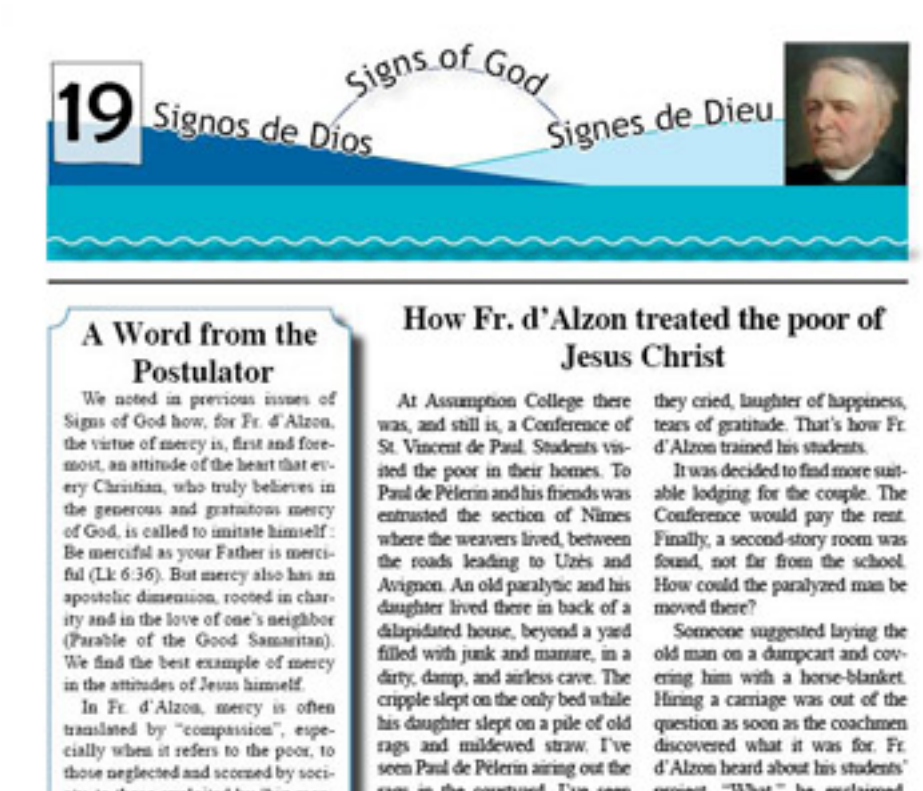


19 Signos de Dios — Signs of God — Signes de Dieu

A Word from the Postulator

We noted in previous issues of Signs of God how, for Fr. d'Alzon, the virtue of mercy is, first and foremost, an attitude of the heart that every Christian, who truly believes in the generous and gratuitous mercy of God, is called to imitate himself : Be merciful as your Father is merciful (Lk 6:36). But mercy also has an apostolic dimension, rooted in charity and in the love of one's neighbor (Parable of the Good Samaritan). We find the best example of mercy in the attitudes of Jesus himself.

In Fr. d'Alzon, mercy is often translated by "compassion", especially when it refers to the poor, to those neglected and scorned by society, to those exploited by "big money". So it is that Fr. d'Alzon would make use of lessons drawn from the Fathers of the Church, as we will see in certain of his texts.

The cause of the beatification and canonization of Fr. d'Alzon is making its way. There are many people who are requesting his intercession and informing us that they obtained graces and favors after having had recourse to him in prayer. Twenty-five years ago, on December 21, 1991, Pope John-Paul II proclaimed him Venerable, recognizing that our founder had led a life of holiness and practiced, in a remarkable fashion, the virtues of the Christian life. We hope that the Lord will soon grant us the grace of his beatification.

Fr. Julio Navarro Rondo, a.a.

How Fr. d'Alzon treated the poor of Jesus Christ

At Assumption College there was, and still is, a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. Students visited the poor in their homes. To Paul de Pélerin and his friends was entrusted the section of Nîmes where the weavers lived, between the roads leading to Uzès and Avignon. An old paralytic and his daughter lived there in back of a dilapidated house, beyond a yard filled with junk and manure, in a dirty, damp, and airless cave. The cripple slept on the only bed while his daughter slept on a pile of old rags and mildewed straw. I've seen Paul de Pélerin airing out the rags in the courtyard. I've seen him bathe the old man and make his bed. I once took part in a sort of little family feast brought in by my friend. Seated on a wooden box, Paul tried to encourage the old man and his daughter to eat the food. Their joy was a pleasure to behold. They laughed until they cried, laughter of happiness, tears of gratitude. That's how Fr. d'Alzon trained his students.

It was decided to find more suitable lodging for the couple. The Conference would pay the rent. Finally, a second-story room was found, not far from the school. How could the paralyzed man be moved there?

Someone suggested laying the old man on a dumpcart and covering him with a horse-blanket. Hiring a carriage was out of the question as soon as the coachmen discovered what it was for. Fr. d'Alzon heard about his students' project. "What," he exclaimed, "An old wagon? Never! We must treat the poor with greater respect than that. Aren't they Jesus Christ's friends? Give me a few moments and I'll find a solution to your problem." He hurried immediately to the home of Countess de B..., to ask her to lend her sedan-chair which, incidentally, was no longer being used. He explained why he wanted it and she immediately gave permission.

We therefore saw this poor old paralytic, revoltingly dirty, seated on fine green velvet cushions, in a gilded chair with beveled glass. The exterior paintings showed winged genii, plump as ortolans, floating and wandering amid garlands of flowers.

Fr. d'Alzon speaks to us

You are ever with me, O my God!
With me in my free time, at my meals,
when I study, and when I sleep to protect me;
and when I desire to speak to your infinite mercy,
I find you ever-ready to listen to me.
(Écrits Spirituels, p. 627)

2 Signes de Dieu - Signos de D

What Fr. d'Alzo

About mercy toward the poor

Estote ergo vos misericordes [So be merciful] [Lk 6:36]. Words drawn from the gospel of the First Sunday after Pentecost. Words that can be used at a meeting where people who are giving of their time to the poor are seeking relief for those who don't have time to visit the down and out.

Why must one be merciful?

Almsgiving is either a restitution to one's neighbor, or an expiation for oneself, or act of adoration with regard to God.

1. Restitution. St. Jerome, and after him Bourdaloue in the presence of King Louis XIV, said: *Omnis dives, iniquus aut iniqui haeres* [Every rich man is wicked or the heir of one who is wicked]. I am not saying that you have stolen — if you have, pay restitution ---- but are there not things that bother you in all your financial speculation? It is the poor whom you hurt and to whom you must make restitution.

For, in the order of providence, what the wealthy possess can be divided into two categories, what is necessary and what is superfluous. Keep what is necessary; the superfluous doesn't belong to you. Listen, I can't dismiss the question of the superfluous and the necessary; it exists after all. Let me appeal to your conscience. Shou dismiss it?

2. Expiation. The ag ing in is an age of plea of money. People wan that they can enjoy ple how do you reconcile pleasure with the Word ior ---- do penance? W to see where pleasure

Stained glass window of th by Gabriel Loire, in the basi in Santiago, Ch

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