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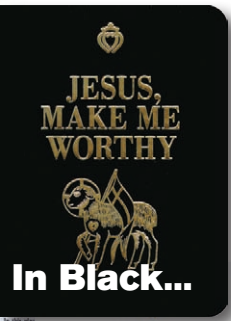
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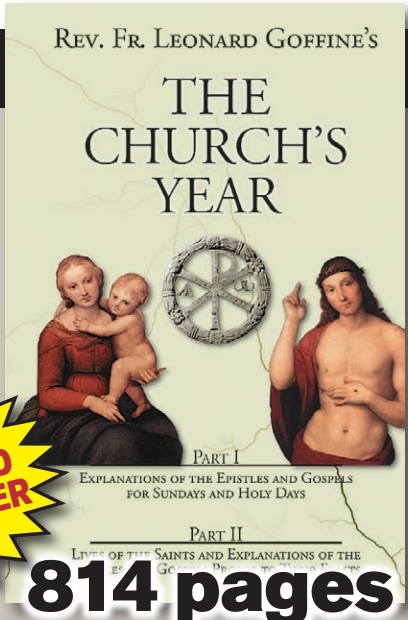


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“To publish Catholic journals and place them in the hands of honest men is not enough. It is necessary to spread them as far as possible that they may be read by all, and especially by those whom Christian charity demands we should tear away from the poisonous sources of evil literature.”

—Pope St. Pius X

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ON OUR COVER: *The Thinker*, a bronze and marble sculpture by Auguste Rodin, the original of which is on display in Paris at the front entrance of a museum of Rodin's work. It was originally meant to depict Dante in front of the Gates of Hell, pondering his great poem, *The Divine Comedy*.

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Letter from the Editor

Best Wishes for A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year. Congratulations!! 2007 and 2008 are memorable years for Angelus Press. In 2007, our Holy Father the Pope Benedict XVI promulgated *Motu Proprio* "Summorum Pontificum." And 2008 is the 30th anniversary of Angelus Press. Do you have any special plan for anniversary? I would like to send my spiritual bouquet to you with this Christmas card.

My spiritual bouquet.

Rosary. 15 decades.

Litany of the Precious Blood. 3 times.

Yours faithfully in Christ our King and Mary our Queen,
Dominicus Pius V Keigo Uemura (Shirakawa, Japan)

So wrote our Japanese friend and intercessor who attends Latin Mass centers of the Society of Saint Pius X in Tokyo and Osaka. Thank you, Mr. Uemura, and, yes, by the way, we do have some special plans. Look for commemorative issues of *The Angelus* this summer. In one, we will remember the Episcopal Consecrations of Archbishop Lefebvre with new interviews of the four bishops he consecrated 20 years ago. We'll have them discuss the growth of the Society materially and in influence. What symbolism do they each give for their episcopal coat-of-arms? In another, Angelus Press will give thanks for three decades of continuous publishing by reviewing its apostolate with H.E. Bishop Bernard Fellay and its managing priests from the past and present, and by recalling the sermon of Fr. Peter Scott given on the day the Angelus Press staff was perpetually consecrated to the Sacred Heart.

In the meantime, Fr. Goffine's *The Church's Year* has been handsomely reprinted in hardback (see inside front cover of this magazine), just in time for Catholics unfamiliar with the liturgical calendar in effect prior to Vatican II. Though not strictly *all* 1962, this already popular book will become more popular among that demographic finding liturgical Catholic Tradition or returning to the missal of their childhood. An elderly priest, a new customer of ours from the northeastern US, wrote this after reading our Angelus Press book *The Mass* (published August 2007):

The other book by Fr. Joseph Dunney—terrific. Great for talks on the Mass. Another holy priest. God bless your work. Holy Mass—I should have loved it more. Jesu!

Angelus Press is becoming the place for fans of *Summorum Pontificum* to shop and play catch-up to the Latin Mass. Two orders placed recently manifest this in a big way. A non-Society Latin Mass website just ordered *The Mass* (50 copies), the *Traditional Hymnal* (50), *The Heart of the Mass* (75), and the *Roman Martyrology* (10). Another large and varied order for \$1578.00 was made by the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Bookstore in Washington, DC.

I quote from the editorial of Robert "BoSacks" Sacks appearing in *Publishing Executive* (Oct. 2007) titled "Does the Next Generation Actually Read?":

...Part of the equation is that we have created a generation of instant-gratification seekers. Reading an in-depth article in the newspaper or magazine does not provide instant gratification. Reading a book takes time and effort. You have to work at reading, and then actually think about drawing your own conclusions. Coming to a conclusion takes brain power and focused energy. It appears that these are not qualities we have wholeheartedly encouraged in this new generation....

When you bring 21st-century media into the instant-gratification mix, with products like PlayStations, TiVos, the Web, PDAs, iPods and 24/7 smart cell-phone activity, you might just get a snapshot of the future of reading. "Screenagers" brains are truly never at rest, but also seem to never have focused staying power to dwell on anything thought-provoking for any length of time....This seems to be a dangerous formula of information discharge. I see that failure manifesting itself in the screenager generation's lack of long-form readership. However, the wireless generation does read; it just reads differently than past generations. It reads in "word blocks," sort of like sound bites with the audio. But what genuine depth of any given topic can you get from a sound bite? Is the same lack of depth true for a word block?

If current statistics are accurate and reading continues to plummet, not only are publishers in trouble, but also, perhaps, is a whole generation....

BoSacks concludes his article asking about the societal changes technology has manifested into our reading habits and how further technological changes will affect reading and information distribution, what if any traction publishing platforms will have with the screenager generation if they are not seduced by constantly updatable WiFi, audio, and video, and what will be the definition of a "publisher" in the next 10-20 years. He ends by saying that in today's digital world the substance of information doesn't matter any more; rather, "the magic it performs is what counts."

I have the same concerns as BoSacks as should all persons in authority to form souls. Catholic tradition, you see, is not immune to technolust. Suffice it to say that Truth can't be sloganeered; the Catholic Faith can't be sound-bit or sound-blocked, neither can the Catholic culture which must radiate from it. That's why I'm so pleased to advertise the "QHR Reading Express" challenge Fr. Steven Soos, SSPX, has instituted at his Queen of the Holy Rosary Academy, St. Louis, MO (314-961-5444). Eight grades plus preschool and kindergarten, each with a pre-selected list of 50 age-appropriate books from which they are challenged to read. Students must give a satisfactory oral report to a teacher proving they've read the book in its entirety. A ladder of rewards includes at the top a gift certificate to the parish bookstore. Thanks, Padre. Your creativity and that of your faculty guarantees the future reading and appreciation of words of life.

Bookstores, since March 7 you know that Angelus Press is challenging you. Most sales to May 1 takes any of three store-credit prizes: \$1000, \$500, \$500. Readers, please help towards victory by patronizing your favorite bookstore over the next month. (Individual retail sales do not count towards your bookstore's aggregate total.)

Instaurare Omnia in Christo,
FR. KENNETH NOVAK

INTRODUCTION

Our World Is False...

To state the obvious is today a hazardous venture because modern man does not want to hear the plain truth. To say that white is white or that black is black is almost always to incur the hostility of the “intellectuals” and of public opinion, which they form. One is dismissed as being weak-minded, pre-historic, or in any case out of tune with today’s world if one tries today to promote the True, the Good or the Beautiful!

For proof of such a sweeping statement, look at the mass of lies, immorality, and all-round ugliness pouring out of our printing presses (and electronic media)—non-stop illusion, unreality, artful pretending, brazen falsehood, dressed-up appearances, and imagination run riot. These are overwhelming the last pockets of resistance, and the desire for what is illusory, ugly, and sensational is sweeping all before it.

If anyone objects that I am exaggerating because they would say that our own age is no better nor worse than any that went before it, I reply that human beings can get used to anything to such an extent that even the profoundly abnormal can come to seem normal. Furthermore, how could our entire planet be in such trouble if we were not being afflicted by a malady profoundly abnormal, affecting man in his very depths?

...Because It Lacks Common Sense

As one way of diagnosing this malady, I declare that our age is suffering from a massive, world-wide loss of common sense, or, as we may call it, good sense. The nature of man is being hollowed out under our eyes. Men are becoming more and more “the hollow men” (T. S. Eliot).

Marcel de Corte was one of the great Thomistic philosophers of the 20th century. In an attempt to introduce English-speakers to his work we are translating material from his work. Bishop Williamson clarified and adapted this particular chapter to make it more relevant to 2008.

Common Sense in Crisis

MARCEL DE CORTE

HEALTHY NATURE OF COMMON SENSE

Defined

Sense

For man's very survival to be at stake, as is the case, what is afflicting him must be attacking his very essence as a rational animal, that is to say, as a material animal with the spiritual faculty of reason. Intimately connected with this material and spiritual essence of man is his common sense, or good sense. For indeed creation is not chaos, but all creatures, animal, vegetable, or mineral, come into being with a nature endowed with a specific purpose or direction or "sense." The world makes sense. Every creature has its own purpose, or sense.

Common Sense

What human beings have is "good sense" or common sense, which is man's in-built ability to guide what he is and does to its proper goal, or, the direct and sane grasp of which way he must go to act properly as a man. As the human mind is designed to grasp reality, so a man's "good sense" discerns how to handle the reality immediately around him so as to achieve his true fulfillment. All of a man's life depends upon this sense of reality in his mind, whereby he orders his life in accordance with the order inside and outside of him.

Common

Common sense defined in this way is a man's mind as permeating all his activity. It presupposes an in-born health of body and mind which gives him a natural grasp on the reality around him. This original health, which goes together with his whole being, a man can either undermine, as so many examples show, or carefully foster and develop.

Observed in Action

In order to illustrate what common sense is, let us observe it in action. As it sets about solving a particularly difficult problem, let us see how it comes up with the "common sense solution."

Simplicity

Is it not our experience that when we have racked our brains over some problem, turning it this way and that, then if the common sense solution presents itself, it suddenly seems as plain as day? Why had we not seen it before? In fact our minds were confusing the issue. With a sense of relief, do we not find that common sense has gone straight to the point, putting everything in its place, restoring balance and order?

Sense of reality

If this description of common sense at work is accurate, then what common sense has to say to us is

not immediately obvious; rather it has to make its way up from inside us to reveal to our minds the heart of the matter in hand. In this respect common sense is like the light of the mind, the spearhead of the mind, giving to the mind its *sense of reality*.

Difference from mind

Such sensitivity to the presence of reality indicates that "common sense" in the full meaning of the expression is wide open to all reality, responding to its presence, and sensing its absence in whatever is illusory, or mere appearance. In this respect good sense differs from the mind, which is perfectly capable of taking our illusion for reality, even of preferring unreality.

Experience amply proves this important difference between good sense and, say, intelligence. How many peasants, for instance, have a sure judgment and "good sense" who would not be considered particularly "intelligent"! On the contrary, how many supposedly intelligent "intellectuals" are veritable imbeciles when it comes to judging of real life, be it in personal or family or national affairs!

Unity

Order outside a man

So good sense is constituted by a certain correspondence to reality which gives it its strength and directness, gravitating as it were towards the light, leaving to one side everything not essential. To be so sure of its way, it must have a vision of the unity and hierarchical order of reality as a whole, which is why its solutions leave one in no further doubt.

Order inside a man

This ability to discern the essential order in things outside him in turn presupposes in a man who displays common sense that he also has order, unity, and balance inside him, that he is not divided against himself, with his faculties making war on one another. This requires a health or sanity of the man as a whole. As his solutions are simple and direct, so must he be himself.

Union of mind and body

So it follows that good sense belongs to the human being in the unity of his nature, that nature composed of body and soul. Good sense is neither below nor above human nature; it is neither mere animal instinct below him nor pure angelic intuition above him. It arises from the conjunction of body and soul. It is not disincarnate. Like health, it belongs to the whole man.

In fact the man of good sense, if he has to choose between them, may well prefer the evidence of his senses to the ideas of his mind, because his sensations are real in a way which his ideas may or may not be. This means he will sometimes be accused of being too down-to-earth—and he may be—but common sense can

also rise to sublime heights, as we see in the case of a St. Teresa of Avila.

However, when common sense is operating normally, far from separating the senses and the intellect, it works with both, discerning the intelligible meaning within the sense data. For example, confronted by a picture which is just a scrawl of colors, common sense will say, "That makes no sense!" This reading from within the sense data is how the human mind itself properly works; we come back to common sense being the mind's sense of reality.

Conclusions

Common sense is individual,

From common sense thus arising where body and soul meet, there follow important consequences. First, as a man is the individual who he is by his body (matter) individuating his soul (form), so common sense, engaging body and soul, belongs to be individual man, and will be as diverse as his particular gifts of body and soul.

Traditional,

Second, one man may think without sensing, another man may sense without thinking, but common sense involves both, and where the mind alone may be baffled by a problem, common sense will turn for a solution to past experience, to traditional teaching, and to those extensions of a man's body in which his life is embodied, such as family, homeland, and Church, where life goes on its concrete way. Common sense is thus traditional.

Sane,

Third, common sense, belonging to the flesh-and-blood man, goes together with his being what he is, namely an individual flesh-and-blood human nature that does not wish to be anyone or anything else. Here is a man's mental health, as opposed to that "mental illness" which afflicts so many modern people, who wish to be other than who or what they are.

Moderate.

When the Greeks said, "know thyself," what they meant was that man should recognize his limits and not overstep them. Such arrogance they represented as being immediately punished with madness by the gods above. Thus common sense springing from a flesh-and-blood human nature will recognize its limitations and will observe the Golden Rule of moderation. By so doing, it will enable a man to do what he really can do, as opposed to deluding himself over what he cannot do. Yet in this way the limitations of common sense are not some kind of prison, as the Romantics think, but a solid foundation for a man to reach out to his neighbor, and to reach up to God.

UNHEALTHY CRISIS OF COMMON SENSE

Man Split in Two

If a man refuses to be what by nature he is, what will he do? He will wither. The limitations recognized by common sense mean the possibility of acting within those limitations. If a mind strives to act outside them, it will lose itself in a world of its own fabrication, unreal and inhuman.

And so we come to today's crisis of common sense. When man refuses his flesh-and-blood condition, his spiritual mind scorns his material body, his one nature is split in two, and his common sense is crippled, no longer able to moderate his thought or action. There are plenty of examples of the ensuing lack of moderation, but let us first look at the dualist misconception of man which, by splitting him in two, is responsible for the crisis of common sense.

Unhealthy Roots

The Protestant split

Of course, original sin has always existed, but it has never wiped out entirely the good in man's nature; otherwise man could not have rebounded as he has always done through history. Therefore when Protestantism claims there is nothing good left in human nature, it is denying history, cutting man off from the society around him, leaving the individual soul alone to deal with God, splitting the soul from its embodiment in flesh-and-blood, kith and kin, and fatherland.

The Romantic split

As opposed to Protestantism, Romanticism claims that there is nothing bad in human nature, yet it splits man in two just the same, because it claims that all corruption comes from society, so that the individual conscience is divine, while the source of all evil in a man is his embodiment amongst his fellow human beings. And we are back to the scorn of the body.

Both are unbearable

Thus Protestantism and Romanticism alike split man in two and pretend he has no embodied limitations. It is interesting to observe how both then strive to overcome their unbearable dualism and to restore the unity of man—religious Protestantism by becoming secular, secular Romanticism by turning into a religion, and both by idealizing an unlimited progress of man into a future where matter will be lifted up to re-integrate into spirit. Teilhard de Chardin raised this illusion to its Omega Point!

Unhealthy Fruits

Common sense crippled...

But let us return to the reality of flesh-and-blood human nature and its fragility. Experience tells us that for human beings to live well is the exception rather than the rule. Common sense can always be an element of sanity and balance in a man's life, but it seems to come and go. However, its *systematic* elimination can come only from a contrary view of man being steadily and widely pushed down people's throats.

...by RATIONALISM

Here is that contrary view: man's observable weakness has no *reasonable* explanation, so man must become more and more *reasonable* to overcome the weakness. But flesh-and-blood resists reason. Therefore flesh-and-blood must be discounted. As for the Catholic Church's supernatural explanation of man's weakness by the Fall, it kept man down and kept him dependent upon religious myths and upon his supposed good sense to be able to rise. But that was good only for the "old man." What the world needs is a "new man" to overcome this weakness, the new man of Rationalism.

Dividing flesh from spirit

Rationalism governs the thought and action of modern man. Rooted in dualism, *i.e.* the tendency of human nature to split flesh from spirit, it makes the link between them as weak as possible, as though they no longer have anything to do with one another. So the common sense that linked them together is to disappear, under pressure from a mind working no longer from sensation, but pre-fabricating its ideas independently of reality.

Rationalism and Revolution

The 19th-century French historian Michelet went to the heart of the matter when he declared that the essence of modern Rationalism lay in its Manichean refusal of the flesh, which is nevertheless the basis of man's communication with the universe around him, and finally with God. Upon this refusal *followed* the French Revolution's making war on the material embodiments of God and State, namely priests and kings.

Rationalism is unreal.

Rationalism is, at root, the declaration of human reason's independence from its imprisoning flesh and from common sense. Rationalism knows no bounds. Its arrogance is boundless. Henceforth common sense is under steady attack from the politicians and the intelligentsia. These new leaders of the new way of things are drunk with their new power, which they push forward as much as they can get the old checks and balances of common sense to fall away. Of course, "there is not a dime's worth of difference" between modern politicians of this kind. Their differences have no real substance—they have left all reality behind them.

Rationalism loves abstraction.

The list of the lunacies of these leaders of the new society is endless, but a common factor can be picked out: the replacing of the concrete by the abstract, by abstractions, by disincarnate ideas, in which the senses have little further part to play except to provide quantity, number, and statistics for anything measurable by number.

Rationalism scorns humanity.

Hence today's abstract art, abstract music, abstract philosophies, where the human element is emptied out, as in Hegelianism and Marxism, for the mind to feed purely on itself. Where the beings and things in nature used to be the philosopher's friends in his pursuit of a satisfying account of reality, now they are no more than the starting-point for a "philosopher" to construct his own system of "thought" providing the satisfaction of a complicated crossword puzzle.

Rationalism proceeds from a disconnected mind,

Such a radical mutation of thinking is made possible by the human mind's particular ability, once it has drawn its original ideas from reality, to play with them as it will, independently of reality. Here is how so many modern minds are turning from a mental world of flesh-and-blood to a mental world of ideology, in which their ideas have almost no basis in reality, yet are pronounced to be more real than reality! Modern paper currencies with no backing, inflatable at will, correspond to this mental divorce from the real world.

And crushes reality.

Thus the disembodied modern mind acts like a crusher, smashing the world in accordance with its pre-fabricated ideas, drawing on the real world only for those popular instincts, gut feelings, emotional drives, and impure forces which motivate the human being whose flesh has been abandoned by his spirit. Abstractions smash down on Pavlov reactions, leaving men little more than their calculable quantities, neither good nor bad, without value or purpose, for whom the True is what succeeds, Good is what stimulates any reaction, Beauty is what is fashionable.

Science is no help...

Nor are science or technology any help. They are not in all respects bad, but their progress in recent times is in no way human progress, because they do not touch on any properly human problem, because they bracket out all communing of the human being with the reality around him, which is where common sense operates. Modern science is concerned exclusively with measuring the quantifiable phenomena, a process in which observer and observed are strictly indifferent to one another. In a society idealizing the scientific method, common sense with its grasp of unscientific values like purpose and direction can only wither away.

Modern science may feed the mind with a certain knowledge, but it starves the soul.

...Rather a hindrance

Worse, modern science presents man, as a human being, with a tremendous temptation to power. Modern physics, which are mathematical and quantitative, provide him with an unprecedented mastery of nature of which only supreme good sense will know how to make the right use. But the mastery of nature promotes not its own limitation, but its limitless extension. Thus the more modern science advances, the less good sense is available to guide it towards truly human goals. Gone is the Greeks' sense of moderation. Only one technique holds another in check, like artificial remedies for artificial illnesses. Any balance can only result from this interplay of artificial techniques, because the abstraction or disincarnation of human life has done away with the very notion of a natural balance, as with the common sense that used to sense it.

Unhealthy New Man

The would-be angel turns beast.

But, as the old saying has it, any man who pretends to be an angel will end up a beast. Rationalist man, inwardly split, tries by all rational means to put himself together again until he bumps into the dark recesses and wild forces of his lower nature, that flesh long since left by his spirit to fend for itself. Then the rationalizations become muddy, and mud is rationalized. For example, envy generates "class struggle," fear of suffering and death generates "euthanasia," the sex drive generates "free love," divorce, "trial marriage," and so on. The abstractions dress up the mud, the mud empowers the abstractions, all balance and harmony in man become artificial.

Self-made

A new man is rising up, chasing the old man of good sense off the stage of history. Where that man of good sense was centered by his nature on goals set outside of himself, independently of his own mind or freedom, the new man is entirely self-centered, making himself into his own goal, because he has repudiated any supposedly given nature. Where the man of good sense merely *perfected* his given nature, the new man *makes* his own nature. Turning in on himself, he asserts his freedom to make of himself whatever he likes. Is not "You can be whatever you want to be" the message of countless modern advertisements?

Existentialist

Whereas natural man cleaves to his nature, to fulfill it, modern man repudiates his nature, to alter it. The one seeks within himself what he is, the other seeks within himself what to change. In this respect, the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre is the classic modern rationalist. With him the mind reasoning within itself precedes and freely determines existence, which in

turn precedes and shapes any essence. I insist on my freedom at all costs to be my own maker, to be the maker of "me"!

Artificial

Make no mistake, today's world is full of men and women striving to be other than what they are, along these existentialist lines. Examples abound. Read T. S. Eliot's "Wasteland" (from 1922; the problem has been around for a while) to meet a variety of modern souls making themselves an artificial personality for personal, professional, or social reasons, whatever. The crusher of rationalism is crushing entire populations.

Alienated

Thus our modern world, where everyone wants to be what he is not, is a mad world of souls alienated from themselves, wholly opposed to the world of common sense.

SOLUTION

Living an ordinary life

What then is the solution? How do we restore common sense? To do so is of vital importance, but there is no foreseeable or artificial solution. We must get back to *ordinary* living where normal is no more noticeable than the air we breathe. But such naturalness is no longer natural to us in our race towards folly, and it may no longer be recoverable by any normal means. Not even two World Wars could turn us back.

St. Therese's "Little Way"

Then should we despair? By no means. There is a way out. There is only one way out. Supreme good sense is to turn to God, to return to God, Creator and Savior of our nature. To live ordinary and natural human lives, we need no less than the grace that comes down from Heaven. St. Therese of the Child Jesus showed us the way to overcome this crisis of common sense—it is the Little Way, followed to the end. ☩

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Marcel de Corte (1905-94), a Belgian, is considered to be one of the four greatest Thomistic philosophers of the 20th century. He held academic posts including Rector of the University of Liège in his native Belgium. He taught Moral Philosophy and the History of Philosophy. To his friends and admirers he was known as "The Aristotelian." Ours is only the second translation of his works into English.

This is a translation of chapter three of *L'Homme contre Lui-même*, "La Crise du Bon Sens" (Paris: Éditions de Paris, 2005).

Good Friday Prayer for the Jews Changed in the 1962

A note from the Secretary of State of the Holy See, published on the first page of the *Osservatore Romano* on February 5, 2008, announced that Pope Benedict XVI had decided to modify the Good Friday prayer for the Jews in the 1962 Roman Missal. In the new version, the request that God may “deliver [them] from their darkness” and “their blindness” has been removed. The reformed prayer is formulated as follows: “that God our Lord should illuminate their hearts, so that they will recognize Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men.” It also asks that God “grant that when the fullness of peoples enters your Church all of Israel will be saved.” The text will be used, beginning this year, in all the liturgical celebrations of Good Friday with the Roman Missal, specified the note dated February 4, 2008, and addressed to all the celebrants considered as “qualified [to use it]” by the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of July 7, 2007.

At the time of the publication of the Motu Proprio liberalizing the use of the pre-Vatican II liturgical books, several personalities of the Jewish world voiced their concern to see the ancient prayer for the Jews re-introduced into the Roman rite, even the prayer reformed by John XXIII, who had caused the adjective “*perfidis*” (unfaithful) and the word “*perfidiam*” (faithlessness) to be removed. The great rabbis of Israel had even written to Benedict XVI to ask him to modify again the Good Friday prayer. Prelates involved in the dialogue with the Jews had made similar appeals to the Sovereign Pontiff and his close collaborators.

However, this modification displeased the great rabbi of Rome Riccardo Di Segni, who, on the very next day, February 6, declared during an interview granted to the *Corriere della Sera*, that the fact that the new formula maintained an “explicit” request for the conversion of the Jews “was undermining decades of progress” in the dialogue between Jews and Christians. In a communiqué released the same day, and signed by its president Giuseppe Laras, the Assembly of Italian Rabbis asked for a “pause in the

dialogue with Catholics so as to reflect on their true intentions.” It underlines that the new text of the prayer substitutes the “blindness of the Jews” with another expression “whose concept is equivalent” in spite of a formula “apparently less strong” since it now asks that “God enlighten them.” But they especially lament that “the most serious fact is that it re-introduced an invitation to the faithful to pray that the Jews eventually recognize ‘Jesus Christ the Savior.’” The rabbis complained:

The pope is certainly free to decide what he thinks best for his Church and his faithful; nevertheless, it remains that the adoption of such a liturgical formula clearly contradicts and jeopardizes at least 40 years of dialogue between Judaism and Catholicism, a dialogue which was often difficult and tormented, and would now seem to have brought about no tangible result,

The rabbis think that this prayer expresses

an idea of the dialogue as having for its objective the conversion of the Jews to Catholicism, something which is obviously unacceptable to us.

On February 7, in answer to this reaction, Cardinal Walter Kasper stated:

We think that reasonably this prayer cannot be an obstacle to dialogue because it reflects the faith of the Church and, furthermore, Jews have prayers in their liturgical texts that we Catholics don’t like. This must be accepted and respected in diversity.

Speaking of the conversion of the Jews for which the modified prayer is asking, the president of the Pontifical Commission for Relationship with Judaism explained that it was a reference to a text of St. Paul the Apostle which “expresses the eschatological hope [*i.e.*, with reference to the last days, the end of history—*Ed.*] that the people of Israel would also enter the Church when all the other nations do.” The German prelate meant to be reassuring when he specified:

I mean that this expresses a final hope and not a proposal to start a mission among them [the Jews]...I must say that I don’t understand why the Jews cannot accept that we can

For the Jews Missal



make use of our freedom to formulate our prayers...Very bad things occurred when we wanted to force conversion upon the Jews. We understand they keep bad memories of facts for which we have made repentance. But this makes it even more difficult to understand why they cannot accept that we bear witness to our faith, when this is done with full respect for the faith of others.

That same day, on the airwaves of Radio Vatican, Cardinal Kasper wished to add the following precisions:

If the prayer speaks of the “conversion” of the Jews, this does not mean we are embarking on a “mission.” As a matter of fact, the pope is quoting St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. In chapter 11, St. Paul tells us that we hope that when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come into the Church all Israel also shall be saved. It is an eschatological hope. This does not mean we are embarking on a mission: we must give witness to our faith, this is clear. But, I want to say this: in the past, such a language was often fraught with contempt, as Jules Isaac, a well-know Jew, rightly said. But, today, there is respect in the diversity which exists between us. Now there is respect and no longer contempt.

Dialogue always supposes respect for the other’s position. We respect the identity of the Jews; they must respect ours which we cannot hide. Dialogue is precisely based on this diversity: upon what we have in common as well as upon our differences. I do not see this as an obstacle but rather as a challenge for a true theological dialogue.

On February 14, in the *Osservatore Romano*, Bishop Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, returned to the subject to give new reassurance to the Jews:

We repeat it: this is the Christian vision, and the hope of the praying Church. It is not a proposal for a theoretical adhesion nor a missionary strategy for conversion....It is the characteristic attitude of supplicant invocation by which we hope—on behalf of persons which we consider as close, dear and important to us—for a reality which we consider as precious and saving....Of course, this must always be done in the respect of the liberty and of the various paths that the other may choose, but it is a sign of affection to wish for your brother what you consider as a horizon of light and life.

For Bishop Ravasi, “in this perspective, the prayer in question, within the limits of its use and in its specificity, can and must confirm our bond and our dialogue” with the Jews. And he quoted the Good Friday prayer according to the liturgy of the Paul VI Missal: the common and ultimate hope is that “the Jews to whom God spoke first...may progress in the love of His Name and in fidelity to His Covenant.”

The Editor of DICI asks: Should we see in this reference to the Missal of Paul VI an instance of the “enrichment” of traditional liturgy by conciliar liturgy, according to the wish expressed by the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* (July 7, 2007), with a view to a reform of the reform?

The reply of the Society of Saint Pius X: Because of pressure put upon him by people outside the Catholic Church, the pope thought he had to change the venerable Prayer for the Jews which is an integral part of the Good Friday liturgy. This prayer is among the most ancient. It dates back approximately to the third century, and thus has been recited throughout the history of the Church as a full expression of the Catholic Faith.

It is worth noting that Cardinal Kasper’s comments—which we may consider as authorized—make of this amputation a real transformation and the expression of a new theology of the relations with the Jewish people. It is in keeping with the liturgical upheaval which is characteristic of the Council and of the ensuing reforms.

Though the necessity of accepting the Messiah to be saved has been kept, we can only deeply deplore the change. ☞

Taken from DICI which sourced its material for this article from AFP, Zenit, Apic, Imedia, Radio Vatican, *L’Osservatore Romano*, *Corriere della Sera*. DICI is the international news bureau of the SSPX. It is available on line at www.dici.org



F R . A L A I N L O R A N S

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT AND CONCILIAR ECUMENISM

On December 14, 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released a doctrinal note “On Certain Aspects of Evangelization.” On July 10, 2007, it had already published a study entitled “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church.” Both texts are intended to clarify the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on ecumenism and religious liberty, thus acknowledging that the conciliar documents are not, in themselves, explicit.

The note of July intends to “[clarify] the authentic meaning of some ecclesiological expressions used by the magisterium which are open to misunderstanding in the theological debate.” Its main objective is to address the difficulties arising from Vatican II’s statement (*Lumen Gentium*, I, 8) that “the Church of Christ subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church.” The document issued in December was intended to “clarify certain aspects of the relationship between the missionary command of the Lord and respect for the conscience and religious freedom of all people.”

These clarifications are in line with the “hermeneutics of continuity” developed by Benedict XVI, from the beginning of his pontificate, on the occasion of his address to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005. According to this interpretation of Vatican II there is no rupture between traditional teaching and conciliar teaching. Thus the Pope declared that: “The Second Vatican Council, recognizing and

making its own an essential principle of the modern State with the Decree on Religious Freedom, has recovered the deepest patrimony of the Church.” And he gave the example of the Christian martyrs who refused to worship the divinized Roman emperors. This example gave rise to some skepticism. Indeed, if the first Christians refused this worship, it was first of all because they wanted to bear witness to the divinity of Christ and considered worship of the emperor as idolatry, and rightly so. From an historical viewpoint, it is difficult to admit that the martyrs opposed the State religion in the name of freedom of conscience. Or, if that were the case, the Church would have been wrong ever since 313, when it recognized the Edict of Constantine which authorized Christian institutions.

By inscribing themselves in the perspective of a continuity between Tradition and Vatican II, the two doctrinal notes from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith fail to prove that the conciliar notions of ecumenism and religious liberty do not introduce any rupture in the traditional Catholic teaching. Let us read the note released in December.

The Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization

The authors of the text acknowledge that the relation between religious liberty and the necessity of evangelization is not clear. This means that, in the

minds of many of the faithful, the one excludes the other:

There is today, however, a growing confusion which leads many to leave the missionary command of the Lord unheard and ineffective (cf. Mt. 28:19). Often it is maintained that any attempt to convince others on religious matters is a limitation of their freedom. From this perspective, it would only be legitimate to present one's own ideas and to invite people to act according to their consciences, without aiming at their conversion to Christ and to the Catholic Faith. It is enough, so they say, to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion; it is enough to build communities which strive for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity. Furthermore, some maintain that Christ should not be proclaimed to those who do not know him, nor should joining the Church be promoted, since it would also be possible to be saved without explicit knowledge of Christ and without formal incorporation in the Church.

While recalling the necessity of evangelization, the doctrinal note means to safeguard the religious liberty promoted by Vatican II:

After having affirmed the right and the duty of every person to seek the truth in matters of religion, it says: "The search for truth, however, must be carried out in a manner that is appropriate to the dignity of the human person and his social nature, namely, by free inquiry with the help of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue. It is by these means that people share with each other the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in such a way that they help one another in the search for truth."¹ In any case, the truth "does not impose itself except by the strength of the truth itself."² Therefore, to lead a person's intelligence and freedom in honesty to the encounter with Christ and his Gospel is not an inappropriate encroachment, but rather a legitimate endeavor and a service capable of making human relationships more fruitful.

For the authors of the doctrinal note, this quotation from the conciliar declaration *Dignitatis Humane* on religious liberty does not seem to contradict the evangelizing mission of the Church. Yet, it is far from being so. Let us be allowed to recall here the teaching of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who saw at once, in the free search for the truth and in dialogue with non-Catholics "the death of the missionary spirit"!

The Second Vatican Council indeed canonized searching in its Declaration on Religious Liberty: "The truth must be sought according to the manner proper to the human person and to his social nature, namely, by means of a free investigation...." The Council puts searching into the first place, ahead of instruction and education! Reality, however, is otherwise: children get strong religious convictions by a solid education; and once they are acquired, anchored in the minds, and expressed in religious worship, why search any more? Moreover, "unrestricted research" has very rarely led to religious and philosophical truth. The great Aristotle is not immune from errors. The philosophy of open investigation results in Hegel. And what is there to say of the supernatural truths? Speaking about the pagans, here is what St. Paul writes: "How will they believe, if no one preaches to them? And how will anyone preach to them, if missionaries are not sent?"³ It is not the search that the Church must proclaim, but the need for the mission: "Go, teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19); such is the only order given by Our Lord. How many souls

will be able to find the truth, remain in the truth, without the help of the magisterium of the Church? This free searching is a total unreality, at bottom, a radical naturalism. And in practice, what is it that distinguishes a free searcher from a free thinker?

And the former Archbishop of Dakar goes on to denounce dialogue with non-Catholics:

"The truth must be sought...by means...of exchange and dialogue, by which some set forth to the others the truth that they have found or think that they have found in order to help each other reciprocally in the search for the truth."⁴ Hence, in the same way as the unbeliever, the believer should always be searching! St. Paul, however, really pinned down the false doctors "who are always learning without ever arriving at the knowledge of the truth!"⁵ For his part, the unbeliever could provide the believer with the elements of truth that are lacking to him! The Holy Office, in its instruction of December 20, 1949, on ecumenism, nevertheless dispelled this error and, speaking of the return of the separated Christians to the Catholic Church, said: "We will, however, avoid speaking on this point in such a manner that, in coming back to the Church, they delude themselves that they are providing it with an essential element that it would have been lacking up to now."⁶ What contact with non-Catholics can supply us with is from human experience, but not doctrinal elements!

For the intrepid missionary, there exists in the conciliar spirit an error of perspective which changes the very nature of Catholic evangelization:

The Council considerably altered the attitude of the Church towards other religions, the non-Christian ones in particular. In a conversation that I had on September 13, 1975, with the secretary of Bishop Nestor Adam, then bishop of Sion, this secretary came to agree with me: yes, something has changed in the missionary orientation of the Church. But he added: "And it was necessary that this change take place." He said to me, "For example, now, in those who are not Christians, or in those who are separated from the Church, we look at what there is of good, the *positive*, in them. We try to discern, in the values that they have, the seeds of their salvation."

Of course, every error has its true, positive aspects; there is no error in the pure state, just as absolute evil does not exist. Evil is the corruption of a good, error is the corruption of the truth, in a subject that nonetheless keeps its nature, certain natural qualities, and certain truths. But there is a very great danger in basing oneself on the residue of truth that error preserves. What would we think of a doctor who, called to the bedside of a sick person, would declare: "Oh, but this sick person still has something; it is not as bad as that!" In regard to the sickness, there would be no use in saying to this doctor: "But then, look at the sickness, can't you see that he is sick? He has to be taken care of, or he is going to die!" He will reply to you: "Oh, after all, he is not as bad as all that. Besides, my method is to pay no attention to the disease that is in my patients—that is negative—but to the remainder of health that is in them."

In such a case, I will say, let us leave the sick to die of their lovely death! The result is that, by dint of our saying to non-Catholics or non-Christians: "After all, you have an upright conscience, you have some means of salvation," they wind up believing that they are not sick. And then how to convert them after that?

Now, this spirit has never been that of the Church. On the contrary, the missionary spirit has always been openly

to show to the sick their wounds, so as to heal them, to bring them the remedies that they need. To stand before non-Christians, without telling them that they need the Christian religion, that they cannot be saved except through Our Lord Jesus Christ, is an inhuman cruelty. In the beginning of a private conversation, to make a *captatio benevolentiae* by praising whatever is honorable in their religions, this is indeed legitimate. But to raise that up to being a doctrinal principle, this is an error, it is to deceive souls! The “salvific values of other religions” is a heresy! To make of this a basis for the missionary apostolate is to wish to keep souls in error! This “dialogue” is anti-missionary to the highest degree! Our Lord sent His Apostles not to dialogue, but to preach! Now, as it is this spirit of liberal dialogue that has been inculcated since the Council in the priests and the missionaries, we can understand why the conciliar Church has completely lost the missionary zeal, the very spirit of the Church!⁷

The attitude which consists in wanting to see only the partial truths contained in other religions, without considering their general spirit of error and negation—in order to consider only what unites and not what divides—has religious indifferentism, or even syncretism as its actual consequences. René Raymond, an author who can in no way be suspected of traditionalism, acknowledges this. Speaking of the idea “very strongly anchored in contemporary mentality, that no religion alone possesses the totality of the truth,” this liberal Christian does not hesitate to say:

The Church itself contributes to this insofar as she shows respect for other beliefs, especially since the last council. Non-Christian traditions are no longer likened to error. Hence, the classic blueprint which for so long has preserved the cohesion of the Catholic people has been smashed to pieces: the well-defined and absolute opposition between truth and error.

And he draws from this the logical conclusion:

Prevailing opinion is not very far from the idea that all the various religious traditions are all of equal worth. Why then should we not look elsewhere for what is lacking to us, through a sort of spiritual tourism? This can lead to a kind of syncretism....⁸

The note from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith insists that religious liberty does not preclude love of the truth and missionary zeal:

Respect for religious freedom and its promotion must not in any way make us indifferent towards truth and goodness. Indeed, love impels the followers of Christ to proclaim to all the truth which saves.

This statement is repeated several times, but without any regard for the facts, that is, without taking into account the concrete effect produced on the mind and behavior of the faithful by inter-religious meetings such as that of Assisi. We may wonder if such a discourse which ignores the lesson of the facts to such an extent is not an ideological discourse, a utopia totally cut off from reality.

The study “On Some Aspects of Evangelization” claims to show, in accord with the “hermeneutics of continuity,” that there is no rupture between traditional teaching and conciliar ecumenism, but it makes no reference to any Roman documents dealing with Christian unity prior to Vatican II. In this document,

not a single quote from *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI, or from *Mystici Corporis* of Pope Pius XII, or from the Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement from the Holy Office in 1949, can be found. On the other hand, the Second Vatican Council is quoted abundantly for, as the authors freely admit, they “presuppose the entirety of Catholic doctrine on evangelization as extensively treated in the teaching of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II.” Would this mean that the Church has only come to understand her relationship to the other religions since the last council, and that, prior to 1962-1965, she was wholly in error?

One week after the release of this note, in his address to the Roman Curia, on December 21, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI was keen to reaffirm the necessary reconciliation between Catholic evangelization and conciliar ecumenism. Referring to his visit to Brazil, last May, and the document published on the occasion in Aparecida, “Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ,” the Pope declared:

“A disciple of Jesus Christ,” the document tells us, “must also be a ‘missionary,’ a Gospel messenger.” It is here, furthermore, that the objection arises: is it still legitimate today to “evangelize”? Should not all the world’s religions and conceptions rather coexist peacefully and seek together to do their best for humanity, each in its own way? Well, that we must all coexist and cooperate in tolerance and reciprocal respect goes without question. The Catholic Church is actively committed to this and, with the two meetings in Assisi, has left evident signs of it, signs that we renewed again at this year’s Meeting in Naples. On this topic, I would like to mention the kind letter sent to me last 13 October by 138 Muslim religious leaders, testifying to their common commitment to promoting world peace. I responded joyfully, expressing my convinced adherence to such noble intentions, and at the same time emphasized the urgent need for a binding accord to safeguard the values of reciprocal respect, dialogue and collaboration. Shared recognition of the existence of one God, the provident Creator and universal Judge of everyone’s conduct, constitutes the premise of a common action in defense of the effective respect of the dignity of every human person in order to build a more just and united society.

After having recalled the two inter-religious Assisi meetings, and this year’s meeting in Naples which was along the same lines, and having acknowledged what in his opinion unites Catholics and Muslims, Pope Benedict XVI wished nevertheless to maintain the missionary exigency of the Church:

But might not this desire for dialogue and collaboration also mean at the same time that we can no longer transmit Jesus Christ’s message, no longer propose to humanity and to the world this call and the hope that derives from it? Those who have recognized a great truth or discovered a great joy have to pass it on; they absolutely cannot keep it to themselves. These great gifts are never intended for only one person. In Jesus Christ a great light emerged for us, the great Light: we cannot put it under a bushel basket, we must set it on a lamp stand so that it will give light to all who are in the house (cf. Mt. 5:15). St. Paul traveled tirelessly, taking the Gospel with him. He even felt under a sort of “compulsion” to proclaim the Gospel (cf. I Cor. 9:16)—not so much out of concern for the salvation of the single non-baptized person who had not

yet been reached by the Gospel, but rather because he was aware that history as a whole could not attain fulfillment until the Gospel had reached the full number (*pléroma*) of Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11:25). To reach its completion, history needs the proclamation of the Good News to all peoples, to all men and women (cf. Mk. 13:10).

The Pope does not appear to consider that inter-religious meetings such as those of Assisi and Naples—like the prayer at the Blue Mosque of Istanbul, in 2006—carry in themselves, independently of the personal intentions of their authors, a practical teaching that goes against the missionary exigency of the Church. And such a teaching speaks much louder to people than all the explanations given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Let us now turn to the note released last July.

Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church (July 10, 2007)

The first answer given in the document consists in a declaration that: “The Second Vatican Council neither changed nor intended to change this doctrine, but rather it developed, deepened and more fully explained it.” Concerning the novel expression “subsists in,” the document puts forward the following explanation:

In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* “subsistence” means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth.

In other words: The Church of Christ is concretely found in the Catholic Church. This tends to affirm the identity of the Catholic Church and of the Church of Christ. But the same answer adds that if “the word ‘subsists’ can only be attributed to the Catholic Church alone,” it is nevertheless possible “to affirm correctly that the Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches [Orthodox] and ecclesial Communities [Protestant] not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them,” according to John Paul II’s teaching in *Ut Unum Sint* (§11).

Consequently, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith justifies the use of the verb “subsists in” instead of the verb “is” in the following manner: “The use of this expression indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church,” but it is meant to signify also that “‘numerous elements of sanctification and of truth’ are found outside her [the Church’s] structure,” because

these separated churches and Communities, though we believe they suffer from defects, are deprived neither of significance nor importance in the mystery of salvation. In fact the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as instruments of salvation, whose value derives from that

fullness of grace and of truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church.

In the commentary attached to the document, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith admits that the Council Fathers simply intended to recognize the presence of ecclesial elements proper to the Church of Christ in the non-Catholic Christian communities. It does not follow that the identification of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church no longer holds, nor that outside the Catholic Church there is a complete absence of ecclesial elements, a “churchless void.”

This is precisely where lies all the ambiguity the document claims to clear without managing to do so. Indeed, *subsistit in* was substituted for *est*

to signify a greater openness to the ecumenical desire to recognize truly ecclesial characteristics and dimensions in the Christian communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the “*plura elementa sanctificationis et veritatis*” present in them. Consequently, although there is only one Church which “subsists” in one unique historical subject there are true ecclesial realities which exist beyond its visible boundaries.

And the commentary adds that the document, far from questioning the ecumenism promoted by Vatican II,

offers valuable indications for the future of ecumenical dialogue. This dialogue remains one of the priorities of the Catholic Church, as Benedict XVI confirmed in his first message to the Church on April 20, 2005, and on many other occasions, especially during his apostolic visit to Turkey (November 28–December 1, 2006).

From Paradox to Ambiguity, and from Ambiguity to Contradictions

The most instructive passage of the commentary is the following:

Catholic ecumenism might seem, at first sight, *somewhat paradoxical*. The Second Vatican Council used the phrase *subsistit in* in order to try to harmonize two doctrinal affirmations: on the one hand, that despite all the divisions between Christians the Church of Christ continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church, and on the other hand that numerous elements of sanctification and truth do exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church whether in the particular Churches or in the ecclesial Communities that are not fully in communion with the Catholic Church. For this reason, the same Decree of Vatican II on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* introduced the term *fullness (unitatis/catholicitatis)* specifically to help *better understand this somewhat paradoxical situation*.

The reader is left somewhat confused to see that the commentary on the document explicitly acknowledges that it is somewhat paradoxical. The ambiguities which were supposed to be cleared up are, in fact, replaced by the paradox in which the Council wants to harmonize two statements: “the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church” and “separated communities, without being in full communion with the Church, are not for all that, a ‘churchless void,’” because they contain many elements of

sanctification and truth, which, according to the Second Vatican Council, are ecclesial elements.

One question arises: if the desire to harmonize these statements results in a paradox, are these two statements reconcilable? Are they not contradictory? And is not this attempt at harmonizing them simply a suspension of the principle of non-contradiction? Since this paradox wants to wed the traditional definition of the Church with the conciliar definition of separated communities, it is useful to recall here the traditional definition of separated communities. Here is what Archbishop Lefebvre wrote on the subject in his book *They Have Uncrowned Him*:

The Council took pleasure in exalting the salvific values, or the values—period—of the other religions. Speaking of the non-Catholic Christian religions, Vatican II teaches that “Although we believe them to be victims of deficiencies, they are not in any way devoid of meaning and of value in the mystery of salvation.” This is a heresy! The only means of salvation is the Catholic Church. Insofar as they are separated from the unity of the true Faith, the Protestant communions cannot be used by the Holy Ghost. He can act only directly on the souls or make use of the means (for example, baptism) which, in themselves, do not bear any indication of separation. One can be saved *in* Protestantism, but not *by* Protestantism!”

Hence the comments made by Bishop Bernard Fellay in the American review *The Remnant*, concerning the release of this note by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:

You have a perfect illustration of what we have said for six years. That is that Rome is continuing in a confusing way because they don’t seem to give much care to contradiction and non-contradiction. This document seems to be a clarification of nothing but assuring once again that “Yes” means “No.”

And to the journalist, Brian Mershon, who was asking for an example [Bishop Fellay replied]:

Sure. One example is precisely the question about *subsistit*. [The question is] why use the expression *subsistit in* and not *est*? You read the answer, and you conclude nothing.

They say it is *est* and that there is an identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church; and there is no change of doctrine. And then the next phrase is precisely a change in doctrine. So...it is a contradiction....This text tries to tell us that there is no contradiction between the doctrine of the Church of the past and of Vatican II. And we insist by saying that Vatican II is in disharmony—is in contradiction—is even teaching error opposed to the traditional teaching, especially on ecumenism. And here [in this new document on ecclesiology] you have both sides put together; that is, the past and Vatican II.

This text is a confirmation of all of our reproaches against the ambiguities of Vatican II and the post-Vatican II [documents]. It is a superb example of ambiguity, and maybe it has never gone so far by trying to put together what cannot be put together, by pretending that there is no position which is a clear position.

Ambiguities mean that you have at least two ways to understand them or to interpret them. This is terribly damaging for a document that is supposed to be from the highest solemnity in the Church—a document which comes

from an Ecumenical Council. It is a great tragedy. These ambiguities, I must say, you find them almost everywhere. In addition to these three major errors of ecumenism, religious liberty and collegiality, you have all these ambiguities everywhere. It is not in the Catholic spirit. It is this modern, progressive spirit which has partly been condemned by Pope Benedict XVI, but which also basically and fundamentally has been approved by him. We’re going around in circles there. And I must say once again, this document [Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church] is a perfect illustration of this ambiguity and of contradictory statements.

Four years ago, on January 6, 2004, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the pontificate of John Paul II, Bishop Fellay sent a study entitled *From Ecumenism to Silent Apostasy*, to all the Cardinals of the Roman Church. It was preceded by a letter of introduction which read:

The Pope himself, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, acknowledges noticeably that the time in which we live is that of a “silent apostasy” wherein there reigns a sort of “practical agnosticism and religious indifference whereby many Europeans give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history.”⁹ Amongst the principal causes of this tragic state of affairs, how can we not put in the chief place the ecumenism that was officially initiated by Vatican II and promoted by John Paul II? In the avowed purpose to establish a new unity, and in the name of a will to “see rather that which unites us rather than that which divides us,” there is the pretense to sublimate or to reinterpret or to put aside specifically Catholic elements that appear to be causes of division. One despises thereby the constant and unanimous teaching of Tradition, which states that the Mystical Body of Christ is the Catholic Church and that outside of it there is no salvation. This ecumenism has seemingly destroyed the most beautiful treasures of the Church, because instead of accepting the Unity which is founded on the plenitude of truth, it wishes to establish a unity adapted to a truth mixed with error.

The cardinals to whom the study was addressed have never replied. And we can scarcely consider that these two doctrinal notes emanating from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith today constitute a convincing response. ❏

Fr. Alain Lorans was ordained for the Society of Saint Pius X. He served as Rector of the Society’s Institut St. Pie X located in Paris from 1980-83, as Rector of the seminary at Ecône from 1983-88, then again Rector of the Institut St. Pie X from 1988-2002. Since then, he has been the editor of the Society’s news bureau, *DICI*. This article reprinted with permission from *Christendom* (Jan.-Feb. 2008), published by DICI, the international news bureau of the SSPX. It is available on line at www.dici.org.

¹ Ecumenical Council Vat. II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.

² *Ibid.*, §1.

³ Rom. 10:15.

⁴ *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.

⁵ II Tim. 3:7.

⁶ Instruction “*De Motion Oecumenica*.”

⁷ *They Have Uncrowned Him*, Ch.26 “Searching and Dialogue, Death of the Missionary Spirit” (Angelus Press, 2003) pp.175ff. [Available from Angelus Press: Price: \$15.00.]

⁸ *Le christianisme en accusation* [*Christianity Under Accusation*, our translation] (Desclée de Brouwer, 2000), pp.45-46.

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, §§7, 9.

If you want to take the measure of modern society in terms of human happiness, watch the faces of the women.

The female of our species is much more sensitive than the male to the things of the spirit, and whatever she feels, and is, will be written on her face after the age of 25 or 30. We are so fashion-conscious that we seldom even look at the soul of modern woman as revealed by her eyes and the lines of her face. In this way we miss observing that most American women, those emancipated and lovely ladies of commercial fiction, either cry themselves to sleep every night or are past giving way to the sorrow and frustration that encompasses them.

WHAT WOMEN WANT

The nature of woman is a matter for philosophical and spiritual investigation. No Gallup poll is needed, or would even be useful, in finding out what women are made for. They are made as all human beings (men included) for God, both here and hereafter. But in a special way women are destined for love and service; love and service of God, usually in the person of another human being. It can be stated dogmatically that the key to any woman's character, and to her happiness or unhappiness, lies in discovering *whom* she loves, whereas a man, though he shares ultimately the

same destiny, is frequently caught loving a yacht or a car or a corporation.

In respect to a woman's loves, she will be happy if they are rightly ordered and duly reciprocated, miserable otherwise. Rightly ordered means that God will get her first love and that all her other loves will be somehow in Christ. In this light one can examine modern woman and see that our society has betrayed her on every level.

THE TRAGEDY OF WASTED SACRIFICE

The tragedy of the aging woman with grown-up children today is the tragedy of wasted sacrifice. In God's plan marriage is intended to be the path of sanctification for most women, the altar of daily sacrifice made easy by love. Marriage is so natural a vehicle for dying to oneself that even today it is rare to see a married woman who is selfish unless she has refused through contraception to permit the ordinary fructification of marriage. A woman with a child immediately takes on a dignity, a dignity which increases as the family grows and the sacrifices multiply. The normal woman, be she Christian or pagan, gives to her children before herself. They are well clothed while she gets shabbier; they attend school at the expense of new furniture or perfume. The normal woman does not even notice her sacrifices because she loves her children and is surrounded by their need for her.



THE TRAGEDY OF MODERN WOMAN

CAROL JACKSON

So far it is all part of God's plan. It is all a prelude to joy unceasing. It is a sort of purgatorial stage of the spiritual life to act as a prelude to the joys of union with God. A Christian woman, while loving her husband and children, should grow increasingly eager for what popular psychologists, with their foolish terminology, call the "empty nest" period, when the house is deserted and the children all at college or married. She should be eager because she should be pretty well stripped of self-love and ready for a swift progress in the spiritual life once she is free for more prayer. She should be already far enough advanced spiritually to count past sacrifices as nothing and to hope she can soon live a more penitential, frugal, simple, and contemplative life than has been possible with a growing family around. Like the saint queens of hagiography she should be planning the personal service she will give to the sick or the needy when her hands are free to love Christ in His least lovable.

The tragedy of the middle-aged American woman whom God intended thus to sanctify hits you with full force if you listen to any of the radio give-away programs. They represent a mountainous vulgarity, a truly shameful indignity. But slightly less vulgarly the same tragedy extends to the more refined suburbanites who waste their declining years in bridge, travel and gossip.

Everyone cooperates in making sure that the years of sacrifice do not fructify. "Now you can have your new car, your trip to Bermuda, your hair elegantly done, the latest dish washing machine and fine clothes!" scream the advertisements, seconded by public opinion. What they are really saying is, "Now that you have been at least partially stripped of self-love, you can learn to love yourself again, so that you may be able to lose your soul after all, and if you don't lose your soul you can at least have the opportunity of going through the stripping all over again, and in a much more painful way, in purgatory."

Husbands only serve to heighten the tragedy, although for other reasons. Owing to a distorted ideal of married love (more about this later), it is considered today that a woman must hold her husband's affection by her physical charms. How cruel the world's way is, compared to God's. In God's plan a man and his wife would so have grown in spiritual unity by middle age that the most beautiful 18-year-old secretary, despite her evident charms, would fail to hold the husband's attention. In the world's scheme love never deepens. It's always superficial and physical. This imposes a torture on all middle-aged women whose waist lines finally expand beyond all repressing and who look more and more pathetic in their determined youthfulness. They must always be dieting when they would otherwise (had they been nearing the goal of holiness) be fasting. They suffer doubly because they will not accept suffering. They are vastly more lonely for having turned away from solitude. The devil is a hard task master.

THE TRAGEDY OF HALF-GIVING

The tragedy of half-giving stalks the unmarried women who are not nuns. Perhaps the best way to see their plight is within an historical perspective.

The single state is, strictly speaking, unnatural. It is tolerable and significant (as will be shown) only within a Christian context where it can be raised to a supernatural role. Pagan societies never tolerated single women (as a class, that is; there were accidental special cases). They were pressed into concubinage or prostitution. One of the most notable social effects of Christianity was that it provided a status and function to unmarried women. They would be "brides of Christ," women who were impatient of reaching their final goal of divine love through the intermediary channel of human love and so chose a direct route of total and immediate self-giving to God, either in a life stripped of all but the barest necessary activities for the sake of contemplation or within the framework of a religious order devoted to the works of mercy. As brides of Christ these women were able to love as fully as possible and their love overflowed all over Europe in the service of the poor and the sick, the homeless, the leper and the ignorant. Peace and joy characterized their countenances and people said of them then as they say of them now, "You can never tell how old a nun is—they always look young."

The Protestant Reformation dispensed with nuns, totally in some countries, partially in others. But Protestantism couldn't erase the memory of the freedom not to marry, nor the ideal of free service in the works of mercy. The last several centuries have witnessed the progressive deterioration of the status of the single woman as she was divorced progressively from her role of Christ's spouse. We still have vestiges of the tail end of that regression in the "noble humanitarian" maiden lady who was popularly called an "old maid." Popular appellations are usually somewhat accurate, even if cruel. No one would ever have called a nun an old maid. It was the secular spinster who had withered up because she couldn't love fully and give her service wholly. And now we see the final decay of half-giving. Teachers, nurses and social workers, divorced from Christ except accidentally (where they are pious on the side but do not see Christ in the patient or the student or client, or if they do are caught up in a system which doesn't corroborate their findings), are sick of half-giving, of leading lonely if useful lives, and are capitulating to self-seeking. They are all asking for more money, not knowing that their frustration comes from quite another source and that they are but jumping from unhappiness to ruination.

CAREER GIRLS

Career girls are another facet of the unmarried woman problem, descended in an indirect line by way

of the emancipation of woman. They are not wholly the termini of the secularized nun but are caught up equally with the disgruntled wife. Without tracing their ancestry in detail, let us examine their present plight.

It can be said categorically that the career girl *cannot* be happy (that is as a career girl—she may accidentally be fulfilled because her career is secondary to the support of an aged mother or a brother studying for the priesthood, or because she only works for a little while and finds it exciting). You have only to ask one question to see why. *Whom* does a career girl love? As a woman she must love *someone* wholly.

She does not love God, not enough anyhow. That is apparent by definition. A career girl is one who is forging a place for herself in business, government, the arts—some secular activity. It does not involve a religious dedication. God, then, is out as the renter of her life.

Most career girls try to go against their natures. They pretend that they can make themselves like men, impersonal, objective, happy in the pursuit of things. If they have love affairs they try to make them seem casual, as though their hearts were not involved. The more glittering a woman's career (in the eyes of the world) the more apt the woman herself is to be distorted, unhappy and neurotic.

Then there are a multitude of career girls who love their bosses, knowingly or unknowingly, morally or immorally, with home-breaking effects or not. It is not in a woman to give her total service and dedication to the Amalgamated Pickle Company or National Horseshoes, Inc., without having a personal attachment involved. Business tends to exploit this fact because it is to the interest of the firm to have devoted workers, and if a roomful of girls is going to be asked to work late night after night it is useful to have a handsome personnel manager. The situation is especially acute in the case of secretaries so aptly named "office wives." Night after night, from coast to coast, important Mr. Jones leaves the office early for golf and then cocktails and dinner, while Mary Jane Smith works on until 8:00pm cleaning up the mail. Often enough she doesn't know why she does it, and most often too Mr. Jones is obtuse enough to accept the sacrifice without realizing its disorienting effects on Mary Jane's life.

The only way for a determined career girl to escape from the emotional disorders which beset her is for her to give all her love to someone whose interests are identical with her own, that is, herself. Needless to say, self-love is to the self's ultimate destruction, but it seemingly frees people from being hurt by others (the person you love always has the power to hurt you). When a career woman thus "frees" herself by loving only herself she becomes a ruthless creature who terrifies all around her. A calloused male, seeking money or power, is warm and human by contrast. And, needless to say, such a woman is in a far more perilous state as regards her soul, than the secretary she makes miserable and the comptometer operator who is secretly in love with the head bookkeeper.

THE LAY APOSTLE

Single women must again turn to Christ with a total love and service. It is easy to say that they ought to marry or enter the convent, but that is often not the answer. Neither is it the answer for them to continue their secular course and pile up novenas on the side. Today's answer to the problem of the single girl is usually the lay apostolate, some form of Catholic Action which will give her a Christ-centered life and a very important function within the contemporary framework of life. Wherever girls have turned to some vital form of the apostolate, the marks of frustration, neurosis, loneliness and unhappiness have indeed begun to disappear. Life is not really as difficult as it seems. God's way is easy and includes everyone.

THE TRAGEDY OF SUPERFICIAL UNION

The tragedy of the married woman today can be traced to a misunderstanding about the nature of human love. We are made, says the Church, in the image and likeness of God. The modern world contradicts this: We are made, it says, in the image and likeness of animals. The union of a man and woman in marriage, says the Church, is analogous to the union of Christ and His Church and can only be understood in that light. It is a spiritual union, expressed through the union of bodies. The union of man and woman in marriage, says the world, is like the mating of animals, to which is attached a little more delicacy and cerebration because we are higher animals.

So the world prepares young people for marriage by teaching them physiology and the techniques of making love, and sends them into marriage (armed with contraceptive devices) physically mature but spiritually infantile.

As the marriage relationship becomes (as it must) progressively more intolerable, the publishers belch forth a mountain of books giving further instructions on the art of eroticism, and finally society shepherds the aggrieved partners singly onto the psychologist's couch, and on to the divorce court.

There virtually is no such thing as sexual incompatibility. The root trouble is the lack of spiritual harmony, and behind that a deficient spiritual development or a complete absence of spiritual orientation. How could marriage possibly succeed?

But let us return to the married woman. She has to love someone wholly. *Whom* does she love? She ought, of course, to love God and her husband as Christ's intermediary but most times she does not.

There is a natural tendency for women to love their husbands as though their husbands were God, were indeed the woman's final end. This is owing to woman's great need to love and give herself wholly and it always leads to disaster. If the husband becomes her god the wife becomes subordinate to him in a disastrous way.

She takes her standards from him (what is good is what pleases him, what is bad he doesn't like), whereas she is supposed to be the member of the family who preserves the moral standards which come from God. Her entire happiness hinges on him, and he is often a poor enough specimen. She becomes jealous, she demands much more of him in time and attention than he wants to give. Eventually the husband will be unable to tolerate this unnatural worship, accompanied as it usually is by frequent tears and emotional outbursts, and the woman will be driven to a nervous breakdown. Or else she will discover in one shattering blow that her god is a clay idol and be so disillusioned she will hate him.

If a woman doesn't love God supremely, and chances not to worship her husband, there is always the possibility of gross over-attachment to her children. Under the guise of maternal solicitude a vast multitude of women are seeking a self-satisfaction in their children, making their sons overdependent on them and robbing their daughters of real lives of their own. Enough evidence of this sort of thing is at every hand to omit any elaboration here.

Or the married woman, like the single woman, can love herself. All loves reduce in the end to self-love or love of God, but those who love another during their lifetime have not yet settled in self-love even if they haven't attained God. Determined, premeditated self-love, as in the newly married girl who loves clothes inordinately and wants no children, is like premature self-damnation. It's like making the final choice between God and self on the very threshold of life.

THE NEW PAGANISM

Paganism has always been marked by the degradation of women. Whether in cultured Athens or Hindu India or ancient or modern China, you will find in vain for the regard for women with which Christianity marked Western society. The degradation takes two forms: women are reduced to slave-like work and to objects of pleasure. We are returning to paganism with ever more swift strides in our society, and again it is marked by the two signs of women's degradation.

The emancipation movement has ended in women's slavery. The myriads of office and factory girls, regimented, depersonalized, with their every gesture prescribed and tabulated, are the armies of slaves on whom the new paganism is being built. Superficially it does not seem so because, for the moment at least, we encourage our new slaves to dress like Hollywood stars and we appease their appetite for life by the vicarious excitement of the movies, radio and pulp stories. We even pay them well, but it is a quarter of a century since Belloc reminded us that slavery is still slavery even if it is well paid—and cushioned about with television sets and double chocolate sundaes.

The moral debacle, plus divorce, birth control and other "enlightened" measures, has resulted in the reduction of women to a pseudo-prostitution, of which the wolf call (which so many poor ignorant women think flattering) is the symbol.


It is into this atmosphere, this post-Christian situation, that the young girl of today emerges from adolescence. For her it will be like starting all over again to work for the true emancipation which Christ came to bring her. She can no longer drain out the last dregs of happiness and dignity left by a residual Christianity, but has to forge a new path in the manner of Sts. Agatha and Agnes. But not quite in their way because they were lone Christian martyrs, defying worldly parents and a pagan society. The modern Catholic girl has the opportunity of uniting with a multitude of others in the lay apostolate, not so much to defy an inevitable authority and suffer death as (through the lay apostolate) to take advantage of what freedom of action is left to bring Christ, purity and happiness to a dispossessed younger generation whose elders have not seen fit to pass on their residual Christianity. But like the early martyrs, the young women of today may well be repudiated and cast out by their materialistic parents.

NOT LESS LOVE, BUT MORE

There is only one answer to the tragedy of the women who are making modern society quite literally a vale of tears, and that is an ordering and an increase in their love. It is pathetic to see the pseudo-solutions which the popular magazines hold out to women whose problems they often see quite clearly, and whose unhappiness has certainly not escaped them (as has not the potentialities of exploiting them for profit). How can they give any but superficial remedies? How can they suggest anything except what might deaden the pain (sometimes at the expense of virtue)? Bridge is no remedy. Helena Rubinstein does not hold the key to happiness. A new dress won't do it. Neither will an affair, a raise, a cruise or a good book.

Unlike the indifferent husband, Christ welcomes love and total devotion, and reciprocates a thousandfold. Unlike children, Christ does not outgrow His desire for our affection. Unlike the world, Christ forgives us, no matter how far we have fallen. He can purify the impure, as He perfected the woman taken in adultery.

The central fact of the case is that women need to love tremendously and there is only one Person whom they can safely and satisfactorily love: Christ. And the more disordered their present loves the more whole-hearted will have to be their conversion to a love of Christ.

There is no remedy for modern woman's tragedy except Christ, and wherever Christ is introduced all human relationships begin immediately to straighten themselves out. 

Reprinted from *Integrity* magazine. Carol Jackson Robinson (1911-2003) wrote numerous books pamphlets and articles. She was a founder and editor of the influential Catholic journal *Integrity*. *My Life With Thomas Aquinas* (available from Angelus Press. Price: \$15.00) is a collection of her articles from *Integrity*. This article is a sample selection from an upcoming fourth volume of the *Integrity* series, to be published in mid-2008 by Angelus Press.

BENEDICTINE MONKS

SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO, USA

Traditional Religious Orders



Founded in 1991 in the southern Rocky Mountains that overlook Silver City, New Mexico, Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery is the home of a young community of Benedictine monks. The secluded, mountainous site, the silence of the surrounding nature, the austere beauty of the high-desert terrain all join together to bespeak the particular vocation of this monastic foundation: *the primacy of contemplation*,¹ a return to the spirit of the monks of Christian antiquity who, with the blessing of the Church, established a unique way of life lived for the honor and glory of *God alone*.

Our monastic roots link us not only to the early days of St. Benedict, who was born in the 5th century, but also to the more recent past, to the Christendom of France, in the year 1850, during the pontificate of Pope Pius IX. Living in a time of restoration in the aftermath of revolution which reduced the great

European abbeys to rubble, Fr. Jean-Baptiste Muard, a diocesan missionary, was inspired by a signal grace of Providence to restore the monastic apostolate of the Church to its purest and original form, as lived by the disciples of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, the Desert Fathers in particular. Being led by the hand of God, he walked as a pilgrim from France to Italy, eventually arriving at the hallowed shrine of St. Benedict in Subiaco, east of Rome. He would later meet with the Holy Father still in exile at Gaëta, who under the duress of revolution still raging and tearing apart Italy in the name of unity, had made himself abbot of St. Benedict's original monastery. This heroic intervention of Pope Pius IX to save the Benedictine Order from extinction in his overall struggle to restore the Church in the time of unprecedented crisis would become the foundational principle of our present monastery.

From Rome, Fr. Muard would bring the Rule of St. Benedict back to France at the same time as other great works of restoration were already underway. The Cassinese Congregation of the Primitive Observance was thus born and under the continued guidance of Pope Pius IX foundations were established throughout Europe, rising from the ashes of once glorious Christendom.

The restoration of the Church, in the mind of *Pio Nono*, would come through the Queen of Heaven, who herself would confirm his teaching through the miraculous apparitions at Lourdes, and also in the restoration of the contemplative monastic Orders. The faithful echo of this determined action would be heard again in our own day in the words of Archbishop Lefebvre: "Without Monasteries, without religious consecrated to prayer, the Church will never be revived from the present crisis."²

The conflict of civil revolution, the destruction wrought by World Wars, and the universal disorder of Modernism have become as the great fire that germinates the seed of the giant solitary redwoods, and today in the critical context of restoration, the contemplative Orders are yet once again being refounded. The sons and daughters of the saintly Fr. Muard have preserved his fervent desire for a return to the purity of the Rule of St. Benedict with its emphasis on the contemplative monastic life. In this work is found the integrity of a life, the *sana doctrina*, the sane doctrine of the Church as found in the lives of her greatest saints.³ This newest branch of the great Benedictine tree is once again flourishing, and the cause for the beatification of Fr. Muard is in Rome.

Archbishop Lefebvre and the Benedictines

The last words spoken to the founders of this monastery remain forever engraved in their hearts:

Now is the time to do the impossible, you must do the impossible to establish oases of the Faith, where the true spirit of the Church can be found. It is your duty to persevere in the true Faith. The impossible must be done to establish this Monastery.⁴

With this small taste of the magnanimous spirit that guided the entire career of Archbishop Lefebvre, the monks of this monastery as well as the other religious houses scattered throughout the world have responded to this voice of the *sensus*



Ecclesia, the sense, the instinct and the mind of the Church,⁵ to do with certitude, to do now what the Church, *quod ubique et semper*, has always and everywhere done in times of crisis.⁶ In this spirit of faith, confirmed by the teaching Magisterium of the holy popes of the recent past who warned the entire world of an upcoming crisis unprecedented and unequalled in magnitude, monasteries of Tradition have received the Archbishop's blessing and encouragement to come into existence. History thus repeats itself, the actions of a holy pope and a saintly archbishop being but the repeated interventions of Divine Providence working through worthy intermediaries to guide the Church in the turbulent times of crisis.



The Rule of St. Benedict and the Monastic Vocation

Hearken, O my son, to the precepts of the Master and incline the ear of thy heart; freely accept and faithfully fulfill the instructions of a loving Father, that by the labor of obedience thou mayest return to Him from whom thou hast strayed by the sloth of disobedience. To thee are my words now addressed, Whosoever thou mayest be That renouncing thine own will To fight for the true King, Jesus Christ, Dost take up the strong and glorious weapons of obedience.⁷

With astonishing perfection these opening words of the Rule express what is the true nature of the vocation to the monastic life. It is nothing other than the response from a son to follow in his father's footsteps. The monk is a prodigal son who returns to his father's house, and this homecoming is a wonder of grace, the fundamental grace upholding every vocation to the religious life. The Father is God the Father the Almighty, who wills to call his adopted sons home to their ultimate end, to the eternal "*facie ad Faciem*—face to face" of the beatific vision.⁸ The vocation thus begins in light of this vision, and it will be in union with the Son of the Eternal Father that the monk will have constant recourse for hope and perseverance through the *dura et aspera*, the hard and demanding challenges of the present life that will one day lead him to heaven.⁹ The son, now no longer estranged, as a new soldier in a *new Knighthood*,¹⁰ must train and strengthen his grip and grasp of the unfamiliar *strong and glorious weapons* of obedience, in imitation of His Saviour, knowing that he, too, will be redeemed by none other than the same means as shown by the sign of the Cross.

The Order's motto is PAX, *pax Benedicti*, heir to the *pax Romana*, the peace of ancient Rome. The once temporal, political peace of the Roman Empire would be transformed into the peace of Benedict, the peace of the Divine Order, the supernatural tranquility of order, radiating from the interior city of the monastic cloisters to the cities of Christendom.



Benedictine "Iwo Jima"



Just as Divine Revelation finds its twofold expression in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, the Sacred Liturgy and the Holy Rule are the two pillars of the Monastic Order.

St. Gregory the Great, pope and biographer of St. Benedict, wrote of his Rule: “Remarkable for its discretion... it is the synthesis of the entire teaching of the Holy Gospels.”¹¹ Organized in 73 chapters like the books of Sacred Scripture, and concentrated into a compact practical code of living with its *discretio* or equilibrium and balance of moderation, the Rule of St. Benedict is a permanent foundation stone of Christendom and one of the invariables of history. This Rule written by a great saint has produced not only an unbroken tradition of sanctity but also vast societies of holiness, with both the monastery and the Christian city bearing its hallmarks.

For over 15 centuries the *Depositum Monasticum*, the deposit of the monastic spirit, like a mirror image of the deposit of the Faith, has been inviolably carried across the expanse of time intact. Thanks to this Rule, which enshrines *the spirit of the Essential*, and which has left out nothing for Christian living, both within and without the monastery walls, for religious and laity alike, the same spirit that has founded Christendom is also the same means unto its restoration in our present day.

Gifted with a penetrating depth of wisdom and experience, St. Benedict is the *doctor of human nature*,

knowing the balance needed for true conversion. He calls his monastic way of life a *school* where the austerity of the *letter* is supplanted by the largesse of the *spirit*, the law of love. “Therefore we establish a School of the Lord’s Service...” based on the teaching of charity, in founding which he hopes “to ordain *nihil asperum, nihil grave*, nothing bitter, nothing burdensome so as not to dishearten”¹²; he exhorts the young monk “not to be overcome with fear and flee from the way of salvation.”

The vocation is universal, “*multi sunt vocati*, for many are called,”¹³ and they are to convert to God “*in toto corde*, with the whole heart.”¹⁴ In this sense the fallen state of human nature is not to be cast away or condemned, but rather restored and redeemed, both in body and soul, through *Ora et Labora*, prayer and work. The practice of the virtue of *modestia*, the ancient ideal of moderation and patience, thus makes up one of the great teachings of the Benedictine school, safeguarded by the encouragements of fraternal charity. The Benedictine vision is therefore one of the heart, seeing the *longanimitas*, the long term, in the longer work of a lifetime, which *in fine* every part of man is to be raised up, sanctified and perfected in grace.

If there must needs be some strictness of discipline, let it be understood that this is unto the preservation of Charity. Let all things be so tempered and ordered that souls may be saved.¹⁵

Dear Friends,

Just a little note in order to give you some news of my vacation in New Mexico. Still not knowing if it would be possible for me to return to the “old continent” this year because of the length of the procedure to renew my visa, I thus decided to visit the famous Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Silver City in New Mexico.

Certainly, I very much regret not being able to see you again this year, but when one considers that I have been able, thanks to God and your generosity, to return each year since I left France in 1984, I truly cannot complain. It is then a little sacrifice to offer, but when one thinks of the life of the

missionaries in poor countries or countries at war, once again one cannot complain but much sooner thank God for all of His favors.

Thus, I arrived here on the 29th of June, the anniversary day of my 29 years of priesthood. It is needless to say that I do not regret the trip (even if I lost my suitcase, which remained for two days stuck somewhere in an airport...grrrr!). That is sometimes part of the small inconveniences of traveling!

Here I am, then, in this beautiful Benedictine monastery situated in a landscape of dreams. Perched about 7,000 feet in altitude in the mountains, the monastery overlooks a magnificent valley of forests bordered by mountain chains which spread beneath our eyes for miles and miles without the least habitation in sight. The setting is truly magical. Nature envelops you in her majestic beauty and leads you irresistibly towards Him who has designed this masterpiece. This magnificent picture speaks to you of the perfections and of the love of our Creator, and lifts the soul, as though naturally, to the contemplation of the divine mysteries. As for the silence which surrounds the monastery, it seems as if wishing to play a melodious symphony which the heart alone can hear, in honor of the invisible Master who yet renders Himself visible through the incomparable beauty of His work.

Thanks be to God, this site will keep for a long time yet its idyllic charm because the monastery is the last property of Silver City that looks out directly onto one of the largest natural parks in the United States. The neighbors of the monastery are therefore stags, wild boars, rattlesnakes, coyotes, bears, wild cats (lynx), and of course the famous mountain lions. As the whole of this little group normally walks about at night, there is no danger to take walks during the day





Ora et Labora
Camps for men and boys. The visitors come to live the monastic life for a week during the summer months.

and to take nice picnics in the forest like the one that we took today with the monks and the boys who make their summer camp at the monastery. This made a very agreeable and a very pleasant day.

This monastery was founded fifteen years ago by Fr. Cyprian, who spent eight years in the Benedictine monastery of "Le Barroux" in Provence, France. He began all alone on this mountain in a mobile trailer. There was absolutely nothing else but rocks, trees and the nocturnal neighbors described above. Today, he has built this superb monastery in the style of the Spanish missions that houses about twenty monks, of which the average age is around twenty-five years old. Besides the plumbing and the installation of the electrical system (which require special permits) the monks, along with help from faithful from all over the country, have done the majority of the remaining work. It is hardly believable! It is impressive to see the monks at work and to see the organization of the monastery! They are always on the go! They have a fully equipped woodwork shop and the monks make all of the furniture of the monastery on site: windows, doors, tables.. All that they are able to make, they make by themselves: the stained-glass windows of the church, shoes, bread (not wine... it is not necessary), and they already have a little farm which supplies them with milk, wool, and soon, eggs and vegetables.

They have an architect who, of course, makes all of the plans but who also knows how to "handle the trowel," I assure you. They heat their cells in the old style with wood stoves, using the wood given them by the Forest Service of the National Park. Despite the altitude, Providence has equally allowed them to find a source of water that freely furnishes the monastery with drinking water.

Their temporary chapel resembles the Cistercian abbeys of Provence, but the monks have already made the plans for the construction of the abbey church, which would be a reproduction of that of Cluny. As vocations now flow into the monastery, they are going to raise up the dormitories by one floor in order to increase the number of cells, but their first wish is to finish the guesthouse and the retreat house for visiting priests. Truly, they have taken my breath away, and you can now understand why I was telling you that I do not regret this visit. I was saying yesterday, joking with my confreres at Los Gatos, that I had lost my return ticket and that they were going to have to let me stay here...! Hum, I don't know what Bishop Fellay would think of it!

But I must admit that that which impressed me the most on arriving here was not so much the splendid setting, the superb buildings, or still yet the skillful and almost relentless work of these monks fighting to survive and grow in this arid and hostile nature; no, that which charmed me the most was the monks themselves! This community of young men lost in the mountains living the strict rule of Saint Benedict in silence, prayer and work is a vibrant testimony of faith which seizes the soul and directs it to God more powerfully still than the contemplation of the beauty of the landscape.

I was captivated by the piety and the dignity of these young monks in prayer. Literally situated between heaven and earth, this community of monks, as Moses praying on the mountain for the people, prays and intercedes for the Church and for the world. The sight of these robust men, retired in the solitude of their mountain and of their church, chanting night and day in humility and fervor the Divine Office and the Holy Mass, is a catechism lesson that is not found in books. These



continued from p.23

good monks remind the world of the essential and preach to us, by their example, the true meaning of life and what ought to be the true relationship between men and their Creator on earth, if they wish one day to contemplate Him in heaven.

How edifying it is to see these young monks, to whom it is difficult to give an age, giving themselves without reserve so as to join the Heavenly Court by their prayers and their chants, in order to procure glory to God and salvation to men! Their faces, already chiseled by fasts and vigils are imprinted with a gravity and a serenity that reflects the peace that has long since taken possession of the depth of their souls. When you pass a monk in the cloister, his eyes are lowered in humility; he is in prayer and you would not dare to disturb his recollection. But, if you venture to address yourself to him, then his eyes raise and shine, his face illuminates and this good monk receives you with a radiant smile which reveals the goodness which abides in his heart. Ah, this smile of the monks which speaks to us more than by words of the Charity of the Heart of Jesus. This smile, which greets you, has the gift to pour into your hearts a heavenly sweetness which breaths forth and communicates the peace of God.

The biographer of the holy Fr. Muard, the founder of "La Pierre qui Vire," wrote of him: "All of Fr. Muard was in the expression of his face, in the goodness of his smile, in the sanctity that shined forth from his person." These monks in Silver City who are from the lineage of "La Pierre qui Vire" have inherited well from their founder. They have truly chosen

the "better part" and I thank God to have been able to take these days of vacation amongst them. This has certainly reminded me of the first calls of my vocation when I had made two retreats in 1967 at "La Pierre qui Vire" and, myself, almost became a son of Father Muard! What a consolation for me to find myself, forty years later, in this Benedictine atmosphere which made the first calls of God resound in my soul.

I pray that you also will be able to have the experience, if your time permits it, of some days of solitude and silence in order to rest and revivify your soul in God. I assure you that it is worth the while; and if you are not able to visit a Benedictine abbey, may you at least be able to make a good Ignatian Retreat like those that we preach at Los Gatos.

I hope that you are all well and that you will spend some good holidays this summer; and may they be as restful for the body and the soul as those that I am passing at this time in this beautiful Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Be very certain that I do not forget you in my prayers addressed to Our Lady, asking Her to bless and to protect your dear families.

Fr. Jacques Emily

July 11, 2007

Feast of the Solemnity of St. Benedict

"The love of Christ must come before all else!" (Rule of Saint Benedict)

Ora

Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi.—In the midst of the night I shall rise unto thy praise.¹⁶

The Benedictine is a contemplative. The primacy of prayer is the guiding principle of the monastic horarium. The monk lives the inverse of the secular day, rising at night in order to *be about the things of his Father*.¹⁷ The bell rings at 3am, he rises and goes to the Church to begin one to two hours of the Divine Office of Matins sung in Gregorian Chant, returning afterwards to the monastic cell for solitary study. At the break of dawn, the bell rings again for the Divine Office of Lauds, concluding the first part of the waking hours of the monk.

By 7:30am the monks have completed four hours of prayer.

Septies in die laudem dixi Tibi.—Seven times a day have I given praise to Thee.¹⁸

Seven times during the day, called *the Hours*, the bells will call the Benedictine to return to the monastery church to attend to the *Opus Dei*, the Work of God, which divides each part of the day with prayer, the universal prayer of the Church. “Let nothing be put before the Work of God... let nothing be preferred to the love of Christ.”¹⁹ The Work of God is the essence of Benedictine life.

In mid-morning, between sessions of study, the *Conventual Mass*, the community High Mass sung daily in Gregorian Chant, is the heart of the day. The hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, and None continue the *Laus perennis*, the unending praise of God, which the ancient sundials fixed to the side of the churches of Christendom marked with a shadow, indicating each passing hour of prayer.

Meals in a monastery are a reflection of the Liturgy, where the brethren take turns preparing and serving the community repast, taken in silence in the Refectory, while edifying readings sustain the spiritual and intellectual formation of the monks. The Benedictine is “a disciple of Christ”²⁰; everything in the monastery is an uninterrupted teaching, by which God makes use of all things great and small as instrumental causes to communicate His grace, “being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus...and this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding.”²¹ Not only in the highest and most sublime liturgical actions performed in the Church, but also in the most humble labors of the hands in the fields where in all things, at all times and in all places, the disciple of Christ is being formed by the masters of nature and grace. “*Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus*—That in all things God may be glorified.”²²

Labora

The spirit of contemplative prayer now becomes action, and manual work, fills the remainder of the day beneath the watchful gaze of God, in imitation of “the *Filius fabri*, the son of the artisan.”²³ Labor, the second half of Benedictine life, is a constant recourse to St. Joseph, called upon daily to guide the hands of the laboring monks.

As prescribed by the Rule, the monastery operates a farm, several workshops, and a gift shop apostolate. The *arts and crafts* of manual labor are thus expressed in husbandry, with the

DAILY SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|--|
| 3:00 AM | Rise |
| 3:30 AM | Matins |
| 4:30 AM | Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) |
| 5:30 AM | Lauds |
| 6:00 AM | Angelus, Private Mass, Mental Prayer in the Choir |
| 7:00 AM | Breakfast |
| 7:30 AM | Prime, Chapter |
| 8:00 AM | Lectio Divina |
| 9:30 AM | Terce, Conventual Mass |
| 10:30 AM | Class, Study or Manual Work |
| 11:45 AM | Sext |
| 12:00 AM | Angelus, Lunch |
| 2:00 PM | None |
| 2:15 PM | Manual Work |
| 5:30 PM | Vespers, Mental Prayer in Choir |
| 6:30 PM | Dinner |
| 7:30 PM | Compline, Angelus |
| 8:00 PM | Retire |

products of various farm animals such as dairy and the spinning of wool, bakery, leather and iron work, woodworking, letterpress printing and other noble works that utilize materials made by God unto His greater glory, where the Divine Order overflows into every aspect of living so as to achieve an integrity of life. As the living descendants of the Desert Fathers, the monks work in joyful obedience and silence, communicating by sign language, “to weave or to unweave their baskets,”²⁴ as it shall please God! “We are happy, O Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God have been made known to us.”²⁵

Thus formed according to the mind of his Father, “*in hominem perfectum*—a complete man,”²⁶ the Benedictine has responded to the call of God in his vocation, to live out his days in the service of things divine, “*corda et corpora*—with heart and body” working together in harmony,²⁷ “for He hath established in me the order of Charity.”²⁸

The Monastic Day comes to its end in the evening with Community Rosary, and the prayer hours of Vespers and Compline at sunset. The monk retires at 8pm.

Pax Intransibus, Gratia Petentibus

The monastery is a place of retreat. The welcoming words of “Peace to those who enter herein and grace to those who come here asking” is the inscription placed above the entry gates of many houses of the Benedictine

Order. The monastery is a refuge of peace and hospitality for retreatants. A monastic retreat consists in spending a few days or a week living the same life as the monks, by following the schedule of the Hours of the Divine Office, by praying and working along side the monks. Additional meetings with a priest add to this over-all predication which is the monastic retreat made both with and without words.

Ora et Labora Camps for men and boys are also part of our apostolate. The monastery opens its doors to organized groups who come to live the monastic life for a week during the summer months or at other times throughout the liturgical year. In this the seed of vocations is planted for the future, to be harvested in due season, as the Master decides. "For great is the harvest but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."²⁹

A priest of the community is also assigned to be the chaplain for the members of the laity who desire to live the Benedictine life. Called *Oblates*, these are the original equivalent of what has become the Third Order in the religious orders of the Church. Thus wishing to live the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict in the world, Oblates are attached directly to the monastery, and are considered as members of the same spiritual family, drawing spiritual strength from the monastic community to persevere in the sanctity of the married state.

The Future


Vocations are the future! To the aspiring Benedictine it suffices to repeat the words of Our Lord, who is the divine

recruiter: *Come and see!* For anyone wishing to study his vocation more closely, a visit of one to two weeks is recommended. A letter of request is the only protocol.

Future plans also include the construction of a neighboring monastery of cloistered contemplative Benedictine nuns, who are presently being formed in our affiliated convent in Europe. The Benedictine ideal of twin monasteries will thus be fulfilled in the near future, being in the traditional image of St. Benedict and his twin sister, St. Scholastica.

Although monasteries are traditionally involved in various kinds of light industry as a means of self-support, the spiritual formation of our communities still living in the period of foundation must necessarily come before any business pursuits. For the present moment, the monastery is sustained through the charitable help and support of dedicated benefactors. No donation is too small to make anyone part of our extended family of friends!

Offers of property have been made to us as well, inviting us to establish new monasteries both in America and abroad. One day this will most assuredly become reality, but for now we recommend these invitations to Divine Providence who alone can order all things with force and might, yet with sweetness and wisdom.³⁰

Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
I have appointed watchmen,
All the day and all the night long,
they shall never hold their peace
from praising the name of the Lord. (Is. 62:6) 

As we were going to press, the Monastery of Our Lady of Bellaigue announced the death of its founder, Rev. Fr. Dom Angel Ferreira da Costa, Prior of Our Lady of Bellaigue, March 9, 2008, on the evening of the first Sunday of Passiontide in the 18th year of his monastic Profession and the 13th year of his ordination to the priesthood. R.I.P.

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¹ "A monk is nourished only by the practice of contemplation, rejoices with tears in the hope of heavenly rewards, foregoes even the things he is allowed to have, strives to converse intimately every day with Our Lord, does not disturb his mind with any preoccupation of the passing world but always expands it in expectation of heavenly joys." St. Gregory the Great in *Homilies on Ezechiel*.

² Quoted in the French MJCF review *Savoir et Servir*, special issue on vocations.

³ Titus 2:1.

⁴ Among the last writings of Archbishop Lefebvre, extract from a personal letter to Fr. Cyprian, March 1991.

⁵ "This is my heritage, what I have received in my seminary formation, the *sensus Ecclesiae*, the experience of these great men of the Church who have taught us, I in turn give to you." Archbishop Lefebvre.

⁶ The criterion of the true faith, St. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*.

⁷ Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict

⁸ I Cor. 13:12.

⁹ Rule, Chapter 58.

¹⁰ Expression borrowed from *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

¹¹ *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* by St. Gregory the

Great, Book II of *The Dialogues*.

¹² From the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict.

¹³ Mt. 20:16.

¹⁴ Joel 2:12 from the Lenten Liturgy: "Convert unto me with thy whole heart, etc."

¹⁵ Rule, Chapter 41 and Prologue.

¹⁶ Ps. 118:62, quoted in Chapter 16 of the Rule.

¹⁷ Lk. 2:49.

¹⁸ Ps. 118:164, quoted in Chapter 16 of the Rule.

¹⁹ Rule, Chapters 4 and 43.

²⁰ Rule, Chapter 6.

²¹ Phil. 1:6, 9.

²² Rule, Chapter 57.

²³ Mt. 13:55.

²⁴ Sayings of the Desert Fathers.

²⁵ Baruch 45:4.

²⁶ Col. 1:28.

²⁷ "Therefore our hearts and bodies must be made ready to fight under the holy obedience of his commands." Prologue of the Rule.

²⁸ Cant. 2:4.

²⁹ Mt. 9:37, also quoted from Archbishop Lefebvre in footnote 2.

³⁰ First of the Greater Antiphons of Advent.



DR. ANDREW CHILDS



FILMING THE MIND'S EYE!

The Fallacy of Passive Entertainment

Through the imagination—an intellectual state fully resonant with reality yet distinct from the material world—we strive to contemplate the highest light. Imagination reinforces our prayer as we contemplate the vision of things unseen, the essences of Faith itself; it often represents our best attempts to reflect on Divine truths that lie beyond our capacity to reason and outside our ability to sense. Through Catholic mystics we glimpse the rarest of graces; God's instilling in a soul the special facility to access Him directly through contemplation. For the majority of men, however, there remains reason, Faith, and imagination. Imagination in this sense differs essentially from fantasy. Grounded in truth, imagination seeks a more perfect—if perhaps expanded—exposition of reality; grounded in Faith, this search draws the mind toward God.

Through our sense perception, we interact with intellectual and emotional stimuli.¹ St. Thomas in his treatment of intellectual virtue describes the action of the will in directing the use of such stimuli, and more importantly reminds us that the goodness or evil of these mental processes depends on our intentions, and our freely choosing the nature of our reaction.² Our good response results from our ability to organize stimuli based on knowledge, and our ability to identify pertinent moral principles and regulate our reactions in accordance with them. Passive reception of artistic stimuli renders this regulation unlikely if not

impossible. The disengaged viewer or listener leaves himself open to manipulation: passive reception of stimuli dulls the receptive capacity, and replaces imagination with packaged images and predetermined emotional—ultimately intellectual—responses. Properly speaking, no truly mindless entertainment exists, only a failure on the part of the recipient to engage the mind during the process of receipt, and a failure to recognize that entertainment lacking the substance to make an appreciable intellectual impact will nonetheless leave an emotional impression.

No matter how masterful the cinematography, these packaged depictions will stimulate primarily the emotions, not the imagination as some argue: proof of this lies in the fact that many have developed a cinematic recall of historical events, personalities, and concepts related more specifically to films than to an objective sense of historical context undergirded by first principles.³

Filming the Mind's Eye, or, Why the Book is Better

Though hardly mindless, film versions of literary masterpieces provide a useful example. The best examples of these films (the Kenneth Branagh *Henry V*, produced by the BBC in 1989; the 1995 PBS production of *Pride & Prejudice*, etc.) still fall short of the intellectual nourishment of the original to the extent that they replace the vital intellectual capacity of imagination with set images. No matter how masterful the cinematography, these packaged depictions will stimulate primarily the emotions, not the imagination as some argue: proof of this lies in the fact that many have developed a cinematic recall of historical events, personalities, and concepts related more specifically to films than to an objective sense of historical context undergirded by first principles.³ As for the supposedly superior accuracy of “historically informed” films, we must remember that few absolutely objective historical accounts have ever existed; more importantly, we know from our Faith that understanding transcends experience.

Imagination draws on reality; though we may never have directly experienced the sights and sounds of a foreign land or distant age, we nonetheless through our understanding of related stimuli can reproduce realistic mental images of the scenes we read. This relates to our faculty of abstraction, where the mind recognizes universal essentials, and makes connections based on our particular experiences. A child understands, for instance, that the family beagle is a dog. Through abstraction, it can deduce that the neighbor's great dane is also

a dog; likewise its Grandmother's toy poodle. A child recognizes the universal essences of “dog” in every case—a four-legged animal that barks and pants—even though the particulars vary greatly. Most importantly, a child's abstraction as a faculty can develop, and must, in fact, if it is to have any hope of grasping concepts of an abstract or theoretical nature (often during its life a child will need this skill, for in the realms both of ideas and interactions, many hungry wolves would have it believe that they are merely friendly dogs...). This development,

however, does not take place simply as a matter of physical maturity or accumulated experience, but requires consistent application. Just as a child learns of adult concepts—responsibility, justice, sharing—through play, adults can hone powers of abstraction through recreation—reading, listening, creating—but only through recreation that actively engages the imagination. Passive visual entertainment blunts this engagement, even though it can dazzle the eyes and overwhelm the emotions (with the help of the well-chosen soundtrack, designed to add emotional depth, convincing viewers that they participate in a far more profound experience than they actually do).⁴

Background Music

Music manipulates on an emotional level. At its best, music inspires a confluence of cognitive and emotional sensitivity that approaches the supernatural. Of all the arts, music—which due to the emotional nature of its communicative mode provides a link between the physical and metaphysical realms—has suffered the most serious and dynamic debasement in modern times, both in terms of process and purpose. The enemy has much to gain by this manipulation—convincing people that they think what in reality they only feel—and even more to gain by our inability to recognize it, best facilitated by pushing music farther and farther into the background of our awareness. Society has come to regard music as something entirely elective, and completely innate. Unlike developing any real skill (so the thinking goes), every man could appreciate music if only he chose to, and in choosing not to nurture an appreciation

for music, he merely decides to use his fully elective free time in some other technically unnecessary (or perhaps more manly) pursuit. The loss of the ability to appreciate an arcane, frivolous art form matters little to such a man, especially in light of his superior technological enlightenment and overall advancement relative to former societies; besides, most people have too little time already...⁵

Two particularly dangerous mindsets develop from this line of thinking; *first*, that serious music is either a vocational, or worse, gender-specific recreation—the realm of womanly pursuits. Men can identify with the vernacular music of square dances, folk, or popular music, as these familiar styles make few demands on manly ears and provide many benefits: vernacular music connects a man to his roots, confirms him in his masculinity, and even gives voice to his patriotism. However meagerly, it also fulfills some requirement of culture. On occasion, however, men have had to submit to the penance of high art, though with certain understandings: just as a wife “did her duty by dragging her husband to a concert or opera; her husband maintained his masculinity by protesting all the way, and by falling asleep during the music.”⁶

The *second* mindset—reverse elitism—proves far more dangerous. Country music, both new and old, features this attitude most prominently: if the old simple ways suited my forebears, they suit me as well. The attempt to introduce outside ideas or pursuits (the invading cultural force is always stigmatized as external or foreign) represents not an opportunity for enrichment, but rather a sort of warfare, a betrayal of upbringing. Family and community can exert tremendous pressures, accusing the newly cultured of “putting on airs,” of adopting an attitude of superiority. Recognition of the obvious insecurity and fear of the unknown—as well as the convenience of the familiar—that motivates these charges does little to soften the impact of cultural exile. An appeal to family loyalty and the nobility of the simple life silences any argument on behalf of culture. Yet, here lies a perilous trap, one likely to catch those whose intellectual apathy has diminished their powers of abstraction: a simple man is not a simpleton. The difference lies not only in the depth of his character, but in the clarity of his thought. The Devil strives tirelessly to overturn God’s order in every realm. In terms of their cultivation, he would have men and women behave like children—or brute beasts. As he would have it, musical recreation must never threaten, challenge, or impose upon us any

imaginative contemplation; it must always remain accessible and comfortably recognizable.

The atmosphere created by familiar sounding music creates a sense of psychological ease; intellectual defenses relax in a recognizable emotional soundscape. In such a state, the listener remains predisposed to permit entry to any sentiments transported by musical material that has become in effect an emotional companion. And yet, as a sort of betrayal, music that in one instance has sung children to sleep, in another will whisper in their ears the most poisonous lies and scandals; and, accompanied by a melodic or harmonic family friend, giving all the while the impression that these new ideas bear the mark of approval. To read popular music lyrics of any type proves shocking, both in terms of the near total lack of poetic grace, and the thematic message: stripped of the music designed to obscure the literal message, few of even the most hardened libertines would grant these sentiments access to their children. And yet structurally, harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically, the music of near occasion resembles

To read popular music lyrics of any type proves shocking, both in terms of the near total lack of poetic grace, and the thematic message: stripped of the music designed to obscure the literal message, few of even the most hardened libertines would grant these sentiments access to their children.

that of our modern folk and popular heroes nearly exactly.

Music, if you will, engages an emotional imagination; instead of triggering the recall and association of specific images, people, or events, the imaginative interaction with music prompts the release of all images and scenarios related to an emotional state: Christmas carols...the Passion chorale...the music played at a wedding...the favorite song of a deceased relative. In most cases, the emotional traveler takes his destination for granted, failing to take into account the mode of transportation.


Active Cultivation: Appreciating Gratuitous Beauty

Active participation takes place in the mind. We interact with art through the imagination and understanding that art inspires. Active culture, however, does not necessarily include actual participation. Though often this participation can provide a wonderful social and intellectual outlet

beneficial to proper formation, individual talent limits the extent to which our direct involvement can inspire imagination. We will either inevitably compromise in terms of content by taking on only those projects within our capacities, or, in terms of quality by performing works beyond our abilities. By doing the latter, we may rob the works of their true inspirational capacity. Audience membership may provide the most efficient means of active cultivation for most people, but listeners, viewers, and readers (perhaps the most exclusive audiences, as the author speaks to the reader alone) must realize their responsibility to interact with the artform, and must choose to expose themselves to works of recognized quality, not simply types of works they find familiar or comfortable...or merely relaxing. Though art can soothe and comfort, many have come to rely on cultural pursuits as purely recreational or escapist. Though Scripture admonishes us to “become as little children”⁷ we often confuse childlike with childish in this regard. As mentioned above, for the child, play is work; how many adults retain a sense of industrious imagination in their recreation? Children show their innate gravitation toward universal concepts in the creation of their “fantasies”: the scenarios they develop and continually revisit may reveal a lack of experience—and limited store of particulars—but not an avoidance of reality. By contrast, a man content to reside permanently within the same cultural parameters of his childhood risks developing a diminished ability to distinguish universals, and an increasingly narrow view of reality.

Our creation of alternate realities to reflect our fantasies represents dangerous subjectivism and an inversion of order; yet what of our ability to make reality fantastic? The artist—assuming active recipient participation—freely employs wonderfully impractical if not gratuitous beauty in order to stimulate and delight the imagination. At daybreak in the opening scene of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare could have had the guard Horatio describe the sunrise in far simpler terms than these—“But look, the dawn in russet mantle clad walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill”—but our mind delights in the fact that he didn’t. In the prelude to *Das Rheingold*, we sit transfixed as Richard Wagner spends five minutes—and uses 100 orchestral musicians—to explore the kaleidoscopic sonic potential of a single chord. When a man falls in love with a woman, her familiar appearance becomes one of his primary sources of simple, continuous joy and psychological stability. Throughout her life as a wife and mother, she will surely possess the physical beauty gifted to her by nature, and though she maintains this beauty through the activities of her life, she will prove her love through accepting and accomplishing the functions of her duty of state. Yet on her wedding day, beauty becomes, in effect, her duty of state; on this day, she will use beauty to show the extent of her love for her husband. The wedding

portrait, though often bearing little resemblance to a woman’s daily appearance, becomes an artifact representing her willful use of gratuitous beauty to symbolize this love.

Active interaction with cultural stimuli prepares us to make such gifts of imagination to others. We must recognize the necessity of developing our mental faculties so that we can appreciate and direct our imagination toward the supernatural through intellectual and emotional means; through prayer, we direct these faculties through spiritual means as well. Far from an elective process—only slightly less elective than prayer, I would submit that active cultivation provides us with the tools to fulfill the commandment to love one another in the most wondrous of ways. It prepares us to give and receive gifts of emotional and intellectual understanding such that all people, regardless of place, time, or status, recognize in the often gratuitous beauty of art—and in God’s overwhelming generosity in providing limitless sources of artistic inspiration—the oneness He desires with us. 

Dr. Andrew Childs serves currently as Professor of Music at St. Mary’s Academy and College in St. Mary’s, KS, where he lives with his wife and daughter, and two cats of legendary girth and good nature. He is also Assistant to the Director of Education for the US District of the Society of Saint Pius X. He has taught at Yale University, the University of California at Irvine, Missouri State University, and Connecticut College. An active professional performer, he has sung over 100 performances of nearly 30 operatic roles.

¹ Plato makes the following distinctions: imagination involves 1) perception of objects and judgments based on their appearance—in effect, the issue of perception vs. reality; 2) the mental capacity to produce images of things not present; and 3) the physical representation of objects based on recalled mental images—artistic creation.

² St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, QQ.55-59.

³ Further proof: though a striking and admirable work, Mel Gibson’s *Passion of the Christ* provides many their images for meditation on the Passion. In this regard, Gibson has provided a great service, yet the person meditating on film images loses a contemplative dimension; because of the fixed nature of the film images, contemplation becomes formulaic. While useful and necessary in many ways, we know that formulaic prayer—in this case, formulaic contemplation—lacks the imaginative spontaneity and potential edification of mental prayer.

⁴ An important note on stage performance. Though stagecraft and scenery create some realistic effects, actors and audience need to understand the purely representative nature of this realism. The full dramatic effect requires contemplation; consequently, many people accustomed to the hyper-reality of film find stage plays only two-dimensional. They fail to realize their participatory role.

⁵ With the advance of industrialized modern society, cultivation (individual or collective) became an increasingly receptive rather than interactive process; lest we insist that our present forms of interactive culture rival pre-industrial substantive norms, consider that the songs of Franz Schubert—now the near-exclusive domain of professional performers—were considered parlor songs, suitable for family singing and playing.

⁶ Frank Rossiter, *Charles Ives and His America*, 27-28. Rossiter writes of the post-War Between the States era.

⁷ Mt. 18:3

Thirty Minutes with Fr. de Chivré:

Fathers and mothers—and wannabes—may find this conference to be for them a cold shower. Leisure may be relaxation, but how a father or mother engages in it says everything about their soul, their manhood or femininity, and the fulfilment of their distinct roles.



Leisure and Education

The Father's Role

Many of you will be surprised to learn that the word “leisure” comes from the Latin verb “*licere*”; it means “that which is permitted”...to remain or to become a man. One could well make a serious examination of conscience in light of this etymology from nearly every point of view: duration, frequency, morality—for it is not permitted to grant to man leisures that kill what is human. It is not permitted to turn man away from the ultimate questions, the ones that define him as “exceptional” compared to the rest of creation. “To distract” means “to turn one away from,” and distractions that turn man away from his natural and supernatural chances for becoming “exceptional” are guilty leisures.

The minute a man gives expression to the life of the soul, according to the superior demands specific to the soul, he becomes *exceptional*. That is to say that he stops living according to the laws common to the rest

of creation—laws of matter, the senses, the passions—and starts living according to what sets man apart and makes him stand out: honesty, conscience, integrity, obedience, duty, service, demeanor.

The primary service you can render to society or a country is to make a choice, within yourself, in favor of the exceptional—not in favor of leisure—that is to say, in favor of the deployment of virtuous, intelligent affirmations that will make you change your name; you will no longer be defined as a man, but as a character, a value, a conscience, fearless, a hero, a martyr, or a saint. You will have stepped away from de-humanizing leisures by granting them only the share that is permitted, to keep them from denying you the primary duty and the primary victory of man: that of distancing oneself from the mere matter dominating our dilemmas in order to taste the solution to our exceptional dilemmas dominating matter and maintaining us *men*.

This point of view has become fairly rare because it is rare to meet a man who does not confuse his own ultimate dilemmas with those he is striving to resolve by science, political or social economy, the planning of his leisure time.

Man no longer knows who he *is*. He contents himself with knowing what he *has*: a job, a title, a diploma, a checkbook. And after being constantly worn thin by what he has, he turns toward leisures in order to *have* otherwise and a little better and to *be* often a little less of a man.

A return to man's interior life would mean a rebirth for families and cities and homelands. The interior life comprises all of those demeanors that do not require a profession or social exterior to give man his exceptional hallmark, demeanors that do not depend on flesh or blood but make use of flesh and blood to prove themselves superior to flesh and blood. It would also engender respect—in general, and respect for the demands of the soul. Similarly with authority—in general, and the authority of government over what benefits the soul. Finally, there is also service—in general, and the service expended in deeds: example, kindness, influence.

The modern way of talking about man is descriptive: the newspaper report of the death of an official with no allusion to the question specific to man. Or a story about a priest and the afterlife; the account of a blessing of the sea, where everything is described including the clergy, but not once does the name of God appear. Likewise with a summary of a speech, where only the descriptive passages are quoted, and nothing that would perturb our complacency.

The press makes it a specialty not to set man above what he has in common with what we could say about the death of a cat or a dog. The result is that we get used to living in an atmosphere of what is not man, all in describing man. This is paganism.

Leaving the media aside, let's look at the realm of business, where we all consider man with that same descriptive mentality: We describe a man's business, placing it in relation to others, profitable or not. Our lives are ruled by questions of competition and advertising. All of that gives rise to currents of rivalry, struggle, measures taken purely in view of self-interest and success. There is no expression of *man* in all that. The merchant, the factory-owner come across as purely occupied and preoccupied with attaining their production goal. Action becomes pure materialism.

Let's move now on to the activity of Dad and Mom, attuned to worldly description, the elegant, the flashy, maintaining one's position in society, *etc.* Dad and Mom worry about the house only in view of shaping it around temporal realities—useful indeed, but secondary. What is their way of worrying about the children? One can only give what he has. The child is going to take on his dilemmas the way Dad

and Mom do. He is going to describe his day in flashes of the fun he had, the pleasures or annoyances he went through, his successes and failures...and the family conversation will not go beyond the level of each members fortunes and misfortunes, evaluated according to their advantages or disadvantages. In short, it is the reign of profit and loss. It is the reign of an all-too-human mentality, but there is no mention of *man*.

By affirming his atheism very loudly, man feels pleasantly alone for a few moments. On the one side, there are the false efforts of exterior concerns; on the other side, the false courage of affirming oneself Godless. How do you expect to have men who are *complete men*, with the essential, inside regions declared off-limits by materialism? And yet only *complete men*, by their interiority and independence, can possibly ensure the reorganization of society and the family.

So how can we recognize a man's real value? By that interiority whose quality keeps him from seeking the exterior or the pagan before anything else. The influence of those ultimate questions proper to the mystery of man is so nourishing to the heart, the conscience and the soul, the brain, the imagination, and man's very love, that everything else pales and fades away in importance. A holy priest, totally absorbed by the absolute gift of himself to the care of abandoned children, told me not long ago: "In 26 years I haven't had a day of vacation, and I have never felt so rested."

As soon as the deeper life takes possession of the outside life, it turns into action and turns away from the useless. It turns into an absorbing interest, forgetting artificial distraction. It becomes rest and relaxation, because nothing is restful like creating a superior harmony in oneself, capturing the accents of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. Nothing is restful like the heights of vision and reflection. I am beginning to fear that all these vacations are turning into a pleasant neurosis for the dismantling of human energies.

No one is trying to throw discredit on relaxation. The nature of relaxation is to compensate in re-creation what was expended in efforts and application. But as soon as that relaxation has filled its role, the excess of repose which we begin to seek there is just as harmful as the excess of efforts, because it has all the negativity of excess. How many children have told me honestly that they are bored, near the end of August or the beginning of September, or that they are "tired" (notice the expression) of inventing distractions. If leisure means the time which every person is able to spend without failing in his duties, isn't one already failing in his duty as a man by preferring the artificial tiredness of endured distractions to the genuine repose of formative activities? And here is where we are able to invite parents to discover an enthusiasm for those formative activities, all through the school year as well

as during the long period of school holidays (too long, in my opinion).

The father of a family often has the legitimate temptation to consider that he has done his duty toward the education of his children because he has generously given his maximum yield of professional activity over the course of the day, to the benefit of the financial and material guaranties that education presupposes. May he allow me to call his attention, in a friendly way, to the expression “maximum yield.” It is a technical expression, one too materialistic for a father conscious of his spiritual mission, taking absolute priority: the mission of molding the souls of his children toward becoming adults who will not be a detriment to society, either by their ignorance or by their dominant faults or by their lack of character or by their preference for leisure. In order for a father to take an interest in the formation of adolescents, he must act in light of the ultimate questions: the conscience, honesty, duty, sacrifice, virtue, gift of self—in a word, the interior, spiritual, supernatural meaning of why he calls himself a man. To do so, the surest means is for him—a man married in the Church, a practicing Christian—to take on his professional life with first and foremost an attitude worthy of those same ultimate questions.

Where does professional monotony come from? From the lack of soul. The danger of this monotony is that it facilitates the base appeals of an overly materialized action, and that it eliminates from the workplace those interior activities which consecrate a man as superlatively *valuable* and haloed with a prestige of moral authority, as an example, as an influence, which would maintain him in a profound, solid state of soul, strangely contrary to monotony and yet restful, because it is a fullness of gift of self to a *human* activity.

If Dad were armed with that state of soul when he comes home after work, he would feel the need to continue to live by it, in transposing it into an affectionate concern for his children. He would find it normal to verify whether, in their turn, and on a level with their age, the child’s day was lived according to the questions that mold a character, a conscience, and a man. The father of the family would take advantage of a mistake in behavior, a lack of respect, a failure to obey, in order to rectify in the child’s mind the sense of what one ought to be. He would do it all the more naturally, and therefore with all the more authority, if the child senses that his father is only expressing what he himself lives by where he works, and the grace of marriage—which not enough people believe in—would give to Dad’s formative comments just that tone of persuasion and of “indisputability” that would act on the child more than the comment of any teacher is able to do, even if that teacher is a priest. You have received the sacrament of life in order that your tone might preserve and guarantee that life in

all its chances for affirming itself spiritual and truly Christian.

It must be thrilling for a father to shape the intellectual and moral form of a child or an adolescent, glimpsing, through his offspring, all the fruit it will bear for the Church, society, and the homeland: fruits of blessed influence, of kindness toward the small, toward the weak, of true and amicable justice in the child’s future relations in society.

It must be a great incentive to shower mercy and blessing on that father, crushed under his temporal concerns, when God sees him intent on ensuring that “Christianity will continue” through his own children.

The duties of an educator are necessarily carried out in a closed-off environment, because it is a family environment, and therefore it, too, is rather quickly invaded by routine and monotony. But what an inexhaustible variety of reasons there are to act, to hold on, to put things in order, when the interior gaze of the father, looking exteriorly out the windows of the home, glimpses far in the distance all those who anxiously await the spiritual formation of that child, breathing in the atmosphere of the ultimate questions that he might teach their value and their fecundity to hundreds of other people. He sees the lineage, not only the physical but also the moral lineage of that influence carried on by his children from generation to generation.

Without taking anything away from the human and pleasantly natural rhythm of family life, you need to ensure the circulation of those mighty currents of interiority which resolve so many conflicts of character and temperament.

One day around 4pm as I was passing in front of the door of a school surrounded by parents waiting for their children, I overheard the following conversation between a father and his son:

“Good afternoon, son. How was school?”

“Good, Dad.”

“Did you have lots of fun?”

“Oh! Yes, Dad.”

“Well, then, your day wasn’t wasted. Off we go...”

One could not be more materialistic, and that child could not help but form his idea of the way his father works from the way he questioned him about his own work. What we need is *men*.

As for those longer and longer school holidays, they could be an exciting way of obtaining a moral and human formation within an entertaining, restful environment. They ought to be a time of friendly collaboration in which the head of the family gives a higher meaning to the enjoyment granted; in which the time of healthy, enthusiastic amusement does not eliminate the complementary moments of spiritual life and Sunday Mass; in which the joy of living develops into a little bit of kindness and affection for those deprived of that longed-for joy by their poverty or illness. They remain holidays and their enjoyment,

far from being weighed down, would be lightened by the slightly immaterial way in which one invites the children to live them. The common expression that identifies holidays with lack of discipline and general permissiveness is a way of undermining their whole reason for being.

Resting means governing one's relaxation, and governing means guaranteeing that relaxation something which never wearies: the quality and moral value of the enjoyable, of pleasure, and of action.

They say that Colbert¹ used to take his vacations simply by varying his work and studying the less stressful or less serious problems of state. He stayed in one place but interiorly he changed place by letting enjoyment and value relax his attention and engage his reflection.

A sheer quantity of toys has never "relaxed" a child—you have only to open that toy-cemetery of certain closets. The child is waiting for someone to make him discover, with the help of his imagination, that which always relaxes: an activity whose amusing side brings him a healthy nourishment, valuable for what he longs to be. Personally, I grew up at a time when toys did not come in such variety, in such technical perfection and science—often infinitely too serious for toys, moreover. I am also of those whose childhood comforts never went beyond a certain norm, and I am not ashamed of it—and yet I wonder if a little boy of today, spoiled to the utmost degree by all of these toys, would be capable of having as much crazy fun as I did, playing with little sticks of wood carefully weighted with pieces of lead pinched from my brother's hunting cabinet and turned into admirable diving submarines that would travel under water and pop up five or ten yards away from me, as I went jumping up to dive them down again.

The role of the father is to make the child become a man, by using child-activities to foster his son's manly inclinations—the inclinations of an engineer, a builder, an explorer, a leader, and so on, and so on, and teaching his son to introduce into those inclinations the ultimate questions that we talked about in the beginning.

Understood in this way, education does not become an added duty coming after other more urgent matters but rather appears as *the* urgent matter of a father's whole reason for being, taking priority over all other duties. This is God's way of giving you a role in the spiritual and divine workings of His creation. A man's life only really attains a fullness when it freely and affectionately enters into the designs of God for the ordering of his time, for the ordering of his heart, and for the ordering of his soul—that is to say, for the exceptional destiny to which we are all invited according to our graces, temperament, capacities, and mission.

It is becoming urgently necessary to rediscover that exceptional meaning of man's existence. I was about to say that chivalric meaning, inscribing

invisible realities into the temporal by visible, tangible supernatural results. The idealist tendency of confining Catholicism and virtue to affectionate or verbally affirmative words and then eliminating the concrete action and the deeds that God is waiting for in order to verify that we were not just boasting in the face of the Crucifix, is a tendency that arises from insufficient doctrine and an excessive spiritual emotivity that neutralizes precisely that thing it is always talking about—and always giving good reasons not to go beyond words.

The Mother's Role

I can imagine your surprise, seeing me speak about education without once pronouncing the word *mother* or her place and role in this program of the ultimate questions—although I am closer to the end of this conference than to the beginning.

The role of the father is to make you *understand*. The role of the mother is to make you *love*, that is to say, to add to the explanations given by the father everything able to make them enticing, attractive, inspiring, full of interest. The mother, in giving life to her child, gives it so like to her own that there exists on the natural level a whole batch of pre-established harmonies, constantly at the service of a beneficent resonance between her and each one of her children's temperaments. Maternal intuition is the most marvelous of radars; it catches the signal of an obstacle ahead before the child himself even imagines he has been figured out. The mother can sense the clear path ahead just as easily as the obstacle, and her thought navigates easily and surely over the psychological states and the psychological upheavals of her children.

Hence the maternal atmosphere, a veritable climate for which the woman has the responsibility of keeping it attuned to the ultimate questions—with the one difference that, whereas the father is responsible for applying those questions, the mother is responsible for fostering a state of soul: all those hidden dispositions that prevent the father from having to speak in a climate that is either empty of all warmth or even hostile.

How clearly we can see the importance of unity of soul between spouses—and, once again, how much the grace of the sacrament comes into play in this harmony between the parents, who become each one in his own way the two guardians guaranteeing the same type of moral security, of Christian formation, of intellectual and psychological expectations, so that their child may have before him only true arguments, able to foster his formation as a man and a Christian.

The mother has a right to dream, to be ambitious for her children, that they be exceptional—as a recompense for her exceptional generosity in having run the risks inseparable from maternity. Yet her moral value still has to purify that word "exceptional"

from all taint of worldly pride, from all snobbery, which so robs the exceptional of its value as to vulgarize its beneficiary. We see it all through history: Woman according to grace, woman according to the Church, is ambitious for perfection and for virtue, as much human as supernatural, and becomes thereby a source of enthusiasm, of energetic action, of a thirst for nobility of soul, for magnanimity, for gratuity in gift of self—in a word, for an irresistible splendor of psychological health, conquering all resistance or hesitation on the part of the child because, if Mom is the one that says it, it must be good and far better than my own stubbornness or obstinacy.

The child needs to feel that his mother is preoccupied by something other than her leisure and her own enjoyment; that his mother is not a sort of employee at the beck and call of his whims and caprices. The child has a longing for moral prestige which parents do not suspect—his human respect keeps it hidden, but as soon as he recognizes the value and authority of it in his mother, he spontaneously lives up to what it demands.

The feminine role is essentially to help the child realize that he is more than a conglomeration of sense reactions; to draw him to appreciate his spiritual freedom for willing the good and preferring the best; for throwing himself wholeheartedly into effort, into sacrifice, into gift of self; and for neutralizing his natural selfishness.

The mother is just as responsible for souls as the priest is, though on a very different level. She is responsible for making souls healthy, for untangling them from the chains of the anti-spiritual, for orienting them toward a fierce love for integrity and truth, the necessary ground for establishing a natural harmony and resonance between those ultimate questions and the child's intimate reflections.

Mothers have no idea of the intensity of the life of the conscience and of the soul in the majority of little children; in their moments of free time, when they know they are alone and no one is watching them, during the few instants before they fall asleep, their head on the pillow, do not imagine that your children think first of the toy they broke or the entertainment you promised. They also think of the profound confidence that they wanted to confide or confess to their mother and the moment they could have done it, the great moral secret torturing them, their dreams of doing something great and noble, the torment they are going through about confessing the bad thing they did when nobody was watching.

In a word, they live in the real world, the world of the conscience and of spiritual secrets, and they are all surprised at finding themselves in a world that is very affectionate and materially attentive to their temporal existence, but so distant and foreign from their great secrets that what they learn to fear is the “knock on the head,” shattering the silence of their confidences with an angry warning not to forget the “serious”

things, such as standing up straight (not putting your finger in your nose) in front of Mrs. So-and-so because you are going to embarrass the whole family—except for God, Péguy might have added with a wink.

You ask me how I know?

Quite simply by what has been confided to me by adolescents of 18 or 20 who were literally possessed by a higher, spiritual sense of existence when they were between 14 and 18, and who missed the turn-off because of a certain mockery, claiming to be full of common sense whereas it was really full of nonsense, coming from the worldliness of the mother, the material concreteness of the father, or the pretentious superficiality of the big brother. The climate was hostile to that mysterious delicacy called naïveté by the big people, because big people are too often so little that they no longer reach the spiritual height of the little children.

But, when He found about what happened
 Jesus got angry,
 Opened His rose-colored cloak
 To let him to hide inside.
 And so brought Gregory
 Into His Paradise
 Saying, “My heaven of glory,
 I say in truth,
 Is for the little children.”
 Milady, yes indeed!²

If only the mothers, when they hide their little children in their rose-colored cloak, could give them the confidence of being in a paradise of understanding and approval of their great spiritual dreams, how society would be peopled with the elect, and how we would rejoice in feeling ourselves surrounded by the elect! The noble characters of children and of the future men of conscience, the future apostles, the future men of goodness, the future heroes, the future martyrs, perhaps the future saints, all depend on how their mothers lived out those ultimate questions.

It is such a serious thing to be a mother. It has nothing to do with belonging to a certain rank in society; it means belonging to the providential designs of God upon the world.

You can see how we need to untangle education from set phrases and formulas which are often helpful but more often insufficient. The road-sign gives you the set phrase of the path to follow if you are in a car—like everyone else, leveled out and enslaved to the universal manner of locomotion. But if you are necessarily on foot, because you are a hunter, an explorer, a forester, a farmer, that is to say, obliged not to hold to the road-sign but to prefer the charming, weathered paths which keep the soul attentive in spite of the activities of the earth, then you are obliged not to hold to the set phrase inscribed on the sign, because the set phrase explains in the average case how to inform the greatest number—but is the greatest number always the most developed and the most successful?

Untangle education, thanks to an educator clever enough, honest enough, and bold enough to dare to deliver the child according to his own mystery, in becoming for him an affectionate living echo of that mystery.

Untangle education from that elegant form of materialism, to dare to commit yourself beyond set phrases, in a spirit and state of soul that takes its inspiration from the spirit of God in the soul of a child and from the spirit of parents independent of the spirit of the world.

There is no dictionary telling us how to apply even the best of set phrases and formulas to man's ultimate questions; there is only the individual conscience, itself living by those questions, which is capable of grasping their urgency and their incontestable value.

Ultimately, the education of the child flows from the education of the parents, flowing from their type of existence, their way of thinking, of reacting; their more or less absolute attachment to what God expects of them. It would seem that our most urgent efforts should be toward recreating or developing this spiritual mentality in our families.

It would seem that the real joy of parents is to be found in expressing this mentality before their children, in a simple and natural way, until the child senses that it makes up the whole background music of the joys of home-life and of family behavior; that it is the cause of those joys. Their education is made all the easier once this background music begins naturally to alert the child as to what attitude everyone expects him to have; as to the act or the reflex of obedience or politeness putting him in harmony with this background music. I do not think that education is obtained by a series of enumerations of what is allowed, demanded, or forbidden, without any other link between all that than a spirit of voluntarism without any spiritual or moral connection. Knowing how to attune the child to all that superior (and therefore demanding) background music, will make it easier for him to accept spontaneously and without threats the practical or numerical demands which give flesh to that spirit, at given times and periods in the life of the family.

We should not turn up our noses at the expression "family spirit." Without granting it any kind of sacramental efficacy and without considering it as a closed circuit in which the father leads the way, automatically followed by the mother, who is automatically followed by the eldest daughter making sure no one is lagging behind, including the baby of the family who wishes everyone would just leave him in peace about all this "family spirit," there nonetheless does exist such a thing as a family spirit, which avoids that rigidity and that routine by its very quality, because it is a spirit that is genuinely a *spirit*. It is an active orientation toward fidelity to the

ultimate questions, adopted and lived out according to the circumstances, and very naturally integrated into daily life without the head of the family's having to take out his watch and announce sententiously that it is "ultimate questions time," and everyone has to rectify his positions "because we are talking about the ultimate questions, my children!" When you have lived even to the slightest degree according to the demands of those great problems, you do not list them out, you emanate them by a look, a tone of voice, a smile, a silence, whose prestige immediately conquers that mocking adolescent sarcasm.

That is when a day's well-being is no longer judged in function of weekends or Sundays, of beach holidays or skiing—not that we should neglect those moments or that we should avoid including them in our leisures—but genuine well-being appears in the collective continuity of reciprocal dispositions to react in the same way: the way of moral nobility, honesty of demeanor, helpfulness toward a suffering neighbor—each one with his grace, his temperament and his faith, but everyone with the same fidelity.

How can you recognize that kind of a family spirit?—By something very simple: what takes priority with most families becomes secondary for them, and vice versa. The essential is not in the curtsy when you arrive in the drawing room but in entering the drawing room on a higher level than mere appearances, with an indisputable moral value. The essential is not in having lots of money but in increasing your moral fortune of intellectual or virtuous authority. The essential is not to wail over a failure but to wail over the evil which flows from it by a lack of character in knowing how to accept it.

When families will have re-adopted those noble customs of a spirit that has more authority over daily life than all the other, secondary, purely human incentives, on that day, a great happiness will take possession of family relations. And when happiness takes possession of a family, it overflows into society by the peace it brings and the confidence it inspires. By the grace of God, families will love re-instituting a Catholic family spirit. ☪

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *Carnets Spirituels: La Famille, Part 2*, July 2005, pp.18-34. Fr. Bernard-Marie de Chivré, O.P. (say: Sheave-ray) was ordained in 1930. He was an ardent Thomist, student of Scripture, retreat master, and friend of Archbishop Lefebvre. He died in 1984.

¹ Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83), French Minister of Finance under Louis XIV.

² The last verse of a famous folk song from Brittany, "Little Gregory," written in 1898 by Theodore Botrel, about a boy of 16 killed in the Catholic resistance to the French Revolutionary Army. He had been sent away as too small to work on the farm, too small to be an apprentice in town, too small to be in the King's guard; he joined the peasant army and the bullets flew over his head laughing at him because he was so short. Finally a bullet strikes him dead; even St. Peter does not want to let him into heaven because what they are looking for is a mighty archangel. But then Jesus heard about what happened... (Translator's note).

Our serialization continues with the chapter of the Catechism devoted to questions of civil society. The debate about religious liberty is further explored with an analysis of the additional development of ecumenism.

Catechism Of the Crisis In the Church

(Continued from *The Angelus*, March 2008, Question 45: What is the new conception of ecumenism?)

- **What is noteworthy in this text?**

First of all, it is worth pointing out that this passage designates heretical and schismatic communities as “ecclesial communities which are not yet in *full* communion with the Catholic Church.” This implies that they are nonetheless in partial or imperfect communion.

- **Is the expression “full communion” novel?**

The distinction between full and imperfect communion is a major innovation of Vatican II.¹

- **What is the Church’s traditional teaching on this subject?**

The Church’s teaching is very simple: to be saved it is necessary to belong to the Church either *in re* (*in*

reality, that is, by fulfilling the three classic conditions: baptism, Catholic faith, submission to the hierarchy), or at least *in voto* (by a desire, explicit or implicit).² Consequently, those who do not have the Catholic faith or who are not submissive to the hierarchy, and who, moreover, have not even an implicit desire to change their state, do not belong to the Church at all. They cannot secure their salvation with these dispositions.

- **What is Vatican II’s innovation?**

The Council tried to find intermediate states between belonging to the Church and not belonging. The non-Catholic Christians would be in “imperfect communion” with the Church (*UR* 3; *LG* 15) and all men, even non-Christians, would be “related in various ways to the people of God” (*LG* 16). This implies that they could be confident of their salvation

without having the desire (at least implicit) of changing their state and becoming a member of the Church.

● ***How can heretical or schismatic communities be, according to Vatican II, in “imperfect communion” with the Church?***

To affirm that the Christians and communities separated from the Church are in “imperfect communion” with it, the Council invokes, like Cardinal Ratzinger [in *Dominus Jesus*], the “elements of sanctification” they contain, and by which they would be in communion with the unique Church of Christ.

● ***Isn’t it true that the schismatic communities, or even the heretical communities, conserve some elements of sanctification?***

It is true that the Protestants conserve Sacred Scripture (more or less altered), and that the Eastern schismatics conserve the Sacraments. But traditional theology did not designate these realities stolen from the Catholic Church as “elements of sanctification” or “elements of the Church,” but rather as “vestiges” of the true religion.

● ***Is the replacement of the term “vestiges” by the term “elements of the Church” important?***

This change of vocabulary is not innocent because the word *vestiges* expressed an important truth: the elements stolen from the Catholic Church by the separated communities by that very fact cease to be a living reality. They become “ruins.”

● ***Yet the sacrament of baptism administered in a community separated from the Church can be valid. Isn’t the term “element of sanctification” more appropriate than “ruin”?***

Here we must carefully distinguish between a valid sacrament and a fruitful sacrament. A sacrament can be valid without being fruitful, that is to say, without giving grace, if it encounters in the soul an impediment to this grace.

● ***Can you clarify this by giving an example of the distinction between a valid sacrament and a fruitful sacrament?***

The sacrament of marriage would be received validly but not fruitfully by a person in the state of mortal sin. He would be really married but would not receive the graces usually given by this sacrament (and, moreover, would commit a sacrilege).

● ***How does this distinction between valid sacrament and fruitful sacrament concern the heretical or schismatic communities?***

The distinction between a valid sacrament and a fruitful sacrament is important because adherence to schism or heresy is *per se* an impediment to grace. It implies that a sacred reality, even holy in itself, cannot be an “element of holiness” inasmuch as it

is in a community separated from the Church. The community is, in and of itself, an impediment to the sanctifying efficacy of the element it has taken.

● ***Yet, are there not cases in which the sacraments dispensed outside the Church can be fruitful (that is to say, give grace)?***

The sacraments given outside the Church can only be fruitful in cases where the person who receives them does not adhere formally to the heresy or schism. (This is the case, for example, of children below the age of reason, or of people who are in what is called a state of “invincible ignorance.”) In this case, even if the sacrament is received materially from a community separated from the Church, the person only receives it fruitfully because by his intention (*in voto*) he escapes from this community.

● ***Is this a certain and traditional teaching in the Church?***

St. Augustine explains that all the goods which are in the Church can be found, in a certain measure, outside the Church, except the grace by which these goods are salutary:

God in His unity can be honored outside the Church; the faith which is one can be encountered outside her; baptism, which is unique, can be validly administered outside her bosom. And yet, just as there is only one God, one faith, one baptism, there is only one incorruptible Church: not only in which the true God is honored but alone in which He is honored with piety; not only in which the one true faith is conserved, but alone in which it is conserved with charity; not only in which true baptism exists, but alone in which it exists for salvation.³

● ***Can you cite another Father of the Church on this subject?***

St. Bede the Venerable, in his Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter, expresses this truth in a striking manner. Speaking of the analogy made by St. Peter between the Flood and baptism (I Pet. 3:21), he explains that for those who are baptized outside the Church, the water of baptism is not an instrument of salvation, but rather of damnation:

The fact that the floodwater does not save, but kills those situated outside the ark prefigures without the least doubt that every heretic, though he possess the sacrament of baptism, is not plunged into hell by other waters than by the very waters that lift the ark to heaven.⁴

● ***Isn’t it an exaggeration to say that baptism received outside the Church would be a cause of damnation?***

Active participation in a religious ceremony of a heretical or schismatic community is of itself, by its very nature, an act of assent to the faith of this community. Thus even baptism becomes, in these circumstances, sinful and an occasion of scandal. That is why St. Bede the Venerable says that the very water of baptism is in this case a cause of damnation.

● ***Is the Second Vatican Council opposed to this teaching?***

Yes, Vatican II is opposed to this teaching by affirming that the heretical or schismatic communities are in imperfect communion with the Church, and by implying that there is a certain (imperfect) presence of the Church of Christ in the Christian communities separated from the Catholic Church.

● ***Has this idea of an (imperfect) presence of the Church of Christ in the communities separated from the Church of Christ been enounced explicitly?***

John Paul II affirmed in his Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (§11):

Indeed, the elements of sanctification and truth present in the other Christian Communities, in a degree which varies from one to the other, constitute the objective basis of the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church. *To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them.*

● ***But is this idea to be found in the documents of Vatican II?***

We read in the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* (§15), regarding the schismatic Eastern Churches:

Hence, through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in each of these churches, the Church of God [!] is built up and grows in stature and through concelebration, their communion with one another is made manifest.

A community which is separated from the true Church is considered as belonging to “the Church of God.”

● ***What does Vatican II think of the non-Christian religions?***

Even towards the non-Christian religions, the Council makes an effort to have the most positive view possible. The conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* sings the praises of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism.

● ***How can this change of attitude towards the non-Christian religions be characterized?***

Whereas before the Church worked to evangelize the adepts of pagan religions, the post-conciliar Church engages in “dialogue” with them.

● ***Is this change of attitude publicly recognized?***

The document *Dialogue and Mission* of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue explicitly states in its opening lines:

The Second Vatican Council marked a new stage in the relations of the Catholic Church with the believers of other religions....This new attitude took the name of dialogue.⁵

● ***What does the word dialogue mean in the Council's language?***

The document *Dialogue and Mission* explains in depth the meaning of the word *dialogue*:

It signifies not only the fact of engaging in conversation, but also the ensemble of positive, constructive interreligious relations among individuals and communities of diverse beliefs for the sake of getting to know one another and for mutual enrichment.⁶

The same document gives this definition of dialogue in its §13:

...dialogue [is] the meeting of Christians with the believers of other religious traditions so that they can work together in search of the truth [!] and collaborate in works of common interest.⁷

● ***What ought we to conclude from these affirmations?***

If the Catholics work with the non-Christians in search of the truth and it is question of reciprocal enrichment, clearly the Church has abandoned any claim to alone possess the truth!

● ***Have the partisans of conciliar ecumenism explicitly renounced the goal of converting the non-Catholics?***

Very many partisans of the Council's brand of ecumenism have renounced any intention of seeking the conversion of non-Catholics. We read, for example, in the Ecumenical Catechism prefaced by the Most Reverend Degenhardt, Archbishop of Paderborn, and highly praised by several bishops:

The goal is not the return, but rather the communion of the Sister-Churches; unity in reconciled diversity; the unity of Churches. The Churches remain, but become one single Church.⁸

46) Are the non-Catholic Christian confessions really partial embodiments of the Church of Christ?

The Christian confessions separated from the Catholic Church are dissidents, and do not belong to it. Even if they keep some Christian truths, and even a valid baptism, they remain separated from the Mystical Body of Christ. Consequently, no one can be saved who, having recognized that the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ, fails to enter it and stays in a heretical or schismatic community.

● ***How does one belong to the true Church of Christ?***

In *Mystici Corporis*, Pope Pius XII teaches that three elements are necessary for belonging to the true Church of Christ—baptism, true faith, and submission to the legitimate authority:

Actually only those are to be included as members of the Church who have been baptized and profess the true

faith, and who have not been so unfortunate as to separate themselves from the unity of the Body, or been excluded by legitimate authority for grave faults committed (§22).

- ***Then, even though they keep the seven sacraments and agree with the Catholic Church on most points of faith, the schismatic Churches do not belong to the true Church of Christ?***

The Eastern Schismatic Churches, even if they keep the sacraments and are in agreement with the Catholic Church about most points of faith, are not the true Church of Christ, for they refuse to recognize the primacy and the infallibility of the Successor of Peter, and Christ said that whoever refuses to hear the Church is to be considered as a heathen and a publican (Mt. 18:17).

- ***What should be said of the heretical communities?***

If the schismatic communities do not belong to the one Church of Christ, this is all the more true of the heretical communities (Protestants, for example), who depart from the true faith on numerous points.

- ***Has this truth been called into question within the Church?***

Unfortunately, this truth has frequently been called into question. On May 6, 1983, a joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic commission met at Kloster Kirchberg in Wurtemberg, issued a statement concerning the heresiarch Luther:

Together, we begin to recognize him as a witness to the Gospel, as a master in the faith, as a herald of a spiritual renewal....The taking into account of the historically conditioned nature of our modes of expression and thought has equally contributed to a broader acknowledgment in Catholic circles of Luther's thought as a legitimate form of Christian theology....⁹

47) Are non-Catholic Christian confessions and the non-Christian religions means of salvation?

The non-Catholic Christian confessions and the non-Christian religions are not means of salvation, but rather, perdition. Certainly, the adepts of the false religions can be saved *in* them, if, living heedful of their consciences and striving to fulfill the will of God insofar as they know it, they receive from God the theological virtues; but God only knows when this happens. We can only say that one may be able to be saved *in* the false religions—or, rather, despite them—but never *by means of* them.

- ***The non-Catholic Christian communities (the Protestants, for instance) provide their members a certain number of goods useful for salvation (baptism, Holy Scripture, etc.); in this are they not means of salvation?***

Everything that can be found of truth and goodness in Protestantism or in the schismatic Churches belongs

by right to the Church. Even the conciliar Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, was made to include a statement to that effect in its §3, at the express demand of Pope Paul VI.

- ***How was this addition, imposed by the Pope, received?***

One readily gathers that the liberal theologians were dissatisfied. Rahner and Vorgrimler had these comments:

The statement that these goods belong by right (*jure*) to the Church of Christ is one of the 19 modifications made by the Pope that were added in November 1964 to a text that had already been voted, and that, because of their narrowness, left a rather more unfavorable impression than is warranted by the teaching contained in the document (here we are alluding only to the changes that especially offended the non-Catholics).¹⁰

- ***So then Vatican II does reiterate Catholic doctrine on this point?***

The very same §3 of the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* unfortunately contains a “monstrosity,” a good example of the Council’s contradictions: “For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them [the separated Churches and Communities] as means of salvation.”

- ***Concretely, is it not through their heretical or schismatic communities that the Christians separated from the Church receive certain means of salvation (even if these means belong, per se, to the Catholic Church)?***

The sacred realities kept unduly by the heretical or schismatic societies can only give grace and salvation insofar as those who receive them *refuse* (albeit implicitly) formal adherence to the heresy or schism; in other words: only insofar as they escape from these societies by the inmost intention of their wills. Far from being “means of salvation,” these societies, in and of themselves, render sterile everything they have taken from the Catholic Church, even the sacraments (which are nonetheless, *per se*, the means of salvation *par excellence*).

- ***The communities separated from the Church and the non-Christian religions, then, cannot be ordinary means of salvation?***

Not only are the false religions not *ordinary* means of salvation, they are not even *extraordinary* means; they are only obstacles to salvation.¹¹ If some of their members are in the state of grace, it is uniquely because they are in a state of ignorance and thus not guilty of their separation from the body of the Church. According to traditional teaching, they can belong to *the soul* of the Church. But they belong individually, and not in and by their communities. The false religions, far from leading people to the Catholic Church, turn them away from it. They are not willed by God.

● ***What should we think of the reasoning of those who affirm that the separated communities are means of salvation because of the elements of sanctification to be found in them?***

This reasoning is a sophism because it is based on something that happens *per accidens* (incidentally), by reason of the personal dispositions of this or that member of the community, from which it draws a conclusion about the value of the society as a whole (*per se*). With that kind of reasoning, it could be argued that Judas is a saint and that he did an eminently meritorious act by delivering up Christ, since he thus allowed the redemption of the human race to occur!

● ***What should we think of Vatican II's positive assessments of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism to be found in Nostra Aetate, the Declaration on the Non-Christian Religions?***

The conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate* is deliberately partial. Its official reporter declared publicly that it was drafted in keeping with a decision not to tell the whole truth about these religions, but only what could make them appear to be compatible with Christianity.¹² This deliberate misrepresentation of those religions is quite simply an act of treason against our Lord Jesus Christ.

● ***Does not the Declaration Nostra Aetate redeem itself when it states immediately afterward that the Church "proclaims, and ever must proclaim, Christ 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself" (§2)?***

Our Lord Jesus Christ not only affords us "the fullness" of religious life; He is the *only* mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5), the *only* ambassador received by God, and who intercedes unceasingly for us (Heb. 7:25). "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father, and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (I Jn. 2:22-23). "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Every religion that refuses this mediation is intrinsically evil. It is contradictory to pretend to announce Christ while vaunting of (even partially) the religions that reject Him.

● ***Despite all that, surely these religions contain some good elements?***


Even in the material order, the judgment of whether a cake is good or bad depends not only on its ingredients, but on the cake as a whole. Good ingredients, excellent in themselves, mixed in the wrong proportions can spoil it; the introduction of one rancid ingredient can make it inedible, and the addition of a few drops of poison would have a greater effect upon the final result than a lot of good butter, flour, and chocolate. In the spiritual order, this

reality applies all the more. A religion is not merely a material agglomeration of "elements"; it forms a whole (just as a scientific or philosophical system or a demonstration, *etc.*). This whole is good or bad, true or false, as a whole. And if it is bad as a whole, then the good elements matter little.

● ***Despite that, can one not underscore the parcels of truth these religions contain?***

Every erroneous system contains parcels of truth; an obvious folly would have no adherents. But these parcels of truth are captured by the false system that makes use of them (and that utilizes their verisimilitude and attractiveness to its advantage). Moreover, these elements of truth are themselves falsified because they are linked to errors that distort them.

● ***Can you give an example of this?***

Islam presents itself as a monotheistic religion. This just and reasonable tenet (stolen from the true religion) lends it much of its force. But this monotheism is fiercely anti-Trinitarian. While true in itself, it is falsified by the erroneous system in which it is enmeshed. 

(Question 47 will be continued in *The Angelus*, May 2008)

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¹ This innovation figures in the document *Unitatis Redintegratio* [UR] §3; see also *Lumen Gentium* §14, which speaks of "full incorporation."

² Those who are not incorporated in the Church *in re* (in reality) can, in certain circumstances, be so *in voto* (by desire: this is what is sometimes called belonging to the *soul* of the Church). This desire can either be *explicit* (for example, in a catechumen preparing for baptism) or *implicit* (for example, in a person brought up in heresy but who only adheres to this heresy from a non-culpable ignorance: he does not possess the means to discern that the Catholic Church is the only true religion, but is fundamentally disposed to accept it).

³ *Ad Cresc.*, Bk. I, ch. 29.

⁴ Migne, *Latin Fathers*, 93, 60.

⁵ *Documentation Catholique*, 1880 (September 2, 1984), p.844. This document was approved by Pope John Paul II on June 10, 1984.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.845.

⁸ Heinz Schütte, *Glaube im ökumenischen Verständnis. Ökumenischer Katechismus* (Paderborn, 1994), p.33.

⁹ *Documentation Catholique* 1855 (July 3, 1983), pp.694-95.

¹⁰ Karl Rahner and H. Vorgrimler, *Kleines Konzilskompendium* (Fribourg: Herder, 1986), p.220.

¹¹ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in *The Ratzinger Report*, an interview on the state of the Church with Vittorio Messori [English version: Ignatius Press, 1985], contests the idea that the non-Christian religions can be *ordinary* means of salvation, but he admits that they can be *extraordinary* means.

¹² *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, vol. IV, perodus quarta, pars IV (Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977), p.698 (response to the second *modus*) and p.706 (response to *modus* 57).

Is it true to say that the difference between human beings is in the body and not in the soul?

St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, explains that man is a composite of body and soul. Both together make up the substance of his being, the soul giving the form or determination of human nature, the body being the material element, but both inseparably making up human nature. In this man differs from the angels, who are pure spirits, and not at all a composite of matter and form, of body and soul. It is because they are pure spirits that each angel has a different nature from all the other angels. Since they are all pure spirits, they share no common nature (except the fact of being pure spirits), as men do. This is in turn why there is a natural hierarchy amongst the angels, in which they are of greater or lesser natural perfection as pure spirits.

It follows from this that what makes one man different from another is not the soul, but the body. If we all share the same human nature, and if the mystery of the Incarnation is precisely this, that Our Divine Savior took upon himself our human nature, it follows that the natural difference between one man and another is not in the soul but in the material element in which the soul exists, namely in the body and everything that relates to the physical aspect of our existence. Taken separately, our souls are all identical in nature. Of course there is also the supernatural difference of grace that is infused into the soul, and in the case of Our Lord this is the grace of the hypostatic union. Nevertheless, what makes a man an individual separate from every other man is not that he has a different soul but that his soul, of a common nature, is united to a particular body.

The consequence is that it is not only a man's sensitive faculties that depend upon his health and bodily well being, but also the spiritual faculties of his soul, namely his intelligence and his will. These spiritual faculties can only be educated and formed in a well balanced physical life and emotional life, for the emotions, coming from the body, are part of the physical make up of a person. This is a fundamental principle for all education, according to the ancient dictum: *a healthy mind in a healthy body*. The conclusion is drawn by Fr. C. Spicq, O.P.:

Parents engender a human body that will be the instrument of a soul and that will determine the initial practical value of that soul. God will intervene afterwards, and He does so, but a man's ancestors determine the initial energy, the fundamental orientation of a human life,...even spiritual! (*Ce que Jésus doit à sa mère*, p.30).

This philosophical principle has some fundamental consequences in the mystery of the Incarnation and in the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as unique source of the body of Our Divine Savior. Explaining St. Thomas Aquinas, Fr. Spicq has this to say:

Since all souls are equal and the quality of their bodies makes the difference between souls, we can understand how extremely important it was that the body of Our Lord was perfect, as an organized body, as a body destined to be united to a soul (Ib. p.31).

He could not have been our Redeemer without being a perfect man, and he was a perfect man because he received his physical human nature from a woman who had been miraculously preserved from the stain of original sin. He had the integrity lost by Adam and hence perfect health of body, perfect and delicate sensitivity, perfect balance of emotions, perfect control of passions. It could not have been otherwise, and we see here the appropriateness of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

If a special Providence of God had not watched over the bodily formation of the Mother herself, on the day of the Incarnation of the Son the Holy Ghost would have had to multiply miracles to preserve the Child Jesus' organism from the hereditary stains that his Mother would have—involuntarily but necessarily—transmitted to Him. But since the body of Mary was perfect, that of Christ was also (*ibid.*, pp.31-32).

We do not often think of it, but when we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, and we acknowledge that Christ had no human father, and that consequently he received his genetic and physical makeup entirely from his mother, we at the same time admit that everything that makes him different from the rest of us in the natural order he received from His mother. He could not help resembling her in all things, not just in physical beauty but also in the natural harmony and perfection that made Him so loveable. It was from Our Lady's extraordinary power of compassion that He received his own delicate and very human mercy and compassion for sinners, encountered on every page of the Gospel (*e.g.*, to the adulteress: "Go and now sin no more" (Jn. 8:11).

The same can be said of the brightness of his human intelligence and the firmness of His human will, spiritual faculties that were molded by his inheritance from his Blessed Mother.

If Jesus was the greatest genius of the human race, He owes it to His Mother; for let us repeat it again and again: his human soul was worth exactly as much as our own. It is only because it was united to a perfect body that it had a value that ours does not have.... Jesus understood in the blinking of an eye all the truth that is hidden under

appearances. His acquired knowledge was developed with unheard of facility and rapidity (*ibid.*, pp.51, 52).

St. Louis de Montfort had a real intuition of these simple truths when he related the captivating beauty and the ineffable gentleness of Incarnate Wisdom to His Holy Mother:

He was born of the sweetest, the most tender, and the most beautiful of all mothers, the Immaculate Mary. If you would appreciate the gentleness of Jesus then consider first the gentleness of Mary, His Mother, whom He resembles

by His pleasing character. Jesus is Mary's Child; in Him there is no haughtiness, no harshness, no unpleasantness; and still less, infinitely less, in Him than in His Mother because He is Eternal Wisdom; He is gentleness and beauty itself (*Love of Eternal Wisdom*, §118). ☩

Fr. Peter Scott was ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988. After assignments as seminary professor and the US District Superior, he is currently the rector of Holy Cross Seminary in Goulburn, Australia. Those wishing answers may please send their questions to Q&A in care of Angelus Press, 2915 Forest Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109.

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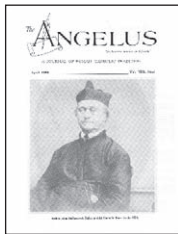
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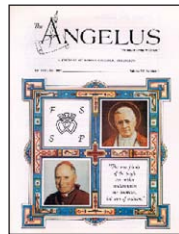
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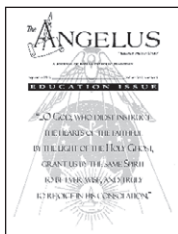
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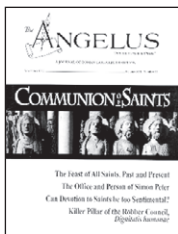
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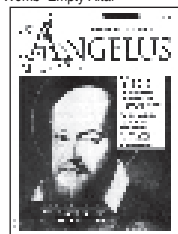
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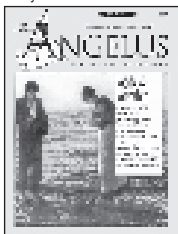
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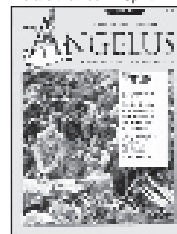
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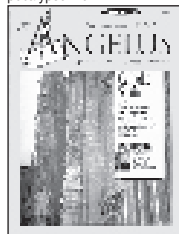
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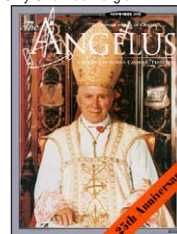
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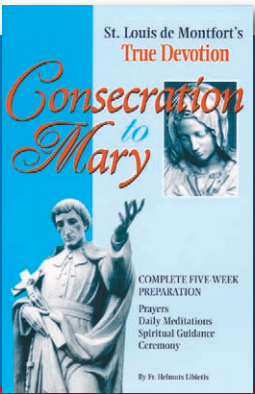
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