the Mass is, as we have seen, its efficacy in aid of some prayer in connexion with which it is offered.<sup>4</sup>

However this may be, it is quite certain that the impetratory power of the holy sacrifice is subject in one sense to many, if not all, of the same limitations or disabilities as a merely human prayer. And this, which at first sight seems so anomalous, is discussed by the theologians in answer to the objection that, as its efficacy is derived from Christ, it ought to be invariably and unconditionally infallible; and whether He asks for the benefit in question Himself directly, or through His representative the Priest in the Mass. Whereas experience proves that the object to further which Mass has been offered, is sometimes not granted—whether this be temporal, or even spiritual, like a vocation or the immediate conversion of a sinner.<sup>5</sup> The theologians<sup>6</sup> meet this difficulty by explaining that the all-powerful advocacy<sup>7</sup> of Christ can only be expected when a priest officiates in order to get something that is in accordance with Christ's intention. Just, they say, as the words of Our Lord: 'Amen, I say to you, if you ask

<sup>1</sup> *De Eucharistia*, disp. 79, sec. 6, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> I. E. RECORD, December, 1882, p. 712, n. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, January, 1883, p. 15, n. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Bellarmine's opinion is the same, *De Missa*, cap. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Billuart, *de Eucharistia*, diss. viii., art. 3. Dico 3.

<sup>6</sup> Lugo, *de Eucharistia*, disp. xix. n. 132.

<sup>7</sup> Christ does not, of course, pray as if He lacked any power Himself, but merely by way of representing His wishes to the Father. Lugo, *ibid.*, n. 131.

the Father anything in My Name, He will grant it to you,' though apparently quite absolute and universal, must be understood to apply only when our requests are feasible and proper. And because they are often not such, to be instant and assiduous in prayer, does not always save us from disappointed expectations. Now, it is in a similar limited way that we are to understand the priest's intercessory and mediating power in the holy sacrifice.

This point may be further illustrated by supposing that some king sends an ambassador to the Pope with a general commission to solicit favours in his name. Well, the Pope may be satisfied, from certain information at his disposal through another source, that what the royal envoy is looking for in a particular instance, is not at all according to the mind or wish of his master; and for that very reason he refuses it. This is the explanation of how it is that a priest sometimes, though he asks for a favour in the Name of Christ, and through the Mass, is by His authority debarred from getting it. For it would not be wise or expedient to give an unlimited call, as it were, on the Divine treasury to human creatures. Because, partly through being blinded by error, and partly through being swayed by unregulated affection, they often ask in the Name of Christ what would be repugnant to Divine Wisdom and the order and arrangements of Providence to grant.

What, then, in detail we may hope to get infallibly from the Mass as a prayer, or rather as enforcing one, and what we may not hope for, can be pretty well ascertained by bearing in mind the limitations imposed, from the nature of the case, on the efficiency of prayers in general.<sup>1</sup> Provided, though, we always vividly realize that, when these requirements are fulfilled, it is no longer we ourselves who are praying, but that Our Lord Himself has the principal part in preferring our request. Some of the conditions in question have reference to the *manner* or *method* of prayer, and others to the *object* we must have in view. The former of these are chiefly: that prayer ought to

be made (a) with a lowly opinion of ourselves, and with faith and confidence in Christ's power and promises; (b) with perseverance; (c) and by a person that, if he be not already in the state of grace, has elicited some inchoate act of repentance or conversion to God. Certain authors, like Prümmer,<sup>1</sup> relying on a wealth of Scriptural texts, positively insist that the state of grace is necessary in the person offering the petition as a condition of its being infallibly granted. However, Suarez does not postulate so much, nor Lehmkuhl, nor Vermeersch.<sup>2</sup> Suarez says it is certainly true that this cannot be laid down without qualification as necessary for the efficacy of prayer. And Lehmkuhl,<sup>3</sup> referring to St. Thomas, holds that it is clearly in harmony with the truth that a sinner, provided he asks it properly, can certainly and infallibly obtain the grace of repentance. While the Angelic doctor himself<sup>4</sup> says that if the Mass finds sinners disposed, it obtains their conversion for them.

That the beginning of a change of heart, though, however tepid, is required, appears manifest from the fact that otherwise we are rebels against God, and should, if we are not mere hypocrites, desire, in preference to everything else, that the Mass we are getting offered may be the medium of making our peace with Him. The importance of this condition is enforced over and over again in Scripture: 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the just: and His ears unto their prayers.' 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.' 'If our heart do not reprehend us we have confidence towards God: and whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of Him.' And at least some feeble and faltering approach, and some lifting up of heart—which itself, of course, must come from God—to the throne of mercy is, as we shall see, required by the Council of Trent as a condition for obtaining even the vital grace of justification.

<sup>1</sup> *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, ii., n. 353 (1923).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii., n. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Theologia Moralis*, i., n. 479 (11th ed.).

<sup>4</sup> *Apud Billot, op. cit.*, p. 587.

Now though, as I have said already, the person in whose interest or rather in support of whose request the priest offers Mass, is not by any means dispensed from complying with these conditions, if he wishes to have his prayer certainly effectual, still, it is clearly much easier to fulfil them in connection with the holy sacrifice than outside it. Thus we can more readily summon up the requisite *confidence*, if our petition is directly and immediately supported by the influence of Christ, than if we stood before God with our wretchedness and sinfulness barely hidden, as it were, by the shadow of the Cross. Similarly, so far as *perseverance* goes, it is reasonable enough to believe that a lesser degree of it will be needed, and that our requests will be more quickly granted, if we have not only the general merits of Christ to recommend them, but a special portion of these allocated to us in the Mass. However, even on this supposition, a certain amount of persistence may be necessary, and perhaps, the offering of more than one Mass, especially if the theory of its limited efficacy is true.

Moreover, in order that prayer either in or outside of Mass may be infallible, certain limitations on the part of the *object* or *benefit* that is sought must be postulated. In the first place it is supposed that the granting of this is within the operation of God's ordinary Providence, and does not require the exercise of miraculous power. Thus, no one would with complete confidence expect that a simple prayer—even though otherwise vested with the proper conditions—or the Mass itself, would obtain the cure of a person in the last extremity from some disease. Just as no one would expect this of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, though the patient's physical recovery, if his complaint has not progressed too far, is one of its objects. Again, in the spiritual order an effect that would be over and above the established economy of grace may not be looked for with unflinching trust. That is to say, e.g., that though God could, of course, give a grace that would be infallibly efficacious for any sinner's conversion, still this

is clearly not the certain result of a Mass or Masses that may be said on his behalf.<sup>1</sup> It is true that such a person will obtain through the impetratory power which we are considering not only grace of a sufficient degree of potency, but one very highly calculated to produce its effect by winning his assent and co-operation. But we have no warrant for thinking that it will be so miraculously congruous as to break down every barrier that passion and self-will may set up. Moreover, it would be almost expecting a miracle to anticipate that grace for such a purpose, unlike, say, that for resisting the onset of a temptation—would be given at a *particular time*,<sup>2</sup> for instance, the moment the holy sacrifice has been completed. Consequently, a Mass—or Masses—will get without fail on behalf of the sinner for whose conversion it has been offered grace in God's good time, and with a degree of efficacy attached to it, that will make correspondence with it not indeed inevitable, but easy.

The necessity of such co-operation partly explains why St. Thomas is so reluctant to allow that impetration will never fail of its results when we are praying not for *ourselves* but for *others*; inasmuch as we cannot answer for their doing their own part to secure the favour we wish to obtain for them, whether this be of a spiritual or temporal character.

To pray for oneself is a necessary condition, not, indeed, in as far as it is required for merit, but in order that what is asked should be obtained with certainty. For it sometimes happens that a prayer said for another fails of its effects although it is offered with devotion and perseverance, and for what is conducive to his salvation, because of some impediment on his part according to the words 'If Moses and Samuel shall stand before me, my mind is not towards this people.' Nevertheless [the Saint goes on] such a prayer is a source of merit to the author of it, because he is actuated by charity, and has Scripture warrant: 'My prayer shall be turned into my bosom'; that is to say, though it does not help others I shall not lose my reward.<sup>3</sup>

However, influenced no doubt by the strength of such

<sup>1</sup> See Billot, loc. cit., p. 594.

<sup>2</sup> Bellarmine, op. cit. cap. v. at end.

<sup>3</sup> *Summa Theologica*, 2a, 2ae, qu. 83, art. 7 ad 2.

texts as: 'Pray for one another that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much,' Suarez<sup>1</sup> and others hold that suffrages for the salvation even of our neighbour are within due limits infallible. And it goes without saying that assurance on this point is much greater if such a petition be presented to God through the instrumentality of the Mass, and so perhaps supported by the prayer of Christ Himself. Of course, no one believing in the Communion of Saints would deny that supplication for another, whether or not it be infallible, is often effective on his behalf.

Apropos of the reference to what is helpful for salvation, in the extract I have just given from St. Thomas, it may be opportune to consider how far temporal advantages come properly within the scope of prayer, either in the holy sacrifice or independently of it. Now, it is clear that when, as is often the case, these would be a positive obstacle in the way of salvation, they will not be granted to us as the fruit of our petitions. Indeed, they may not be expected with the highest degree of confidence unless—a matter of which we can very rarely be sure—they are of actual assistance to us in a spiritual way. How far this condition is necessary to render asking for them barely lawful, is to some extent a matter of controversy between Vasquez and Lugo.<sup>2</sup> Vasquez says that though it is plain enough from the prayers of the Missal that these, *e.g.*, good health, rain, fine weather, etc., can lawfully be sought, this may only be in so far as they are the medium of spiritual benefits; because Christ did not die to provide temporal things for us that have no bearing on spiritual issues. Lugo, however, believes that even though a person looking for such an advantage does not do so with a view to bettering his spiritual condition, he still might obtain it through the agency of the holy sacrifice, seeing that it may be of itself useful in order to allure men to Christ's service.

It is the general opinion of theologians, if for some reason Divine Providence does not give us the favour we

<sup>1</sup> De Relig., tr. 4, l. 1, c. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit., n. 157.

want, that our prayers, if clothed with the proper attributes—and the Mass especially—will not be barren of effect, but will bring something that is in reality more advantageous for us. Of how little use what we ask would be sometimes, anyone can readily appreciate who realizes the feeble and short-sighted intelligence that too often guides our requests. Noldin<sup>1</sup> says:—

Although the special benefits that are sought may not be conceded, particularly if they are in the temporal order, nevertheless, there is always, in virtue of the sacrifice that has been offered, some other advantage given in their stead, unless there is an obstacle to it.

And according to Lehmkuhl<sup>2</sup>:—

It may happen that the priest, as representative of Christ, is mistaken in believing that certain things he asks of God are desired by Our Lord, when, as a fact, His prayer and impetration have no reference to them, but are diverted to secure other benefits for us—those, namely, which are such in reality and not merely in our estimation.

Vermeersch<sup>3</sup> holds that:—

Although a prayer which is wanting in any of the requisite conditions cannot claim to be heard in virtue of the Divine promises, still it is not useless, since the goodness of God imparts to it some intercessory value.

I think, though, that Lugo is not so emphatic in expressing this view as the authors I have just quoted, for he merely says<sup>4</sup> that God *often* gives in virtue of the Mass something more useful to the suppliant than would be the boon desired by him but denied to him.

I may sum up on the subject of the infallible *impetration* of the Mass by saying that graces of themselves sufficient—if properly utilized—for the remission both of mortal and venial sin, sufficient for the increase of habitual grace and for perseverance are conferred, without risk of failure or mischance, on those who make their prayers in union with the sacrificial one of Christ. Because, seeing that God, if properly approached, would not deny these in any case, He is particularly pleased to grant them in virtue of the

<sup>1</sup> *De Sacramentis*, n. 174, b. (1904 ed.).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii. n. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii., n. 184, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*, n. 156, at end.

Mass in which the Passion of His Divine Son is represented. But the *actual* remission of sin, the increase of grace and the gift of perseverance, are not infallibly the fruit of impetration; inasmuch as the helps given for these purposes may be frustrated through lack of our co-operation. Neither is any improvement in our temporal affairs or prospects an unfailing result of the offering of a Mass or Masses, because this is not always conducive to our spiritual welfare.<sup>1</sup>

Now, as regards *propitiation*, the Council of Trent<sup>2</sup> teaches that the sacrifice of the Mass:—

Is truly propitiatory, and that through it, if being contrite and penitent, we draw near to God with an honest heart and true faith and with fear and reverence, we shall obtain mercy and find grace through the medium of seasonable aid. Because God, having been placated by this sacrifice, grants us grace and the gift of penance, and forgives even grievous crimes and sins. . . . Wherefore it can be offered according to Apostolic tradition not only for the sins, punishments and satisfactions<sup>3</sup> of the faithful while they are alive, but for those who have died in Christ and are not yet fully purified.

From the tenor of this decree it is plain that the Mass does not at all directly and *ex opere operato*, after the manner of a Sacrament, remit sins either mortal or venial, even if attrition be entertained for them. Because it appears from the words of the Council to the effect that 'we shall find grace through the medium of seasonable help,' that the forgiveness in question is to be reached through the channel of *actual* grace.

However, I believe that some theologians, as Suarez and Vasquez<sup>4</sup> make a mistake in going to the opposite extreme, and limiting the efficacy of the Mass towards justification to the actual graces it gets for us *by way of impetration*. To explain in this view of theirs the singling out of *propitiation* as a distinct fruit or class of fruits, it is not open to them, in face of the teaching of the Fathers of Trent that I have quoted, to limit this effect to the abolishing or abating of the temporal punishment due to

<sup>1</sup> Billuart, *loc. cit.*, Dico 4<sup>o</sup>.  
<sup>2</sup> Sess. 22, cap. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. can. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Apud Lugo, *loc. cit.*, n. 140.

sin, or the prevention of other chastisements which we deserve for it. But they can contend that impetration for graces with a view to our reconciliation with God is rightly put into a category by itself—propitiation—inasmuch as it is more necessary for us than anything else, and is more likely to obtain its effect infallibly, as not being subject to all the conditions with which other petitions must be invested, be these of a spiritual or temporal nature.

It seems much better, however, and more in harmony with the decree I have quoted to hold that God is in some degree placated even *before* He gives the graces suitable for conversion. This is a fair deduction from the words: 'God having been placated by this sacrifice, grants us the grace and the gift of penance,' etc. So that the giving of the grace of conversion, which Suarez and Vasquez hold to be the same as propitiation, in reality merely follows from this, and is, in fact, the result of it. How far then, it may be asked, is God made *propitious* or gracious towards the sinner by the Mass, seeing that he is as yet unconverted, and that God, consequently, instead of being at peace with him, or regarding him with favour, cannot but look on him as an enemy?

Well, the effect of this propitiation is simply to move Almighty God to set free for his reformation certain abundant helps that He would not otherwise give. It is true, indeed, that by means of an ordinary prayer aid may be obtained that would be certainly sufficient, though, perhaps, not effectual for one's conversion. But the justice of God, were it not for the placatory power of the Mass, would, as it were, hold up in punishment of sin more copious or additional helps in this direction. So propitiation induces God to forego His right to punish us by withholding these. Accordingly, Mass offered for a sinner helps to secure these special, and it may be vital, aids in *two* ways: in a negative manner by arresting the just anger of God which keeps them back; and in a positive way, through impetration, by supplicating Him to grant them.

It is true—and very probably because the effects of the

Mass are limited—that it may require more than one to secure that the graces held back by retributive justice be restored in full measure. And the propitiatory value of each can in this hypothesis be explained by holding<sup>1</sup> that it *in part* placates God; or else that it is a channel to the sinner of a portion of the graces withheld, which are made available in the aggregate by all the Masses. The forgiveness of sins is so necessary and so closely associated with the holy sacrifice both in Scripture and in the authoritative pronouncements of the Church, that its efficacy in this respect must certainly be looked on as normally quite infallible. And the only point on which there is room for difference of opinion among Catholics is as to whether this effect must ever and always be realized to some extent, if I may say so, mechanically almost; or whether an obstacle on the part of a sinner may cause its total frustration.

Now, judging by the decree that I gave previously, it would appear that a certain degree of obduracy or obstinate adherence to sin<sup>2</sup> would be such a complete hindrance, not only to the successful operation of grace in the soul, but even to the mitigation of God's just resentment. Because the Council seems to insist with a view to the sinner's gaining this fruit, not only that he should cherish no affection for mortal sin, but that his will should be detached from it, and that he should have some measure of sorrow for it. This is certainly not too rigid an interpretation to put on the doctrine that the Mass is propitiatory for those who fulfil certain conditions, among which is that they be 'contrite and penitent.' As Lugo says, it seems to be in vain for a person to wish to placate God whose heart is doggedly wedded to sin, or who has no sorrow for it.<sup>3</sup>

According to Lehmkuhl<sup>4</sup> a certain amount of propitiation

<sup>1</sup> Lugo, loc. cit., n. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. n. 146.

<sup>3</sup> Suarez, however, seems to reject this view. I. E. RECORD, January, 1883, p. 20, n. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. n. 237, 3. Cf. n. 248, 5.

is demanded of us, not only on account of our unforgiven sins, but because of the temporal punishment which attaches to them, and which may, of course, remain unremitted when they are pardoned. He does not mean merely that *satisfaction* is necessary in such a case; he is referring to propitiation in the strict sense, and believes that for want of it even sin that has been forgiven may be a bar to grace for the living, and to the alleviation of their pains in the case of the dead.

This brings me to say a few words as to whether the *satisfactory*<sup>1</sup> effect of the Mass is certain and unailing. And no doubt can be entertained of its infallible efficiency in this respect at least in the case of the living, provided the conditions for its operation are realized. And one would think that the Council of Trent made this equally clear as regards the dead, particularly in the decree on Purgatory, where they are said to be helped in a very special way by the 'acceptable sacrifice of the Altar.'<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, provided the intended recipient is in the state of grace,<sup>3</sup> and has a debt of punishment incurred by a sin already pardoned, some at least of this punishment will infallibly be done away with. *All* of it may possibly not be blotted out; partly because an individual Mass, being limited in its effect, may not be sufficient for this; and perhaps, because God, having cause to harbour a certain degree of displeasure towards the beneficiary, may not give him the full advantage of it. Accordingly, the propitiatory fruit of a Mass may be necessary, and may not even be enough to allow its satisfactory effect to have full and

<sup>1</sup> See extract from the Council of Trent above, and also Canon 3 of the same 22nd Session.

<sup>2</sup> However, according to Lehmkuhl (op. cit., n. 248, note), Suarez considers the teaching as to the infallible efficacy of the Mass for the benefit of *any particular soul in Purgatory*—as distinct, I suppose, from the souls there *taken in general*—to be merely more probable. The character of its efficacy for the unbaptized souls there is quite open to question. See Code, Canon 809, and Cohalan, *de Eucharistia*, pp. 498 and 507.

<sup>3</sup> If he is not in the state of grace when the Mass is offered, this effect will not be made available for him later on when he has made his peace with God. Scotus denied the necessity of this condition in order that one be released from the punishment of mortal sins already forgiven. Cohalan, op. cit., p. 497.

free play in the soul. And this is also true even of the faithful in Purgatory who are God's inalienable friends. For there is no doubt from the practice of the Church that a single Mass will not of necessity open the gates of Heaven to any one of them. Now, the theologians do not attribute this exclusively to the fact that the Mass is restricted in its beneficent fruits: that a soul is allowed to share only partially in these is held by many,<sup>1</sup> and is set down by them, to the fact, *e.g.*, that it was careless about the Mass during life, or perhaps, about the fate of the suffering souls. As St. Augustine says, the Mass helps those who while they were alive did something to deserve that it should be made available for them afterwards.

An interesting question, and a very debatable one, is whether the Mass, not only as satisfactory but as impetratory, may gain for us remission of temporal punishment, in addition to the boundless range of other spiritual favours which it is incomparably the most efficacious means of placing at our disposal. Suarez in a very mild way, and Lago<sup>2</sup> and Cohalan<sup>3</sup> favour the positive side. They hold, accordingly, as do all authorities, that the Mass immediately and infallibly remits more or less temporal punishment—its purely satisfactory effect. They hold also, of course, what is unquestionable, that we can impetrate through the Mass grace to perform works having a *satisfactory* value for ourselves or others—a method that is rather indirect. While they believe *in addition* that the impetratory effect may be directly—though not infallibly—concentrated on the forgiveness of temporal punishment, whether for the living or the dead. Lehmkuhl,<sup>4</sup> however, characterizes this opinion as very doubtful, and Vermeersch<sup>5</sup> is not any more enthusiastic in its favour. But if it were true, it would exemplify an advantage—though a comparatively small

<sup>1</sup> See Billot, op. cit., p. 600; and Vermeersch, iii., n. 284, and n. 314, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit., n. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit., p. 501.

<sup>4</sup> Loc. cit., n. 247, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit., n. 312.

one—of devotion to the Mass that we ought not to lose sight of. This, namely, how beautifully the Divine Wisdom has arranged that its various fruits should facilitate the operation of one another on our behalf: just as we saw already that a certain measure of propitiation may be required in order that God would heed or honour its impetratory<sup>1</sup> or satisfactory powers.

If the holy sacrifice is not in every respect infallible in its effects, still, it can never happen that a person who assists at it with a fair amount of good-will, or who has it offered in such a spirit, will not bear away in a greater or less degree, or through one effect or another, precious blessings from this 'open fountain'<sup>2</sup> of grace and salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> See Franzelin, *de Eucharistia*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Zacharias xiii. 1.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### 'THE ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY'

REV. DEAR SIR,—It is now time to put before the readers of your esteemed periodical, what remains to be quoted from the Turin MS. relative to the restoration in 1475 by Father James Sprenger and the approbation in 1476 by the Legate Alessandro di Malatesta, of the Rosary Confraternity in Cologne. The first part of Sprenger's description of the event was given in the number of the I. E. RECORD for December, 1928. Readers must have noticed then that in what appears to be an Italian translation in the Turin MS. of Sprenger's words, archaic spellings and contracted forms are numerous. Others occurring in this part, if it has been considered necessary, are respectively either explained or expanded here.

*Io frate Jacobo Sprengieri doctore de la sacra theologia e priore del convento de Colonia de la provincia de Almania de lordine de frati predicatori, etc.; hazo (ho) ordinato che sia una fraternitade per tuta (tutta) la Christianitade nelaquale (nella quale) possa (possano) intrare tute le persone ecclesiastice e seculari richi e poveri homini e done, etc.; la quale fraternitade lo zorno (giorno) et anno sopraditto, el Reverendissimo padre meser (messer) Alessandro episcopo forliviensi legato de latere per tuta le Almania cum plena auctoritade aplica (apostolica) davanti al serenissimo Imperatore Federico tercio semper augusto e molti Archiepiscopi, Episcopi, Abbati, principi e gentilhomini e populo Coloniense ne laziesa della chiesa) de frati predicatori aprobo confirmo e ratifico cum auctoritade apostolica, come hè (è) manifesto per una bulla la qual se ha nel preditto convento de Colonia.*

The Bull referred to, apparently, is the first of the two issued by the Legate, on 10th March, 1476. More than once in these pages mention has been made of it. The implication of the words, *praetactam Fraternalitatem auctoritate apostolica nobis specialiter concessa approbamus, confirmamus, et ratificamus*, which it contains, may be that after his first approval of the Confraternity, on 8th September, 1475, the Legate had applied for special faculties, and had got them from the Pope. At any rate, a similar clause is not found in the Bulls about Rosary Confraternities existing elsewhere that were issued by three other Cardinal Legates: Luke, Bishop of Sebenico; François de Clermont, Archbishop of Auch; and Egidio di Viterbo. And it may very well be on the other hand that the words *Cum itaque, sicut accepimus, in ecclesia domus Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Coloniensis, quaedam Confraternitas, etc.*, used by Sixtus IV in his Bull, dated 30th May, 1478, indicate that Alexander was his informant or one of his informants. At any rate the