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ANGELUS

A JOURNAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

INSIDE

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THE CONCILIAR SKY**

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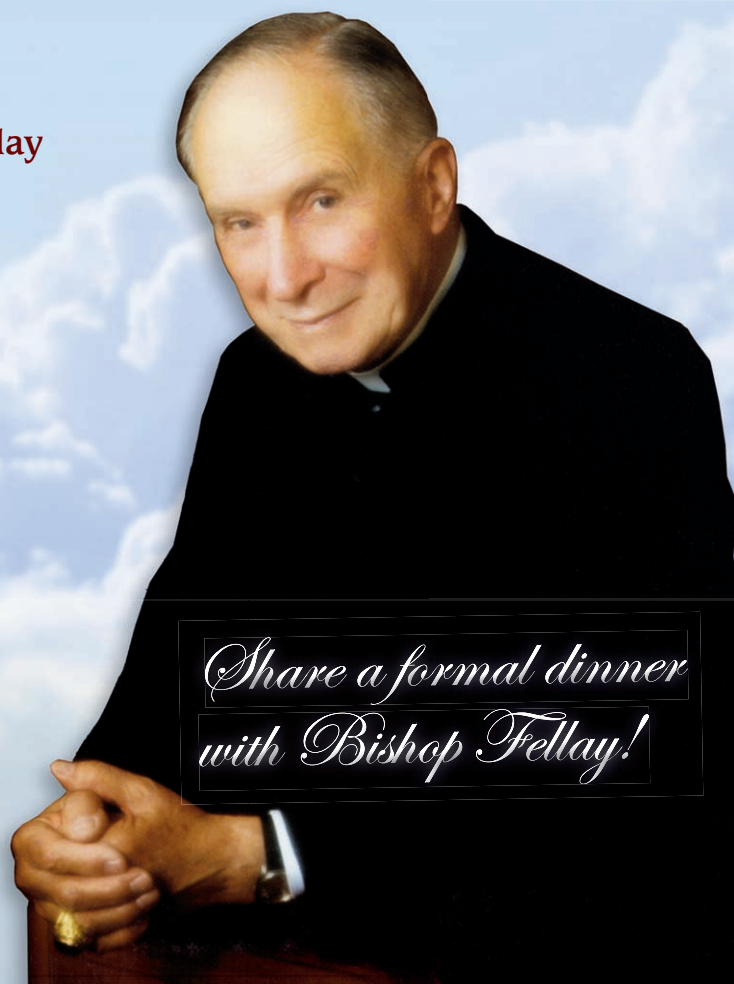
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—Pope St. Pius X

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"Instaurare omnia in Christo — To restore all things in Christ."
Motto of Pope St. Pius X

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ON OUR COVER: Monument of St. Francis de Sales, Visitation Basilica, Annecy, France, located in the Basilica's museum.

Letter from the Editor

The Angelus is a monthly review and is thus limited in bringing news to the attention of the reader. The chief importance of “news,” however, often resides in the fact that *The Angelus* makes known to the reader what the SSPX thinks about events, especially things related to the Church.

In this sense, it has been appreciated by many that a column “Church and World” was introduced, which tries to link events in the Catholic Church with commentary by the SSPX. The mere fact that an event is reported therein indicates that it is of a certain importance...

For the same reason, we introduce in this issue a new column, “The Last Word,” which basically fulfills the function of a commentary on some important subject especially related to Tradition. We will see how it goes. In this issue the topic is, not surprisingly, the upheaval of the media against the Pope. It will usually be a commentary written by a priest of the SSPX. This month it is by Fr. Alain Lorans, the French SSPX priest who directs DICI, the press agency of the general office.

Another effort of *The Angelus* is to create a column of spirituality. For the moment this is done by the series about the Pater Noster, written by a priest of the SSPX. We will start another after this series. It can be anything from a commentary of the Sunday Gospels to a series of spiritual conferences...

One word should be said about the question of clarity. One of the proofs of the quality of an article is that it is clear. This practically means that it can be understood by most of the readers without difficulty. I realize this is a high standard and a somewhat idealistic requirement, but it is a necessary one. Allow me to give an example from philosophy. Many philosophers are difficult to understand because their language is rather obscure. Many people suppose that this is an indication of a profound intellect, but others think they are hiding a lack of clarity behind the obscurity of words. Examples include Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel. They are exponents of philosophical idealism, which is incompatible with the clarity of St. Thomas. There are other philosophers in modern times who have non-Catholic ideas, such as the English philosophers George Berkeley or John Locke or the French writer and philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. But the award for being the most obscure belongs to Hegel and Kant rather than to the others, even though Rousseau was directly instrumental in preparing the French Revolution. Perhaps his impact on his contemporaries was partly due to his talent as a writer, which allowed

him to exercise a profound influence on his readers and his time although his ideas were revolutionary. Simply put: He was wrong but brilliant.

If we look at the great examples of Catholic writers, we should name St. Peter Canisius, one of the first Jesuits in German-speaking regions (born in the Netherlands, died in Switzerland) and who became famous for his Catechism. About this book we can read in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*: “The catechism of Canisius is remarkable for its ecclesiastically correct teachings, its *clear*, positive sentences, its mild and dignified form. It is today recognized as a masterpiece even by non-Catholics...” The expression “clear” is mentioned and should truly be an ideal which a Catholic writer strives for.

The second writer to mention here is St. Francis de Sales, proclaimed a patron of writers and journalists by Pius XI. Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church and called him “The Master and Restorer of Sacred Eloquence.”

I would also like to mention letters to the editor. *The Angelus* does not print them regularly, but sometimes it is worthwhile to read them. I make the distinction of those letters which try to contribute and those which are written in an attempt to influence the editor. This latter case particularly involves theological opinions which some try to project on *The Angelus*, as if the editor needs other help beyond his fellow priests and superiors. Everyone has the right to ask explanations required by circumstances, but anyone who does not like the line of Angelus Press or the SSPX may try to discuss matters with a competent priest; one should not expect the editor to waste his time with fruitless discussions.

Finally, you might have noticed that Angelus Press tries to establish a connection between the magazine and the books we publish in the sense that some books are a result of a series of articles in the magazine. As an example, soon there will be a book about the traditional religious orders and a book version of the *Catechism of the Crisis in the Church*, a result of serialized articles which were recently published in *The Angelus*.

I would like to thank all our faithful readers in addition to those who started to subscribe to *The Angelus* recently. After the March issue we received 100 new subscriptions. We thank you for this encouraging support.

Instaurare Omnia in Christo,
FR. MARKUS HEGGENBERGER

CONCLUSION

N O R B E R T C L A S E N

European Roots of National Socialism:

A contribution to the reflection on the Year of Darwin

From Imperialist Colonial Wars to Racial-Biological War of Extermination

In *Hitler's Table Talk* (1941-2) with Martin Bormann and others, Hitler often compared the German war on the Eastern Front with the colonial wars. "What India was for England," Hitler said shortly after the start of the offensive against the Soviet Union, "the eastern area will be for us."¹

Toward the middle of October 1941, Hitler presented his ideas of a German conquest of Eastern Europe, which recall the African fantasies of William Reades: "In twenty years, the territory of Ukraine will include twenty million people. After three hundred years it will be a flourishing landscape park of unusual beauty." His people would be forced to their knees by destructive methods, such as had been used in former times by other empires. "We

will select them (the natives). There is only one task: Germanization by moving in Germans and regarding the natives as Indians." The "natives" should not be Germanized, but reduced to the condition of slaves. Hitler proposed to teach them a "gesture language," to outlaw literature, and to prohibit education. The radio would be sufficient for the general public as a means of entertainment. Of course, the colonization of the Slavic world would include the elimination of the intellectual and political elites.²

The Nazis were the first in Central Europe to have led a policy of conquest which also included the destruction of ethnic groups from the ancient world. With that they crossed another threshold: Classical imperialism occupied territories in order to plunder them, to get raw materials and new markets in order to "expand the civilization." The primary goal of the National Socialist policy of conquest, however, was the biological and racial extension of German rule.

It was not just a question of conquering new lands, but above all, of Germanizing them. Therefore, for the Nazis, racism and eugenics were far more than an ideological cover or justification for the policy of conquest; they were their engine. At the center of it was racial and biological anti-Semitism.³

As Goebbels said in July 1941, the soldiers of the Third Reich should be mainly “saviors of European culture and civilization,” which was threatened by a “political undermining following the lead of greedy state capitalists.” Unlike the imperialist assessment of the colonial peoples, the Nazis saw in the Jews not a backward, savage people who could not survive the march of progress, but the enemy of mankind. Their extermination was therefore not instrumental in nature but took the dimension of a struggle for the salvation and renewal of mankind itself. Thus, the destruction of Judaism was planned and organized as a crusade or war of liberation. Eastern Europe was, according to the Nazis, the “Lebensraum” (Living Space) that they wanted to colonize, but this implied the conquest and the destruction of the Soviet Union and of Bolshevism, which was seen by the Nazis as a product of “Jewish intelligence” and “the Slavic, subhuman race.” The Red Army embodied that threatening alliance. To erase it, very different resources from those that had been used in the colonial expeditions of the 19th century were needed: It took a total war in the middle of Europe. This total war was also a war of conquest, a “race war” and a colonial war. The murder of the Jews was a part of it.

Biological Anti-Semitism

In May, 1920 the *London Times* published an article entitled “The Jewish Peril.” Winston Churchill called Marx, Trotsky, Bela Kun, Rosa Luxemburg and others a part of a “worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization.” “Now this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America gripped the Russian people by the collar and has practically become the undisputed ruler of a mighty empire.” The Bolsheviks were in his eyes “enemies of mankind,” “vampires who suck the blood of their victims,” “terrible baboons in the middle of cities in ruins and mountains of corpses”, at the head of Lenin, “a dog’s monster on a pyramid of skulls.”⁴

The novelty of the Nazis’ anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism was the combination of extreme biological theories and “racial hygiene.” The vocabulary of the pesticides and images from medical pathology were used to characterize the Jews in particular: “the Jew is a deadly cancer that destroys without prejudice to the national body.”⁵ The destruction of these abnormal cells would therefore be for the Nazis one of the central

concerns of their health policy: racial hygiene. Alfred Rosenberg, one of the main authors of key Nazi ideological creeds, writes in “The Myth of the 20th Century” that the takeover of Lenin and Trotsky had only “been possible in the middle of a racially and mentally ill body politic, which could practice nothing more than bloodless love.” Even Hitler speaks in *Mein Kampf* of the “tragedies that Germany could have prevented if it had sent the Jews to the gas.”⁶

Eugenic Practices and Models

The first step of destruction on biological and racial grounds (for cleansing the “hereditary disposition”) happened with Operation T4, the euthanasia of brainsick and other disabled people, which began in January 1940.

Euthanasia, as a means of social prophylaxis, was specific to the politics of the Nazis; there is nothing comparable in the history of the 20th century. The roots of this practice, however, are found in the Western world. Racial anthropology and eugenics were subjects that, since the end of the 19th century, were taught in every Western university. The term “eugenics” was first coined in 1883 by a cousin of Darwin, Francis Galton, who summed up his hopes for mankind in the sentence: “If it is possible to breed by a careful selection of dogs or horses with specific properties, then it should be possible to create a highly gifted race of men.”⁷

Eugenics had a great influence from 1905-1940, in which it officially became the policy of a number of countries. The sterilization of inmates of asylums and prisons was practiced. In the US there were, by the year 1958, thirty states with legislation about such practices, and nearly 61,000 persons had been sterilized against their will. By the year 1932, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and two Canadian provinces had adopted sterilization laws.⁸

A little later, Hitler issued his infamous sterilization program.

The Nazis especially admired the work of the American eugenicist Madison Grant. They published a German edition of his book *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) in 1925. The 1910 *Encyclopedia Britannica* claimed, in the article “Civilization,” that the future of mankind would likely bring “the biological improvement of the breed, thanks to the application of inheritance laws.” This article, which was removed only after 1945, shows both the legitimacy which eugenic theories enjoyed in the scientific community, as well as its distribution in public opinion. In Italy and France, where the Catholic Church was against forced sterilization, the theories of eugenics had nevertheless found a widespread distribution. In 1924, the first Italian

Congress for “social eugenics” was held. Five hundred physicians there discussed the “biological improvement of the breed.” In France the main propagandist of eugenics was Georges Vacher de Lapouge, who championed, in the 1890s, a campaign of mass sterilization in order “to prevent chaos and barbarism in democratic societies.” In *Selections Sociales* (1896), he sketched the outlines of his project of producing a more elevated humanity by artificial insemination. This would be the replacement of spontaneous animal reproduction by “zotechnical and scientific reproduction.”⁹

The theory of eugenics fell on fertile ground in Germany. Since the end of the 19th century, several anthropologists such as Ernst Haeckel proposed euthanasia as a social therapy, a kind of synthesis between eugenics and Nordic racism. In 1905 the physician Alfred Ploetz founded the Society for Racial Hygiene in Berlin. In the Weimar Republic, eugenics caused strong economic growth through the creation of the *Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics*, which planned the first projects for the sterilization of mentally ill people, criminals, and “morally” retarded individuals. The Rockefeller Foundation made substantial funds available and recognized the scientific value of the Institute. Initially less ideologically oriented, the Institute after 1930 increasingly began to implement a synthesis of theories of eugenics and racial thought; some of its employees were openly racist.

For most of Western public opinion, the German race policy was moving along the lines of a widespread positivist logic until the end of the thirties. It is noteworthy that eugenics was widespread and well received especially in countries with a Protestant tradition, while the predominantly Catholic countries were less enthusiastic. In fact, in the Catholic countries of Europe, there was, under fascism, virtually no eugenics.¹⁰

One of the few formal condemnations of eugenics in all its forms was by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Casti Connubii* in 1930. The fact is that



eugenics and “racial hygiene” were widespread in the West and had found enthusiastic supporters. From this “tradition,” National Socialism, moreover, drew its “scientific” language, through which it formulated its “biological” new anti-Semitism: Now, the Jews were a “virus” that caused “disease” and its “eradication” a measure of purge or “hygiene.”

The condemnation of the eugenic theories which were partly at the root of the crimes of the Nazis happened only after the discovery of Nazi crimes: Until the war, the eugenics of the Nazis were not considered to be inhumane or insane or an obstacle to international research, in spite of the mass emigration of Jewish scientists. Only the unanimous condemnation of the Nazis after 1945 overshadowed these good relations. Mengele had indeed no counterpart in any other country, but his practices were only the radical culmination of a eugenic ideology which was widespread in the West. Thus several German doctors did not miss the chance, at the Nuremberg trials in 1945, to refer to similar experiments that other democratic countries had done before them.

The War as a Means of Salvation and Hygiene

Together with Social Darwinism, eugenics was ultimately the justification for the war. Thus Hitler

emphasized, in his secret speech before the “junior military leaders” of May 30, 1942:

A deeply serious saying of a great military philosopher is that struggle and war is the father of all things. The whole universe seems to be dominated by this one idea that there exists an eternal selection, in which the stronger survives at the end and the weaker dies....This struggle consequently leads to an incessant selection of the better and harder ones. We therefore see in this fight an element of all living and of life in general.... We know that this battle will always remove the weak and will strengthen and make harder the strong, and that therefore the individual organisms themselves are enabled to undergo a development of progress.¹¹

This ideological consideration of war was not specific to National Socialism. Around 1900, the German eugenicist Otto Ammon taught that war would assure “the higher and more intelligent peoples of the superiority which they deserve.” Three years earlier, in 1897, Field Marshal Lord Wolseley opened a congress of the Philosophical Society of London with a speech on “War and Civilisation” which presented war as a tool for identifying the best from mankind.¹²


And in 1911, on the eve of World War I, the British military specialist Sir Reginald Clare Hart developed a biological theory of war in which he considered war as an instrument of progress and renewal of the human race. In his conclusion Hart calls even for a relentless war to destroy lower people and nations.¹³

Shortly before the outbreak of World War I the renowned British weekly *Nineteenth Century* printed an article of the well-known journalist Herold F. Wyatt, with the title “War as a Test of God.” In some passages it recalls Hitler’s secret speech of 1942 (above):

If you now dream of short-sighted and superficial sentimentalists—if war on earth could be made impossible—then one would destroy the mechanism which punishes the corruption of a nation and rewards national virtue. The better ones would no longer replace the inferior, and the process of human evolution would come to a halt....Victory is the crown of moral quality, and therefore, as long as nations fight each other, the survival of the fittest is the survival of the physically best....The real judgement, the only judgement which decides in questions of nations, is the decision of God, and that judgement is war.¹⁴

That Wyatt’s declarations are not an extreme example can be proved by a number of similar statements in popular newspapers and magazines, especially in the period between 1880 and 1914. War was referred to as “a religious crusade to destroy the evil which threatens the welfare of humanity and which is an obstacle to the march of the kingdom to salvation” (Hans Kohn, 1939).¹⁵

The Warning of History

National Socialism and its crimes was, without any doubt, an event without historical precedent. However, its ideology and its inhuman crimes did not simply fall from the blue; they have substantial roots in the cultural and scientific landscape of the West in the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, the idea that civilization makes necessary the conquest and destruction of “inferior” or “bad” breeds or the biological anti-Semitism of the Nazis were not invented. Almost all the basic elements of Nazi ideology, such as biological racism, anti-human social Darwinism, eugenics, anti-Semitism, colonial conquest and destruction, including war as an instrument of selection and progress, could be found in the context of Western Civilization at the time of imperialism and colonialism and in the context of the First World War and its revolutionary upheavals. The French historian André Pichot goes probably too far when he says: “Hitler did not invent much. Most of the time he did simply collect ideas that were in the air and put them into action.” National Socialism was indeed something unique. Its singularity lay above all in its ability to meld those elements and ideas into a unique synthesis that was so terribly radical and new, that for most of his contemporaries it was inconceivable and incomprehensible. 

This article originally appeared in the November 2009 issue of *Kirchliche Umschau*. Translated by Angelus Press. Norbert Clasen is president of *Initiativkreis Eichstätt*, a group dedicated to promoting the traditional Latin Mass.

¹ Enzo Traverso, *Modernity and Violence* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 69-78.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105f.

⁵ Eberhard Jackel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung* (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 69.

⁶ Traverso, *Modernity and Violence*, p. 108.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸ Jean-Claude Guillebaud, *The Principle*, p. 38-39 E.

⁹ Traverso, *Ibid.* 125-127.

¹⁰ Guillebaud, *Ibid.* 306.

¹¹ *Hitler's Table Talk at the Driver's Head-quarters*, ed. Henry Picker, Stuttgart Third Edition 1973, p. 464f.

¹² Koch, *Ibid.* 109.

¹³ Traverso, *Ibid.* 126.

¹⁴ Koch, *Ibid.* 104f.

¹⁵ Traverso, *Ibid.* 147.



Rebirth of a Monastery

A B E N E D I C T I N E M O N K

The Reichenstein Castle, in the Eifel region of Germany,
becomes a Benedictine Monastery!

This historic monastery on the Belgian border was established in the 12th century as a priory of the Premonstratensians (better known as the Norbertines or White Canons). For 600 years the Canons of Reichenstein were the apostles of the region of Monschau in western Germany until they were expelled in 1803 in the process of secularization. Now, 200 years later, Reichenstein will again become a place of monastic spirituality due to a foundation which follows the original rule of St. Benedict and offers a liturgy which reflects the 2,000-year-old Tradition of the Church.

A promising future can be seen where past and present merge: that is why the transmission of the values of the Christian West to the next generation is the best service that can be done by a young congregation to modern society.

During a time of cultural upheaval, in which more and more churches are closed or used for other purposes, the revival of a church—and even of an entire monastery—is a real adventure. The monks from the Monastery of Our Lady of Bellaigue (near Virlet, France) were encouraged in this venture by the strong performance of our French monastery in the past ten years—thanks be to God! We started in 2001 with four monks but today our community has 25 members, German vocations among them.

Fortunately, this puts us in a position in the foreseeable future to comply with a demand which

was again and again asked of us: Please found a monastery in one of the German-speaking countries, like in France, according to the original Rule of St. Benedict and with a liturgy that reflects the 2,000-year-old Tradition of the Church.

With the acquisition of the medieval monastery estate of Reichenstein near the triangular border between Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, the decision about the location has been made. We have seen it as a special sign of Divine Providence that our project has been welcomed very positively and supported on all administrative levels from the beginning.

The “Rheinische Amt für Denkmalpflege” (conservation office) confirmed in a report from March 2009: “The planned use [as a Benedictine monastery] is an ideal case for the conservation of a historical monument.” But it was noted by the Authority as well: “Measures of conservation are of great urgency.”

**“We want a future
based on roots!”**

The German Foundation for Monuments, presided by German Federal President Horst Köhler, has agreed to help with the renovation. On the occasion of the millenary of the Mainz Cathedral on October 11, 2009, the President admirably

expressed the larger context in which a commitment to cultural and religious monuments has to be classified. We follow his assessment:

If we bear in mind how much time was needed to build such a house of God, when we realize that the generation that made the plans and laid the foundation stone usually did not experience the completion on the construction: then we realize what it means to take a long breath. We need again the sense and the courage to think about more than our present time, to think of a future that belongs to future generations! To conserve a cultural heritage does not only mean the preservation of stones. It is important that the spirit and the attitude from which the old works arose remain alive.

And Dr. Kohler added: “If one asks whether it is worth it to invest a lot of money and power in such

an old building, then we can answer: Whoever does not invest in memory, harms the future. But we want to win the future, a future orientation inspired by the past.”

“We promote a work that is larger than ourselves!”

We may be allowed to apply the words of the President to the historic monastic building at Reichenstein because it is the oldest building in the Monschauer countryside. For over 600 years it was a stronghold of Christian culture and education—and should become that again.

Reichenstein: History of the New S



Reichenstein Castle

March 2005

A family living in Kalterherberg draws the attention of our congregation to the old monastery at Reichenstein.

February 5-10, 2007

Dom Angel, our Prior, visited the historic estate for a few days. He makes his decision of founding a religious community at Reichenstein. Negotiations for the purchase begin.

November 27, 2007

A purchase agreement is signed between the owners, the Handschumacher family, and the (for taking legal actions) newly founded Association of St. Benedict.



Handing over of the keys of Reichenstein

March 9, 2008

Dom Angel dies of cancer. Shortly before his death, he exhorted the brothers gathered around him a last time: “My sons, love one another!” He offers up his life for the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI.

Summer 2008

Our newly ordained priest, Father Bernard (ordained on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul) celebrates Mass in several places in Germany and Belgium, visited the pilgrimage place at Banneux, Belgium, and communities who are friends with us.

September 19, 2008

The formal handing over of the keys of Reichenstein by the Handschumacher family to our community. Several hundred guests meet in the church buildings which are not yet consecrated.


January 2009

Father Bernard, Father Anselm, and Brother Joseph spend a week at Reichenstein.



Monastery chapel, Bellaigue

We promote a work that is larger than ourselves; we want to restore Reichenstein to its ancient purpose. That includes the establishment of 20 cells for monks, about 15 guests cells, as well as a refectory and various workshops. Add to this the establishment of a crypt and a cloister. Agricultural activity of an ecological orientation, but also forest work, will be a part of the future life of the monks.

The extensive historical preservation measures that are necessary for the restoration of a medieval monastery can nowadays no longer be done without the sense of community. But we are optimistic, not to hope in vain for help, as more and more groups see with us the urgent need to take action in order to maintain the values of the Christian West and to pass them on to future generations. 



Foundation

January 24, 2009

Our Prior, Dom Matthew, consecrated the future foundation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Helfta, the place where St. Gertrude received her revelations from the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

February 2009

The church receives provisional installations. The most important piece is a Gothic altar, which the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Niedaltadorf donated to us. The final equipment will be added later, once the foundation is realized.

March 2009

The *Rheinische Amt für Denkmalpflege* writes a report: "The planned use [as a Benedictine monastery] is an ideal case for the conservation of a historical monument, because the old use of the building as a monastery, discontinued at the beginning of the 19th century, shall be re-established."

May 16, 2009

Dedication of the future church of Reichstein under its ancient patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostle St. Bartholomew, and St. Lawrence. The patronage date is to become August 15th. Our newly ordained priest, Father Anselm, celebrates a Mass on the occasion of this great day. The church is packed to the last seat. The local television has the event on the news.

Mid-June 2009

On every third Saturday of the month from now on, in the monastery church at Reichenstein, prayers for priestly and religious vocations are offered, in addition to a quick foundation of a monastery on this location.

October 2009

Father Bernard, our Cellarer, Brother Marcel, and Brother Michael live almost two weeks in Reichenstein in compliance with the monastic way of life; they are doing wood work. They give two conferences on our monasteries in Brussels and in the Netherlands.

October 24, 2009

The Eifel Association visited Reichenstein with 600 hikers. A small exhibition draws attention to the future monastery.

November 9, 2009

Twenty years ago the Berlin Wall fell. Dom Angel—with his great sense of salvation history—did not randomly choose Germany for a first foundation. Dom Angel saw in the apparitions of Fatima, in 1917, in which the Blessed Virgin called us to prayer and penance and warned the world against the errors of Russia, a special call on Germany to return to God and His commandments.

December 2009

The City Council of Monschau gives us an authorization for the new construction of a cloister near the church.

January 2010

Father Matthew and Father Bernard visit several parishes in southern Germany in order to give a presentation of the future monastery. On January 20th and 21st the first plans are finalized with the architects for the year 2010.



“Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them; there is no third.”

–*T.S. Eliot*

DANTE

WHY SHOULD CATHOLICS STUDY LITERATURE?

PART 2

DR. DAVID ALLEN WHITE

One cannot understand the proper role of literature without understanding, more broadly, the purpose of art itself. The term “art” does not only refer to paintings or sculptures; it also is used to refer to the larger body of created expressions such as music and literature. Thus, art is really a large and diverse category.

Art has always existed as a manifestation of the human spirit. As Catholics, however, we also know that art has also served as an extension of the glories of the Faith. I insist on reminding you that those beautiful creations that we know as the glories of Western art grow out of the Mass. This is as true of the architecture of the great cathedrals as it is of the great paintings. When Western art dawns after the classical age, it dawns with magnificent paintings. Music takes on a life of its own after it begins to grow out of Gregorian Chant. Even drama itself, after the Greeks, grows largely out of the liturgy.

The Catholic Church is, then, in some way the source of art. The reason is because art is one of the ways in which man is allowed to worship his Creator and to imitate His glory by also being, in a smaller way, a creator. Obviously, we are here on earth to save our souls and be humble servants, created beings, creatures of God. But we have been given certain blessings. One of these blessings is the ability to create things ourselves.

The greatest gift that our Creator gave us is the ability to propagate or extend this creation. Think of the command to “go forth and multiply.” Adam

and Eve were told to create new human life. This is the most important act of creation that mankind participates in.

At the same time, there are other ways in which mankind has always created. Consider here the craftsman. Tables and chairs and dishes and clothes are all designed by someone and made by someone. All of these crafts have certain rules: if someone tried to make a chair with one leg or a cup with a hole in the bottom or a shirt with one arm, it would not be able to fulfill its purpose. Thus, there are rules of crafting, and craftsmen need to know these rules so that they can build correctly so that the object is useful.

But beyond a normal sturdy chair, there are occasionally artists who do something special with a craft. Thomas Chippendale, for instance, was known for making exceptionally beautiful chairs, usually now named for him, “Chippendale chairs.” They are worth a lot of money, even if they fulfill the same function. The chair’s value comes from its exceptional beauty, not merely its utility. This is when craft is transcended and becomes art. Thus, we can move beyond craftsmanship to artistry.

Artistry always has, at its core, the reflection of a high beauty, something higher than us. It is reflected in the created object. This is true in all art, literature, and music. Any artist giving expression to this is, on one level, a maker, and another level, a craftsman. But the higher the level of craftsmanship, the greater the inspiration (a word that comes from the Latin

term meaning “to breath into”), and thus we can say that the greater the artist, the more we can say the divine has been breathed into that artist.

There is a certain connection between the great artist and the divine vision, reflecting that which is good, true, and beautiful. The greatest art, in reflecting divinity, is reflecting these attributes of the Godhead. Thus, created objects which manifest and reflect these qualities draw souls to God like a kind of magnet. Great art can do this in many different ways.

Yet art is not religion. Art is that which artists make; a painter paints and a musician composes. They are concerned with their craft. But if they do it to the top of their form, they are given another dimension, something often timeless, which speaks across boundaries, to all people. Thus, there is something of universality in great art. As a result, there are certain attributes which transcend this mundane world.

Here we are concerned with literature. Literature is unique; it is different from the other arts. In fact, every kind of art is a separate thing. I have a book written in 1928 on this topic by Brother Leo, a Christian Brother. It provides a good introduction to this question. I will briefly summarize a section called “Why We Read Literature.”

His first argument: “To vitalize our knowledge.” This means to infuse life into what we know. If we go all the way back to the Greeks, to the Romans, through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and even the best modern writers (such as Evelyn Waugh), you find artists saying similar things. There are two basic things that all this literature does. First, it educates. Literature exists to tell us something. *Educare*, in Latin, means “to lead.” Every piece of literature leads us, takes us somewhere we have not been before. The second thing literature does is delight. There is an enjoyment factor here. We enjoy the process of the story and the act of story-telling.

Thus, these two separate functions of literature are always present: in fact, you could say that one of the reasons that literature is such a powerful tool for education is because it is so delightful. A good story interests us; further, it is easier to remember what a story tells us if it is a delightful story. Literature is conducive to memory.

There are those who consider literature to be less than serious, or unnecessary. I give to you the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. This is the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Christ here teaches us about the seed which falls on different kinds of ground. It is here that the disciples ask our Lord: “Why speakest thou in parables?” It is a genuine question and a fair question, one which we still ask today in various ways. “Why do I need to read all these books? What’s the point of

writing stories?” In the Gospel, our Lord responds: “Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But to them, it is not given.” Most people cannot know or understand things directly. Our Lord continues:

For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And the prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled in them, who saith: By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut: lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. For, amen, I say to you, many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them.

Before you can understand, the eyes have to be opened slowly. The ears have to be opened slowly. Thus, things must be given in a way that is pleasant, that delights, that introduces us to knowledge. We cannot get it directly. How much truer is this for us today. I would actually argue that we need stories now more than ever. I would also say that God, in His wisdom, prepared this time, prepared the human race for the coming of His Son who would speak in parables, by imparting to us a desire to listen to stories. It is innate to us.

One of the things which defines man from the dawn of time is storytelling. Og the caveman, after he killed an animal and took it home to eat, probably painted it on the wall and told his family and friends about the hunt. We enjoy making up stories. Anyone who has spent time around children realizes this. “Tell me a story.” “Tell me a story you told me last night.” We need to hear the same stories over and over. This implies that the repeated story sinks deeper.

This is why our Lord uses parables. It was necessary for Him to use these to give the Good News. He told stories; story-telling then has a very honorable imprimatur. Those of us who teach literature can thus be proud of doing so, even if what we teach is not on the same level as the parables. Nevertheless, the story itself is honorable.

Back to Brother Leo. He says that we read literature “to vitalize our knowledge.” But he goes one step further; literature is not there just to give us knowledge. He says:

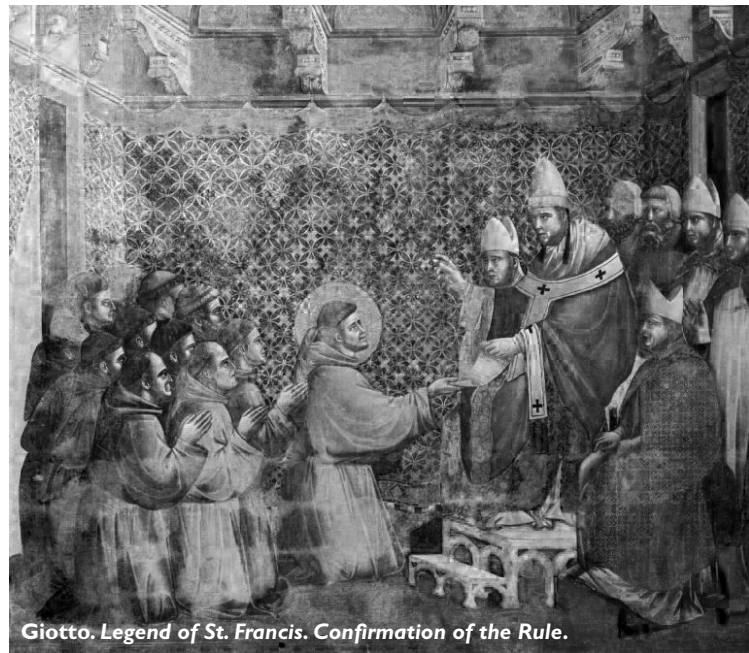
To know is one thing. To realize is another. Realization implies vitalized knowledge. I may know, for instance, that Assisi is a town somewhere in Italy and that St. Francis lived there and founded the Friars Minor. I

may know several of the events from his life and know many of the legends about the first Franciscans. I might be able to cite the dates of St. Francis' birth, death, and canonization. I might even be able to tell you how many Franciscans there currently are in the world. This is all knowledge. Then let us suppose that one day I find myself in Umbria and climb the hill on which Assisi is built. I walk the same streets down which the Saint used to trip, singing in the days of his youth. I kneel at his tomb in the great church raised in his honor and gaze upon his life as depicted by the artist Giotto. Then I walk down the olive-clad hill and across the fields to visit the noble basilica which encloses the tiny 700-year-old chapel of the Portiuncula. Let us finally suppose that in the moonlight I sit and ponder the spirit of love, simplicity, and holy gladness which the "little poor man" enkindled in this very place so long ago and which still burns mightily throughout the world. Thinking thus, I resolve to make the Franciscan spirit a part of my own life and to shed love and joy about me everywhere. At this point, I do not merely *know*; I realize the significance of Assisi and its saint. My knowledge is alive and vital. In other words, knowledge confined to the intellect is dead. It comes to life when it is realized, that is, when it arouses an emotional response and stirs the will to action.

This is why it is possible to be a walking encyclopedia, filled with facts, and still not hold real wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge vitalized that reaches the heart as well as the head and causes the will to act. This is what literature does. It gives us information, but because of the emotional power of the literary artifact, it turns that knowledge into something lived, experienced, and then reinforced in the world.

Brother Leo's second reason for studying literature is "to live more deeply and richly." Here is the recognition we all live our own lives, full of unique incidents and events. But we can also live in another way. I had a dear friend, a neighbor, who never slept out of her home on any night from the day she was married at eighteen years of age until her death at eighty-nine; she didn't want to. She used to say: "I don't need to go anywhere; God gave me the ability to read books." She also had a capacity to memorize; she could sit and recite poetry for hours on end. Much of it was learned in school. She had a rich interior life, which is what literature provides.

When you read *Hamlet*, you are experiencing a range of events which you will personally never know. They will not be a part of your lived life externally in the sense of action. You will never be Prince of Denmark. Your uncle probably won't kill your father. It's even more unlikely your mother will marry your uncle. I hope I'll never stab someone blindly without knowing who it is. I hope I'll never



Giotto. Legend of St. Francis. Confirmation of the Rule.

drive my beloved mad by ill-treating her. These are all events which take place in that play, all of which you are wiser for knowing. They are things you need to know. Having experienced them through *Hamlet*, and living deeply and richly—the good and troubling things alike—wisdom can come to you without you having to live it personally.

This will be especially striking when we enter the pits of Hell in the *Inferno*. By encountering all the sinners in Hell, Dante gains necessary information without having to commit all those sins. When we read Dante, and spiral down through the Inferno, we are gaining knowledge vicariously, we are living deeply and richly, gaining insights we need to have, experiencing emotions and torments which aid us in living. Fortunately, we don't have to go through it directly.

Part of this is the interior life which literature can provide. As Brother Leo says:

The soul, the mind, needs food and exercise just as the body does. But the food of the mind is not bread and its exercise is not games. It feeds on visions of truth and beauty as supplied by the master word artists in literature. Its exercise is to wrestle with ideas as enshrined in noble books, even as Jacob wrestled all the night with the angel. Its reward is like Jacob's: to receive a joyful blessing at the dawn.

There it is; you have to feed the soul and the mind. St. Thomas also says the soul needs refreshment just as the body needs rest. There is a class of literature which is not serious, deep, or scholarly, and tends to the enjoyment factor: delightful pleasure in a story well told. The soul and mind need this refreshment. Other times, they need

training. Indeed, if you are only giving dessert to the brain and soul, it will grow fat. As Brother Leo says:

A man, physically ill, has no appetite for beefsteak and onions, and no desire to take part in a football game or marathon race. Often a reader gets no benefit from reading a masterpiece of literature simply because he does not give himself to the work with vim, vigor, and enthusiasm. He must take an active, not a passive, attitude towards the great writer and the great book. He must read creatively. Reading is a form of living.

People often complain of literature being boring; I reply that the problem lies in us, not the book. Take Dante, for example: for 700 years, the finest minds have found him one of the greatest sources of enlightenment concerning what life is about and the overall design of the universe. Now, we think it is boring? It is clear where the problem lies—not in the book but in ourselves.

Brother Leo points out a reality which is hard: some people can't handle good literature. If you give someone cotton candy for 18 years, and then offer them a steak, they won't be able to chew it. This in spite of the fact that he is getting real food for the first time! If the teeth have rotted away from all the sugar, the meat cannot be eaten. The mind that encounters great literature and says "I don't understand this" is the man with no teeth, gumming a beefsteak.

Brother Leo provides a third reason for studying literature: "to acquire culture." Culture is a dirty word these days, especially in universities. Culture represents the past. Brother Leo tells us:

Through religion and art, music and literature, the man of culture comes into vital contact with ideas of truth, beauty, and goodness. The emotions aroused in him, because of these refining influences, are noble and elevated. It follows that his habits of thinking and feeling are formed under the influence of the best and finest ideals. Such a man has the dignity and simplicity, the ease and self-control, the poise and independence, the strength and gentility which are the external indications of inner culture.

The whole point of exposing ourselves to these great things is to be elevated. When an entire body or populace jointly decides these things are of value, focuses on them, and gets to know them, you have culture. Everything is then elevated. Consider the etymology of "culture." Agriculture means to grow crops. A cultured society consists of a people growing, ennobling, and elevating themselves. If I simply throw rocks and pebbles into some dirt, no corn will grow. It would be my fault. Similarly, year after year of bad movies and lousy television and sappy novels will leave only


a barren field: nothing will grow. Then you will be starving. Then barbarism will ensue: violence, drugs, suicide. Religion, art, music, and literature are not equivalent. Each one is different, but they are all necessary.

Brother Leo gives one final reason for studying literature: "To learn the art of self-expression." T. S. Eliot wrote an essay called *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. In it, he points out that we can't do anything on our own, cut away from a tradition, purely as an individual. Whatever you accomplish must be part of a tradition. Before building a house, this foundation is essential. This foundation is represented by all the great artists and writers before you. Eliot, wanting to be a poet, spent years profoundly studying the poetic tradition of the West. It's much easier to ignore the past and write whatever you want, however you want to write it; the result, however, will be as shallow as your preparation has been.

If you really want to develop ideas, you must consult the giants of the past. Only in that way will you have the possibility of lifting yourself up to stand on their shoulders. And even if you don't do that, you will certainly develop and master the art of expressing yourself with greater clarity and conviction.

We are creatures of language. We were given the gift of language with which to express, understand, and become creatures of reason. It is part of what makes us human. We need to master it. It takes work. Just like riding a bicycle, it is worth learning, but the learning process demands that we fall over, struggle back on and maybe use training wheels. Eventually the activity becomes second nature to us.

There is a basic degree of competence necessary. Human speech is part of the music we make. Poetry is human speech as music: it is where literature and music converge.

This is just a basic overview of what literature does for us. Beyond these considerations, I would say that time is limited: why waste your time reading modern spy novels or romance fiction when you could have the best? Turn to tradition. We know who the greatest books are written by: Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, etc. In this series, we will only consider Dante. 

(To be continued.)

Dr. David Allen White taught World Literature at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, for the better part of three decades. He gave many seminars at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona, Minnesota, including one on which this article is based. He is the author of *The Mouth of the Lion* and *The Horn of the Unicorn*. Illustration on p.10 by Gustave Doré.



TELEVISION

THE SOUL AT RISK

CONCLUSION

ISABELLE DORÉ

This is the seventh and last installment of a series on television.

It was originally published as a book by Clovis in France (Clovis is the publishing house of the French district of the SSPX).

CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR

To what extent does television constitute an obstacle to fraternal charity? The Church teaches us that charity towards one's neighbor has two aspects: patience and service. Patience consists chiefly in bearing with one's neighbor—his weaknesses, faults, and infirmities; service consists in putting one's time, money, and person at the service of one's neighbor.

Telephobic Catholics are often reproached with being uninterested in others and of being withdrawn. Do they lack charity towards their neighbor by deliberately choosing to ignore the necessarily dramatic televised news? No, for a vague and fleeting compassion experienced at these times rarely results in true charity. At the most one gives the alms of a few prayers or some spare change when the catastrophe was really spectacular and widely reported. To be interested in distant events shown on television under pretense of taking an interest in others is ultimately a caricature of charity: in most cases there is no patience and no service.

This interest may even be an easy justification for being uninterested in one's actual neighbor, the one who lives with us, whose faults and failings one must bear and whom one must serve actively, otherwise than with some spare change. Let us take the case of parents who install their child in front of the television, declaring: "Now I have peace; I don't need to look after him." Such parents are refusing both aspects of charity: patience—"I have peace"; and service—"I don't need to be looking after him."

Over time, these parents may feel a slight sense of guilt about their child "glued" to the television, so they attempt to maintain some contact, some bond of affection: they awkwardly try to do something, that is, to serve their child in some easy way that reassures them in their role as parents and keeps the child dependent on them. The service rendered consists in doing the child's chores, bringing him his meals and drinks in front of the television, preparing a tray so that he can watch a program alone in his room.

I recently heard the following statement: "You're lucky that your children help you. My children don't do anything. When they come home from school [or college] they sit down in front of the television, and if I tell them to do something, they don't want to. They never set the table, never

make their bed, never tidy their room, and make me do three washes a day and iron their things! I have to do it or else no one will.”

For the author of this statement, any thought of suppressing television is out of the question because the children like it. Since this mother of a family makes no connection between their addiction to television and their poor academic performances, their inability to care for the common good of the family or to set their hand to a task, their great immaturity, it is unlikely that things will improve.

“Stolen Childhoods”

These parents are lacking in charity in another manner: they deprive their children of a normal childhood. The dedication of the book by Liliane Lurçat, *Les Enfances volées* [Stolen Childhoods] is addressed “to the children without a childhood, whose only memories will be of television series...” For “the children’s free time was annexed by television: it was prison time. And their childhood passed too often without the projects and events that make a childhood from which one will later draw one’s most precious memories.” Moreover, by the time spent before the little screen and by the content of the programs, the child is victim of a triple and even a fourfold abandonment:

The physical abandonment of the child seated or lying too close to the set in a receptive attitude masks other forms of abandonment. He is abandoned morally, since he is entrusted to the seducers of childhood whose task is to retain his attention as much as it is to entertain him and so many other children. He is abandoned emotionally: he is afraid sometimes, left alone with the villains he is shown, and tells no one; he may not even be able to express his fear. He is abandoned intellectually: between what is unreal and what is incomprehensible, how can he understand, how can he account for what he sees?

If no one is there to accompany him, to tell him to stay far enough away from the screen, to choose with him, to diffuse the drama if need be when fright overcomes him, to give him an understanding of what he is watching; if no one is there to speak to him, to listen to him, to suggest something else to him—then he will become accustomed to his solitude. He will adapt to it, and soon he will no longer want the other relationships his parents would like. He will change; he will become progressively someone else, perhaps one of these too numerous children who have acquired the hazardous freedom that street children used to have, confronted by multiple dangers and leaving childhood too soon.

Books, comic books, and magazines can also play a negative role, and parents can abandon their children to bad reading, but the deplorable aspect is less evident, less seductive, and less constant: one

is more unwilling to dive into an absurd book; the special effects are not there to compensate for the absurdity or cruelty of the story. One more readily gives up a book that is frightening. How many children have watched a nightmarish film (*Planet of the Apes*) with their family just so they could be with their parents, while they would never have begun to read such an absurd and frightening story?

Charity towards Our Children

Do parents who watch television habitually lack charity towards their neighbor? Yes, because they show that their children hold a reduced place in their hearts. Numerous are the families in which the conversation at dinner is limited to, “Keep quiet, I’m watching TV.” For the child, this means that his person, his cares, his problems, do not amount to much in comparison with the silly soaps, the B films, the sitcoms, the incessantly repeated news. It is enough to make one doubt parental love.

A responsible father or mother of a family is constantly confronted with the various facets of his duty of state: one must incessantly organize, prepare, address, intervene, check, answer, correct, support, explain, listen, speak, reflect, and so on. One cannot at the same time slouch in front of the television several hours a day, devoting to it one’s thoughts and dreams, extinguishing one’s mind and will, and have the promptness, diligence, and attention to others which makes one apt to organize, support, listen, or answer.

In so doing, one places many obstacles in the way of the graces that could wake us up or keep us alert.

In the eyes of children, a parent who habitually watches television is a bit like a parent who takes drugs or drinks. If the parent is incapable of sacrificing his favorite series or sitcom to spend time with the children, if he is dependent to the point of having no self-restraint in the matter, he gives a very bad example: he shows himself to be a passive, pleasure-seeking, selfish being, little likely to inspire respect and love.

This also holds true for priests, those who should take care of our souls. Some justify their time spent in front of the little screen: “You have to know what everyone is watching; you have to live in the same world as they do in order to be on the same wavelength.”

Haven’t they something better to do, these priests who prefer to watch the world rather than look at God and His saints? Is it by polluting his mind, his heart, and his soul that he can bring unbelievers to God?

TELEVISION AND EVIL

The first argument given by telephobes is often that television programming is too violent, morbid, and immoral; the proposed models often call in question or ridicule family models. Inversely, the violence and the morbid images do not seem to trouble other families, some of which even go so far as to justify them as being a part of life. Television violence, it would seem, has a cathartic effect.

Catharsis

About the cathartic effect of violence and morbid images, everything has been said for and against. Usually, people endowed with common sense wonder whether it is a good thing for children to be watching all this violence, while the “intellectuals” assert that watching violence helps viewers to dissipate their aggressive impulses. If it is true that violent, morbid spectacles do not always have tragic or spectacular consequences, one can nevertheless observe that violence overall has not diminished in society. Ergo, the alleged cathartic effect has not occurred.

Causal Connection

It has been said that this need for violence is an effect and not a cause. That may be, but it is never good to feast one’s eyes on horror and violence. In the United States and Canada, there are groups organized against televised violence; in these countries serious studies on the connection between media violence and aggressive behavior have been conducted. The American Academy of Pediatrics officially considers that repeated exposure to media violence increases violent tendencies and passivity in its presence. One recent study conducted by the University of Illinois concluded that the best indicator of violent behavior in children over ten years old is, not the goodness of their parents nor their social rank or economic status, but simply the content of the television programming viewed around their eighth year.

Do violence and the sight of morbid spectacles really make up a part of life? Yes and no. Of course violence has existed since original sin. Anger, hatred, and envy lurk in the heart of man. The unleashing of the forces of nature, blunders and human error still cause innumerable violent deaths. However, the parents of previous generations for the most part carefully shielded young children from violent scenes, since the little ones lacked the maturity or the capacity to be useful at the sites of these dramas.

For example, in the novel by Elizabeth Goudge, *Island Magic*, published in the 1930’s, a mother tries to protect her children from the sight of victims of drowning. In antiquity, violence was not present 24/7 for days and days. During the Hundred Years’ War, scenes of violence and pillaging certainly were not lacking, but they did not occur day in and day out, and people derived no pleasure in beholding them.

In real life, when someone comes upon a scene of violence, he is in a certain sense protected from it: one flees, one intervenes, one is caught up in the action, one does not really comprehend what is happening; perhaps one even receives graces to be blind to the nature and scope of the act. It is only on television and at the movies that the viewer has a right to full view of the particularly unbearable scenes. In real life, one is half anesthetized.

The author of these lines took down the testimony of the victim of crime, a boy of twelve, just minutes afterward. The child had not understood what had happened: someone threatened him with a gun, dragged him into a dark courtyard, disrobed; he was frightened, he fought, but he did not understand what was done to him. The witness did not understand any better.

It is effrontery to pretend that media violence heals aggressive tendencies and diffuses violent behavior. Of course, viewing violent films does not transform all spectators into murderers, fortunately, but it can brutalize them. It is unhealthy to get used to watching difficult situations be resolved by violence. In action movies, patience, goodness, abnegation, and prayer have little place, or else these virtues are treated as naïvete.

One certain effect of media violence is a greater tolerance towards violence in viewers, what the University of Illinois study terms desensitization and indifference towards real-life violence. And then, this violence can frighten, destabilize, and drive to despair. It gives the impression that we live in a terrible, hopeless world in which we are constantly delivered over to evil forces: killers, space aliens, ghosts, monsters, deadly bacteria...

Schadenfreude

What is most unwholesome in this violence is the attitude of the viewer who takes pleasure in the sometimes fictitious but sometimes real suffering of individuals. St. Augustine already made this comment about the theater:

Stage-plays also drew me away....Why does man like to be made sad when viewing doleful and tragical scenes, which yet he himself would by no means suffer? And yet he wishes, as a spectator, to experience from them a sense of grief, and in this very grief his pleasure consists. What is this but wretched insanity? (*Confessions*, Book III, ch. ii)

In a violent scene, there is necessarily suffering. Of course, a viewer may watch this suffering in order to understand, to compassionate, or to act, and not to enjoy the spectacle of suffering itself. But a habitual television viewer watches suffering for amusement, like the theater-goers vilified by St. Augustine.

And what would St. Augustine say about voyeuristic reality TV? The viewer enjoys real suffering staged for his viewing pleasure. A guinea pig is placed in a difficult, unusual, dangerous situation and his reactions are filmed.

The film is uninteresting if all goes well. For the film to be appealing, there has to be drama: cries, tears, scenes of hysteria and suffering.

One day, a French TV station broadcaster invited us to participate in filming for a reality TV show called *Live My Life*. It would have involved filming our homeschooling family life, but with the involvement of someone hostile to homeschooling who would take the place of the mother of the family in daily life. The proposal was presented with reassuring arguments: "It involves the confrontation of two points of view: that of someone in favor of homeschooling, and that of someone opposed."

After having consulted several friends who own television sets and knowing by hear-say about this type of program, we formed this opinion: "People who are interested in homeschooling do not watch this kind of program, and people who watch this kind of program are not interested in homeschooling." We understood that the purpose was not to inform or to debate, but to enter into a game over which we would have no control. It would be our children who would bear the brunt of the experience: the goal of the broadcast was not to show well-behaved, studious children peacefully learning the multiplication tables or doing spelling exercises, but to provoke situations of conflict that would elicit extreme reactions for the greater enjoyment of the TV viewers.

A School of Vanity

Another effect inherent in the audiovisual is the encouragement of vanity, the need to appear, to make oneself stand out. People are worried about

their image: politicians—and they are not the only ones—learn to sell themselves. They forget their convictions for the sake of the image they seek to convey, for political expedience, for vanity. People want to have a place in the "star system." They let themselves be formatted by an impresario or public relations adviser to please and to seduce, whether cultivating a conformist or a non-conformist style. People are led to be more concerned about appearances than about being true in their thoughts and words.

This cult of appearance and show ends by affecting the whole of society in varying degrees. The humble virtues are despised: reserve, silence, solitary reflection, and lowly toil are no longer appreciated. Gratuitous and disinterested action is disesteemed: of what use is it if it does not earn money or glory or power?

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Not only does television cultivate this primacy of appearance over content by showing us actors, singers, and spokespersons chosen for their advantageous physical appearance—their beauty, their shape, their harmonious features (moreover, their physique often takes the place of talent), but these seductive personalities often perform in sentimental stories in which the sixth and ninth commandments are scoffed and love is always selfish, acquisitive, and narcissistic.

St. John Chrysostom tried in his day to fight against the love of theater: "The husband returns dreaming of the pretty waiting-maid and no longer finds any charm in his faded wife." Bossuet preached likewise:

Do not love worldly spectacles in which they strive to draw you into other people's passions and to interest you in their revenges and mad affairs. Do not attend the theater, for everything there, as in the world of which it is the image, is either the concupiscence of the flesh, or the concupiscence of the eyes, or the pride of life. The passions are made delectable, and all the pleasure consists in arousing them....It is untrue that the Fathers found blameworthy in the spectacles only idolatry and blatant indecency. They blamed the uselessness, the dissipation, the mental turmoil, the desire to see and be seen, the decent things surrounding the evil, the play of the passions and the contagious portrayal of vice. (*Traité de la concupiscence*)

It would seem that good literature is not made of good sentiments. Obviously, in movies and melodramas, bad sentiments are preferred to good ones. It is undoubtedly a matter of marketing, although sometimes, quite unexpectedly, a worthwhile film meets with an unforeseen success, like *The March of the Penguins*, *Microcosmos: The Grass People*, or *Winged Migration*.

It is true that merely watching a film portraying all manner of turpitude is not enough to elicit our consent or for us to start practicing like turpitude. However, as with violence, telephiles have been observed to have a passive acceptance of all the vices, a greater tolerance, as if by dint of having their eyes fixed on television they finally lose their moral discernment.

CONCLUSION

It is wiser not to have a television set at home. Certainly, we all know elderly people who make a very limited and reasonable use of one (for instance, to watch a knowledge-based game for mental stimulation), but no one is beyond temptation from a guest who would like to watch his favorite programs or a neighbor whose set is broken and invites himself over to watch his series. If one really must see something important or useful to one's work or apostolate, one can always arrange an invitation from an obliging telephile who, thanks to us, will have a chance to watch a program critically. This type of necessity does not arise often and does not really justify the purchase of a television set.

We should not think that the absence of a television set will eliminate all educational problems: evil can slip in in other ways, and addictive behaviors can take other forms. Replacing television with comic books or video games is not the solution. The absence of television from the home will not protect completely against its sway: sometimes it just takes a stay in the hospital, where

television may be watched by the patient sharing your room. Parents' opposition to television may be interpreted as abuse! Children may be initiated into the use of television when visiting friends or while the parents shop at a department store. It is not always possible to get the set turned off, in which case one should not hesitate to criticize and to express one's judgment of what has been seen and to make the idols fall from their pedestals: the story was stupid, improbable; the actors performed badly; the producer falsified the subject. We should help the children think about what they have seen so that they at least profit by something.

If one owns DVD's, strict rules must be imposed, as for comic books, according to the family and the children's ages. It may be a half an hour per week or once every month or fortnight. It must not be allowed to become a drug, an occupation, or an obsession. It is indispensable to be vigilant over content and frequency. Most of the time, children are not interested in DVD's about the art of flower arranging, the maintenance of farming equipment, or the mayor's powers. The danger does not lie there.

It is important to make them understand that being deprived of television is not a punishment—it is a gift, an opportunity, which few children enjoy. ☐

Translated from *La Télévision, ou le péril de l'esprit* (copyright Clovis, 2009)

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“If one owns DVD's, strict rules must be imposed, as for comic books, according to the family and the children's ages. It may be a half an hour per week or once every month or fortnight. It must not be allowed to become a drug, an occupation, or an obsession. It is indispensable to be vigilant over content and frequency. Most of the time, children are not interested in DVD's about the art of flower arranging, the maintenance of farming equipment, or the mayor's powers. The danger does not lie there.”

Sì sì no no

THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Let your speech be “Yes, yes: no, no”; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)

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The Catechetical Teachings of Pope St. Pius X

St. Pius X is justly known for many things: his fight against Modernism, the lowering of the age of First Communion, and the formulation of the Code of Canon Law among them. What is perhaps less known today is his intense catechetical work. This article, written in 1953 by Don Silvio Riva, provides some insight into this aspect of his life and pontificate.

In the Vatican gardens on feast day afternoons between 1903 and 1914, an uncustomary scene would take place: the gates of the Vatican opened to admit an ever-growing crowd desirous of seeing and hearing the Pope, who would comment on the Gospel and explain the catechism as he did when he was chaplain at Tombolo and parish priest at Salzano. Then came an “apostolic blessing.” The act was unusual for the Vatican’s environment, but not for him who was born “with the catechism in his blood.”

The Catechetical Magisterium of St. Pius X

St. Pius X was the soul that profoundly interpreted the role of the catechism in the life of the Church and its salvific function in the economy of souls. It will not be without gain to follow him, even summarily, in his catechetical vocation as it appears when one examines the mystery of his life.

One remembers that during his childhood he was diligent and enthusiastic at the school of Christian Doctrine in his native village of Riese, where he stood out among all the children his age; and when he was a high school student, during summer vacations he would organize “open air catechism classes” on the plaza of the Sanctuary of the Madonna di Cendrole, where he deftly explained some lessons of Christian Doctrine, listened to with pleasure and profit by the village children. The lessons were “active,” accompanied by alternating songs and prayers, and made lively by the intuitive gesticulation of the young catechist.

But once ordained priest, it was during the years of his first assignment as chaplain at Tombolo from 1858 to 1867 that he perceived the scope of the catechetical problem for children and adults alike. Thanks to the practical vision he acquired from his pastoral ministry, he observed that the pulse of the Christian community is taken by measuring the vitality of its catechetical instruction: without

catechism, one does not make genuine Christians. It was during these years that, having instituted a school for the poor, he came in touch with the vital problems of education and pedagogy, for it happened that he replaced the village's primary school teacher. His awareness of catechetical instruction became more acute while he was responsible for the parish of Salzano (1867 to 1875), during which he saw the urgent needs of the people.

"I beg and beseech you to come to catechism. Miss Vespers rather than catechism!" he would tell his flock repeatedly, certain that if they frequented catechism, he would soon see them at Vespers, too. He was convinced that religious ignorance is the root of every evil. It was at Salzano that the outline of his famous encyclical on catechesis, *Acerbo Nimis*, was born in his heart; once he was Pontiff, he merely ratified with the supreme authority of the magisterium what had ripened during his parish ministry.

We remember the delightful "dialogue catechism" he would give at church with the young Don Giuseppe Menegazzi, of the neighboring village of Noale, to which flocked not only his own faithful, but many other eager listeners in the surrounding area. During the lessons of the "dialogue catechism," the two priests would talk to each other; one played the part of the ignorant, and the other, the teacher. A certain jealousy naturally arose among the priests of neighboring villages, and this strange method of catechism was even denounced to the bishop, who answered: "Do likewise yourselves!"

This curious catechism enthused and interested the people, for the *ignorant* made himself the intelligent and effective interpreter of the doubts and difficulties of the audience. The catechetical zeal of Fr. Sarto did not prevent him from becoming aware of a pedagogical dissonance: the catechetical textbooks did not correspond to the mental development of the children, who were nonetheless judged by Bishop Zinelli, in the decree of his pastoral visitation, "well instructed in Christian Doctrine."

On April 18, 1885, Giuseppe Sarto was elected Bishop of Mantua. His first pastoral visitation opened his eyes to the immediate needs of the diocese so well that during his conversations with the priests, with bitterness and affliction, he constantly had on his lips the refrain he would still repeat when he had ascended the See of Peter: "Christian Doctrine! Christian Doctrine! Christian Doctrine!" In a pastoral letter to the parish priests in 1885 and during the diocesan synod held at Mantua on September 10, 1888, he anticipated the practical rules that constellate the Encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* of 1905:

In every parish a school of Christian Doctrine is to be established, and every Sunday and holy day of obligation,

catechism is to be taught in every church: The pastor will explain Christian doctrine to the children, and immediately afterward he will teach catechism to the people from the pulpit. During Advent and Lent, special daily instruction is to be given to the children to prepare them for confession and Communion. Parents, guardians, and employers who habitually prevent their children or subordinates from regular attendance at the teaching of Christian doctrine cannot receive absolution.

This pastoral solicitude was to push him to inform his clergy during his second pastoral visitation: "I shall especially be pleased by the good ordering and progress of the teaching of Christian doctrine. This is the subject about which I spoke to you on my arrival in the diocese. It is what I have vigorously recommended in all the parishes during my first pastoral visitation, and it is the subject I shall insist upon the most during my second visitation" (Letter No. 501).

Monsignor Sarto had a dream, and he enthusiastically shared it with his priests: to see the churches of the diocese transformed into great schools of Christian doctrine for the people. He called upon everyone's help, declaring that "the deepest gratitude of his heart would be earned by the aid lent him in such an important part of his episcopal ministry." Thus he wrote in a letter to the clergy dated April 19, 1893. His magnificent catechetical letters constitute a practical summary of pedagogy and pastoral technique from the religious magisterium and, in my opinion, they would merit being collected and organized in a volume and published, for they are documents of a burning relevancy for our time.

A number of episodes followed that show his zeal and firm, fatherly intervention on behalf of the accomplishment of this very serious pastoral duty. Monsignor Sarto was a courageous bishop who dared to sound the depths of the ministry and to expose it in its least dynamic aspects. He did not hesitate to denounce certain forms of ecclesiastical eloquence that failed to correspond with the genuine need of souls: "I much prefer that the Lenten conferences, which most of the time prove to be absolutely fruitless because the people do not understand some speeches, be suppressed and the distinguished orator preach in the desert, rather than the faithful remain without Christian doctrine and the pastor's catechism," he wrote in his letter to the clergy of October 12, 1885.

In response to a question about pastoral practice posed by some of the parish priests, namely, whether the explanation of the Gospel could replace the catechism lesson, he bluntly replied in the letter quoted above:

No, the explanation of the Gospel, while necessary, cannot take the place of catechetical instruction, for these are two quite different duties. The explanation or homily made on the Gospel, even if it is adapted to the meager capacity of the listeners, presupposes that the faithful are already instructed in the rudiments of the faith, for these are recalled on the fly, so

to speak, while catechetical instruction must propound a truth of faith or Christian morals and explain it in all its parts.... Preparation for teaching catechism cannot be done without great care, to the contrary; it requires study, even more than for the preparation of an eloquent sermon. It has been said aright that it is easier to find a preacher than a catechist who can give good instruction. Whatever may be the aptitude one may think one has, one will never be able to teach catechism fruitfully without diligent preparation. The pretext that the people is loutish and uncouth only increases the duty to spend more time studying than if one had to address cultivated and instructed persons.

Need one add that the catechetical magisterium of Pius X did not mature on the pontifical See, but was the laborious and considered fruition of his long pastoral experience in the world of living souls? At every passage, obvious correspondences stand out. Pius X is known for the drafting of his “catechism,” which is a precise formulary of Christian doctrine.

The origin of the “uniform catechism” goes back to September 1889, when the first National Catechetical Congress was held at Piacenza, presided by the outstanding bishop and catechist that was Msgr. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza. Msgr. Sarto was occupied with his second pastoral visitation and so was unable to participate. However, he presented a motion and a wish for the drafting of a catechism that would be satisfactory by its clarity and the simplicity of its formulas, which could be placed in the hands of the people and understood by them. The catechism in usage in the diocese of Mantua did not satisfy him, nor did the catechisms of the neighboring dioceses which he had studied attentively, for, he confided to his clergy in a letter of April 19, 1893, “with all due respect for the councils and methods, I have not yet found any that can be adapted to the needs and conditions of our diocese.”

It should be related that during the preparatory phase of the Catechetical Congress, during a discussion to determine whether the idea of a single catechism, which was desired by a great number, should be included among the topics of interest to the congress, Msgr. Scalabrini, a balanced and refined soul, expressed fear “lest the congress encroach upon the authority of the bishops,” who have the right to select and impose the catechism they consider best adapted to their diocese. But when the motion of the Bishop of Mantua was read, which recalled an identical wish formulated by the Fathers of the First Vatican Council, during an executive session, the general opinion shifted towards this practical objective, and it was Msgr. Scalabrini who was the first to express his affirmative opinion. Even though he had “decided not to refer to the development of a uniform catechism during the Congress,” he showed himself to be forthwith very happy to speak about it and to conclude with a petition to be addressed to the Holy See. The Acts and Documents of the First Catechetical Congress of Piacenza, printed by the

Episcopal Press of the same diocese in 1890, precisely report the fact and reproduce the text of Msgr. Sarto’s motion, which deserves to be known, at least in its most interesting passages:

The undersigned Bishop of Mantua respectfully greets the First Catechetical Congress, and makes a proposal that he desires to see discussed by the learned ecclesiastics who will be taking part.

Faced with the abundance of catechisms which are lacking, especially among those published recently, not only in form but also in dogmatic exactitude, it is desirable to have a single text that would be adopted for instruction in the Schools of Christian Doctrine.

In anticipation of the objection that this is not a question that can be treated of during a local congress because the bishops, masters of the faithful entrusted to their care, have the right to present, each one in his own diocese, the catechism in the form they believe the most opportune.

The Congress is not being asked to deliberate, but only to manifest its desire on this subject and to make it known to the Apostolic See.

Indeed, just as the Holy See established the *Catechismus ad Parochos*, which belongs to the Universal Church, likewise it is desirable that there be a popular historical, dogmatic, and moral catechism, written in short questions and answers, which would be taught in all the Schools of Christian Doctrine and translated in all languages, so that in this matter also, all may be *labii unius*; and this would be the foundation of the other, more numerous institutions which must be established by the parish priest and catechist.

He supported his desire with reasons of obvious practical urgency, such as the uniformity of a child’s catechetical language in its family and in the parish; the frequent emigration of the faithful from one parish to another—an argument making allusion to the work of Msgr. Scalabrini for immigrants—and from one country to another; and the fact that St. Robert Bellarmine’s *Book of Christian Doctrine*, even though composed by order of Clement VIII, “proves to be very difficult for uncultivated minds, not only of children, but also of adults, who in this domain are ‘*quasi geniti infantes*.’” Msgr. Sarto does not exclude a few difficulties, which he judges to be “negligible in relation to the great advantages to be gained.”

He suggested the text of the resolution: “The First Catechetical Congress addresses a prayer to the Holy Father, that he might command the redaction of a popular and easy Catechism of Christian Doctrine in the form of very brief questions and answers, divided into different parts, and that he make it obligatory throughout the Church.”

He then added a remark of great biographical and apostolic interest, because it is praise and indirect recognition of what he himself, as Pius X, was to do for the practical achievement of this very same episcopal motion: “It would not be the least of the glories of Your Pontificate, and the First Catechetical

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Congress of Piacenza would have the merit of having promoted a work of immense profit for souls.”

He was to be the one to accomplish this petition, which the Congress forwarded to the Holy See, and this pontifical glory would be his only 14 years later when he became Pope. The enterprise was not easy, but Pius X did not fear to become unpopular, for in his soul he was still Don Giuseppe Sarto, chaplain of Tombolo and archpriest of Salzano: that is to say, a man of God and workman of the Church.

This was at Mantua. At Venice, when he reigned on the patriarchal see, he was to repeat vigorously this catechetical magisterium, stigmatizing a deplorable oratorical formality, which remained, as he pointedly remarked, “in the lofty heights of the pulpit, closer to the organ pipes than the people’s hearts.” Thus he expressed himself in a letter to his clergy of January 17, 1895.

There is a document of considerable value and of pastoral relevance coming from Cardinal Sarto just two months before his accession to the patriarchal see: it is a letter burning with zeal and full of paternal bitterness, not unworthy of authentic patristic literature. In it one sees the notion of the primacy of teaching in pastors of souls take precedence over their liturgical and sacramental ministry, a theme that he will take up with prophetic vigor in the great encyclical that remains sovereign among pontifical documents concerning catechesis, because it harkens to Christ’s *docete*, which precedes the *baptizantes*. Here it is in its essential passages:

We preach too much and teach too little. We must put aside these florid speeches and preach piously and simply to the people the truths of faith, the commandments of the Church, the teachings of the Gospel, the vices and the virtues, because it often happens that persons well instructed in profane sciences do not know or misknow the truths of faith, and know less of the catechism than idiotic children do. Think of the good of souls more than the impression you hope to make. The people thirst for truth: let them be given what they need for the salvation of their souls; and so, instructed in their own language, touched and moved, they will weep over their faults and approach the divine Sacraments.

These teachings of Cardinal Sarto announce the documents of Pope Pius X: the pontificate would only increase their authority and force.

The Catechetical Activity of St. Pius X

The Pope of Catechesis

There is a date in the life of Pius X and consequently in the history of the Church, which has particular importance, for it projects the apostolic vigor of St. Peter and St. Paul, of St. John Chrysostom

and St. Augustine: April 15, 1905. The Catholic world received from Pius X an eminent gift: the Encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* on teaching Christian Doctrine. Some of his august predecessors gave exhortatory rules for catechesis, but the task of giving it a complete treatment in its theological, moral, legal, and pastoral aspects devolved to him. Even now [1953], his encyclical constitutes the *code of the Catechism* for the Catholic Church, and subsequent legislation drew upon this source, including the Code of Canon Law redacted under his authority and promulgated by Benedict XV.

A brief synthesis of the document will effectively clarify the pastoral and social content of his catechetical thought, officially expressed at a historical moment in which Freemasonry, which had seized political power in several Christian nations, “had especially attacked the public schools in order to rear up new generations not only ignorant,” remarked Msgr. Lorenzo Pavanelli, eminent specialist on the catechetical problems in light of the teaching of St. Pius X, “but also resolutely opposed to real and authentic Christianity, that is to say, Catholicism. Even in Italy, by cunning regulations and underhanded ploys violating the spirit and the letter of statutory legislation, all Christian teaching and prayer were driven in sectarian fashion out of all the schools, even the lower grades.”

There was on the one hand a massive front hostile to catechism at school, even elementary school, that advanced reasons such as the incompetence of the priests, charged with religious teaching within the confines of the church and who should not profane this teaching by giving it in public schools; and on the other hand, there was a no less hostile aversion toward the text of the catechism itself, composed as it was according to didactic criteria inferior to those in practice at school. Such accusations were supported by factions in our own camp, and perhaps even by elements of the clergy, ignorant of the adversary’s game. In effect, the didactical situation of the catechism—one catechism for all the grades—seemed delicate and vulnerable. Catechesis at school did not fit in with the didactic structure of the other disciplines because of its insufficient and rudimentary methodology, because the catechetical criterion of questions and answers exclusively learned by heart was not the most indicated for schooling at the time. For the same reasons they even went so far as to denounce the deficiencies of parish catechesis, and in the Italian parliament a blasphemous voice of condemnation and contempt was raised which overstepped the limits of methodology and crossed the line into doctrinal content and the Church’s teaching power. Finally, the teaching of religion was banished from Italian schools.

Pius X was the man placed by Providence to hoist the destiny of the catechism, beginning with

the parishes and dioceses, so that it might then be ready and able to hold a place at school with dignity and honor. He took up the idea of a School of Catechism based on the thought and rules of St. Charles Borromeo, but a school in keeping with the times, school as it was then, with its didactic and technical rules, with its pedagogical spirit purified and refined by the educational treasures of the Church and its holy educators, to whom he fervently looked for guidance. It would be difficult to form a fair idea of the catechetical encyclical of Pius X without keeping in mind these determining factors set by the circumstances, and especially by the pedagogical and apostolic acuity of this Pontiff, who achieved the Church's desire for perfection in the domain of catechesis. The program of this document is "the renewal of the Church's teaching mandate by developing it within the framework of the era, with the adoption of the best pedagogical and didactic results, thereby impressing upon catechesis an organization that transforms the parish into an authentic catechetical teaching authority." The encyclical is thus a short treatise of pastoral catechesis, catechetical legislation, and organization, such as was required by the exigencies of the nascent 20th century.

The encyclical begins with an analysis of the religious decadence caused by "ignorance of things divine," which leads men to insensibility to good and evil. This leads to the corruption of morals in which every affection of man is turned to a love of vanity and deceit, and men stray from the paths of justice. Pius X sees "the knowledge of divine things" as the only guide able to direct the erring will of man, and he does not hesitate to state that "the obligation to dissipate this most pernicious ignorance...rests upon all who are pastors of souls," according to the command of Christ. The encyclical then traces the evangelical figure of the priest as teacher and catechist, as propagators of the doctrine of Jesus Christ and saviors of the human family, athirst for light and truth. Indeed, Pius X affirms with apostolic frankness:

...for a priest there is no duty more grave or obligation more binding than this.... If what We have just said is applicable to all priests, does it not apply with much greater force to those who possess the title and the authority of parish priests, and who, by virtue of their rank and in a sense by virtue of a contract, hold the office of pastors of souls? These are, to a certain extent, the pastors and teachers appointed by Christ in order that the faithful might not be as "children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men.... (§§9, 10).

The encyclical, in reference to the parish priests, expounds wise rules about the catechetical magisterium. It recalls that the teaching of catechism comes before the explanation of the Gospel because

The sermon on the holy Gospel is addressed to those who should have already received knowledge of the elements of faith. It is, so to speak, bread broken for adults. Catechetical instruction, on the other hand, is that milk which the Apostle Peter wished the faithful to desire in all simplicity like newborn babes. (§12)

Pius X then finds it opportune to provide the general outline of a catechism lesson that will really lead to amendment of life:

The task of the catechist is to take up one or other of the truths of faith or of Christian morality and then explain it in all its parts; and since amendment of life is the chief aim of his instruction, the catechist must needs make a comparison between what God commands us to do and what is our actual conduct. After this, he will use examples appropriately taken from the Holy Scriptures, Church history, and the lives of the saints—thus moving his hearers and clearly pointing out to them how they are to regulate their own conduct. He should, in conclusion, earnestly exhort all present to dread and avoid vice and to practice virtue. (§13)

In the clear pedagogical conception of Pius X, the lesson comprises four parts: the first makes an appeal to the mind by the master's lively, oral exposition in which he examines the particular truth in all its parts. In this part, the teaching aspect of catechism dominates, as distinguished from mere moralizing, in which doctrine is absent and the mind left inactive. The Pontiff likes simple, forceful catechesis, which he demands be dispensed with great clarity and simplicity. Once the truth has been expounded, its application to practical life follows: this calls for an interior act of reflection and verification, engaging the understanding and facilitating assimilation and possession of the truth. It is tantamount to an examination of conscience injected quickly into the catechism lesson, the efficacy of which is incalculable. The mind that before was hesitant about a truth of faith now seeks support and confirmation in practical, lived examples that extend beyond religious knowledge as such and translate into the lives of men as it is represented in sacred literature, or reliable historical truth which constitutes literature for edification and encouragement. This is the appeal to the sensibility, which receives so much emphasis in contemporary pedagogy. The heart has its role in catechesis, as in all teaching, and Pius X, with the sensible balance that characterizes him, discreetly assigns it its place so that it can fulfill its function. The fourth part is reserved to the will, of which Pius X shows that he has a lofty and sovereign conception, for it is man's backbone. The final exhortation he desires as a conclusion to the lesson is volitional, for once the motives for action have been exposed and illustrated, there is nothing left but to exhort the pupils to put them into practice. The common sense

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and the cultured—in order that they may arrive at eternal happiness. (§26)

of these volitional applications is worth pointing out, for they do not end in cold, illogical exhortations; they are grafted on the living trunk of the lesson, in which the foundations of doctrine and hence of motivation have been laid. Contemporary volitional psychology rightly extols the indispensable character of *motivation* that persuades the understanding and discovers to it the beauty of truth, which becomes lovable through the heart's office: from there to the will, the passage is short.

Without any display of pedagogical erudition, Pius X summarizes the best of the Catholic Church's knowledge of education handed on by the experience of the most reputable persons worthy of the confidence of Christian schools. Even today, almost a half a century after the promulgation of this encyclical, it is astonishing to glimpse such freshness, vigor, and truth, and it must be admitted that some saints can teach every age and offer, in a nutshell, the vital principle of what men will do afterwards.

After outlining the lesson, Pius X confirms the oral nature of catechetical teaching: "Faith then depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17, quoted in §16). It was from this truth that an academic program for catechetical instruction was developed and put in place by a handful of apostolic priests who were able to adapt the teaching of catechism to the school setting, organized by grades in parallel to the public school grades, with professors, a curriculum, textbooks, registration, grades, teachers' manuals, supplementary instructional material; with an office, secretariat, examinations and competitions, rewards and feasts, celebrations and apostolate.

Finally, the encyclical establishes the norms and directives for parish priests, concluding with a fervent appeal to the duty of pedagogical preparation, which even today occupies the lion's share of catechetical efforts:

We do not, however, wish to give the impression that this studied simplicity in imparting instruction does not require labor and meditation—on the contrary, it demands both more than any other kind of preaching. It is much easier to find a preacher capable of delivering an eloquent and elaborate discourse than a catechist who can impart a catechetical instruction which is praiseworthy in every detail. No matter what natural facility a person may have in ideas and language, let him always remember that he will never be able to teach Christian doctrine to children or to adults without first giving himself to very careful study and preparation. They are mistaken who think that because of inexperience and lack of training of the people the work of catechizing can be performed in a slipshod fashion. On the contrary, the less educated the hearers, the more zeal and diligence must be used to adapt the sublime truths to their untrained minds; these truths, indeed, far surpass the natural understanding of the people, yet must be known by all—the uneducated

Pius X repeats this point several times in the encyclical, persuaded that fruitful catechesis largely follows upon a preparation adapted to the pupils: without wishing to, he has described himself, for Don Giuseppe Sarto, then Bishop, Patriarch and lastly Pope, prepared his catechism lessons at Tombolo and Salzano, at Mantua and Venice, and even those he gave from the Chair of Peter, in just this way.

The Pope of the Catechism

In his youth, he studied catechism in the books of his time. As a young priest, he lamented the inadequacy of the texts and programs ill-adapted to the mental capacity of his pupils, but he said nothing. As a parish priest, he highlighted this lacuna and perhaps contented himself with talking about it to fellow priests and calling for a sound revision. He supplied the deficiencies of method by his words and skillful presentation. As bishop of Mantua, he observed the insufficiency of the diocesan catechism: he would have liked to see the material organized more rationally, the form and style less rhetorical and plainer and more concrete, simpler and more concise. We have already spoken of his motion at the first National Catechetical Congress of Piacenza in 1889—which remained a dead letter until 1912, the year in which he promulgated *his* catechism.

[Almost a century] has elapsed since that 12th of October on which Pius X wrote a letter to Cardinal Pietro Respighi, his vicar general for the city of Rome. The Letter, imbued with paternal fervor, is as it were the synthesis of all his other writings on catechesis. As such, it ought to be made known for the benefit of priests and Christian educators, who will find in its lines an abundance of doctrine and wise rules for catechetical instruction.

From the beginning of Our Pontificate we have taken the greatest care for the religious instruction of the Christian people, and in particular of children, convinced that a great part of the evils afflicting the Church arise from ignorance of its doctrine and laws. The enemies of the Church condemn it, blaspheming what they do not know, and very many of her children, failing to appreciate this doctrine and its laws, live as if they were not children of the Church. That is why we have often insisted upon the urgent necessity of catechetical instruction, and we have promoted it everywhere, according to our power, by the Encyclical Letter *Acerbo Nimis*, and by regulations concerning the teaching of catechism in the parishes, but also by the approbation and encouragement given to catechetical congresses and schools of religion, and by the introduction here at Rome of the text of the Catechism used in some of the major ecclesiastical provinces of Italy.

However, several years having passed, because of the new difficulties cunningly erected against any teaching of Christian doctrine in the schools, where it had been taught for centuries, but also by the useful anticipation, wished by Us, of the first Holy Communion of children, and for other motives, the desire having been expressed to Us for a suitable

Catechism, which would be much shorter and better adapted to today's needs, we have consented to the abridgment of the old Catechism into a new, concise one, which We, Ourselves, have examined and which We wished to have examined by many Fellow Bishops of Italy, so that they might express their opinion in general and indicate in particular, according to their knowledge and experience, changes to be made.

Having received from them an almost unanimous favorable appreciation, as well as a great number of precious observations which We have ordered to be taken into account, it seems to Us that we ought not to postpone a substitution of a text recognized to be opportune for different reasons. We are confident that this text, with the Lord's blessing, will prove to be much more practical and also profitable—if not more—for souls than the former: Significantly abridged, it will not discourage the youngest, on whom already weigh heavy scholastic burdens, and it will permit the masters and catechists to have it learned in its entirety. In spite of its brevity, one finds better explained and emphasized there the truths which today are the most combated, misunderstood, or forgotten, to the great detriment of souls and of society.

We are even confident that adults who wish to revitalize in their soul the fundamental knowledge upon which rests the Christian moral and spiritual life—as they ought sometimes in order to live better and to educate their families—will find useful and will appreciate this short, carefully worded compendium, in which they will find expounded with great simplicity the chief divine truths and the most effective Christian reflections.

This Catechism, and the rudiments we would like excerpted without modification of the wording for the use of young children, We approve and consequently prescribe for the diocese and the ecclesiastical province of Rome, by the authority of this present letter, and We forbid that henceforth any other text be used in catechetical instruction. As for the other dioceses of Italy, it is sufficient for Us to express the wish that the same text, judged by Us and by numerous Ordinaries, also be adopted there, so that, among other reasons, the detrimental confusion and inconvenience many experience today in their frequent changes of domicile, finding in their new place of residence notably different formulas and texts which they have difficulty learning even as they confuse and finally forget what they already knew. It is worse for the children, for nothing is more fatal to the success of teaching than to pursue it with a different text from the one to which the child is already more or less accustomed.

And as the adults may meet with some difficulties in teaching the present text, for it departs from the previous in certain formulas, and to remedy this inconvenience, We command that at the beginning of all the main Masses and classes of Christian doctrine the essential prayers and main formulas be recited aloud clearly and slowly. In this way, after some time and without effort, all will have learned them, and an excellent habit of common prayer and instruction will have been introduced, which is already in force in numerous dioceses in Italy, not without edification and profit.

We firmly exhort in the Lord all the catechists, now that the very brevity of the text facilitates their work, to endeavor with the greatest care to explain Christian doctrine and make it penetrate into the souls of young children, so great is the need today for solid religious instruction because of the diffusion of impiety and immorality. Let them remember that the fruit of catechism depends almost totally upon their zeal and knowledge and skill at making the teaching lighter and appealing to the pupils.

We pray God that just as today the enemies of the Faith, ever more numerous and powerful, propagate error by every means, so also may arise a great number of souls desirous of zealously assisting the parish priests, instructors, and Christian parents in the teaching of catechism, as necessary as it is noble and fruitful.

The date and the august signature, preceded by an affectionate benediction, seal this important pontifical document, which has lost nothing of its urgency and practicality.

A few notes of a didactic character should be made in the margin of this little masterpiece of Christian catechesis which was the code of the Faith for generations of children. The “catechism,” as it is known, was drafted at the order of St. Pius X by abridging the former text used in certain Italian dioceses, which was very extensive and little indicated for use by primary school children who, thanks to the Decree *Quam Singulari* by the same Pius X, could make their first Holy Communion sooner than previously. A sufficient but short catechism was needed that could easily be learned by heart, in conformity with the august teachings of the encyclical of 1905. Memorization made its entrance into Catechism class as a dike to check the collapse of a body of knowledge that was not taking sufficient root in the child's mind, dissipated by the onset of puberty and still more by adolescence. Pope Pius X personally examined the new edition.

Thus it is that we have the “Catechism of Christian Doctrine” called, even today, the “Catechism of St. Pius X,” a precious little book that has educated and is still educating in the faith entire generations of Catholics. In the didactical organization of catechetical instruction, a formulary is distinct from an actual text: the formulary condenses in very brief, precise statements the essence of a religious truth so that it can be learned entirely by heart; the text, on the contrary, based on the formulary, develops the truth in a simple and clear fashion so as to reach the same formula as a logical, theological conclusion. The Catechism of St. Pius X is a formulary, it is not a text; as such it is useful to both great and small, to the learned and the illiterate. It is the orthodox synthesis of Catholic doctrine, of dogmatic, moral, and sacramental theology, in a very simple didactic form. It possesses all the qualities of a synthesis: conciseness, clarity, simplicity, integrity, and fidelity. Of course, to be understood by the pupils, the formulas require, like the rules of grammar, the teacher's explanation. The formula cannot replace the teacher's personal instruction. That is why as a synthesis, the formulary of Pius X is

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the most remarkable work we could have had in the domain of catechism to the present day.

The difficulty of the wording of some of the formulas, hard and dry for a child's mind, has been noted. It is obvious that the catechism by nature abounds in abstract terms and speculative notions, but that is inherent in Christian doctrine, which is revealed and which concerns the relationship of created man with the Creator God. That the Catechism of St. Pius X may sometimes seem difficult to children is granted, especially in certain particularly condensed formulas, but the division of the subject matter into cycles, currently in vigor in teaching texts, mitigates the asperity by dosing the contents of the catechism according to the children's age. Perhaps the most widespread error is to consider it as a text when it is simply a formulary which all the writers of textbooks can draw upon. There is another error, which consists in conceiving of it as a point of departure in oral catechesis when in fact it is the point of arrival, the conclusion of the exposition of the lesson given by the instructor with the aids contemporary pedagogy recommends.

Decades of experience have taught many things about the formulary of Pius X: it has first and foremost assured the precious unity and uniformity of terminology which is very important in the religious study of children and of the people, and which was one of the holy Pontiff's principal intentions. Also, the remarks he made in 1912 on the frequent migration of families from one town to another, have been largely confirmed today by the continual moving of families within a country. Questions of terminology, concerning the conciseness of concepts, can be explained by the absolute respect for doctrinal

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exactness and precision. There were, in effect, here and there some attempts at new catechetical formularies, perhaps in the intention of replacing that of St. Pius X. They succeeded in being clearer and less hard, but by increasing the amount of text, explaining in half a page what the Catechism of St. Pius X explained in a maximum of two or three lines. The latter still remains vivid, perennial, incisive. It is a monument of doctrine, synthesis, clarity, and piety, for the short catechetical formulas are full of unction and inculcate true Christian piety.

(To be continued.)

Translated from *Courrier de Rome*, January 2010.

F R . T H O M A S
J A T Z K O W S K I , F S S P X

“THE LORD’S PRAYER”

“Our Father, who art in heaven”

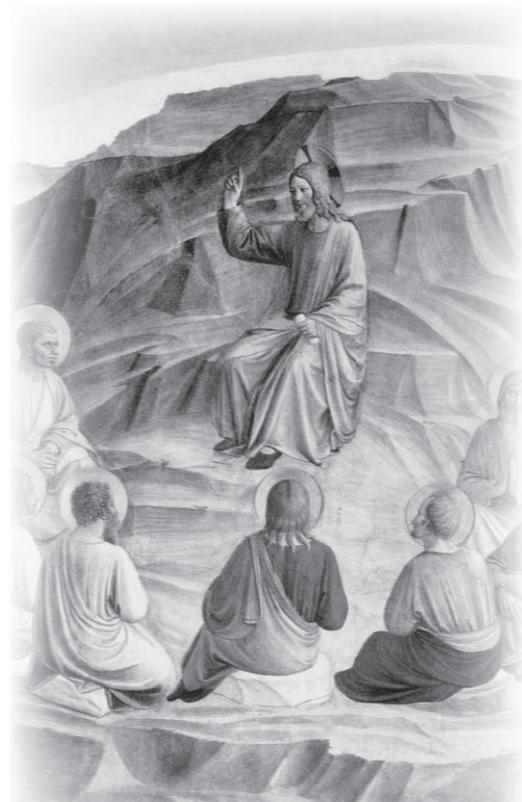
Modern man no longer needs a “father in heaven.” He is his own master and legislator. Scientific research operates under “freedom of values in science,” a godless “exclusion” of God. For feminists and those of the revolutionary emancipation movements, this line of the Our Father is either an incredible impertinence, or simply an erroneous translation which could be amended by a new “politically correct Bible”: “O God, who art our father and mother in heaven,” or simply “Mater Noster.”

Similarly, a more precise determination of the word “our” seems unfit for our era of postmodernism, with its individualism and selfishness—not “our,” but “my” should be correct. And “heaven” is just something for bedtime stories, more opium for the people, a consolation for theoretical eternity. Already, the beginning of the “Our Father” appears to be anything but natural or understandable in the modern world view. What was so dear to the early Christians, the address of Jesus Christ, “Abba (Dear), Father,” seems to have now become for many an ideological issue.

The Unapproachable Yet Very Familiar God

If we have to approach outstanding public figures, we consider very carefully the manner of address and choice of words. In the Lord’s Prayer, it is all the more surprising that our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to address God simply and directly as “Father.” There is no “holy” or “most holy” beforehand, but quite simply, “Father.” By way of address, we show a person special respect and honor him. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He taught them exactly this form of address, which expresses our love in an almost familiar intimacy. It was the will of God that we may call Him and pray to Him as “Father.”

The beginning of the Our Father is not abrupt as if the praying person would right away assail God with prayers and supplications. Before the individual exposes his requests and concerns, he must first of all worship and praise God in an appropriate way. The “Abba, Father” is an address from the Aramaic world, an appeal of children to their father. It is very surprising that our Lord Jesus Christ shared His relationship to His Father with us. After all, we ourselves would



Part 2 of 10

- 1) Introduction
- 2) **Our Father who art in heaven,**
- 3) hallowed be
Thy name;
- 4) Thy kingdom come;
- 5) Thy will be done,
on earth as it is
in heaven!
- 6) Give us this day
our daily bread
- 7) and forgive us
our trespasses,
- 8) as we forgive those
who trespass
against us,
- 9) and lead us not into
temptation, but
deliver us from evil.
- 10) Amen.

not incorporate every outsider without exception into the intimacy of our closest family circle.

The Paternal Qualities of God

To properly understand and pray the Lord's Prayer, one must be careful with the projection of images of human fathers onto God. On the one hand, God is also generating and providing care, and, on the other hand, there are true differences between the "fatherhood of God" and human fatherhood. Our Lord Jesus Christ makes a proper distinction between the heavenly Father and a human father by adding the phrase "Who art in heaven." For example, the love of God is completely untroubled by secondary motives; God always wants only the best for the children of God. Almighty God always has the possibility of realizing His best intentions for His children.

Adopted Children and Heirs of God

God Himself has adopted us as children of God. Through baptism, God incorporates us into the Mystical Body of Christ. "But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God..." (Jn. 1:12). "And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ..." (Rom. 8:17). By sanctifying grace, God has made us partakers of the divine nature.

God as Creator and Preserver of Being

God is our Father because he created us. Not only that, He has created us in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26). All created being is subject to the preservation and government of God, which is only a continuation of the creativity of God. The divine act of preservation is, strictly speaking, not a new activity in addition to creation, but rather something like a perpetual continuation.

Faith and Trust in the Spirit of Childhood

The Lord's Prayer at the beginning already breathes the spirit of adoption, which St. Paul describes so well: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. 8:15). The spirit of adoption speaks from every line of the Lord's Prayer. A genuine spirit of adoption will foster the sentiments of childlike devotion and sincere trust. "Childlike innocence" in this case does not mean mere naivety, but rather an undisguised simplicity and the certainty of being loved by the Father. A crucial key to the success of a godly prayer is confidence. Doubt and mistrust are poisons for the fruitfulness of prayer. The one who prays must have confidence above all: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). The Sermon on the

Mount teaches us more about the spirit of childhood in a very impressive way.

Freedom and Responsibility of God's Children

Do we always live up to the responsibility and the title of "children of God"? When we call God our Father, we have to live as sons of God. From the image and likeness of God and the adoption as a child of God results the necessity to move closer to the ideal of the child of God, meaning for us a lifetime of effort putting off the "old man." As children of God we owe God worship, imitation, obedience, and patience in trials, as St. Thomas summarizes in his *Compendium* (see *Comp. Theol.*, II, cp. 5-8).

Worship of God

A child of God owes God worship for reasons of justice or *pietas*: "*Est enim pietas iustitia adversus deos*—for piety (*pietas*) is justice towards the gods," as an old Latin pre-Christian saying goes. The worship of God should be done sincerely, which necessarily includes a Christian life and the practice of justice towards others in everyday life.

True Imitation of the Father of Love, Mercy, and Perfection

The imitation of our heavenly Father must be measured in our practice of love, mercy, and perfection. Therefore if the one who prays the Lord's Prayer were inhumane or cruel, his prayer would not be honest. "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (Mt. 5:43-45). Similarly, a child of God has to exercise mercy because the heavenly Father forgives our sins again and again in the sacrament of confession through His mercy. The fifth beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount calls for the exercise of mercy: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7). God is "the Father of mercies" (II Cor. 1:3). A true imitation of the heavenly Father must take seriously this verse: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

Submission to the Will of God

The opening words of the Lord's Prayer already show, even before the request "Thy will be done," the necessity of obedience to the will of God.

Patient Perseverance

In light of the cross, the sincere worshipper has to believe the Lord's Prayer because, "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come" (Rom. 8:18) and "whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth" (Prov. 3:11).

That Small Word: "Our"

The word "our" shows us our special relationship with God, but in no way expresses possession of God. This special relationship of God's children to their father rather points to the affiliation of the children to their father. Where "our" is prayed sincerely, selfishness and individualism must give way to the love received from God. The "our" at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer and "we" in the last four petitions are not a sign of separation, but rather of interaction and unity in the one Mystical Body of Christ, of which all the baptized are members. We pray with all the baptized and for all the baptized, for all living and dead believers in Christ. The concern of someone who prays the Lord's Prayer should be as open and broad-minded as the all-encompassing love of God—simply endless. We have only a right to pray this word "our" if we do not set limits to charity, which can only then be true Christian charity—if it proceeds from the charity of God, which has no limits.

"Who art in heaven"—Lifting Up Your Eyes to the Promised Fatherland

This description of God seems superfluous, if not paradoxical. Of course God is in heaven; why would we want to emphasize this point? Moreover, God is everywhere, in heaven and on earth. God even dwells in the soul of the baptized if he lives in a state of sanctifying grace and mortal sin has not separated him from God. The meaning of this line must therefore be different.

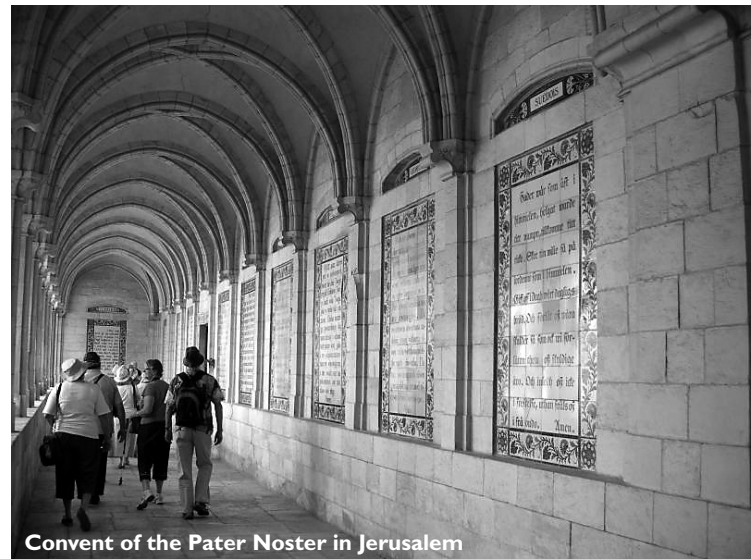
With this apparently superfluous phrase, Our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to direct our view towards our true, eternal goal. The words "Who art in heaven" can be a real eye-opener to the supernatural and even for God to the prejudiced souls who live lives of worldliness, oblivion of heaven and the afterlife, and senselessness. The praying soul is made to look up from our earthly exile to our true homeland. St. John Chrysostom (+ 407), the famous Father of the Church, interprets this description of the Father as the intention of Jesus: "Not for God to include him, so to speak, in heaven, but in order to separate the worshipper from the earth, to lift him up to higher heavenly things" (in *Homily on St. Matthew*, XIX, 7).

The praying soul should be liberated from the forgetfulness of his eternal destiny. This lifting of his eyes up to the eternal home can be, for the praying

soul, a true remedy against his fixation on earthly things in the wake of earthly concerns, needs, selfishness, greed, materialism, etc.

The Longing for Heaven

The praying soul must apply the invocation "Who art in heaven" practically in seeking what is heavenly, as St. Paul exhorts us: "Seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. 3.1). This is a lifelong task calling for a further education in the Faith. With the words "Who art in heaven," the praying soul will become aware of the ultimate goal of life: eternal happiness. Through prayer, the yearning for heaven is entertained. Of course, this alone is not sufficient because it has to find its expression in everyday life.



Convent of the Pater Noster in Jerusalem

The Church of the Pater Noster in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives

At the site of the present church there was a former church from the time of Emperor Constantine, which was destroyed in 614. The spot, which has been maintained since the Crusades, is where Our Lord taught people how to pray this prayer. It was acquired in 1868 by a French Catholic. The current French Carmelite monastery was then built. On the walls of the hall and of the cloister, there are tiles of Majolica with the text of the Our Father in 140 languages. ☩

(To be continued.)

Fr. Thomas Jatzkowski, FSSPX, was ordained in 2004, and is currently prior of St. Teresa of Avila Priory, Hamburg, Germany.



Thiberville: The Story Continues

According to the website *Osservatore Vaticano*, Cardinal Hummes of the Congregation of the Clergy has rejected the appeal filed by Fr. Francis Michel against his sudden dismissal from the parish of Thiberville by his bishop in January, 2010.

The letter, signed March 26, informs Fr. Michel that his appeal has been rejected and that, canonically speaking, the parish of Thiberville no longer exists. There are further canonical appeals possible, but the point is this: Whatever positive developments may occur in the Church (such as the relative proliferation of Masses under *Summorum Pontificum*), the general tenor remains the same. The crisis continues. (Source: *Rorate Caeli*, Angelus Press)



On the Beatification of Pope Pius XII

Reuters announced on February 17 that eighteen Catholic theologians—from the United States, Germany, and Australia—sent the Pope an “unusual and impassioned” letter in which they admit they are “troubled” by Benedict XVI’s decision last December to recognize the heroic virtues of Pius XII. “We implore you,” they write to the Pope, “...to be patient with the cause of Pius XII.” They fear in particular that beatification of the World War II Pope “might harm Jewish-Catholic relations in a way that cannot be overcome in the foreseeable future.” Among the signatories are Fr. John Pawlikowski, a member of the Catholic Theological Union and an historian of Judaism and the Holocaust, and Eugene Fisher, an expert on relations between Catholics and Jews for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

According to *L’Osservatore Romano* of February 16, the American foundation Pave the Way (PTWF) has obtained the Holy

See’s permission to digitize and publicize “free of charge” and “very soon” the *Acts and Documents of the Holy See Relative to the Second World War* taken from the closed section of the Vatican Secret Archives. It concerns twelve volumes that were published between 1965 and 1981 by four Jesuits, Frs. Pierre Blet, Angelo Martini, Robert Graham, and Burkhardt Schneider, at Paul VI’s behest in 1964. The Holy See’s newspaper “intends to render service to historical truth” with the posting of these documents online.

“Ironically, the Vatican Secret Archives [from the period prior] to 1939 were opened over two years ago,” and they showed that “65 percent of Pacelli’s ministry has simply been ignored by the critics who call for the war years to be opened,” declared Gary Krupp, the Jewish founder and president of the PTWF, which will be publishing online 5,125 documents belonging to the Vatican Archives from the period covering March 1939 to May 1945. Pave the Way intends thereby “to show clear evidence of Pope Pius XII’s efforts to mitigate suffering during the war and that the ‘black legend,’ which

besmirched his name, is simply not true.”

The documents will be available on the Pave the Way Foundation web site as well as that of the Vatican. Founded in 2002, the foundation describes itself as “[a non-sectarian public foundation] dedicated to achieving peace by closing the gap in tolerance, education and the practical relations between religions, through cultural, technological and intellectual exchanges.”

Asked on February 24 by *L’Osservatore Romano* about the contribution that the opening of the Vatican archives on the pontificate of Pius XII might make, Fr. Bernard Ardura, president of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences, confided that “the simple fact of providing access to the sources is in itself a fundamental contribution, but that does not mean there will be surprising discoveries.” The Premonstratensian underscored that, even if this opening were not “decisive,” it would be “very useful for a knowledge of the figure and work of Pope Pacelli, at last freed from much too facile and worn-out prejudices.” The French religious, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture since 1997, was named on December 3, 2009, by Benedict XVI to the head of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences, which gathers some thirty researchers from the international academic world.

After the French philosopher Bernard-Henry Lévy, it is now the turn of the lawyer and historian of Rumanian extraction Serge Klarsfeld to take up the defense of the memory of Pius XII. The *Osservatore Romano* of March 6, 2010, in an article entitled “The Nazi Hunter and Pius XII,” commented on a dossier published in *Le Point* of February 25 under the title “The



Pius XII Affair.” In it Serge Klarsfeld declared: “People forget that the Vatican, hemmed in, censured, was dealing with a very determined enemy—Nazism. The Jews weren’t anybody’s priority. People are conducting an anachronistic trial of Pius XII.”

“The Pius XII Affair” revealed the existence of a broader and more complex movement to which are attached current accusations being leveled against the Western leaders of the time and the Red Cross. In the same story, the Franco-Israeli historian Saul Fridländer affirmed that, as far as he was concerned, if Pius XII “had spoken, even if there had been reprisals, the grandeur of the Church would have been remembered.”

(Source: *DICI*)

Rabbi Calls Media Coverage of Church Abuse Scandal One-dimensional

In an interview with the Catholic News Agency (CNA), Rabbi Jack Bemporad commented on the recent media onslaught concerning the Holy Father, calling the coverage “one dimensional” and saying that the depiction of the Church in the media has not been given “proper context.”

Rabbi Bemporad, director of the New Jersey-based Center for Interreligious Understanding, was recently quoted as a lone voice in an Associated Press article in which other Jewish leaders denounced the

papal preacher, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, for his comments likening the media depiction of the Church to anti-Semitism.

In the AP article released on April 2, and in a follow-up interview with CNA, Rabbi Bemporad defended the papal preacher. Although the rabbi believes Fr. Cantalamessa used a “poor example,” ultimately, the preacher’s “point is correct.”

What the preacher intended to indicate through his homily, Rabbi Bemporad said, was that “you can’t collectively condemn the Church for what some priests and some individuals in the Church may have done.”

Addressing those who have criticized Pope Benedict in recent days, Rabbi Bemporad stated that “you’ve got to have a sense of compassion, charity, and saying ‘how can we help you do this properly?’ instead of condemning him and saying, ‘See, you’re not doing enough.’”

“We’re so quick to judge, we’re so quick to condemn,” he stressed. “There’s no charity, there’s no compassion, no sympathy, and no, by the way, self-criticism.”

A lot of sex abuse involving children is going on, the rabbi noted. “It’s not simply a Catholic problem.”

“I do think that the pope is trying to do the best he can,” he added.

The rabbi also took a jab at the media coverage of the Pope, calling it “very one-dimensional” and charging that many of the reports have not placed Vatican actions “in the proper context.”

“The tragedy of the media,” Rabbi Bemporad stated, “is that it has a capacity to educate; instead, what it does is cater to the worst element in human beings. The most voyeuristic element.”



Liturgy Conference in Los Angeles

In March, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in California held a liturgy conference. A picture says a thousand words.

In related news, Cardinal Mahony’s successor was announced recently: Jose Gomez will succeed Cardinal Mahony in 2011. He is known to be somewhat in favor of the Old Mass.

(Source: Angelus Press)



La Salette Seniors Noted in Paper

The News-Gazette, an Illinois paper, recently featured a story about five students from Notre Dame de La Salette Boys' Academy, a boarding high school run by the SSPX. What made these five students so unique to the paper was their desire to pursue vocations. The paper quotes the Headmaster, Fr. McMahon, who says La Salette is "not a minor seminary with the direct goal of preparing men to enter the religious life. Rather, its purpose is to form solid Catholic men, zealous and generous."

The paper continues:

"The fact that outside distractions—such as video games and girls—are not

present while opportunities to attend Mass occur daily, makes it easier for the students to focus on long-term plans.

"The environment is set up to form men, plain and simple," Golightly said. "Some of the reasons that more young men from La Salette try the priesthood is because they are in an environment that is conducive to thought and prayer, which is the key to finding God's path for you."

"Carlisle said that with the focus on discipline and 'doing the right thing as opposed to doing what feels good or



what's easier,' the result is 'to form men of character and principle.'

"He added: 'While I in no way felt "pushed" to pursue the priesthood, the La Salette system, which stresses doing God's will in all things, prepared me to make the decision when the time came.'

"As for the sacrifice involved, it is tough giving up all the world has to offer. One is only truly happy and at peace when he is doing God's will, and thus the reward of the priesthood far outweighs the sacrifice."

(Source: News-Gazette, Angelus Press)

"We shouldn't be so quick to grab at headlines which are virulent, and in my opinion, hysterical," he asserted.

The New Jersey rabbi also praised Pope Benedict for his efforts in helping advance the relationship between the two faiths, saying the pontiff has "tried to be a friend" and has done whatever he can "to show the close relationship between Catholics and Jews."

"All I am asking for is charity," and "that we should think about how we can help one another, not condemn one another," said the rabbi.

(Source: Catholic News Agency)

Martin Mosebach on Pope Benedict XVI

Martin Mosebach, whose famous book, *The Heresy of Formlessness*, has been well-received in traditional Catholic circles in recent years, gave his thoughts on recent

developments in the Church in 2009. Here are some excerpts:

"Even today it is a difficult undertaking to speak of the importance of the liturgy for the Church. Twenty years ago it was almost hopeless finding a sympathetic ear. It was a foregone conclusion for many clerics that the traditional, over 1500-year-old liturgy of the Church was decorative mumbo-jumbo for the nostalgic and for aesthetes. It had the same importance for 'emancipated Christians' as the string quartets played on occasions of state have for politics. What had been true throughout the entire history of the Latin Church had been forgotten: that liturgy is the visible body of the Church; that Church and liturgy are identical. It is the mystic depiction of the whole plenitude of revealed truths. It is the locus of faith, where subjective conviction and feeling become objective contemplation and encounter. It is this liturgy which carried the Christian faith through the centuries. The success of the mission in the entire world

was owed to its sacrality in liturgical language and chant.

"The liturgy had soared above the deep divides of European history because it was equally removed from every epoch into which it entered. It is always unseasonable and therefore always an image of the other reality which awaits man. This great form of the liturgy had been softened up by Paul VI's radical reform of the mass—an intervention unheard of in the entire history of the Church. It splintered into a thousand improvisations.

"But why was Archbishop Lefebvre the only bishop in the entire world who uncompromisingly rejected this attack against the liturgy and thus against the Church? With this no to a process of decomposition so highly dangerous to the Church, Lefebvre entered ecclesiastical history. What gave him the strength was the milieu, only found in France, of a Catholic laity which had acquired its world view in the struggle against aggressive republican secularism...



“Must he [Pope Benedict] not, however, have felt a sense of obligation to the SSPX; that, for all its faults, it had become an instrument for preserving the Holy of Holies of the Church in a time of crisis?”

(Source: *Rorate Caeli*/Angelus Press)

In another interview, with *The European*, he said:

“We have to ask ourselves why there was an increase in sex crimes by priests in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. There can be no denying that this experiment in *Aggiornamento*—the assimilation of the Church with the secular world—was a colossal failure. After the Second Vatican Council most priests shed their priestly garments and they stopped celebrating the Holy Mass each day.”

(Source: Dialog International)

Rosary Crusade UPDATE

The General House of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), in Menzingen, has lately been receiving from all over the world the results of the Rosary Crusade launched by its General Superior, Bishop Bernard Fellay. This crusade lasted from May 1, 2009, to March 25, 2010; its goal was to ask for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Supreme Pontiff and all the bishops of the Catholic world, in accordance with the message of Fatima in which Our Lady herself announced the final triumph of her Immaculate Heart.

To date we have only a provisional count, as all the results have not yet been tallied. However, DICI is delighted to announce to its readers, in this exclusive news report, that the goal of 12 million rosaries,

which were to form a crown of 12 stars for Mary, Queen of Heaven, has been surpassed by far, since more than 18 million rosaries have already been reported. Among the districts that sent in their results, we should note the generosity of the United States (5,354,552), France (2,936,890), Africa (2,816,826) and Asia (2,583,204). Next come Canada (717,000), Germany (680,000), South America (536,480), Switzerland (411,000), Australia (402,000), Mexico (332,800), Great Britain (218,116), Italy (215,000), Ireland (136,190)....

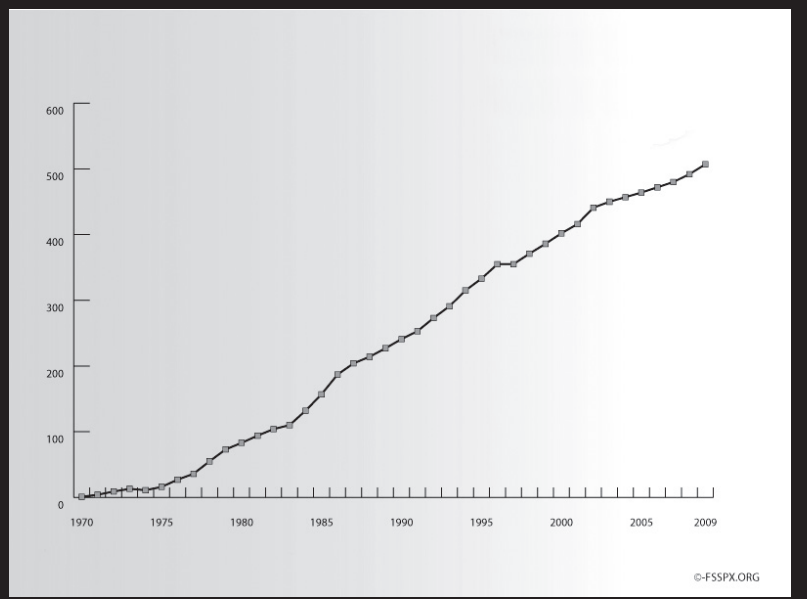
Once a definitive count is obtained, this crown of rosaries recited around the world, over the course of nearly a year, will be presented to the Holy Father by Bishop Fellay. Profound thanks to all the Rosary crusaders for their admirable Marian fervor!

—Father Alain Lorans

(Source: *DICI*)

Priests of the Society of Saint Pius X

A graphical analysis of the number of priests in the Priestly Society of St. Pius X, from 1970 to today. There are currently 511 priests. The figures were published recently by the General House in Menzingen.





A Dark Cloud in the Conciliar Sky

In his bestseller, *The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion*, Msgr. Gherardini studies the question of the value of the Council's magisterium and its interpretation. While his approach to the doctrinal problems differs from that of Society publications, he practically reaches the same conclusions. Msgr. Gherardini's contribution has the advantage of opening the debate in the heart of Rome and, therefore, the Church.



Brunero Gherardini
Le Concile Œcuménique Vatican II
UN DÉBAT À OUVRIR

Casa Mariana Editrice

At the end of January, the great liberal figures of the “Wojtylian era,” from Cardinal Martini to Msgr. Sorrentino, sponsored the creation of a new Web site in Italy: *Viva il Concilio!*—an acclamation to sing the wonders of a “superdogma,” as if it were necessary to close ranks to ward off an ineluctable threat: Vatican II, during which the aula resounded with thousands of voices nearly a half a century ago, today sees its aura tarnished. At the same time, after three printings in the language of Dante, one of the most eminent theologians of the Lateran, Msgr. Brunero Gherardini, brought out the French [and English] edition of his latest work: *The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion*.¹

Msgr. Gherardini's Initiative

Neither a man of power nor curial prelate, this Tuscan professor, a native of Prato, has spent decades training priests in ecclesiology and ecumenism. Professor emeritus of Theology at the Pontifical Lateran University and a canon of St. Peter's

Basilica, he has become an acknowledged and consulted specialist in the Lutheran Reformation, ecclesiology, and Mariology. The book published by this heir of the Classical School at the age of 85 might be perceived as a synthesis of the hundreds of publications this eminent Roman academician, initiated in Thomist theology and quite traditional definitions, had published during his ecclesiastical career. Such is manifestly not the goal of its 260 pages. Rather, at the time when the doctrinal discussions between the Holy See and the Society of St. Pius X are underway, they appear as a response to Pope Benedict XVI's famous speech to the Curia of December 22, 2005. The Pope, in what constituted a veritable opening program for his new pontificate, made the “hermeneutic of continuity” its key theme. For him it was a matter of bringing to an end the post-conciliar crisis and of placing the Council in the wake of Tradition.

Msgr. Gherardini states his willingness to follow this approach. Moreover, he gives us to understand

that this is the interpretation he has patiently applied in his teaching by trying to reconcile the conciliar documents with the antecedent magisterium. But, without rejecting it, he shows that such a procedure is clearly not evident. He shares the accumulated doubts to which the application of this method of interpretation has given rise, and with the use of precise definitions, he underscores the real dissonance existing between a great number of texts, from *Dignitatis Humanae*² to *Lumen Gentium*,³ and Tradition. After 50 years of teaching, he states:

I must confess, however, that the following problem has never ceased to present itself to me: namely, if in reality the Church's Tradition had been **entirely** protected in the last Council and if, therefore, the *hermeneutic of developing continuity* could be utilized and show its undeniable worth. (p. 88)

Consequently, his study, marked by great restraint and an unmatched deference, does not devolve into hollow praise. After four years of Benedict XVI's pontificate, he even gives expression to a sense of alarm and concludes his book with an appeal to the Holy Father. "After almost a half century of such language, of such incense offered with 'three double swings,' of such intemperate celebrations—uncalled for and counterproductive—it seems to me that the time has finally arrived to turn the page" (p. 22).

A Rereading of the Council

Before methodically looking at the conciliar documents that seem to him, in an emblematic way, particularly problematic, Monsignor Gherardini first takes care to dismantle the supposedly "defining" character of Vatican II which would make of it a third Testament. The prelate recalls the necessity of placing the Council in its context and of bearing in mind the intentions that Popes John XXIII and Paul VI had assigned to it: a pastoral objective that dispelled any desire to proclaim definitions of faith:

But when a Council presents itself, its contents, and the very reason for its documents under the category of the *pastoral*, deliberately qualifying itself as being *pastoral* in character, then it excludes in this fashion any intent of a defining nature. Therefore, it cannot demand the status of a dogmatic Council, nor can anyone confer this status upon it. This holds even if within it there resound some appeals to dogmas of the past and its documents may contain certain theological formulations. Theological is not necessarily synonymous with dogmatic. (pp. 29-30)

From now on, it is no longer the members of the SSPX who advance the argument of the Council's pastorality, but one of the most eminent deans of the Roman faculty.

In the same way, the professor of ecclesiology does not want to distinguish too sharply between the Council and what followed. According to him, the one effectively fueled the other by its omissions,

gaps, and ambiguities, and by what was contrary to the anterior Magisterium:

It is not by chance that the *spirit of the Council* was spoken of. The Council had liberally spread this *spirit* by its confidence in man and his progress, by calling attention to social-political-cultural experimentation: something which was already taking place in much of the Church and which exploded in an almost uncontrollable manner afterwards through its invitation to dialogue and collaborate with everyone for a world more suited for man, through its open irenicism to every brewing opposition, through its imposing silence on all bearers of bad tidings. (p. 88)

At this point, Msgr. Gherardini launches into a thorough study of the major documents on the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), religious freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*), ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), and the definition of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). The professor does not conduct a trial. Rather, he emphasizes what he considers to be the essential contributions of Vatican II and even what he considers to be the benefits (?) of certain constitutions like *Lumen Gentium*. He brings out, though, the particularly devastating role of the experts, in the front ranks of which he names Karl Rahner, who brought with them what he calls the "revolutionary aspirations of Vatican II." The conclusion is clear: The Church cannot abide flagrant contradiction between magisterial texts. The pope must organize conferences and initiate an in-depth study of the Council in order to give it a reading in conformity with the true notion of Tradition, which he takes the time to clarify by making reference to the definition of St. Vincent of Lerins.

Silence about the Resistance

The work is short, but even so the dozens of historical and theological pages relative to the Council and the post-council never mention the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum* or the Society of Saint Pius X. The name of Archbishop Lefebvre is not mentioned once. Someone zealous for justice might take offense at such omissions. At one point, the reader might almost perceive a disavowal, notably when the author alludes to the polemical character of certain publications of the *Courrier de Rome*, which is widely known to be the work of an eminent member of the Ecône foundation. Nevertheless, this distance remains a posture, and the silence conceals, it seems to me, the praise the theologian, sure that we are defending truth rather than a particular cause, did not want to confer publicly. His appeal must equally reach those who would have bristled at the mention of a valorous but officially condemned society. An adroit allusion seems, moreover, like a wink at the attentive reader. In the chapter on the liturgy, one of the references the theologian cites is

by a certain “D. Bonnetterre,” published by “Éditions Fideliter” in 1980...⁴

For Monsignor Gherardini’s approach, if it does not confront Vatican II directly, and if, consequently, it is independent of that of the Society of St. Pius X, reaches the same conclusions: faced with a council that cannot be annulled nor easily reduced to the level of a conciliable, it is necessary that Rome reappropriate its doctrinal authority in order to clarify, define, and even condemn. It is necessary that the authority of the Church annotate these documents with *notae praeviae*—and *posteriores* as needed—which will be like buttresses stabilizing the disequilibrium of a vault clearly seeming to crumble. Sure of his dismantling of the dogmatic character of Vatican II, Msgr. Gherardini in his appeal calls for frankness in addressing the contradictions that crop out everywhere:

If the conclusion proves that continuity, whether in part or on the whole, is not real, then it would be necessary to say so with serenity and frankness in response to the need for clarity. This need has been felt and this response desired for nearly half a century. (p. 299)

In his preface to the book, the Most Reverend Mario Oliveri, Bishop of Albenga-Imperia, near Genoa, corroborates this idea:

...if it were to emerge from a Catholic, theological hermeneutic that **some passages**, or some statements or assertions of the Council, **not only say things which are *nove*** [the same thing said in a new way], **but also say things where are *nova*** [different things] with respect to the perennial Tradition of the Church, one would not be presented with a homogenous development of the Magisterium: **in such a case there would be a teaching which is not unchangeable, and certainly not infallible.** (p. 10)

Msgr. Marcel Lefebvre

In a 1987 interview, Archbishop Lefebvre had already called for the correction of these contradictions and even errors. He was asked this question:

The only solution to the Lefebvre “case” acceptable to you would seem to be a public disavowal of Vatican II by the Sovereign Pontiff. But can you see the pope one Sunday morning showing up at St. Peter’s Square and announcing to the faithful that after more than twenty years, it turns out that the Council was mistaken and that at least two decrees voted for by the majority of the Fathers and ratified by the pope must be abrogated?

He answered:

Come now! At Rome, they would be able to find a more discreet way of going about it... The pope could assert that a few documents of Vatican II need to be better interpreted in light of Tradition, so that it has become necessary to change a few sentences to render them more in conformity with the magisterium of preceding popes. It would have to be stated clearly that error can only be “tolerated,” but


that it can have no “rights”; and that State neutrality about matters religious neither can nor should exist.

At the end of January, Monsignor Babini, the bishop emeritus of Grosseto, did not hesitate to pay homage to the founder of Ecône:

Monsignor Lefebvre was right in his ideological choices. He was certainly a great and wise churchman whom I always liked. The “Lefebvrist” are not at all schismatic. John Paul II saw himself obliged to excommunicate them, but he did so with tears in his eyes. But, I repeat, if only there were in the Catholic Church, today so progressive, serious and courageous men like the great man that was Monsignor Lefebvre... whose memory is in the process of being re-evaluated. It suffices to consider those who come out of his seminaries—well-prepared, courageous priests—while from ours, often empty, it is not always [men like those] who come out!

The Traditionalists’ Temptation

The mere opening of doctrinal conversations and the agreement to discuss the Council have, it seems, loosened tongues and brightened private opinions. The temptation occasioned by such a discourse, as eminent as it is rare, which shatters the taboo of a divinized council, would be for us to lay down the cross confided to us by our Lord. Christ Himself could have interrupted His way to Golgotha after the first fall. But, before these positions have been adopted by the Church’s authorities, let us recall that they are the fruit of the exactingness of those who have gone before us. What would be left at present had we been satisfied with the meager liturgical compromises the indults constituted 20 years ago?

The principle [of “Living Tradition”] is not up for debate. It could, however, lend itself to a breaking down of the sacred deposit of the contained truths in its Tradition. In the context like that which reigned during and after Vatican II where only the “new” appeared as true and where the “new” presented itself and is presented with the aspect of the immanentistic and fundamentally atheistic attitude of our times, doctrine is nothing more than a great illusion. Tradition remains mortally wounded and agonizes, that is, if it is not already dead in consequence of positions radically irreconcilable with its past. It is not sufficient, therefore, to define it as *living* if it no longer has any life. (p. 155) 

Msgr. Bruno Gherardini, 85, a renowned theologian of the Roman School, resides at the Vatican as a Canon of St. Peter’s Basilica. He is the secretary for the Pontifical Academy of Theology, professor emeritus at the Pontifical Lateran University, and editor of *Divinitas*, a respected Roman journal of theology.

¹ The English version has also been published: *The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion* (Casa Mariana Editrice, 2010). Quotations of the work are from this edition.

² The Declaration on Religious Freedom: On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, December 7, 1965.

³ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, November 21, 1964.

⁴ The reference is to Fr. Didier Bonnetterre [FSSPX], *The Liturgical Movement* (1980; Angelus Press, 2002)—Ed.

ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE

THE AUTHORITY OF VATICAN II QUESTIONED

PART 6



Fr. Gleize is a professor of ecclesiology at the seminary of the SSPX in Ecône and now a member of the commission involved in the doctrinal discussions with the Holy See.

In 2006, he compiled and organized Archbishop Lefebvre's thinking about Vatican II. It was published by the Institute of St. Pius X, the university run by the SSPX in Paris, France.

Vatican II Questioned

Excerpt from the conference given at Ecône on March 25, 1976, during which Msgr. Lefebvre recounted an interview with Msgr. Benelli, substitute for Cardinal Villot, Pope Paul VI's secretary of state. –Fr. Gleize

The only sentence [Msgr. Benelli] picked out from my talks was in my Declaration of November 21, 1974, which reads: “No authority, not even the highest in the hierarchy [and you can guess what follows], can force us to abandon or diminish our Catholic Faith, clearly laid down and professed by the magisterium of the Church for nineteen hundred years.” I really do not see how one can quibble with a statement like that...

So he began: “No authority, not even the highest in the hierarchy”—in other words, the Pope,” he told me.

I replied: “Obviously.”

“But it is not you who make the truth!”

But I do not make truth; I know very well that it is not I who make the truth. But I do think that I am capable of knowing it all the same; I hope I am capable of knowing it.

“But the pope is the judge of what is true; the pope is the criterion of truth; the pope decides what is true.”

I said: “Well, I don't know about that. I think that the pope is supposed to hand on the truth; he transmits the truth, but it is not he who makes the truth; he is not the truth, he has to transmit it.”

“In any case, it is not you who make the truth.”

I said: “It is not I. A child going to catechism and who knows the catechism knows the truth, and the pope cannot be against the truth that is in the catechism and what the popes taught for twenty centuries.” So I was supposedly against the pope, against the Council, and against everything that had been done after the Council.

The Fight for the Faith

The Society's attitude is not dictated by a disciplinary question, but by questions of faith. The Society refuses Vatican II because this council effected a rupture in the unity of faith: from a talk given by Archbishop Lefebvre at Ecône, June 22, 1976. -Fr. Gleize

We are the ones, on the contrary, who are for order, the ones who are for the hierarchy, for discipline, and so we are not trying to divide the Church—on the contrary. We think that the principles we profess are the true principles of the Church's unity. The first unity the Church must seek, and has always sought, and in which it has always existed, is the unity of faith. To the extent that the entire hierarchy of the Church professes the same faith, it is united. It is not we who invent the faith, nor do they; it is not even the pope who invents the faith. The faith existed before him, it existed before us, and it existed before the hierarchy. It is known.

Open your theology books to the sources of revelation; you will find Scripture and Tradition, which are the two sources of revelation. The chapter on Tradition will indicate all the sources which constitute the *norma fidei*. It is not we who make the *norma fidei*; it is not we who say what must be believed, but we seek to know what the Church tells us. The theology books will first indicate the professions of faith, the *Credos*: the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed—the different creeds, then dogmatic theology, and finally everything that

has been solemnly and infallibly taught by the magisterium of the Church—it is not complicated.

This is the unity to which we must be joined. And it is precisely to the extent that this unity of faith is shaken that the Church begins to find itself in a terrible situation, a very difficult division, a state of confusion. This is what prompts us to have reservations about Vatican II, its reforms, and everything that has followed. It is not for us simply a matter of discipline, but it is really a question of faith.

When the nuncio of Berne approves and accepts that, in the name of the Council, the social reign of our Lord Jesus Christ is no longer possible, something is wrong. That is not in conformity with the encyclical *Quas Primas*, an encyclical that is certainly, at least in its fundamental elements, infallible, for the pope bases himself upon Scripture, Tradition, and the teachings of all the popes. It is a very solemn encyclical which, in some way, defines in a public and solemn manner the social reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly based on evident theological truths like the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. So if it is true that in the name of the Council one can affirm that the social reign of our Lord Jesus Christ should no longer be sought, then one is obliged to have some reservations about the Council; it cannot be otherwise. For it is true that in the name of the Council freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of worship have been proclaimed—three freedoms which have always been condemned and reproved, at least in the bad sense [of those terms]. There is undoubtedly a

IOTA UNUM

42. THE BREAKING OF THE COUNCIL'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK, CONTINUED.

The predominantly modernizing tendency of the council, which was responsible for the rejection of three years' preparatory work carried out under Pope John's aegis, was apparent even in the very first meeting on 13 October. That day, the council was due to elect its members (sixteen out of twenty-four) on the ten commissions which were to examine the draft documents drawn up by the preparatory commission. The council secretariat had distributed copies of the ten requisite forms, each having blank spaces in which to write the names chosen. It had also published the list of the members of the preconciliar commissions from whom the drafts had come. This procedure was obviously designed to favor an organic continuity between the drafting stage and the formulation of the final documents. This is in accordance with traditional practice. It also answers a very urgent

need, since nobody can better present a document than those who have studied, refined and finally drafted it. Nor did it prejudice the electors' freedom, since they remained completely at liberty to set aside the members of the preconciliar commissions when choosing those who were to form the conciliar ones. The only objection which could be made was that since the council had opened only three days earlier, an election might appear to be unduly hasty and insufficiently considered, given that the members of the vast and heterogeneous gathering knew each other so little.

To a good number of Fathers, this procedural step seemed to amount to an attempt to force the issue, and was resented in consequence. Cardinal Achille Liénart, one of the nine presidents of the council, voiced their point of view at the opening of the session. When he had asked the president

of the session, Cardinal Tisserant, for permission to speak, and had been refused in accordance with the rules on the grounds that the session had been called in order to proceed to a vote, not in order to debate as to whether a vote should be held, Cardinal Liénart seized the microphone, thus violating due legal process, and read a declaration amidst the applause of many of those present: it was impossible to proceed to a vote without first having information about those to be selected and without there first being consultations among the electors and the national conferences of bishops. The vote did not take place, the session was adjourned, and the commissions subsequently formed contained large numbers of men who had had nothing to do with the preconciliar work.—**Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum*, pp.83-84. [Available from Angelus Press. Price: \$23.95]**

certain freedom of thought, there is a certain freedom of conscience, and there is a certain freedom of worship. But when freedom is understood in the sense of license, of total liberty, in the sense that one can think whatever one likes, that everyone may, according to his conscience, have his own way of conceiving things, that cannot be.

Criticism of the Council

Archbishop Lefebvre, in a press conference on August 2, 1976, presenting the first edition of *A Bishop Speaks* (writings and addresses, 1963-75), recalls that the Catholic Faith is always the criterion by which conciliar liberalism must be judged and condemned (*A Bishop Speaks* [Angelus Press, 2007], pp. 260, 261).—Fr. Gleize

The adoption of liberal theses by a Council could not have occurred except in a non-infallible pastoral council, and cannot be explained without there having been a secret, detailed preparation which the historians will eventually uncover to the great stupefaction of Catholics who confuse the eternal Roman Catholic Church with the human Rome susceptible to infiltration by enemies robed in purple...

The objection is made that we make ourselves the judge of the Catholic Faith. But is it not the gravest duty of every Catholic to judge the faith which is taught him by that which was taught and believed for twenty centuries and which is inscribed in the official catechisms, like that of Trent, of St. Pius X, and of every pre-Vatican II catechism? How have the true faithful always acted in the face of heresy? They have preferred to shed their blood rather than betray their faith.

No matter how exalted the dignity of the spokesmen of heresy may be, the problem for the salvation of our souls remains the same. And in connection with this, many Catholics are seriously ignorant about the nature and scope of the pope's infallibility. Very many think that every word that comes from his mouth is infallible.

True and False Obedience: the Faith Does Not Belong to the Pope

During his sermon at Ecône August 22, 1976, Archbishop Lefebvre responded to the charges of disobedience. —Fr. Gleize

“You are disobeying the Pope.” Well, I am disobeying the Pope to the extent that the Pope is identified with the revolution that took place during

the Council and after, because this revolution is the Revolution of 1789, and I cannot obey the Revolution of '89 in the Church. I cannot obey the goddess Reason; I shall not bow before the goddess Reason, and that is what they would have us do. They would suppress this seminary so that all of us would go and adore the goddess Reason, man, the “cult of man”! No, we shall never accept that. We desire to be obedient to God and subject to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall be submissive to the extent that those who ought to give us the faith will also be submissive to the faith. They have no right to sell off the faith. The faith does not belong to them. The faith does not belong to the Pope. It belongs to the Church; it belongs to God; it belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Pope and the bishops are there to hand on the faith. To the extent that they transmit it, we kneel, we obey; we are ready to obey at once. To the extent that they destroy our faith, we no longer obey. We cannot allow the destruction of our faith. We have the faith etched in our hearts till death. This is what we must say and profess. Therefore we are not disobedient people; we are people who obey our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the Church has always demanded of the faithful.

And when they tell us, “You are judging the Pope, you are judging the bishops,” we answer that it is not we who judge the bishops, it is our faith, it is Tradition. It is our penny catechism. A child of five can point out a bishop's error. Were a bishop to say to a child: “What they have told you about the Blessed Trinity, that there are Three Persons in the Holy Trinity, is not true,” the child could take his catechism and say, “My catechism teaches me that there are three Persons in the Holy Trinity. It's you who are wrong, and I'm right.” The child would be right. He would be right because he has all of Tradition with him, because he has all of the Faith with him. Well, what we are doing is no different. We are saying: Tradition condemns you. Tradition condemns what you are doing at present. So we are with two thousand years of the Church and not with a dozen years of a new church, a conciliar church, as we were told when Msgr. Benelli asked us to submit to the “conciliar church.” I do not know this conciliar church; I only know the Catholic Church. ☩

(To be continued.)

Fr. Gleize is a professor of ecclesiology at the seminary of the SSPX in Ecône and now a member of the commission involved in the doctrinal discussions with the Holy See. In 2006, he compiled and organized Archbishop Lefebvre's thinking about Vatican II. It was published by the Institute of St. Pius X, the university run by the SSPX in Paris, France. Although slightly edited, the spoken style has been preserved.

What are we to think of the Divine Mercy devotion?

Many people have certainly received graces from the devotion to Divine Mercy propagated by St. Faustina, and her personal piety was certainly most exemplary. However, this does not necessarily mean that this devotion is from God. It is true that Pope John Paul II promoted this devotion, that it was through his efforts that the prohibition was lifted on April 15, 1978, and that he even introduced a feast of Divine Mercy into the *Novus Ordo*. However, the fact that good and pious people receive graces and that Sister Faustina was pious do not necessarily mean that it is from heaven. In fact, it was not only not approved before Vatican II. It was condemned, and this despite the fact that the prayers themselves of the chaplet of Divine Mercy are orthodox.

Condemned by the Holy Office

There were two decrees from Rome on this question, both of the time of Pope John XXIII. The Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, in a plenary meeting held on November 19, 1958, made the following decisions:

1. The supernatural nature of the revelations made to Sister Faustina is not evident.
2. No feast of Divine Mercy is to be instituted.
3. It is forbidden to divulge images and writings that propagate this devotion under the form received by Sister Faustina.

The second decree of the Holy Office was on March 6, 1959, in which the following was established:

1. The diffusion of images and writings promoting the devotion to Divine Mercy under the form proposed by the same Sister Faustina was forbidden.
2. The prudence of the bishops is to judge as to the removal of the aforesaid images that are already displayed for public honor.

What was it about this devotion that prevented the Holy Office from acknowledging its divine origin? The decrees do not say, but it seems that the reason lies in the fact that there is so much emphasis on God's mercy as to exclude His justice. Our sins and the gravity of the offense that they inflict on God is pushed aside as being of little consequence. That is why the aspect of reparation for sin is omitted or obscured.

The true image of God's mercy is the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance, crowned with thorns, dripping precious blood. The Sacred Heart calls for a devotion of reparation, as the popes have always requested. However, this is not the case with the Divine Mercy devotion. The image has no heart. It is a Sacred Heart without a heart, without reparation, without the price of our sins being clearly evident. It is this that makes the devotion very incomplete and makes us suspicious of its supernatural origin, regardless of Sister Faustina's own good intentions and personal holiness. This absence of the need for reparation for sins is manifest in the strange promise of freedom from all the temporal punishment due to sin for those who observe the 3:00 p.m. Low Sunday devotions. How could such a devotion be more powerful and better than a plenary indulgence, applying the extraordinary treasury of the merits of the saints? How could it not require as a condition that we perform a penitential work of our own? How could it not require the detachment from even venial sin that is necessary to obtain a plenary indulgence?

Presumption in the Writings of Sister Faustina

The published *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalski* (Marian Press, Stockbridge, MA, 2007) also indicates several reasons to seriously question the supernatural origin of the more than 640 pages of voluminous and repeated apparitions and messages. The characteristic of any true mystic who has received supernatural graces is always a profound humility, sense of unworthiness, awareness and profession of the gravity of his sins. Yet this humility is strangely lacking in Sister Faustina's diary. On October 2, 1936, for example, she states that the "Lord Jesus" spoke these words to her: "Now I know that it is not for the graces or gifts that you love me, but because My will is dearer to you than life. That is why I am uniting Myself with you so intimately as with no other creature." (§707, p. 288). This gives every appearance of being a claim of being more united to Jesus than anybody else, even the Blessed Virgin Mary, and certainly more than all the other saints. What pride, to believe such an affirmation, let alone to assert that it came from heaven!

In April 1938, Sister Faustina read the canonization of St. Andrew Bobola and was filled with longing and tears that her congregation might have its own saint. Then she affirms the following: "And the Lord Jesus said to me, Don't cry. You are that saint." (§1650, p. 583). These are words that most certainly no true saint would affirm, but rather his sinfulness and unworthiness of his congregation.

ND ANSWERS

This presumption in her writings is not isolated. She praises herself on several occasions through the words supposedly uttered by Jesus. Listen to this interior locution, for example: “Beloved pearl of My Heart, I see your love so pure, purer than that of the angels, and all the more so because you keep fighting. For your sake I bless the world.” (§1061, p. 400). On May 23, 1937 she describes a vision of the Holy Trinity, after which she heard a voice saying: “Tell the Superior General to count on you as the most faithful daughter in the Order” (§1130, p. 417). It is consequently hardly surprising that Sister Faustina claimed to be exempt from the Particular and General Judgments. On February 4, 1935, she already claimed to hear this voice in her soul: “From today on, do not fear God’s judgment, for you will not be judged” (§374, p. 168). Add to this the preposterous affirmation that the host three times over jumped out of the tabernacle and placed itself in her hands (§44, p. 23), so that she had to open up the tabernacle herself and place it back in there, tells the story of a presumption on God’s grace which goes beyond all reason, let alone as the action of a person supposedly favored with innumerable and repeated mystical and supernatural graces.

It is perhaps not accidental that Pope John Paul II promoted this devotion, for it is very much in line with his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*. In fact, the Paschal Mystery theology that he taught pushed aside all consideration of the gravity of sin and the need for penance, for satisfaction to divine justice, and hence of the Mass as being an expiatory sacrifice, and likewise the need to gain indulgences and to do works of penance. Since God is infinitely merciful and does not count our sins, all this is considered of no consequence. This is not the Catholic spirit. We must make reparation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world, as the Sacred Heart repeatedly asked at Paray-Le-Monial. It is the renewal of our consecration to the Sacred Heart and frequent holy hours of reparation that is going to bring about the conversion of sinners. It is in this way that we can cooperate in bringing about His Kingdom of Merciful Love, because it is the perfect recognition of the infinite holiness of the Divine Majesty and complete submission to His rightful demands. Mercy only means something when we understand the price of our Redemption.

Does Pope Benedict XVI support the charismatic renewal?

One of the clearest indications that the Holy Father is not supporting Tradition is contained in his unambiguous support of the charismatic renewal, which is the vehicle of the Protestant ideas with which it was founded and a denial of Catholic Tradition. The whole purpose of this movement is to replace the sacraments and the Mass as the principal means of grace. They are replaced by a personal and sentimental experience, in typical modernist fashion.

On the occasion of the 13th international conference of the Catholic Fraternity of Covenant Charismatic Communities and Fellowships, the Pope reiterated his support of these charismatic groups and gifts (Zenit.org, October 31, 2008):

Young ecclesial communities are a gift from God and their contributions should be valued and welcomed with trust...The ecclesial communities which bloomed after the Second Vatican Council, are a unique gift of the Lord and a precious resource for the life of the Church...The movements and new communities are like an inrush of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in contemporary society. One of the positive elements and aspects of the communities of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is precisely the importance given by them to the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and their merit lies in having reminded the Church of the actuality (of these gifts).

This is nothing less than a profession of belief in the evolution of the Church. For clearly if these communities are now such a bonus to the Church, then the Church before 1967, when they first came into existence, could not have been what it is now, and in fact must have been much less.

Then, On May 4, 2009, Benedict XVI sent a telegram, though Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State, to 20,000 members of the Italian chapter of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, gathered in their 32nd national assembly in Rimini.

Far from reproaching them for the deviations of the Charismatic Renewal, he expressed his hopes for an abundant outpouring of the fruits of the Paraclete” on the gathering and expressed his desire that it would “enkindle a renewed adherence to the crucified and risen Christ, a deep fraternal communion and a joyous evangelical witness.” (Zenit.org)

He made no mention at all of the grave dangers of sentimentalism and of the protestantizing substitution of special charismatic experiences for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments as the ordinary means of sanctification.

The same must be said of the Pope’s final approval of the Neocatechumenal Way. This

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is an organization of the laity that forms small communities of “renewal” within parishes. Founded during Vatican II, in 1964, it considered itself a response to the pastoral intuitions of that council for the participation of the laity in evangelization, and soon adopted the charismatic principles, especially independence from the priesthood, the Mass and the sacraments. It received its first official recognition in 1990 by Pope John Paul II as “an itinerary of Catholic formation valid for our society and for our times,” and then on June 13, 2008, it received its final approval from the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Lip service to the discernment of ecclesiastical authority does not change the reality that these groups, so positively approved and encouraged, have consistently displaced the true ordinary working of the Holy Ghost in souls through prayer and the sacraments, and replaced it with sentimental, extraordinary, exterior signs, that really amount to nothing more than group psychology and natural enthusiasm. It is no secret that these groups, as a general rule, have no appreciation for the sacredness of the Church, the Mass and the sacraments, nor for Catholic Tradition and devotion to the saints, nor for the teaching of the catechism of Christian doctrine, their “living” experience having replaced this rich inheritance of true spirituality.

More recently, Cardinal Josef Cordes was honored with a personal letter from Benedict XVI on the occasion of his 75th birthday, the week before Christmas, 2009. The main purpose of the letter was to thank him for his “contribution to the genesis and the growth of the World Youth Days” and for his “commitment to (lay) movements in his role in the Pontifical Council for the Laity” (Zenit of 12-22-09).

In fact, the Pope was very specific about the charismatic and Pentecostal nature of the movements encouraged by Cardinal Cordes, not only showing his clear approval of them as charismatic, but going so far as to say that the Church can no longer exist without them:


The charismatic movement, Communion and Liberation and the Neocatechumenal Way have many reasons to be grateful to you. While at the beginning the organizers and planners in the Church had many reservations in regard to the movements, you immediately sensed the life that burst forth from them—the power of the Holy Spirit that gives new paths and in unpredictable ways keeps the Church young. You recognized the Pentecostal character of these movements and you worked passionately so that they would be welcomed by the Church’s pastor....Here were men who were deeply touched by the spirit of God and that in such a way there grew new forms of authentic Christian life and authentic ways of being Church....They

need a guide and purification to be able to reach the form of their true maturity. They, nevertheless, are gifts to be grateful for. It is no longer possible to think of the life of the Church of our time without including these gifts of God within it.” (*Ibid.*)

Further confirmation was found in an address given by the Pope on March 7, 2010, to the new parish (since 1989) of San Giovanni della Croce in Colle Salario, in Rome, a parish specifically open to these new, charismatic, ecclesial movements from its very inception, in particular the Sant’Egidio and Caritas groups. Benedict XVI had this to say:

From the very beginning this parish was open to the movements and to the new ecclesial communities, thus developing a wider awareness of the Church and experiencing new forms of evangelization. I call on you to continue in this direction with courage....I was happy to hear that your community wishes to promote, in regard to the vocations and the role of consecrated persons and the laity, the co-responsibility of all the members of the people of God...moving from considering them “collaborators” of the clergy to recognizing them as truly “co-responsible” for the being and action of the Church. (Zenit.org of 3/11/2010)

In this address Benedict XVI is quite explicit about the long-term result of the charismatic movement—the undermining of the importance of the clergy and of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, no longer considered by them as essential to the life of the Church. Yet he gives it all the encouragement he can!

Let no-one affirm, then, that the Pope does not support and encourage the charismatic movement, or that he believes in the traditional doctrine that it is through the Mass and the sacraments, and our traditional prayers and devotions, that the Holy Ghost is communicated to us. He has manifestly embraced the charismatic thesis that in this post-Vatican II age the spirit is given through non-structured, non-clerical, humanistic organizations, regardless of whether they practise traditional Marian and sacramental devotion. 

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.

Celibacy Revisited

Nothing, it seems, can stop the international media campaign launched several months ago against the Church and the Pope. On March 20, Pope Benedict XVI addressed a *Letter to Irish Catholics* about the crimes of pedophile priests, in which he expressed his shame and sorrow over such actions. On April 12, the Holy See published on its web site a reminder of the legal procedures to follow against these scandalous sexual abuses. Between these dates the Vatican Press Office, several cardinals, and numerous bishops throughout the world tried to clarify the facts, but in vain. Every day the press serves up new revelations intended to show the guilty silence of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI, with regard to these crimes.

Why? Because those who are leading this campaign have not yet reached their goal: to discredit the Church as a whole in order to bring about the abolition of clerical celibacy.

The simplistic reasoning which they want to impose on public opinion in order to achieve the abrogation of consecrated celibacy can be summarized in this way: Catholic priests are pedophiles because they are celibate. Or, in more sensational terms: clerical celibacy is a crime because it is responsible for the criminal actions of the pedophile priests which the Church has tried to silence. The pope himself is therefore an accomplice because he intends to keep the Catholic clergy in this crime-provoking celibacy.

As the weeks go on, an increasing number of scandals are being revealed in the international press. But it is always aimed at one and the same person: Benedict XVI. Even if the Pope is never the one directly accused, he is nonetheless the target of criticisms fired from all sides. What exactly do they

reproach in him? The same thing for which Pius XII was reproached: his guilty silence, seeking to protect the institution at the expense of the victims.

According to the March 25 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, "the prevalent tendency in the media," the tendency to "neglect the facts" and to "force interpretations," has a double objective: to create the impression that the Catholic Church is "the only one responsible for sexual abuses, an image that has nothing to do with reality," and to condemn the "ignoble intention of succeeding, cost what it may, in dealing a blow to Benedict XVI and his close collaborators."

Swiss Cardinal Georges Cottier, in an interview published in the Catholic weekly French paper *Famille Chrétienne* on April 3, 2010, denounced the "calumnies," the "perfidious" attacks against the Pope. He especially accuses the dissenting progressivist Hans Küng, who has made "perfectly odious personal attacks." More generally, the prelate observes "much recklessness and thoughtlessness" in a battle where "stupidity" dominates, obscuring intelligences. According to him, many persons are "nothing but puppets manipulated by the forces of evil" unleashed upon the Church.

Msgr. Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, stated on the Vatican Radio on April 6 that "he had never seen, in the past, a series of attacks so violent and of such proportions," due to "the dominant ideologies that wish to impose a culture of death." The American intellectual George Weigel reacted in much the same way on the same radio station, remarking that "the Pope is attacked because he affirms the existence of the truth," while the "powerful forces of the West" deny it. In his eyes, some see "in the inad-

equacies of some of the Church's sons the opportunity to destroy the Church's teachings" and to exclude her from the public debate on crucial themes. In this attack, George Weigel also sees the implications of Catholic sectors that pursue a revolution "never yet realized: the diminution of the authority of the bishops, the ordination of women, the end of celibacy."

Will this crisis open the eyes of those who believe that being "open-minded towards the world" will shelter the Church from the criticisms of modern society? The Italian philosopher Romano Amerio, in his monumental work *Iota Unum*, describes the post-conciliar period as a time where "the Church seems to fear that she is rejected, which in fact she is by a great fraction of the human race. So she seeks to let fade the meritorious particularities that are her own in order to emphasize the traits that she has in common with the world." But the present crisis proves that the modern world is not satisfied with the Church's "open-mindedness" towards it. Modernism demands a Church not only in the world, but also of the world, the world that, according to St. John in his first Epistle, is characterized by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* and Bossuet in his *Treaty on Concupiscence* offer on this subject commentaries which, though pre-conciliar, are nonetheless pertinent. The Catholic writer Charles Péguy said on the same subject: "Jesus, prince of the spiritual world, has founded a Church that will never cease to be attacked in the spiritual and in the temporal worlds, and that will never cease to fight."

Fr. Alain Lorans, FSSPX, is the editor of *DICI*, the international news journal of the Society of Saint Pius X.



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