

Fr. Perozich comments —

Joe Diffie sang, “Prop me up beside the juke box if I die. Lord, I want to go to heaven, but I don't want to go tonight.”

Admittedly I do not wish to go to heaven right now because of the earthly delights that I have planned and expect to enjoy today and in the near future,

While I may be spiritually ready in the sense of being free from mortal sin, heaven and the Beatific Vision of God seems to be secondary in my life.

The two saints below wanted the Beatific Vision in their own lives.

St. Romauld disposed himself so to be ready to receive the divine visions, mysteries, and ecstasy dictated by the Holy Spirit.

He anticipated his passing over with joy.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga renounced his power, possessions, and prestige preferring to go to the missions. His mission became a hospital in Rome during a plague from which he willingly served and died of the same sickness.

*Aloysius' letter to his mother notes that God has “lent” Aloysius life. **“When he takes away what he once lent us, his purpose is to store our treasure elsewhere more safely and bestow on us those very blessings that we ourselves would most choose to have.”***

Both saints give an example to live well in holiness in this world, yet to prefer eternal life and to desire God above all things in this world.

From the life of Saint Romuald by Saint Peter Damian

(Cap.31 et 69: PL 144, 982-983, 1005-1006)

Denying oneself and following Christ

Romuald lived in the vicinity of the city of Parenzo for three years. In the first year he built a monastery and appointed an abbot with monks. For the next two years he remained there **in seclusion. In that setting, divine holiness transported him to such a summit of perfection that, breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, he foresaw many future events and comprehended with the rays of his intelligence hidden mysteries of the Old and New Testaments.**

Frequently he was seized by so great a contemplation of divinity that he would be reduced to tears with the boiling, indescribable heat of divine love.

In this condition he would cry out: Beloved Jesus, beloved, sweet honey, indescribable longing, delight of the saints, sweetness of the angels, and other things of this kind. **We are unable to express the ecstasy of these utterances, dictated by the Holy Spirit.**

Wherever the holy man might arrange to live, he would follow the same pattern. First he would build an oratory with an altar in a cell; then he would shut himself in and forbid access.

Finally, after he had lived in many places, perceiving that his end was near, he returned to the monastery he had built in the valley of Castro. While he awaited with certainty his approaching death, he ordered a cell to be constructed there with an oratory in which he might isolate himself and preserve in silence until death.

Accordingly the hermitage was built, since he had made up his mind that he would die there. His body began to grow more and more oppressed by afflictions and was already failing, not so much from weakness as from the exhaustion of great age. One day he began to feel the loss of his physical strength under all the harassment of increasingly violent afflictions. As the sun was beginning to set, he instructed two monks who were standing by to go out and close the door of the cell behind them; they were to come back to him at daybreak to celebrate matins. They were so concerned about his end that they went out reluctantly and did not rest immediately. On the contrary, since they were worried that their master might die, they lay hidden near the cell and watched this precious treasure. For some time they continued to listen attentively until they heard neither movement nor sound.

Rightly guessing what had happened, they pushed open the door, rushed in quickly, lit a candle and found the holy man lying on his back, **his blessed soul snatched up into heaven. As he lay there, he seemed like a neglected heavenly pearl that was**

soon to be given a place of honor in the treasury of the King of kings.

From a letter to his mother by Saint Aloysius

(Acta Sanctorum, Iunii 5, 878)

God's mercies shall be my song for ever

May the comfort and grace of the Holy Spirit be yours for ever, most honored lady. **Your letter found me lingering still in this region of the dead, but now I must rouse myself to make my way on to heaven at last and to praise God for ever in the land of the living;** indeed I had hoped that before this time my journey there would have been over. If charity, as Saint Paul says, means *to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who are glad*, then, dearest mother, you shall rejoice exceedingly that God in his grace and his love for you is showing me the path to true happiness, and assuring me that I shall never lose him.

The divine goodness, most honored lady, is a fathomless and shoreless ocean, and I confess that when I plunge my mind into thought of this it is carried away by the immensity and feels quite lost and bewildered there. **In return for my short and feeble labors, God is calling me to eternal rest; his voice from heaven invites me to the infinite bliss I have sought so languidly, and promises me this reward for the tears I have so seldom shed.**

Take care above all things, most honored lady, not to insult God's boundless loving kindness; you would certainly do this if you mourned as dead one living face to face with God, one whose prayers can bring you in your troubles more powerful aid than they ever could on earth. And our parting will not be for long; we shall see each other again in heaven; we shall be united with our Savior; **there we shall praise him with heart and soul, sing**

of his mercies for ever, and enjoy eternal happiness. When he takes away what he once lent us, his purpose is to store our treasure elsewhere more safely and bestow on us those very blessings that we ourselves would most choose to have.

I write all this with the one desire that you and all my family may consider my departure a joy and favor and that you especially may speed with a mother's blessing my passage across the waters till I reach the shore to which all hopes belong. I write the more willingly because I have no clearer way of expressing the love and respect I owe you as your son.