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1862

*B. Petrus Canisius.*

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE

VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD,

PETER CANISIUS,

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Beatified, November 20, 1884,

BY

HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS IX.

*Bisdoms, Monks, Convents, Masters, Servants*  
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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"He was mighty in work and word."—ST. LUKE xxiv., 19.

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# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

	<i>Page.</i>
Life of Blessed Canisius at Nimeguen.—His Entrance into the Society of Jesus.—His Preaching at Cologne.....	7

## CHAPTER II.

Canisius is sent to Charles V. and the Bishop of Liege.—He assists at the Council of Trent.....	11
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

He is named Rector of the University of Ingolstadt, and governs it with great Wisdom.....	17
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

The Emperor calls Canisius to Vienna.—He refuses the Episcopal Dignity several times.....	24
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

	<i>Page.</i>
He composes an Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine	29

## CHAPTER VI.

Canisius founds the Colleges of Prague, of Ingolstadt, and of Munich.—He assists at the Diet of Worms	32
---	----

## CHAPTER VII.

He sustains the Cause of Religion with Firmness and Success at Piotrkov in Poland, and at Augsburg in Germany.....	38
--	----

## CHAPTER VIII.

He returns to the Council of Trent and to the Diet of Augsburg.....	46
---	----

## CHAPTER IX.

Canisius confutes the Centuriators of Magdeburg.....	58
--	----

## CHAPTER X.

Arrival and Sojourn of Canisius at Friburg in Switzerland.—His holy Death.....	63
--	----

## CHAPTER XI.

His principal Virtues.....	68
----------------------------	----

CONTENTS.

5

CHAPTER XII.

	<i>Page.</i>
Prodigies operated by his Intercession.....	81

CHAPTER XIII.

Miracles approved of for the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God.. . . . .	91
--	----

BRIEF OF THE BEATIFICATION OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD, PETER CANISIUS, PROFESSED FATHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.....	98
---	----

Litany of Blessed Canisius.....	113
---------------------------------	-----

Prayer of Blessed Canisius, S. J., for himself and for others.....	116
--	-----

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# PETER CANISIUS.

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## CHAPTER I.

BIRTH OF BLESSED CÀNISIUS AT NIMEGUEN—HIS  
ENTRANCE INTO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS—HIS  
PREACHING AT COLOGNE.

THE heroic virtues of which the blessed Peter Canisius has given us an example, and the marked service that he has rendered to the Catholic Church, have conferred upon his memory an undying glory. Stanislaus Hosius, the celebrated cardinal, calls him the *hammer of heretics*. According to Baronius, he was a *very venerable man, whose praises are in the mouths of all Christians*.

Canisius, according to the testimony of a great many writers, is the most brilliant star that has ever shone upon Germany.

Peter Canisius was born at Nimeguen, May 8, 1521. About the same time St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, fell on the ramparts of Pampeluna, having received a serious wound whilst bravely defending that place. Canisius, being yet young, was sent to Cologne to receive there a liberal education. He made rapid progress in science and piety under the direction of a holy and learned priest, the celebrated Nicholas Eschius. Peter had scarcely reached his nineteenth year when, to guard against the temptations of youth, and to preserve his innocence from the fatal taint of worldly pleasures, he resolved before God to observe perpetual chastity. A lover of solitude, he frequently withdrew to pray, and tortured his innocent flesh with a rough hair shirt. During his stay in Cologne he studied civil law, and then repaired to Louvain to follow a course of canon law. It was his delight to converse on religious topics with those who lodged in the same house, and he more than once preached with ardor against heretical doctrines. His heart being inflamed with the love of God, he resolved to become a Carthusian, but finally

gave the preference to the Society of Jesus, which had just received the sanction of Pope Paul III.

On May 8, 1543, at the age of twenty-three, he entered the Society of Jesus at Mayence. The fame of Father Peter Lefèvre, and the admirable fruits of piety which he produced in souls by means of the exercises of St. Ignatius, had drawn Canisius to that city. Meditation and prayer enkindled in his soul an ardent desire to lead a perfect life. He had the happiness of being sent to Cologne to make his novitiate under the direction of the same Father Lefèvre. His progress in the ways of God was so solid that, soon after having completed his course of theology, and received holy orders, he was judged capable of filling the office of superior in the Society; he succeeded Father Lefèvre, who was removed to Portugal.

Canisius commenced his apostolic preaching at Cologne. He explained the Epistles of St. Paul to the theologians of the university, and the Gospels to the pupils of the College of Berg. Besides this, profiting by his few leisure moments, he prepared a new edition of the works

of St. Cyril of Alexandria, and of St. Leo the Great. But he was forced to abandon these peaceful pursuits, the interests of religion requiring him to take an active part in public affairs.



## CHAPTER II.

CANISIUS IS SENT TO CHARLES V. AND THE BISHOP OF LIEGE—HE ASSISTS AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

HERMANN of Weiden, Archbishop of Cologne, had been deceived and drawn into error by the new enemies of religion, who, under the specious name of Reformers, had brought ruin into the very bosom of the Church. Martin Bucer, Melancthon, Pistorius, and other champions of heresy, had obtained free access to the city of Cologne. The unfortunate Hermann, like an unfaithful shepherd, confided the care of his flock to ravenous wolves, who, seeming at first gentle as lambs, gradually disclosing their true character, lost no time in seizing numerous victims. Fortunately, Cologne was strongly attached to the Catholic faith, and indignantly rejected all novelties in religion.

The clergy, magistrates, university, and people unanimously decided to purge their city of these pestilential doctrines. Canisius and his companions, though expelled from the house in which they had just opened a college, and pursued by calumnies and outrages, remained faithfully at their post.

Seeking a remedy against the rapidly spreading evil, they resolved to solicit the aid of Charles V., whose victorious arms had already humbled the pride of the Protestants; they also addressed themselves to George of Austria, Prince Bishop of Liege, suffragan of the Archbishop of Cologne, grandson of Maximilian I. This prince was said to be no less disposed to espouse the cause of religion than able to defend it. To treat of an affair of such importance, both clergy and university were unanimous in choosing Canisius as envoy to the princes. Both emperor and bishop gave him a most cordial reception. After hearing him, they promised their aid, and the cause of religion triumphed. Canisius returned full of joy to Cologne. The unfortunate Hermann was soon after excommunicated by the Sover-

eign Pontiff, deprived of his archiepiscopal see, and deposed from his dignity of elector. Adolphus of Schauenburg, a prelate of sound orthodoxy and irreproachable life, succeeded him.

While the people of Cologne were rejoicing at this happy termination of their difficulties, they suddenly learned that Canisius was about to leave their city ; all were in consternation at this news.

While on his way to appeal to the emperor, Canisius had stopped at Worms and at Ulm to see the Cardinal Otho Truchsès. This eminent prelate learned even during these few days to appreciate the profound learning and wisdom of the servant of God, and resolved to place him where he would find a more extensive theatre for his abilities, by sending him to the Council of Trent, although he was then but twenty-six years old.

The people of Cologne made every effort to prevail on the cardinal and St. Ignatius to leave Canisius in his present field of labor, but all in vain. Truchsès was inflexible, strengthened in his purpose by the consciousness that St.

Ignatius supported him. "Besides," as he very justly observed, "the general good of the Church, resulting from the Council of Trent, is evidently of greater moment than the interests of any one city or diocese."

Canisius then set out for Trent. His stay there was brief, the council being transferred to Bologna, whither he and the other Jesuit theologians repaired. The expectations which Cardinal Truchsès and St. Ignatius had formed in regard to Canisius, were amply fulfilled. On several occasions he addressed the fathers of the council; he was commissioned to revise the style of the nomenclature of errors in regard to the sacraments, a work which had already been superintended by the Jesuit theologians Laynez and Salmeron. At this time, however, on account of disturbances in Italy, resulting from the murder of the Duke of Placencia, the council was dissolved provisionally. Canisius was called to Rome by St. Ignatius. This saint had long known by fame the reputation for sanctity enjoyed by the servant of God, and, at a personal interview, he pressed him to his heart with the most paternal affec-

tion. Ignatius kept him with him for five months, to exercise him in all the virtues of the interior life, particularly in humility and obedience, regarding these virtues as indispensable for the success of any work undertaken for the glory of God. Thus did the founder of the society fashion the instrument destined by Providence to preserve the faith in Germany.

An occasion soon presented itself, which showed how thoroughly Canisius was imbued with these solid virtues. John de Vega, Viceroy of Sicily, had entreated St. Ignatius to send him members of the Society of Jesus, as professors in the new college he was about to open in Messina. Canisius was amongst the twelve Jesuits chosen for this purpose; he was commissioned to teach rhetoric. He accepted this office with the most entire devotedness, and exerted himself as energetically to succeed therein as if there had been question of expounding the most sublime mysteries of faith before the Council of Trent. He even made a vow, the formula of which, written by his own hand, is still preserved in the archives of the

professed house of the society at Rome. "I hereby vow unreservedly, never, during my whole life, to ask any thing in regard to dwelling, employment, ministry, or any other particular whatsoever. I abandon myself forever, and with all the plenitude of my will and understanding, into the hands of my Father in Christ, Ignatius, General of the Society of Jesus. February 5, 1548. Written and signed by my hand, Peter Canisius, of Nimeguen."

## CHAPTER III.

HE IS NAMED RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF INGOLDSTADT, AND GOVERNS IT WITH GREAT WISDOM.

WHILE Canisius labored with ardor and perfect self-abnegation in governing his modest class of rhetoric, Providence was opening before him a vast field of labor. William of Bavaria had vainly sought to close the entrance of his states against heresy. The evil found its way into the universities, and thence diffused its venom throughout the city. In this extremity the prince addressed himself to St. Ignatius, trusting that he would supply professors capable of teaching every branch of literature, and, at the same time, competent to revive the ancient glory of Ingoldstadt. The holy founder, ever on the watch to profit by favorable opportunities to maintain the cause of religion, complied with the request, choosing three of

his most learned disciples; Canisius was among the number. Claudius Le Jay and Alphonsus Salmeron, like Canisius, men replete with wisdom and science, aided him in dissipating the darkness of error.

Canisius gave a public course of theology, and preached in German to crowds so vast that no church could be found of sufficient dimensions to contain them. But the fruits of salvation produced by his perfect humility were still more astonishing. After leaving the pulpit, where his eloquence had gained for him palms of victory, he was often seen directing his steps to the prisons, the hospitals, and the huts of the poor. So true is it that the best teaching is that which joins example to precept!

All who knew Canisius were convinced that he could render still more signal services to religion, if his science and virtue were, so to speak, consecrated by the authority and influence which a high position necessarily confer. He was then promoted, in spite of himself, to the office of rector of the university. The blessed father did not disappoint the hopes reposed in him.



His first care was to proscribe and place beyond the reach of all classes, every book found to be infected with heresy, or injurious to good morals. He substituted works combining solid literary merit with those qualifications best calculated to strengthen Catholic sentiments in the hearts of the young. He also discountenanced all those combats which too frequently took place between the pupils, often degenerating into sanguinary conflicts. He forbade injudicious plays, and all those amusements which incline youth to vice and licentiousness. As to inveterate abuses which were already too deeply rooted in the soil to be easily eradicated, he felt that to exterminate them, would be a laborious task; but he took note of all, and communicated the result of his observations to the principal dignitaries of the university, stimulating them to exertion by the reflection that the welfare of the schools was in their hands, and impressing upon them that it was their duty to exercise their utmost ingenuity in discovering means to remedy these disorders. To incline the hearts of the young to piety, Canisius employed gentle persuasion, and

availed himself of many agreeable devices. He established a society which met daily, and in which he taught theology, always taking care that these familiar reunions did not interfere with the public course of instruction. Upon these occasions he lost no opportunity of inculcating to his pupils a love of virtue. The holy teacher instituted the custom of making these young men themselves write an eulogy upon a certain virtue, and recite the composition in the presence of their companions. These themes, at once literary and religious in their character, obliged the scholars to study the virtue they were to describe, thus furnishing the master with opportunities of making many valuable suggestions. Finally, actuated by the noblest devotedness in the cause of youth, Canisius endeavored to provide, by pious foundations, for the necessities of those deserving young men who, although deserted by fortune, were yet suited by intellect and love of knowledge, to the pursuit of literature. He hoped to find, eventually, among these young persons, priests according to the heart of

God : the need of such laborers was a want cruelly felt, to the great detriment of souls.

He employed a like zeal in improving the morals of the people. In order to succeed in this task, he first strove to gain their hearts by the most devoted charity. He censured with prudence those customs which seemed to him most blamable, exhibiting their moral deformity, and pointing out the unhappy consequences which necessarily result from such evils. The practice of prayer had fallen into such disuse that the majority of Catholics seemed to think that they would disgrace themselves by frequenting a church for the purpose of prayer. The man of God explained the nature, the facility, the advantages, and the necessity of prayer ; then uniting word and example, he asked his hearers to kneel down and pray with him. Not satisfied with this, he addressed himself to some young men of the highest position, and induced them to visit the church in a body at certain fixed times, knowing that the example of their fervor and modesty would soon influence others to trample under foot all human respect. Attendance at the holy sacri-

fice of the Mass was equally disregarded. While the sacred mysteries were being celebrated the people behaved in a most unbecoming manner, and were, in short, occupied with every thing rather than with God; they would even leave the church at the very moment when the blessed sacrament was elevated for the adoration of the faithful. After Canisius had made them understand the sublime importance and worth of the sacred mysteries, they assisted at the holy sacrifice with the profoundest recollection, remaining until the end. This happy result was due to the discretion with which Canisius knew how to combine gentleness and energy. Under his holy influence the Catholic religion recovered its pristine splendor in the town of Ingoldstadt. The reputation of Canisius as a man of true merit and moderation received its final lustre by refusing the pension usually granted to the rectors of Ingoldstadt, and by also declining the office of vice-chancellor, a post then left vacant by the death of the titular. This office was equally lucrative and honorable; the vice-chancellor, who was named for life, enjoying considerable revenues, and,

among others, the emoluments of a rich canonship. But Canisius, the faithful follower of his divine Redeemer, was all the firmer in refusing because there was question of honors and riches. Ignatius applauded his determination; neither the entreaties of the university, nor the urgent letters addressed to him by Albert, Duke of Bavaria, who had now succeeded his father, Duke William, could move his purpose. The only concession he granted was his consent to superintend the affairs of the vice-chancellor for a few months; but with the express agreement that he would accept no remuneration of any nature from that dignitary.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE EMPEROR CALLS CANISIUS TO VIENNA—HE REFUSES THE EPISCOPAL DIGNITY SEVERAL TIMES.

WHEN it was known in Germany that Canisius had re-established discipline in the University of Ingoldstadt, and restored respect for religion in the town, all the other cities vied with one another to gain him, and, to obtain their desire, made eloquent appeals to his zeal. Julius Pflug, Bishop of Naumburg, and the canons of Strasburg, restored to the city whence they had been expelled by the Lutherans, wrote frequently, urging him to come to their aid. Upon the other hand, the bishops of Freisingen and Eichstatt earnestly desired to send him in their name to the council which was about to reassemble at Trent. Albert of Bavaria firmly opposed all these solicitations, being determined to retain Canisius at Ingoldstadt. He finally

yielded, however, to the request of his father-in-law, Ferdinand, King of the Romans. The latter prince, upon the recommendation of the Sovereign Pontiff and of St. Ignatius himself, entreated Canisius to come to Vienna, at least for a few months, to organize the college which his majesty was about to found in that city. Albert was forced to resign himself to his loss, and Canisius arrived in Vienna in the beginning of March, 1552.

The authorities of the University of Ingoldstadt furnished Canisius with the most honorable letters of recommendation.

The blessed father found Austria ravaged by heresy to an inconceivable extent. The secular clergy, the religious orders, and the schools were all alike tainted with this fatal leprosy; scarcely one in twenty had escaped this frightful infection. The cities either languished without pastors, or were governed by vile mercenaries, steeped in debauchery; the sacraments were neglected and despised, religious rites and ceremonies had almost entirely disappeared. At the sight of so many calamities the soul of the servant of God was pierced

with anguish. Knowing that aid could only come from Heaven, he had recourse to prayer, and begged his friends to join in his supplications. He addressed himself particularly to St. Ignatius, who granted him the favor that all the priests of the Society should each week celebrate a mass for the salvation of the nations of the North and the conversion of heretics. Canisius did not, however, content himself with prayers and sighs; putting his hand bravely to the work, he neglected no remedy for the cure of the great evil.

One of the most fatal means by which heresy had penetrated into the country, was the great facility with which the degree of doctor was conferred in the schools. Canisius decided that in future the examinations required for that title should be very severe, and that professors called to the public chairs should be permitted to occupy them only after having given satisfactory proofs of solid virtue and sound doctrine.

To supply the deficiency of religious and learned men, capable of maintaining science and morality in their true position in the schools,



Canisius deemed it advisable to open a seminary, where a certain number of chosen young men should be formed to the practices of piety, and aided in the acquisition of every branch of science and literature.

Canisius entered the lists in the public disputes against the most violent champions of heresy; some were forced to take refuge in flight, others were reduced to silence; many, abandoning their errors, entered once more the pale of the true Church. Convinced that heresy is most readily propagated when morality is corrupted, Canisius applied all his energies to the improvement of the public morals. Before the authority of his words, every vice, however inveterate or however sanctioned by custom, was forced to yield: what was still more remarkable, the nobility as well as the populace heard his frank and familiar exhortations with interest and pleasure.

When Christopher Wertwein, Bishop of Vienna and preacher at the court, died, Canisius, yielding to the importunities of King Ferdinand, was forced to accept the vacant place. Still no one could ever prevail on him to ac-

cept the episcopal see of Vienna, which the prince offered to him three times. The king finally wished to employ force, and after his ambassadors had used their influence with the Sovereign Pontiff, he wrote to St. Ignatius, urging the same request.

Notwithstanding the favorable dispositions entertained both by the nobility and the people, the man of God did not wish to remain at Vienna, where he could so easily enjoy his renown and reap the fruits his labors operated in souls. He made excursions in the surrounding country, visited parishes deprived of pastors, preached, administered the sacraments, and freely offered his services to all who required them. But an almost incredible fact was, that in the midst of these immense and continual labors, he still found time to compose books, one of which would alone have sufficed to instruct, not only Germany, but the whole world.

## CHAPTER V.

HE COMPOSES AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN  
DOCTRINE.

THE blessed father had observed that the heretics availed themselves of a multitude of little books to disseminate their errors through the North, thus distilling their subtle poison into the hearts and minds of the young. To this evil he resolved to oppose an antidote. He composed an abridgment of the Christian doctrine, divided into five parts. This book was published by the order of the Emperor of Germany; it rapidly spread throughout the country, and was explained in the schools. Sanctioned by the unanimous approbation of the Catholic world, translated into all languages, it obtained the honor of four hundred editions in one century. The best theologians, those of Louvain among the number, agreed that no book was better calculated to enlighten the

mind with the purest rays of Catholic truth, and at the same time to infuse into the hearts of the nobility the loftiest sentiments of a solid and tender piety.

Philip II., King of Spain, ordered that the catechism of Canisius should be taught, to the exclusion of every other, throughout the whole extent of his vast dominions. By the aid of this work the subtleties and ruses of heresy were easily discovered, and it succeeded in dispelling darkness from the generality of minds. Duke Wolfgang, of Neuburg, affirmed that after once reading it, to remain a heretic was an impossibility, and adduced his own experience as a proof of his assertion. This catechism at first appeared in a very simple form; marginal notes simply indicating the texts of Holy Scripture and the passages from the Fathers which supported the Catholic dogmas. In later editions, all the quotations being inserted in full, the book necessarily assumed more important dimensions. Men of learning, and, in general, all persons of intelligence, proclaimed its merits and excellence; and they hesitated not to say that in all probability no other work had

ever produced so much fruit in the Catholic Church. Moreover, the ridicule and invectives of the heretics contributed no less to its honor, since they thus acknowledged that no writing had ever inflicted upon their cause so mortal a wound.

## CHAPTER VI.

CANISIUS FOUNDS THE COLLEGES OF PRAGUE, OF INGOLDSTADT, AND MUNICH—HE ASSISTS AT THE DIET OF WORMS.

CANISIUS had acquired great fame from the publication of this excellent and useful work. Transylvania, Hungary, Silesia, and Poland made appeals to the zeal of the blessed father and to that of the Society. Ferdinand gave the preference to Bohemia, for which country he had a special predilection ; he wished to endow there a college of Jesuits. Canisius then set out for Prague, accompanied by a band of chosen companions. They were all the more desirous that the new establishment should be built on solid foundations, as the Hussites, Wicliffites, and Lutherans had sworn to thwart them in their undertaking. Their fury was so unlicensed that, not satisfied with hurling against the Jesuits the most shocking calum-

nies, they went so far as to stone them and set fire to their house. Canisius was obliged to call in the aid of an armed force to defend his community against such outrages. Happily he soon ceased to require the assistance of the prince's soldiers in repelling these attacks. The meekness and patience of the man of God disarmed the sacrilegious hands of these impious men. St. Ignatius constituted him first provincial of Germany, and he conducted with entire success the foundation of the colleges of Ingoldstadt and Prague. He had been but a few days in Bohemia when King Ferdinand made him come to Ratisbon. The nobility of Germany had assembled there to confer upon some means to end the troubles which religious dissensions had brought upon the nations. The Protestants desired that a certain number of men, chosen from either party, should meet at Worms. This proposition was not displeasing to Ferdinand. He was forced to employ some tact in treating with the Protestant princes, as he counted on their aid afterwards in carrying on the war against the Mohammedans. Canisius opposed this idea of a diet with a frankness

of speech entirely apostolic. For his part, he could see no utility in such a meeting; but, on the contrary, believed that it would prove full of danger. Still, in compliance with the commands of the Sovereign Pontiff and the wishes of his superiors, he consented, and promised to repair to Worms. While awaiting the day appointed for the convocation of the diet, he profited by the intervening time to visit Rome, and assist at the first general congregation called to appoint a successor to St. Ignatius, who had died a holy death, July 31, 1556. But the meeting being deferred for important reasons, Canisius set out for Germany. He accepted, in passing, the foundation of the College of Munich, and then proceeded to Worms. The diet met September 12, 1557. Canisius took the initiative in the following motion: "Catholics do not admit as subjects of controversy any article which is not contained in the Augsburg Confession. The adherents of this confession will alone be admitted to the controversy, as the diet has been convoked on their account; all the other sects will consequently be excluded."



This Augsburg Confession was the apple of discord that caused dissensions among heretics themselves; some held to it, whilst others would have nothing to do with it at any price, and separated from their co-religionists. Of the twelve Protestants who were present at the diet, seven only defended this confession. This disagreement threw the innovators into confusion, and it became necessary to separate. Thus, the Catholic Church gained a new triumph; her unity of doctrine and teaching was made still more manifest to the eyes of all. It was Canisius's skill that brought about this happy result. No one, better than he, had refuted the heretics, whether with the pen or with the voice. They therefore took revenge on him by inventing all sorts of ridiculous stories, and everywhere spreading the vilest calumnies. Instead of being moved at this, the holy man redoubled his patience, and despised these infamous attacks; moreover, he adroitly seized every opportunity of performing acts of charity towards his adversaries. Thus it happened that at Strasburg, whither he had been summoned by pressing letters from the bishop

and clergy, at Schelestadt, at Colmar, at Brisach, at Friburg in Brisgau, and in other cities of Upper Alsace, he passed along *doing good and healing* the sad wounds inflicted on the Church by the novel heresies.

Nevertheless, the evil was daily aggravated, especially at Piothkov, in Poland, and in Augsburg. Means had to be devised for putting a stop to it, without irritating the innovators, and without exciting new troubles. The heretics feared to appear openly before a council; they preferred private conferences, where it was easier for them to make some new attack upon religion. This unfortunate state of things caused the Sovereign Pontiff much anxiety. He promised to send an apostolic nuncio, accompanied by two divines of the Society, into Poland. Canisius was to be of the number. He happened, at this time, to be in Rome, taking part in the congregation which elected James Laynez general of the order. Canisius set out for Cracow on the 15th of October, 1558. He entirely gained the affections of the Poles, and disposed them so favorably to our Society, that to him must be attributed all the good

which the Jesuits have accomplished in Poland. Everywhere the grateful people received them with the utmost generosity.

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## CHAPTER VII.

HE SUSTAINS THE CAUSE OF RELIGION WITH FIRMNESS AND SUCCESS AT PIOTHKOV, IN POLAND, AND AT AUGSBURG, IN GERMANY.

ON arriving in Poland, Canisius found religion on the brink of ruin. The feeble and indolent king took little pains to oppose a check to the progress of heresy; the nobility, still more blinded than the sovereign, openly favored the efforts of the innovators. Add to this, that the prelates and pastors, for the most part of advanced age, did not trouble themselves about religious matters, which they looked upon as hopeless. Profiting by this sad state of things, the heretics became more audacious day by day. The holy man did not lose courage. By having recourse to prayer, and by exhorting his friends thereunto, he endeavored to merit Heaven's protection. He began by stimulating the zeal of the bishops and clergy in every pos-

sible way : he attacked the heretics both by word and writing ; he unveiled all their impostures, exposed all their impious plots ; encouraged the good, and finally determined King Sigismund not to allow the bishops' rights to be despised, and the Catholic worship to be any longer exposed to insolent contempt.

This unexpected success greatly rejoiced the heart of the Sovereign Pontiff. There still remained the city of Augsburg, in Germany, which stood in need of prompt assistance, for here the faith was in great danger, and, unfortunately, there was less hope of applying a remedy. Hither Canisius hastened, for the Cardinal of Augsburg's desire, and the Emperor Ferdinand's invitation, were for him as so many commands. He had barely arrived in the city, when the Protestants sounded the alarm. They had recourse to their accustomed weapons : calumnies, insults, and outrages were poured like a torrent upon him. What did the man of God then do ? To all this violence, he opposed the meekness of Christ, and the invincible buckler of truth. It was thus he succeeded in defending himself, and gained a multitude

of heretics to his cause; among them, one of their most celebrated chiefs, Stephen Agricola.

The greatest difficulties that Canisius had to surmount came, whence least expected, from the Catholics themselves. The innovators, though divided among themselves on doctrinal points, agreed admirably, whenever there was question of attacking the Church, whilst the Catholics, bound together, indeed, by the ties of a common faith, were continually disputing and quarrelling about mere trifles. Disunion existed even between the most august personages—Pope Paul IV. and the Emperor Ferdinand. Canisius brought the latter to listen to counsels of peace; and the Roman Jesuits led the Pontiff to milder sentiments. When this reconciliation had been effected, Canisius set about encouraging the desponding bishops. He addressed himself to them in every possible way, and besought them to be firm and resolute in saving the patrimony of the ancient faith. This result of the Augsburg diet was as fortunate as it was unexpected; yet not satisfied with having snatched the Catholic faith in this city from extreme peril, he was still desirous

of providing for the future. He begged of the bishops to establish free schools in their dioceses; exhorted them to meet frequently in synod, and to found colleges for the education of youths destined at a later period to exercise the functions of the sacred ministry. Canisius was persuaded, that in order to remedy abuses and to revive ecclesiastical discipline, it was necessary to begin by the foundation of a Christian education for youth. About this time, there were many students at Augsburg who gave great hopes for the future. Unhappily they were destitute of means, and could not pursue the higher courses of study. The innovators were not ignorant of this, and, profiting by this circumstance, they drew a great many of these youths into their toils. The man of God, moved at the loss of these unfortunate people, made so many and such vigorous efforts with the rich, that they consented to provide for the habitation and support of those scholars who had remained faithful to the Catholic religion.

Meanwhile, Canisius did not cease his apostolic preaching to the inhabitants of Augsburg.

He took the greatest care to fortify them against the venom of the new errors. His eloquence was so captivating and so persuasive that Cardinal Truchsès, the canons, and the people, asked the general of the Society to grant them permission to retain Canisius as preacher in the Cathedral. It was with the greatest difficulty that they consented to let him depart for a few months, in order to accompany Stanislaus Hosius, the Bishop of Warmia, in Poland, to Vienna. Hosius had just been raised to the purple, and deputed by the Pope to the Emperor Ferdinand. Canisius returned to Augs-burg, where a new cause of sorrow awaited him.

The sectaries had made of this city their stronghold. In his discussions with the Protestants, the blessed man often had recourse to the Sacred Scriptures, as to an impenetrable buckler. But the heretics, interpreting them after their own fashion, sought, by this means, to elude the solid arguments which he brought forward. He therefore determined to combat them on this very ground of the Holy Scriptures. For this purpose, Canisius explained to



the people how they were to distinguish the true Scriptures from the false, and showed to them that the adulterated fragments of the Lutheran Bible, which the sectaries were distributing with such boldness and bad faith, were of no value whatever when compared with the pure Scriptures as possessed by the Catholic Church.

When he preached to the faithful, without treating of controversial subjects, he frequently placed before the eyes of his audience the awful picture of the last judgment, and spoke to them of the dreadful torments reserved for the wicked; in consequence of which, many, seized with a saving fear, detested their past disorders, and sincerely returned to the service of God. People hastened from all sides, even from the very extremities of Germany, to listen to his voice; and all affirmed that it was impossible to resist the force of his arguments, and the ardor of his apostolic eloquence. Often did the holy man make the eulogy of prayer; he looked upon it as the source of all virtues. He likewise composed a prayer-book, entitled, *The Catholic Manual*, and presented it to the

emperor, who was greatly pleased with it. By the emperor's command this book was reprinted, and distributed throughout the whole empire. He published, besides, some of the most beautiful of St. Jerome's letters, and recommended young people to read them, in order to form themselves to piety, and to acquire true Christian eloquence. In addition to these works, he composed several smaller treatises on religious controversy, and had a large number of excellent books reprinted. Thus, was the cause of religion, so to speak, gained, and the Augsburg Catholics began to lift up their heads and to advance bravely to the combat with heresy. The face of things was now entirely changed; the churches were frequented, conventual discipline was re-established, and the sacred mysteries were held in honor. Among the persons of distinction, who in great numbers renounced heresy, we shall principally cite two noble ladies of the illustrious house of Fugger; these ladies gave to Augsburg a brilliant example of the Christian virtues, and, at the same time, manifest proofs of the most generous liberality towards the Society. When

Rome heard of the prodigies, which, thanks to the divine mercy, had been operated in Augsburg, the entire city abandoned itself to transports of the most lively joy, but no one was so delighted as the Pope, Pius IV. Not satisfied with praising Canisius in presence of the cardinals, he sent him a special brief on the 5th of March, 1561. The Pontiff congratulated the man of God upon his apostolic labors, and exhorted him to pursue his holy enterprises; and he added: "If there be any thing, which can assist you in the salvation of souls, I shall favorably listen to all your requests."

## CHAPTER VIII.

HE RETURNS TO THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, AND TO  
THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

CANISIUS was necessary for Augsburg ; Cardinal Truchsès, the canons, and all the townspeople made constant efforts to keep him among them ; however, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IV., the Emperor Ferdinand, Cardinal Hosius, and the legates of the apostolic see, judged it more useful, if not even indispensable, that Canisius should go to Trent, where the celebrated council was again assembled. And, truly, when we consider the profoundness of his learning, and the perfect knowledge of German affairs which he had acquired by long experience, it may be affirmed, that Canisius alone thoroughly understood the extent of the ravages, which heresy had caused in the fold of Christ, and the proper remedies to apply to them. The fathers of the Council of Trent

heard with unspeakable joy of the arrival of the holy man. Cardinal Hosius had reason to rejoice more than all the others. He was united with Canisius by the ties of friendship, and the holy man's presence was to be the occasion of his restoration to health. Hosius was attacked by a mortal sickness; but upon seeing his friend again, and embracing him, he felt himself instantaneously cured.

In order to form to ourselves an idea of the immense fatigues which Canisius had to undergo during this council, suffice it to say, that he was ever found ready to bestow advice upon those who asked it, a circumstance of very frequent occurrence; he never gave his opinions on controverted points without fully developing his reasons, and he proved by solid arguments the admirable concatenation and sublimity of the Catholic dogmas. We cannot pass over in silence the manner in which he succeeded in safeguarding both the peaceable sitting of the council and the dignity of the Holy See. This point was a very delicate one, and of such a nature as to give rise to the most baneful disputes. The ambassadors of the Emperor Ferdinand

demanded, with the utmost eagerness, the right of proposing certain questions, contrary alike to the dignity of the council and to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. There was question of a certain writing, which, under pretext of zeal, the emperor's counsellors had drawn up, and which in reality was nothing else than an enormous compilation of all kinds of concessions to be made to the innovators. Before submitting this instrument to the council for examination, the emperor wished to have it examined and discussed by certain select divines, who were to assemble at Innspruck. "Very luckily," remarks Cardinal Commendon, whilst commenting on this fact, "Divine Providence so disposed of events that Canisius was named to form one of this commission, and his virtue and wisdom on this occasion saved the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff." Gratian, secretary to Commendon, adds, that several of the doctors present endeavored to draw over the Jesuit to their way of thinking. But it was in vain. Canisius opposed them with no less strength than modesty. He defended the cause of truth and justice before this minor

assembly, and was appointed by it to treat of this matter himself with the emperor. The emperor no sooner heard the reasons which Canisius urged to make him change his idea, than he abandoned the project and never recurred to it again.

When the Sovereign Pontiff was apprised by a letter of Cardinal Morone of what had passed, he publicly lauded Father Canisius's conduct, and declared that he had deserved well of the Holy See. He summoned Francis Borgia, vicar-general of the Society since the recent death of Father Laynez, and embracing him with effusion, related to him in detail all that Canisius had accomplished with so much prudence and firmness.

This, however, was neither the last nor the most important service which the holy man rendered to the Council of Trent. This memorable assembly definitively separated in the year 1563.

The Catholics received the decrees of the council with great joy. But it was necessary to make them known to the princes of Germany, and to dispose these princes to accept

them and put them into execution. This mission, so honorable and yet so difficult to fulfil, greatly preoccupied the mind of the Sovereign Pontiff. He did not know to whom he should confide it. Whilst he was reflecting as to who was the most suitable person to be intrusted with so important an affair, he chanced to think of Canisius; without hesitating, he gave him the preference. The esteem which everybody had conceived of Canisius's knowledge and virtue, was of the very highest. The Pope named him his apostolic nuncio, and enjoined upon him to set out for Germany. Canisius, who once more was the man for the times, immediately obeyed. That religious simplicity, of which he everywhere gave a brilliant example, caused him to lay aside all the insignia of his new dignity. On arriving in those countries, he persuaded the princes that it was their interest to see that the decrees of the council were promulgated and executed, and he got them to adopt all those measures which he deemed advisable for the propagation and strengthening of the faith in their dominions. Throughout the whole of his journey he did



not cease laboring for the good of religion, making use of every means suggested to him by his apostolic charity ; he preached wherever it was possible to do so. It was with great pleasure that the Catholic princes beheld Canisius evangelizing their subjects ; the heretics suffered him to proceed, and avoided showing their discontent.

The venerable man of God very wisely caused it to be notified to the Sovereign Pontiff, that in those dioceses which bordered on the territory of the heretics, it was highly important for the salvation of souls that coadjutor bishops should be appointed, with the right of future succession, so that, upon the death of the titular bishops, the vacant sees might not become the prey of ravenous wolves.

Pope Pius IV. had addressed to the inhabitants of Cologne a brief filled with paternal sentiments ; in it he lauded their piety, encouraged them to persevere, and recommended them to put his dogmatical bull in execution. Canisius himself presented them with this bull ; they received it with every mark of the most profound respect. At the suggestion of the

apostolic man, the senate adopted the following resolutions: "No one shall publicly teach unless he has given sure proofs of his orthodoxy; the publication of books hostile to the Catholic religion shall be forbidden; Lutheran ministers, Calvinists, and the adherents of the other sects, shall be excluded from the city." The university, in turn, not satisfied with making an act of respectful submission to the decrees of the council, drew up a statute in perpetuity, that hereafter no one should obtain the doctor's degree unless he had previously, and in writing, made his profession of the Catholic faith. This statute was extended to all the Catholic universities throughout the world, in virtue of a pontifical bull obtained by Canisius. The University of Dillingen was the first that conformed to this regulation, when, about the year 1563, the cardinal confided the direction of this university to the Jesuits.

After Canisius had acquitted himself of the duties of his nunciature, according to the Sovereign Pontiff's wishes and his own, he thought of taking a little repose after his labors, when the Holy Pope Pius V., successor to Pius IV., or-

dered him to proceed to the Diet of Augsburg. It was in the year 1566. The times were dark and stormy. This diet was convoked with a view to snatch the Church from new perils. The Lutherans obstinately refused to contribute to the subsidies that were necessary to wage war against the Turks, and to oppose the invasions with which they menaced the whole of Europe. They showed a determined resolution not to pay any thing, unless concessions were made to them which were incompatible with the security and honor of the Church. To turn aside this threatening storm, the utmost prudence was required, and the talents of Canisius, joined with the skill of Fathers Natal and Ledesma, who were nominated by the Pope as companions to the nuncio, Cardinal Commen- don, barely sufficed for this purpose. The Protestants arrogated to themselves all sorts of rights; it was therefore necessary to resist them. The Catholics showed an untimely inflexibility of purpose, and would make no concessions to the heretics, without accompanying it with manifest signs of ill-favor, thus creating one more difficulty to be resolved; and besides;

it was impossible in any way to touch the emperor's interests, for, as he had need of both the Catholics and Protestants, he avoided satisfying the latter at the risk of offending the former. Cardinal Commendon took the advice of the fathers, and obtained that the conventions made eleven years before should be kept; this granted nothing to the innovators, and took away nothing from the faithful children of the Church. Every one approved this measure, for it left the faith out of the question; and, under the existing circumstances, to lose nothing under the point of view of faith, was equivalent to a great gain. It was in this diet, also, that the Catholics solemnly received the decisions of the sacred Council of Trent.

The Protestants finally subscribed to the subsidies which the impending Turkish war demanded. The Emperor Maximilian, who had seen himself on the point of being abandoned both by Catholics and Protestants, for refusing to sanction the peace which had been concluded under Charles V. at Augsburg, in 1555, laid the blame on the stubbornness of the Jesuits, and in a familiar conversation with the legate,

he observed to him: "These fathers have virtue, knowledge, and skill, but in religious matters they are too severe and too stiff; they do not attend sufficiently to what the circumstances and necessities of the times require. Above all, Father Canisius is a man of the most rigid inflexibility." To this the cardinal-legate replied: "If the Catholics have succeeded in obtaining what they wanted, they owe it to the three Jesuit divines, and, especially, to Canisius, the chief author of the reconciliation. It is they who, by word of mouth and writing, have defended the only expedient capable of bringing to an issue so arduous and complicated an affair." Commendon spoke with such an assured tone, and brought such convincing proofs, that Maximilian changed his opinion, and came back to kind and affectionate sentiments towards the fathers.

The Augsburg Diet was hardly brought to a close when Canisius, freed from his grave anxieties, and from all fear, began to visit the different provinces of the Society intrusted to his government by Father Natal, the visitor in Germany. He accepted those colleges which

the princes eagerly offered to him, and set about assuring means of subsistence for the members employed in the establishments already opened. He everywhere enkindled the divine fire with which his own soul was consumed, and placed no bounds to the ardor of his zeal for strengthening the faith, and extending it more and more. The glory of God and the salvation of souls were the objects nearest to his heart.

Canisius next went into Suabia. His first care was to drive out six Lutheran ministers who were sowers of discord; he next received into the pale of the Church Count Ulderic de Helfenstein, with all his vassals. From Suabia, Canisius passed over into Franconia, where he was to treat with the Bishop of Wurzburg about founding a college. During his stay in this city he did nothing but evangelize the people by his eloquent preaching; enlighten the heretics by explaining to them the essential parts of the Christian doctrine; instruct the children; and, finally, teach the clergy the rules of a truly sacerdotal way of life, and the manner of worthily fulfilling the duties of the sacred minis-

try. From Wurzburg he went to Elwangen, to gather the harvest from the good seed which he had sown there some years previously. Quitting Elwangen, he returned direct to Wurzburg. In this latter city the Lutherans had spread a monstrous calumny in regard to Canisius, and he considered it a point of great importance to refute them in the most public manner possible. They had endeavored to persuade the people that he had renounced all his errors, had abjured the Catholic religion, and had united with them in the profession of the true and orthodox faith. The calumniators were on the point of enjoying a triumph over this pretended apostasy of Canisius, while many honest but uninformed Catholics were greatly dismayed at the effects of so irreparable a loss; but he suddenly appeared in the city, and, by his presence and his discourses, confounded the wicked inventors of this ridiculous calumny. Once more were they reduced to silence by the invincible champion of the Catholic Church in Germany.

## CHAPTER IX.

CANISIUS REFUTES THE CENTURIATORS OF  
MAGDEBURG.

It was not long before Canisius caused heresy to suffer a new defeat. About the year 1560 the chief innovators at Magdeburg had published, in the form of centuries, or periods of one hundred years, certain ecclesiastical annals entitled "*Magdeburg Centuries.*"\* Beneath a mask of cutting satire these annals concealed the most perfidious calumnies. They falsified historical events to favor Protestantism, and caused a great deal of harm to souls. The holy Pope Pius V. determined to arrest the propagation of these pestilential errors, and ordered

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\* The principal author of these centuries was Flach Francowitz, better known under the name of Flaccus Illyrius, as he was born in Illyria.



Canisius to refute the Centuriators. In 1561 appeared the first part of this refutation. The valiant athlete presented it to his holiness, who acknowledged the author's merit with great eulogy. Pius V. gave him his apostolic blessing and loaded him with spiritual favors. Baronius, whose talents and historical labors raised him to the purple, did not hesitate to make use of these words, when speaking of the holy man's work: "*It is the fruit of the erudite and pious Canisius's watchings.*" According to the learned cardinal, this work brings into evidence the folly, the awkwardness, and the perfidy of the heretics. In 1577 the second part was published. The celebrated cardinal held this part also in high esteem; he says "*that the venerable Father Canisius, whose praises are in every Christian mouth, has composed it with his accustomed piety, elegance, and erudition.*" Another prince of the Church, Cardinal Hosius, is no less explicit when speaking of the same work: "*It seems to me,*" he says, "*that these answers are written with so much exactness that they leave nothing to be desired.*" Canisius had intended to publish a third part, but he had

not time to do so. And, truly, if we consider the immense and continual labors, the journeys and occupations of every kind which were imposed upon him by the Sovereign Pontiffs, the princes, and the generals of the Society, we may wonder how he still found time to devote to literary composition. When Gregory XIII. sent Canisius as envoy to the Bishop of Salzburg, the Duke of Bavaria, and the other German princes, he said to him: "*I want you to help me to realize the desire which I feel to assist that country; I know how much I shall be able to derive from your skill and knowledge.*" When the indefatigable laborer had fulfilled the commands of Gregory XIII., he was called to Rome by that Pontiff to settle matters regarding the foundation of the German College. This was the seventh time that he directed his steps towards the eternal city. He soon after returned to Germany to be present at the first Diet of Ratisbon. Thence, yielding to the wishes of William, grandson of the Duke of Bavaria, he went to Landshutt, from which place he started, upon the orders of the father-general of the Society, to visit Albert,

Duke of Fürstenberg. Shortly after he was ordered by the Sovereign Pontiff to accompany the Bishop of Brescia to the Nuremberg conference. As this conference was put off to a later period, Canisius's fatigues and labors were devoted to a different object, though they were no less continual than before. The Bishops of Basle, Constance, and Lausanne had informed Gregory XIII. of the danger which menaced the faith in Catholic Switzerland. In his fatherly anxiety, the Pope intrusted this affair to the Bishop of Verceil, his nuncio in Germany: he enjoined upon him to traverse the different parts of Switzerland which had remained faithful, in order to secure them from the contagion of vice and the poison of false doctrines. After the nuncio had carefully examined the state of affairs, he wrote to the Holy Father that the only means to preserve Catholic faith and piety in this country was to establish therein a college of the Society. Gregory approved of this advice, and gave orders to endow the proposed foundation of Friburg College, with an ecclesiastical benefit proportioned to its wants. This work did not succeed. The mere word *Jesuit*,

the announcement of a new college, set all the heretics in commotion; very soon they grew enraged and uttered threatening words; they depicted the Jesuits in the most hideous colors, and denigrated them by means of calumny and satire. These satanic machinations produced the desired effect. The Friburgers, though sincerely attached to the Church, showed themselves averse to the Jesuits, who had been represented to them under such frightful colors, and obstinately refused them permission to open a college in their city.

## CHAPTER X.

ARRIVAL AND SOJOURN OF CANISIUS AT FRIBURG,  
IN SWITZERLAND—HIS HOLY DEATH.

THE apostolic nuncio, who was greatly annoyed at this unexpected opposition offered to the Jesuits, saw that Canisius was the only man capable of changing the dispositions of the inhabitants of Friburg, and of rescuing the Society from the calumnies which had been unsparingly circulated against it. Canisius set out for that city. The brilliancy and soundness of his doctrine, his innocence of life, and the example of his virtues, soon attracted the attention of the inhabitants, and they became greatly attached to him. Canisius passed the remaining seventeen years of his life at Friburg, where he breathed his last. The direction of the college, which had been finally opened to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants, for

they had liberally contributed to its establishment, was confided to the solicitude and prudence of Canisius. However, he had no sooner been convinced that he could be dispensed with in the government of this new house, than, yielding to his ardent desire of living in a state of dependence and obedience, he earnestly begged the general of the Society to be relieved of the superiorship. It was granted. From that moment Canisius devoted himself entirely to the salvation of souls at Friburg. He was the counsellor of every one; his zeal in preaching the Gospel was truly apostolic; he wrote books to nourish piety and maintain the faith; announced the word of God in the towns and villages of the neighborhood, and wrote letters of advice and encouragement to those of the Society living in the provinces or colleges which he had founded. His indefatigable labors, joined to an already advanced age, impaired his health and rendered work impossible. He gave up the ministry of preaching, and thought more than ever on his final passage from time to eternity. With greater ardor he solicited the prayers of his friends, and morti-

fied his body by fasts and other austerities. He was already entering on his seventy-eighth year, and very feeble. He no longer wished to hear of any thing except of heaven and heavenly things, and whilst suffering the most acute pains, he deemed himself happy that he bore some resemblance to his Lord and Saviour. His desire of suffering was especially manifest when, afflicted by the dropsy, he was unable to remain standing, sitting, or to lie on his bed; whenever he moved, he experienced the most violent pain. After four months passed in this kind of martyrdom, on Friday, December 20th 1577, he clearly understood that the bonds which kept his soul captive in the body would soon be broken. This he spoke of openly as a thing that would certainly happen. On the following day, December 21st, about 3 P. M., Canisius, burning with the desire of leaving the earth in order to be united to Jesus, calmly expired in the midst of his weeping brethren and sorrowful friends. He was seventy-eight years old, and had spent, since his admission at Cologne by Father Lefèvre, fifty-four years in the Society.

Grief and mourning succeeded the news of his death, as though the greatest calamity had befallen the city. As soon as the mortal remains of the holy man were exposed, the inhabitants of Friburg thronged around to contemplate their apostle, and pay him their last tribute of veneration; nothing was heard on all sides but sighs and sobs. Some there were who would remain motionless, their eyes fixed on the beloved countenance of the deceased; others would prostrate themselves and kiss with respect the feet and hands of the great servant of God; nearly all brought rosaries wherewith to touch the body. Some, wishing to satisfy their devotion at all hazards, cut off locks of hair; they went so far almost as to tear away the vestments in which the body was robed. It was becoming impossible to protect the precious remains, when, finally, the clergy, senate, and members of the magistracy had the corpse taken away with funeral honors at the expense of the public treasury, and deposited in the collegiate church of St. Nicholas; this they did on the express condition of restoring the body to the Society as soon as the college



should be in possession of a suitable church. The translation took place on the feast of Easter, March 31st, 1625.

Besides the funeral oration on the venerable deceased delivered by the provost of the chapter, the people, out of gratitude to their generous benefactor, desired that an inscription should be engraved on his tomb which should tell in befitting terms of the eminent services which the holy man had rendered to all. They styled him their patron; the patriarch of the Church in Switzerland; the stanch upholder of the Catholic religion; a priest whose reputation had spread far and wide. Then comes the enumeration of his virtues. Of these we here propose to treat briefly, and then lay them on his tomb as so many flowers whose beauty and fragrance we hope will last, even to the latest posterity.

## CHAPTER XI.

## HIS PRINCIPAL VIRTUES.

SHOULD we not, in the first place, admire that continued self-sacrifice which we behold in him at all times—in his gigantic and constant labors, his frequent travels, in the numerous matters of importance to which he had to attend, and the risk to which he was so often exposed? Yes, truly Canisius had an insatiable thirst for the salvation of souls. In him Charity shone forth in all her lustre, and, with queen-like majesty, directed all his actions. A declared enemy of heresy, he, by his eloquence and his writings, checked its progress and combated its fury. He also humbly did his utmost to lead a holy life, to draw down the blessings of God on his endeavors. We may apply to him those words of the royal prophet: “My zeal hath made me pine away.”

His zeal suggested to him a thousand ways of reclaiming souls from their sinful life. He seemed to multiply himself and to labor incessantly. Colleges and universities, the crowded thoroughfares of large cities, courts of princes, and also the abodes of the poor, were the scenes of his unceasing toils and fatigues. But his ardent zeal was unattended with any thing that savored of harshness or severity. His conversation, his writings, all in him breathed modesty, gravity, and peace.

He was wont to say that truth should be defended boldly, but with prudence and discretion. In their intercourse with him, all admired his kindness and his courtesy; for (accustoming himself to the character of every one) he with heroic patience and fortitude bore with the gruffness and peevish dispositions of some, with the ill-will and hatred of others. In nearly every place where he resided, his good name was vilified by calumny and his life in danger from the dagger of the assassin. The holy man meanwhile felt happy, as he certified by many of his letters addressed to his brothers in religion; and when he thought that

he might one day shed his blood in testimony of the faith, his joy knew no bounds. Influenced by such noble sentiments, it is not to be wondered at that he endured all the fury of his enemies with the greatest peace of mind and holy joy; he regarded them as instruments which the Almighty, in his goodness, makes use of to perfect the virtue of his servants, or to chastise their tepidity. He frequently prayed for them, repairing by his communings with God the evil which the ill-conduct of his opponents had occasioned.

True charity towards our neighbor ought, like limpid water flowing from its pure source, to take its rise in the love of God. Has not the Lord said, "Love your friends in me, and your enemies on account of me?" The cause and the measure of the charity which Canisius exercised towards all, was God alone. This divine love which filled his soul, preserved him in his youth from plunging into a life of pleasure and dissipation. In the prime of his age he consecrated his spotless virginity to his Creator. He preferred the privations and austerities of the religious life to the comforts

with which he would be surrounded in case he accepted an important and lucrative benefice. It was his continual endeavor to nourish the celestial fire of divine love which glowed in his heart. It is not, then, astonishing to see him in fervent prayer and heavenly contemplation, seeking the most efficacious means of uniting himself intimately to Jesus. Every day he rose at an early hour, and his first occupation was prayer, and the ineffable delight which he enjoyed whilst thus communing with God made him frequently shed tears. It was often necessary to have recourse to some expedient, such as pulling him by his clothes, making noise in his room, &c., &c., in order to call his attention from the lofty considerations in which his soul, as though liberated from all control of the senses, seemed entirely absorbed. Such ecstatic moments were most frequent whilst offering up the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Sometimes his sighs and supplications were overheard, and the occupant of the next room would come in haste, fearing that some accident had happened. He would find the holy man prostrate on the floor of his cell, and wrestling, so

to speak, in a loving struggle with God, beseeching him for the conversion of heretics. During those moments of ardent prayer, it was observed more than once that the head of Canisius was surrounded by a halo, symbolical of his burning fervor. Of this, several eye-witnesses deserving of credit, gave written testimony. This salutary practice of prayer was not limited to his room nor to the church. Bearing in mind the words of the apostle, who exhorts men to pray always and everywhere, he constantly raised his pure and innocent hands to heaven, at one time giving thanks to the Almighty, the author of all good; at another begging for himself and others light, fortitude, and support; and, in order that nobody should be excluded from his prayers, he drew up a list of names which he wished to remember, and among them those of his enemies did not occupy the last place. When, in the bustle of courts, or embarrassed by numerous and important affairs, or occupied in the toilsome duties of a missionary life, it was impossible for him to give much of his time to prayer, he supplied the deficiency of time by the frequency and

fervor of his ejaculations. But when, in the decline of life, and his strength had failed him, he could no longer bear the labors and fatigues which he formerly underwent, he devoted seven hours of the day to meditation, and recited, besides, many other prayers.

This intimate union with God was the fruit of his great severity towards himself, and the complete subjection in which he held the impulses of his heart. And, in truth, when the soul is free from all sensual affections, and perfectly disengaged from the fetters of the passions, she easily soars to the Divine Spouse, and is admitted to his heavenly embrace.

Such toils and labors and angelical innocence would have sufficed, it would seem, to exempt Canisius from still clinging to his austerities and mortifications, which usually accompany repentance for sins, or some special fervor. Both were dear to him, and both he cherished with an irrepressible fondness. Though enfeebled by old age and infirmity, he still clothed himself with haircloth, and his superiors were obliged to have recourse to pious artifices to prevent him from macerating his body, which

was reduced to a state of almost complete debility. Shortly before his death he could not be prevailed on to renounce the fast of the ember-days. Moreover, whether he fasted or not, his abstinence practically was the same. Besides his custom of never drinking wine, he took so little nourishment, that in the space of a week the quantity he ate would scarcely suffice for the meal of a man of moderate appetite; it often happened that he remained twenty-four hours without tasting food of any kind. The generals of the Society, knowing with what severity Canisius treated himself, and fearing that he would go to excess, admonished him more than once to moderate his rigor. Canisius ruled with the same sway all the emotions of his soul. He was careful especially to subdue all feelings of ambition; the favor he enjoyed with the great ones of the earth, the important negotiations which he conducted, and generally with success, the praise and esteem of the public, he regarded as so many dangers, against which he was ever on his guard. Often he was heard to repeat these words of our Saviour: "If you do not become



like unto little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." It was his delight to converse with the poor and with children. No menial office was too low and humiliating for him to fulfil it; he was as obedient as the most fervent novice, and he abhorred nothing so much as the non-compliance with the intentions of his superiors, and the neglect to accomplish exactly the orders they had given. He was firmly convinced that the apostolic laborer is merely an instrument in the hands of God, and that his toil is profitable only inasmuch as he is obedient. It is stated, in proof of the humility of the holy man, that he constantly declined the dignities and honors tendered him by the court of Rome and the German princes. When apprised that Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and afterwards Emperor of Germany, was doing all in his power to have him nominated to the bishopric of Vienna, he wrote to St. Ignatius, expressing his sorrow and anxiety as follows: "Ah! what a misfortune for me if I should ever be obliged to accept so weighty a burden! If your prayers and your prudence do not succeed in avert-

ing the danger which now threatens me, if so great a calamity should ever befall me, I shall believe that my sins have irritated the Almighty against me, and I shall pass the remainder of my days in tears and sorrow."

Pope Pius V., and also Gregory XIII., had resolved to raise Canisius to the cardinalship. The holy man was informed of it, but, at the same time, felt so annoyed and grieved, that, like St. Francis Borgia, he suddenly quitted Rome, without taking leave of any one, and fled as though before a tempest. Not deeming it sufficient not to accept honors, he shunned the mansions of the great and wealthy, the palaces of princes, and the courts of kings; "a religious," would he say, "cannot live there without great danger to his soul." It is to that effect he wrote in 1579 to Father Everard Mercurian, general of the Society: "I give it as my opinion, supported by experience, that it is exceedingly dangerous for the members of the Society, when they allow themselves to be prevailed on by persons of rank, who call themselves our protectors and friends, to live, I had almost said, in servitude, in the midst of courts and

princely families; and certainly, to say all in a word, if members of the Society stay too long among nobles and courtiers, they will do more harm to themselves than spiritual service to others; and in the midst of the licentiousness of manners so general, especially among those distinguished by their birth, it will be difficult for them not to be accessory to their sinfulness. I say nothing of the tediousness and of the risks to which they will necessarily be exposed, being obliged to conform to the ways of those with whom they live. In regard to their vocation, then, they will be of little service to others, and will do themselves much harm." Canisius practised as well as taught what we have just heard. He stayed at the courts of princes only as long as the strict exigencies of his ministry required; he would then take his leave, with or without the consent of his hosts, as soon as he thought his presence no longer necessary. This conduct elicited a letter of congratulation from Father Mercurian: "I am highly pleased," said he, "to learn that your reverence has not yielded to the entreaties of those who wished to retain you. If all those

of the Society who have to live at courts acted in the same manner, we should be exempt from much embarrassment, and rarely obliged to withstand the pretensions of princes." Thus far Mercurian.

But to return to the humility of Canisius. One day, whilst he was in prayer, his soul was suddenly inundated, so to speak, with a flood of heavenly light, and he understood better than ever the meaning of those words: "When you shall have done all that has been commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants." Thus enlightened from above, the man of God conceived so low an opinion of himself, that he fled even the shadow of honors, and joyfully applied himself to the practice of Christian humility. However, the more worthless and contemptible he was in his own eyes, the greater he became in the sight of God, the higher he rose in the esteem of men. When passing through Dillingen, the Cardinal of Augsburg welcomed him with the highest marks of distinction and friendship. It was vain for Canisius to resist, for his eminence was resolved by all means to lower himself before the servant

of God, even so far as to wash his feet. When the same Truchsès, through esteem for the Society, confided to us the direction of the University of Dillingen, he gave his reasons as follows: "It is in consequence of my constant and familiar intercourse with Peter Canisius, a man of the most exalted piety and extensive knowledge, that I have determined upon this measure. It is he who, in my episcopal city, and throughout my diocese, has brought back to the bosom of the Church a large number of Protestants, and has confirmed in their faith many wavering Catholics, and as an indefatigable laborer in the service of the Lord, was ever remarkable for his works of zeal, which we can never sufficiently praise." When St. Charles Borromeo learned with what wisdom and success Canisius devoted himself to the cause of the Church in Switzerland, he wrote him immediately a congratulatory letter, requesting at the same time to be informed as to the best means to adopt in order to strengthen his flock in true faith and piety. After all we have said, we shall not be astonished to hear that the Sovereign Pontiffs Julius III., Pius

IV., St. Pius V., and Gregory XIII., and the Emperors Ferdinand and Maximilian, the fathers of the Council of Trent, the two Dukes of Bavaria, and the other princes of Germany, all held Canisius in the highest esteem and veneration.

## CHAPTER XII.

## PRODIGIES OPERATED BY HIS INTERCESSION.

AFTER stating fully the universal and unchanging opinion which was held in regard to the saintliness of Canisius, we cannot but expect that God himself will confirm by miracles the merits of His servant. This was the case during his life and after his death. That he possessed the gift of prophecy, is proved by many facts.

He knew the state of several souls suffering in the flames of purgatory, and gave the information to persons who inquired about them. He admonished his sister's husband, at a time when he enjoyed excellent health, to prepare for death. The event explained the admonition, for his brother-in-law died a month after. One of our religious, who was greatly annoyed

by a grievous and dangerous temptation, had studiously concealed it. He went to visit Canisius, and the latter, with paternal affection, reproved him for his culpable silence, and convinced him that he was wrong; that troubled soul was shortly after restored to its former peace and tranquillity. Meeting, one day, a little boy, whose angelic innocence beamed on his countenance, the holy man, charmed at the sight, stopped to gaze, and predicted that in the course of time he would receive holy orders, and, owing to his virtues, be raised to the highest dignities in the Church. The prediction was verified. Canisius not only saw with a penetrating eye the miseries of both body and soul; he also knew how to prescribe proper remedies. At Augsburg, a lady of rank, the Countess Mark Fugger, born and educated in heresy, could not bear the sight of a Catholic priest, and especially that of Canisius. She had a dream, in which the holy man seemed to her to say that she should return to the religion of her ancestors, which alone could conduct her to heaven. On awakening, the countess was astonished at finding herself so changed, for



she no longer felt any dislike for priests, and went directly to see Canisius. As soon as she saw him, she threw herself at his feet, saying, "Father, I surrender myself, instruct me, give me your commands. I wish to become a Catholic without delay." Scarcely had this interview been made known abroad, when the principal persons among the Protestants did all they could to keep in their ranks the noble lady, who had till then been the honor and support of their party; but all in vain. The Countess Fugger made a public and solemn abjuration; she became the ornament of the Catholics of Augsburg by her eminent piety, and persevered in the practice of all virtues, to the confusion and despair of the Protestants. Some time previous, her sister-in-law, the Countess George Fugger, whose maiden name was Ursula de Lichtenstein, had likewise renounced the errors of Protestantism, to be admitted by Canisius into the Catholic Church. One would scarcely believe how destructive the example of these two illustrious converts was to the cause of the votaries of the mere Written Word. In the same family of Count Mark

Fugger, a young girl had been possessed by the devil for eight years. She was conducted to Canisius at Otting; the holy man began to pray for her, and invoked the assistance of the Mother of God. After a few moments, Satan was conquered. William Krumenstol, a senator of Friburg, and a man of great influence, fell from his horse into a quagmire, and remained on the spot, unable to extricate himself from his perilous situation. After making long and useless efforts to disengage himself, he begged of Almighty God, in the name of Canisius, who was his friend, to come to his assistance. Scarcely had he finished praying when he was released. He remounted his horse and returned home, full of joy at his providential escape. Five days after, he went, according to custom, to pay a visit to Canisius. Forgetful of the obligation he was under to the servant of God, he spoke upon indifferent matters, when at last the saintly man turned the conversation on the danger to which the senator had been exposed, and related all the details of the adventure. It is certain he could not have been informed thereof by any one. Krumenstol was

at once sensible of his fault, and in the midst of his confusion, excusing himself, expressed his heartfelt thanks to Canisius for having preserved him at so critical a moment. He accepted his excuses and thanks, but forbade him ever to say a word about it to any one.

Sebastian Veronio, vicar-general of the diocese of Lausanne, and provost of the church of St. Nicholas at Friburg, was engaged in a very vexatious lawsuit concerning a sum of money, and could form no conjecture as to when or how it would end. His cause appeared hopeless. This priest, as pious as he was prudent, resolved to bring matters to a close by renouncing all his claims. However, before doing so, he wished to consult Canisius, and to beg the assistance of his prayers. The servant of God accordingly prayed, and on that very day a decision was given in favor of Veronio, and the debtors came on the following day to present him with the half of the sum which was his due.

Christopher Reiff, of Villarsel, another member of the Senate of Friburg, had been for more than a month dangerously ill. His wife, seeing

all human remedies fruitless, made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Canisius, begging him earnestly to restore her husband to health. Her prayer was readily granted; on her return home she found the senator perfectly cured.

A lady of noble birth had for several days been unable to eat or drink any thing whatever, an inflammation of the throat having taken place, which prevented her even from receiving the Holy Viaticum. In the midst of her sufferings she caused a picture of Blessed Canisius to be brought to her, which she placed under her pillow, and although she had not closed her eyes for eight days, she fell immediately into a quiet slumber. Judge of her surprise and happiness to find, upon awakening, that her illness had entirely disappeared, and with it all her doubts and fears.

A woman was seized with the pains of childbirth; they placed the rosary of the holy man round her neck, and both mother and child were saved. From this arose the custom of applying Father Canisius's rosary to women in labor, and many of them were speedily de-

livered by its use, some even in an almost miraculous manner.

Another woman was afflicted by the terrible disease of epilepsy; worn out with suffering, she went and passed a night at the tomb of Blessed Canisius; the following day she was radically cured. A person was nearly suffocated by means of a bone sticking in her throat; she invoked Canisius, and was immediately freed from it. The son of Peter Posset had a deformed hand, the thumb adhering to the palm. The father, who owned some table utensil which had been formerly used by Canisius, applied it to the deformed member, which was healed without leaving the slightest scar. A young man had a withered arm; he made a vow to Canisius and implored his intercession; shortly after he fell into a quiet slumber; when he awoke his arm was cured. A lady, paralyzed in all her limbs, who had vainly tried all medical remedies, caused herself to be taken to the tomb of the servant of God; in a few moments she felt herself filled with new life; quickly rising, she began to walk, and went joyfully

home amidst the shouts and acclamations of the crowd, praising God and proclaiming Him admirable in the works of His saints.

The inhabitants of Friburg had begged Canisius, during his life, to protect them against the plague, which frequently visited that city. God heard the prayers of His servant, for, from that time forth, that terrible scourge always respected the city of Friburg, although it often raged furiously throughout the surrounding villages. If, by chance, an inhabitant of Friburg was attacked by it, a prayer at the apostle's tomb was an instant remedy. We will cite two examples. In 1612, the servant of a lady of rank was seized with the plague, and soon reduced to the last extremity; she made a vow to recite some prayers on the tomb of Canisius. Hardly had she done so when her sufferings abated, and with them the plague itself disappeared. The members of the family, who had seen the girl at the point of death, would not believe in her cure, and turned the whole into ridicule; she herself began to doubt if her health were really restored by the intercession of Canisius; this

doubt was followed by the immediate return of her sickness; she at once recognized her error, and, being carried to the venerable father's tomb, was a second time cured, and everywhere loudly proclaimed the power of her celestial protector. In 1639, a contagion threatened the entire destruction of a convent of Ursuline nuns; three of the sisters had already fallen victims, and several others of the community were at the point of death. In their great affliction, the faithful servants of God vowed to offer certain prayers at the tomb of Blessed Canisius, and to place his picture there, embroidered in pure gold. The vow was scarcely made, when the sick sisters recovered their health, and the remainder felt no more inconvenience.

Whilst God was everywhere publishing, by means of these various prodigies, the holiness and merit of His servant, the Sovereign Pontiff was besought on all sides to add the seal of his apostolic authority to the testimony of earth and heaven. The sovereigns of Europe, — his most Christian majesty, his Catholic majesty the King of Portugal, the

Dukes of Bavaria and Savoy, the Swiss, above all the inhabitants of Friburg, the bishops and princes of Germany—in short, all people who regarded him as the planter or restorer of the Faith in these different countries, earnestly solicited the Holy See to proceed to his beatification.

New miracles were added to the former list. All the facts worthy of note have been gathered together, in a work recently compiled: a large fire suddenly extinguished; a blind person restored to sight; a cripple healed; a deaf mute regains her speech; persons delivered from violent spasms; a woman, so to say, restored to life; dropsical persons cured; pains of the head and stomach driven away, and many other maladies cured. A number of similar extraordinary events have been regularly drawn up, in a writing signed by Count Peter Montenach, Bishop of Lausanne and Prince of the Empire. By his order, all these miracles have been scrupulously examined and verified, and then placed among the archives of the city of Friburg.



## CHAPTER XIII.

MIRACLES APPROVED OF FOR THE BEATIFICATION  
OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD.

To this biography of Canisius, which we owe to the learned and elegant pen of Father Jomency,\* we will add the miracles which were approved for the beatification of the venerable servant of God, by his Holiness Pope Pius IX., April 17th, 1864.†

The first miracle is the instantaneous and complete cure of Elizabeth Vonderveit, belonging to a noble family of Friburg. She

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\* Father Jomency, a distinguished member of the Society of Jesus, wrote an abridged life of the great Apostle of Germany, in Latin.

† Gregory XVI., of happy memory, declared by his decree of January 28th, 1844, that he recognized the heroic virtues of Canisius.

had been suffering for eight years from a disease of the liver, which ended in an abscess. It was followed by complete prostration of strength, a general paralysis of the whole body, produced by the weakening of the intestinal viscera, and finally dropsy. She gradually grew worse, and her sufferings became daily more insupportable. Already mortification had set in, and corruption mingled with worms flowed from her nostrils. As if these horrors were not sufficient, she became subject to violent contortions, and various contractions which turned her feet inward, forced her ribs from their natural position, and bent her back until it became a deformity. She also suffered from terrible spasms, which threw her into horrible convulsions.

They vainly consulted the most skilful physicians; all the resources of art seemed fruitless. Elizabeth learned that they had begun at Friburg the apostolic process, regarding the virtues and miracles of the venerable Father Peter Canisius; she renewed her confidence in the servant of God, to whom she had frequently prayed, and uttered these

fervent words: "Oh, good Father! I beg you to restore me to health by your intercession, if it will add to the glory of God and hasten your canonization."

The venerable Canisius could not be deaf to a request urged with such dispositions. One night, during her sleep, Elizabeth seemed to hear a voice, saying to her: "The first time you rise from your bed you will be able to walk." At these words, pronounced in her own language, she sprang out of bed animated with lively confidence, stood upright on her feet, and walked about the room with the utmost ease; paralysis, dropsy, bodily deformity, had all disappeared; her ribs had returned to their natural position, and all her sufferings were over. Such was the miracle, or rather combination of miracles, wrought in the person of Elizabeth Vonderveit, by the intercession of Blessed Peter Canisius. These facts were attested by nineteen eye-witnesses, amongst whom Elizabeth herself appeared and deposed juridically in the process. This miracle took place more than one hundred years ago.

In 1727, Anne Mary Kern was attacked

with acute rheumatism, which finally became an incurable arthritis, or inflammation of the joints. Her ribs were displaced, painful tumors broke out in various places ; she was reduced to so miserable a condition, that she could not bear the contact of any garment, nor find repose either day or night ; finally, she was unable either to sit, stand, or lie down ; her only comparatively easy position was to kneel down with her elbows on the ground. Physicians vainly endeavored to cure her, but, after two years' labor, were unable to give her any relief. Mary, hoping nothing from human aid, listened to the advice given her to implore the assistance of the venerable father, and to make a novena at his tomb. She did so ; the last day of the novena, feeling an extraordinary vigor in her limbs, she rose from the ground and found herself perfectly cured. Upon returning home, the poor girl was able to go out to service.

Mary Margaret Allaz, a noble lady of Friburg, had been ill for six years with pulmonary consumption, and was at the last extremity. Having nothing to hope for from

human science, she turned her eyes towards God, and caused herself to be carried, several times, though with great difficulty, to the tomb of Canisius. She earnestly besought him to obtain her restoration to health. Her perseverance was rewarded; in the month of August, in the year 1726, while prostrate upon the tomb of the servant of God, in St. Michael's Church, she was perfectly and instantaneously cured.

Eleven months after, she began to doubt of her cure. Was it really Father Canisius to whom she owed this favor? At the same moment she was seized with a violent fever, which brought her, in a few days, to the verge of the grave. She had immediate recourse to her celestial patron, and begged his forgiveness of her doubt. Canisius appeared to her visibly that very day; assured her that she had been healed by his intercession, and told her in future to have more confidence in him. Margaret fell asleep quietly, and awoke in perfect health.

Anne Mary Buman, a country girl from the environs of Friburg, was poisoned, whilst at

dinner, from verdigris. She did not die, but became completely paralyzed, and a prey to violent convulsions. She complained of feeling the poison devouring her intestines, and spots of a livid and disgusting appearance became visible on her neck, hands, and feet. The miserable creature was in such a fearful state, that medicine, far from benefiting her, only aggravated her sufferings. She conceived the desire of visiting the tomb of the venerable father, to pray nine successive days for the blessing of health. Anne Mary Buman experienced the same grace as Anne Mary Kern: the last day of the novena she was perfectly cured. Such were the miracles approved for the beatification of the venerable Canisius. The ceremony took place November 20th, 1864. On that day the Church offered a newly beatified son to the homage of her children. Germany gained a powerful protector, and the Society of Jesus was glorified in one of its members, who, according to the judgment of Dr. Bachtold,\*

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\* History of the Canton of Friburg.

an historian little given to partiality, joined the skill of the diplomatist, the humility of the saint, and the learning of the sage to the zeal of an apostle.

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BRIEF OF BEATIFICATION

OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD,

PETER CANISIUS,

PROFESSED FATHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

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POPE PIUS IX.

IN PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THE EVENT.

BE IT EVER IN REMEMBRANCE.

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CHRIST our Lord, having predicted that the gates of hell should never prevail against His Church, has in every age raised up valiant souls, who, armed with the double sword of sanctity and holy doctrine, have been charged with the mission of repressing the boldness, repelling the attacks, and resisting the violence of heretics, every time that the latter have endeavored to disturb the Church, and to cause dissension and trouble among her children.



It has frequently been seen, especially at the time of Luther, when that impious man, puffed up with satanic pride, declared openly against the Holy See, the bulwark and fortress of the Christian name, raised the standard of revolt, and began to spread innumerable errors, to corrupt the true Faith, and by that means caused the loss of many souls. It was not without a special dispensation of Providence, that, the same year, during which Ignatius of Loyola, the father and founder of the Society of Jesus, met with his dangerous but happy wound, whilst defending the Castle of Pampeluna, and who, quickly laying down the arms of earthly warfare, resolved henceforth to fight only the Lord's battles; that the same year, we repeat, saw the birth of the venerable servant of God, Peter Canisius, who, under the auspices of the same Ignatius, was destined to fight courageously against enemies of a new character. Canisius, born in 1521, of a distinguished family of Nimeguen in Holland, passed his first sinless years under his father's roof. Later, he repaired to Cologne to begin his studies; having finished

his course of humanities, and received the degree of doctor of civil law, he went to Louvain to study canon law. Although young, he was so influenced with zeal for the defence of the Faith, that, on listening to his sermons against the pernicious errors of the heretics, one would have said he was preparing for the glorious struggles which were to be his lot in after years.

To carry out his desires, he resolved to enroll himself in the Society of Jesus, then newly established; nothing could dissuade him from executing his project—neither the prospect of a large fortune, nor the advantages of a noble alliance, which was offered to him. Scarcely had he received Holy Orders, when his heart burned with zeal for the defence of the Church; therefore, he spared no trouble to obtain permission to fly to her assistance.

The clergy and people of Cologne, anxious to preserve intact the inestimable treasure of the Catholic Faith, sent Canisius as their ambassador to the Emperor Charles V., and to George of Austria, Bishop of Liege, to implore their aid against Hermann, Archbishop

of Cologne, who had swallowed the bait of the new ideas, and, seduced by the cunning heretics, had invited numerous sectaries to Cologne, thus bringing ravening wolves into the sheepfold of Christ. Canisius successfully accomplished his mission; for, shortly after, Hermann, a hireling, and not a shepherd, was excommunicated and deposed by the Sovereign Pontiff.

Peter was barely twenty-six years old when the Cardinal Otho Truchsès, Bishop of Augsburg, who knew how to appreciate the virtue and learning of the man of God, sent him to the Council of Trent as his Theologian. The fathers who composed that memorable assembly, were struck with the talent with which Canisius debated; they admired his mature judgment, the readiness of his answers, his grace, and continued eloquence. Being called to Rome by St. Ignatius, he received an order to go and teach the belles-lettres at the College of Messina, in Sicily. He acquitted himself of that mission, rich in cares and troubles, with great merit to himself and great advantage to his pupils. The year was scarcely

ended, when the Venerable Peter, returning to Germany, displayed upon that vast theatre all the resources of his holy and enlightened zeal. Upon his arrival at Ingolstadt, and later at Augsburg, he perceived with sorrow the numerous and terrible wounds which the heretics had inflicted on the Church: the people had become depraved; the manners of the clergy were relaxed; the churches were abandoned; the sacraments despised, and most of the cities, deprived of their pastors, were abandoned. To remedy all these evils, Canisius made use of the ministry of preaching; but he preached still more loudly by example, the eloquence of which is ever so persuasive. His first care was to re-establish solid studies in the colleges; but it cost him vigorous and continued efforts to succeed in his design. He brought thither men of undoubted orthodoxy to resume the teaching of pure doctrine and scholastic theology, so well calculated to further the spread of Catholic Faith, for which reason it is so bitterly hated by Protestants. Having remarked that the poison of heresy was more especially propagated by

means of little books, he judged that the best antidote to employ, would be to publish an abridgment of Christian doctrine. He composed it with such clearness, brevity, and precision, that no work is better calculated to instruct people in the Catholic Faith. Thus it was unanimously approved of by bishops and theologians, and spread on all sides, to the great benefit of souls.

Words cannot describe how much this courageous servant of God undertook in order to serve as a rampart to the Church during her troubles; the long journeys he made during the space of fifty years, and the labors and fatigue he endured.

In defence of the Spouse of Christ, he travelled through Poland, Franconia, Bavaria, Bohemia, and almost all Germany. He saved a multitude of cities and provinces, preserving some from the contagion, and purging others from the plague of heresy. At the Diets of Ratisbon, Piotrkov, and Augsburg, he aroused the courage of the bishops and Catholic princes, and induced them to restrain the fury of the heretics, and to extinguish the fatal

flames of heresy, which threatened universal destruction. At the Convention of Worms, he disputed publicly with the chief heretics; he crushed some with the weight of his learning and eloquence, and reduced the rest to silence, although their boldness was unparalleled. He victoriously refuted the Centurionators of Magdeburg in a work of great learning, and one requiring ample research.

Having been named first Provincial of Germany by St. Ignatius, he founded a number of colleges for the instruction of youth, and took great pains to establish at Rome the German College, destined to receive the youth of Germany, who, under the shield of the protection of the Sovereign Pontiff, were, after having been carefully instructed in faith and morality, to be sent back to their own country, to fight as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, against the rapid progress of error. Those portions which he could not visit himself were no less the objects of his zeal; he sent thither priests, worthy imitators of his charity, who were employed in carefully cultivating the vineyard of the Lord.

Having been recalled to the Council of Trent, for the second time, by the Legates of the Holy See, he defended the Catholic cause with a zeal and erudition which were recognized and approved by the whole world. The Sovereign Pontiffs, Our predecessors, confiding in the science and holiness of Canisius, frequently employed him in very important missions. Paul IV. sent him to Poland, to revive religion in that country, where it had fallen into contempt. Pius IV. dispatched him into Germany, to induce the bishops and princes to accept and promulgate the decrees of the Council of Trent, and by that means contribute to the spread of the true Catholic faith and Christian morality. Finally, Gregory XIII. had recourse to the ministry of this holy apostle to unravel several complicated ecclesiastical affairs; he accomplished his end according to the wish of the Pontiff, but not without overcoming numerous difficulties and braving many dangers.

Furthermore, neither threats, nor abuse, nor risk of his life, could ever prevent his employing all his moral as well as physical strength

in the defence of religion, then so violently shaken by the underhand dealings of Protestants.

Given up to so many different occupations, having not a moment of rest, still less of ease, he encroached upon his necessary sleep, to spend the night in prayer, and gave himself up so fully to the contemplation of heavenly things, that he ordinarily shed abundant tears. The Sovereign Pontiffs and persons most illustrious by their rank and piety, especially St. Charles Borromeo and St. Philip Neri, professed the greatest esteem for Canisius; nevertheless, in spite of such flattering testimonials, he was so modest and had so little self-esteem, that he constantly refused the Bishopric of Vienna, though it was earnestly and repeatedly pressed upon him. It was only with great difficulty, and by virtue of a command of the Holy See, that he could be induced to undertake the administration of the diocese for a year.

His attachment and devotedness to the Pope knew no bounds. He consecrated to the successor of Peter all his talents, his strength,



his labors; in short, his whole life. His obedience to his superiors was no less remarkable: entirely submissive to their commands and good pleasure, no enterprise, however difficult or painful, appeared above his strength, as soon as authority had spoken; thus his joy and promptitude in their performance was perfect. He preserved his baptismal innocence to his last breath, and furthermore, had made a vow of perpetual chastity from his earliest years. He macerated his body by all sorts of austerities; after the example of St. Paul, he brought his body under subjection, in order to prevent it from revolting against the spirit. Finally, having been sent to Friburg, a city of Switzerland, where he labored with untiring zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he peaceably died in the Lord, in the year 1697, aged seventy-seven years. He fell under the weight of his long and painful labors, rather than under the burden of years.

The general opinion of men relative to the eminent virtues of the Venerable Peter, took a very decided character immediately after

his death. For that reason, the Bishops of Lausanne and Freisingen caused a written account of the life and labors of the servant of God to be drawn up. Unfortunately, the troubles of war prevented the finishing of the work. But in 1730, all the requisite formalities being complied with, the cause of Peter Canisius was brought before the Apostolic See.

But it was once more necessary to interrupt the course of proceedings by reason of the unsettled times, and the tempest raised against the Church. Calm being finally established, by the advice of Our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, charged with the preservation of the Sacred Rites, the examination of the virtues by which the Venerable Peter Canisius had principally been distinguished was begun, and after a careful deliberation, Gregory XVI. declared formally, on the 28th of January, 1844, that Peter had practised all virtues in an heroic degree.

The four miracles which God had wrought by the intercession of His Servant, the Venerable Peter, were then investigated. After the

wonted and severe tests had been concluded, and every thing had been carefully and attentively examined, We pronounced, on the 17th of April of this present year, upon the real truth of the prodigies spoken of.

Nothing further remained but to examine, before the Sacred Congregation of Rites above mentioned, if We could safely proceed to Beatify the Venerable Peter. It was in the General Congregation held on the 24th of June of this present year, in Our presence, in the Vatican Palace, that these same Cardinals and all the Consulters, being there assembled, unanimously answered in the affirmative: they judged that the above-named servant of God might be declared Blessed, and enjoy all the privileges attached to that title until the solemnity of his Canonization could take place. We Ourselves having offered Our earnest prayers to the Father of Light, to prevail upon Him to enlighten Us in so important an affair, have decided, on the 24th of June of this present year, that We may render the honors of Beatification to the Venerable Peter.

Therefore, in order that the faithful, during

these stormy times, when the Church is violently attacked by armed and impious men, may have before their eyes the striking model of an intrepid champion of Catholic doctrine, and be led to imitate his example, in preserving the precious treasure of the Faith, without which no one can gain eternal life, We, touched by the prayers addressed to Us by almost all the Bishops of Germany and the whole Society of Jesus, by the advice and consent of Our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, charged with the care of the Sacred Rites, in the plenitude of Our Apostolic Authority, We permit by these present Letters, all persons to give the title of Blessed to the Venerable Servant of God, Peter Canisius, and We allow that his body or his relics may be publicly exposed for the veneration of the Faithful, without, however, granting them to be carried in solemn processions. We furthermore concede, by virtue of Our said authority, that the Mass and Office of the Common of Confessors not Pontiffs, with the appropriate prayers approved by Us, may be said in his honor; all in conformity with

the Rubrics of the Missal and Roman Breviary. We only authorize the recitation of this Office, on the 27th of April, in the dioceses of Utrecht and Lausanne, as also in the churches and houses belonging to the Society of Jesus, in whatever country they may be established, and this, for all the Faithful of the Flock of Jesus Christ, secular as well as regular, who are obliged to recite the Canonical Hours; and as to the Mass, We permit it to be said by all Priests who shall go to any church where his Feast is celebrated, with that intention. Finally, We permit that at any time during the space of one year, dating from the publication of these Letters, the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God, Peter Canisius, may be solemnized in the churches of the above-mentioned dioceses, and in all those belonging to the Society of Jesus, with the faculty of saying the Office and Mass of the Blessed, as a Major Double; and We order that the said solemnity shall be observed on the day fixed by the Ordinary, after the same solemnity shall have taken place in the Vatican Basilica, all other Constitutions and Apos-

toxic Ordinations to the contrary notwithstanding. We also desire, that credence be given to all printed copies of these present Letters, provided they be signed by the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites already mentioned, and bear the seal of the Prefect; and that all pay them the same deference as to Our own, in which the authentic expression of Our will is clearly set forth.

Given at Castel-Gondolfo, under the Fisherman's Ring, the 2d of August, 1864, the nineteenth year of Our Pontificate.

N. CARDINAL PARACCIANI CLARELLI.

## LITANY OF BLESSED CANISIUS.

LORD, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have  
mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Throne of Mercy, have mercy  
on us.

Holy Mary, Conceived without sin, pray for us.

Blessed Peter Canisius,

Worthy disciple of St. Ignatius,

Intrepid Defender of the Church,

Apostle of Germany,

} Pray for us.

Model of Priests and Religious,  
 Sure guide in the Road of Virtue and  
 Christian Perfection,  
 Exact observer of the Evangelical Coun-  
 sels,  
 Marvel of Humility,  
 Great Lover of Obedience,  
 Admirable in your Chastity,  
 Vase of Election, filled with Divine Love,  
 Treasure of Grace and Holiness,  
 Example of Charity and Gentleness,  
 Martyr through your austere life,  
 Devout servant of the Holy Angels,  
 Zealous propagator of Devotion to the  
 Blessed Virgin,  
 Illustrious through your numerous Mira-  
 cles,  
 Immortal Glory of the Society of Jesus,  
 Favored with a sublime Gift of Prayer,  
 Burning with insatiable desire to labor  
 and suffer for Jesus Christ,  
 Converter of thousands of sinners,  
 Surnamed the Hammer of Heretics,  
 Thou whose credit is great before God,

Pray for us.



That we may ever preserve intact the inestimable treasure of the one true Catholic Faith,

That we may ever show ourselves the faithful children of our Holy Mother Church,

That we may imitate your virtues,

That we may be delivered from all evils,

That thou wilt obtain us the precious grace of a happy death,

That we may have the happiness of praising God with you throughout Eternity,

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the World, spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the World, graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the World, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

*V.* Pray for us, Blessed Peter Canisius.

*R.* That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who for the defence of the Holy

We beseech you, hear us.

Catholic Faith, didst endow the Blessed Peter, Confessor, with strength and learning, grant, by his intercession, that the Church may see all errors dissipated, and may there be only one fold and one Shepherd. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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### P R A Y E R

*Of Blessed Peter Canisius, S. J., for himself  
and for others.*

STRIP me, O Lord, of the old man, with all his evil affections and inclinations, to which Thou knowest me to be subject. Clothe me in the new man, as my holy calling requires it; so that I may every day be renewed in spirit, and feel an ardent desire and a constant willingness to advance in the solid virtues of which I stand so much in need. Keep from me, O Lord, all violent and dangerous temptations, but especially with respect to the grace of my vocation. In troubles, give me strength of mind to bear with them, and rise superior

to them. Grant me the gift of perseverance, to be till death faithful to Thee. Increase grace within me, for the due fulfilment of my vows, that poverty in all its simplicity, and angelical chastity may shine forth in me,—that obedience, internal as well as external, may have full sway in my soul, and that thus I may become in Thy sight a pleasing, continual, and perfect holocaust. Amen.

Have mercy on me, O Father of Mercies, for having so often offended, both in the world and in religion, Thy Divine Majesty; for being even up to this, ungrateful for thy favors, lukewarm in religious life, devoid of true fear and love, and so careless in purely referring all things to Thy glory and my own salvation. Open my eyes, I beseech Thee, to see; add to my strength, to be able; and likewise move my soul to be willing to make due progress in Thy ways and in my holy state; and to tend directly to my end, by laboring unsparingly for my own and my neighbor's salvation and perfection. Wherever I may be, whatever I may have to suffer, may Thy good, acceptable, and perfect will be done in me and with me.

Hallowed be Thy name in me, so that I may meet the expectations of my superiors, and enter into close communion with all the just who, in the whole Catholic Church and in our Society, please Thee on earth, and even with those that triumph with Thee in heaven: Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Have mercy on our parents, and on all our spiritual superiors. Grant them, O Lord, to be wise according to Thy Spirit, prudently to govern their subjects, and have the satisfaction of finding in us obedient children.

Have mercy on our friends and benefactors, and on all who faithfully assist our Society either in spiritual or in temporal matters. Save them from all evil, not only in life, but also after death, that they may find in Thee, if not in us, a munificent rewarder.

Have mercy on our Society which Thy Right Hand hath planted; that she may spread more and more throughout the whole world, and like a productive tree, abound in the garden of the Church in fruits pleasing unto Thee.

Have mercy on the dead, whether our brothers and benefactors, or strangers to us,

and on all Catholics. Give them, O Lord, light in darkness, rest from their pains, and everlasting happiness in Thy Kingdom. Amen.

Have mercy on our pupils and spiritual children, whom in every part of the world Thou hast given to the Society to be instructed, directed, and aided. Give growth in them, O Lord, to the good seed, that they may advance more and more in knowledge, in righteousness, and in virtue; and be rightly and successfully attended to by the members of our Society.

Have mercy on our fathers and brothers who remain faithful to their vocation, that they may be strengthened by Thee in the true path of virtue. Have mercy on those also who waver and are unsteady, that aided and made firm by Thy powerful Spirit, they turn neither to the right nor to the left.

Have mercy also on those who have fallen away, that these fugitive sons may rise from their apostasy, acknowledge their former grace of vocation, and be reconciled to Thee by sincere repentance.

Have mercy on our enemies, and those who,

either openly or secretly, persecute our Society. Impute not this sin unto them, but grant them Thy grace, repentance and true charity. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Have mercy on schismatics and heretics, that they may return to the unity of the Church, and leaving the shadows of error, receive faithfully, in union with us, the light of Catholic doctrine.

Have mercy on sinners who serve the world, the flesh and Satan, rather than Thee, the true and living God, and run headlong to the gates of endless death. Bring them back, O Lord, to the path of penance, and restore to them, now dead, the life of grace, lest they otherwise, dying in their sins, be forever separated from Thy grace and glory. Amen. To the Glory of God and of his Holy Mother.









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