

A Novena for the Cause of Frances and Gilbert Chesterton

Dec. 4 - 12 (Frances's death) and June 6 - 14 (Gilbert's death) (for private use only!)

Prayer for the Canonization of G. K. & Frances Chesterton

(Said each day; also an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be in honor of the Most Blessed Trinity)

Oh, Most Holy Trinity, in the union of Frances Blogg and Gilbert Chesterton in Holy Matrimony, You gave us an example of Your own Trinitarian love and revealed the supernatural fruitfulness of Christian marriage. You enlightened Your servant Gilbert with great gifts of mind to defend the One True Faith, and endowed Your servant Frances with many gifts to be his loving, patient, and devoted wife and trustworthy support. If it be Your will, may the Church recognize the sanctity of this married couple, modeled upon Jesus Christ the Everlasting Man, through Whom we pray. Amen.

Mary, cause of our joy, your servants Frances and Gilbert acknowledged you to be the Virgin Mother of the Incarnate Word. Through your intercession, may the Church soon acknowledge their sanctity.

First Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

My heart overflows with noble words,
To the King I must speak the song I
have made;

My tongue as nimble as the pen of a
scribe.

My heart overflows with noble words.

A mass of legend and literature, which increases and will never end, has repeated and rung the changes on that single paradox; that the hands that had made the sun and stars were too small to reach the huge heads of the cattle. Upon this paradox, we might almost say upon this jest, all the literature of our faith is founded. It is at least like a jest in this; that it is something which the scientific critic cannot see. He laboriously explains the difficulty which we have always defiantly and almost derisively exaggerated; and mildly condemns as improbable something that we have almost madly exalted as incredible; as something that would be much too good to be true, except that it is true. When that contrast between the cosmic creation and the little local infancy has been repeated, reiterated, underlined, emphasized, exulted in, sung, shouted,

roared, not to say howled, in a hundred thousand hymns, carols, rhymes, rituals, pictures, poems, and popular sermons, it may be suggested that we hardly need a higher critic to draw our attention to something a little odd about it...

—The Everlasting Man

Second Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

You are the fairest of the children of
men and graciousness is poured upon
your lips:

Because God has blessed you for
evermore.

My heart overflows with noble words.

Alone upon the earth, and lifted and liberated from all the wheels and whirlpools of the earth, stands up the faith of St. Thomas; weighted and balanced indeed with more than Oriental metaphysics and more than Pagan pomp and pageantry; but vitally and vividly alone in declaring that life is a living story, with a great beginning and a great close; rooted in the primeval joy of God and finding its fruition in the final happiness of humanity; opening with the colossal chorus in which the sons of God shouted for joy, and ending in that

mystical comradeship, shown in a shadowy fashion in those ancient words that move like an archaic dance; "For His delight is with the sons of men."

—*St. Thomas Aquinas*

Third Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

O mighty one, gird your sword upon
your thigh;

In splendor and state, ride on in
triumph for the cause of truth and
goodness and right.

My heart overflows with noble words.

You cannot evade the issue of God, whether you talk about pigs or the binomial theory, you are still talking about Him. Now if Christianity be ... a fragment of metaphysical nonsense invented by a few people, then, of course, defending it will simply mean talking that metaphysical nonsense over and over again. But if Christianity should happen to be true – that is to say, if its God is the real God of the universe – then defending it may mean talking about anything or everything. Things can be irrelevant to the proposition that Christianity is false, but nothing can be irrelevant to the proposition that Christianity is true.

—*Daily News*, December 12, 1903
Quoted in *The Man Who Was Orthodox*

Fourth Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

Take aim with your bow in your dread
right hand.

Your arrows are sharp: peoples fall
beneath you.

The foes of the king fall down and lose
heart.

My heart overflows with noble words.

There is a great and possible peril to

the human mind: a peril as practical as burglary. Against it religious authority was reared, rightly or wrongly, as a barrier. And against it something certainly must be reared as a barrier, if our race is to avoid ruin.

That peril is that the human intellect is free to destroy itself. Just as one generation could prevent the very existence of the next generation, by all entering a monastery or jumping into the sea, so one set of thinkers can in some degree prevent further thinking by teaching the next generation that there is no validity in any human thought. It is idle to talk always of the alternative of reason and faith. Reason is a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all...

There is a thought that stops thought. That is the only thought that ought to be stopped. That is the ultimate evil against which all religious authority was aimed... The creeds and the crusades, the hierarchies and the horrible persecutions were not organized, as is ignorantly said, for the suppression of reason. They were organized for the difficult defence of reason.

— *Orthodoxy*

Fifth Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

Your throne, O God, shall endure
forever.

A scepter of justice is the scepter of
your kingdom.

Your love is for justice; your hatred for
evil.

My heart overflows with noble words.

The sanity of the world was restored and the soul of man offered salvation by something which did indeed satisfy the two warring tendencies of the past; which had never been satisfied in full

and most certainly never satisfied together. It met the mythological search for romance by being a story and the philosophical search for truth by being a true story. That is why the ideal figure had to be a historical character, as nobody had ever felt Adonis or Pan to be a historical character. But that is also why the historical character had to be the ideal figure; and even fulfill many of the functions given to these other ideal figures; why he was at once the sacrifice and the feast, why he could be shown under the emblems of the growing vine or the rising sun. The more deeply we think of the matter the more we shall conclude that, if there be indeed a God, his creation could hardly have reached any other culmination than this granting of a real romance to the world. Otherwise the two sides of the human mind could never have touched at all; and the brain of man would have remained cloven and double; one lobe of it dreaming impossible dreams and the other repeating invariable calculations. The picture-makers would have remained forever painting the portrait of nobody. The sages would have remained forever adding up numerals that came to nothing. It was that abyss that nothing but an incarnation could cover; a divine embodiment of our dreams; and he stands above that chasm whose name is more than priest and older even than Christendom; Pontifex Maximus, the mightiest maker of a bridge.

– *The Everlasting Man*

Sixth Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above other kings:

Your robes are fragrant with aloes and myrrh.

My heart overflows with noble words.

We have got to explain somehow that the great mysteries like the Blessed Trinity or the Blessed Sacrament are the starting points for trains of thought far more stimulating, subtle and even individual.... To accept the Logos as a truth is to be in the atmosphere of the absolute, not only with St. John the Evangelist, but with Plato and all the great mystics of the world. ... To exalt the Mass is to enter into a magnificent world of metaphysical ideas, illuminating all the relations of matter and mind, of flesh and spirit, of the most impersonal abstractions as well as the most personal affections.

– *The Thing*

Seventh Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

From the ivory palace you are greeted with music.

The daughters of kings are among your loved ones.

On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

My heart overflows with noble words.

I know that I shall never exhaust the profundity of that unfathomable paradox which is defined so defiantly in the very title of the Mother of God. I know that there are not only far deeper, but far fresher and freer developments of thought and imagination, in that riddle of the perfectly human having once had a natural authority over the supernaturally divine, than in any sort of iconoclastic identification which assimilates all the sacred images by flattening all their faces.

–*The Thing*

\

Eighth Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

Listen, my daughter, give ear to my words:
forget your own people and your father's house.

So will the King desire your beauty:
He is your Lord, pay homage to Him.

My heart overflows with noble words.

When I was a boy a more Puritan generation objected to a statue upon my parish church representing the Virgin and Child. After much controversy, they compromised by taking away the Child. One would think that this was even more corrupted with Mariolatry, unless the mother was counted less dangerous when deprived of a sort of weapon. But the practical difficulty is also a parable. You cannot chip away the statue of a mother from all round that of a new-born child. You cannot suspend the new-born child in midair; indeed, you cannot really have a statue of a new-born child at all. Similarly, you cannot suspend the idea of a new-born child in the void or think of him without thinking of his mother. You cannot visit the child without visiting the mother; you cannot in common human life approach the child except through the mother. If we are to think of Christ in this aspect at all, the other idea follows as it is followed in history.

– *The Everlasting Man*

Ninth Day

My heart overflows with noble words.

And the people of Tyre shall come
with gifts, the richest of the people
shall seek your favor.

The daughter of the king is clothed
with splendor, her robes embroidered
with pearls set in gold.

My heart overflows with noble words.

When God turned back eternity and was
young,
Ancient of Days, grown little for your
mirth
(As under the low arch the land is bright)
Peered through you, gate of heaven –
and saw the earth.

Or shutting out his shining skies awhile
Built you about him for a house of gold
To see in pictured walls his storied
world
Return upon him as a tale is told.

Or found his mirror there; the only glass
That would not break with that
unbearable light
Till in a corner of the high dark house
God looked on God, as ghosts meet in
the night.

Star of his morning; that unfallen star
In the strange starry overturn of space
When earth and sky changed places for
an hour
And heaven looked upwards in a human
face.

Or young on your strong knees and lifted
up
Wisdom cried out, whose voice is in the
street,
And more than twilight of twifomed
cherubim
Made of his throne indeed a mercy-seat.

Or risen from play at your pale raiment's
hem
God, grown adventurous from all time's
repose,
Or your tall body climbed the ivory
tower
And kissed upon your mouth the mystic
rose.

– “A Little Litany”