

# THE MEDAL OR CROSS OF S. BENEDICT, ITS ORIGIN, MEANING, AND PRIVILEGES,

BY DOM P. GUÉRANGER,

ABBOT OF SOLESMES;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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## PREFACE.

Man has no right to pass judgment on the effects which God deigns to produce by his power and goodness. In order to assist us in our necessities, God, in his wisdom and providence, sometimes makes use of extremely simple means, thus to keep us in humility and filial confidence. A Christian, whose faith is but weak, is surprised at this, and even tempted to be scandalized, inasmuch as it seems to him that the means by which God works, are not in keeping with his greatness. Such a thought as this is nothing less than pride or ignorance; for whenever God puts himself within our reach, he must needs stoop down to our lowliness.

And yet, does he not shew his greatness when he selects simple material objects as the medium of communication between himself and us, as in the case of the Holy Sacraments? Does he not thereby shew us how he is the absolute Master of all, even so far as this - that he can embody his grace in such low and apparently commonplace forms as these? The Church, which is guided by his Spirit, delights in imitating this his mode of acting, at least in some slight way, and hence she communicates the divine virtue, which she possesses, to those objects which she sanctifies as helps and consolations for her children.

This little work treats upon one of these sacred objects; one which is honoured by the protection and by the blessing of the Church, and which unites in itself the triumphant power of the holy Cross, which redeemed us, with the memory of one of God's most illustrious servants. Every Christian that loves and adores Jesus who redeemed us - or who believes in the intercession of the Saints, who are now reigning in heaven with him - will look on the Medal of S. Benedict with respect, and when he hears of any of those heavenly favours of which it has been the instrument, he will give thanks to God, who authorizes us to make use of his Son's Cross as a shield of protection, and to rely with confidence on the assistance of the Saints in heaven.

We have collected together in these pages a certain number of facts which prove that God deigns to protect in a special manner those who put their confidence in the sacred signs marked on the Medal. These facts, to which we in no manner wish to attribute the name of miracles properly so called, have been told us by persons in whom we have the fullest confidence. The reader is at liberty to form his own judgement upon them and believe them or not as he please. Numerous as they are, we could easily have given very many more, of all of which we have received the particulars but we thought it advisable to limit ourselves to those we have related, and variety rather than number has been our aim.

In publishing this Notice upon a subject, which to many may seem ill-fitted for an age like this, when rationalism is so rife, our only object is to render a service to our brethren in the faith. During life they will be placed in circumstances when they will feel that they need a special help from heaven - let them, at these times, have recourse to the Medal of S. Benedict, as so many Christians have the habit of doing; and if their faith be strong and simple, they may depend on the promise of Our Lord - such faith shall not go unrewarded.

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## **I. ON THE IMAGE OF THE CROSS REPRESENTED ON THE MEDAL.**

There is a great wish on the part of many Catholics to have clear ideas regarding the celebrated Medal which goes under the name of the great Patriarch of the Western Monks. It is true that several notices have been already published, some more, some less correct; but not one of them, so it seems to us, having fully satisfied the wishes of the faithful, we thought it would be well to offer to their devotion a more complete explanation of an object which has become so dear to them. That there may be order in what we are going to say about it, we will begin with a description of the Medal.

A Christian needs but reflect for a moment on the sovereign virtue of the Cross of Jesus Christ in order to understand how worthy of respect a Medal is on which it is represented. The Cross was the instrument of the world's redemption; it is the saving tree whereon was expiated the sin committed by man when he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. S. Paul tells us that the sentence of our condemnation was fastened to the Cross, and blotted out by the Blood of our Redeemer. In a word, the Cross, which the Church salutes as our *only hope*, "*Spes Unica*," is to appear at the last day in the clouds of heaven, as the trophy of the victory of the Man-God.

The image of the Cross excites in our minds the liveliest sentiments of gratitude towards God for the benefit of our salvation. After the Blessed Sacrament, there is nothing on earth so deserving our respect as the Cross; and it is for this reason that we pay it a worship of adoration, which is referred to God, whose precious Blood was spilt upon it.

Animated by sentiments of the purest religion, the primitive Christians had, from the very beginning of the Church, the profoundest veneration for the image of the Cross, and the Fathers seem never to tire in the praises they give to this august image. When, after three hundred year's of persecution, God had decreed to give peace to his Church, there

appeared in the heavens a Cross, on which were these words, "In this sign shalt thou conquer;" and the Emperor Constantine, to whom this vision was granted, promising him victory over his enemies, would have his army go henceforth to battle under a standard bearing the image of the Cross with the monogram of the word "Christ." This standard was called the *Labarum*.

The Cross is an object of terror to the wicked spirits ; they cannot endure its presence; they no sooner see it, than the let go their prey and take to flight. In a word, of such importance to Christians is the Cross and the blessing it brings along with it, that from the times of the Apostles down to our own age, the faithful have ever been accustomed to make the sign of the Cross frequently upon themselves, and the Priests of the Church have constantly used it upon all the objects, which in virtue of their sacerdotal character, they have the power to bless and sanctify.

Our Medal, therefore, which firstly offers to us this image of the Cross, is in strict accordance with Christian piety, and worthy, even were there no other motive than this, of all possible veneration.

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## II. OF THE IMAGE OF S. BENEDICT REPRESENTED ON THE MEDAL

The honour of appearing on the same medal with the image of the Holy Cross has been given to S. Benedict with the intention of expressing the efficacy which this holy Sign had when made by his venerable hand, S. Gregory the Great, who has written the Life of the Holy Patriarch, tells us how, by the Sign of the Cross, he overcame his temptations, and broke the cup of poisoned drink which was proffered to him, thus unmasking the wicked design of those who had plotted to take away his life. When the Evil Spirit, in order to terrify his Religious, made the Monastery of Monte Cassino appear to be on fire, S. Benedict immediately dispels the artifice, by making over the fiery phantom this same Sign of our Redeemer's Passion. When his Religions are troubled interiorly with the suggestions of the tempter, the Holy Father bids them take the remedy, and it is to make on their breasts the Sign of the Cross in his Rule, he prescribes that the Brother who has been reading the solemn engagement of his profession at the foot of the altar, should immediately affix to it the Sign of the Cross, as an irrevocable seal of the deed on which his vows are written.

The disciples of S. Benedict have had a like confidence in this sacred Sign, and have worked innumerable miracles by it. Let it here suffice to mention S. Maurus giving sight to a blind man, S. Placid curing many who were sick, S. Richmir liberating captives, S. Wulstan preserving a work man in the very act of falling from the top of the Church-tower, S. Odilo drawing out from a man's eye a splinter of wood, which had run through it; S. Anselm of Canterbury driving away from an old man the horrid spectres which were tormenting him in his dying moments; S. Hugh of Cluny quelling a storm; S. Gregory the Seventh arresting the conflagration at Rome, &c.: these and a thousand other such miracles which are related in the Acts of the Saints of the Order of S. Benedict, were all worked by the Sign of the Cross.

The glory and efficacy of the august instrument of our salvation have been celebrated with enthusiasm by the children of the great Patriarch; they loved to extol it, for their hearts were full of gratitude towards it. Not to speak of the Little Office of the Holy Cross which S. Udalric, Bishop of Augsburg, used to recite, and which was also said in choir in the abbeys of S. Gall, of Reichenau, of Bursfeld, &c.; the Blessed Rhabanus Maurus and S. Peter Damian consecrated their talent for Poetry in singing the praises of the Holy Cross; S. Anselm of Canterbury has written its praises in the form of most exquisite prayers; Venerable Bede, S. Odilo of Cluny, Rupert of Deutz, Ecbert of Schonaugen, and a long list of others of the Order have left us Sermons on the Holy Cross; Eginhard wrote a Book in defence of the worship paid to it against the Iconoclasts, and Peter the Venerable defended, a set Treatise, the use of the Sign of the Cross which had been at tacked by the Petrobrusians.

A great number of the most famous Monasteries of S. Benedict of the Order of S. Benedict were founded under the title of "Holy Cross." Of these let it suffice to mention the celebrated Monastery built at Paris by the Bishop, S. Germanus; the Monastery built by S. Faron in the diocese of Meaux; the Abbey of "Holy Cross" founded at Poitiers by S. Radegonde; the Monastery of "Holy Cross" at Bordeaux built by Clovis the Second; those of Metten in Bavaria, Reichenau in Switzerland, Quimperlé in Brittany, and the five famous Monasteries in the Vosgian country which were founded by S. Hydulph, and which he so situated that they formed a Cross.

The Saviour of the world seems to have entrusted, by a special favour, to the children of S. Benedict a large portion of the Cross on which he died for the redemption of man. Large fragments of this sacred wood have been confided to their keeping, and a Christian might almost glory in having seen the Instrument of his salvation were all the pieces to be put before him which have been possessed by different Monasteries of this Order. We may mention the following amongst the Houses thus privileged: in France, S. Germain-des-Prés, in Paris; S. Denis; Holy Cross at Poitiers; Cormery, in the Touraine; Gellone. &c.; S. Michael de Murano, in Venice; Sahagun, in Spain; Reichenau, in Switzerland; S. Ulric and S. Afra at Augsburg in Germany; S. Michael, at Hildesheim; S. Trutpert in the Black Forest; Moelk, in Austria; the celebrated Monastery of Gandesheim, &c.

But the most glorious mission given to the Benedictines in what relates to the glory of the Holy Cross, is that of having carried this instrument of salvation into so many countries, by preaching the gospel to their pagan inhabitants. The greater part of the West was converted by their zeal from the darkness of infidelity, and the reader need scarce be told that England was converted by S. Augustine of Canterbury, Germany by S. Boniface, Belgium by S. Amandus, Holland and Zealand by S. Willibrord, Westphalia by S. Swithbert, Saxony by S. Ludgerius, Bavaria by S. Corbinian, Sweden and Denmark by S. Anscharius, Austria by S. Wolfgang, Poland and Bohemia by S. Adalbert of Prague, Prussia by S. Otho of Bamberg, Russia by S. Boniface the Second.

Such are in brief the facts which give to the person and name of S. Benedict a special connection with the Holy Cross; it is, therefore, with a most evident appropriateness that the Figure of this Holy Patriarch has been put on the same Medal with the Image of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We see still more clearly why this should have been done, when we refer to what is related in the Acts of the two great disciples of this Servant of God, S. Placid and S. Maurus. Both of them, when working the miracles which we meet in almost every page of their lives, were wont to join with the invocation of the help of the Holy Cross the name of their holy Father Benedict, thus establishing, at the very beginning of the Order, the pious practice, of which the Medal was to be, in after times, the symbol and the expression.

S. Placid had scarce had farewell to the Holy Patriarch when leaving Monte Cassino to repair to Sicily, than arriving at Capua he was besought to heal the superior of the Church of the town. His humility made him for a long time resist such a demand; till at length he consents, and placing his hand upon the head of the Priest who was sick of a mortal disease, he immediately cures him, whilst pronouncing these words: "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ who, by the *prayers and virtue of Benedict our Master*, drew me safe from the midst of the water, may God reward thy faith and restore thee to thy former health."

Immediately there comes a blind man, begging now to have his turn and be cured. Placid makes the Sign of the Cross upon his eyes, at the same time adding this prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Mediator of God and men, who didst come down from heaven to earth that thou mightest enlighten those who were sitting in the darkness and shades of death; thou who hast given to our *blessed Master Benedict* the gift of healing all maladies and all wounds, deign, *by his merits*, to give sight to this blind man, to the end that, seeing the magnificence of thy works, he may fear and adore thee as the Sovereign Lord." Then addressing himself to the blind man, Placid thus continued: "*By the merits of our most Holy Father Benedict*, I command thee in the name of him who created the sun and moon to be the ornament of the heavens, and gave to him who was born blind the eyes which nature had denied him, arise, and be thou healed! go now and tell all men the wonderful works of our God." The blind man immediately recovered his sight. We might quote several other miracles from the Life of S. Placid, such as healing the sick or driving out devils from those possessed, in which the invocation or the mention of S. Benedict, still living, was united with the making of the Sign of the Cross. In some of these miracles, we find the sick themselves acknowledging and proclaiming this mysterious connection.

S. Maurus, having been sent by the great Patriarch into Gaul, there to establish his rule, soon began to work numerous miracles. As we noticed before, these miracles were wrought by means of the holy Cross, and the saintly Abbot was also accustomed to join to the divine virtue of the instrument of our redemption, a prayer invoking the intervention of S. Benedict. He bore testimony to this himself, when on occasion of his having saved one of his fellow travellers from death, he made this declaration: "If," said the Saint to those who had witnessed the miracle, "the Divine Majesty hath



These two lines put together form a pentameter verse, containing the Christian's protestation that he confides in the Holy Cross, and refuses to bear the yoke which the devil would limit upon him.

On the rim of the Medal there are inscribed several other Letters; and first the well-known Monogram of the holy name of Jesus, IH S. Faith and our own experience convince us of the all-powerfulness of this divine Name. Then below, beginning at the right hand, the following letters:

V. R. S. N. S. M. V. S. M. Q. L. I. V. B.

These initials stand for the two following verses.

VADE RETRO, SATANA; NUNQUAM SUADE MIHI VANA.

SUNT MALA QUAE LIBAS; IPSE VENENA BIBAS.

in English: *Begone, Satan! and suggest not to me thy vain things; the Cup thou profferest me is evil; drink thou thy poison.*

These words are supposed to be said by S. Benedict; those of the first verse when he was suffering the temptation in his cave, and which he overcame by the Sign of the Cross; and those of the second verse, at the moment of his enemies offering to him the draught of death, which he discovered by his making over the poisoned cup the Sign of Life.

The Christian may make use of these same words as often as he finds himself tormented by temptations and insults of the invisible enemy of our salvation. Our Saviour sanctified the first of these words, by himself making use of them "Begone, Satan!" *Vade retro, Satana.* Their efficacy has thus been tested, and the very Gospel is the guarantee of their power. *The vain things*, to which the devil incites us are disobedience to the law of God; they are also the pomps and false maxims of the world. The *cup proffered* us by this angel of darkness is *evil*, that is *sin*, which brings *death* to the soul: instead of receiving it at his hands, we ought to bid him keep it to himself, for it is the inheritance which he chose for himself.

The Christian who reads these pages needs not that we should enter into a long explanation of this formula, which meets the artifices and violence of Satan with what he most dreads; namely, the Cross, the Holy Name of Jesus, our Saviour's own words in his temptation, and lastly the mention of the victories which the great Patriarch S. Benedict gained over the infernal dragon. We need only pronounce these words of the Medal with faith, and we shall immediately feel ourselves strengthened and encouraged to resist all that hell can do against it; us; even did we know none of the countless facts which show us how strangely Satan fears this Medal, the mere knowledge of what it means and what it expresses would be sufficient to make us look upon it as one of the most powerful arms which the goodness of God has put into our hands against the malice of the devils.

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#### IV. ORIGIN OF THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT.

It would be impossible to say at what precise period the faithful began to make use of the Medal which we have just described \*; all we can do is to state the circumstances which caused it to become so widely spread in the Church, and elicited for it the express approbation of the Holy See.

\* It is a mistake to understand, as some have done, this verse of the hymn on S. Benedict, composed by Paul the Deacon, *Aether Pluit numismata*, as expressing a much higher antiquity for our Medal than we have mentioned in the text. These words are nothing more than an allusion to the miracle related by S. Gregory the Great, in the Life of S. Benedict, chapter xxv ii.

In the year 1647, at Nattremberg in Bavaria, certain witches, who were accused of having exercised their spells to the injury of the people of the neighbourhood, were put into prison by the authorities. In the examination which they were put to at their trial, they confessed that their superstitious practices had never been able to produce any effect wherever there was an Image of the Holy Cross, either hung up or hidden under ground. They added that they had never been able to exercise any power over the monastery of Metten, and this circumstance had made them feel sure that the house was protected by the Cross. The Magistrates questioned the Benedictine Monks of Metten upon this subject.

Search was made in this monastery, and their attention was at length fixed upon several representations of the holy Cross painted on the walls, and together with the Cross were found the letters, which we have been describing. These paintings were very ancient, but for year's they had been passed by without notice. How, then, were the letters to be explained? No one in the house knew what they meant, and yet they alone could explain the reason of these Crosses having been painted in this particular manner.

After many pious researches, they came to examine a Manuscript belonging to the library of the Monastery. It was an *Evangelarium*, or Book of the Gospel, remarkable for its binding, which was inlaid with relics and precious stones. On the first page were written thirteen verses, telling the reader that this book was written and thus ornamented by order of Abbot Peter, in the year 1415. At the end of this Manuscript there was the book of Rabanus Maurus, *On the Cross*, and several pen and ink drawings made by one of the Monks of Metten, who had concealed his name. One of these drawings represented S. Benedict in a monk's cowl, and holding in his right hand a staff, one end of which was formed into a Cross. On the staff was written this verse:

CRUX SANCTA SIT M LUX N DRACO SIT MICHI DUX.

The Holy Patriarch was holding in his left hand a banner, on which were inscribed these two other lines:

VADE RETRO SATHANA NUQ SUADE M VANA  
SUNT MALA QUAE LIBAS IPSE VENENA BIBAS. \*

\* The description of the Metten Manuscript was published in the year 1721 by the learned Dom Bernard Pez, in the first volume of his *Thesaurus Anecdotorum Novissimus*, in which he has given an engraving of the Drawing in question.

So that, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, S. Benedict was represented holding a Cross, and the verses, the initials of which are now found on the medal, were known even at that time. These verses must have been, at this period, regarded as an object of special devotion since the painting of the Cross on the walls of the Metten Monastery was encircled with their initial letters. At the same time, it is evident that reason of these crosses having been placed on the walls had been lost sight of, and that the rich *Evangelarium*, which we have just described from Dom Bernard Pez, had been almost forgotten, until an unexpected circumstance induced the Monks to search for an explanation of the mysterious letters. We cannot be surprised at this carelessness, if we remember the vicissitudes through which the Monasteries of Germany had passed for upwards of a century, owing to the religious and political disturbances, which had taken place in that century, and which had caused the suppression of so many of the Monasteries, leaving the remainder in a wretched and precarious state.

But here the question presents itself, when was the practice first introduced of representing S. Benedict with the Holy Cross? In answer, we may fairly quote, as some kind of origin to this practice, the very characteristic facts which we have already given from the Lives of SS. Placid and Maurus, those first founders of the traditions of the Benedictine Order. From these instances we learn how both of these Saints performed their miracles by associating to the power of the Holy Cross, the merits of their master S. Benedict. But we may also find a further clue to this question in the fact related in the life of Pope S. Leo the Ninth, who governed the Church from 1049 to 1054.

The holy Pontiff was born in the year 1002. His name was Bruno, and during his childhood he was put under the care of Berthold, Bishop of Toul. Being on a visit to some relations in the Castle of Egingenheim, he was sleeping one night - it was between Saturday and Sunday - in the room which had been allocated to him. During his sleep, a frightful toad came and crept on his face. It put one of its fore feet on his ear and the other under his chin, and then, violently pressing his face, began to suck his flesh. The pressure and pain awoke Bruno; alarmed at the danger to which he was exposed, he immediately ran from his bed, and with his hand knocked away from his ear the horrid reptile, which the moonlight enabled him to see. He immediately began to search with fright: several servants were soon in his room with lights; but the venomous reptile had disappeared. They searched for it in every corner of the room, but to no purpose: so that they were inclined to look upon the whole matter as a mere imagination of the boy. Be this as it may, the consequences were cruel realities, for Bruno immediately felt his face, throat and breast begin to be inflamed, and he was soon reduced to an extremely dangerous state.

For two months did his afflicted parents sit by his bed side, expecting every day to be his last. But at length, God, who destined him to become the pillar of his Church, put an end to their anxiety by restoring him to health. For eight days he had been speechless, when on a sudden, whilst perfectly awake, he saw a shining ladder which seemed to go from his bed, and then passing through the window of his room reached up to heaven. A reverend old man, clothed in the monastic habit, and encircled with a brilliant light, descended by this ladder. He had in his right hand a Cross which was fastened at the end of a long staff. Coming close up to the sick man, he put his left hand on the ladder, and with his right placed the Cross, which he was carrying, on Bruno's face, and afterwards on the other parts which were inflamed. The touch caused the venom to issue through an opening which was there and then formed near the ear. The old man then departed by the same way by which he had come, leaving the sick man with the certainty of his recovery. Bruno lost no time in calling his attendant Adalberon, who was a cleric: he made him sit on his bed, and related to him the joyful visit which he had just received. The sadness which had overwhelmed the family, was changed into an extreme joy, and in a few days the wound was healed and Bruno restored to perfect health. Ever after he loved to recount this miraculous event, and the Archdeacon Wibert, to whom we are indebted for this history, assures us that the Pontiff was convinced, that the venerable old man who had cured him by the touch of the Holy Cross, was the glorious Patriarch S. Benedict. (Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Saeculum vi.*)

Such are the facts as we read them related in the Acts of S. Leo the Ninth, given by Dom Mabillon in his Sixth Benedictine Century. This history

almost forces us into two equally natural conjectures: and first, the reason of Bruno's recognising S. Benedict in the venerable figure which appeared to him with a Cross in it is hand, was because it was the custom of those times to represent the holy Legislator as bearing this sign of our Redemption; and secondly, the event, which we have here related, having happened to a man whose influence in the Church was so great, and who entertained such warm gratitude towards the holy Patriarch who had healed him by the Cross, must have confirmed and perhaps even originated, in Germany more particularly, where S. Leo the Ninth passed the greater part of his life, the custom of making the Cross to be an emblem of S. Benedict, since it was the instrument whereby he worked so many wonders. The Manuscript of the Metten Monastery is a monument which bears witness to such being the case, and the verses which surrounded the Effigy of the Holy Patriarch were not merely the manual labour of the anonymous writer, but a venerable formula, which was famous even then, since the initial letters of each word in the verses were found united, in several parts of the same Monastery, round the Image of the Cross, and this too so long before, that in the year 1647 the Monks were not able to explain what the letters meant.

The affair of Nattremberg roused the devotion of the country towards S. Benedict and his Cross. In order to secure to the faithful the protection granted by heaven to those who venerate the Holy Cross unitedly with the Holy Patriarch of the Western Monks, certain pious persons then began to multiply and distribute, wherever they could, the august symbols which are found united on the Medal. To the figure of the Cross, and the Effigy of S. Benedict, they added the Letters which had been explained by the Metten Manuscript. From Germany, where the Medal was first struck off, it was soon propagated into every part of Catholic Europe, and was looked upon by the faithful as a sure protection against the infernal spirits. S. Vincent of Paul, who died in 1660, seems to have known this Medal, for his Sisters of Charity have always worn it attached to their Beads, and for many years it was only made, at least in France, for them.

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## V. OF THE USE TO BE MADE OF THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT.

After having described the Medal of S. Benedict, and given its origin, we will now explain the use which is to be made of it and the advantages to be derived from it. We are aware that in this age of ours, when the Devil is thought by many to be an imaginary rather than a real being, it will seem to be strange that a Medal should be made, and blessed, and used as a preservative against the power of the wicked spirit. And yet, the holy Scriptures give us abundant instructions upon the ever busy power of the Devils, as also upon the dangers to which we are exposed both in soul and body by the snares they set for us. The not believing in the existence of Devils, or the ridiculing the accounts which are told of their



operations, is not enough to destroy their power, and, in spite of this incredulity, the air is filled with legions of these spirits of wickedness, as S. Paul teaches us. (Ephesians ii, 2; vi, 12)

Were it not that God protected us by the ministry of the holy Angels, and this generally without our being aware of it, it would be impossible for us to escape the countless snares of these enemies of all God's creatures. But if there ever was a time when it would seem to be superfluous to prove the existence of wicked spirits, it is now, when we find reappearing amongst us those dangerous and sinful practices, which were used by the pagans of old, and now again by christians for the purpose of eliciting an answer from spirits, though these can be no other than evil and lying ones. Surely our age is credulous enough in the existence of devils, when we find it so fashionable to be using again those consultings of the dead, and oracles, and superstitions, which Satan employed for keeping men under his power during so many hundred years.

Now such is the power of the Holy Cross against Satan and his legions, that we may look upon it as the invisible shield, which makes us invulnerable against all their darts. The brazen Serpent raised up in the desert by Moses, in order to cure those who were stung by the fiery serpents, is given to us by our Saviour himself as a figure of his Cross. (S. John iii, 14.) The mark made on the house doors with the blood of the Paschal Lamb by the Israelites preserved them from the terrible visit of the destroying Angel. (Exodus xii, 23.) The prophet Ezechiel tells us that they were God's elect, who had *Thau* on their foreheads; and it is this same mark, which S. John, in his Apocalypse, calls the sign of the Lamb. (Apoc. xiv, 1) It would even seem that the Pagans had some idea of the power, which this sacred sign was to exercise, at some future period, against the Devils; for on occasion of the destruction of the Temple of Serapis at Alexandria, under the Emperor Theodosius, there was found engraven upon its foundations the *Thau*, which is the figure of the Cross, and the symbol which was venerated by the Pagans as expressive of the *future life*. The very adorers of Serapis used to say, agreeably to a tradition which they had, that when this symbol should be made known to the world, idolatry would cease.

History informs us that the pagan mysteries were sometimes rendered powerless on account of there being in the crowd a Christian who made the sign of the Cross. Tertullian tells us in his Apology, that even pagans, who had witnessed what wonders the Christians wrought by the Cross, would themselves successfully employ this mysterious sign against the artifices and attacks of the wicked spirits. S. Augustine assures us that the same was done in his time - "nor ought we," says he, "to be astonished at this; these men are, it is true, strangers who have not joined our ranks; but it is the power of our great King, which makes itself felt on these occasions." (De diversis quaestionibus. Quaest. lxxxix.)

After the triumph of the Church, the great doctor S. Athanasius thus expressed his own convictions and confidence in reference to this important subject. "The Sign of the Cross," he says, "has the power of dispelling all the secret charms of magic, and of rendering harmless all the deadly draughts it employs. Let any one but try what I say; let him make the Sign of the Cross in the midst of the demons, and pretended oracles, and magical spells. Let him invoke the Name of Christ, and he will see for himself how the devils fly from this Sign and this Name, how the oracles are struck dumb, and how magic and its philtres lose their power!"

So that this power of the Cross is, at the same time, an historical truth and a dogma of our faith and it is only because our faith is weak, that we so seldom have recourse to it and so seldom experience help from it. The snares of Satan are laid for us on every side; we are surrounded by dangers both of soul and body: let us imitate the early Christians; and defend ourselves by making a more frequent use of the Sign of the Cross. Will the happy time ever come again for our country when we shall be allowed to have the Crucifix as our protection in our towns and highways and fields? - and be permitted to reverence it in our public squares as well as in our own houses? - and not be insulted for wearing it openly on our breast besides loving it secretly in our heart?

And now applying these considerations to the Medal, which is the subject of these pages, we come to this conclusion, that it must be profitable to us to make use of the Medal of S. Benedict with faith, on occasions when we have reason to fear the snares of the enemy. Its protection will infallibly prove efficacious in every kind of temptation. Numerous and undeniable facts attest its powerful efficacy on a thousand different occasions, in which the faithful had reason to

apprehend a danger, either from the direct agency of Satan, or from the effects of certain evil practices. We may also employ it in favour of others as a means of preserving or delivering them from dangers, which we foresee are threatening them. Unforeseen accidents may happen to us on land or on sea; let us carry about us this Holy Medal with faith, and we shall be protected. Even in the most trivial circumstances, and in those interests which regard solely man's temporal well-being, the efficacy of the Holy Cross and the power of S. Benedict have been felt. For example, the wicked spirits, in their hatred of man, sometimes molest the animals which God has created for our service, or infest the various articles of nourishment which the same Providence has given to us. Or again, it is not unfrequently the case that our bodily sufferings are caused or protracted by the influence of these our cruel enemies. Experience has proved that the Medal of S. Benedict, made use of with a proper intention, and with prayer, has frequently broken the snares of the devil, procured a visible improvement in cases of sickness, and sometimes even effected a complete recovery.

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## VI. THE MIRACULOUS EFFECTS OF THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT IN THE 17TH CENTURY.

Though the Medal of S. Benedict has been given to the faithful as a protection in the various necessities in which they may be at any time placed, yet as its use is only private, and almost always secret, we cannot be surprised that there has never been published an official account of the salutary effects it has produced. We are going, however, to mention some few facts which have attested its powerful effects in the 17th century. We take them from the pious and learned Bucelin, in his *Benedictus redivivus*. (*Veldkirk*, 1679, pages 267-269.)

In 1665, at Luxeuil in France, a young man, possessed by the wicked spirit, was most cruelly tormented. His parents had employed every means to free him from this state, but all had failed. In this extremity, it came into their minds to have recourse to the Medal of S. Benedict. They made their son drink some water into which they had dipped the medal. Scarce had the boy raised the cup to his lips, than the devil began to torment his victim with such unusual violence that the by-standers were struck with terror. The parents, however, were consoled by hearing the devil declare, by the mouth of their son, that he felt himself controlled by a superior power, and that he would go out of the boy at the third hour of the night. So in effect it happened: the infernal spirit went at the time mentioned, and the boy was restored to peace of mind and health of body.

The following fact took place at Luxeuil about the same time. A young girl was irresistibly compelled by the wicked spirit to utter, at every turn, the most obscene words. One would have thought that the devil had taken up his abode on the lips of his victim. In order to free her from this violence of the enemy of every virtue, her friends gave her also some water to drink which had been sanctified by the contact of the Medal of S. Benedict. Immediately she felt herself freed from this wretched compulsion, nor did she ever after transgress, in her words, the rules of Christian modesty.

The same year, 1665, there was a man who had a sore on his arm, but so large and so inflamed that no remedy seemed to have any effect on it. It was suggested that the next time the sore was dressed, there should be also tied on the arm the Medal of S. Benedict. This was done, and the next day, in taking off the bandages, the sore was found to be in a healthy state, and after a few days it was perfectly healed.

About the same time, another sick man was reduced to such a state that nothing seemed to give him relief, and he was despaired of. In this sad condition, he asked to be given to drink some water in which the Medal of S. Benedict had been dipped, and very soon afterwards he was restored to perfect health.

In the year 1666, the Castle of Maillot, not many miles from Besançon, was infested by devils. Its inmates were being continually alarmed by hearing strange noises, and numbers of their cattle were dying from unknown distempers. At length such was the terror, that the building was abandoned. Some pious persons recommended the Medal of S. Benedict being hung up here and there on the walls of the Castle, and the event justified their confidence. Instantly all cause of fear disappeared, the house was perfectly quiet, and the inmates lived in it henceforward without being molested.

In 1665, a village of Lorraine was being laid waste by frequent fires. Every day some house was burnt down, and no one could discover any cause of these destructive fires. After twelve houses had been thus destroyed, the inhabitants went in despair to a neighbouring Monastery, and asked what they had best do under this calamity. The Monks gave them several Medals of S. Benedict, advising them to hang them on the walls of the houses which were still spared. The villagers followed this advice, and from that time they had no more cause to fear further ravages from fire.

In a certain part of Burgundy, a distemper broke out amongst the cattle, and so virulent was it that the cows gave blood instead of milk. They were perfectly cured on being made to drink water into which the Medal of S. Benedict had been put. This fact happened in the same year, 1665.

The owner of a brick-kiln complained of not being able to bake the clay, no matter how intensely the kiln was heated. A Medal of S. Benedict was fastened to the wall; the fire immediately regained its power, nor did the unnatural phenomenon again appear. This also happened about the same year, 1665.

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## VII. THE EFFECTS OF THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT IN THE 19TH CENTURY. CURES OBTAINED BY IT.

During the last few years the grace of God has produced a change in the minds of the faithful of these northern countries, by reanimating many of them with a respect for what is supernatural. This also in its turn revived confidence in the holy practices from which our ancestors received so many blessings. The Medal of S. Benedict, which was on the point of becoming a secret, known only by a few pious souls, has now been brought so much into notice that thousands have recourse to it in their necessities, and their confidence has been rewarded.

We proceed to give several instances of the protection granted to those who have used this Holy Medal, and we begin by those which relate to the cure of bodily ailments.

In the early part of July, in the year 1843, a lady, who was taking the waters at Neris, (France) was suddenly seized with a violent bleeding at the nose. The doctor is called in; he perceives the danger; but the remedies he prescribes for stopping the bleeding only seem to increase it. Things continue in this state till the evening of the third day, when, at nine o'clock, the danger visibly increases, and the doctor can no longer conceal his fear. The landlady of the hotel goes out of the room in a state of great excitement, and, as if by inspiration, she asks if any one in the house had a Medal of S. Benedict. Fortunately one is found; the sick person, who was a woman of strong faith, accepts the Medal, and immediately time bleeding stops. She washes her hands and face, and goes to lie down, which she had not been able to do for three days and two nights. The person who had lent the Medal found, on returning home, a letter dated Rome, July 8, 1843, in which was written: "I have not yet been able to meet with the book of the Benedictine of Prague;\* however, I send you a little book on the same subject, given me by our Benedictines of Rome." Now, in the list given in this little book of the miraculous effects of the Medal of S. Benedict, we read this amongst the rest: "It is a most efficacious remedy against bleeding." (*E'rimedio efficacissimo pel jetto di sangue.* VIII.)

\* The book here alluded to is that of Benno Löbl, Abbot of a Margaret's of Prague, entitled: *Disquisitio sacra numismata, de origine quidditate, virtute, pioque usu Numismatum seu Crucularum S. Benedicti, Abbatis, Vienna Austriae, apud Leopoldum Kaliwoda, 1743.* We have this work, and have consulted it in drawing up this notice.

About the same time, a young person, who was laid up with the typhus fever, had been obliged to sit for ten days in an arm-chair, as the reclining position of lying in bed had become insufferable. At nine in the evening, a friend of the family who had come to see her, spoke to her of S. Benedict's Medals, and slipt one into her handkerchief. Scarce five minutes had elapsed, when the sick person got into bed, and on the morrow, after sleeping soundly during the whole night, she found herself perfectly recovered from this terrible fever, which up to that time had baffled all the skill of the doctors.

In January of 1819, at T--, the Reverend Father P--, a Jesuit, calls at the house of a friend, and asked him if he could recommend him some cure for a tooth-ache which was almost driving him wild. The friend begins to tell him about S. Benedict's Medal. After a short explanation of it, the good Father accepts of one. The very moment it touches his hand

he makes a cry, like that which dentists so often hear from their patients, and then says, "My tooth is broken." He puts his finger on the place, and is surprised to find the tooth all right, and the aching quite gone.

In 1858, a Benedictine, of the Monastery of S. Paul in Rome, having heard that a child, to whom he had stood god-father, was taken dangerously ill at Juliers, in Rhenish Prussia, sent to the mother a Medal of S. Benedict. Inflammation of the lungs, accompanied by spasms in the stomach, had gradually reduced the child to the last extremity. One night, the mother, seeing the child almost at the point of death, was suddenly minded to make use of the Medal which she had received a few days before. Distracted with grief and trembling with anxiety, she lays the Medal on her child's breast, and then throws herself on her knees at the foot of the bed in fervent prayer. That very moment the poor little sufferer falls quietly asleep, and after some hours of the most tranquil slumber, got up full of life and free from the disease, which up to that time had seemed incurable.

In the summer of the same year, 1838, the cholera was raging at Tivoli, in Italy, and a man, who lived not us from Subiaco, was seized with the most excruciating pains. In a few hours, this terrible malady had made such progress, that his friends ran in great haste to bring the priest, that he might administer the last sacraments. In the meantime the danger became so great that the sick man thought himself at the point of death and swooned away from the violence of the pain. A few moments after he returned to himself, and felt that his sufferings were still increasing. The cramps in his stomach were more violent than ever, and in endeavouring to allay them by the pressure of his hands, he touches the Medal of S. Benedict, which he always wore. This reminded him to have recourse to the Holy Patriarch, for whom he entertained the most lively devotion. His pains immediately disappeared - he gets up, leaves his bed, and seeing the priest who, out of breath and the perspiration running down his face, had just come into the house, "Father," he exclaims, "I am cured;" and showing him the Medal, he adds, "See what has saved me." The good man paid a visit not long after to the Benedictine Monastery of S. Paul at Rome, taking with him the certificates of both the priest and doctor, which bore testimony to the truth of this extraordinary cure.

In February, 1861, a colony of Benedictines, from the same Monastery of S. Paul of Rome, established itself near the town of Cleves, in Rhenish Prussia. They began in March to build an enclosure round the little garden of the new Monastery. The man who acted as superintendent of repairs of the parish church, which was served by the Benedictine Fathers, offered to go and purchase for them the wood they required for the building of the enclosure. Accordingly, he repaired to the place where they were felling trees in the government forests. This man had had given to him the Medal of S. Benedict, and he carried it on his person with great devotion. After having loaded his cart with several large logs of oak, he started back for the Monastery; but just as the cart began to move, one of the logs, which had not been properly fastened, came rolling down; the good man was at the back of the cart, and not being able to get out of the way in time, he was knocked down and his right leg almost crushed to pieces.

He was carried home. The prior of the Monastery on hearing of this frightful accident said to the bystanders "It was in the service of S. Benedict that he got wounded, and S. Benedict will cure him." One of the Religious mentioned this to the poor sufferer, who had already been thinking of having recourse to his Medal, which he never ceased wearing. Placing it then on the leg which was so fearfully crushed, he fastens it there with a bandage. In a very short time he falls fast asleep. and continues so till late the following morning, when he awakes, gets up without the slightest difficulty, and finds the wounds as perfectly healed as though there had been no accident at all.

In 1801, at Chambéry, in the Convent called "S. Benedict's," one of the Sisters had been suffering for three months most acute pains in her legs, brought on by her having been exposed to draughts and unusually heavy work. She could not make up her mind to tell her sufferings to any one, nor had she employed any remedy. At last she resolved to making a Novena in honour of S. Benedict, during which she would use the Medal in order to obtain the protection of the Holy Patriarch. During the nine days she pressed the Medal strongly upon her legs, first on one and then on the other, at the same time invoking the aid of S. Benedict, and each time the pains were relieved. She went on, however, with the heavy work, which her duties in the house required of her. The first Novena not having produced any other effect than mere momentary relief, she decided on a second. This was blessed with perfect success and entirely removed the pain. The same Sister, being afterwards afflicted with sore eyes, had recourse to the same remedy, and having bathed her eyes

with water into which she had dipped the Medal, her sight was immediately strengthened, and in a few days became as good as ever it had been.

There lived in Savoy a little girl six years old, who had been for several weeks suffering the most excruciating pains. The nerves of the child had become contracted, and to touch her even with the tip of the finger caused her to feel agonies of torture, in such a state as this she could neither eat nor drink. The parents had employed all the remedies which medical skill could suggest, and the case was evidently an incurable one. Two Sisters of the Convent of S. Benedict, which we have just mentioned, went to visit the little girl, for she belonged to the school which they managed, and offer some consolation to the mother. On reaching home they bethought themselves of the Medal of S. Benedict. They immediately sent one, with word that it should be put round the child's neck, and that she should be persuaded to swallow something into which the Medal should have been previously dipped. The mother of the little sufferer faithfully complied with the pious prescription. An immediate change was visible, and after a few days the child got up perfectly cured.

In the same country, but in the preceding year, two women were cured - one of the miliary fever after confinement, and the other of a dangerous attack of dropsy on the chest - and both of them by drinking something into which the Medal of S. Benedict had been put.

In the Westmoreland of Pennsylvania, during the month of August, 1861, Mrs. --, a Catholic, perceived that one of her daughters was taken with a violent attack of *diphtheria*. It began about evening and kept getting worse every hour, which was the more distressing owing to the difficulty of finding a doctor in that part of the country. The nearest was almost twelve miles off. The mother had great faith in the protection of S. Benedict, and possessed his Medal. She resolved on putting this Medal into a tumbler of water, and making her child drink it. She did so. The child drank the water thus sanctified by the contact of the Medal, and next morning was out of all danger.

In the early part of the year, 1863, at Montigny-le-Roy, there was a woman who had been suffering for a long time the most severe attacks of earache. Pieces of clotted blood and matter would occasionally come from the ear, showing the diseased state of the organ. At length deafness came on, and the poor woman was unfit for any work. Having had a Medal of S. Benedict given to her, she put it to her ear and said a *Pater* and *Ave* in honour of the holy Patriarch. The moment after, she was completely cured and could hear as well as ever she had done in her life.

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### VIII. SPIRITUAL FAVOURS OBTAINED.

The greater number of favours obtained during our own times, by means of S. Benedict's Medal, have reference to the instantaneous conversion of sinners, who had been callous to all that had previously been tried in order to bring them to God. We will mention a few of these instances.

In a provincial town of France, there was living a gentleman in very comfortable circumstances, who had once held a government appointment. His sister, an exceedingly pious widowed lady, nursed him with the most affectionate care during his frequent attacks of illness, but was above all solicitous how she might induce her brother to think upon doing something for his salvation. Hitherto, all her efforts had been fruitless. No matter how gentle or indirect were her attempts, they were all met with this cold answer. "Do not talk to me about seeing a Priest: I cannot bear to hear the subject mentioned." The sister went at last to a friend, and told him in confidence of her trouble, who said to her: "Pay no attention to your brother's answer; persevere in your entreaties; if by your silence you suffer him to fall into hell, he would surely not excuse you." And in this way several years passed on.

In the December of 1846, after a short illness, there were evidences of gangrene; the doctors not only pronounce such it be the case, but moreover, that an operation would be useless, and finally, that; the sick man could live two days longer. The friend who had advised the sister not to be deterred by the words of her brother, now comes to see her. She is overwhelmed with grief, but declares that not even now has she the courage to put the question to him. "Well, then," says the friend, "take these two Medals of S. Benedict keep one for yourself that the devil may not hinder you from doing

your duty, and put the other under your brother's pillow." She took his advice, and five minutes had scarce passed when the following conversation took place between the brother and sister: "Dear Sister!" said the sick man. "Well Brother, what is it?" "My Dear Sister, do you not think it would be right to send for the Priest?" The Priest accordingly is sent for, and soon arrives the sick man receives him with joy, all the rites of the Church are administered, and he dies two days after in the most edifying dispositions.

In 1854, in an hospital of Incurables, there was a woman advanced in years, who was almost entirely paralyzed and bedridden. With no more religion about her than that of an impious lunatic, she would utter at times such disgusting language and such horrid blasphemies, that many persons looked upon her as being possessed by the devil. There were reasons for suspecting that she kept near her certain articles which prompted her to all this wickedness. It happened that on a day when the ward had to undergo a thorough cleaning, she was obliged to be taken from her bed and put, for the time, in a room near at hand. She screamed, or rather howled with rage, but she was obliged to yield. The Nuns of the hospital found under the mattress a bag filled with objects of a most suspicious character. They took it away and put in its place a Medal of S. Benedict. In an hour or so the poor woman was carried back to her bed, without of course being told of what had been done. Scarcely, however, does she come near the bed than she begins to abuse the Sisters for having taken away her treasure, of which no doubt the devil took care to tell her. In spite of all this, she is laid on the bed, when suddenly her screaming ceases, and she becomes as quiet as a lamb; the hideous look she ordinarily put on was changed into one of joy. The poor creature then asks for a Priest. A few days after, the infirmary was arranged as a chapel - prettily lit up and flowers placed here and there - to receive our Lord, who was coming to comfort and cure this soul, now set free like a captive bird, from the snare of hell.

In 1859, a poor woman was telling her troubles to a person who knew something of the efficacy with which our Lord has enriched the Medal of S. Benedict. Her husband, though a clever work man was a great drunkard. All they earned was regularly spent at the end of the week, and of course there was nothing in the house but wretched-ness. The person to whom she spoke gave her one of the Medals, telling her to touch with it the kettle of wine which she put before her husband at meals, though she herself was obliged to be satisfied with water. When he had tasted the wine, he exclaimed - "That wretched stuff! Give me some water, for it is better than such wine as thus. I will make up for it after." When he had finished his dinner, he makes his wife give him some wine. and goes to his old place, the neighbouring public house from which he always was accustomed to come back home late at night and intoxicated. In about a quarter of an hour he comes home telling his wife that he was sure this was a plot against him, for the wine at the tavern was worse than their own. It was a happy night for both. Next day and the next few days, water was the only beverage, the poor man could bear to touch. When this much was gained, his wife, who was an excellent Christian, had not much difficulty in persuading him to fulfil henceforward his religious duties.

In the same year, 1854, at T\*\*\*\*, there was a woman eighty years old, who had declared that she was determined to die without going to confession; it was upwards of sixty years since she had been to the Sacraments. The Priest, who was asked by a friend to visit her, was prepared for a refusal. A Medal was put into the Priest's hand, and the person who gave it to him said "Go, and fear not." On his entering her room, the old lady turns her face towards the wall, saying aloud that she intended going to sleep; "Do so" replied the Priest, "and take this Medal, and I will say a little prayer." He kneels down by the bedside, and before he had time to finish the *Memorare*, the old lady turns towards him, tells her relatives to leave the room, and begins her confession.

On the 14th of March, 1859, a pious layman happened to meet in the street a Priest, who was much distressed about a young man of seventeen who had come home from Paris so ill, that the doctor was of opinion that he could not live many days. The Priest had been three times to the house, but the family would not receive him. The layman on hearing this, spoke to him about the wonderful effect of S. Benedict's Medal, gave him one, and encouraged him to make another trial. The Priest went, and at first meets with the same reception. He then showed the Medal, which he said he wished to give to the young man. "Oh, if that is all," said the person who was speaking to him, "you may come in." He went to the room of the young man, who no sooner saw him than he hid his face in the bed clothes. "My dear friend said the Priest, "accept this little present from me." Immediately he uncovered his face, and began his confession with the most admirable sentiments of contrition.

In 1860, an old man was received into one of the Paris hospitals, and falling seriously ill there, it was evident that he had but a very short time to live. He was a Protestant. The Sisters, who had the care of the hospital, seeing that there was no chance of his recovery, lost no time in using every possible effort to secure to him the life of the soul. For this end they had made novena after novena, private and general communions had been offered up, and they had got a great many masses said. It seemed however to be all of no avail. It happened one Sunday, that a friend having come to the hospital to visit the sick, and being informed of the Protestant who was so near death, he advised them to give the sick man a Medal of S. Benedict, and in case he should refuse it, to put it under his pillow. The advice was instantly followed, and the Medal was put round the neck of the dying man. The next time the same person came to the hospital, he had the consolation of hearing that the very Sunday he advised them to use the Medal, the Protestant had asked at twelve o'clock that night, to be received into the church. They offered to send for either of the two nearest parish Priests, but he refused, saying that he would prefer the Chaplain of the house, whom he had had occasion to know. This latter, not having the faculties necessary for receiving the abjuration or for absolving from heresy, leave was obliged to be sent for to the Archbishop, so that in spite of all the diligence that was used, it was not possible to administer the Sacraments to the sick man before nine o'clock the next morning. The old man received all the rites of the church with great devotion, and died tranquilly in the evening of the same day

An English Puseyite Minister, a young man full of information, happened to be at T-- in 1861. He was fond of controversy, and had therefore sought an introduction to three Parsons who had become zealous converts, and lived out in the country not far from the town. For nine days had the amicable discussion been going on with no result. The tenth day, May 14th, was fixed by Divine Providence for the close of these disputes, which were destined to prepare the way for an extraordinary conversion. The Puseyite Minister was going back to the town, and one of his three friends being obliged to take a party of children to see the circus, which was at that time being exhibited in a field adjoining the market place, invited him to go there with them. He did so. They reach the circus and take their tickets. Whilst the children were enjoying the amusements, our two controvertists resumed their discussion, and as their neighbours could not understand them, they were under no restraints. The entertainment was about half over, when the Puseyite interrupts the dispute, saying "I have had quite enough, let us have no more: You will never convince me." Thus abruptly silenced, the Catholic friend was going to give all up, when he suddenly bethought himself of the wonderful things he had heard regarding the Medal of S. Benedict, and taking off the one he wore, he begs his friend to accept it. The Puseyite holds out his hand and takes the Medal. For several minutes there was silence on both sides. Meanwhile the Catholic was praying. Suddenly the Puseyite breaks the silence with these words: "My dear friend, I have done wrong by holding all those long disputes. The light now beams upon me, and I wish without delay to be received into the Church." Accordingly, he made his profession of faith five days after, and the Church numbered one more in the fold of Christ.

In the town of Noyon in Fiance, there was a pious woman, who was in great trouble on account of her mother being out of her mind, and who from time to time had fits, during which she was perfectly furious. People who brought work to the daughter were afraid of the poor mad mother, who would sometimes seize anything she could get hold of in the room, and throw it out of the window. There was every reason for fearing that some day or other she would destroy herself. This state of things went on for several years - but there was nothing which so afflicted the daughter, as the impossibility of her mother getting to Confession, which was the more distressing as this state of madness had seized the creature so suddenly, that she had not had the opportunity of settling the accounts of her conscience. In the year 1861, a pious Christian happened to give her a Medal of S. Benedict, which she contrived to put round her mother's neck. That same instant all her madness ceased - she took the Medal and kissed it unceasingly. Soon after, she made her confession in the most edifying manner. Since then, she has continued to be as gentle and quiet as a lamb, and though the infirmities of old age now oblige her to keep her bed, she never gives way to anything like impatience, and there seems to be every likelihood of her dying a happy death.

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## **IX. PROTECTION AGAINST THE SNARES OF THE DEVIL.**

There is one special influence which the Medal of Holy Father S. Benedict possesses, and which may be called the principal object for which God gave this gift to his faithful people - the power it possesses to spoil the devil's designs. We here mention a few facts which will do more than merely interest our readers; they will suggest to them what they themselves may do, should they ever find themselves in circumstances which now-a-days are anything but impossible.

In 1839, a celebrated magnetiser who had performed several wonderful things in different towns in France, went to T--, where he advertised that he was going to give public lectures. He took about with him to all these different places a young girl on whom he exercised his mesmerism, and he drew crowded audiences by the extraordinary effects he produced on this victim. In the town of which we are now speaking, he attracted an immense crowd by his advertisement; the lecture was to be given in a very large room, which anciently had been a church, but had been turned to profane uses long before this. The hour came: but nothing that the magnetiser did had the slightest effect, and the girl remained unmoved by all his passes. The audience was dismissed, and the money returned to those who complained of their disappointment. A few hours after, placards were put up all over the town, announcing a second meeting, at such an hour, in the Guildhall. The audience had assembled and this time also the lecturer could do nothing, and after all his trouble and expense, he stole away from the town. Next day came the papers with their scientific explanations of the failure; one would have it that the room had been too hot, another that the gas was too much turned on, and the rest. Of course none of them assigned the true cause. A nun who had happened to hear of the proposed lecture, and knowing that the Church is opposed to the practice of mesmerism, resolved on thwarting the operations of the lecturer, so far as they had any connection with the devil. All she did was to hang out of her cell-window a Medal of S. Benedict, and beg the intervention of the holy Patriarch. The result was what we have related, and *the prince of the power of this air*,\* as the Apostle calls Satan, was vanquished.

\* 1 Ephesians, ii. 2.

A gentleman of our acquaintance happened, in the year 1858, to be in a town of the department of Vienne. At a party of friends to which he had been invited, the conversation got on the subject of table-turning, and some of the company began to relate the extraordinary effects they themselves had produced last year. Of course, there were some of the company who laughed at it all - but the conversation ended in their all agreeing to meet in the same house on the following day at noon, when they would see if they could produce any of these strange wonders. Several expressed a scruple on the subject, as to whether one is quite right in having anything to do with such matters; all however came at the appointed hour and the business was fearlessly begun, the customary forms all being carefully gone through. For two long hours were they at work without the slightest result there was no use in trying any longer, but before separating they ventured to express their various opinions as to the cause of this unusual refusal of the spirits to hold any communication. One of the party, a Miss N., expressed her own conviction that the Medals she carried about her, and especially the Medal of S. Benedict, had something to do with it. Another attempt was proposed and agreed to - all were to meet again the next day at eight o'clock in the evening. Miss N., who had left all her Medals at home, refused, when the party had assembled, to take any active part in the operations, for she felt that she had no longer the same protection, and she kept herself as far off as she could from the company, who had already begun their experiments.

In less than half an hour the table began to shake, then to crack: signs that it was going to move of itself. One of the party, a physician, agreed that when it wished to speak, it should strike one of the legs against the floor, twice for *yes*, and once for *no*. In a moment or two it raised itself somewhat from the floor: all were delighted, and they began putting their questions. These at last were on trifling subjects, and then the following questions regarding the silence of the previous day.

Q. "Why did you not speak yesterday? Was it because Miss N--. had her Medal of the Blessed Virgin?" A. "No," Q. "Was it because she had her Medal of S. Benedict?" A. "Yes." (The two knocks were very loud). Q. "Would the Medal of the Blessed Virgin have prevented your coming?" A. "No." It was the case that almost all who were present always wore both the Medal and the Scapular of our Lady.\* They then passed on to other questions. Q. "What is your name? The table then knocked the floor, as had been agreed, when those letters of the alphabet were pronounced which spelt the words required: first it was at S, then at A, then at T. It was unnecessary to be told more, and everyone understood the



word before the table had finished the letters, "SATAN." Several of the party were terrified and left the ring, but the others, who needed more than this to alarm them, went on with their questions. Some of these were on religious and some on scientific subjects, but not one single answer was elicited and twice did the table throw itself completely on the floor, which done, it again began to turn as before. One of the party put this question, "Will you return to-morrow?" The answer was 'Yes.'" On the same person asking "at what o'clock?" The table gave twelve strokes. Q. "Do you mean twelve at noon?" A. "No." Q. "Twelve at night?" A. "Yes."

It would be too long to give here all the other answers which were made to the various questions but the impression made on the persons present was great, and it was impossible for them to doubt who the mysterious agent is who thus communicates with men by means of this "Table-Turning." The party broke up at eleven, and each one resolved to wear, from that time forward, the Medal of S. Benedict.

\* It has seemed strange to some that God should have chosen to grant this by the medal of S. Benedict rather than by that of our Lady. But let them remember, that although the power of the Blessed Mother of God is greater than that of all the Saints together, it is also the practice of the faithful to have recourse to the Saints also. As God sometimes grants us favours by Mary, which he did not grant us when we asked them directly from Himself, so also Mary would have us sometimes receive favours from the Saints, which she herself could easily grant us. [*Author's Note*]

In the year 1840, the Town Council of S--, proposed to widen one of the streets, through it was already quite wide enough for the traffic: the measure was carried, and it was resolved that they should pull down a large portion of a Church dedicated to our Blessed Lady, and which was much frequented by pilgrims. In order to carry out this plan they began to build a partition wall from top to bottom of the Church. Our Lady's Altar was within the part to be taken down, and, therefore, it was to be destroyed by this whim of the Street Commissioners. The wall had risen twenty feet, and one may imagine the mess and confusion in the Church caused by the masons. A gentleman who was passing through the town was grieved to see such a sad profanation, and going up to the statue of our Lady, which had been brought from its own place into the portion of the Church which was to be spared, he puts a Medal of S. Benedict on the pedestal. A few days after, the town surveyor, who had been mainly instrumental in this measure, died suddenly. His successor, when coming to inspect the works, soon perceived how perfectly unnecessary such a change was, even were it not a desecration, and stops the works. The next day he went before the Town Council and submitted to its consideration so satisfactory a report upon the matter that the first decision was revoked the wall, which had almost reached as high as the ceiling, was taken down, and the people saw their clear old Church given back to them.

Not far from the city of Rennes, there was a Cafe and Billiard Room kept by a good Catholic family. For the last few years they had noticed strange symptoms of the place being infested with demons. When. there was no one at the billiard-table noises and voices were sometimes heard as though there were a large party playing; pieces of furniture were changed from place to place in the house without any one of the family touching them; doors opened and shut apparently of themselves, and a strange noise was heard in the bedrooms. One Christmas night, the servant had gone up to the attic to get herself ready for the midnight Mass, when she finds all that part of the house filled with a thick smoke, in the midst of which there was a something, which she could not lay hold of, moving to and fro. She screamed, hurried out of the place, and fainted. But these strange appearances were frequently happening, and of course kept the initiates of the house in a state of continual alarm. They had got many masses said for the dead, and had had the house blessed with the *formula* prescribed by the Church for these occasions, but up to that time all had proved ineffectual. Nothing, therefore, remained for the inmates of the house but to abandon it, though it was quite new, and they had hoped to find it a convenient and comfortable home. A pious woman spoke to them about S. Benedict's Medal, and persuaded them to make use of it. They began by putting it over every door in the house, and immediately all was quiet. But they had not thought of placing the sign of salvation in the doorway leading to the cellar, and all the fury of the evil spirits seemed to concentrate there, so great was the noise and disorder which began to be heard from this quarter. The Medal was put there also, and the influence of Satan seemed now to be entirely removed from the house; not, however, without his seeking revenge by there and then taking possession of the person who related all this to the writer, and cruel indeed were the sufferings which the devil caused his victim to endure both in body and soul. This person obtained, after some time, deliverance from this terrible trial by following the counsels of an enlightened director, who

recommended the poor sufferer not to be afraid of the devil, and to pronounce frequently the holy names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

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## **X. PRESERVATION IN DANGER.**

Amongst the effects of S. Benedict's Medal, when it is employed with a lively and simple faith, preservation in accidents is one. We here offer to the reader a few recent facts, which will show that the power granted to this Medal by Almighty God is far from being exhausted.

In June, 1817, four Christian Brothers and two other travellers were going by coach from Orleans to Lyons. They were inside passengers, and one of the gentlemen began to speak to the rest about S. Benedict's Medal, and gave one to each of the party. He was busy explaining to them the meaning of the letters, when on a sudden the horses took fright at something, set off at full gallop, and the driver soon lost all command over them. The road was being mended, and one half of the pavement had been taken up. The stones with which the road was going to be repaved, had been piled up in such a manner as to serve as a barrier to keep conveyances from going on the part which was unpaved. The horses dashed across this heap of stones, dragging the coach after them. Though one side was fearfully higher than the other, it was not upset. For two or three minutes it ploughed through the soft ground of this side of the road, when in the twinkling of an eye, it is dragged back again all safe on to the good part, and as the traces were broken by the violence of the shock, it immediately stopped, much to the delight of the passengers. This happened near a village called Chateau-Neuf (Loiret), which is about six miles from the town of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire. The people of the village who had witnessed the narrow escape of the conveyance, cried out "It is a miracle! What else could have saved it?"

A few years before this, in June, 1843, a diligence was going up the very steep hill near Ecommoy, a village on the high road between Le Mans and Tours. The horses were not able to proceed, and, suddenly stopping, they were dragged back down the hill at a fearful speed. There were three passengers in the front compartment of the diligence. Opening the door, two of them jumped out on the road, but the third kept his seat, and took into his hands his Medal of S. Benedict; that very instant the diligence stopped, and the horses which had turned sideways, quietly returned to the middle of the road.

It was a day in the summer of 1858, about five o'clock in the afternoon, when a wagon heavily laden with goods was passing along the street named *Rue Royale, Saint Honoré*, in Paris; it had got opposite No. 4, or 6, when it stopped. It was in the middle of the street - the horses became restive - and a crowd soon gathered. One of the traces broke and the front horse turned completely round. He seemed wild with fright: he raised himself upon his hinder legs, and throwing up his other two as high as he could, he came down with his whole weight upon another of the horses, which he began biting most savagely, and this done, he recommenced his prancing and kicking. The waggoner was most vigorous in his attempts to subdue the poor animal, pulling the reins and dealing the hardest blows he could on his head with the butt-end of his whip; but all this seemed only to irritate him the more and make things worse. The police-man, who was on the spot, assisted the driver in his attempts, and the spectators were busy, as usual on such occasions, voicing their advice, and yet all to no effect. In the crowd there was a good Christian, and he had learned by experience how powerful is the intercession of S. Benedict; seem the danger, he took the Medal in his hand, at the same time addressing a short ejaculation to the holy Patriarch. Scarcely had his lips pronounced the prayer, when the horse, which was still wild with rage, became suddenly quiet, allowing himself to be patted and then led to his place.

One beautiful morning of the same summer, and in the same city, two soldiers in half-uniform had been giving some exercise to the horses of which they had the management; they were returning, and had got opposite the Mayor's Court-House of District No. 1, when the following scene took place and attracted the attention of the idle and curious who were passing along the street called *Rue Anjou, Saint Honoré*. One of the horses suddenly stopped, and turning sideways, nothing that his rider did could induce the animal to move. In front of the Court-House was an open space - it was facing this that the horse stood just as though he were rivetted to the earth, and every now and then he shook his whole body. One of the passers-by was a person who had great faith in the Medal of S. Benedict: he had not quite come

up to the spot, but as well as he could judge at the distance, he could not help thinking that the enemy of mankind might very possibly have something to do with all this. Afraid of an accident happening, he recites to himself the words of which the initials are engraven on the Medal:- *Vado retro, Satana, &c.* No sooner has he finished the formula than the horse begins to prance and rear, and then becomes immovable as before. The individual of whom we just spoke and who was now very near to the Court-House, perceiving that the rider was still in the same difficulty, takes his Medal into his hand, and says this prayer, "Glorious S. Benedict, beseech our Lord that he by thy intercession, may make these horses docile to the command of their riders, and deliver them from danger." The stubborn animal at once proceeds quietly onwards, and canters up to the other which had been waiting. The unknown liberator asked a woman who was standing on the pavement at the corner of the street Suresnes, if the horses had been standing there a long time - she told him they had been there for a quarter of an hour.

During the winter of 1858-9, the same person was in Paris, and was just turning into the street *Miromesnil*. His attention was attracted by seeing a crowd standing on the footpath which is opposite this street; and the stoppage, he found, was caused a horse which would not stir one inch further, in spite of all the beating and spurring of the groom who was riding him. Anxious to see what was the matter, he stopped, and saw that the stupidity of the animal was in it to be mastered. The groom at length was obliged to rest, and called for a glass of something to drink to revive his courage and strength. Thinking that Satan might have something to do with such strange perversity, the person we allude to relied on having recourse to his Medal of S. Benedict. Scarcely had he finished the words which are marked on the Medal, than the horse set off at a gallop along the *Avenue Marigny*. In spite of this, he still feared the snares of the invisible enemy, and whilst proceeding on his way he kept his eyes on the horse and rider. His fears were soon realised, for the horse had not gone half-way up the avenue when he suddenly stopped again and turned round as before. The good man then took his Medal into his hand, and said this short prayer: "O glorious S. Benedict, ask of our Lord that He may, by thy intercession, render this His creature obedient to man and harmless." The horse instantly became tractable, and the groom turning him to the right into the *Champs Elysées*, they soon were out of sight.

On Sunday the 28th of November, 1858, a boy of thirteen who was apprenticed to a jeweller in Paris happened to meet in the street a person whom he knew to be a friend, who took an interest in his family. After a cordial greeting and a few words of conversation, the young man received from the friend a Medal of S. Benedict, as a protection against the dangers to which we are all so much exposed. On the following Thursday, which was the 2nd of December, our young apprentice was sliding down the banisters of the staircase, which, seeing that some one was coming up and afraid of coming against him, he leaned forward, lost his balance, and falls down nearly two storeys. In his fall, he came with his side against the banister of the lower storey, and the violence of the shock sent him back on to the last step of the landing, where he found himself sitting, with no other injury than the being stunned by the fall. He immediately returned to the workshop and resumed his employment. His master, however, fearing that such an accident might produce some fatal result in spite of there being nothing just then which could give the slightest ground of alarm, sent him home for a few days perfect rest. Nothing however like an indisposition came on, and the young man could not help attributing his extraordinary escape to the power of S. Benedict's medal, which had so very opportunely been given him to wear.

At Tours, in 1859, a young gentleman was taking a lesson of exercises at a public Gymnasium of the town. He was going through one of the feats which consisted in pulling himself up to a horizontal beam, on which he was then to hang, holding it by his hands and feet. He had scarcely accomplished this than the beam gave way, and he fell fifteen feet flat upon his back on the ground with the beam upon him. The master of the Gymnasium, who was present, had scarce time to express his alarm, for the young man jumped up, and taking his Medal of S. Benedict, he showed it to him, saying; "I am all right! I assure you that I am not hurt! See what has saved me."

It was in the February of 1859, when a nurse was walking with a little child in the gardens of the Tuileries. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the Emperor was passing. The nurse could not resist her curiosity, so she set off running by the side of the Emperor's carriage, was soon lost in the thick of the crowd, and forgot all about her little charge whom she left behind. The little fellow seeing himself thus left alone, began to make his way home, which was in the street called *Rue Saint Florentin*, No. 4. There was a perfect stream of carriages passing just at this exciting moment

along the *Rue de Rivoli*, but the brave little fellow was not afraid, he boldly crosses the street and reaches home. His parents were alarmed at seeing him come home by himself: they asked him how he had lost the nurse and when his sister, who was a year or so older than himself, was exclaiming and asking how in the world he had got home without being run over: "I had round my neck the Medal of S. Benedict," said the child, very coolly, "and just as I was going to cross the street, the carriages made such a noise!" but they let me run across."

In 1859, a Community of Nuns, whose special object was the education of young ladies, had just finished building a large dormitory for their boarders. It was now ready for use, and both parents and children were delighted with the excellent accommodation which the new building afforded, for besides the dormitory there were also several parlours on the ground floor: but not many weeks elapsed before much alarm was caused by crackings being heard all over the building. At first they were thought to be the creaking which is sometimes heard in rooms newly boarded; but they became so loud and threatening that the parents began to talk of taking their children from the school. In vain did the architect assure them that the building was perfectly safe, and the Nuns were obliged to pacify them by removing all the children from the new dormitory and promising every possible precaution against accident. They would have begun at once to build another dormitory, but they had spent all their available funds over the one which now proved such a disappointment. A friend in the Convent, to whom two of the nuns happened to mention their trouble, advised them having recourse to S. Benedict. He recommended them to put a Medal of the holy Patriarch on each storey in the new building, and four down into the foundations, one on each side; reciting meanwhile five times *Gloria Patri*, in honour of the Passion, three times *Ave Maria* in honour of our Lady, and lastly three times *Gloria Patri* in honour of S. Benedict. His advice was followed; nothing more was heard of the noises which had caused so much alarm, and the Community returned fervent thanks to God, to our Lady, and to S. Benedict, for the protection thus visibly granted to them.

In July, 1859, at Paris, a gentleman was passing on horseback up the *Avenue Gabrielle*. He happened to come up to that part of the Avenue which is at the back of the Elysée Garden just as one of the gardeners was watering the beds with one of the large tubes. A cart, loaded with wood, had been stopped in this very place in consequence of an accident which had happened to a carriage. The splash of the watering machine frightened the gentleman's horse, which, suddenly turning round, galloped back some distance. The rider encouraged the animal to return, and shouted out to the gardener to stop watering for a moment whilst he passed; no attention was paid to this request, and the horse again shied and again galloped back. Once more the rider urged him by spur and whip to the dreaded spot, and at a furious speed he at last passed it, but in doing so he came with such a shock against the wheel of the cart that the girth of the saddle was torn and the stirrups got twisted. The gentleman had foreseen the danger, and had pulled his foot out of the stirrup, but in doing so he threw himself so much on the other side as completely to lose his balance, and was thrown over the head of his horse, which passed over him without trampling on him. That poor animal had taken fright at the shower of water which came spurting in every direction, and though the rider had done his best to pull him clear from the cart, which stood, as we have said, upon the road, yet he dashed against it with all his weight. The gentleman had on his person the Medal of S. Benedict, and felt nothing whatever from the fall but a little stiffness in his limbs. The horse was badly cut by the cart-wheel on his side and hind leg, and for twelve days was unfit for use. The saddle was taken to a saddler in the street *Suresnes*, and several persons who had witnessed the accident expressed to him their surprise at the rider's having escaped without a single scar.

During the spring of 1861, an individual was one day waiting for the omnibus at the office in the *Rue Royale, Saint Honoré*. He perceived a carriage and pair coming down the street at full gallop, but when it had got about ten yards from the place where he was standing it suddenly comes to a dead stand, right in the middle of the road. The two horses became restive, pulling with all their strength one to the left and the other to the right. The driver does all he can to keep them together, whipping and coaxing them in turns, but all to no effect: each pulls his own way, and amidst all the confusion caused by the crowds of vehicles passing in every direction in such a crowded thoroughfare, and frequented hour of the day, the carriage could scarce escape either an upset or a collision. The persons who were inside were terrified and thought of jumping out. The driver was in despair. One of the by-standers, a good catholic, seeing the danger, immediately came to the rescue. Turning to a labouring man who was next to him, and whom he knew, he said to him: "This poor coachman is in a sad dilemma but see! I will immediately put all right." He then says to himself the words of which the initial letters are on the Medal of S. Benedict. That very instant the horses became quiet, came side

by side to each other, and set off quite good humouredly. "Well!" said the liberator to his neighbour, "What say you to this?" "Why," replied the other, delighted and astonished, "why, it's really first rate!" but there were certain reasons why he should not be told the secret so they parted.

A Medal of S. Benedict had been given to a poor woman, who had just lost her husband, and was living by herself in a lonely cottage some distance from Rennes (in France). She was extremely nervous at having to live thus alone, and as a protection against danger she accepted this Medal from a good Christian, who lived in the town. In the year 1862, an unhappy wretch, who had just come out of prison, was prowling all about the neighbourhood. He at last hit on a plan for getting into some of the houses round about - he would set the widow's cottage on fire. The people of the neighbourhood would leave their houses and run to the spot, and whilst they were out, he might go in and do his work. His time came. The poor widow was just then passing an hour with a neighbour. She suddenly feels an unusual kind of trouble, it declares that she must go home. She is soon there, when she sees a cloud of smoke coming from the little stable which adjoined her cottage, and a man running across the field as though he were trying to make his escape. Without giving herself time for reflection, she sets off running after the man, and is not long before she discovers him to be that very individual who, not long before, had come in her door begging for some-thing to drink. Whilst pursuing him she screams for help, and a farmer hearing her, runs out of his house with his servants, and recognizes in the fugitive the man who had attacked him only a few nights before. They are not long before they catch him, and put him into the hands of the police. He was sentenced to penal servitude for fourteen years, and when in court, he confessed publicly, that he had done his utmost to set fire to the widow's cottage, but not being able to succeed, he threw a lighted faggot into the stable, and then went away. His attempt to burn down the house did not do the slightest injury either to the stable or the house.

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#### **XI. APPROBATION OF S. BENEDICT'S MEDAL BY THE HOLY SEE.**

The above facts, and many others of the same kind which we pass over in silence, naturally suggest the question as to whether the authority of the Church has spoken on the subject of a devotion, the results of which will probably excite as much astonishment in the minds of some, as they will give confidence and comfort to others. Fortunately, the Holy See has long since examined this subject, upon which we are now writing, and has given to the Medal of S. Benedict the wished-for sanction, which is an authority and an argument superior even to those which are given by the wonderful instances of its efficacy which are every day being related as having taken place in almost every country. The Medal of S. Benedict had been attacked as savouring of superstition, by the author of the *Treatise on Superstitions* \* - a work, by the way, which is on the Index. This unreasonable critic defended his opinion regarding the Medal by this strange argument, that the initial letters which are upon it are difficult to be understood, and are therefore to be suspected of some superstitious purpose.

\* J.B. Thiers, curate of Vibraye, in the Diocese Le Mans, France. Obiit A.D. 1703. *Trans.*

It was reserved to the learned Pope Benedict XIV to encourage the faithful in their confidence in this holy Medal, and to confute the scruples which the rationalism of that period endeavoured to raise regarding it. It was at the behest of Dom Benno Löbl, Abbot of S. Margaret's Monastery in Prague, that this Pope, after a careful examination and a decree of the Congregation of Indulgences, approved by his Brief of March 12th, 1742, the Medal with its Cross, the figure of S. Benedict, and the Letters which are upon it. He authorized the form of blessing which is to be used over this Medal, and granted a great number of Indulgences to all who wear it about them. We here give the text of this important Brief, for it is but too little known.

**BENEDICT XIV., POPE.**

**UNTO THE PERPETUAL MEMORY THEREOF, AND FOR THE INCREASING THE DEVOTION OF THE FAITHFUL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

**BENEDICTUS, P.P. XIV.**

**AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM, ET AD AUGENDAM CHRISTI FIDELIUM DEVOTIONEM.**

Watchful with fatherly love over the heavenly treasures of the Church, and desirous of enriching with the grant of Indulgences the sacred medals, known under the name of Crosses or Little Medals of S. Benedict, we have gladly accorded to certain persons holding certain dignities, the special power to bless the said Medals with rich indulgences, and to distribute them amongst the faithful: and to the end that this grant may produce its full effect and abide uninterrupted in all future time, the more especially as such has been asked of us, we willingly add hereunto the weight of apostolic confirmation, and the influence of our endeavours and solicitude, according as it has seemed to us before God to be good and needful, having maturely considered the circumstances of persons, places, and times.

Our beloved son Benno Löbl, Professed Monk of the Order of S. Benedict, and now at this present time Abbot of Monastery of Brzewnow in the diocese of Prague - the said Monastery being *nullius*, free, exempt, and immediately subject to the Apostolic see - Provost of Wahlstad in Silesia, Mitred Prelate of the kingdom of Bohemia, and perpetual Visitor of the said Order in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia - has recently made known to us, that on another occasion he asked of us for his successors, as also for all and each of the Abbots, Priors, and Priests of the said Order, who are or shall be subject to him and to his successors in the office of Visitation, the faculty to bless, according to the formula given in the said petition, the Medals or Crosses called S. Benedict's, and to distribute the same respectively, in order to spread the Indulgences which have been so profusely granted to them; with a prohibition to all ecclesiastics to interfere in this pious work the which faculty was graciously accorded and imparted by a decree of the Congregation of Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, called the Congregation of Indulgences, on the 23rd of the month of December, in the year of our Lord, 1741; the text of which decree is as follows:

*“Decree for the Order of S. Benedict in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia:*

“At the most humble and instant entreaties of Dom Benno Löbl, Abbot of the free and exempt monastery of Brzewnow *in Brauna*, of the Order of S. Benedict, Provost of Wahlstad in Silesia, mitred Prelate of the kingdom of Bohemia, and perpetual Visitor of the said Order in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia: Our most holy Father Pope Benedict XIV has graciously given and granted to the same

Coelestibus Ecclesiae thesauris paterna charitate intenti, sacra interdum Numismata, seu Cruces, vel Cruculas Sancti Benedicti nuncupatas, indulgentiarum muneribus condecorare volumus; et personis, praesertim, speciali dignitate fulgentibus, facultatem illas cum thesauro indulgentiarum hujusmodi privative benedicendi et distribuendi libenter impartiti fuimus; et ut illa perpetuis futuris temporibus suum plerarium sortiatur effectum, firmiusque subsistat; potissimum cum a Nobis petitur, Apostolicae confirmationis robur libenter adjicimus, opemque et operas nostras impendimus efficaces, prout personarum locorum, et temporum qualitatibus matura consideratione pensat is, in Domino conspicimus salubriter expedire.

Exponi Nobis nuper sane fecit dilectus filius Benno Löbl, monachus Ordinis Sancti Benedicti expresse professus, ac modernus Abbas liberi et exempti, Sedique Apostolicae immediate subjecti monasterii Brzevnoviensis in Brauna, nullius, seu Pragensis dioecesis, et Wahlstadii Silesiorum modernus Praepositus, Praelatusque infulatus regni Bohemia, dictique Ordinis Visitor perpetuus in Bohemia, Moravia et Silesia: quod alias per Nos eidem exponenti, ejusque successoribus, ac omnibus et singulis Abbatibus, Prioribus, alterisque ejusdem Ordinis monachis, sacerdotibus, expetenti tamen praedicto, ejusque successoribus Visitoribus praedictis subjectis, numismata seu medallas, vel cruces, aut cruculas Sancti Benedicti nuncupatas, privativa facultas, sub certa, inibi expressa formula benedicendi et respective distribuendi, pro consequendis indulgentiis, in illis amplissime elargitis, cum inhibitione cuicumque personae ecclesiasticae, in hujusmodi opere pio se immiscendi, decreto Congregationis Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalium super indulgentiis praepositae, sub die XXIII, mensis Decembris anni Domini MDCCXLI emanato, benigne concessa et elargita fuit: cujus decreti tenor est qui sequitur:

*“Ordinis Sancti Benedicti, per Bohemiam, Moraviam et Silesiam decretum:*

“Ad humillimas et enixas preces Domini Bennonis Löbl, Ordinis Sancti Benedicti, liberi et exempti Monasterii Brzevnoviensis in Brauna Abbat is, Wahlstadii Silesiorum Praepositi, regni Bohemiae Praelati infulati, atque Ordinis praedicti per Bohemiam, Moraviam et Silesiam Visitoris perpetui: Sanctissimus Dominus noster Benedictus PP.

Benno and to his successors, as also to all and each of the Abbots, Priors and Priests who for the time being are subject to him as Perpetual Visitor, the special faculty of blessing the medals known under the name of S. Benedict's Cross, and of which, one side represents the image of the same S. Benedict, and the other a Cross, with these following letters or characters round the rim, which signify respectively as follows: *V. Vade. R. retro. S. Sathana. N. numquam. S. suade. M. mihi. V. vana. S. sunt. M. mala. Q. quae. L. libas. I. ipse. V. venena. B. bibas.* On the perpendicular line of the Cross: *C. crux. S. sacra. S. sit. M. mihi. L. lux.* On the horizontal line, *N. non. D. draco. S. sit. M. mihi. D. dux.* Lastly, on the four corners, *C. crux. S. Sancti. P. Patris. B. Benedicti* and the said blessing shall be in the formula as follows:

XIV, eidem Bennoni ejusque successoribus ac omnibus et singulis Abbatibus, Prioribus, caeterisque monachis sacerdotibus, ipsimet pro tempore existenti Visitatori perpetuo subjectis, Numismata, seu Medallas, vel Cruces aut Cruculas Sancti Benedicti nuncupatas, quarum una pars imaginem ejusdem Sancti Benedicti repraesentat, altera vero Crucem, in cujus extremo circuito litterae seu characteres, scilicet: *V. Vade. R. retro. S. Sathana. N. numquam. S. suade. M. mihi. V. vana. S. sunt. M. mala. Q. quae. L. libas. I. ipse. V. venena. B. bibas.* In linea vero ejus recta, *C. crux. S. sacra. S. sit. M. mihi. L. lux.* In inversa autem, *N. non. D. draco. S. sit. M. mihi. D. dux.* ac demum in quatuor lateribus *C. crux. S. Sancti. P. Patris. B. Benedicti* respective significantes exprimuntur: facultatem privatam benedicendi, benigne concessit, atque indulsit, formula quae sequitur, nimirum:

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

R. Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Exorcizo vos numismata, per Deum Patrem + omnipotentem, qui fecit coelum et terram, mare et omnia quae in eis sunt: omnis virtus adversarii, omnis exercitus diaboli, et omnis incursus, omni phantasma Sathanae eradicare et effugare ab his numismatibus, ut fiant omnibus, qui eis usuri sunt, salus mentis et corporis, in nomino Dei Patris + omnipotentis, et Jesu Christi + Filii ejus, Domini nostri, et Spiritus Sancti + Paracliti, et in charitate ejusdem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos et saeculum per ignem. R. Amen.

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Pater noster, etc.

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

V. Salvos fac servos tuos.

R. Deus meus, sperantes in te.

V. Esto nobis, Domine, turris fortitudinis.

R. A facie inimici.

V. Deus virtutem populo suo dabit.

R. Dominus benedicet populum suum in pace.

V. Mitte eis, Domine, auxilium de sancto.

R. Et de Sion tuere eos.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum Spiritu tuo.

Oremus.

Deus omnipotens, omnium bonorum largitor, supplices te rogamus, ut per intercessionem Sancti Patris Benedicti his sacris Numismatibus litteris et characteribus a te designatis tuam benedictionem + infundas, ut omnes, qui ea gestaverint, ac bonis operibus intenti fuerint, sanitatem mentis et corporis, et gratiam sanctificationis, atque indulgentias nobis concessas consequi mereantur, omnesquo diaboli insidias et fraudes per auxilium misericordiae tuae effugere valeant, et in conspectu tuo sancti et immaculati appareant, Per Dominum, etc.

Oremus.

Domine Jesu, qui voluisti pro totius mundi redemptione de Virgine nasci, circumcidi, a Judaeis reprobari, Judae osculo tradi, vinculis alligari, spinis coronari, clavis perforari, inter latrones crucifigi, lancea vulnerari et tandem in cruce mori: per tuam sanctissimam Passionemque humiliter exoro, ut omnes diabolicas insidias et fraudes expellas ab eo, qui Nomen sanctum tuum his litteris et characteribus a te designatis devote invocaverit, it eum ad salutis portum perducere digneris, qui vivis et regnas, &c.

Benedictio Dei Patris + omnipotentis, et Filii +, et Spiritus + Sancti descendat super haec Numismata, ac ea gestantes, et maneat semper: in nomine Patris + et Filii + et Spiritus + Sancti. R. Amen.

“Being therefore desirous to enrich in a special manner, by spiritual favours and with the heavenly treasures of the Church, the aforesaid Medals blessed by the Visitor, and the other Monks mentioned above then living, he has graciously given and granted to all and each of the faithful, of both sexes, who shall carry about their persons one of these Medals or Crosses thus blessed, and shall at the same time perform the good works which are enjoined as below in their respective places, the following indulgences in the manner and form as herein specified; to wit: he who shall regularly recite, at least once in the week, the Chaplet of our Lord, or that of the most blessed Virgin Mary, or the Rosary, or a third part of the Rosary, the Divine Office, or the Little Office of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Office of the Dead, or the Seven Penitential Psalms, or the Gradual Psalms; or who shall regularly teach the rudiments of faith, or visit those who are in prison, or the sick in any hospital, or assist the poor, or either hear, or, if he be a Priest, say Mass; if he be truly penitent and have confessed to a Priest approved by the Ordinary, and have received the holy sacrament of the Eucharist on any of the days following, namely the Feasts of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, most Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi, and on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption; also on the first day of November, the feast of All Saints, and on the feast of S. Benedict; and shall have devoutly prayed God for the destruction of heresies and schisms, for the exaltation and propagation of the Catholic faith, for peace and concord of Christian Princes, and for the other necessities of the Roman Church he shall obtain a plenary indulgence and the remission of all his sins.

“He who shall have fulfilled the same said conditions on the other Feasts of our Lord, or of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the feasts of the Holy Apostles, or of S. Joseph, or of SS. Maurus, Placid, Scholastica, or Gertrude, of the Order of S. Benedict, shall gain on each of these

“Eadem vero Numismata sic per Visitatorem caeterosque monachos praefatos pro tempore existentes benedicta, et spiritualibus gratiis ac coelestibus Ecclesiae thesauris specialiter insignire volens: omnibus et singulis utriusque sexus Christi fidelibus, aliquod hujusmodi Numismatum, seu Crucularum, sic benedictum devote gestantibus, ac insimul pia opera, prout infra suis cuique locis respective injungitur, peragentibus, indulgentas modo et forma quae praescribitur, clementer concessit atque indulsit, videlicet: ut qui saltem semel in hebdomada Coronam Domini, vel Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, vel Rosarium, ejusve tertiam partem, aut Officium vel divinum, vel parvum ejusdem beatissimae Virginis Mariae, vel Defunctorum aut septem Psalmos poenitentiales, vel Graduales, recitare, aut rudimenta fidei edocere, aut detentos in carcere, vel alicujus domus hospitalis aegrotos visitare, aut pauperibus subvenire, aut Missam vel audire, vel, si sacerdos, celebrare consueverit; si vere poenitens, et sacerdoti per Ordinarium approbato confessus fuerit, ac sanctissimum Eucharistiae Sacramentum sumpserit, in quolibet ex diebus infra scriptis, nimirum: die festo Nativitatis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Epiphaniae, Resurrectionis, Sanctissimae Trinitatis, et Corporis Christi, Ascensionis, Pentecostes, diebus Conceptionis, Nativitatis, Annuntiationis, Purificationis et Assumptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae; nec non primo die Novembris festo Omnium Sanctorum, ac die festo Sancti Benedicti: et pro haeresum ac schismatum extirpatione, fidei catholicae, exaltatione ac propagatione, pace et christianorum principum concordia caeterisque Romanae Ecclesiae necessitatibus pias ad Deum preces effuderit, plenariam omnium peccatorum suorum remissionem et indulgentiam consequatur;

“Qui eadem in aliis festis Domini, aut Beatissimae Virginis Mariae sanctorumque Apostolorum, aut sancti Josephi, aut sanctorum Mauri, Placidi, Scholasticae, vel Gertrudis, Ordinis Sancti Benedicti, peregerit, in quolibet eorum



feasts an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines.

“Which same indulgences also granted to him who shall hear, or, if he be a priest, shall say Mass, and shall pray for the prosperity of Christian Princes and the tranquillity of their states and possessions.

“He who shall fast on Fridays, out of reverence for the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, or on Saturdays in honour of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, each day he so fasts, shall gain an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines.

“And he who, having confessed and nourished himself with holy Communion, shall have observed this same fast on the aforementioned days for one whole year, shall gain a plenary indulgence, which also shall be granted to him who, having the intention of doing this same work, shall die within the year.

“He who shall have the custom of saying once or oftener in the day this ejaculation: *Blessed be the most pure and immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary*, shall gain an indulgence of forty days.

“He, who shall have the custom of reciting at least once a week the Chaplet or Rosary, or the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Office of the Dead, or the Vespers, with at least one nocturn and Lauds, or the seven Penitential Psalms, and the Litanies and their prayers, or five times the Lord’s Prayer, either in honour of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, or of His Five Wounds, or five times the Angelical Salutation or the Antiphon: *‘We fly to thy patronage,’* together with any one of the approved collects of the Most Blessed Virgin, and this in honour of the Most Holy Name of Mary, shall gain, on that day, on which he does this, the indulgence of one hundred days; which same indulgence is likewise granted once each Friday, to him who shall have thrice recited the Lord's Prayer or the Angelical Salutation, and shall have piously meditated on the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ; which same also is granted to him who, out of devotion to S. Joseph, S. Benedict, S. Maurus, S. Scholastica, and S. Gertrude, shall recite the Psalm, *Miserere mei Deus*, or five times the Lord’s Prayer, or the Angelical Salutation, and shall pray God that he will, by their intercession, preserve the Holy Catholic Church, and give to himself a happy death.

“He, who in the celebration of Mass, or in holy Communion, or in the recitation of the Divine Office, or of

septem annorum, totidemque quadragenarum indulgetiarum acquirat.

“Quam pariter adipiscatur, qui Missam audiet, vel si est sacerdos, celebrabit, ac pro christianorum principum prosperitate, illorumque statuum et ditionum tranquillitate Deum orabit.

“Qui ob reverentiam erga Passionem Jesu Christi Domini nostri, Feriis sextis, aut in honorem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae diebus Sabbati, jejunaverit, qualibet earum die id egerit, indulgentiam septem annorum, totidemque quadragenarum.

“Qui vero confessus, ac sacra communione refectus, jejunum iisdem diebus per integrum annum, servaverit plenariam indulgentiam lucretur; qua etiam gaudeat qui idem opus complere intendens infra annum decesserit:

“Qui semel vel pluries in die jaculatoriam: *Benedicta sit purissima et immaculata Conceptio Beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, proferre consueverit, indulgentiam quadraginta dierum inquirat.

“Qui saltem semel in hebdomada Coronam, aut Rosarium, aut Officium Beatissimae Mariae Virginis, vel defunctorum, aut Vesperas cum uno saltem Nocturno et Laudibus, aut septem Psalmos poenitentiales et Litanias, earumque preces, aut in honorem Sanctissimi Nominis Jesu, vel quinque ejus plagarum, quinquies Orationem Dominicam, aut in honorem Sanctissimi Nominis Mariae quinquies Salutationem Angelicam, aut Antiphonam: *Sub tuum praesidium*, cum una qualibet ex approbatis Orationibus Beatissimae Virginis recitare consueverit, quo die id egerit, indulgentiam centum dierum consequatur: qua semel in quavis Feria sexta fruatur. Qui Orationem Dominicam, ac Salutationem Angelicam ter dixerit, ac de Passione et morte Domini nostri Jesu Christi pie cogitaverit; eamdem pariter lucretur, qui ob devotionem erga sanctos Josephum, Benedictum, Marum, Scholasticam ac Gertrudem, recitando Psalmum: *Miserere mei Deus*; aut quinquies Orationem Dominicam et Salutationem Angelicam oraverit, ut Deus per eorum intercessionem sanctam catholicam Ecclesiam conservet, ipsumque devotum beato fine quiescere faciat.

“Qui in celebranda Missa vel sumenda Eucharistia, aut Officio divino, vel parvo Beatissimae Mariae Virginis persolvendo, priusquam incipiat devotam aliquam precessionem adhibuerit, quinquaginta dierum indulgentia

the Little Office of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, shall say some short prayer before he begins, shall receive fifty days of indulgence; which same is also granted to him who shall pray for those of the faithful who are at the point of death, and shall say thrice, for their Intention, the Lord's Prayer or the Angelical Salutation.

"He who shall visit those who are in prison, or the sick in hospitals, and shall assist them by any work of mercy, or shall teach Christian doctrine in the church or at home, either to children, or relations, or servants, each time, besides the Indulgences granted for this by other Sovereign Pontiffs, shall obtain also an Indulgence of two hundred days.

"He who shall recite the Chaplet or the Rosary of the most Blessed Virgin Mary in honour of her most pure and immaculate Conception and shall ask her, by her intercession with her divine Son, that we may live and die free from mortal sin, shall receive an indulgence of seven years. Which same indulgence is granted also to him who shall devoutly accompany the most Holy Sacrament when carried as viaticum to the sick, and this over and above those other Indulgences which have been granted to the same pious act by other Supreme Pontiff.

"He who shall pray daily for the extirpation of heresies, shall gain, once each week, an Indulgence of twenty years.

"He who shall examine his conscience, and being truly penitent, shall firmly resolve to correct himself of sins hitherto committed and confess them, shall gain, upon devoutly reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation, one years indulgence; and if he come and receive Holy Communion, he shall gain an indulgence of ten years that same day.

"He who shall, by his good example or advice, lead any sinner to repentance, shall obtain the remission of one third of the punishment in what way soever due to his own sins; and he, who being truly penitent, shall go to confession and holy Communion, on holy Thursday, and Easter Sunday, and shall devoutly pray to God for the exaltation of our holy Mother the Church, and for the preservation of the Sovereign Pontiff, shall gain these same Indulgences which His Holiness grants, on the said days, in giving his solemn blessing to the people.

"He who shall beseech God to propagate the Order of S. Benedict, shall become partaker of all and each of the

gaudeat; quam similiter asequatur, qui pro Christi fidelibus in exitu vitae constitutis Deum deprecabitur, ac pro ipsis ter Orationem Dominicam et Salutationem Angelicam dixerit.

"Qui detentos in carcere, aut aegrotos in nosocomiis, eos aliquo pio opere adjuvando, visitaverit, aut doctrinam christianam in ecclesia, vel domi, filios aut propinquos aut famulos docuerit, praeter indulgentias ab aliis Summis Pontificibus ad id concessas, toties indulgentiam bis centum dierum acquirat.

"Qui Coronam aut Rosarium Beatissimae Virginis in honorem ejusdem purissimae et Immaculatae Conceptionis recitaverit, ipsam deprecans apud ejus divinum Filium, ut sine lethali labe vivere et mori valeat, indulgentiam septem annorum percipiat; quam pariter qui sacratissimum Eucharistiae viaticum ad infirmos devote sociaverit, praeter indulgentias ad idem tam pium opus ab aliis Summis Pontificibus concessas, omnino consequatur.

"Qui quotidie pro haeresum extirpatione oraverit, indulgentium viginti annorum semel in hebdomada lucretur.

"Qui conscientiam suam excusserit, ac vere poenitens peccata commissa emendare et confiteri firmiter proposuerit, quinquies Oratione Dominica aut Salutatione Angelica devote repetita, unius anni; si vero confessus, et sacra communione refectus fuerit, eadem die decem annorum indulgentia fruatur.

"Qui probo suo exemplo aut consilio aliquem peccatorem ad poenitentiam reduxerit, tertiae partis poenarum sibi propter sua peccata alias quomodolibet debitarum remissionem consequatur; qui vere poenitens confessus, sacraque communione refectus in Feria quinta Coenae Domini, et in die Paschalis Resurrectionis, pro Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae exaltatione, Summique Pontificis conservatione, pias ad Deum preces effuderit, easmet acquirat indulgentias, quas iidem diebus Sanctitas Sua populo benedicens publice elargitur.

"Qui Deum pro Ordinis seu Religionis Sancti Benedicti propagatione deprecatus fuerit, particeps fit omnium et singulorum bonorum operum, quae in eadem Religione quomodolibet peraguntur.

"Qui vel infirmitate corporis, vel alio legitimo impedimento detentus, Missam audire, aut si est sacerdos, celebrare, aut Officium vel divinum, vel Beatissimae Mariae Virginis, aut alia virtutis exercitia, ad praedictas indulgentias

good works which in any manner whatsoever are done in the said Order.

“He who by reason of bodily infirmity, or other lawful impediment, is not able to hear, or being Priest, to say, Mass, or to say either the Divine Office, or that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, or has it not in his power to perform the other exercises of piety, which are enjoined for obtaining the aforesaid Indulgencies, shall, notwithstanding, receive the same on thrice saying, in the place of the said pious exercises, the Lord’s Prayer and the Angelical Salutation, and the Anthem, *Salve Regina*, adding at the end, *Blessed be the Most Holy Trinity, and praised be the Most Holy Sacrament, and the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin*, provided, nevertheless, that he shall have been to confession and holy Communion, or, at least, shall have contrition for his sins, and the firm resolution of afterwards confessing them.

“He who being at the point of death, shall devoutly recommend his soul to God, and having previously gone to confession, and received Holy Communion, if he have it in his power; or if not, having made from his heart an act of contrition shall, with his lips, or, if he cannot do more, at least in his heart, invoke the names of JESUS and MARY shall obtain a plenary indulgence and the remission of all his sins.

“Each one may gain for himself, or apply, by manner of suffrage, to the faithful departed, all and each of the above mentioned indulgences, as also the remission of sins, and the relaxation of the punishments thereunto due.

“Notwithstanding all things whatsoever to the contrary, His Holiness has declared that the Medals herein mentioned which shall not have been blessed by the Monks aforesaid, or by those to whom the Holy See has, by a special favour, granted the power, shall in nowise be indulgenced. He also forbade that the said Medals should be of paper, or such like material ; and that unless they were made of gold, silver, brass, copper or other solid metal, they shall not be indulgenced.

“In all things relating to the distribution and use of the said Medals, His Holiness moreover orders that there should be observed the Decree of Alexander VII, of happy memory, published on the 6th day of February, 1657, to wit: that Medals blessed, and indulgenced as here mentioned, cannot pass beyond the persons to whom either the said Monks shall have given them, or to whom they shall have

acquirendas injuncta peragere nequiverit, iisdem nihilominus gaudeat, si pro ipsis piis exercitiis recitaverit ter Orationem Dominicam et Salutationem Angelicam ac Antiphonam: *Salve Regina*. Atque in fine ipsius dixerit: *Benedicta sit sanctissima Trinitas, et laudetur Sanctissimum Sacramentum, ac Conceptio Beatissimae Virginis Mariae sine labe concepta*, dummodo tamen confessus ac sacra communione refectus fuerit, vel saltem contritus inde sua peccata confiteri firmiter proposuerit.

“Qui in articulo mortis animam suam Deo pie commendans, praemissa peccatorum suorum confessione, sumptaque sanctissima Eucharistia, si potuerit: si minus, elicita cordis contritione JESU et MARIAE nomina ore, si potuerit, alioquin corde saltem invocaverit, plenarium omnium peccatorum suorum remissionem et indulgentiam consequatur.

“Quilibet omnes et singulas praedictas indulgentias ac peccatorum remissiones, necnon poenitentiarum relaxationes, aut ipso pro se adipisci, aut fidelibus defunctis per modum suffragii applicare valeat.

“Non obstantibus quibuscumque in contrarium facientibus, Sanctitas Sua declaravit, quod ejusmodi Numismata seu Medalliae, quae non fuerint benedictae a praefatis monachis, vel quibus ab Apostolica Sede ex speciali gratia indultum fuerit, omni penitus indulgentia careant. Item vetuit ejusmodi Medallas chartaceas, vel ex simili materia confectas, sed tantummodo ex auro, argento, aere, auricalcho, aliove solido metallo consistentes; aliter nulla prorsus gaudeant indulgentia.

“In distribuendus hujusmodi Numismatibus, eorumque usu, eadem Sanctitas Sua servari jubet Decretum felicis recordationis Alexandri VII., editum sub die sexta Februarii MDCLVII. nimirum, ut Numismata, quae vulgo Medalliae nuncupantur cum praedictis indulgentiis benedicta non transeant personam illorum, quibus a monachis praedictis concedentur, aut quibus ab eis prima vice distribuentur, nec commodari aut vendi, aut precario dari valeant; alioquin careant indulgentiis jam concessis; et aliqua deperdita, altera pro ea subrogari nullo modo possit, nisi a quibus supra benedicta fuerit; quacumque concessione, aut privilegio in contrariam non obstante.

“Insuper expresse prohibet ne quis sacerdos, sive saecularis, sive cujus libet Ordinis, Congregationis, aut Instituti regularis, quavis etiam dignitate aut officio insignitus, extra praedictos monachos, id quibus a Sancta

been by them distributed in the first instance, neither can they be lent, or sold, or borrowed, without their losing the indulgences which have been attached to them; and if one be lost, another cannot be taken in its place unless it have been blessed by those before mentioned, notwithstanding any concession or privilege to the contrary.

“Moreover, His Holiness expressly forbids that any Priest, whether secular, or of any Order, Congregation, or regular Institute whatsoever, and whatsoever may be his dignity or office, with the exception of the Monks here above mentioned, or of those to whom the Holy See shall, by a special privilege, have granted the faculty, shall dare or presume to bless the said Medals or Crosses, or to distribute them to the faithful after having so blessed them, under such penalties - besides the nullity of the blessing and indulgences - as it shall seem good to the respective Ordinaries or Inquisitors of the Faith to inflict according to the gravity of the fault: notwithstanding all things soever which may be to the contrary, these presents shall hold good unto all future times.

“His Holiness likewise has willed that the Copy of these Present letters, whether in manuscript or print, when signed by a public notary, or by the secretary of the forementioned perpetual Visitor, now at this present in office, sealed also with the seal of some dignitary, or of the forementioned Benno, or of the then existing Perpetual Visitor, shall have the same weight in all questions of dispute or otherwise, in all places, which would be given to these presents on their being shown or produced.

“Given at Rome, the 23rd day of December, in the year 1741.

(The Seal.) L. Cardinal PICO, Prefect.

A.M. ERBA, Apostolic Protonotary, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation.

But although, as the same petition added, no one could doubt of the validity of this Decree, and of the said faculty, nevertheless, to procure for them, with all persons, greater respect and authority, the said petitioner greatly desiring that this Decree, with all things therein contained and expressed, be approved, and for ever confirmed by Us and the Apostolic See, as we are here about to do, he has humbly sent to us a petition and earnest entreaty that we would be pleased to grant him, by Apostolic Letter, and by these presents, that which he asks of us.

We, therefore, wishing to show to the said petitioner a mark of our special favour, and declaring him to be loosed

Sede ex speciali privilegio indultum fuerit, ejusmodi Numismata, seu Cruces, ut praedicitur, benedicere, aut a se benedicta fidelibus distribuere audeat, vel praesumat, sub poenis, praeter nullitatem benedictionis et indulgentiarum, per respectivos locorum Ordinarios aut fidei Inquisitores, juxta reatus qualitatem, arbitrio infligendis. Quibuscumque in contrarium facientibus non obstantibus, praesentibus perpetuis futuris temporibus valituris.

“Voluitque Sanctitas Sua, quod istarum litterarum transumptis, seu exemplis, etiam impressis, alicujus notarii publici, vel secretarii Visitoris perpetui praedicti, pro tempore existentis, subscriptis, et sigillo personae in dignitate constitutae, aut ejusdem Bennonis, aut existentis pro tempore Visitoris perpetui munitis eadem prorsus in judicio, et extra ubique locorum, fides adhibeatur, quae haberetur eis praesentibus, si forent exhibitae vel ostensae.

“Datum Romae, die XXIII Decembris, anno MDCCXLI.

(L. S.) L. Cardinalis PICUS, Praefectus.

A.M. ERBA, Protonotarius Apostolicus, Sacrae Congregationis Secretarius.

Sed etsi, sicut eadem expositio subjungebat, de hujusmodi Decreti, dictaeque facultatis validitate haesitari non possit; attamen cum pro ejusdem majori apud omnes veneratione, et validiori illius subsistentia, dictus exponens plurimum cupiat, Decretum praedictum cum omnibus et singulis in eo contentis et expressis, per Nos et Sedem Apostolicam ut infra, perpetuo approbari et confirmari; ideo nobis humiliter supplicari fecit expressis petens, ut ei in praesentibus opportune providere de benignitate Apostolica dignaremur.

Nos igitur eumdem exponentem specialis gratiae favore prosequi volentes, necnon quibusvis excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti, aliisque ecclesiasticis sententiis, censuris et poenis a jure, vel ab homine, quavis occasione vel causa latis, si quibus quomodolibet innodatus existit, ad effectum praesentium tantum consequendum, earum serie absolvendum et absolutum fore censentes, hujusmodi supplicationibus inclinati, Decretum praedictum cum omnibus et singulis in eo contentis et expressis, Apostolica auctoritate, tenore praesentium perpetuo approbamus et confirmamus, illique inviolabile Apostolicae firmitatis robur adjicimus, omnesque et singulos tam juris quam facti et solemnitatum, aliosque quantumvis substantiales defectus, si qui desuper

and absolved, for the sole intent of his obtaining the effect of these presents, from all excommunication, suspension, and interdict, and other ecclesiastical sentences by whomsoever proclaimed, as also from all censures and punishments *a jure* or *ab homine* on whatsoever occasion or cause awarded, in case he were under any such; determined thereunto by the supplications which he has unto this purpose addressed to us, we approve and confirm by our Apostolical authority the tenor of these presents, for ever, the aforementioned Decree with all it contains and expresses and thereto we add the inviolable strength of the Apostolical confirmation, making good all and each of such defects, whether of fact, or right, or formality, or of any other kind soever, even though they were substantial, which may be in these same. We wish that these present letters be and continue for ever firm, valid, and of effect, and that they receive their full and entire effects. We declare that they shall not be comprised in the revocations, limitations, derogations, or other contrary decisions, which have been or shall hereafter be made by Us and the Roman Pontiffs in reference to such favours as these, or to any favours whatsoever but that these same shall be always excepted, and shall as often as the aforesaid revocations be made, be each time restored, replaced, and fully re-established to and in their former and most valid state: and lastly, we wish that under what later date soever they be enunciated by the petitioner and by his successors hereafter to be elected, they receive their full effect, and that neither the petitioner nor his successors be disturbed, molested, or impeded, by any authority or under any pretext, colour, or pretence whatsoever. Thus and in no other way must it be judged and defined by all exercising any whatsoever authority, ordinary or delegated, even by the Auditors of Causes of the Apostolic Palace, by the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, even should they be legates *à latere*, and by the Nuncios of the Holy See. We declare null and void whatsoever, by whomsoever, and what dignity soever he may enjoy, shall be attempted contrary to the aforesaid letters, whether this be done with or without knowledge. And all this notwithstanding the Apostolical Constitutions and rules, as well as those of the said Order, even were they strengthened by Apostolic attestation, confirmation, or any other support; notwithstanding likewise all statutes, customs, privileges, Apostolic letters, granted, confirmed, and renewed to all superiors and others, which should be in anywise contrary to the said privileges. From all and each of the which Constitutions and Rules we hereby derogate, as likewise from all other expressions to the

quomodolibet interveniunt, in eisdem supplemus; necnon praesentes litteras semper et perpetuo firmas, validas et efficaces esse et fore, suosque plenarios et integros effectus sortiri et obtinere; nec illos sub quibusvis similium vel dissimilium gratiarum revocationibus, suspensionibus, limitationibus, derogationibus, aut aliis contrariis dispositionibus, per Nos et Romanos Pontifices successores nostros, pro tempore factis et faciendis, comprehendi, sed semper ab illis excipi, et quoties in illae emanabunt, toties in pristinum et validissimum statum restituas, repositas, et plenarie reintegratas; ac denuo etiam sub quacumque posteriori data per exponentem, ejusque successores praedictos quaecumque eligendos, concessas fore et esse, suosque plenarios effectus sortiri et obtinere, eundemque exponentem propterea, et successores suos praedictos super praesentibus omnibus et singulis a quoquam quavis auctoritate fungente, quovis praetextu, colore, vel ingenio perturbari, inquietari, aut quoquo modo impediri posse, neque debere; sicque et non aliter per quoscumque Ordinarios vel delegatos quavis auctoritate fungentes, etiam causarum Palatii Apostolici Auditores, ac Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinales, etiam de latere Legatos, dictaque Sedis Nuncios, judicari et definiri debere, Irritum quoque et inane decernimus, si super eis a quoquam, quavis auctoritate, scienter vel ignoranter contigerit attentari; non obstantibus Constitutionibus et ordinationibus Apostolicis, dictique Ordinis etiam juramento, confirmatione Apostolica vel quavis firmitate alia roboratis statutis et consuetudinibus, privilegiis quoque indultis, litteris Apostolicis, quibusvis superioribus et personis in contrarium privilegiorum quomodolibet facientibus, concessis, confirmatis ut innovatis; quibus omnibus et singulis, etiamsi de illis eorumque totis tenoribus specialibus, et specificis, expressa et individua, non autem per alias generales idem importantes, mentio seu quaevis alia expressio habenda, aut aliqua alia exquisita forma ad hoc servanda foret; eorum tenores, etiamsi de verbo ad verbum, nihil penitus omisso, et forma in illis tradita observata, inserti forent; praesentibus pro expressis habendis, illis alias in suo robore permansuris, latissime et plenissime, hae vice duntaxat derogamus, caeteris contrariis quibuscumque.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctam Mariam Majorem, sub annulo Piscatoris, die duodecima Martii MDCCXLII, pontificatus nostri anno secundo.

P. Cardinalis Prod.

contrary, even in those cases where it would be required to make mention or any other expression of them, specially and specifically express and formal, even by the insertion of the whole tenour, and not by a general and virtual mention; as likewise in such cases as would require that they should be expressed word for word, without any single omission, and using the form in which they were drawn up; the said Constitutions, Rules, and the like, being considered as expressed in these presents, and remaining in full vigour for all the rest, are hereby derogated from most largely and fully in this particular case, and likewise from every expression which may in any way be to the contrary.

Given at Rome, at S. Mary Major's, under the Fisherman's Seal, the 12th of March, 1742 the second year of our Pontificate.

The Cardinal Prodatary.

## **XII. CONSEQUENCES OF THE BRIEF OF BENEDICT 14TH IN REGARD TO THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT.**

It follows in the first place from the Papal document which we have just given, that the Medal of S. Benedict is put under the sanction of the Holy See. The pretended scruples which certain persons had excited regarding it, are hereby shown to be groundless. It is well known with what extreme caution and with what profound knowledge of principles Rome proceeds in every thing. She has not, however, found anything superstitious in this Medal: the letters which are marked upon it have not seemed to her deserving of the slight suspicion. The using the first letter of a word for the word itself may have appeared strange to the author mentioned above, who, like so many other intolerant critics of his time, had but a very shallow knowledge of archaeology; otherwise he would no more have thought it strange to express these words *Vade retro, Satana, &c.* by V. R. S. &c. than it is to employ, as did the early Christians, the word *Ichthus* to stand for these words, of which it contains the initials, *Iesous Christos Theou Huios Soter*. At Rome, these things have always been perfectly understood, and the approbation of S. Benedict's Medal, with its inscription which is so easily explained, could not meet with the slightest opposition from any fear of appearing to be giving a sanction to some superstitious formula.

But the approbation is given not only to the Medal, but also to the prayers to be used in blessing it. Moreover, a liberal grant of Indulgences is made to all who shall wear it or carry it about them with devotion. We give in the next chapter the list of these Indulgences, with the conditions for gaining them, as specified in the Papal Brief. It is clear, therefore, that the Holy See formally recommends the Medal or Cross of S. Benedict to the confidence of the faithful.

The privilege of blessing the Medal and attaching the indulgences to it, is, as we have just seen, reserved to the Benedictines of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, with a strict prohibition to any other Priest, unless he has received permission, to exercise this privilege under penalty of nullity both to the blessing and the indulgences. This same power has been since extended to the various congregations of the Order of S. Benedict. With regard to the approved Form of Blessing, it is of strict obligation; so that it would not be enough to make use of the simple sign of the Cross, as is generally done in the attaching indulgences to Medals, Crosses, and Beads, in virtue of faculties granted by the Holy See.

In case, however, of one's not being able to meet with a priest who has the faculty to bless the Medal of S. Benedict, a Christian may still have confidence in this sacred object. Of course, it deserves our confidence so much the more when it has been enriched with the blessings of the Church and with the indulgences which she grants to those who carry it

about their person: at the same time, we must not forget that many favours were obtained by its means even before it had been made the object of such Special privileges as we have seen bestowed on it by the Holy See. The power of the Medal is attached to the sign of the Cross which is marked on it, and to the figure of S. Benedict whose protection is assured to those who wear it. The Holy Name of Jesus, the words which our Saviour made use of in driving the Devil away, and the allusion to the victories of S. Benedict over this spirit of evil, are all so many holy forms of conjuration which the fiend cannot withstand when they are used against him with faith.

Whilst, therefore, recommending the faithful to do their utmost to get their Medal blessed, we must remind them that they ought to make use of it and have confidence in the Holy Cross and S. Benedict, even when they have no opportunity of having it blessed by a Priest who has the necessary power.

The reader has seen in the brief that the effigy of S. Benedict is necessary for the Medal. It is not therefore enough that there be engraven on it the letters C. S. P. B. (*Crux Sancti Patris Benedicti*); it moreover must have upon it the image of the Holy Patriarch of the Monks of the West. There have been within the last few years a great number of medals made in France which have not the figure of S. Benedict upon them; they cannot be blessed as Medals of the Saint, and they are essentially different from those which have been made both before and after the Brief of Pope Benedict 14th. It is well to make the faithful aware of this, and to impress upon them that these other medals, in spite of their being widely circulated in some places, are not authentic. That Medal has been from its first beginning consecrated to the honour of the holy Cross and S. Benedict; both have always been represented on it from its very beginning, and it is only under this special form that the Church offers it to her people.

As one cannot retrench the figure of S. Benedict without essentially changing the Medal, for precisely for the same reason it is wrong to put anything else whatsoever upon it. We must consequently consider as spurious, certain Medals struck off in Germany - they are of a large size, and bear a device expressive of their being Medals of S. Zachary. This Medal is quite different from that of S. Benedict which is the subject of these pages. It is true, it has upon it the effigy of the holy Patriarch; and eighteen letters are written round the medal which, if they mean anything at all, must be the initials of as many words, like the *Ichthus* of the early Christians, or the adjurations inscribed by their initials on the Medal of S. Benedict.

Some have endeavoured to explain these eighteen letters by making them the initials of a series of formulas in which God is besought to deliver us from pestilence. To say the least of it, it is strange that one single letter should be made to stand for a whole sentence, and this sentence sometimes a long one; thus, for instance, there is one which is composed of fifty-one words. This explanation, which is arbitrary from beginning to end, gives us a collection of sentences which have no connection whatever with each other. And then, why is there the figure of S. Benedict upon this Medal? Not the slightest allusion is made to the Saint in the explanation given to the eighteen letters. Whereas on the true Medal everything which does not allude to the holy Cross refers to the Holy Patriarch. It may reasonably be doubted whether the Holy See would ever consent to give its approval to an object of so confused and undetermined a character. The propagators of this Medal would have it that its originator was the holy Pope Zachary, who began his reign in the year 741; but so far they have not been able to give the merest shadow of a proof for such an assertion. In saying this, we have no intention of hurting the feelings of any one; but it seemed necessary to make these few observations relative to a Medal which would justify by its strange pretensions the severity of criticism, and indirectly bring discredit and disrespect to the true Medal of S. Benedict.

We must also protest against an error which is found upon a very great number of the Medals of S. Benedict which are distributed. A gross ignorance of the habits of the different Religious Orders has given rise to this error, which represents the figure of S. Benedict in a dress which is not that of his Order. On some of these Medals we find, for instance, the Holy Patriarch muffled in a cloak which is girded at the waist by a cord, after the manner of the Franciscans, instead of his having on the Cowl, which is the essentially distinctive habit of the Benedictine. Not that such an error invalidates the Medals, but it is one which ought to be corrected. The emblems or attributes, which ecclesiastical tradition has assigned to each Saint, cannot be set aside without a sort of irreverence, and the caprice or ignorance of artists who do so ought not to be tolerated. The edition of the Medal, which we are now alluding to, is fortunately beginning to get rare, and the

sooner the better, for besides its giving the wrong Habit, it makes the figure of S. Benedict most contemptible. The Medals which are now in circulation are much more correct, and one has just been struck off in Paris, which is perhaps the best of all that have yet appeared; it is of several sizes.

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### **XIII. LIST OF THE INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT BY THE BULL OF BENEDICT 14TH.**

We have thought it would be well, for the convenience of our readers, to give a list of all the Indulgences granted by the Holy See to those who make use of the Medal of S. Benedict.

It is not easy to distinguish them as they are given in the Brief of Benedict the 14th. We will classify them into the two ordinary divisions, plenary, and partial.

I. Those who devoutly carry about their persons the Medal of S. Benedict may gain a *plenary indulgence* on the following Festivals:-

Christmas Day,

Epiphany.

Easter Sunday.

Ascension Day.

Whit Sunday.

Trinity Sunday.

Corpus Christi.

The Immaculate Conception.

The Nativity of Our Lady.

The Annunciation,

The Purification.

The Assumption.

All Saints' Day,

S. Benedict (21st of March).

Besides the usual conditions of Confession and Holy Communion and praying, according to the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, it is requisite, in order to gain the above-mentioned Indulgences, that one should perform habitually, that is to say once at least in the week, one of the following pious practices:

Recite the Chaplet of our Lord, or Rosary,

*Or* a third part of the Rosary,

*Or* the Divine Office,

*Or* the Little Office of Our Lady,

*Or* the Office of the Dead,

*Or* the Seven Penitential Psalms,

*Or* the Gradual Psalms

Teach the rudiments of faith to children or the poor;

visit those who are in prison;

*Or* those who are sick in hospitals;

Give relief to the poor;

hear Mass, or, if he be a Priest, say it.

II. A *Plenary indulgence* to him, who, being at the point of death, having made his confession and received holy Communion, shall devoutly recommend his soul to God, and shall invoke with his heart, if not able to do so with his lips, with contrition, the Holy Names of JESUS and MARY.

III. A *Plenary indulgence*, the same as that which is given by the Sovereign Pontiff by the Papal Benediction at S. Peter's of the Vatican, on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, is granted to him, who, being truly penitent, having confessed his sins and received Holy Communion on these same days, shall pray devoutly for the exaltation of Holy Church and for



the preservation of the Supreme Pontiff.

IV. The indulgence and remission of a *third part* of the punishment due to his sins, to him, who by his good example and advice shall lead a sinner to repentance.

V. An Indulgence of *twenty years*, once each week to him who shall daily pray for the extirpation of heresies.

VI. An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines* to him who shall perform the several pious works specified in No. 1, on the lesser feasts of Our Lord and of Our Lady; for example, the Circumcision, the Holy Name of JESUS, the Transfiguration, &c.; the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin, her Presentation, her Seven Dolours, the Holy Rosary, &c. The same Indulgence, on the same conditions, for the feasts of S. Joseph, Spouse of the Most holy Virgin, of S. Maurus, S. Placid, S. Scholastica, and S. Gertrude.

VII. An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines* to him who shall hear, or if he be a Priest shall celebrate Mass, and pray for the prosperity of Christian princes and for the tranquillity of their States.

VIII. An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines*, each time, to him who out of devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, should fast on Fridays, or in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on Saturdays. He who shall have performed either of these two fasts during a whole year, shall gain a Plenary Indulgence, on a day of his choice, when, having made his confession, he shall receive holy Communion. Should he happen to die during the course of the year in which he had the intention of keeping up this pious practice during it, he shall obtain the same Indulgence.

IX. An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines* to him who shall say the Rosary or Chaplet in honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, beseeching her to intercede with her Divine Son, to obtain for him the grace of living and dying without committing a mortal sin.

X. An Indulgence of *seven years and seven quarantines* to him who shall accompany the Most holy Sacrament when carried to the sick. This Indulgence is in addition to those already granted by the Supreme Pontiff to the faithful who practise this devotion.

XI. An Indulgence of *one year* to him, who having examined his conscience, and being truly penitent for his sins, shall be resolved to avoid them for the future and confess them, and shall say five Paters and five Aves. If he go to confession and receive Holy Communion, he shall on that day gain an Indulgence of *ten years*.

XII. An Indulgence of *two hundred days* to him who shall visit those who are in prison, or those who are sick in hospitals, rendering to them some service of charity; the same is granted to him who shall teach Christian doctrine, or, as it is called, Catechism, either in the Church or at home, to his children, neighbours, or servants.

XIII. An Indulgence of *one hundred days* to him who, on Fridays, shall devoutly meditate on the Passion and Death of Our Lord, and say three times the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation.

XIV. An Indulgence of *one hundred days* to him who, out of devotion to S. Joseph, S. Benedict, S. Maurus, S. Scholastica, or S. Gertrude, shall say the Psalm *Miserere*, or five *Paters* and five *Aves*, begging of God that He will, by the intercession of these his Saints, preserve the Holy Catholic Church, and grant him a happy death.

XV. An Indulgence of *one hundred days* to him who has the habit of saying, at least once in the week, the Holy Rosary or Chaplet, or the Office of Our Lady, or that of the Dead, or only the Vespers and one Nocturn and Lauds of the same Office, or the Seven Penitential Psalms, with the Litany of the Saints and the Prayers which follow it, or five *Paters* and five *Aves* in honour of the Most Holy Name of JESUS and his five Wounds, or five *Aves*, or the Antiphon *We fly to thy Patronage, &c.*, with one of the approved Collects, in honour of the Most Holy Name of MARY.

XVI. An Indulgence of *fifty days* to him, who, before saying Mass, going to holy Communion, reciting the Divine Office or the Little Office of Our Lady, shall say some devout prayer.

XVII. An Indulgence of *fifty days* to him who shall pray for those who are in their last agony, and shall say for their intention three *Paters* and three *Aves*.

XVIII. An indulgence of *forty days* to him who shall say, once or oftener during the day, this ejaculatory prayer, "*Blessed be the most pure and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*"

XIX. He who shall pray to God that he would spread the Order of S. Benedict shall enter into a participation of all and each of the good works, of what kind soever, which are done by that Order.

XX. He who through sickness or any other lawful impediment cannot hear, or being a Priest, cannot say Mass, nor recite either the Divine Office or the Office of Our Lady, nor in fine perform the other acts of virtue enjoined for the gaining the above indulgences, may supply them by reciting three *Paters* and three *Aves*, followed by the Anthem *Salve Regina, &c.*,

adding to these prayers the following aspiration; *“Blessed be the Most Holy Trinity! and praised be the Most Holy Sacrament, and the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without sin!”* If the Indulgence, intended to be gained, be a Plenary one, it is necessary to Confess one’s sins and receive Holy Communion. But should one not have it in his power to do this, he must at least be contrite in his heart, and be firmly resolved to confess his sins when opportunity serves.

All the Indulgences here mentioned are applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

The Decree expressly forbids the selling the Medals after the Indulgences have been attached to them; as also the lending them to other persons for the purpose of communicating the Indulgences. It also reminds the faithful, that in case of a person’s losing an indulgenced Medal, and procuring another, without having the indulgences attached to it by a Priest who has the power, this person does not enjoy the favours granted to those who have had their Medal properly blessed.

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#### **XIV. RITE TO BE USED IN BLESSING THE MEDAL OF S. BENEDICT.**

We have seen in the Brief of Pope Benedict the XIV., the formula of exorcisms and prayers to be used by the Priest empowered to bless the Medals for the Indulgences, which are granted to them, and which we have just enumerated. This formula was presented to the Holy See by Benno Löbl, Abbot of S. Margaret’s of Prague; and the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, after having made some few changes in it, approved it by its Decree, dated December 23rd, 1741. We have thought it would be useful to give this Blessing, according to the copy printed at Mount Cassino, in the year 1844.

*Sacerdos professus Ordinis S. Benedicti et privilegio fruens, indutus stola, ante se habens Numismata benedicenda, incipit absolute.*

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

R. Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Exorcizo vos numismata, per Deum Patrem + omnipotentem, qui fecit coelum et terram, mare et omnia quae in eis sunt: omnis virtus adversarii, omnis exercitus diaboli, et omnis incursus, omni phantasma Sathanae eradicare et effugare ab his numismatibus, ut fiant omnibus, qui eis usuri sunt, salus mentis et corporis, in nomino Dei Patris + omnipotentis, et Jesu Christi + Filii ejus, Domini nostri, et Spiritus Sancti + Paracliti, et in charitate ejusdem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos et saeculum per ignem. R. Amen.

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Pater noster, etc.

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

V. Salvos fac servos tuos.

R. Deus meus, sperantes in te.

V. Esto nobis, Domine, turris fortitudinis.

R. A facie inimici.

V. Deus virtutem populo suo dabit.

R. Dominus benedicet populum suum in pace.

V. Mitte eis, Domine, auxilium de sancto.

R. Et de Sion tuere eos.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum Spiritu tuo.

Oremus.

Deus omnipotens, omnium bonorum largitor, supplices te rogamus, ut per intercessionem Sancti Patris Benedicti his sacris Numismatibus litteris et characteribus a te designatis tuam benedictionem + infundas, ut omnes, qui ea gestaverint, ac bonis operibus intenti fuerint, sanitatem mentis et corporis, et gratiam sanctificationis, atque indulgentias nobis concessas consequi mereantur, omnesquo diaboli insidias et fraudes per auxilium misericordiae tuae effugere valeant, et in conspectu tuo sancti et immaculati appareant. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. R. Amen.

Oremus.

Domine Jesu, qui voluisti pro totius mundi redemptione de Virgine nasci, circumcidi, a Judaeis reprobari, Judae osculo tradi, vinculis alligari, spinis coronari, clavis perforari, inter latrones crucifigi, lancea vulnerari et tandem in cruce mori: per tuam sanctissimam Passionemque humiliter exoro, ut omnes diabolicas insidias et fraudes expellas ab eo, qui Nomen sanctum tuum his litteris et characteribus a te designatis devote invocaverit, it eum ad salutis portum perducere digneris, qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. R. Amen.

Benedictio Dei Patris + omnipotentis, et Filii +, et Spiritus + Sancti descendat super haec Numismata, ac ea gestantes, et maneat semper: in nomine Patris + et Filii + et Spiritus + Sancti. R. Amen.

*Deinde sacerdos aspergit numismata aqua benedicta.*

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## **XV. ON DEVOTION TO S. BENEDICT.**

The choice which God has vouchsafed to make of his Servant Benedict, whereby he has associated the merits of this holy Patriarch of Monks to the divine virtue of the holy Cross on the Medal which we have described in these pages, seems to require that we should add, in conclusion, a few words in order to recommend to the faithful a devotion towards so powerful a protector.

The motive for our having a special devotion to any particular Saint is generally based on the merits of this Saint, which give him a more than ordinary power of interceding to God for us. Now, if we consider all that grace has worked in S. Benedict, and all that S. Benedict has done, by himself and by his children, for the honour of God, the salvation of souls, and the service of the Church, we are led to think that amongst the friends of God, and amongst those whom he has mercifully glorified, there are few whose intercession can be more powerful.

That Rule so holy and so full of wisdom, which for more than five centuries was the only one in all the Monasteries of the West, may we not justly consider it as dictated by the Holy Ghost to the man who was chosen to write it and give it his own name? Those thousands of Saints which it has produced, and who gloried in being children of S. Benedict, are they not so many stars which shine in heaven round this bright sun? Whole nations converted from paganism to the Christian faith by his disciples, do they not proclaim him to be their Father? The numerous bands of Martyrs, who honour Benedict with the title of their Leader, do they not give him the right to claim a share in the merit of their combats? That almost countless multitude of sainted Bishops who have governed so many Churches, and that constellation of holy Doctors who have taught the sacred sciences and fought against the heresies of their time, are they not also a homage to him whom they all honoured as their Master? The thirty Popes whom the Benedictine Rule has given to the Church, and of whom so many were engaged in carrying out measures of the highest importance to the defence and well-being of Christendom, do they not also bear testimony to the deep wisdom of the inspired legislator under whose guidance they passed so many years in the cloister? In a word, so many millions of souls who have, during the last thirteen hundred years, consecrated themselves to God under the holy and immortal Rule of S. Benedict, do they not form round his venerable head an everlasting crown, which is the admiration of the elect?

All these motives justify every effort which we can make to persuade Christians who love to honour those who have been heroes of sanctity, to cultivate a devotion towards the great Patriarch, in whom God seems to have united everything that can give us an idea of the immense glory wherewith he has crowned him in heaven. Let us therefore

have recourse to S. Benedict in our necessities; he has power to grant all we ask him; and that wonderfully paternal lovingness which formed quite a leading characteristic, of his soul whilst he was here on earth, (as we learn from the account of his admirable life given us by S. Gregory the Great), that same paternal sweetness is still, now that he is enjoying the happiness of heaven, the peculiarity of his intercession for his clients on earth.

He appeared one day to S. Gertrude, his illustrious daughter. The holy virgin, overwhelmed with admiration at the contemplation of his merits, reminded him of his glorious death, when in the church of Mount Cassino, on the 21st of March, 543, after having received the Body and Blood of our Lord, supported on the arms of his disciples, and standing, as it were, in the attitude of a valiant combatant, he breathed forth his soul to his God, whilst uttering his last prayer. She then ventured to ask him, in the name of this his so precious a death, that he would vouchsafe to assist by his presence, at their last moments, each of her Religious who were then living in the Convent of which she was Abbess. Relying upon the merit which he possessed with the Sovereign Lord of all things, the holy Patriarch thus answered her, with that sweet authority which accompanied his words even whilst he was here on earth: "Every one who shall honour me for the privilege wherewith my Divine Master so graciously enriched my death, I promise to be present at his death and assist him. I will be to him as a protection against all those snares which the devils will cruelly lay for him; and comforted by my presence, he shall escape them all, and obtain the bliss of heaven and there be for ever happy." \*

\* S. Gertrudis, *Insinuationes divinae pietatis*. Lib. iv, Cap. xi.

So consoling a promise made by such a servant of God, and authenticated by such a noble spouse of the Saviour of the world, has inspired the children of S. Benedict, with the pious thought of composing a special prayer in accordance with the intention specified by their Patriarch, in order thus to ensure to those who recite it the blessing which he has deigned to promise them. We here give this prayer, with the desire that it may become known and used by the faithful, and secure to them a happy death.

#### **ANTIPHON.**

Benedict, the beloved of our Lord, whilst standing in the Church, having been fortified with the Body and Blood of the Lord, supporting his failing limbs on the arms of his disciples, with his hands upraised to Heaven, breathed forth his soul amidst words of prayer, and was seen ascending into heaven by a path most richly hung with tapestry, and lit up with countless lamps.

V. Thou didst appear glorious in the sight of the Lord.  
R. Therefore did he clothe thee with beauty.

#### **PRAYER.**

O, God! who didst adorn the precious death of most holy Father Benedict with so many and so great privileges; grant we beseech thee, that at our death we may be defended from the snares of our enemies, by the blessed presence of him whose memory we celebrate. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **ANTIPHON.**

Stans in Oratorio, dilectus Domini Benedictus, Corpore et Sanguine Dominico munitus, inter discipulorum manus imbecillia membra sustentans, erectis in coelum manibus, inter verba orationis spiritum efflavit, qui per viam stratam palliis, et innumeris coruscantibus lampadibus, coelum ascendere visus est.

V. Gloriosus apparuisti in conspectu Domini.  
R. Propterea decorem induit te Dominus.

#### **ORATIO.**

Deus, qui pretiosam mortem sanctissimi Patris Benedicti tot tantisque privilegiis decorasti: concede, quaesumus: ut cujus memoriam recolimus, ejus in obitu nostro beata praesentia ab hostium muniamur insidiis. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.