

things expose men. Without self-consideration, prayer, and pious reading or meditation, it is impossible that a man should be really possessed of these virtues, how finely soever he may talk of them by way of notion or speculation. It is also by prayer and holy meditation that he pays to God the homage of praise and compunction, and improves himself as a rational or spiritual being, and as a Christian. Every one, therefore, must, in the first place, reserve time for their employments, even preferably to all others, if any should seem incompatible. But who cannot find time for pleasure and conversation? Sure then, he may for prayer. By this even a man's secular life and employs will become spiritual and holy.

ST. DIDACUS, C.

DIDACUS or Diego (that is, in Spanish, James) was a native of the little town of St. Nicholas, in the diocess of Seville, in Andalusia, of mean condition, but from his childhood fervent in the love of God, and the practice of all virtues. Near that town a holy priest led an eremitical life, and Didacus in his youth obtained his consent to live with him. Though very young he imitated the austerities and devotions of his master, and they cultivated together a little garden; and also employed themselves in making wooden spoons, trenchers, and such like mean utensils. After having lived thus a recluse for some years, he was obliged to return to his parents: but desiring most ardently to walk in the footsteps of his divine Redeemer, he soon after betook himself to a convent of the Observantin Friar Minors, called St. Francis's of Arrizafa, and there took the habit among the lay-brothers who belong not to the choir, but serve the convent in humble offices, and are much employed in manual labour.

After his profession he was sent with a priest of his Order into the Canary islands, where he did wonders in instructing and converting many idolaters, and though only a lay-brother, was appointed by his superiors the first guardian or warden of a convent which was erected in one of those islands called Forteventura. By the mortification of his flesh, and of his own will, and assiduous prayer, he offered himself a continual sacrifice to our Lord, and by this long martyrdom prepared himself to shed his blood for the faith amongst the barbarians, if such had been the will of God. After some time he was recalled into Spain, and lived in divers convents about Seville with great fervour, simplicity, austerity, and recollection: he seemed so much absorbed in God as scarce to be able to speak but to him, or of him; and the humility, ardour, and lively sentiments with which he always discoursed of heavenly things, discovered how much he was dead to himself, and replenished with the divine Spirit.

In the year 1450, a great jubilee was celebrated at Rome; and St Bernardin of Sienna being canonized at the same time, three thousand eight hundred religious persons of the Order of St. Francis were assembled there, in the great convent called Aracæli. Didacus went thither with F. Alfonsus de Castro. In this journey our saint attended his companion during a dangerous illness with such fervour of spirit, and such as ardent charity, that it was easy to see how much God aided and favoured him, and how wonderfully he was animated with the spirit in all the pains he took night and day for his love. This appeared still more in the charity and devotion with which he waited on many others of his Order that were sick at Rome, during thirteen weeks that he stayed there. From Rome the servant of God returned back to Seville, and lived thirteen years longer in the convent, first at Saussaye, and

chiefly of Alcala of Henares, in Castile, shining in all kinds of virtue, going forward every day in perfection, and moving wonderfully all who conversed with him to aspire to the same. Not content punctually to keep the rule of his holy father St. Francis, he endeavoured with all his strength to draw in himself the most perfect portraiture of his heavenly life. His admirable humility, by which he put himself under the feet of every one, was a great source of the constant peace of mind which he enjoyed; for, so perfect was the mastery which he had gained over his passions, and his soul was so much raised above all earthly things, that nobody ever saw him troubled, heard from his mouth an angry or unbecoming word, or discerned any thing in his conduct which did not seem to breathe an air of perfect virtue. Having no other will but that of our Lord, in whose cross he gloried, he accepted every thing with equal cheerfulness from his hand, and equally praised him in adversity and prosperity. He treated his body very rigorously: his habit was always mean, and his attire and whole exterior deportment was an image of the interior mortification of his soul. With the perfect spirit and practice of penance he joined her good sister, continual prayer, and the elevation of his soul to God. In contemplation his body was sometimes seen raised from the ground, whilst his soul was ravished and absorbed in God. The passion of our divine Redeemer was the ordinary object on which his thoughts and affections were employed; he often meditated upon it with a crucifix in his hand, and with frequent raptures. When he passed from the contemplation of the bloody sacrifice of the Son of God to the unbloody sacrifice in which the same sacred victim continues daily to be offered on our altars, his love and fervour were redoubled. A God in the holy eucharist made the spiritual food of our

souls, was the object of his admiration, and the nourishment of his love; and the oftener he received this God of love in his breast, the more were the flames of his love increased. His tender devotion to the Son extended to the mother, whom he honoured as his advocate.

In 1463, he was taken ill at Alcala, where he had spent the last years of his life. His distemper began by an imposthume in his arm. During this illness his preparation for his last hour was most fervent and edifying. In this agony he called for a cord (such as the friars wear) and put it about his neck, and holding a cross of wood in his hands, with tears in his eyes he begged pardon of all his religious brethren that were assembled about his bed in prayer. Then fixing his eyes on the crucifix, he repeated with great tenderness the words of the hymn on the cross: *Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, &c.* and calmly expired on the 12th of November, in 1463. Several miracles were performed by him in his lifetime; and many more through his intercession after his death. Don Carlos, son of king Philip II. having by a fall at the palace of Alcala, hurt his head so grievously that the wound was judged mortal by the surgeons; and miracles being then frequently wrought at the tomb of St. Didacus, the king caused his shrine to be brought into the chamber of the dying prince, which was done with great devotion and holy pomp: and thereupon the prince's wound was immediately healed. Philip II., out of gratitude, solicited the saint's canonization, which was performed by Sixtus V. in 1588. Innocent XI. appointed his office in the Roman Breviary, and ordered his feast to be transferred to the 13th of November, though in his Order it continues to be observed on the 12th. See on this saint, Mark of Lisbon in the Chronicle of his Order; and the history of his life, miracles, and canonization, compiled by Peter

Gelasinius, apostolic prothonotary, and Francis Pegna, the celebrated auditor of the Rota, by order of his holiness. See also Sedulius's *Historia Seraphica*.

ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA, C.

YOUTH is the amiable bloom of age in which sanctity has particular advantages and charms; a circumstance which recommends to our admiration this saint, who in his tender years surpassed the most advanced in the gifts of grace and virtue. Stanislas was the youngest son of John Kostka, senator of Poland, and of Margaret Kriska, sister to the palatine of Masovia, and was born in the castle of Rostkou, on the 28th of October, in 1550. His mother engraved in his tender heart early and deep impressions of piety; and the first use the saint made of his reason was to consecrate himself to God with a fervour beyond his age. The first elements of letters he learned at home under a private tutor named John Biliuski, who attended him and his elder brother, Paul, to the numerous college of the Jesuits at Vienna, when the saint was fourteen years old. From the first dawn of reason he showed no inclination to any thing but to piety; and, as soon as he was capable, he gave as much of his time as possible to prayer and study. His nicety in the point of purity, and his dread of detraction, and all dangers of sin, made him infinitely cautious in the choice of his company. When he arrived at Vienna, and was lodged amongst the pensioners of the Jesuits, every one was struck with admiration to see the profound recollection and devotion with which he poured forth his soul before God in prayer: the modesty and glowing fervour which appeared in his countenance at those times, raised in all who beheld him a veneration for his person. He sometimes fell into