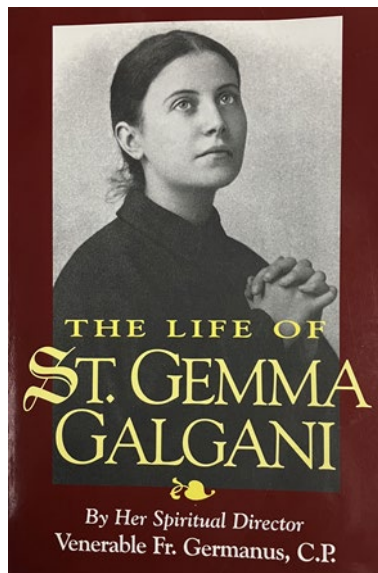


# Reflections on St. Gemma Galgani. The Gem of Christ.

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By [Jeff Liautaud](#)

## Summary:

In *The Life of St. Gemma Galgani*

1878-1903 aged 25 at death today she is ranked as one of the greatest<sup>1</sup> saints.

From Ch. 13, Fr. Germanus writes:

"From her earliest years, Gemma had preserved her baptismal innocence unstained... She had never committed a deliberate sin."

**For example**, another child at school came to St. Gemma and accused her of spiritual wrong doing. St. Gemma responded asking

the other to let her correct the fault, and he would see she had changed. Even though this was a false accusation St. Gemma took on the burden in heroic ego diminishment by surrendering to God.

The spirituality of natural law is ego diminishment by surrender to God. That touches others in ripples of intentional-community building by satisfying innate needs now proven scientifically toward happiness. When another thwarts your innate needs, you suffer. At this pivotal point the spirituality of natural law kicks in by action of the Holy Spirit enlightening and guiding the use of reason.

In some instances, suffering can bring joy, for example when you stay in community by your acts of kindness with another who thwarts your innate needs long enough for the other to be kind back to you. St. Gemma certainly did this.

Our self, our ego, tends to tilt unaware of our surroundings in a self-centered fashion. Ego diminishment is needed. Only by surrender to God, can we come to God. Mortification of the senses can be good, for as many times as there are weaves in a shirt is how many times our cross will be in our lives. God will provide the perfect means to come to Him, uniquely for each person. For God is nothing but Love.

**Personal Reflections.** If you read the Life of St. Gemma, you will have personal reflections as did I. The best reflections become ego diminishment, self-criticisms, and my call to change.

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<sup>1</sup> See Endnote.

The Catholic Church teaches that any person in close juxtaposition to Christ brings an effusion of the Holy Spirit. From St. Gemma's relationship with Christ in His passion came a remarkable purity.

Even her parents sensed the import of the child as a gem. Her relationship with Christ was experiential and affirmed in grace of upbringing.

The child's earliest earthly actions reflect a commingling of the effusion of the Holy Spirit with her very self. Thus was born a saint with a cross.

In fact St. Gemma's whole desire was to know Christ crucified. First introduced to the idea by her mother in the most genteel of the ways, reinforced by holy nuns who personally informed her most intense curiosity on the subject, culminated in receiving her first Holy Communion that Christ might live in her and she in Christ.

This was very much unlike my first Holy Communion. The nuns trained me in the knowledge of the true body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ that we would be receiving in communion. But there was no infused understanding by the Holy Spirit felt interiorly by me. I made up for what was lacking by saying to my mother "I don't know. I just feel different."

This shows a desire unfulfilled at the time. I spoke this to my mother who was more spiritual but largely silent, and especially not to my father who was more material and practical in raising his family to get ahead. I wished to please them both.

Whereas St. Gemma Galgani was inspired by both her parents' greatest desire that Christ might live in her and she in Christ. Ego diminishment was way stronger in St. Gemma than in myself. She was born and coached into ego diminishment by all around her, not so myself who was born into ego increasing by all around me except my mother who was mostly silent but obviously to me quite spiritual. It was not until later that I was to learn that my father served as an altar boy continuing in age long after the norm was to stop.

But when my father met my mother she was Lutheran and the priest would not marry them in the church. Much later my mother converted to Catholicism and before I was born remarried to my father in the Catholic Church.

St. Gemma was raised in a family that had middle class money but was approved by her parents to seek her cross not money.

My father was domineering but loving and I was raised first to be a good man, then to seek money, but not my cross. By money I include the habits of money making, like hard working and keen perception.

My cross found me and in great adversity I seriously sought my cross. After years of praying I began to have mystical experiences centered on the cross which was to be in my life "as many times as were weaves in my shirt." By cross I mean suffering. Then I chose ego diminishment to make room for the Holy Spirit that Christ might live in me and I in Christ. One Friday on retreat at Bellarmine Retreat center in Barrington IL. Christ sat on my bed not

physically present to the eye but interiorly present in my soul and told me we were brothers. From task master to brother was not possible to my way of thinking. But Jesus sent me to walk the retreat grounds and the Holy Spirit convinced me of a difference of myself from others around me. I remember thinking each person given as an example had given up and did not follow ego diminishment for what I called Pennies.

Thence forth my relationship with Jesus became mutually supportive in abundant reciprocity. By accepting my cross my ego was burning away and joy was filling my heart.

St. Gemma had left the world by the time of her First Holy Communion, while I left the world in my late thirties in self change with my eyes fixed on the Lord. Our shared breakthrough was mystical experiences of ego diminishment by one ready, willing, and able. St. Gemma left this world by death at the age of 25. I am 82. I still have work to do. See my paper "The Natural Law Science of Happiness."

St. Gemma completed her work of simplicity to live in Christ so that Christ may live in her at age 25. I am so different. I have much to go to become even a little like St. Gemma. Then I read one of her confessors, Fr. Peter Paul's, account that sometimes she was in a state of ecstasy especially during Christ's passion describing ecstasy on page 86 Tan Books soft cover: "She was during ecstasy insensible to any noise that was made near her, or to the puncture of a pin, or to burning with a taper. But although so dead to sense(s)

during the ecstasy, she was all alive to heavenly things and was heard to give vent in fervent expressions to her love of God. 'Yes, I love thee, my Jesus; I will be all Thine. I will suffer all I can for Thee.' Like Christ she was doing this for others.

Her experiences of Christ's passion weren't just gruesome. Fr. John Paul continues: "Her bearing during those moments was truly angelic, and her countenance was resplendent with beauty joined with a marvelous majesty."

Christ wants no one to suffer. But Christ died in great suffering in His Passion. St. Gemma experienced Christ's passion physically in union with Him. Yet my own repulsion to physical pain is great like a big baby. By ego diminishment we live in Christ and Christ lives in us. My journey to God changing myself from ways that hurt and harm others to more loving ways is my lifelong work. I will never be finished. My self is burning away in ego diminishment.

### **Criticism of handling St. Gemma by the norms of discernment in her day by her spiritual directors:**

Innate needs were not taken into consideration; nor could they be until discovery.

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## **The Discovery of Innate Needs**

Since 2017 more than 700,000 academic research articles have [cited](#) Deci and Ryan, who finds "Remarkable Convergence" with

innate needs and Jeff Liautaud's discovery of primary values that satisfy innate needs.

According to Deci and Ryan:

"The findings have led to the postulate of three innate psychological needs—*competence, autonomy, and relatedness*—which when satisfied yield enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when thwarted lead to diminished motivation and well-being."

**Loquate** is a ripple organization that touches others in ripples of intentional community. They know how to satisfy innate needs and build community. In 1977 Loquate discovered **primary values** that build community. **Primary values** converge as the **Smart® habits** that satisfy *innate needs*.

The innate need of *Competence* is satisfied by the primary value of - **Attaining goals or other ends, not necessarily preconceived as goals, but which become goals once experienced.**

The innate need of *Autonomy* is satisfied by the primary value of - **Operating in an area of meaningful expansion for yourself, that is your interiorly preferred work.**

The innate need of *Relatedness* is satisfied by the primary value of - **Doing that which is truly in the best interests of others.**

## **Feelings: ARE THE MOST SCIENTIFIC PART OF NATURAL LAW**

It is a natural law that all human beings are born with feelings. Our feelings tell us if we are on target, or off target, as a human being. Feelings are hardwired into the human chassis. As a computer analogy, feelings become part of our operating system.

## **The Smart® Natural Law Rule of Feelings is this:**

**If one or more of the primary values is present in an experience, and the experience does not go against any of the other primary**

**values, you will feel good! If the experience goes against one or more of the primary values, you will feel bad, even if other primary values are present.**

**On 10/17/19, Richard M. Ryan in a note to Jeff Liautaud, Founder of Loquate said this:**

## **Remarkable Convergence.**

Hi again Jeff

Happy to say this: "*Reading the text you sent, I see that we share some very basic values and missions Jeff, and I loved the autonomy, competence, and relatedness themes you expressed. I see remarkable convergence with our work within self-determination theory (SDT). I especially appreciate your interest in promoting the importance of community and what I would call having the widest integrative span of care one can shoulder, and I hope SDT can be a resource in that effort. I truly hope your mission to promote communities in which one most values the common good really takes off.*"

All the best  
Richard

## **Community**

Loquate has been building community for environments since 1970. The Research cited also shows that the more people focus on goal content with selfish aims, like money, image, power etc., which do not directly satisfy innate needs and often crowd them out, the less happy they are—even when they attain them. The more they place value on community, the greater their well being and happiness.

Loquate's **Smart®** activation training offers **Scientific Momentum Activating Righteous Transformation** in three 2 hour sessions by zoom.

Primary values converge as the Smart® habits that scientifically satisfy innate needs. Open to all mankind, like sailors eating limes to prevent scurvy, Smart® habits overcome the scurvy of the human spirit which is diminished motivation and well-being. Doing so leads to peace, happiness and joy for the member, and increased sense of community in every group of which the member is a part.

The End of the Discovery of Innate Needs

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**Criticism Continued:** St. Gemma's spiritual directors appear to have reinforced a scrupulosity of St. Gemma living a lie of treating an occasion of sin, as sin itself.

**Solution:** Discernment of living the lie of treating an occasion of sin, as different from sin itself is needed through both spiritual direction and natural law.

Jeff Liautaud's insight is that obedience to any authority can never be absolute when in violation of natural law. By reason alone no person can tell you to hurt yourself. Reinforcing scrupulosity through "Absolute obedience" risks telling someone to hurt or harm one's self. Natural law limits "absolute obedience" to obedience. That limit is reason.

Mutually abundant reciprocity may better occur through Spiritual direction and natural law. Proof positive will be an increased spirituality in, by, and through Spirit-centered sense of community.

All on earth together need each other in spiritual community for Spirit-centered community. For alone we are so vulnerable. But together in interfaith dialogue we can

live in a protective bubble of Spirit-centered community bringing peace on earth. Leave the trap of "absolute obedience." Spiritual direction and natural law are both needed.

Endnote: St Gemma is ranked as one of the greatest saints:

<sup>1</sup> After her death on April 11, 1903, in Lucca, Italy, her remains were immediately entrusted to the Passionist Nuns (the Monastery of St. Gemma in Lucca, Italy), with whom she had lived as a spiritual daughter and quasi-postulant during the last years of her life.

She bore the visible stigmata for several years (photographed and medically examined).

She experienced weekly mystical reenactments of the Passion (every Thursday–Friday she would literally bleed from the wounds of Christ and go into ecstasy).

She had almost daily conversations with Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, her guardian angel (the dialogues were written down and are considered extraordinarily profound).

She offered herself as a victim soul for the conversion of sinners, enduring intense physical and spiritual suffering.

Numerous miracles were attributed to her intercession both during her life and after her death.

Popes have spoken of her in glowing terms:

St. Pius X called her "a gem."

Pius XI advanced her cause rapidly.

Pius XII canonized her in 1940 and praised her as a "model of the highest Christian perfection."

St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI both referred to her with great reverence.

Passionist priests (her spiritual family) and many exorcists consider her one of the most powerful intercessors against evil spirits in modern times.

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## Resources

[Loquate](#) (6436 N Oketo Ave, Chicago, IL 60631, United States [jeff@loquate.tv](mailto:jeff@loquate.tv) 773-621-0863).

[The Natural Law Science of Happiness.](#)