

Patience in the Trials of Married Life

Blessed Anna Maria Taigi

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There is nothing secret about the great sanctity of Blessed Anna Maria Taigi. There is an explanation. She understood the meaning of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Our Lord Himself taught her in one sentence: “You must fill up in your flesh that which is wanting to My Passion for My Church and My Vicar.”

Anna Maria’s understanding of the Mystical Body of Christ explains her whole spiritual life. Our Lord had said that something was lacking to His Passion. She knew quite well that nothing could be lacking to His Passion as Head of the Mystical Body. Equally well did she know that much is lacking in the sufferings of the Whole Christ-Head and members. We are the members and Our Lord gives us the chance to supply what is lacking by our sufferings in union with His.

Anna Maria.Gianetti was born on 29th May, 1769, at Siena.

The Gianettis were honest and devout people. Anna Maria’s mother had the privilege of preparing for burial the body of fellow-parishioner, St. Benedict Labre.

As a girl and young woman Anna Maria was very good looking and knew it. She dressed and adorned herself to display her beauty to best advantage; but she always dressed modestly. In the matter of dress she had some skill and merely did her own advertising. She was a dressmaker of no ordinary ability. The demand on her services and advice was considerable. Whether she used cosmetics or not we do not know, although her father was a pharmacist and probably dealt in synthetic beauty. Later, when she married Domenico Taigi, she was encouraged to dress smartly. Domenico was no intellectual, but he had horse sense and a simple. outlook. He was proud of his beautiful, virtuous wife, and delighted in being seen abroad with her.

It had been Anna Maria’s dress sense that gained her the position of lady’s maid in the palace of the Serra. Here she first met Domenico, a waiter in the employ of Prince Chigi.

Domenico was attracted, not by Anna’s good looks alone, but by “a certain pleasing modesty in her dress and manner.”

Before “speaking for her hand” Domenico consulted Anna’s former employer, then the Signora Serra, and the parish priest. They were unanimous that Anna Maria was a good and virtuous girl, upon whom it had been borne that life is not so simple for the very attractive.

Marriage to Domenico Taigi on 7th January, 1790, secured Anna from danger, and did not diminish her charm; Domenico insisting that her dress be complementary to her beauty.

The success of the marriage was not a foregone conclusion. Domenico was undoubtedly a good man who deeply loved his wife and was faithful to her. But, off duty, he was a rough diamond, played the master, was hot tempered and as obstinate as a mule.

Somewhat an epicure in food, if anything displeased his taste he would seize the tablecloth by the four comers and hurl Anna’s carefully prepared repast in the air. An insult few wives could stand. Anna merely remarked: “How tired your work for us makes you, Domenico.”

Later, in evidence, Domenico admitted what a trial he was by saying of Anna: "I may say that her whole life with me was a constant and very difficult exercise in patience." Then he added humbly: "She led me to mend some of my faults."

Anna Maria had seven children. Her dressmaking helped here. She was never idle. "Idleness," she impressed on the children, "is the mother of vice."

But her family was not confined to her own home. Hers was the whole family of Christ, members of the Mystical Body. The sick and poor she regularly visited, taking some of her children with her to train them in practical charity.

Her mother came to live with them; now an embittered, difficult old lady, whose chief delight was baiting the fiery Domenico. Her father refused to cross her threshold, declaring she had

"left" him. He would sit on the steps and whine about her ingratitude. Domenico used to get furious at this. Anna won him round to behave as if her father was his most welcome guest. He even grew to like and be amused at his mother-in-law.

The eldest boy, Camillo, married and brought his wife to live with his parents. The young wife expected to be mistress. More fireworks from Domenico. Alessandro, the second son, looked to Anna for the support of his family. The husband of Sofia, the eldest daughter, died leaving six young children. Anna Maria took the family home. "Try my daughter, to trust God better," she said to the bewildered Sofia. "You know He will always care for His own little ones."

These were but a few of the trials that fell to the lot of this chosen soul. Patience was the key to her spiritual success; patience with the members of Christ's Mystical Body and most of all with the members of her own household. Our Lord told her: "He who possesses charity, my daughter, possesses patience." In and by marriage and family life she achieved her extraordinary vocation of victim soul. "You must fill up in you flesh what is lacking to My Passion" was no meaningless vocation.

The date of her death was revealed to her. It was 7th June, 1836. She was 67. Days before she took leave of her dear ones. Her final request was that they should be faithful to the family rosary and to Mary. There is lesson for the world in the last words of Blessed Anna Maria-The Rosary and Mary.