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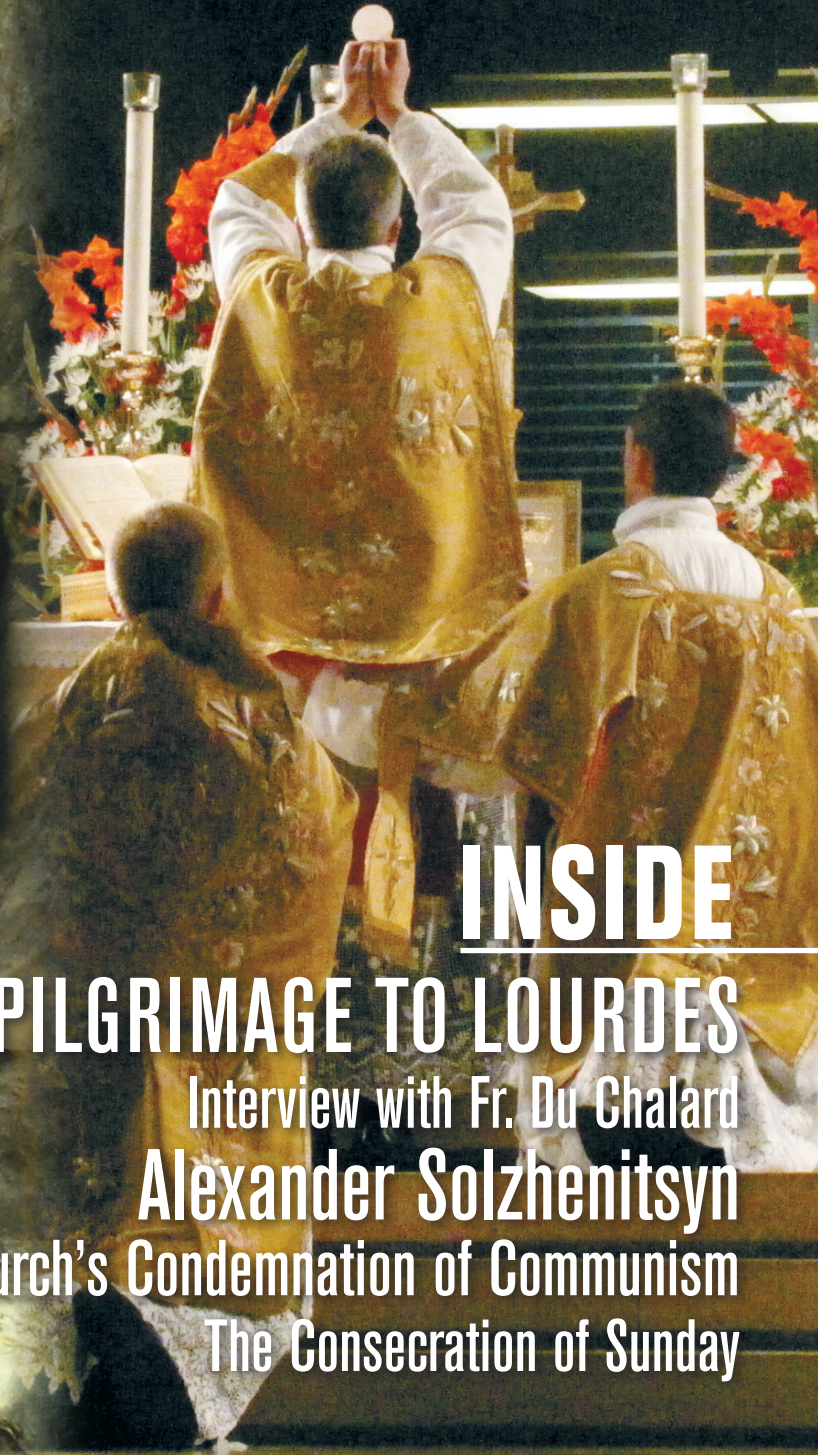
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The

"Instaurare omnia in Christo"

ANGELUS

A JOURNAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION



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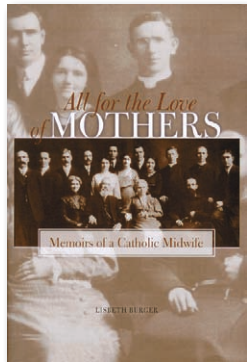
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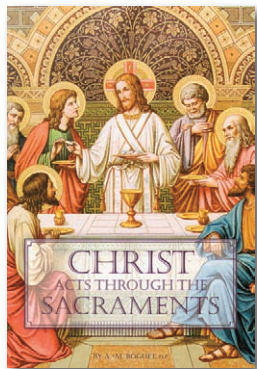
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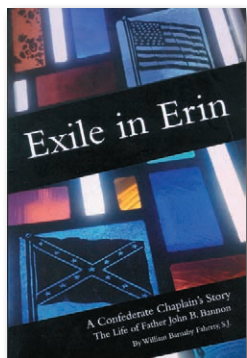
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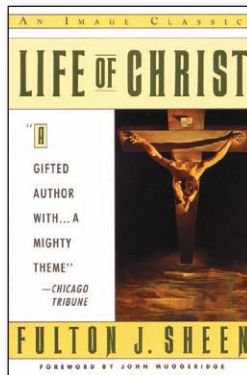
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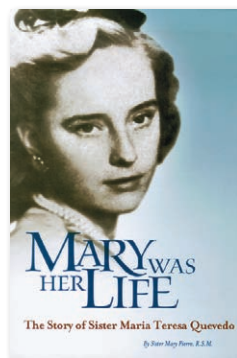
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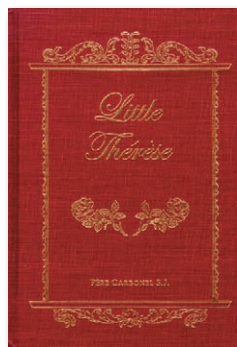
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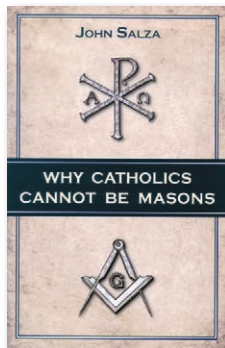
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Motto of Pope St. Pius X

The **ANGELUS**
A JOURNAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

“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

December 2008

Volume XXXI, Number 12

2915 Forest Avenue • Kansas City, Missouri 64109

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for the International Society of Saint Pius X

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	1 YEAR	2 YEARS	3 YEARS
US	\$35.00	\$65.00	\$100.00
Foreign Countries (inc. Canada & Mexico)	\$55.00	\$105.00	\$160.00

All payments must be in US funds only.

Online subscriptions: \$15.00/year (the online edition is available around the 10th of the preceding month). To subscribe visit: www.angelusonline.org.

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The Angelus (ISSN 10735003) is published monthly under the patronage of St. Pius X and Mary, Queen of Angels. Publication office is located at 2915 Forest Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109. PH (816) 753-3150; FAX (816) 753-3557.

Periodicals Postage Rates paid at Kansas City, MO. ©2008 by Angelus Press. Manuscripts are welcome and will be used at the discretion of the editors. Postmaster sends address changes to the address above.

Letter from the Editor

Communism is one of the topics in this issue of *The Angelus*. It is reflected in the voice of the popes (*Divini Redemptoris* of Pius XI), in a commentary of Bishop Tissier de Mallerais and in one of the victims of communism: Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

The last article in particular may astonish some readers because there is a lot of talk about Solzhenitsyn's critique of the materialism of the West. There are two reasons for this.

First, Solzhenitsyn lived in America for some years. He was very disappointed in the West, because he saw that America was as materialistic as communist Russia.

Second, Solzhenitsyn saw that the materialism of the West was another form of the same liberalism that is at the root of communism. The contradiction is only apparent. What we call capitalism is an economic system that is not the result of Catholic doctrine, but rather of the famous "man is a wolf to man" of Thomas Hobbes (the English philosopher, who established the foundation for most of Western political philosophy from the perspective of the social contract theory). Communism, often presented—especially by communists—as the exact opposite of capitalism, is in reality nothing else than State Capitalism, *i.e.*, the State uses its power to exploit individuals. Mr. Brezhnev was famous for his collection of upper-class cars (Mercedes, Rolls Royce, *etc.*), and there were many statesmen who added collector's items to Brezhnev's collection in order to please the chief of state of communist Russia.

Communism presented itself as the dawn of paradise; a paradise on earth, without God and without virtue. In fact the communist is not a saint (and does not try to be one), so that the "normal" result of communism is corruption (see Brezhnev and his car collection).

A man like Solzhenitsyn was lucid and courageous enough to see this corruption during the time of Stalin and to speak up against it, which brought him to labor camp and exile.

But he also had the lucidity to see that the West was heading towards the same corruption by a different path. Solzhenitsyn did not mention it, but we should mention it: Fatima and its message apply here: "Russia will spread its errors throughout the world..." This is to say, that the errors of communism will be spread if the West fails to convert. It is important here to see that the chief error of communism is not in the field of economics (to think so is short-sighted for a Catholic; too important are the doctrinal errors that are in direct contradiction to Divine Revelation or Natural Law—think of atheism or opposition to property rights).

Idealistic people easily walk into the trap of Karl Marx, who reduced spiritual things to matter with his "dialectical materialism." This is nothing other than to reduce religion to "fraud," common sense to rationalism, the history of a society to money and material welfare. Do we think so as Catholics? Then Jesus Christ was an imposter, the kings and popes exploiters of people. But, of course, Leonid Brezhnev is an honest man!

The best assessment of communism was given by Pope Pius XI long ago: "Communism is in itself wrong"—that means not because of circumstances of time or place, but as opposed to human nature and the reality of things. This papal assessment does not argue with the economic evaluation (or, rather, let's say: disaster) of communism, but with the principles of Catholic doctrine and the fundamental opposition of communism to it.

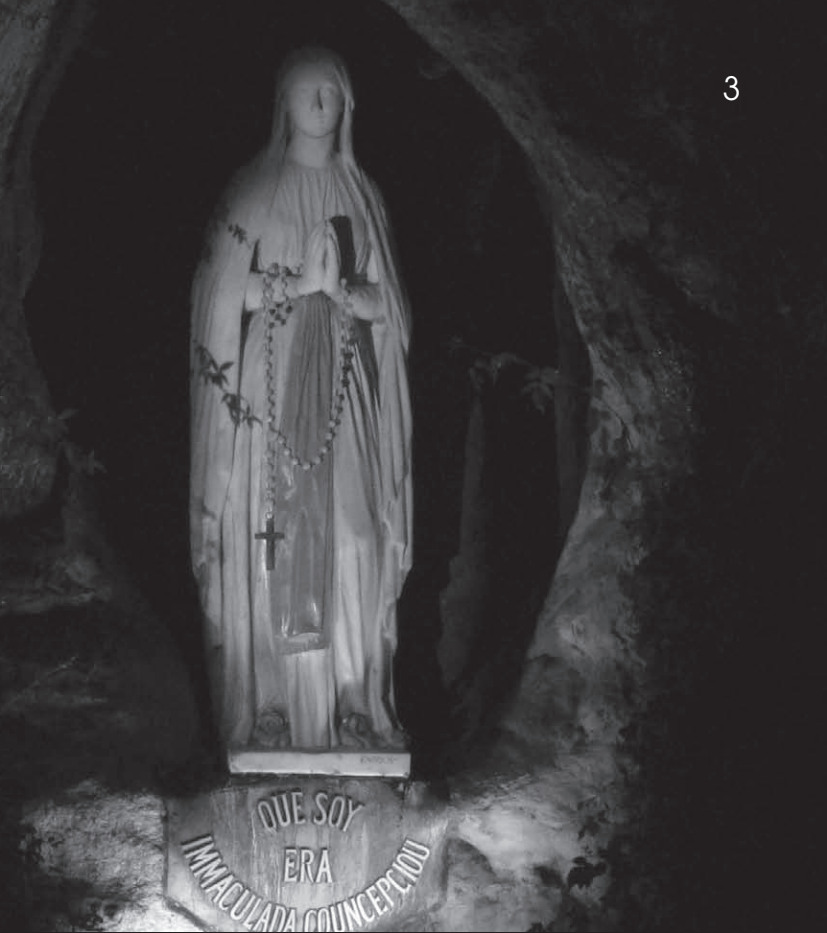
Many would admit that Stalinism was inhuman, but they think that a "better communism" would be possible. This is, according to the popes, an error, for the exact reason that communism is "wrong in itself."

"The errors of Russia" has a meaning that is easily forgotten. The deterioration of society that we are witnessing today, due to the abandoning of natural and supernatural principles by the rulers and the Church, is nothing else than a consequence of these errors of communism. We easily forget it because the Western societies are Christian only on paper. But anti-Christian social institutions and habits such as divorce and "free love" were the first things that were allowed in Russia after 1917. Not to forget: abortion is a plague in the countries of Eastern Europe. Needless to say: all these errors are today a part of Western society. Those are certainly more important errors than some issues of economics. Besides, the Russian communists seem to be quite practical: they opened their border to Western Europe after the period of the "Iron Curtain" in order to have a share of the Western wealth and prosperity. But can we consider communist governments harmless for the mere reason that they replace corruption in Eastern style by corruption imported from the West?

Communism might be able to mutate and to deceive, but its attitude against the Catholic religion and the Church is clear and has always been the same. One of the interesting facts of recent history is that the Catholic Church seemed to forget the lessons that were taught by Pius XI. Around the time of Pope John XXIII the Church adopted a new attitude ("*Ostpolitik*") towards the communist countries; this new attitude was in contrast to Pius XII and in correspondence to the "*aggiornamento*" of Vatican II. The message of Fatima became more urgent than ever before and so did the necessity to reform the Church according to the standard of the Catholic Faith of all times.

Instaurare Omnia in Christo,
FR. MARKUS HEGGENBERGER

This was the largest pilgrimage organized by the Society of St. Pius X in its history. Nearly 300 priests, brothers and seminarians, more than 150 sisters and at least 18,000 faithful came to gather around the Grotto of Massabielle, with their four bishops consecrated by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre 20 years ago...



INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE OF CHRIST THE KING AT LOURDES





Stations of the Cross

SATURDAY, OCT. 25



Solemn High Mass

This was the largest pilgrimage organized by the Society of St. Pius X in its history. Nearly 300 priests, Brothers and seminarians, more than 150 Sisters and at least 18,000 faithful came to gather around the Grotto of Massabielle, with their four bishops consecrated by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre 20 years ago. There were the Benedictines of Bellaigue, the Capuchins from Morgon, the Dominicans of Avrillé, the Fathers of the Transfiguration of Mérigny... Also present were the Nursing Sisters of Rafflay, the Little Sisters of St. Francis of Trévoux, the teaching Dominicans of Brignoles and Fanjeaux...and many others. There were around 50 South Americans under the supervision of Fr. Bouchacourt, a hundred or so Mexicans who were later to visit Ars, Paray-





Fr. Yves Le Roux

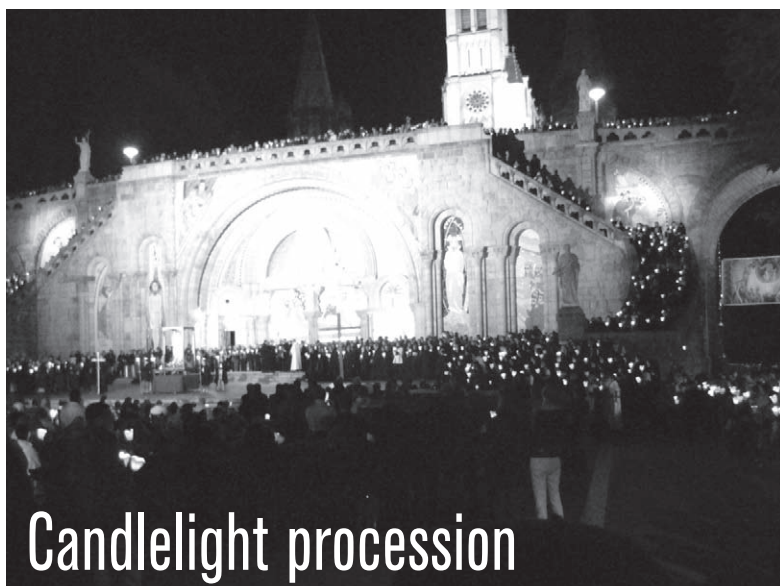
le-Monial, Lisieux... There were also all those anonymous pilgrims, those who had not booked to come months in advance, but who, drawn by the beauty of the traditional liturgy asked if they could go to confession and discovered the faith they thought they had lost.

With One Voice

What could not have failed to strike the pilgrim was the profound unity in the tone of the preaching over the three days. On Saturday, Fr. Yves Le Roux reminded us of the words of Our Lady to St. Bernadette: "I do not promise to make you happy in this world," inviting the young seer to turn her soul resolutely towards her heavenly home. The rector of the USA seminary in Winona spoke of aging souls, withered hearts, looks faded by sin, before quoting to the spellbound pilgrims these words of the Vendéen hero Charrette, encouraging his Chouans: "We are the youth of God, gentlemen!"

On the Monday, Fr. Régis de Cacqueray asked the congregation to be ready "to leave behind everything that is useless in our lives, in order to dedicate ourselves solely to this enormous and decisive combat for the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ, not only in the tabernacles and in souls, but also in families, nations and all societies." Later the Superior of the District of France warned against the futilities and the trifles which clutter up our lives, and recommended instead the "infallible instruments" given by Mary to the soldiers of Christ: the Rosary, the Spiritual Exercises, and her Immaculate Heart.

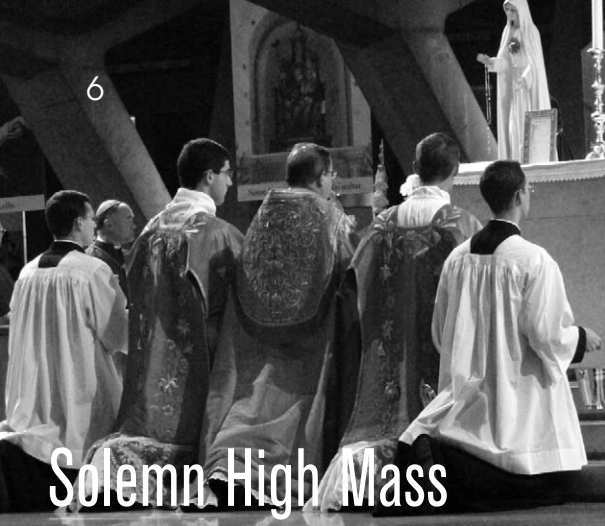
This preaching prefigured and continued, without any advance consultation, the sermon on Sunday when Bishop Bernard Fellay took inspiration from the two words spoken by Our



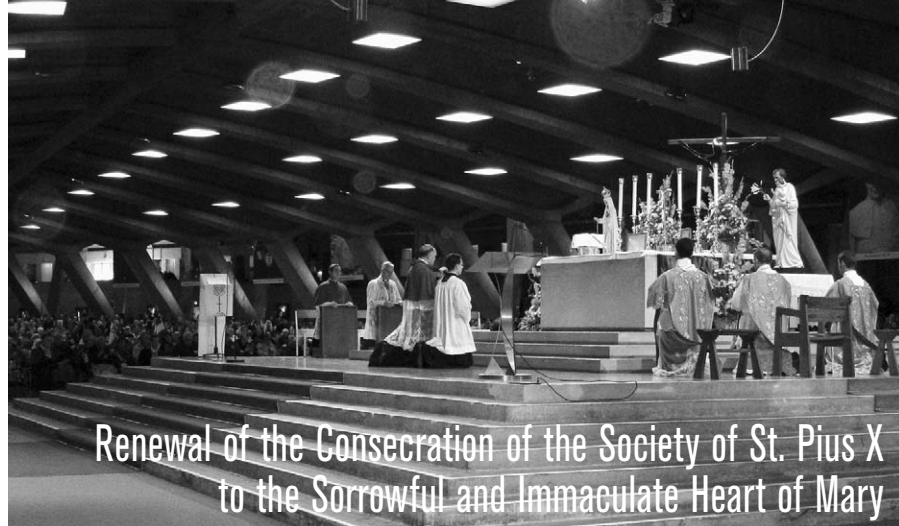
Candlelight procession



Vigil at the grotto of the apparitions



Solemn High Mass



Renewal of the Consecration of the Society of St. Pius X to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary

Blessed Lady, “prayer and penance,” in order to reiterate the necessity of Christian self-denial: “The world thinks only of pleasure, the world just looks for the easy life. And hardly anyone speaks out to remind us of the way to heaven: penitence. It is the Cross, the way of our Lord, and no other. We are saved by the Cross of Jesus.”

Thanking Our Lady for the special protection which she extends over the entire Society of St. Pius X, the Superior General launched a new rosary crusade in order to obtain from the Holy Father the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication, which affects not merely the bishops consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre, but all those who work in favor of Tradition and who have had to carry the scandalous label which has sought to disqualify them definitively. He then made this request: “We invite you once more to gather together a bouquet of a million rosaries by Christmas.”

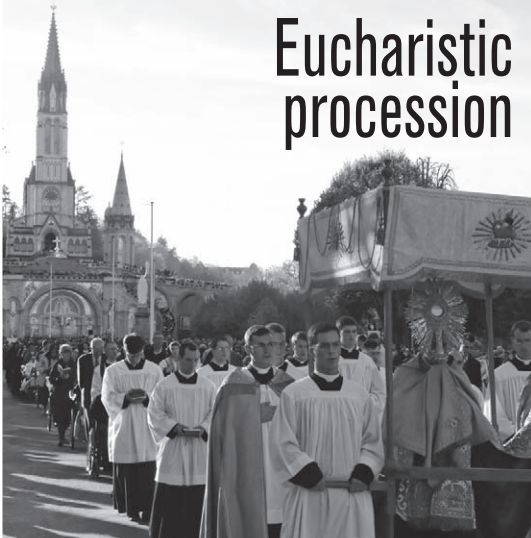
It is for the good of the entire Church, which cannot detach herself from her 2,000-year patrimony, that we must beg the Virgin Mary to obtain the grace to see Tradition no longer excommunicated, but rehabilitated; Tradition which is not, added Bishop Fellay, “a fossilized attachment, a dead fidelity, (but) an attachment to gathering the principles and lessons of life from the past in order to live today, since the Truth, God, is above time. Faith does not change, the supernatural principles of the Church do not change.”

After giving a translation of his sermon in German, English, Spanish, and Italian, the Superior General renewed the Consecration of the Society of St. Pius X to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary carried out by his predecessor, Fr. Franz Schmidberger, in 1984.





Eucharistic procession



SUNDAY, OCT. 26



Blessing of the sick

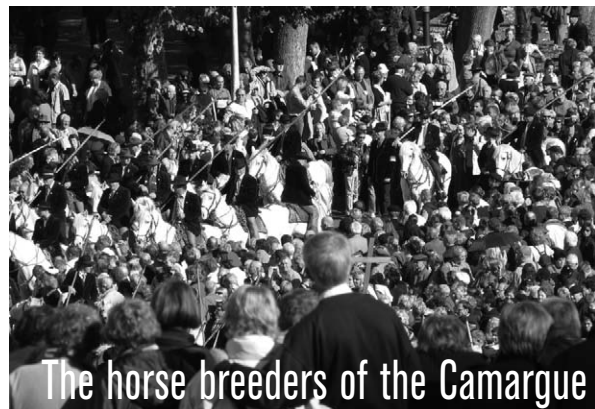
One of the pilgrims said to me, just before the last rosary at the Grotto: “To ask for the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication would seem entirely logical, since the Motu Proprio has acknowledged that the traditional Mass has never been rescinded. In fact, if Archbishop Lefebvre consecrated four bishops, it was so that they could ordain priests who would celebrate this Mass which they claimed was forbidden at that time, so why are our bishops still in disgrace?”

The “Phantom Pilgrimage”

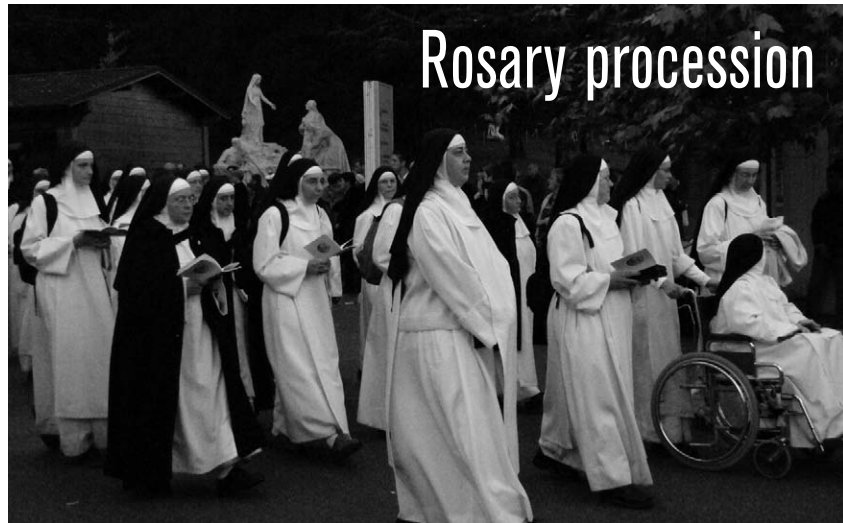
Eighteen thousand pilgrims is something that does not pass unnoticed—except in the press. In spite of around 50 presentation dossiers addressed to Parisian and provincial editorial offices, not one journalist gave an



Solemn High Mass



The horse breeders of the Camargue



Rosary procession

account of the pilgrimage of Christ the King! In its Monday October 27 edition *La Nouvelle République des Pyrénées* only said:

The attraction of the weekend to the Sanctuaries: the pilgrimage of the “guardians” (horse breeders from Southern France).

The Traditional pilgrims were mentioned only for the record:

The horse breeders of the Camargue...attracted many people to the Sanctuaries, which also welcomed [*sic*] the Society of St. Pius X pilgrimage of Christ the King and their 18,000 pilgrims.

To be sure, had Bishop Fellay been a “guardian” (horse breeder), things would have been different; but he is only a guardian of the Faith! So how could he make the front page story in the newspapers? If only Fr. de Cacqueray had presented himself on horseback before the crowned Virgin, but his hobby-horse is only Catholic principles. They were unable to interest these journalists who lean against these principles only with the hope of making them fall down.

Eighteen thousand phantoms that the television did not see, whom the radio did not hear, of whom the journalists did not speak. Eighteen thousand pilgrims who will soon become phantom-subscribers to these same publications.



The Mass of the Sick

They were there on stretchers or in blue wheelchairs, wheeled along by nurses who are veritable guardian angels. I saw a young Sister from Rafflay, frail under her white veil edged with red, tucking in the blanket of her patient, as it was chilly in the underground basilica.

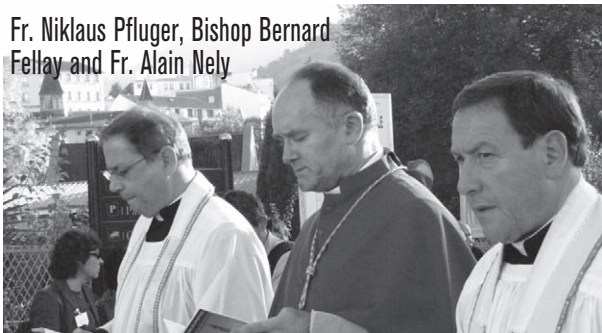
Nurses busied themselves taking round water and making sure everyone was alright. There was a Brother who had put on a white coat over his black cassock. He went to find



MONDAY, OCT. 27



Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, Bishop Bernard Fellay and Fr. Alain Nely




a priest for a patient who had expressed the wish to go to confession. Others followed.

An elderly man was lying paralyzed on a stretcher; at the altar, it was the Offertory and the priest poured the drop of water into the chalice. Able to move only his eyes, the man offered his suffering which became a sacrifice. At the Consecration nailed to his bed, he was unable to kneel, but united to the Cross, he suffered and offered himself. At Communion, he could not go to Jesus, but Jesus went to him.

At the end of the Mass, after the procession of the clergy, the blue wheelchairs went down the ramp which leads to the exits. On all sides, the faithful let them pass as a guard of honor.

Next Year at Lourdes!

Before the final blessing at the Grotto of Massabielle, Fr. de Cacqueray expressed his gratitude to all of those even remotely involved, officially or discreetly, who had made this grandiose pilgrimage such a success, in particular Fr. Nicolas Pinaud, the Prior of Domezain and responsible for the ceremonies. He expressed his gratitude to the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes for his hospitality at the Sanctuaries, but was unable to hide how much the prohibition imposed on Bishop Fellay to celebrate in the St. Pius X Basilica had caused great pain to the priests and faithful attached to Tradition. The spontaneous applause which interrupted him showed just how much he was aware of what everyone felt very deeply. Then he invited the pilgrims to return to Lourdes next year, but in the meantime...to go to their rosaries in order to gather a million roses to place at the feet of Our Lady at Christmas! 

Taken from *DICI*, No.184. November 2008. www.dici.org



RAMPANT DISOBEDIENCE OF THE BISHOPS



An interview with
Fr. Emmanuel
du Chalard

On July 7, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI issued his motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, in which he made the traditional Latin Mass accessible for every priest worldwide. On the first anniversary of the motu proprio, the *Kirchliche Umschau*, a traditional publication in Germany with close ties to the SSPX, spoke with a priest who has observed Vatican politics in Rome over the last 30 years. Fr. Emmanuel du Chalard is a priest of the Society of St. Pius X, and has served since 1978 as the liaison of Archbishop Lefebvre's priestly fraternity to the Roman Curia.

The motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* is a year old. Many observers say that nothing has changed in the Church.

That is not altogether false, but neither is it entirely accurate. The motu proprio first came into effect on September 14, 2007. This was an act of great importance for the whole Church. If the bishops were to make it their own, a matter of personal concern, what blessings would follow for the Church! Unhappily such is not the case. With few exceptions the bishops are against it and are blocking the will of the Pope.

We are faced with a situation of massive *de facto* disobedience of the shepherds of the Church over against the Vicar of Christ.

Nevertheless, interest in the motu proprio remains unbroken. Among the faithful and the clergy there is a slow but steady increase in interest. Since most of the hierarchy continue—against the will of the pope—to treat the traditional Mass as something forbidden, this process has been retarded, but remains irreversible.

In Italy, where I have lived for 30 years, more than 1,000 priests have ordered a DVD, produced

by the Society of St. Pius X, in order to learn the rubrics of the old Mass. These DVDs are being sold in bookshops near the Vatican. Young priests in particular are finding a great treasure in the Mass of St. Pius V. In all seminaries there are students who desire this Mass. The *sensus fidei* is awakening in souls. Young clerics are searching for an authentic expression of the Faith. Many bishops do not yet realize this. Prelates shaped by the Conciliar revolution are often completely perplexed when they perceive this phenomenon.

The greatest success has been that many younger priests are finding themselves through the traditional rite. They are discovering the reality of Catholic priesthood, their reason for being priests—sacrifice. They discover their priestly identity, which has been so obscured by the new liturgy, modernistic theology, and a false understanding of their pastoral duties.

What are the obstacles that hinder the return of the old Mass?

As far as priests are concerned, there remains a great lack of information regarding the old Mass. Many priests are not sufficiently informed, or have not yet had contact with the old liturgy. We are speaking here not of progressives, but of priests who want to be truly Catholic.

Many priests also have a practical problem, especially in the English-speaking world. They know nothing of Latin, not even the rudiments. This is the result of a cultural rupture and an educational problem that should not be underestimated. For many priests who know no Latin the Church naturally begins in 1965.

But there is also an increasing number of religious, priests, and nuns who yearn for the traditional liturgy. I know the situation in Italy rather well, and am astonished where and under what circumstances the traditional Mass is returning after nearly 40 years of repression.

The faithful often find no priests whom the bishop will put at their disposal. The old way of thinking still prevails. Many groups remain orphaned or give up, since the ordinaries sabotage their efforts: holy Mass should be celebrated only on a weekday, the cycle of readings must be taken from the *Novus Ordo*, no liturgy can be said on holidays, Communion in the hand, no advertising, *etc.* Those are only some examples. Faithful who write respectfully to their bishops often receive no answer. This has opened the eyes of many, and they are coming to understand what the Society of St. Pius X means when it speaks of a state of necessity. The *motu proprio* has opened the eyes of many faithful.

Why are people interested in the old Mass?

There are two reasons for the rediscovery of the traditional Mass. First, many want it because it is more dignified and beautiful. They find a sacred element in this venerable rite that they do not find in their

parishes. That is a personal choice. Second, for others there is a bigger problem. For them it is a problem of the teaching expressed in the liturgy. I believe that we must now show that the immediate problem is not one of aesthetics but of the expression of the Faith. We must struggle against the Protestantizing of our Catholic Faith.

In response, some might object that the *motu proprio* does in fact maintain that the old and the new Masses are merely two expressions of the Faith.

The New Mass is a product of ecumenism. For that reason it suppresses everything that could displease Protestantism. Cardinal Ottaviani already pointed this out in 1969, when he perceived in the liturgical reform a striking departure from the teaching of the Council of Trent on Mass as a sacrifice.

Cardinal Martini recently admitted this again in his book *Jerusalem Nachtgespräche [Nighttime Conversations in Jerusalem]*. “In the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church allowed itself to be inspired by Luther’s reforms.”

The *motu proprio* is an antidote. It will have its effect gradually, but it will take effect. Have no doubt of it. Even if many modernists in the Curia and the bishops’s conferences believe that—pardon the expression—the Ratzinger phantom will soon pass. This is the thinking in some circles!

We are in a terrible crisis of the Church, a crisis of doctrine.

It is already remarkable that the venerable and 1500-year-old Roman rite is characterized as an “extraordinary form.” May the day soon come when this “extraordinarily beautiful” rite of the Church will again be recognized as the only ordinary form.

In any case the Church is a visible society and the necessary reforms demand human exertions and good use of the supernatural means that God has given us. If the *motu proprio* places the traditional Mass on the same level as the *Novus Ordo* of Paul VI, it is not of the essence of the Pope’s personal intervention. The mind of the document is: *numquam abrogata*. The traditional Mass was never abolished.

We must keep before our eyes the real persecutions suffered by priests who have remained loyal to the Mass of St. Pius V. What have we experienced over the last 30 years! In this regard rehabilitation and a *mea culpa* from the bishops is a point of justice.

The Pope’s theme was the following: the Mass is not forbidden, and cannot be forbidden. Everything else in the *motu proprio* and the accompanying writing to the bishops is an appeal for acceptance. We are in the age of collegiality, which hinders papal government.

We must observe that the Pope has up to now never publicly celebrated the old Mass, and has not once referred to the *motu proprio* in other documents.

He is aware of the strong opposition. He has chosen another path, that of example.

He has appointed a new master of ceremonies, who has only the title in common with his predecessors. The cross is once again in the center, the *paramenta* are more dignified. Now the Pope is once again distributing Communion in the mouth to kneeling faithful. This is interpreted by many as a sign that the Pope wishes to reintroduce the old form of distribution of Communion.

These are important signs. The Holy See has given them no official explanations or interpretations, only statements in passing. All these indications have caused great discomfort to the modernists. Now there are rumors that the Pope wishes to return to Latin for the administration of sacraments and the consecration.

The mistaken translations of the words of consecration are supposed to be corrected, although I don't see many countries where this is actually happening.

Would it not be a great consolation for many faithful to see the Holy Father act energetically in ruling the Church?

The Holy Father sees the dramatic situation of the Church. He is well aware of the deep crisis in the Church. For this reason he believes that it is no longer possible to rule the Church by authority, but rather by force of persuasion. Resistance in the Curia is very strong. As an observer of many years I can say that the Pope is very limited in his choice of personnel. Great pressure has been exercised from various sides. It is no secret that a certain group of priests in the Curia are the real decision makers. Even if the Pope were able to fill important positions with people in his confidence, there would be no change in the people who dictate a progressive course in the Church. They know how to maneuver, how to conceal the true problems, and how to accomplish their purposes. With his reform of the Curia Paul VI gave the Secretary of State a degree of power that is not good for the Church. No significant nomination in the Curia or in the Church throughout the world takes place today without passing through these hands.

What is expected from the forthcoming document, that is supposed to elucidate certain passages in the *motu proprio*?

I have no privy knowledge of this document. If it happens, such a text would surely only elaborate certain subjects. What is a "stable group"? What characterizes a priest suited for the old Mass? The answers will be practical, rather than matters of principle...

Will the order of readings be changed?

...that would be dangerous... Many in Rome are talking of a "reform of the reform." They want to

correct the New Mass and make it "traditional." Will the Offertory come back? Silence at the Canon? The traditional form of kneeling for Communion in the mouth? I don't think that they are trying to alter the old Mass. The progressives want this, of course, but not the current pope.

We ourselves stick to the rules that the Church has always applied. Faithful to Tradition.

The competence is in the Holy See, in the papacy. He has the primacy! Very clearly! If changes are made in the spirit of the Church, that are led by the spirit of the Church and brought forth from the treasure of Tradition, that would not be a problem. We know very well that the Church has full power over the divine liturgy.

In any case the missal of Pius V has reached such perfection, that it would be difficult to surpass. There were sound developments in the liturgy, which were led by the Holy Ghost. We could compare that with dogmas such as the Immaculate Conception. These are fruits of the Faith. Clear expressions of Catholic Faith. After the proclamation of a dogma there is not much to be added. They are the fruit of a certain perfection. To practice superficial politics with liturgical changes is a big mistake.

Twenty years ago Archbishop Lefebvre consecrated four auxiliary bishops. What are your thoughts?

Archbishop Lefebvre is without any doubt the savior of the old Mass. There is no doubt of it. Archbishop Lefebvre also preserved the transmitted teaching of the popes without deviation. Who stood up against false ecumenism? Archbishop Lefebvre!

Ecumenism is entering into its waning days, even if it is accelerating in the minds of modernists. Observing all these efforts we are confronted with ruins. Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue continue amongst the modernists, but it is a dialogue of the like-minded. It serves the obscuring of truth, and nothing else. Today 95% of Catholics believe that one can be saved through any religion. They adhere to a diffuse pan-Christianity. This is an illustration of the bankruptcy of the conciliar project: no true unity and massive loss of faith. False ecumenism must therefore be discontinued. We need a return to the clear words of Pius XI in *Mortalium Animos*.

"*Numquam abrogata*" were the key words in the *motu proprio*: the old Mass was "never abolished." It logically follows that the Society of St. Pius X was "*numquam excommunicata*," "never excommunicated." Archbishop Lefebvre's and Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer's consecration of four auxiliary bishops in 1988 had the goal of saving Tradition. The *motu proprio* is a posthumous triumph of this heroic act motivated by an authentic understanding of episcopal obedience.

Whoever might earlier have had doubts about these episcopal consecrations should have no more doubts after the last 20 years. They made possible a great development, which found a first confirmation in

the *motu proprio*. Without the episcopal consecrations even the *Ecclesia Dei* communities would not exist. There is an ever greater readiness to admit this even among these communities.

Since the year 2000 there have been ongoing discussions between the Society and Vatican authorities.

There were always discussions. For the last 30 years I have regularly visited the Curia. Castrillon Hoyos recently formulated five points, which were characterized as an ultimatum.

The Society's response was solid, clear, and precise. We consider the *motu proprio* important, but it is not everything. Problems remain regarding Catholic doctrine, religious freedom and ecumenism in particular. The drama lies in the fact that very few people recognize that both of these problematic areas brought forward by the Council are in contradiction with the papal magisterium of the past.

For this reason there are no "negotiations." It is not a question of canonical "form." This is not the problem that afflicts the Church. Authorities in the Church need to recognize that there is a grave doctrinal issue in question. Where these conciliar innovations have been applied, there is sterility, the loss of Catholic identity, and indeed of the Faith. From these principles follow the dechristianization of states, the disappearance of Catholic families, the destruction of the Catholic priesthood and religious life. Where there is adherence to Tradition, there are good fruits, vocations, families with many children, and conversions. The more conservative, the more vocations. A tree must be judged by its fruits. Where the Tradition—or the appearance of Tradition—is found, vocations are attracted.

Would you say something about the "ultimatum"?

On June 4, 2008, Dario Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos called Msgr. Bernard Fellay, Superior General of the Society of St. Pius X, to Rome.

In the course of the discussion a memorandum was transmitted, with the demand for a response by the end of the month of June.

On June 23 an Italian daily newspaper—informed by a curial indiscretion—publicized the existence of this ultimatum. In the following days this information was picked up by the whole international press. Thus mass media pressure was exerted and compounded through the Internet.

The document of Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos demanded four concessions, beyond the requirement of a response by the time of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. The Society of St. Pius X was, in the person of its Superior General, to commit itself to the following conditions: **1)** to give a response proportionate to the pope's generosity; **2)** to avoid any public comment which would not respect the person of the Holy Father and would have a negative impact upon ecclesial

charity; **3)** to avoid claiming a magisterium superior to the Holy Father's and not to set the Society in opposition to the Church; **4)** to demonstrate its will to act in all honesty and ecclesial charity, and in the respect of the authority of the Vicar of Christ.

Bishop Fellay responded on June 26. The Cardinal wrote back the next day and said that he had given the document to the Holy Father.

Bishop Fellay made public the following explanation:

The conditions seem to be meant to obtain an atmosphere favorable to a further dialogue, rather than imply any precise commitment on definite issues. The Society of St. Pius X wishes that the dialogue be on the doctrinal level and take into account all the issues, which, if they were evaded, might jeopardize a canonical status hastily set up. The SSPX considers that the preliminary withdrawal of the 1988 decrees of excommunication would foster serenity in the dialogue.

The SSPX does not claim the exercise of a magisterium superior to the Holy Fathers, nor does it seek to oppose the Church. Following in the footsteps of its founder, it wants to hand down what it has received, namely what has always been believed everywhere and by all. It claims as its own the profession of faith addressed by Archbishop Lefebvre to Paul VI on September 24, 1975: Jesus Christ has entrusted to His Vicar the charge of confirming his brethren in the faith, and has asked him to make sure that every bishop faithfully keep the deposit of the faith, according to St. Paul's recommendation to Timothy.

In the discussions between Cardinal Ratzinger and Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988, the events of 1976, including the suspension of the Archbishop's faculties, were passed over in silence. It seems to me that the same thing is happening today. For years now, and in particular since last fall, there is discussion of lifting the excommunication decrees of 1988. That is not a problem. Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos has repeatedly said so. In an audience with Bishop Fellay the Pope spoke of Archbishop Lefebvre as "a great man of the universal Church." The Cardinal has not rejected the Society's request to proceed step by step: liberation of the Mass, lifting the decree, discussion of dogmatic questions, *etc.* The Cardinal has his own strategy. He wants a "practical solution." We will not be required, as in 1976, to cease ordaining priests or to interrupt the apostolate. It is only asked that we should stop criticizing the authorities. But the authorities indirectly recognize that we represent no evil and that we are not harming souls.

In connection with the "ultimatum," regular "Lefebvre bashing"—verbal attacks on the Society—appeared in various "conservative" media.

The verbal violence stems from a misunderstanding of the deeper causes. Many people are no longer in a position to understand that there are dogmatic issues. The ecumenical spirit has reached such a point that it is common to see only what we have in common. Thus it is hard to accept differences

when they are brought forward—this is perceived as a lack of charity. But this interpretation is opposed to the truth. There is only one truth, no multiplicity of truths. There is no love without truth.

Thus some people who passionately attack the Society in the name of loyalty to the papacy actually are stabbing the Pope in the back. We are Catholics, loyal sons of the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church.

In the ecumenical climate that prevails in the Church—which otherwise in a most painful manner forbids those who are now attacking us from speaking the truth—we are seen as creating adversity. We are taken for disturbers of the peace.

Personally, I would like to refer to a statement of the Pope from April 18, where he refers to the necessity of doctrine and shows clearly why we must hold firm to that which the Church has always taught in matters of religious freedom, ecumenism, and ecclesiology. I cite as follows:

Fundamental Christian beliefs and practices are sometimes changed within communities by so-called “prophetic actions” that are based on a hermeneutic not always *consonant with the datum of Scripture and Tradition*. Communities consequently give up the attempt to act as a unified body, choosing instead to function according to the idea of “local options”. Somewhere in this process the need for *diachronic koinonia—communion with the Church in every age*—is lost, just at the time when the world is losing its bearings and needs a persuasive common witness to the saving power of the Gospel (cf. Rom. 1:18-23).

Faced with these difficulties, we must first recall that the unity of the Church flows from the perfect oneness of the Trinitarian God. In John’s Gospel, we are told that Jesus prayed to his Father that his disciples might be one, “just as you are in me and I am in you” (Jn 17:21). This passage reflects the unwavering conviction of the early Christian community that its unity was both caused by, and is reflective of, the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This, in turn, suggests that the internal cohesion of believers was based on the sound integrity of their doctrinal confession (cf. I Tim. 1:3-11). Throughout the New Testament, we find that the Apostles were repeatedly called to give an account for their faith to both Gentiles (cf. Acts 17:16-34) and Jews (cf. Acts 4:5-22; 5:27-42). The core of their argument was always the historical fact of Jesus’s bodily resurrection from the tomb (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30). The ultimate effectiveness of their preaching did not depend on “lofty words” or “human wisdom” (I Cor. 2:13), but rather on the work of the Spirit (Eph. 3:5) who confirmed the authoritative witness of the Apostles (cf. I Cor. 15:1-11). The nucleus of Paul’s preaching and that of the early Church was none other than Jesus Christ, and “him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). But this proclamation had to be guaranteed by the purity of normative doctrine expressed in creedal formulae—*symbola*—which articulated the essence of the Christian faith and constituted the foundation for the unity of the baptized (cf. I Cor. 15:3-5; Gal. 1:6-9; *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2).

My dear friends, the power of the kerygma has lost none of its internal dynamism. Yet we must ask ourselves whether its full force has not been attenuated by a *relativistic approach to Christian doctrine* similar to that found in secular ideologies, which, in alleging that science alone is “objective,” relegate religion entirely to the subjective

sphere of individual feeling. Scientific discoveries, and their application through human ingenuity, undoubtedly offer new possibilities for the betterment of humankind. This does not mean, however, that the “knowable” is limited to the empirically verifiable, nor religion restricted to the shifting realm of “personal experience.”

For Christians to accept this faulty line of reasoning would lead to the notion that there is little need to emphasize *objective truth* in the presentation of the Christian faith, for one need but follow his or her own conscience and choose a community that best suits his or her individual tastes. The result is seen in the continual proliferation of communities which often eschew institutional structures and minimize the importance of doctrinal content for Christian living.

Even within the ecumenical movement, Christians may be reluctant to assert *the role of doctrine* for fear that it would only exacerbate rather than heal the wounds of division. Yet a clear, convincing testimony to the salvation wrought for us in Christ Jesus has to be based upon the notion of *normative apostolic teaching*: a teaching which indeed underlies the inspired word of God and sustains the sacramental life of Christians today.

Only by “holding fast” to sound teaching (II Thess. 2:15; cf. Apoc. 2:12-29) will we be able to respond to the challenges that confront us in an evolving world. Only in this way will we give *unambiguous testimony to the truth of the Gospel and its moral teaching*. This is the message which the world is waiting to hear from us.

This is precisely the point.

What can we expect from Rome?

The Pope—with the interruption of his trip to Australia—and the Curia are now *ad aquas* for their summer vacation. Then we shall see. The five points have mostly to do with a climate for discussion. No one knows what steps the Cardinal is now preparing and what the Pope foresees.

The events of June show the negative role of the mass media, in particular the Internet and Internet chat rooms. Everyone writes their own commentary and many create confusion. This gave the “ultimatum” a greater dynamic than it had in reality.

The excitation in the media did clarify what the Society concretely represents, since her number of priests is very small in proportion to the whole of the Church. Nevertheless it attracts so much attention. This does not have to do with the Society as a group with all its limits and weaknesses, but rather with the meaning of Tradition for the Church, the meaning of the papal magisterium of the last centuries. A high level Curial prelate put it this way: “The Society poses the right questions and articulates the real problems.” In this terrible crisis of the Church most are not looking for the deepest causes of the crisis. They try merely to limit the abuses, but they do not address the causes of the abuses. ☪

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from the July-August 2008 issue of *Kirchliche Umschau* and published with their permission.



Letter #73 to Friends and Benefactors from Bishop Bernard Fellay, Superior General of the Society of Saint Pius X

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In this letter, I would have liked to give you first of all some news about the internal life of the Society. However, current events in the Church at large and especially concerning the developments in favor of Tradition compel us to dwell longer upon these topics of a more external nature, because of their importance. Once again, it seems to us necessary to tackle this subject, so as to express as clearly as possible something which might have caused some concern at the beginning of the summer.

As the media related in a rather surprising manner, I must say, we did receive an ultimatum from Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos. But the thing is rather complex and needs to be clarified in order to be well understood. A glance back at recent past events will help us to grasp things a little more clearly.

I) Our Pre-conditions

From the beginning when Rome approached us and proposed some solutions, that is, at the beginning of 2001, we clearly stated that the manner in which Church authorities were treating the problems raised by those who desired to attempt the experience of Tradition with Rome did not inspire confidence in us. Logically we had to expect to be treated in like manner once the issue of our

relationship with Rome would have been settled. Since that time, and in order to protect ourselves, we have been asking for concrete actions which would unequivocally show Rome's intentions towards us: the traditional Mass for all priests, and the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication. These two measures were not sought directly in view of gaining some advantage for ourselves, but to re-instill into the Mystical Body a breath of traditional life, and thus, indirectly, help to bring about a sound rapprochement between the Society and Rome.

The first responses were hardly engaging and were rather a confirmation of our misgivings: it was not possible to grant freedom for the Mass, because, in spite of the realization that the Mass had never been abrogated, some bishops and faithful thought it might be repudiation of Paul VI and of the liturgical reform... As for the excommunication, it would be lifted at the time of the agreement.

In spite of this demurrer, we did not cut the slender thread of fairly difficult relations, aware as we were that what is at stake far exceeds our own plight. It is not a matter of persons, but of an attitude which for centuries has been that of all the members of the Church, and which remains ours, unlike the new spirit, called "the spirit of Vatican II." And it is obvious for us that this new spirit is at the root, and is the main cause of the present misfortunes of Holy Mother Church. Hence, the basic motivation behind our actions and our relations with the

Roman authorities has always been to do prudently all we can to bring about the return of the Church to what she cannot deprive herself of without rushing headlong to suicide.

Our situation is very delicate: on the one hand, we recognize both the Roman authorities and the local bishops as legitimate. But on the other hand, we contest some of their decisions, because, in various degrees, they are opposed to what the Magisterium always taught and ordered. In this, there is no pretense on our part of setting ourselves as judges or of picking and choosing. It is nothing more than the expression of an extremely painful observation of a contradiction which goes against both our Catholic consciences and faith. Such a situation is extremely grave, and cannot be treated with levity. This is also the reason why we move only very slowly and with the utmost prudence. If we are obviously greatly interested in obtaining a situation which is concretely livable in the Church, the clear awareness of the much more profound key issue which we have just described, forbids us to place the two issues on an equal footing. It is so clear for us that the issue of the Faith and of the spirit of faith has priority over all that we cannot consider a practical solution before the first issue is safely resolved. Holy Mother Church always taught us that we had to be ready to lose everything, even our own life, rather than lose the faith.

What is strange is that the blows are now coming from within the Church, and that is the stark reality of the drama through which we are living.

2) In 2007, One of the Pre-conditions was Fulfilled: the Motu Proprio

In 2007, the new Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI finally granted the first point we had requested, the traditional Mass for the priests all over the world. We are deeply grateful for this personal gesture from the Pope. And it causes us a great joy, because we have a great hope that we can see in this a renewal for the whole Mystical Body. Yet, the motu proprio has become (because of the very nature of what it states and gives back, *i.e.*, the traditional Mass), the object of the fight we mentioned earlier in this letter because the traditional worship is opposed to the cult which meant to be “new,” the “*Novus Ordo Missæ*.” It has become an occasion of fight between the progressivists, who give lip service to their full ecclesial communion while they more or less openly oppose the orders and the dispositions coming from the Sovereign Pontiff, and the conservatives, who consequently find themselves in a situation where they resist their bishops... So whom are we to obey? The progressivists know quite well that what is at

stake is much more than a liturgical dispute. In spite of the efforts of the motu proprio to minimize opposition by affirming continuity, what is at stake is the very fate of a Council which meant to be pastoral, and which was applied in such a way that Paul VI already could speak of the “*self-destruction of the Church*.”

3) Hope of a Rapid Fulfillment of Second Pre-condition

This first step of Rome in our direction gave us to hope that a second would soon follow. Some signs seemed to point this way. But, whereas we had long ago proposed the itinerary we had mapped out, it would seem that Rome has decided to follow another route. In spite of our reiterated request for the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication, and as it seemed that there was no longer any major obstacle to prevent the accomplishment of this act, we witnessed a sudden turn of events: Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos wants to impose upon us conditions before going any further, even though we had clearly said that we expected a unilateral act. Our attitude seems to him ungrateful towards the Sovereign Pontiff, and even worse: haughty and proud, since we continue to openly denounce the evils from which the Church is suffering. Our latest Letter to Friends and Benefactors particularly aroused his displeasure. This earned for us an ultimatum, the precise conditions of which we still have not yet been able to figure out. For either we accept the canonical solution, or we will be declared schismatic!

When we take a stand this is interpreted as a delay, a voluntary procrastination. Our intentions and our good will to really discuss with Rome are doubted. They do not understand why we do not want an immediate canonical solution. For Rome, the problem of the Society would be resolved by that practical agreement; doctrinal discussions would be avoided or postponed. For us, each day brings additional proofs that we must clarify to the maximum the underlying issues before taking one more step toward a canonical situation, which is not in itself displeasing to us. But this is a matter of following the order of the nature of things, and to start from the wrong end would unavoidably place us in an unbearable situation. We have daily proofs of this. What is at stake is nothing more nor less than our future existence. We cannot and will not leave any ambiguity subsist on the issue of the acceptance of the Council, of the reforms, of the new attitudes which are either being tolerated or fostered.

Confronted with these new difficulties, we take the liberty of appealing once more to your generosity. Given the success of our first Rosary

Crusade to obtain the return of the Tridentine Mass, we would now like to offer to Our Lady a new bouquet of a million rosaries (5 decades) to obtain the withdrawal of the decree of excommunication through her intercession. From November 1st until the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, we will take it to heart to pray with renewed fervor that, in these difficult hours of history, the Holy Father may fulfill with fidelity his august functions in accordance with the wish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the good of all the Church. We are utterly convinced that such a gesture coming from the Sovereign Pontiff would have as profound an effect on the Mystical Body as the freedom of the traditional liturgy.

Indeed, the excommunication did not cut us off from the Church, but it has driven away a good number of her members from the Church's past and from her Tradition. And she cannot deprive herself of them without suffering serious harm. It is truly obvious that Holy Mother Church cannot ignore her past, since she has received everything and is still to this day receiving everything from her divine founder, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through the excommunication, what has been censured and penalized is the very attitude which specified the combat of Archbishop Lefebvre, *i.e.*, this relationship to the Church's past and to her Tradition. Since then, because of this reprobation, many fear to come to the sources of living water which alone can bring back the good old days of Holy Mother Church. Yet, Archbishop Lefebvre did nothing more than adopt the attitude of St. Paul, to

the extent that he requested that the following words be engraved on his tomb: "*Tradidi quod et accepi*—I have handed down what I have received." Did not St. Pius X himself write that the "true friends of the Church are not the revolutionaries, nor the innovators, but the traditionalists"?

For this reason, dear faithful, we launch again this Rosary Crusade on the occasion of our pilgrimage to Lourdes for the 150th anniversary of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin. We thank the Mother of God for the maternal protection she extended over us during all these years, and especially for the twenty years since the Episcopal Consecrations. We entrust to her all your intentions for yourselves, your families and your work. To her we entrust our future and beg for this fidelity to the faith and to the Church without which no one can work out his salvation.

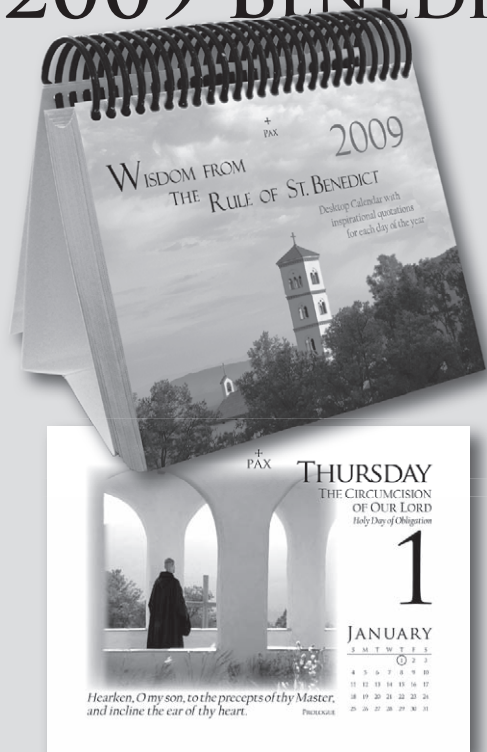
I thank you wholeheartedly for your untiring generosity which enables us to continue the magnificent work founded by Archbishop Lefebvre. We ask our good Mother in Heaven to protect you and to keep you all in her Immaculate Heart.

Menzingen, October 23, 2008
Feast of St. Anthony Mary Claret



+ Bernard Fellay
Superior General

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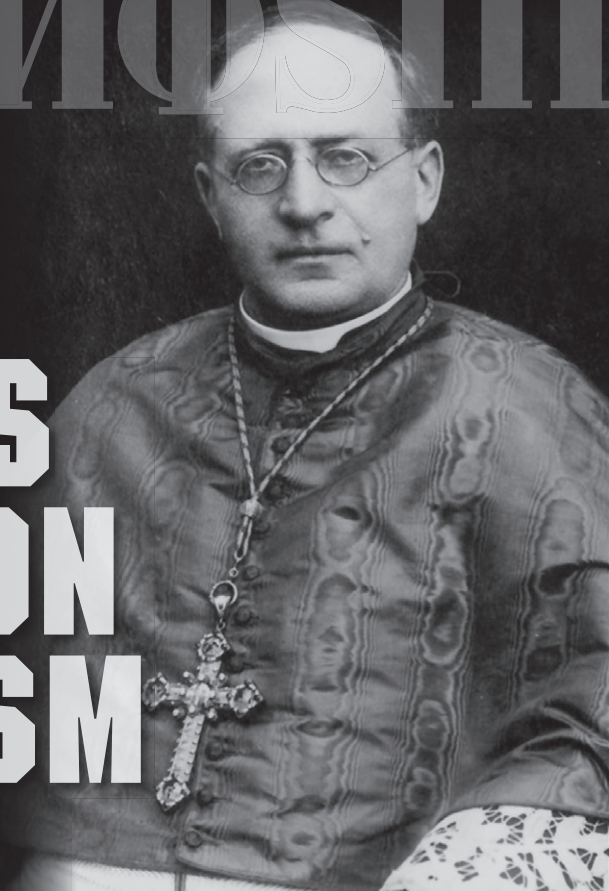
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COMMUNISM

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THE CHURCH'S CONDEMNATION OF COMMUNISM



On the brink of the Second World War, March, 19, 1937, the Feast of St. Joseph, patron of the Church, Pope Pius XI published his judgment of Communism (closely following upon his condemnation of National Socialism) in the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*: “Communism is intrinsically wrong.”

His predecessor Pius IX, whom he cites, had already denounced Communism as “a doctrine most opposed to the very natural law. For if this doctrine were accepted, the complete destruction of everyone’s laws, government, property, and even of human society itself would follow” (*Qui Pluribus*, November 9, 1846, §16). At this stage of the Church’s analysis, the Communist doctrine of the ownership of property in common, to the detriment of private property, is condemned as contrary to the natural law.

Goods Held in Common a Perversion?

It should be remarked that private property is not absolutely required (*simpliciter*, the Scholastics say) by human nature, but only for a better condition of life (*ad melius esse*). Indeed, with private property everyone is better served and things better and more easily administered than with property held in common, because man takes a greater interest in his own good than in the common good. This is due to the limits of his nature when grace is not there to lift it above its natural capacity.

Nevertheless, since all Christians are not saints, private property is still required by the natural law even in a Christian society. It was by grace that the “saints” of Jerusalem in the first century, and nowadays persons in the religious state, succeed in renouncing the possession of private property. Communism, which seeks to impose this exceptional state upon everyone, is thus a kind of angelism, a naturalistic caricature of grace. This graceless angelism must bring about the ruin of a society, which is not and cannot be wholly “angelized,” even by grace, in a Christian polity.

The historical realizations of communal property in Christian civil society like the Jesuit “reductions” in Paraguay or the French missions in Texas were merely temporary, destined to initiate the indigenous peoples in the cultivation of land and related skills and arts in

order to lead them progressively to the management of private property, which fosters initiative and organization in everyone. These very particular experiments, limited in time and space, were rather a “school of work and ownership” than a model of a stable, established society.

Earlier Condemnations of Communism

Pope Pius IX came back to this error several times, condemning it in his Encyclical *Noscitis et Nobiscum* of December 8, 1849; in his Allocution *Singulari Quadam* of December 9, 1854; and in his Encyclical *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore* of August 10, 1863, documents referenced in the Syllabus of Errors. The blessed Pontiff stigmatized it as “the criminal systems of the new socialism and communism” (1849), while not failing to reprove also “that thoroughly insatiable passion for power and possessions that overrides all the rules of justice and honesty and never ceases by every means possible to amass and greedily heap up wealth” (1863), by which is undoubtedly designated economic liberalism and its inhumane methods.

Pius XI also quotes the denunciations made by Leo XIII, Pius IX’s successor, of

that sect of men who, under various and almost barbarous names, are called socialists, communists, or nihilists, and who, spread over all the world, and bound together by the closest ties in a wicked confederacy, no longer seek the shelter of secret meetings, but, openly and boldly marching forth in the light of day, strive to bring to a head what they have long been planning—the overthrow of all civil society whatsoever....They leave nothing untouched or whole which by both human and divine laws has been wisely decreed for the health and beauty of life. (*Quod Apostolici*, December 18, 1878)

Then, in *Rerum Novarum* of May 15, 1891, Leo XIII renewed the condemnation of “socialists” who “are striving to do away with private property, and contend that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the State or by municipal bodies.” Founding his reasoning upon “the principle of private ownership,” which is based upon human nature, the personal nature of work, and “the common opinion of mankind” as well as the rights of families, the Pontiff affirms “the inviolability of private property.”

This judgment, however, must be understood with the nuances adduced in the common opinion of Catholic theologians. They teach that the usage of property is private in the ordinary circumstances of life for the aforementioned reasons, but that the earth was given by the Creator absolutely for the good of all men, and thus private property cannot prevent that goal. On the contrary, it should favor it, which means that the private usage of goods must be

directed towards the common good—a demanding and absolute truth indeed.

The Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*

At that point, Communism was just a subversive theory. With the Russian Revolution of 1917, it became a practice, of which Pius XI was to denounce solemnly “the principles and tactics,” having previously condemned its doctrine in several texts: *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (May 8, 1928), *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15, 1931), etc. The recent persecutions against the Church in Mexico and Spain impelled the Pope to analyze the methods of “the most persistent enemies of the Church, who from Moscow are directing the struggle against Christian civilization” (§5).

However (and which may surprise a reader discovering the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* today), Pius XI condemns Communism, not essentially because it is atheistic or destructive of private property, but, as Jean Madiran astutely observed (*La vieillesse du monde* [DMM, 1976]), because it is a practical application of dialectic materialism and a method for enslaving the masses through a reign of hatred and fear.

The classless society envisaged by the Communists, the Pope affirms, is but a counterfeit of the redemption of the lowly. “A pseudo-ideal of justice, of equality and fraternity in labor impregnates all its doctrine and activity with a deceptive mysticism” (§8).

The theory of “dialectical and historical materialism” articulated by Karl Marx and completed by Lenin, is directed towards accelerating the conflicts that conduct society to an earthly paradise by means of human action. “Hence they endeavor to sharpen the antagonisms which arise between the various classes of society” (§9). This is what is supremely contrary to charity, which unites the classes.

Finally, Communism “strips man of his liberty, robs human personality of all its dignity, and removes all the moral restraints that check the eruptions of blind impulse” (§10). The woman is thrust into the workplace and the care of children devolves upon civil society (§11). To the economic failures the Pope describes is joined a cruel and absolute power, reigning by means of terror, which reduces countless individuals to slavery (§23). Thirty-five years before Solzhenitsyn, the Pope denounced the regime of espionage and the Gulag, the reign of fear.

Systematic Lying

Before pronouncing his condemnation, the Pope denounces the deceitful but all too effective methods of Communist propaganda: “trickery of various forms, hiding its real designs behind ideas that in themselves

are good and attractive,” like “peace,” even as “they have recourse to unlimited armaments”; or “they invite Catholics to collaborate with them in the realm of so-called humanitarianism and charity”; or with periodic mitigations of anti-religious legislation (§57).

Now Pius XI can pronounce his grave and concise judgment:

See to it, Venerable Brethren, that the Faithful do not allow themselves to be deceived! Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever (§58).

The Remedies Proposed by the Church

As the guardian of the natural law by reason of its spiritual ends, the Church should not only condemn Communism’s perverse practices, but also propose remedies. All the Popes we have cited did so. Following are the remedies set forth by Pius XI; for him it is a matter of putting into practice the doctrine of the Church in the face of Communist ideology (§39).

The poor and rich alike must practice detachment from material goods, but the rich will also practice the works of charity and “social justice” (§51), which include the establishment of public or private insurance of all kinds, and the employers’ fixing just wages by “organizing institutions the object of which is to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment for workers” (§53). This can only be achieved, given the disappearance of traditional guilds, by “a body of professional and inter-professional organizations, built on solidly Christian foundations, working together to effect, under forms adapted to different places and circumstances, what has been called the Corporation” (§54). This will be achieved with interprofessional labor agreements and without Communism.

The final remedy proposed by Pius XI was to expose the deceptions of Communism (§57). In this the Pope was not to be obeyed; rather, the clergy in the period after the war spoke only of collaboration with the Communists! The Church became infected with the idea of baptizing Communism, which led straight to the scandalous refusal to condemn Communism during the Second Vatican Council. The reader may profitably consult the chapters “The Battle of Mortain” and “In the Turmoil of the Council” in our biography of Marcel Lefebvre (2002; English version: Angelus Press, 2004).

Conciliar Rome’s Complicity with Moscow

Concerning Conciliar Rome’s complicity with Moscow, Archbishop Lefebvre used to say: “The

Council, which had given itself the responsibility of discerning the “signs of the times,” was condemned by Moscow to keeping silence on the most obvious and the most monstrous of the Signs of this time!” (*They Have Uncrowned Him*, p.215). But John XXIII in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of April 11, 1963, had already absolved Communism of every accusation by asserting:

Besides, who can deny the possible existence of good and commendable elements in these undertakings, elements which do indeed conform to the dictates of right reason, and are an expression of man’s lawful aspirations? (§159)

In light of this one readily understands that the attempt by Bishop Geraldo de Proença Sigaud and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to have the Council condemn Communism was doomed to failure. The petition signed by 332 of the Council Fathers (ultimately by 454) which the two bishops submitted to the secretariat of Vatican II on November 9, 1964, was conveniently “forgotten in a drawer” (Archbishop Lefebvre, *Against the Heresies*, p.329).

The Vatican’s Dubious Policy of *Ostpolitik*

The scandalous silence of the Council led the Holy See to conduct its dubious *Ostpolitik* during the Seventies, a politics of compromise with the Communist governments of Eastern Europe by the appointment of bishops who were collaborators with the Communists and former “Peace priests.” We touch on this briefly in the above-mentioned biography, pages 503-505.

Cardinal Casaroli, the mainspring of *Ostpolitik*, explained his method:

Even if the other party is less sincere, for tackling the problem without any complex, an attentive study of the situation is required, as well as a complete honesty, bolstered against the risk of naiveté. Great patience is especially required, and raised voices or threats are out of place. [We base our position] on the fundamental rights of man without refusing to consider the whole in which the religious problem is situated in order to achieve practical, and even provisional, solutions when it is not possible for the time being to go any further. (Conference at Vienne, France, *Fideliter*, No. 67, November 1978, p.52)

An assessment of *Ostpolitik* needs to be made. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 challenges our presuppositions: was it the fruit of *Ostpolitik*? Did it result in freedom for the Church everywhere? We leave to others the task of justifying a response, which, in our opinion, must be rather in the negative. 📌

Translated with permission from *Fideliter*, No. 155, September-October 2003, pp.31-36. Translated by Miss Anne Stinnett.

Selections from

DIVINI REDEMPTORIS

(On atheistic Communism)

Pope Pius IX

3. This all too imminent danger...is Bolshevistic and atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization.

4. In the face of such a threat, the Catholic Church could not and does not remain silent. This Apostolic See, above all, has not refrained from raising its voice, for it knows that its proper and social mission is to defend truth, justice and all those eternal values which Communism ignores or attacks.

7. Hence We wish to expose once more in a brief synthesis the principles of atheistic Communism as they are manifested chiefly in bolshevism. We wish also to indicate its method of action and to contrast with its false principles the clear doctrine of the Church, in order to inculcate anew and with greater insistence the means by which the Christian civilization, the true *civitas humana*, can be saved from the satanic scourge, and not merely saved, but better developed for the well-being of human society.

8. The Communism of today, more emphatically than similar movements in the past, conceals in itself a false messianic idea. A pseudo-ideal of justice, of equality and fraternity in labor impregnates all its doctrine and activity with a deceptive mysticism, which communicates a zealous and contagious enthusiasm to the multitudes entrapped by delusive promises. This is especially true in an age like ours, when unusual misery has resulted from the unequal distribution of the goods of this world.

11. Refusing to human life any sacred or spiritual character, such a doctrine logically makes of marriage and the family a purely artificial and civil institution, the outcome of a specific economic system. There exists no matrimonial bond of a juridico-moral nature that is not subject to the whim of the individual or of the collectivity. Naturally, therefore, the notion of an indissoluble marriage-tie is scouted. Communism is particularly characterized by the rejection of any link that binds woman to the family and the home, and her emancipation is proclaimed as a basic principle. Finally, the right of education is denied to parents, for it is conceived as the exclusive prerogative of the community, in whose name and by whose mandate alone parents may exercise this right.

15. How is it possible that such a system, long since rejected scientifically and now proved erroneous by experience, how is it, We ask, that such a system could spread so rapidly in all parts of the world? The explanation lies in the fact that too few have been

able to grasp the nature of Communism. The majority instead succumb to its deception, skillfully concealed by the most extravagant promises. By pretending to desire only the betterment of the condition of the working classes, by urging the removal of the very real abuses chargeable to the liberalistic economic order, and by demanding a more equitable distribution of this world's goods (objectives entirely and undoubtedly legitimate), the Communist takes advantage of the present world-wide economic crisis to draw into the sphere of his influence even those sections of the populace which on principle reject all forms of materialism and terrorism.

16. If we would explain the blind acceptance of Communism by so many thousands of workmen, we must remember that the way had been already prepared for it by the religious and moral destitution in which wage-earners had been left by liberal economics. Even on Sundays and holy days, labor-shifts were given no time to attend to their essential religious duties. No one thought of building churches within convenient distance of factories, nor of facilitating the work of the priest. On the contrary, laicism was actively and persistently promoted, with the result that we are now reaping the fruits of the errors so often denounced by Our Predecessors and by Ourselves.

17. There is another explanation for the rapid diffusion of the Communistic ideas now seeping into every nation, great and small, advanced and backward, so that no corner of the earth is free from them. This explanation is to be found in a propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its like before. It is directed from one common center. It is shrewdly adapted to the varying conditions of diverse peoples. It has at its disposal great financial resources, gigantic organizations, international congresses, and countless trained workers. It makes use of pamphlets and reviews, of cinema, theater and radio, of schools and even universities. Little by little it penetrates into all classes of the people and even reaches the better-minded groups of the community, with the result that few are aware of the poison which increasingly pervades their minds and hearts.

18. A third powerful factor in the diffusion of Communism is the conspiracy of silence on the part of a large section of the non-Catholic press of the world. We say conspiracy, because it is impossible otherwise to explain how a press usually so eager to

exploit even the little daily incidents of life has been able to remain silent for so long about the horrors perpetrated in Russia, in Mexico and even in a great part of Spain; and that it should have relatively so little to say concerning a world organization as vast as Russian Communism. This silence is due in part to shortsighted political policy, and is favored by various occult forces which for a long time have been working for the overthrow of the Christian Social Order.

32. The means of saving the world of today from the lamentable ruin into which a moral liberalism has plunged us, are neither the class-struggle nor terror, nor yet the autocratic abuse of State power, but rather the infusion of social justice and the sentiment of Christian love into the social-economic order.

34. The Church does not separate a proper regard for temporal welfare from solicitude for the eternal. If she subordinates the former to the latter according to the words of her divine Founder, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33), she is nevertheless so far from being unconcerned with human affairs, so far from hindering civil progress and material advancement, that she actually fosters and promotes them in the most sensible and efficacious manner. Thus even in the sphere of social-economics, although the Church has never proposed a definite technical system, since this is not her field, she has nevertheless clearly outlined the guiding principles which, while susceptible of varied concrete applications according to the diversified conditions of times and places and peoples, indicate the safe way of securing the happy progress of society.

38. It may be said in all truth that the Church, like Christ, goes through the centuries doing good to all. There would be today neither Socialism nor Communism if the rulers of the nations had not scorned the teachings and maternal warnings of the Church. On the bases of liberalism and laicism they wished to build other social edifices which, powerful and imposing as they seemed at first, all too soon revealed the weakness of their foundations, and today are crumbling one after another before our eyes, as everything must crumble that is not grounded on the one corner stone which is Christ Jesus.

39. This, Venerable Brethren, is the doctrine of the Church, which alone in the social as in all other fields can offer real light and assure salvation in the face of Communistic ideology. But this doctrine must be consistently reduced to practice in every-day life, according to the admonition of St. James the Apostle: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas. 1:22). We cherish the firm hope that the fanaticism with which the sons of darkness work day and night at their materialistic and atheistic propaganda will at least serve the holy purpose of stimulating the sons of light to a like and even greater zeal for the honor of the Divine Majesty.

41. As in all the stormy periods of the history of the Church, the fundamental remedy today lies in a

sincere renewal of private and public life according to the principles of the Gospel by all those who belong to the Fold of Christ, that they may be in truth the salt of the earth to preserve human society from total corruption.

52. Social justice cannot be said to have been satisfied as long as workingmen are denied a salary that will enable them to secure proper sustenance for themselves and for their families; as long as they are denied the opportunity of acquiring a modest fortune and forestalling the plague of universal pauperism; as long as they cannot make suitable provision through public or private insurance for old age, for periods of illness and unemployment.

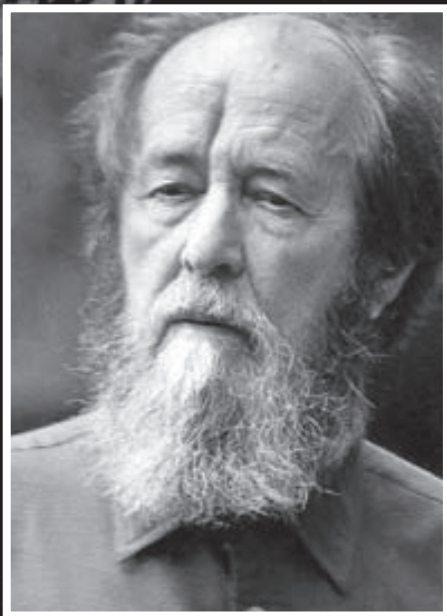
55. It is necessary to promote a wider study of social problems in the light of the doctrine of the Church and under the aegis of her constituted authority. If the manner of acting of some Catholics in the social-economic field has left much to be desired, this has often come about because they have not known and pondered sufficiently the teachings of the Sovereign Pontiffs on these questions. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to foster in all classes of society an intensive program of social education adapted to the varying degrees of intellectual culture. It is necessary with all care and diligence to procure the widest possible diffusion of the teachings of the Church, even among the working-classes. The minds of men must be illuminated with the sure light of Catholic teaching, and their wills must be drawn to follow and apply it as the norm of right living in the conscientious fulfillment of their manifold social duties. Thus they will oppose that incoherence and discontinuity in Christian life which We have many times lamented. For there are some who, while exteriorly faithful to the practice of their religion, yet in the field of labor and industry, in the professions, trade and business, permit a deplorable cleavage in their conscience, and live a life too little in conformity with the clear principles of justice and Christian charity. Such lives are a scandal to the weak, and to the malicious a pretext to discredit the Church.

58. *Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever.* Those who permit themselves to be deceived into lending their aid towards the triumph of Communism in their own country, will be the first to fall victims of their error.

71. Many times Our paternal heart has been saddened by the divergencies—often idle in their causes, always tragic in their consequences—which array in opposing camps the sons of the same Mother Church. Thus it is that the radicals, who are not so very numerous, profiting by this discord are able to make it more acute, and end by pitting Catholics one against the other. Those who make a practice of spreading dissension among Catholics assume a terrible responsibility before God and the Church.

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

HIS LIFE AND CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS MATERIALISM



Alexander Solzhenitsyn was born in Russia on December 11, 1918. His father had enlisted as a volunteer when war broke out in 1914. He became an artillery officer on the German front, fought throughout the war and died in the summer of 1918, six months before Alexander was born.

In 1941, a few days before the outbreak of the Second World War, Alexander graduated from the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Rostov University. Later, because of his mathematical knowledge, he was transferred to an artillery school, from which, after a crash course, he graduated in November 1942. Immediately after this he was put in command of a company that found artillery positions, and in this capacity served without a break in the front line until he was arrested in February 1945.

He was arrested on the grounds of some correspondence with a school friend in 1944 and 1945, primarily because of certain disrespectful remarks about Stalin—although they referred to him in

disguised terms. As a further basis for this accusation, they used the drafts of stories and reflections which had been found in his map case. These, however, were not sufficient for a prosecution, and in July 1945 he was “sentenced” in his absence, in accordance with a procedure then frequently applied, after a resolution by the OSO (the Special Committee of the Soviet secret police), to eight years in a detention camp, at that time, a mild sentence.

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich: First Description of the Soviet System of Death Camps

He served the first part of his sentence in several correctional work camps of mixed types. In 1950 he was sent to the newly established “Special Camps” which were intended solely for political prisoners. In the town of Ekibastuz in Kazakhstan (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*), he worked in a camp as a miner, a bricklayer, and a foundryman. There he contracted a tumor which required an operation, although the condition was not cured.

One month after he had served the full term of his eight-year sentence, there came, without any new judgment, an administrative decision to the effect that he was not to be released but *exiled for life* to Kok-Terek (southern Kazakhstan). This measure was not directed exclusively against him, but was a very common procedure at that time. He served this exile from March 1953 (on March 5th, when Stalin’s death was made public, he was allowed for the first time to go out without an escort) until June 1956. By this time his cancer had developed rapidly, and at the end of 1953, he was very near death. He was unable to eat, he could not sleep and was severely affected by the effects from the tumor. During all his years in exile, he taught mathematics and physics in a primary school, and during his hard and lonely existence he wrote prose in secret (in the camp he could only write

down poetry from memory). He managed, however, to keep what he had written and to take it with him to the European part of the country, where, in the same way, he continued, as far as the outer world was concerned, to occupy himself with teaching and, in secret, to devote himself to writing.

Until 1961, not only was he convinced that he would never see a single line of his printed while he lived, but, also, he scarcely allowed any of his close acquaintances to read anything he had written because he feared it would become known. Finally, at the age of 42, his secret authorship began to wear him down. The most difficult thing of all to bear was that he could not get his works judged by people with literary training. In 1961, after the 22nd Congress of the U.S.S.R. Communist Party and Tvardovsky’s speech at this congress, he decided to emerge and to offer *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

This novella made him a celebrity during the post-Stalin political thaw. Within a decade, Solzhenitsyn was awarded the 1970 Nobel Prize for Literature but was out of favor again for his work, and was being harassed by the KGB secret police. In 1973, the first of the three volumes of *The Gulag Archipelago*, a detailed account of the systematic Soviet abuses from 1918 to 1956 in the vast network of its prison and labor camps, was published in the West. Its publication sparked a furious backlash in the Soviet press, which denounced him as a traitor.

Critique of Western Materialism

Early in 1974, the Soviet authorities stripped him of his citizenship and expelled him from the country. He settled in Vermont, in the US, where he completed the other two volumes of *The Gulag Archipelago*. While living there as a recluse, he railed against what he saw as the moral corruption of the West. His views found a prominent expression in his famous “Harvard Address” (1978), where he denounced the West for its materialism.

THE “HARVARD ADDRESS”

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, addressing an assembly at Harvard University in June of 1978, offered profound insights on the West and the future of Western society. His thoughts sprang from a profoundly Christian mindset (Solzhenitsyn was Orthodox). His most important ideas can be gathered from his address:

- 1) Abuse of liberty;
- 2) Abuse of the press;
- 3) moral dangers;
- 4) decline of courage and legalism;
- 5) Spirit of Enlightenment: Communism in the East and Materialism in the West;
- 6) No God.

1) Solzhenitsyn accuses the West of abusing of liberty.

The individual’s independence from many types of state pressure has been guaranteed; the majority of the people have been granted well-being to an extent their fathers and grandfathers could not even dream about; it has become possible to

raise young people according to these ideals, preparing them for and summoning them toward physical bloom, happiness, and leisure, the possession of material goods, money, and leisure, toward an almost unlimited freedom in the choice of pleasures. So who should now renounce all this, why and for the sake of what should one risk one's precious life in defense of the common good and particularly in the nebulous case when the security of one's nation must be defended in an as yet distant land?

And yet in early democracies, as in American democracy at the time of its birth, all individual human rights were granted on the ground that man is God's creature. That is, freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility. Such was the heritage of the preceding one thousand years. Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual be granted boundless freedom with no purpose, simply for the satisfaction of his whims.

2) Among the false liberties, according to Solzhenitsyn, is pre-eminently the freedom of the press.

The press, too, of course, enjoys the widest freedom. (I shall be using the word "press" to include all the media.) But what use does it make of it?

Here again, the overriding concern is not to infringe the letter of the law. There is no true moral responsibility for distortion or disproportion. What sort of responsibility does a journalist or a newspaper have to the readership or to history? If they have misled public opinion by inaccurate information or wrong conclusions, even if they have contributed to mistakes on a state level, do we know of any case of open regret voiced by the same journalist or the same newspaper? No; this would damage sales. A nation may be the worse for such a mistake, but the journalist always gets away with it. It is most likely that he will start writing the exact opposite to his previous statements with renewed aplomb.

The press can act the role of public opinion or miseducate it. Thus we may see terrorists heroized, or secret matters pertaining to the nation's defense publicly revealed, or we may witness shameless intrusion into the privacy of well-known people according to the slogan "Everyone is entitled to know everything." (But this is a false slogan of a false era; far greater in value is the forfeited right of people not to know, not to have their divine souls stuffed with gossip, nonsense, vain talk. A person who works and leads a meaningful life has no need for this excessive and burdening flow of information.)

There is yet another surprise for someone coming from the totalitarian East with its rigorously unified press: One discovers a common trend of preferences within the Western press as a whole (the spirit of the time), generally accepted patterns of judgment, and maybe common corporate interests, the sum effect being not competition but unification. Unrestrained freedom exists for the press, but not for readership, because newspapers mostly transmit in a forceful and emphatic way those opinions which do not too openly contradict their own and that general trend.

Without any censorship in the West, fashionable trends of thought and ideas are fastidiously separated from those that are not fashionable, and the latter, without ever being forbidden have little chance of finding their way into periodicals or books or being heard in colleges. Your scholars are free in the legal sense, but they are hemmed in by the idols of the prevailing fad. There is no open violence, as in the East; however, a selection dictated by fashion and the need to accommodate mass standards frequently prevents the most independent-minded persons from contributing to public life and gives rise to dangerous herd instincts that block dangerous herd development.

3) Among the "false liberties" there are, of course, the consequences: the moral dangers (sin!) like pornography and rock music.

On the other hand, destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space. Society has turned out to have scarce defense against the abyss of human decadence, for example against the misuse of liberty for moral violence against young people, such as motion pictures full of pornography, crime, and horror. This is all considered to be part of freedom and to be counterbalanced, in theory, by the young people's right not to look and not to accept. Life organized legalistically has thus shown its inability to defend itself against the corrosion of evil.

Of course, a society cannot remain in an abyss of lawlessness, as is the case in our country. But it is also demeaning for it to stay on such a soulless and smooth plane of legalism, as is the case in yours. After the suffering of decades of violence and oppression, the human soul longs for things higher, warmer, and purer than those offered by today's mass living habits, introduced as by a calling card by the revolting invasion of commercial advertising, by TV stupor, and by intolerable music.

4) The most noteworthy explanations given by Solzhenitsyn are a purely formalistic understanding of the law (he calls it "legalism"), what amounts to the abuse of the law as an instrument of the stronger, and the "lack of courage."

A decline in courage may be the most striking feature that an outside observer notices in the West today. The Western world has lost its civic courage, both as a whole and separately, in each country, in each government, in each political party, and, of course, in the United Nations. Such a decline in courage is particularly noticeable among the ruling and intellectual elites, causing an impression of a loss of courage by the entire society. There are many courageous individuals, but they have no determining influence on public life.

Western society has chosen for itself the organization best suited to its purposes and one I might call legalistic. The limits of human rights and rightness are determined by a system of laws; such limits are very broad. People in the West have acquired considerable skill in using, interpreting, and manipulating law (though laws tend to be too complicated for an average person to understand without the help of an expert). Every conflict is solved according to the letter of the law and this is considered to be the ultimate solution.

I have spent all my life under a Communist regime, and I will tell you that a society without any objective legal scale is a terrible one indeed. But a society based on the letter of the law and never reaching any higher fails to take full advantage of the full range of human possibilities. The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven of legalistic relationships, this creates an atmosphere of spiritual mediocrity that paralyzes man's noblest impulses.

5) A most interesting point in Solzhenitsyn's analysis is what we could call the "conversion of Eastern Communism and Western Materialism." He indeed sees both movements as parallel and as equally distant from true spirituality.

Subsequently, however, all such limitations were eroded everywhere in the West; a total emancipation occurred from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice. State systems were becoming ever more materialistic. The West has finally achieved the rights of man, and even excess, but man's sense of responsibility to God and society has grown dimmer and dimmer. In the past decades, the legalistic selfishness of the Western approach to the world has reached its peak and the world has found itself in a harsh spiritual crisis and a political impasse. All the celebrated technological achievements of progress, including the conquest of outer space, do not redeem the twentieth century's moral poverty, which no one could have imagined even as late as the nineteenth century.

This statement has proved to be not entirely unreasonable. One does not see the same stones in the foundations of an eroded humanism and of any type of socialism: boundless materialism; freedom from religion and religious responsibility (which under Communist regimes attains the stage of antireligious dictatorship); concentration on social structures with an allegedly scientific approach. (This last is typical of both the Age of Enlightenment and of Marxism.) It is no accident that all of communism's rhetorical vows revolve around Man (with a capital M) and his earthly happiness. At first glance it seems an ugly parallel: common traits in the thinking and way of life of today's West and today's East? But such is the logic of materialistic development.

I am not examining the case of a disaster brought on by a world war and the changes which it would produce in society. But as long as we wake up every morning under a peaceful sun, we must lead an everyday life. Yet there is a disaster which is already very much with us. I am referring to the calamity of an autonomous, irreligious, humanistic consciousness.


It has made man the measure of all things on earth—imperfect man, who is never free of pride, self-interest, envy, vanity, and dozens of other defects. We are now paying for the mistakes which were not properly appraised at the beginning of the journey. On the way from the Renaissance to our days we have enriched our experience, but we have lost the concept of a Supreme Complete Entity which used to restrain our passions and our irresponsibility.

We have placed too much hope in politics and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life. It is trampled by the party mob in the East, by the commercial one in the West. This is the essence of the crisis: the split in the world is less terrifying than the similarity of the disease afflicting its main sections.

6) Like an apologist he finally concludes with the reality of God, even if he is not using the name.

If, as claimed by humanism, man were born only to be happy, he would not be born to die. Since his body is doomed to death, his task on earth evidently must be more spiritual: not a total engrossment in everyday life, not the search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then their carefree consumption. It has to be the fulfillment of a permanent, earnest duty so that one's life journey may become above all an experience of moral growth: to leave life a better human being than one started it.

Even if we are spared destruction by war, life will have to change in order not to perish on its own. We cannot avoid reassessing the fundamental definitions of human life and society. Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no Superior Spirit above him? Is it right that man's life and society's activities should be ruled by material expansion above all? Is it permissible to promote such expansion to the detriment of our integral spiritual life?

In 1990, Solzhenitsyn's citizenship was restored, and he moved back to Russia in 1994. In 2000, his last major work, *Two Hundred Years Together*, examined the position of Jews in Russian society and their role in the Revolution. Solzhenitsyn died from a heart condition on August 3, 2008. 

Biographical notes compiled by Angelus Press.



Starting from Zero

PART 3

J A M E S K A L B, E S Q.

The first part of this series discussed scientism and liberalism. The second outlined a more adequate view of knowledge that is capable of supporting a better way of life, and argued that the teaching authority of the Church would be at the center of any basic improvement.

But how more specifically can we put things on track? The answer, I believe, is to work from the inside out: convert ourselves, and then the world. Philosophical arguments are good and necessary, but arguments do not save us, and they will not be effective with many people unless they are part of a way of life that works. So beyond fighting the intellectual battles we must, for the sake of others as well as ourselves, pay attention to how we live.

Prayer and Fasting

Each must start with himself. The reconstruction of Catholic order includes things as simple as turning away from what is wrong, trying to live rightly and well, and going to confession and trying again when we fall short. We prepare the way for a social revival by living like Catholics.

Most basically, though, Catholic order depends on God. It cannot be willed into existence, and the practices that make it what it is must reflect its basic nature. In particular, they must include prayer and fasting. Modernity makes our knowledge self-contained and our satisfaction the goal of what we do. Social action becomes social engineering, so that internal

conversion becomes irrelevant. Prayer and fasting are a direct denial of such a view and are indispensable to rejection of modernism. We cannot restore our relation to the true and the good or establish a better social order without them. For similar reasons, we cannot do those things without liturgy.

Intellectual Culture

Building a Catholic order requires turning the mind around as well as the spirit. We have traced the problems of modernity to the inadequacies of modern reason. Our current predicament thus has an essential intellectual aspect: how can we dig ourselves out of the conceptual hole into which we have fallen that makes it impossible to deal intelligently with our other problems?

An adequate response would require a whole theory of education, but a few comments that are particularly relevant to our situation may be helpful. I will mainly borrow them from Plato, the first great theorist of education and in many ways an *anima naturaliter Christiana*.

In the *Republic*, Plato gives a penetrating discussion of the cave of material appearance and socially-accepted error that he believes holds most men prisoner. To escape from that cave he emphasizes the importance of personal conversion—of standing up and turning away from error—and also of attention to two things that are visibly present in our world but also point to non-physical realities: mathematics and beauty.

Mathematics studies non-material realities that order the world around us. Its central position in modern natural science gives an edge to the Pope's question at Regensburg: if science can tell us about the world by reducing it to rational order, then the world must be intrinsically rational. But what is the source of that rationality? The place in science of something as purely rational as mathematics is a problem for scientism. Catholic education should highlight both the strengths and the limitations of science. Mathematics is key to both.

The place of beauty in human life is also a problem for scientism, one that is likely to be more relevant to common experience and so easier to make clear to most people. A defect of technological modernity is that it knows nothing of beauty. On the scientific view, it is just a matter of taste or preference: as the utilitarian moralist Jeremy Bentham noted, from his point of view pushpin (a children's game) is as good as poetry.

The problem with such a view is that it is not true to the world as we find it. Beauty forces itself on us as something that cannot be reduced to personal taste or preference. Our perception of it depends on personal taste, just as our perception of truth depends on personal intelligence, experience, and good sense, but the presence of a personal element does not make a perception simply subjective.¹ The dogma that excludes from reality what is difficult to analyze and impossible to measure cannot deal with our actual experience of the world. Beauty is not an add-on but part of how things are. An adequate view of reason—of reality and how we grasp it—must give it the importance it deserves.

Beauty knits the world together by connecting it to something above physical fact, and it gives us pleasure doing so. It attracts and pleases as well as illuminates and sustains. That is its power. Although it gives pleasure, it is no less at odds with the technological spirit than prayer and fasting. You cannot force beauty. Technique can serve it but cannot create it. You have to wait on it and let it be what it is.

An emphasis on beauty is necessary not only for Catholic education but for Catholic culture generally. It gives us an immediate perception of the presence of something transcendent that is worthy of our love in the world around us. As such, it is an image of the Incarnation. Catholics have more right than anyone to that perception and image. When Catholics lack a sense of beauty their faith can seem less an absorbing way of life that discloses the reality of things than one pursuit or faction among others—a matter of rules and team spirit and not much else. When they have it, and their faith becomes beautiful, it becomes visibly what it is.

Catholic Community

Our efforts cannot be merely individual. Our life as Catholics is essentially social. To be Catholic is to

be part of the Church. In addition, our surroundings affect us, and sometimes they do not leave us alone. Little Greek boys used to grow up knowing Homer. I grew up knowing cigarette jingles, because that is what was around me. So in addition to trying to be Catholic ourselves, we have to build Catholic communities pervaded by Catholic understandings and sensibilities.

Liberalism and Community

That creates special problems today. The greatest strength of the current order—a strength that enables it to maintain itself with minimal use of overt force—is its ability to destroy all order other than that established by markets and bureaucracies. It infects and paralyzes its victims before it swallows them. It does so in a variety of ways:

- The development of the social services state radically undercuts the function of local institutions and networks of mutual assistance.²
- In particular, the social services state has absorbed or at least thoroughly colonized education and the rearing of children, which are becoming ever more socialized and professionalized.
- The liberal conception of nondiscrimination and human rights has led to a pervasive regulatory network that makes it all but impossible for institutions of any size to be anything but liberal. To avoid lawsuits, they must all “celebrate diversity.”
- Multiculturalism, together with “tolerance” and “inclusiveness” as supreme goals, have deprived informal cultural standards of authority and so rendered them nonfunctional.
- Equality demands reversal of the benefits of informal cultural standards. If they lead to better family life that means success, it is unjust and something must be done about it!
- In any event, feminism and gay rights have deprived the family of specific purpose and structure. It is no longer an institution but only a name for a variety of purely private arrangements, none of which can be treated as better than any other and none of which has any authority.
- What the state begins, technology and commerce finish—or vice versa. Electronic entertainment, fast food, and the automobile replace family life. Television and the Internet make every point on earth equally present to every other point and so abolish privacy, particularity, and settled connections. And pop culture and advertising propagandize self-indulgence and consumerism as the highest goods.

Under such conditions, Catholics seem to have a choice among sectarianism, individualized religion, or assimilation to something radically anti-Catholic. Of those possibilities, sectarianism seems the least bad.

Assimilated or radically individualized Catholicism is nothing much, and something is better than nothing.

Catholic Communities and the World

So it seems that in their community life Catholics are likely to have two major tasks in the decades to come. The first is establishing a separate Catholic social order, with its own customs and institutions, within an anti-Catholic and increasingly anti-human public order. Catholics in non-Catholic countries used to live in such an order; they need to do so again, since the attempt to do without one has failed. The second is minimizing the disadvantages of such a separate order, for example intellectual isolation and inability to speak to outsiders.

On both points, the decline and corruption of what passes for our public order is likely to be very helpful. In liberal theory Catholic institutions and communities should not be allowed to exist at all—they can exist only by discriminating against what is not Catholic, and liberal theory demands that all significant social institutions be inclusive. Nonetheless, a corrupt and inefficient public order with a stated commitment to diversity is likely to leave some scope for their existence.

The triumph of Christianity came when paganism could no longer support social cohesion or sustain intellectual life, and first the state and then the top thinkers became Christian. The same could happen again. Secular life grows increasingly nonfunctional, and our rulers need society to function at least minimally. That need may motivate some degree of toleration and even cooperation with Catholic institutions. We already see that tendency in connection with Catholic schools. In addition, the siren song of secular intellectual, artistic, and social culture that often distracts Catholics from Catholic life is likely to be increasingly muted in the years to come as liberal culture continues its decline into incoherence.

Catholicism in a Non-Catholic World

While Catholic life has to maintain its integrity, it cannot be completely separate. It must be supported by practical efforts to change the orientation of politics and social life generally. Such efforts are our duty as Catholics and as citizens.

Political action is partly a matter of self-defense. Liberalism is very rational in its way. It has its own logic that it is inclined to pursue without limit, because in the long run it has no place for informal restraints like common sense. That logic can lead to strange and sometime frightening results. There have been proposals, for example, to treat teaching your children Christianity as child abuse.

Political Involvement

Political involvement is therefore a necessity. Our political efforts should include

- An attempt to change the principles on which public life is carried on, at least to the extent of making them less aggressively liberal.
- Defense of centers of Catholic life, and so of the right of families and religious and community institutions to run their own affairs. The defense of homeschooling would be an example.
- A defense of whatever traditional order is still present in social life generally. That would include life issues and the defense of marriage.

A great deal can be said on each of these topics. Each of us has something to add, and none of us knows it all. I will make my own contribution by commenting on a very few points.

Public Principle

Of all these goals, the most basic is the first. Liberalism imprisons thought, so if public principles change and become less rigidly liberal, the range of possibilities can broaden immensely.

To change public principles, the most important single measure is to present an alternative clearly and forcefully. We need to put modernist reason in question. To do that we must clarify our thoughts, keep them clear, and wake others up.

People who reject religion or assimilate it to liberalism feel entitled to presume reason is on their side. Richard Dawkins and others want to call atheists “brights.” The courts overthrow traditional understandings that are as basic as recognition of marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman because (they say) there is “no rational basis” for them.

It may be difficult to convert people who take such positions, but their power depends on the acquiescence of people who are much less committed. We should therefore insist that counterarguments exist, and if our rulers want (as they say they want) their decisions to be based on reason, and if they want them to be accepted, they should make arguments for their views that take the counterarguments into account.

To put them to that task, we have to present a better view of reason in every possible setting. Natural law and reason are Catholic but not only Catholic. Others can understand them as well, and we should learn to present them lucidly and in terms others can understand. In learning how to speak to others we question our own habits and assumptions, which are often implicitly liberal and modernist, and so convert ourselves and solidify our faith.

The modern understanding of reason cannot meet human needs. The point to push, therefore, is that people should consider whether the answers

modernity gives them are adequate to their actual experience of life. Rather than engaging liberals by accepting their stated principles, which invariably lead back to scientism and liberalism, we should point out the real principles by which they live, which always smuggle objective goods back in to make their system minimally workable.

Changing something as basic as a conception of reason is not easy. If we preach the word in season and out of season, however, people will get used to hearing what we have to say even if it takes them a while to understand what it means. And if they do understand it, and it makes sense to them, first the discussion and then the possibilities of social order can change radically.

A New Apologetics

The Left has made a practice of attacking the remnants of traditional order at their weakest points. We need to do the same. The difficulty of silencing all discussion in modern society, and the stated preference for reason, present obvious opportunities. We live in a target-rich environment with a thousand fora in which we can present views based on a version of reason at odds with the one established.

We can counter the Left's one-liners ("Freedom!" "Equality!" "Tolerance!" "Reason!") with comebacks of our own, backed by serious theories about man and the world. There should be a conscious effort among Catholics to organize for and carry on such exchanges. There is no reason the Left should always be on the attack and individual Catholics should be left each to himself to fumble around for responses to sophistry.

Why, we might ask, do we do anything at all? Because we feel like it, or to take part in a larger pattern? If the former, discussion is at an end; if the latter, what is the pattern? Such questions are always relevant and can be brought into every setting imaginable, for example:

- What is education? Is it purely technological or does it connect us to a larger world of tradition and value?
- If it is purely technological, just a matter of getting what we want as efficiently as possible, why all the indoctrination?
- If it is about values, what values and whose? Liberal values are values too!

People try to shrug such questions off or rule them out of order. You can tell when a question is a good one: nobody wants to deal with it. The key is to keep raising issues as many ways as possible, until they cannot be shrugged off and others start raising them on their own.

Defense of the Local

As always, clarity and forthrightness in principle need to be combined with caution on practical issues. Not all grand principles can be put into effect directly. Practicalities and particular arrangements intervene. Also, you cannot force compliance with the good, beautiful, and true. It is important to make them present, but their effect has to grow up largely of itself: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:20).

We must give the good, beautiful, and true a place to act, however, one not fully integrated into the liberal world order. Defense of Catholic life therefore requires opposition to globalism and the all-competent administrative state. It requires decentralization, limited government, and localism.

Such concerns touch on a contrast between European and American traditionalism. The former grew up in a still comparatively rooted society in which the ideal of the confessional state was quite realistic. It has therefore been receptive to the idea of strong paternalistic government. Statements of the social teachings of the Church, as well as Church support for such institutions as the European Union and United Nations, often seem to follow the Europeans on that point. Memories of the Roman Empire and its would-be Medieval successors may also play a role in ecclesiastical attitudes.

American traditionalism grew up in an explicitly liberal public order devoted to liberty, prosperity, and security as the highest public goals. That history has made American traditionalists less receptive to the allure of big government. (American conservatives, or people calling themselves that, have sometimes been overly receptive to the allure of big business, but that is another issue.)

The American view may be less complete in itself, to the extent it tends to treat the highest goods as nonpolitical and therefore perhaps essentially private, but today it is more realistic in practice. For Catholics to favor wide-ranging government involvement in social life under present circumstances is madness. Why should they want education, medicine, and the care of children and the elderly to be run by a government based on the principles of present-day liberalism? As long as governments are run on their present principles, we should want their activities to be very narrowly restricted. "Catholic libertarian" is no doubt an oxymoron in principle. As a matter of what institutions make sense now, though, it cannot be altogether dismissed.

Reaching Out

Provocation can be useful on occasion—it can wake people up—but clarity must often be combined with the search for common ground. Political action is likely to be more productive if you can make use of what is already on the scene: Catholic proliferators need the help

of Baptists. And on a more basic level, the world is more likely to listen if you seem to wish it well. It helps conversion to show that what you propose is implicit in what is already believed.

With that in mind, we should emphasize that “Catholic” and “American” are not at odds with each other as long as the proper priorities are maintained. As each is traditionally conceived, the American Way is thought to be at odds with the Catholic way. Still, the “American way” is simply the way Americans have lived together, and as such it is not captured by its rhetorical formulations. It could not exist at all if the good, beautiful, and true were not present in it. If evil is a deficiency, then what is best is what is most real in it.

So why not denounce and debunk the formulations and present a better version of America? Many American institutions, like federalism and voluntary local action, are consistent with Catholic principles like subsidiarity. We should build on that. Catholicism, we can say quite truly, is a better and truer American Way that brings to fruition what is best in American tradition. It did not make the Greeks less Greek or the Romans less Roman. Why should it make Americans less American?

Obviously you have to avoid the reverse approach, the claim that Americanism is a better and truer Catholicism. There is a tendency to define America as an enterprise, cause, or religion, or at best as a legal order motivated by freedom and equality, rather than a country or people. To the extent that tendency prevails, Catholic support for “America” cannot be counted on. Also, modern ways of thinking have a genius for invading, colonizing, and transforming other traditions, and the genius of America has been its ability to assimilate. Catholics must resist those tendencies.

Still, the Church has always been willing, when possible, to baptize local customs. Liberals have been able to sound moderate while steadily advancing their cause. Can Catholics learn from them? If we are very clear on fundamentals, we should be able to be flexible on presentation and political tactics. Until recently, perhaps, whoever has not been with us has been against us. When the tide turns against scientism and liberalism, because of their intrinsic failures, the reverse will hold, and when that reversal comes we should be ready to take advantage of it.

Conclusion

When things are at their worst there is the most room on the upside. Even today, in the world of Obama, McCain, and MTV, we can work to clarify the situation and show the way to something better.

Our advantage is that the truth will out. Liberalism seems all-powerful, but it leaves out too much and cannot last. Victory makes it increasingly corrupt. If getting your way is the ultimate reality, there is no basis for the sacrifices even ordinary honesty requires. For illustrations, look at news stories about corruption in Brussels and at the UN.


It is hard to live happily or well as a liberal. Crude measures like surveys of reported happiness and charitable giving show as much. There are too many things the outlook cannot deal with. The future belongs to people with children, for example, and liberalism does not fit well with family life. Liberals do not have children.

In contrast, to live as a Catholic is also to live for others. That is true even for a hermit in the desert. Even on the purely natural level, people will notice if the way we live is better for its adherents and more helpful to others.

To put the issue in marketing terms, there is a big gap in the intellectual and lifestyle products now on offer. What is being sold is flashy and claims to solve all problems, but it does not work. If established views do not clear the way for a good way of life, people will look for something better. If we live well ourselves, we will offer them what they need.

We cannot expect fast results, but we have good reason to be confident in the ultimate outcome. It can seem like we are getting nowhere, but it is not possible to know that. Pour water into a bucket full of sand, and it looks like nothing is happening, and then the bucket overflows.

The Soviet Union looked like it was going to last forever, but did not. The same is likely to be true of liberalism. Basic issues cannot be suppressed forever, and they can reassert themselves very quickly when the wind changes. The realization that the emperor has no clothes is sudden and changes everything. And as Catholics we have ultimate assurance that the gates of Hell will not prevail.

The question is how we should live now, and what there will be to pick up the pieces left by the ultimate disintegration of liberalism. The fall of communism in Russia has meant mafia rule and collapse of life expectancies. I hope things do not go so badly in the liberal West, and that we can do better when the present order falls apart. Our task, as citizens as well as Catholics, is to prepare for that day. The more the issues have been thought through, and the better the available alternatives, the better things will go for ourselves and our country. 

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¹ For a ground-breaking study of the objectivity of aesthetic value by a scientifically-trained architectural theorist, see Christopher Alexander, *The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe* (Berkeley, CA: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2002–2004).

² The writings of family scholar Allan C. Carlson are very helpful on this point.

This part, (postponed from the July issue), concludes Chapter 6 on Ecumenism with a close look at the Prayer Meeting of Religions at Assisi, October 26, 1986; the Balamand Declaration of 1993; and the effects and moral implications of false ecumenism.

Catechism Of the Crisis In the Church

51) How should the prayer meeting of religions at Assisi be judged?

The prayer meeting of religions held at Assisi on October 27, 1986, was an unprecedented scandal, leading souls into error.¹ It was also a sin against the First Commandment of God: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before me." Never had the Church been so humiliated as when the Pope put himself on the same level as the heads of all the religions and sects. So doing, he gave the impression that the Catholic Church is but one religious community amongst many others that must work together to establish peace on earth—as if there could be another peace than in the conversion of men to Christ and His Church!

You must not consent to be yoke-fellows with unbelievers. What is there in common between light and darkness? What harmony between Christ and Belial? How can a believer

throw in his lot with an infidel? How can the temple of God have any commerce with idols? (II Cor. 6:14-16)²

- ***How did the Pope put himself on the same level as the heads of all the false religions and sects?***

During his welcome address, which took place in Notre Dame Basilica, the Pope was seated on the same kind of chair as the heads of the other religions. Everything that might have given the impression of the Pope's precedence was avoided; all had to appear to be equals.

- ***Did not the Pope make a profession of his faith in Jesus Christ at Assisi?***

The Pope gave witness to his *personal* faith in Jesus Christ; but, despite the command given by Christ in sending His Apostles on their mission, he did not ask the representatives of these religions to convert to Christ. To the contrary, he invited them to pray to their false gods:

We shall go from here to our separate places of prayer. Each religion will have the time and opportunity to express itself in its own traditional rite. Then from these separate places of prayer, we will walk in silence towards the lower Square of Saint Francis. Once gathered in the Square, again each religion will be able to present its own prayer, one after the other.

Having thus prayed separately, we shall meditate in silence on our own responsibility to work for peace. We shall then declare symbolically our commitment to peace. At the end of the Day, I shall try to express what this unique celebration will have said to my heart, as a believer in Jesus Christ and the first servant of the Catholic Church.³

● ***Afterwards, were not efforts made to convert to Christ the representatives of the different religions?***

Not only was nothing done at Assisi for the conversion of non-Christians, but Cardinal Etchegaray even declared on the square of St. Francis's Basilica that it was very important that the members of the different religions remain faithful to their false faith:

We come from numerous religious traditions across the world; we are meeting together in total fidelity to our own religious traditions, quite conscious of the identity of the involvement of everyone in his own faith. We are gathered here without any trace of syncretism. This is what makes for the richness and value of this prayer meeting.⁴

● ***Did non-Christian religious worship take place during the World Day of Prayer at Assisi?***

Not only did non-Christian worship take place publicly, but places of Catholic worship were placed at the disposition of the false religions. When one considers that a Catholic church is a sacred place consecrated uniquely to the worship of the most Blessed Trinity, one cannot but think of the "abomination of desolation" announced by Christ (Mt. 24:15).

● ***But didn't the Vatican nonetheless scrupulously avoid common prayer of Christians with non-Christians, and specify that it was not a matter of praying together, but of being together to pray?***⁵

This formula seems more like a temporary concession made to the opponents of the meeting at Assisi than the expression of the Pope's thought. As early as 1979, in his inaugural encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II announced his intention of establishing "prayer in common" with the members of other religions.⁶ In any case, the simple fact of publicly promoting the practice of false religions, with the implication that they are pleasing to God, is already an enormous scandal even if one does not participate in it directly. God has often shown that He holds false religions in abomination, and especially idolatry, the *summum* of all superstitions.

● ***Can it not be said that John Paul II encouraged these prayers and worship as expressions of natural religion, and not as false religions?***

The gathering at Assisi was not a matter of individual prayer, of man in his personal relationship

with God, but rather of the prayer of the divers religions as such, with their own rites addressed to their particular divinities. These cults, being the public expression of false beliefs, are, in and of themselves, insults proffered to God. Moreover, Sacred Scripture, in both the Old and the New Testaments, teaches that the only prayer pleasing to God is the prayer of the one He has established as the sole mediator between Himself and men, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that this prayer is only to be found in the true religion.

● ***Didn't John Paul II attempt to justify his initiative at Assisi?***

John Paul II tried several times to justify the meeting at Assisi, particularly in the speech he addressed to the cardinals on December 22, 1986.

● ***What is most striking in the speech of December 22?***

What is most striking about this speech is that the Pope cites the Second Vatican Council 35 times without mentioning any other magisterial document. He notably asserts that "the appropriate key to understanding so great an event is found in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council."⁷ He elaborates:

The event of Assisi can thus be considered as a visible illustration, an object lesson, a catechesis understandable by all, of the presuppositions and signification of our commitment to the ecumenism and interreligious dialogue recommended and promoted by the Second Vatican Council.⁸

● ***In this speech, how does John Paul II justify theologically the interreligious gathering at Assisi?***

Besides the 35 references to Vatican II, John Paul II justifies the inter-religious prayer meeting of Assisi by asserting: "All authentic prayer is inspired by the Holy Ghost, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every man."

● ***What can be said about this statement?***

This statement contains two affirmations, the first of which is ambiguous ("All authentic prayer is inspired by the Holy Ghost"), and the second is clearly false ("The Holy Ghost is mysteriously present in the heart of every man").

● ***Why is it ambiguous to assert that every authentic prayer is inspired by the Holy Ghost?***

The sentence is ambiguous because its truth or falsehood depends on the meaning given to the word "authentic." If by "authentic prayer" is meant a prayer in which a person really elevates his heart and mind to the one true God, then the sentence is undoubtedly true. But if it means "any sincere prayer," it is seriously erroneous (the prayer of the Buddhist before an idol of Buddha, like that of the animist sorcerer or the terrorist Muslim, can be sincere, but that certainly does not mean that it is inspired by the Holy Ghost).

● ***Why is it false to say that the Holy Ghost is mysteriously present in the heart of every man?***

During a baptism, the priest commands the devil: "Depart from him, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Consoler."⁹ This surely indicates that the Holy Ghost was not indwelling in that soul.

● ***What may we conclude on this subject?***

Clearly, a false proposition underlies the justification of the prayer meeting of religions at Assisi.

● ***If John Paul II showed great respect for the false religions at Assisi, did these religions show a like respect for Catholicism?***

The Muslims shamelessly took advantage of the meeting at Assisi to profess their faith in Allah as the only correct way. This is the prayer they offered for peace:

It is Thou whom we adore, it is Thou whom we implore. Lead us on the straight path, the path of those upon whom Thou dost bestow blessings and not of those who anger Thee or go astray.

Sura II:36 of the Koran followed:

Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which had been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.

The Muslims' prayer for peace concluded with Sura 112, recited in Arabic by all the Muslims present:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him.¹⁰

● ***What is remarkable about the Muslim prayers?***

The assertions that God does not beget nor is He begotten and that they make no distinction amongst the prophets expressly take aim against the Catholic faith, which professes that Jesus Christ is not a prophet like the others, but the true Son of God, begotten by the Father before all ages.

● ***How did the Assisi meeting conclude?***

When all the delegations had completed their separate worship service for peace, they returned in silence like pilgrims to the Basilica of St. Francis, where each made a prayer for peace. In the speech closing the day, the Pope alluded to this procession:

While we have walked in silence, we have reflected on the path our human family treads: either in hostility, if we fail to accept one another in love; or as a common journey to our lofty destiny, if we realize that other people are our brothers and sisters. The very fact that we have come to Assisi from various quarters of the world is in itself a sign of this common path which humanity is called to tread. Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others. We hope that this pilgrimage to Assisi has taught us anew to be aware of the common origin and common destiny of humanity. Let us see in it an anticipation of what God would like the developing history of humanity to be: a fraternal journey in which we

accompany one another towards the transcendent goal which he sets for us.¹¹

● ***What can be said about this speech?***

We shall leave the commentary to a high dignitary of Freemasonry—Armando Corona, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Vernal Equinox (Italy):

Our interconfessionalism earned us the excommunication declared by Clement XI in 1738. But the Church was surely in error, if it is true that on October 27, 1986, the current pontiff at Assisi gathered men from every religious confession to pray together for peace. What else were our brethren seeking when they gathered in our temples if not brotherly love, tolerance, solidarity, the defense of the dignity of the human person; considering themselves equals, above political creeds, religious creeds, and skin color?¹²

The ecumenism of Assisi meshes with the Masonic plan: the establishment of a great temple of universal brotherhood above religions and creeds, the "unity in diversity" so dear to the New Age movement and globalism.

52) What are the results of ecumenism?

The results of ecumenism are religious indifferentism and the ruin of the missions. Today the opinion is widespread among Catholics that one can save one's soul equally well in any religion. Missionary work no longer makes sense, and it often happens that churchmen refuse to receive members of other religions into the Catholic Church in spite of their petitions. Missionary activity becomes an aid to socio-economic development. This is in flagrant opposition to the Lord's command (Mt. 28:19):

Going therefore, teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

● ***Can you cite an example of an actual refusal to convert non-Catholics?***

One unimaginable example of this ecumenism is the Balamand Declaration, signed June 23, 1993, at the conclusion of a meeting between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.¹³

● ***In what context was this meeting at Balamand, Lebanon, held?***

It is necessary to understand that since the Greek Schism, several parts of the Eastern Church were reunited to Rome. While keeping their Eastern Rite, they recognize the papal primacy, as did the entire Eastern Church before the schism. These Eastern Catholic Churches experienced a great expansion after the political changes that took place in the Soviet Union (many Orthodox were only in the schism as a result of external pressure and desired to be reunited with the See of Peter). One can comprehend the anger of the Orthodox authorities, who threatened to break

off ecumenical relations. The Balamand conference was an attempt to salvage ecumenism.

● **What does the Balamand Declaration say?**

In §8 of the Declaration, the Eastern Catholic Churches are called “a source of conflicts and of suffering.” It states that in order to justify its “proselytism”—that is to say, its efforts to bring the schismatics back to Catholic unity—“the Catholic Church developed the theological vision according to which she presented herself as the only one to whom salvation was entrusted” (§10). In other words, the constant teaching of the Church, according to which all Christians must be united to the pope, the Supreme Pastor, is reduced to a simple theological opinion developed to justify selfish interests.

● **How does the Balamand agreement conceive of the relations between the Catholic Church and the schismatics?**

The Oriental schismatic Churches are henceforth considered as Sister Churches:

It is in this perspective that the Catholic Churches and the Orthodox Churches recognize each other as Sister Churches, responsible together for maintaining the Church of God in fidelity to the divine purpose, most especially in what concerns unity. According to the words of Pope John Paul II, the ecumenical endeavour of the Sister Churches of East and West, grounded in dialogue and prayer, is the search for perfect and total communion which is neither absorption nor fusion but a meeting in truth and love (cf. *Slavorum Apostoli*, n.27). (§14)

● **What are the consequences of the practical rules agreed to in the Balamand Declaration?**

The Catholic Church expressly renounces trying to convert Oriental schismatics (§12). She even agrees to renounce creating Catholic organizations against the will of the Orthodox where none presently exists (§29). The Declaration concludes:

By excluding for the future all proselytism and all desire for expansion by Catholics at the expense of the Orthodox Church, the commission hopes that it has overcome the obstacles which impelled certain autocephalous Churches to suspend their participation in the theological dialogue and that the Orthodox Church will be able to find itself altogether again for continuing the theological work already so happily begun. (§35)

● **How might one summarize the Balamand accords?**

In short, the Eastern Catholic Churches are considered to be an obstacle to ecumenism. Since, unfortunately, they exist, at the very least they must be forbidden to develop. This policy constitutes a betrayal of all the Christians who for centuries endured great sufferings and even martyrdom to remain faithful to the See of Peter. The churchmen sacrifice their own brothers in the faith solely to keep ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox from stagnating.

● **What realistic assessment of ecumenical dialogue in general can we make?**

Ultimately, ecumenical dialogue always turns to the detriment of the Catholic Church. It is always the Church that retreats and yields, while the other confessions and religions rejoice over the Church’s concessions without taking a single step towards truth.

53) Isn’t ecumenism required for the sake of fraternal charity?

Ecumenism as preached by Vatican II is not an exigency of fraternal charity, but rather a crime committed against it. True charity requires that one both desire and do good to one’s neighbor. In matters religious, this means leading one’s neighbor to the truth. It was an act of true charity when the missionaries of old left their countries, families and friends to go and preach Christ in foreign lands amidst unspeakable dangers and toil. Many laid down their lives, carried off by sickness or violence. Ecumenism, on the contrary, leaves men in their false religions and even confirms them in their errors. It abandons them to error and to the immense danger of losing their souls. While ecumenism may be more comfortable for its proponents than the missionary apostolate, it is not a sign of charity, but rather of laziness, indifference, and human respect. The ecumenical theologians act like doctors who encourage the self-delusion of a gravely ill patient instead of alerting him to the gravity of his condition and treating him. ☒

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *Katholischer Katechismus zur kirchlichen Krise* by Fr. Matthias Gaudron, professor at the Herz Jesu Seminary of the Society of St. Pius X in Zaitzkofen, Germany. The original was published in 1997 by Rex Regum Press, with a preface by the District Superior of Germany, Fr. Franz Schmidberger. This translation is from the second edition (Schloß Jaidhof, Austria: Rex Regum Verlag, 1999) as translated, revised, and edited by the Dominican Fathers of Avrillé in collaboration with the author, with their added subdivisions.

¹ The same kind of interreligious ceremony was repeated at Assisi in January 1993, at Rome in 1999, then again at Assisi, in the Pope’s presence, in January 2002.

² Knox version.

³ John Paul II, Allocution of October 27, 1986, in the Basilica St. Mary of the Angels [English version taken from the Vatican website].

⁴ Cardinal Etchegaray, *DC*, No. 1929 (December 7, 1986), p.1074.

⁵ The expression is John Paul II’s (*DC*, 1929, p.1071).

⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, §6.

⁷ John Paul II, “The State of the World and the Spirit of Assisi,” Discourse to the Cardinals and the Curia, December 22, 1986; *DC* No. 1933 (February 1, 1987), p.133.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.134.

⁹ *Exi ab eo, immunde spiritus, et da locum Spiritui Sancto Paraclito*.

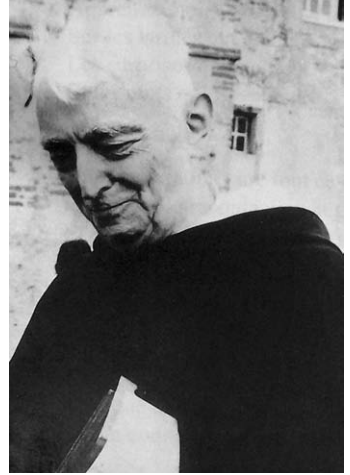
¹⁰ *Documentation Catholique* 1929 (December 7, 1986), pp.1076-77.

¹¹ Pope John Paul II, Address to the Representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of the World Religions at the St. Francis of Assisi Basilica, October 27, 1986 [English version online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1986/october/documents].

¹² Remarks published in *Hiram*, the bulletin of the Grand Orient of Italy, April 1987.

¹³ The text was made public on July 15, 1993, by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Ten Minutes
with Fr. de Chivré:



The Consecration of Sunday

The sacred belongs only to God. Being *consecrated* is the proper form of a man sharing in the absoluteness of God. This can be either permanently through the priesthood, baptism, or confirmation; or by some obligation flowing from those permanent consecrations: the priestly apostolate; living out the faith (baptism); proclaiming that faith (confirmation); or else by obedience to a command of God: the Sunday obligation.

Sunday belongs to God by the sacred character which He gave to it. There is something supernatural in the nature of Sunday. The spontaneous role of the baptized Catholic is to adhere in all sincerity of conscience to that supernatural nature of Sunday by maintaining its consecration to God.

Keeping Sunday holy is first a state of soul. God “needs” me on Sunday as I need Him every single day. God longs to share with all of us something which belongs properly to Him: His own repose, His own plenitude, incommunicable outside of Himself. His repose is source of nourishment, a soundless plenitude, nourishing Him by the intimate communication among the Three. The repose of His power, pleased with what it has done, pleased with what it can continue to do, in continuity of action. And the repose of His being, always ready to shine forth His divinity.

Sunday is the awakening of divine sentiments in us. From the outset, Sunday means clinging to God in virtue of being invited, by the mark of our baptism, to enter where others cannot enter: into God’s secret life.

Baptism is meant to introduce us into the mentality of God the Creator, who remains forever exterior to His creation, intended to exist independently of

Himself; and also the mentality of God the Redeemer, anxious to communicate His interior, ineffable existence. The baptismal mentality continually invites us to that communication. Baptism is meant to make us participate in what God knows and understands of that exterior Creation which is the image of His Power. It makes us participate in what He knows as Redeemer through the intermediary of His only Son Jesus Christ, splendor of the Father of whom He is the image even before existing as a human by the physical collaboration of His Mother.

Sunday has the mission willed by God of placing man’s soul back in God’s restful plenitude. It is a kind of renewed expression of baptism, inviting man, inside and outside, to the intimate wedding feast of divine thought. Sunday is an ever repeated dress-rehearsal for the definitive, eternal wedding feast described by Jesus (Mt. 22:1-14). The King forever sends His servants to invite us to the feast, as baptized Catholics. Those servants are the events, large and small, which invite us, on Sunday, to a marriage-feast of more intimate spiritual communication with God, Providence and Redemption, in His very own house.

That spiritual intimacy helps us to see the place which we ought to occupy at the table of the Master of existence and at the table of His Redemption, that we might nourish our life and our behavior to the maximum value of their divine capacity of interior light and interior affection. It is a meal which is reposing because of the plenitude of its nourishment: one feels completed, armed, reinforced for the coming week, and remade, repaired for the week which is ending.

“I have prepared my wedding feast...I have killed my cattle and my fatted calves, everything is ready. Come to the wedding.”

It is in the imperative, because your baptism dresses you in dispositions to understand, to love, to think more profoundly, to establish yourself nearer to Me, better than last week, right next to Me, filled with the repose necessary to take on the coming week to the benefit of My glory and of your true happiness.

“But they took no account...”

They went off to live their Sunday, one to his field, to his material preoccupation, another to his commerce, to his money; the others seized hold of events to insult Providence, or killed their redemptive meaning. Then the king became angry...

He directed the catastrophic natural events of those cataclysms which no one can escape—epidemics, earthquakes—on those murderers of Sunday. Indeed, the ones primarily responsible for the divine punishments are those invited to the wedding feast and who slunk away under the pretext of their sinful worldliness, soiling their baptismal gown, slinking away from the weekly wedding feast to which they are invited by their baptism.

I believe in the holy divine anger over Sundays which are neutralized by the paganization of the baptismal character—not by forgetfulness or by passing weakness, but by pagan habits, paganized by a kind of thinking far removed from the questions inherent to the nature of baptism. I believe that the paganization of Sunday, expressed by a conscious or unconscious disdain in all of those invited to the weekly banquet and preferring to live at the rhythm of the pagans themselves, causes God a kind of astonishment, often captured by Péguy in his poetry, portraying us as naughty little boys.

We have reached that point by dint of sterilizing Sunday and emptying it of its particular, inexpressible vitality. Its current flows into the water of baptism, a water salted by the grace of God to produce a state of soul which a pagan, even of good will, could neither know nor desire. Without that baptismal Sunday state of soul, our activities no longer express anything beyond our own fallen nature.

A civil but truly Christian people, with leaders consecrated but resolutely Christian in their spontaneous attachment to attitudes dictated by their upright judgment, anxious to uphold the rights of God in the intelligent, human, and formal sanctification of the Lord’s day—that people and those leaders would have the upper hand during the rest of the week over legislation, customs, propositions, fashions, and nauseating pleasures which are unfurling in and over Catholic family institutions in an effort to neutralize them.

We believe that social institutions can only be harmful when we cease to spread the sanctity of Sunday over them, throughout the week, by our decisions. Everything is possible to one who believes

first in God, in His divine, sacramental institutions, sources of repose preceding the battles of the week in order to turn them into victories.


Lord, today, Sunday, is Your day. Today, my belonging to You by baptism takes on a voluntary expression of priority from the minute I wake up, by my gaze turned first and foremost toward what concerns You. I let you lead my intentions so that they might be worthy of belonging to Your thoughts.

Make it so that I might be all day long a “Christopher,” a Christ-bearer helping others to pass over from the pagan shore onto the Christian shore, in accord with my supernatural duties, reposing for everyone; in accord with my examples and my words, free of ostentation but the proof of a living conscience. Make me attentive to Your affairs as I am to my own all week long.

Make me understand that I am invited to the meal of the Trinitary Family in the language of my baptism: speaking with faith in the name of the Father; listening with charity in the name of the Son; answering with hope in the name of the Holy Ghost, in a human language which is precise but attentive to enlightening the Sunday of others by the respect of my own. May my human expression of Sunday not be merely a series of automatic motions, not a series of right-thinking expressions, not a series of attitudes like some kind of sacristan afraid of having forgotten the celebrant’s sweater, maybe causing me a hiccup in the masterly intonation of the first notes of my decisive declarations on the situation in the Church today. No, may it be none of all that.

Rather let it be an attitude worthy of welcoming Sunday as the earth welcomes the rising of the sun. Let it be like the dawn, when the earth is in a direct line to receive the light, for the fecundity of the entire day, allowing it to sing out in growth, in flowers and in fruits worthy of God. Such is Sunday; such is our baptismal regeneration drawing forth a dawn in us, around us, to introduce better than ourselves into the coming week.

What a labor of depaganization there is to be undertaken in the secret of our lives, in favor of the lives of others. This includes the life of our poor country whose supernatural upheavals cry out to the liberty of Christians for help. Our present fate is leading up to the finale: victory or defeat without mercy. The final result will depend upon the Catholic resurrection of each one of us, seeking for God there where He has placed Himself, in order to save the weeks that await us.

The love of Sunday! Lord, may my cry rise up to You! Such is Sunday, such is the power of each one of us, such is what alone can save us: The worship of God! 

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. Originally published in May 1976 as “Le Dimanche Consacré” in *Carnets Spirituels*, No. 6, October 2005, pp.43-47.

What is meant by the expression “The New Evangelization”?

This new expression was consecrated by Pope Paul VI's 1975 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. It refers to a new way of presenting the Gospel, different from preaching and teaching, and much more extensive than these, which is supposedly more adapted to the modern world in which we live. Although no clear definition can be found, Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, gives it a place of great importance. He explains, in fact, that the very concept of evangelization is a historical one, “the encounter of the Gospel with the culture of each epoch” (p.108), and so consequently one that changes according to historical circumstances. It is consequently “linked to generational change” as an “ever renewed encounter with man” (*ibid.*, p.113). The New Evangelization is the fruit of the 1975 Synod of Bishops dedicated to this theme, and is defined by John Paul II as “a response to the new challenges that the contemporary world creates for the mission of the Church” (*ibid.*, p.114). It has “nothing in common with” either restoration or proselytism. But it is not pure pluralism and tolerance either (*ibid.*, p.115). It is “a proclamation of the Gospel capable of accompanying man on his pilgrim way” (*ibid.*, p.117).

But what does this really mean in practice? A recent document (Dec. 14, 2007) from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled “Doctrinal Note on some Aspects of Evangelization” explains this quite clearly. It means substituting for the teaching and public profession of the Faith (the traditional manner of handing down divinely revealed Truth) modern means: personal witness, sharing from person to person, dialogue, and ecumenism. It is the expression of our inalienable right and duty to religious liberty (§10), by which “an individual's personal conscience is reached and touched” (§11). It is closely connected with Ecumenism, and consequently requires listening, and seeking to understand, the beliefs, traditions, and convictions of others, in which partial agreement can be found through dialogue (§12), and thus it brings about an enrichment, not only “for those who are evangelized; it is also an enrichment for the one who does the evangelizing, as well as for the entire Church. For example, in the process of inculturation” (§6). Unbelievable! It is not only the person who dialogues with the heretic, schismatic, unbeliever, agnostic, or communist who is supposedly “enriched,” but the Church Herself, Teacher of divine truth!

I think that by now you have the picture. We are dealing with a natural sharing process that builds up a certain human sense of oneness and community on a purely natural level, as opposed to the direct teaching of supernaturally revealed truth. It is a

human phenomenon of dialogue, corresponding to a man's desire to have others share in his goods (§7). It is consequently not specifically Catholic, but something that any other religious person can practice, and is a form of naturalism. This is how it differs from the traditional preaching of divine truth, as St. Paul commands St. Timothy, regardless of what anyone might think or say about it: “Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine” (II Tim. 4:2).

There is a “theological” basis for this new teaching, and it can be found in the Vatican II document on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §§1 & 3, quoted in §5 of this note. The principle of religious liberty is thus stated: “Truth can impose itself on the mind of man only in virtue of its own truth.” This false principle is the denial of all role of authority, especially necessary in the communication of Divine Revelation, taught to us by the authority of the Church itself, without which we could not have the assurance of infallible truth at all. The inviolable rights to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience are the immediate consequence of this false principle, even in those who are in error and “who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it,” as Vatican II explicitly states (D.H. §2). Hence the conclusion concerning the new evangelization that this document quotes: “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 enquiry with the help of teaching or instruction, communication, and dialogue. It is by these means that men 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” (D.H. §3). The equality of all religions in such exchanges is entirely manifest. Is this not the “undifferentiated pluralism” of which the Note complains? Is this not the source of the “relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* (= in practice) but also *de iure* (= in principle),” which the Note admits endangers the Church's missionary work (§10). Is it not this “respect for religious freedom” that makes “us indifferent towards truth and goodness,” as the Note deplores (*ibid.*)? Indeed it is. Pluralism is of its nature “undifferentiated,” treating all religions as equal. This is what a pluralistic sharing of opinions really is.

In his book *They have Uncrowned Him*, demonstrating how the Liberalism of Vatican II leads to apostasy, Archbishop Lefebvre comments on the text from *Dignitatis Humanae* quoted above:

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 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?" (Rm. 10:15). It is not the search that the Church must proclaim, but the need for the mission: "Go and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19); such is the 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? (pp.175-76).

The modern doctrine on the New Evangelization is nothing more or less than the practical application of the Vatican II teaching on religious liberty, the denial of the Church's right and duty to teach authoritatively all men, by Christ's command, under pain of eternal damnation: "Preach the Gospel to every creature...he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:15-16). It is the proclamation of man's supremacy, his right to choose for himself. That is why the above-mentioned Note admits that a private individual can convert "as an expression of freedom of conscience and religion" and objects to the title of proselytism being given to such conversions (§12). However, it does not admit that the Church can preach such conversions, as also the strict obligation of becoming a member of the one, true, Catholic Church, under pain of eternal damnation. This would indeed be considered as proselytism, which is why proselytism was condemned in 1993 in the Balamand agreement, with the approval of Rome. Here precisely lies the contradiction. All rights are based on personal conscience and religious liberty. This means that they are subjective and relativist. Given such a foundation, it is entirely preposterous to complain of how relativism is destroying the Church. But this note does precisely that. What blindness to auto-destruction!

Let Archbishop Lefebvre guide us with the following words: "This spirit has never been that of the Church. On the contrary, the missionary spirit has always been openly to show 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" (*They Have Uncrowned Him*, p.181).

Can the Church sell or give a Catholic cemetery to the city?

It is truly extraordinary to think that such a question could arise. When Catholics request to be buried in the consecrated ground of a Catholic

cemetery, it is to await the general resurrection of the body at the end of the world. The Code of Canon Law consequently does not even consider the question of the reduction of a cemetery to a profane use.

However, Canon 1207 of the 1917 Code does point out that the rules for violation (*i.e.*, sacrilegious) and reconciliation of churches are also to be applied to cemeteries. It is reasonable to conclude, by the principle of juridical analogy, that the same could apply to the reduction of a cemetery to a profane use. Canon 1187 of the 1917 Code and Canon 1222 of the 1983 Code do in fact state that a church that can no longer be used for public worship can be reduced, by decree of the Ordinary of the diocese, to a profane use (and hence sold), provided that the use is not "sordid," that is, sinful or scandalous.

Clearly, this is not something to be done lightly. However, the Church does allow for this eventuality, prescribing that if this be done any bodies that may have been buried in the church be removed first and buried in consecrated ground (Fr. Wuest, *Matters Liturgical* [1959], pp.71-72). It follows likewise that if this is applied to a Catholic cemetery, the bodies that are buried there, that are consecrated through the sacrament of Baptism, must be exhumed. This means that a necessary condition for the reduction of a cemetery to a profane use, such as making a park of it, or building on it, or placing a highway over it, would be the removal of all the bodies buried in the cemetery. This is the commentary of *Matters Liturgical*:

A cemetery that has been solemnly or simply blessed cannot be desecrated except perhaps by decree of the local Ordinary reducing it to profane, non-sordid uses according to the norm of Canon 1187 insofar as it is applicable. But before the decree goes into effect, all bodies of the faithful shall be transferred to another blessed cemetery. (p.146)

It is consequently a sacrilege and an offense against Almighty God for a bishop to deliver up a cemetery to the city for such profane use without ensuring the removal of all the bodies buried there beforehand; and if this has already been done, his successor has the obligation to do all in his power to exhume and rebury the bodies in consecrated ground.

Is it permissible to build over a cemetery?

The answer to this question depends on whether the building is to be used for a sacred or profane use. It is certainly permissible to build sacred monuments or a mausoleum or a church building over tombs, for under special circumstances it is permitted to bury under a church, although not close to an altar. However, the construction of a building for non-consecrated uses would be equivalent to reducing the cemetery to a profane use. The building of a church hall or a school building or a conference center would all be considered as profane uses (although perfectly honest and good) and not consecrated ones. It would

consequently be necessary to exhume all the bodies of the faithful departed and bury them in consecrated ground, with decree of the local Ordinary, before proceeding to such a building. 📍

Fr. Peter Scott was ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988. After assignments as seminary professor, US District Superior, and Rector of Holy Cross Seminary in Goulburn, Australia, he is presently Headmaster of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy in Wilmot, Ontario, Canada. Those wishing answers may please send their questions to Q&A in care of Angelus Press, 2915 Forest Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109.

WRITING CONTEST WINNER



Paul F. Craig
Pittsburgh
Pennsylvania

Brilliant light gleamed from the chandeliers overhead upon the polished wooden pews. A green cloth covered the altar, as the latter awaited the renewal of Christ's sacrifice.

A single visitor was paying homage before Our Lord tonight. He sat close to the sanctuary, head bent, deep in thought. His evening devotions now completed, Fr. Smith pondered upon the main events of the day. Two Masses recited, with confessions heard before each, as well as a baptism and a Holy Name Society meeting. In the course of two weeks, only three penitents had entered the confessional. Quite a low number, indeed!

A sense of grief overtook him. He began to feel that, perhaps, his flock was taking advantage of the sacrament of Penance—after all, he had preached a sermon on the importance of frequent confession! Well, God's Will be done. Fr. Smith turned his gaze once more to the tabernacle and prayed for guidance, for the situation filled him with unease. At nine o'clock, he prepared to leave the church.

The main wooden door abruptly creaked open as someone entered. Faltering, hesitant footsteps advanced towards Fr. Smith's pew. It could be Mr. Barron, the sacristan, or Brother Matthew. But at this hour?

The stranger halted, laid his hand on the priest's shoulder. Fr. Smith stared into a pair of aged, tear-streaked eyes. An elderly man stood nervously before him. A moment later he whispered pitifully, "Father, I know it's late. I was passing by and found the church open. Could you—could you hear my confession? I haven't gone in years." The man's voice was choked with emotion. Fr. Smith almost jumped up, responding, "Of course, my son! If you're ready, follow me...follow me!"

As he led the relieved penitent to the door a half-hour later, the priest mumbled a silent prayer: "I thank Thee, Lord for this 'prodigal son' of Thine; Thou Who knowest that the return of one lost sheep is greater than the at times lukewarm service of Thy faithful flock."

MONTHLY PHOTO WRITING CONTEST

For the moment, the monthly Photo Essay Contest has been discontinued. Thank you to all who participated.

BOOK REVIEW

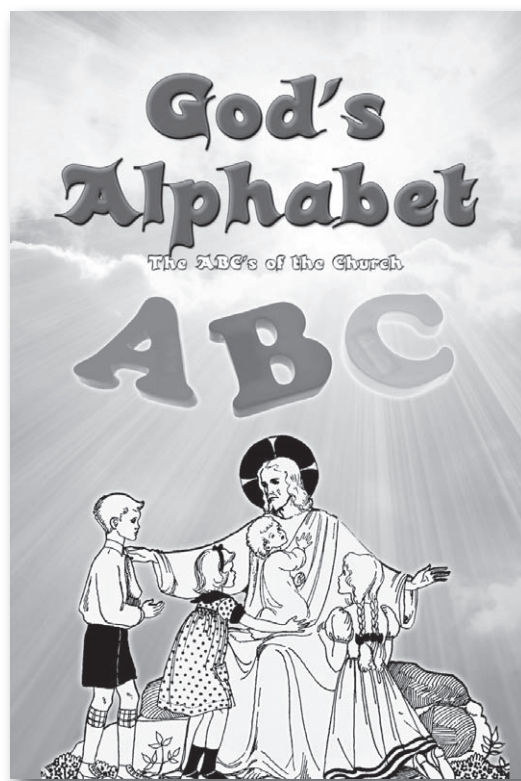
TITLE: *God's Alphabet: The ABC's of the Church*

AUTHOR: Verses by M.H. Ruane,
text by Janet Robson

PUBLISHER: Angelus Press. Price \$16.95

REVIEWER: Michael Sestak

SUMMARY: An Alphabet Catechism of Catholic words and rhymes by which children learn to identify each letter with a person, place, or thing as seen through eyes of the Catholic Faith.



Each new day, hundreds of books enter the public domain. This means that they are no longer protected by copyright laws and, consequently, may be used freely by anyone and everyone. Some of these books are long-forgotten classics; still others are monumental wastes of paper, deserving extinction. But one thing is certain—the vast majority of these titles will remain buried forever by the sands of time, never to be rediscovered.

It is the revered job of a publisher to weed through this expansive archive of ancient literature in an attempt to find that needle in a haystack, that classic book worthy of reprint. Like many publishers, *Angelus Press* is faced every day with innumerable books, each begging to be revived, each crying to be reprinted for a new generation. But with time constraints and financial limitations, only a few are chosen. Only the best.

It was a brisk night in October, and I had just made the twenty minute drive out of Kansas City to enjoy the evening with a family. As we finished

our warm meal, the entire family entered the living room to relax and converse about life, love and politics—the usual stuff. After a momentary lull in the conversation the stillness was broken by the father of the family: “Perhaps you would like to see one of the books we used to read to our children when they were little. In fact, *Angelus Press* **might** consider reprinting it...” As he finished these words, he stood up and left the room. I sat there, motionless, uncomfortable, already preparing an unenthusiastic reply.

As he returned, he handed me a tattered, yellow-stained book, entitled: *My Father's House*. I eyed the book skeptically; my eyebrows rose in obvious incredulity. It was clear that I had a difficult time taking this miniature book seriously. Its pages were well worn, noticeably marred by the course of time. Peanut butter fingerprints stained the cover. The corners were rounded; the pages were bent. No doubt the book had been regularly used over the years. But

as I peered at the date of its “fifth printing,” I was impressed how well it had stood the test of time.

I slowly opened the first page, gently turning the cover with care. As my hand moved across the smooth paper, I immediately noticed the striking red hue of the pages. The book had been originally printed in monotone. A bright, garish red covered the pages. The color was not attractive.

I smiled, then quickly glanced at those around me. The family watched my expression with marked silence. They were doing their best to read me. They wanted to know what I thought. They wanted to know if we would republish their childhood memory.

I sighed inaudibly. This was not going to be easy. I was already pondering how to reject the book without offending anyone. I lowered my gaze and stared absentmindedly at the first page.

A
is for
ANGEL
our Guardian so bright.
Say to him,
“Angel dear, help me do right.”

I read the words to myself slowly, though oblivious to their meaning. My thoughts were too preoccupied with the accompanying picture which graced the upper half of the page. The image depicted a young girl being led by a beautiful angel. My eyes glided gradually across the page. The next image showed an elegant couple at dinner with their children, their heads bowed in prayer before the evening meal.

B
is for
BLESSINGS
we beg God to send
On our food, work, and play
—on parent and friend.

My demeanor suddenly became less serious, and a smile creased my face. How simple it all was—twenty-six letters, accompanying twenty-six short poems, with charming drawings, solely aimed at impressing young minds with a Catholic alphabet. It was an ingenious idea.

Beaming thoughtfully at the dog-eared pages before me, I could not help but reminisce on my elementary school days when my teacher diligently instructed us in the ABC’s to the proverbial sing-song of a “Hooked on Phonics” program:

“A is for apple! *Aa Aa Aa!*”
“B is for bat! *Bb Bb Bb!*”
“C is for cat! *Cc Cc Cc!*”


The memories came rushing back. There we were—30 grinning children all rhythmically mouthing and bobbing our heads to the sounds of the English alphabet. For each letter, she would raise in the air the appropriate picture. By the repetition of words, sounds and images, we soon learned our alphabet. No doubt, the program worked. And from that moment on, we learned to associate “A” with apple.

I stared at the tattered book in my fingertips, and I wondered how much more edifying learning the alphabet could become if children’s first exposure to the ABC’s were to *Christian* terms. Why learn “A” for Apple when one can learn “A” for Angel? Why an “S” for Snake when there is an “S” for Saint? Why a “J” for Jack-o-lantern when there is a “J” for Jesus? Instead of Sesame Street and Big Bird, children would make formative mental links to the immemorial truths of the Faith, helping them to remember—for a lifetime—the building blocks of their language *and* their religion. Instead of Alphabet Soup, children would imbibe an Alphabet Catechism of Catholic words and rhymes by which they would forever identify each letter with a person, place, or thing as seen through eyes of the Catholic Faith. It would elevate a normally mundane exercise to something lofty, something heavenly, transforming the natural into the *supernatural*. It would become mother’s milk for little minds. It would become the sustenance needed to satisfy both body and soul—mind and heart. And just as *I* could never forget the “apples” and “snakes” learned when I was five, so others would never forget the “angels” and “saints” they memorized.

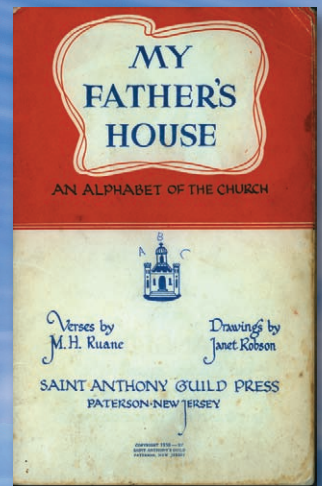
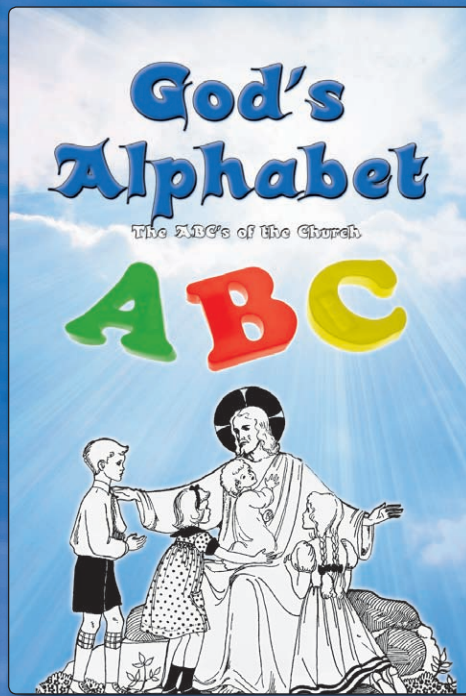
I remained on the couch for a moment, slowly turning the pages, lost in thought, still quietly deliberating the many beautiful potentialities of *God’s* alphabet. I awoke from my reverie at the sound of a voice repeating the question, “What do you think? Is it the sort of book *Angelus Press* would want to print?”

Closing the little book, I tried to look serious. I shook my head. “This is just the kind of book we’ve been looking for. But *God’s Alphabet* is about to gain a new letter...”

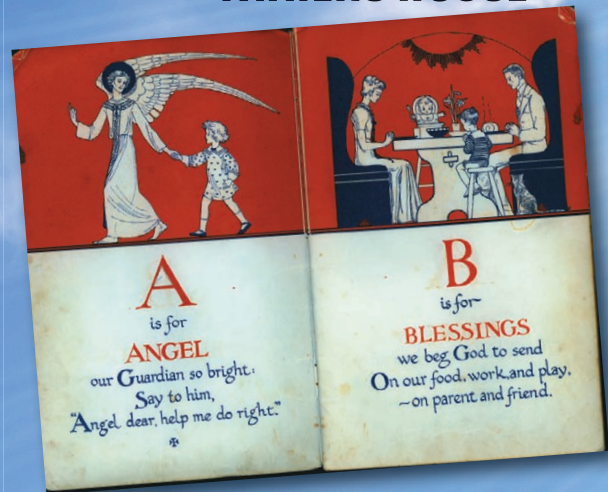
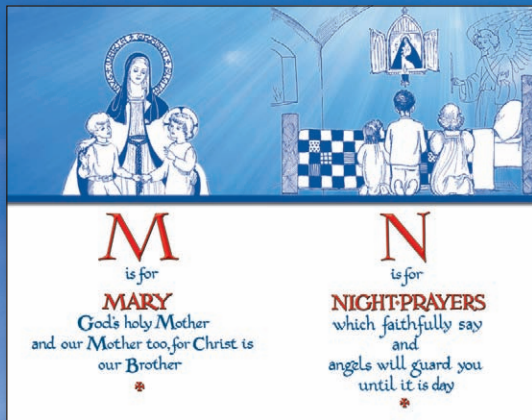
He eyed me quizzically. “And what would that be?”

“R is for *re*-print! *Rrr Rrr Rrr.*” 

Michael Sestak is operations manager at Angelus Press.



THE ORIGINAL MY FATHER'S HOUSE



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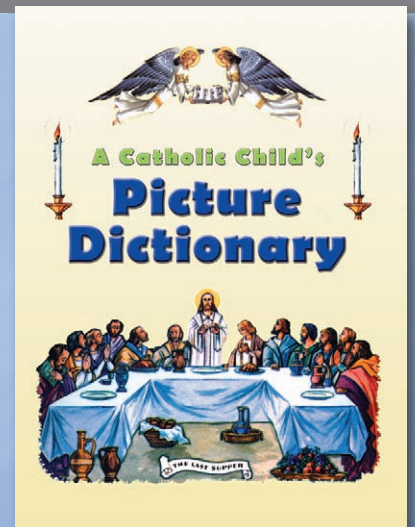
A Catholic Child's Picture Dictionary 58pp. 8½ x 11. Hardcover. 240 four-color illustrations. STK# 8299* \$19.95

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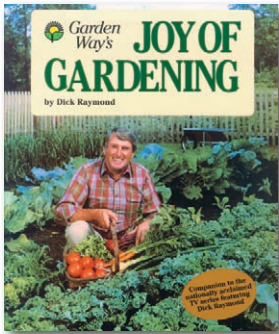
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A great resource for the early education of your Catholic child. Bite-sized definitions and charming pictures satisfy the most challenged attention spans. By ages eight or nine, they'll be reading it all by themselves.

Originally published in 1956 by the Catechetical Guild Educational Society with Cardinal Spellman's *imprimatur*. We've built this to last forever with a big 8½" x 11" durable hardcover that will withstand rough treatment, your children's book box, and peanut butter and jelly. A title which should become a family standard. A delightful gift.



THE NEWEST DISTRIBUTED TITLES



Joy of Gardening

Dick Raymond

More food, better food, safer food, and, if you follow this book, cost-effective food.

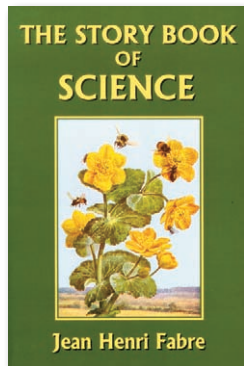
The locals here say this is the best book on gardening around. We say gardening is the smart investment. You can't eat your IRA or your precious metals! So many pictures (in full color) we can't count them. At-a-glance charts, and great how-to instructions and diagrams

make the author's famous short, wide-row, high-yield, organic methods accessible to everyone.

- planting wide, multi-crop rows ● preparing soil ● starting plants ● stop weeds cold ● rules of watering ● plants that become next year's fertilizer ● insects and diseases ● trench-planting for earliest and healthiest tomatoes ● using tin cans for sweeter melons ● the advantages of raised-bed planting

Easygoing, folksy, enthusiastic manner. A garden is a catechism of virtue and purification of the soul. Turn any patch of ground into a lush, bountiful vegetable garden. Plan today: garden seed purchases were up 40% in 2008. If all you have is a tight suburban lot, yard gardens are one of the hot things to try.

366pp. 10" x 8½". Softcover. Indexed. STK# 8319 \$24.95



The Story Book of Science

Jean Henri Fabre

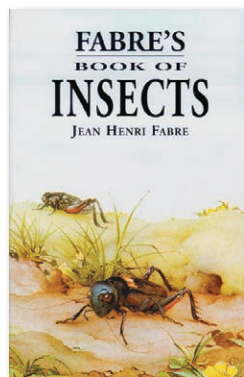
Creation is a classroom and a catechism. Stock up your child's experiential storehouse of knowledge with this miraculous and marvelous treasure hunt.

Renowned Catholic scientist and bugman Fabre said, "After 87 years of thought and observation, I say not merely that I believe in God—I can even say that I see Him." See (70 illustrations)

and read what he meant in this ultimate classic nature book on plants and animals:

- ants' underground cities ● spiders' suspension bridges ● habits of cows and sheep ● length of plants and animal life ● insect venom ● the properties of metals, gold, the iron kettle, metal plating ● fleece, flax, cotton, paper, rope ● thunder and lightning ● clouds ● experiments with cold water and cats ● sun, moon, stars, and sky ● poisonous plants ● volcanoes ● fruit, pollen, bees, honey ● mushrooms ● earthquakes ● seasons ● shells, snails, pearls, caterpillars, silk ● sea, salt, waves

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Jean Henri Fabre

"Catholic Bugman" at his best.

No one "read the book of nature" like the author. This book was the result of countless hours devoted to observing bugs while they hunted, built nests, and fed their families. Suspensefully-written essays blending facts and picturesque folklore. With infectious enthusiasm, Fabre weaves his stories:

- how the scarab beetle sculpts his ball of food for home delivery ● cause of a firefly's glow ● how the locust sings ● the luxurious home of

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168pp. Softcover. STK# 8317 \$9.95



Back in the Day

Michael Powell

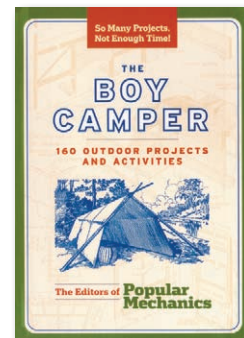
101 things everyone used to know how to do (and the rest of us should learn).

If you have an inkling that the modern world has dumbed you down, that your grandparents or great grandparents knew how to do things you don't, or you want to increase your repertoire of valuable timeworn life skills, this book will fit the bill. Ancient tips, careworn advice, bygone suggestions, and step-by-step instructions intro-

duce you to the things we don't know how to do anymore, some useful and some just for fun:

- fight with a rapier and dagger ● make bread and butter ● find berries in the wild ● pluck a chicken ● read Roman numerals ● write a sonnet ● can food ● read a coat of arms ● make a fire without matches ● set broken bones ● write calligraphy ● besiege a castle ● make a stained glass window ● thatch a roof ● hurl a battleaxe ● make a lasso and throw it

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The Boy Camper

The Editors of Popular Mechanics

160 outdoor projects and activities.

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- campground shelters ● forest furnishings ● tent construction and placement ● mastering the outdoors ● outdoor innovations ● angling for the big fish ● terrific tackle box ● the perfect fly ● cleaning the catch ● canoeing and paddle power ● archery ● campfire grub

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The Boy Mechanic

The Editors of Popular Mechanics

200 classic things to build.

Women and girls, look for this guy! Guys, what can you make without electricity? With the rawest of materials, a minimum of technology, and a maximum of ingenuity, men and boys used to dedicate themselves to crafting wonderful items, both practical and fanciful. These were skills that revealed an important part of the measure of a man.

- make tools like T-squares and sawhorses ● animal-proof gate latch ● birdhouse made from an old hat ● mission-style candlesticks ● toys like a miniature fighting tank and paper warship ● puzzles ● card tricks ● marksman aids ● Chinese kite ● gardening tips ● bee feeder, portable fences, self-closing gate ● axe handles and heads

A book to inspire a working knowledge of the general sciences, a proficiency in outdoor skills, and an ability to craft projects in wood and metal. Fascinating and encouraging stuff.

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THE NEWEST DISTRIBUTED TITLES



How to Tell Stories to Children

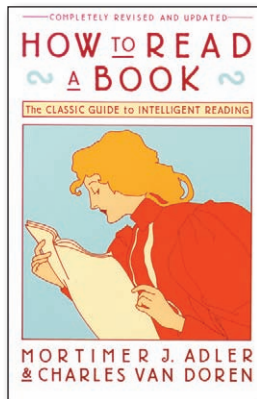
Sara Cone Bryant

When families were their own entertainment centers.

Instructs parents, elder children, and teachers the purposes and art of storytelling in education, how to choose the most "tellable" stories to tell aloud, and to adapt them to your audiences at home and in the classroom. Better than just **reading** a story, this teaches you how to be a **master storyteller**, how to voice a story, and satisfy the child-mind. Includes select short poems and 33 stories categorized for Kindergarten and Grade 1, for Grades 2 and 3, and

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Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren

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426pp. 8 1/4" x 5 1/4". Softcover. STK# 8305 \$16.00

Home Instructor in Penmanship

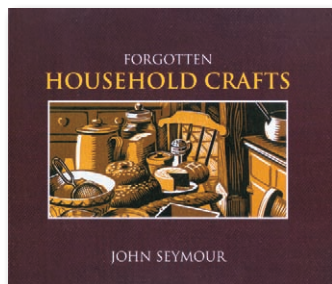
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Forgotten Household Crafts

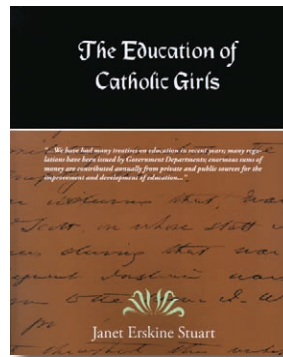
John Seymour

What His Excellency wants all women to know. How to be the real heart of a real home.

When asked what books were most essential for young ladies, Bishop Tissier de Mallerais replied, "Books on cooking, sewing, and how to furnish

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The Education of Catholic Girls

Mother Janet Erskine Stuart, Religious of the Sacred Heart

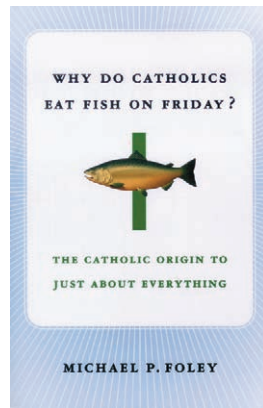
"... [We insist on] the teaching of handicrafts, training of the senses in observation. Development of knowledge, taste, and skills which are useful for life, and for girls especially on things which make the home."

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Why Do Catholics Eat Fish on Fridays?

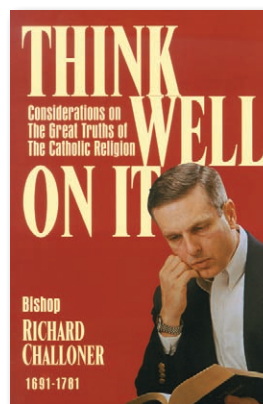
Michael P. Foley

Unearthing the present and forgotten Catholic roots of what we say and do in everyday America.

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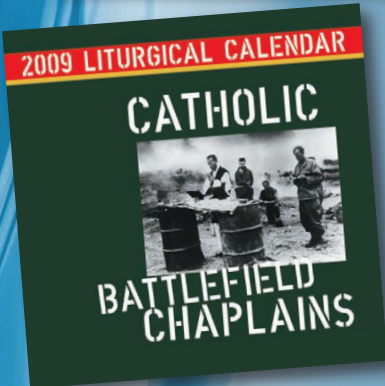
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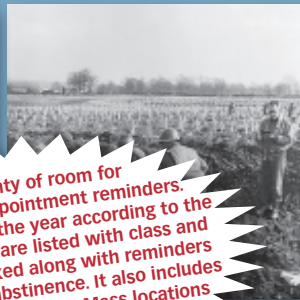
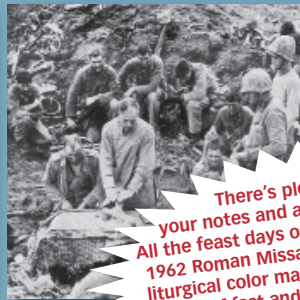
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#1047



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