

# DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

Adapted from a study by the Rt. Rev. George de Charms

Even while we are on earth, our minds are in constant touch with the spiritual world. What we think and feel seems to come from within ourselves, but this is not really true. Feelings and thoughts come to us from the spirits or angels who are present with us. People are spiritual beings, as to their minds. This is why we continue to live after the death of our bodies.

We are constantly under the influence of spirits. Some of these are good and some are evil. Both kinds cannot influence us at the same time. If they did, we would be torn between wanting to go in two opposite directions at the same time. But good spirits and evil spirits dominate our thoughts and feelings alternately. The Lord maintains a balance between these opposite influences through the secret operation of His Divine Providence. He brings our minds into equilibrium, and so provides for our free choice. But how is free choice possible?

Even while we are under the influence of evil spirits, we can remember how we felt while good spirits or angels were present with us. This memory is what is called "conscience." We are troubled by the loss of this heavenly delight, and wish to regain it. This causes us to reflect, on what we really want. Should we merely follow the impulse of the moment, or should we struggle to regain what has been temporarily lost?

We really have no power of our own to make this choice, but the Lord flows into our souls and gives us the power to make the choice. The power really belongs to the Lord alone, but by using that power as if it were our own, we ourselves make the choice. We are perfectly free to choose to confirm or dwell on the evil thoughts and feelings that come to us, or to make the thoughts and feelings from heaven our own.

If we insist on choosing evil, the Lord permits us to do so. Nevertheless, He also causes good spirits and angels to draw near and restore the balance or equilibrium of our minds. This enables us to change our minds and choose the good, if we are willing.

Of course, every time we choose evil, we increase the power of evil spirits over our minds, and then choosing what is good becomes more difficult. Fortunately, the reverse of this is also true. Every time we choose what is good, our ability to make that choice again is strengthened.