

# the friends of ST. HANNIBAL MARY

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## ON THE EUCHARIST AND THE FAMILY

### ON THE EUCHARIST

"Seraphic Worshipper of the Eucharist" this was the title that Fr. Tusino gave, referring to St. Hannibal. This title speaks the deep love and reverence of St. Hannibal to our Lord Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist.

Fr. Hannibal considers the Eucharist, especially its reception, as one of the essential means to grow and go deeper in our journey towards holiness. Addressing the Daughters of Divine Zeal, he says, "My daughters in Jesus Christ, you must understand that your individual spirituality and growth in holiness... depend on your receiving the Eucharistic Communion frequently and worthily through prayer..." He considers the Eucharist as our "mystical beehive" which produces "the sweetest honey of the virtues that please Jesus, the supreme goodness," and where we should gather together and rest.

This is all the more true in the concrete events in St. Hannibal's life. If we were to take a short glimpse at his life story, we can see that the Lord Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament has always been vital in his spiritual life and his journey towards holiness. When he was still young, St. Hannibal would often avail of the long hours of Eucharistic Adoration. He would never fail to spend some moments with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament when he would visit Churches. While having the adoration in the Church of St. John of Malta, St. Hannibal first received the inspiration to offer himself in prayer to obtaining more priests.

While working with the poor in the Avignone, he realized the need of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist in that place. So much was his reverence for the Eucharist that he prepared the place and the people for more than two years before finally letting Jesus come in the midst of them on July 1, 1886 for "the Blessed Sacrament's appearance should be an event, because our Lord Jesus Christ would be in the very midst of the poor, becoming poor himself in these

hovels for the sake of his desolate children." This event came to be known as the Feast of July the First. So memorable and joyous that event that its celebration lasted for days. He considers the Eucharist as the Divine Founder of his works and establishments, who in his goodness came down and dwelt among the little ones and the poor. He says: "The loving, fruitful, dutiful, and continuous center of this pious institute of Jesus' interests is Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. From now on, people must know that the true, effective, and immediate founder of this pious institute is Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. Of this foundation we may say: "God did something new." In fact, usually he places a founder rich with his graces and gifts in his institutions; this institute instead, which was born to promote his Heart's divine command that has been neglected for so many centuries, has our Lord himself in the sacred tabernacle as the real founder. Graces, help, enlightenment, and providence poured out from his divine heart in the Sacrament."

So important this event was for Him that he wished this memory to be renewed annually in order for his sons and daughters to express our "gratitude for Jesus' loving sweetest dwelling in the midst of them



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despite their failings and unfaithfulness, their languid faith and incomplete answer to his love and inspirations." In the first years of this yearly commemoration, St. Hannibal would create "titles" given to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to be meditated for and celebrated for that year. Gifted as he was on poetry, he composed poems and songs on the Blessed Sacrament. He wrote hymns and songs for July the First.

Fr. Teodoro Tusino, who wrote splendid biographies, articles, and books about St. Hannibal recounts a lot episodes that shows St. Hannibal's great love for the Eucharist. He would kneel in front of the Eucharist for long periods of time. He wasted his time in prayer even though at times his health would not permit it. He insists on the practice of Eucharistic Processions and encouraged the people to join. He would offer great respect for the Eucharist in Procession both externally and internally. His love for the Eucharist led him to participate in some of the Eucharistic Congresses. In fact, he was a speaker of the Eucharistic Congress held at Rome in 1905.

Fr. Carmelo Drago narrated an instance when he accompanied St. Hannibal who joined and preached at a Eucharistic Procession. St. Hannibal himself recounted a sad episode when the thieves broke into the Church, stole everything including the sacred hosts which were later found scattered in the road, a kilometer away from the Church. As an act of reparation, Eucharistic procession was done yearly from the Church to that ground where the hosts were found. He himself usually joined and preached in that event.

## ON THE FAMILY

Though St. Hannibal used to gather the little ones and poor in his orphanages, family was very important for him. He had always believed that the family, especially if it is a good one, is always the proper milieu suited for education and formation.

For him, his children (orphans) should be able to feel like "in their family in the Orphanages." Talking with Fr. Carmelo Drago he often stresses the beauty and the benefits of creating a familial spirit in the Orphanages.

At the beginnings of St. Hannibal's apostolate in the slums of Avignone, he lamented at the situation of the families living in that area not only because of their material poverty but also of their spiritual poverty. Spiritual poverty in the sense that they did not have the idea of the sanctity of marriage and of the family because some of them are

## THE FRIENDS OF ST. HANNIBAL MARY

If you have graces received and prayers heard through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, please share it with us... contact us at:

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living together without the grace of the sacraments. St. Hannibal, slowly addressed these things by educating them on the dignity and sanctity of marriage. But of course, he started with offering them material help that could, as much as possible, alleviate the current state of living they had. He offered decent clothes, place where they could stay and live as a family.

St. Hannibal was very much into this kind of priestly ministry. He did not want families to live in poverty, both internally and externally. He wanted every families to be blessed by having the parents themselves avail of the sacrament of marriage. He prayed much for those families who were in difficult situation. He even exhorted his followers to "take care of validating illegal marriage unions with the sacrament of marriage" talking especially to the Rogationists.

The Eucharist plays a vital role in keeping the family united and preserved. Commenting on the event that happened on the Feast of July the First, St. Hannibal beautifully said, "He came as a very loving father in the midst of his children to form a small family living on his body and blood, and to make it able to receive from his divine lips the command of his heart's divine zeal: PRAY, THEREFORE, TO THE OWNER OF THE HARVEST THAT HE WILL SEND OUT WORKERS TO GATHER IN HIS HARVEST."

## THE DEVOTEE

I'm one of the many devotees of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia. Looking back at my life story, I experienced many times the miracles that God wrought through St. Hannibal's intercession. I would like to reminisce some of them here.

Last 2012, the night before St. Hannibal's feast day I had a fever. That night St. Hannibal's pilgrim statue was in our house. I prayed that night for healing so that I could hear mass on his feast day. Fortunately, my prayer was heard.

The second miracle was about my eldest son. He was suffering from pneumonia and his situation was worsening at the Iloilo Provincial Hospital. The doctors referred us to specialists. I didn't have the money to pay. We were already there for two days and nothing happened. So I decided to bring my son home. Deep inside me I prayed, "Lord, I have nothing, I'm financially broke these days, please help me." I prayed through the intercession of St. Hannibal. I entrusted my son to the Lord's hands, especially his recovery and healing. Now, I'm delighted to say that my son was healed and is currently in good condition.

Also, last May 22, 2015 my uncle, who was living in Cagayan de Oro died due to cirrhosis of the liver. He was a lawyer. Due to my financial problem, I knew in an instant that I can't be there. I love my uncle so much and in that time of grief my only wish was to be able to be there and see him for the last time. It came to my mind then that the only thing I can be of help for my uncle is to contact Fr. Tino. He was one of my uncles' best friends. Before I contacted Fr. Tino I prayed to St. Hannibal to help me. His feast day was then fast approaching. I hoped he might answer my call. In God's grace, when I dialed the phone, a man answered and said he was Fr. Tino. How joyful I was at that moment. My heart was overwhelmed with great joy because God has heard my prayers. I told Fr. Tino that his best friend passed away. However he replied that he can't be there, but he assured me of his daily prayers and masses which will be offered for my uncle's eternal repose. I thanked Fr. Tino and started to introduce myself, that I was his niece, that I'm living here in Capul-an, Mina and that I'm a UPV member. He answered that he knew Fr. Marcelino Diaz very well. I really believed that it was through the help of St. Hannibal that I was able to contact Fr. Tino. Also, hearing Fr. Tino, I'm assured that my uncle is now happy and is now at peace with God our Father in Heaven.

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