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# The Angelus

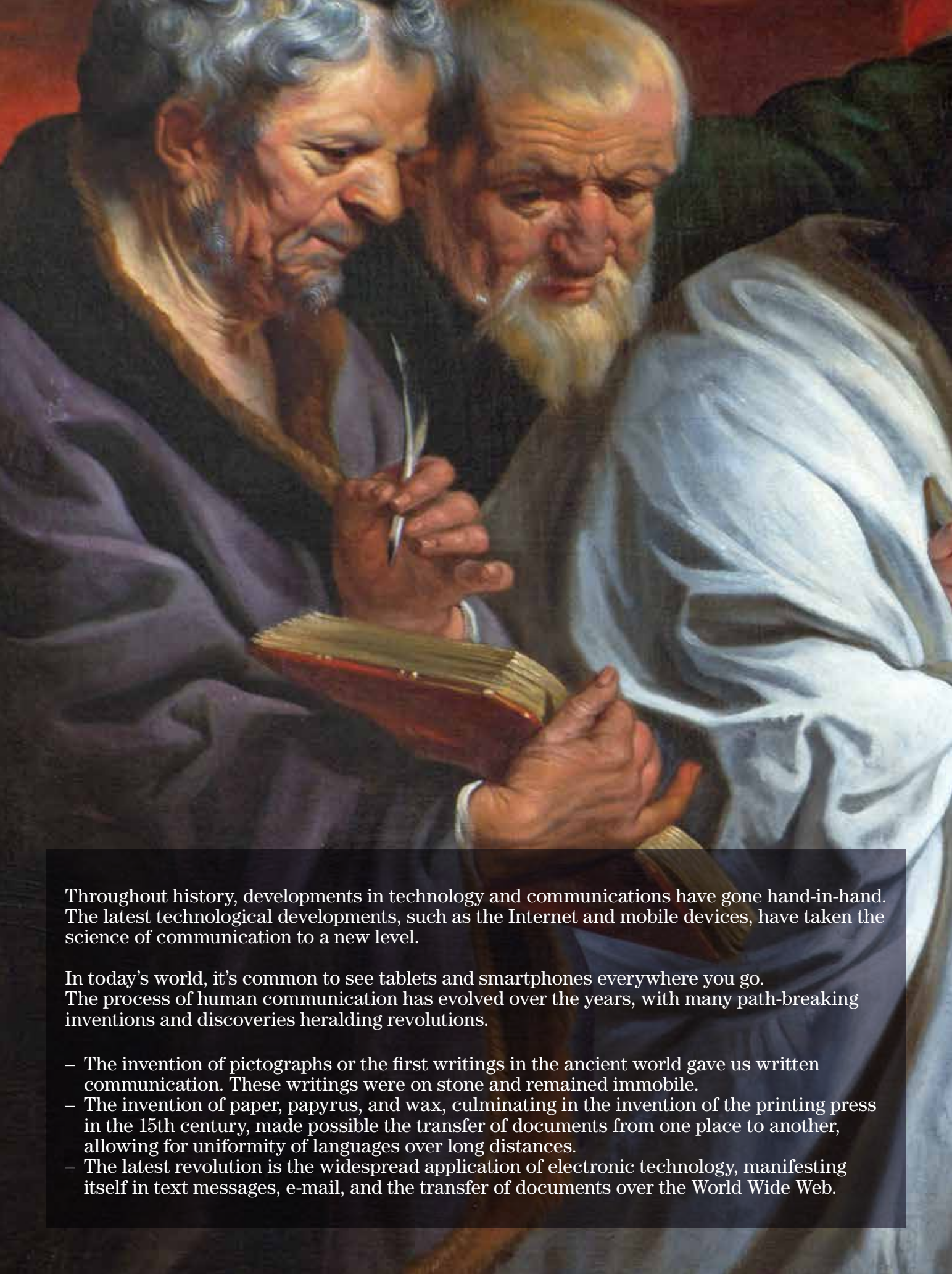
“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

## Social Media

The Screen Teen

Connected, Depressed,  
and Alienated

In Comes Google;  
Out Goes Intelligence



Throughout history, developments in technology and communications have gone hand-in-hand. The latest technological developments, such as the Internet and mobile devices, have taken the science of communication to a new level.

In today's world, it's common to see tablets and smartphones everywhere you go. The process of human communication has evolved over the years, with many path-breaking inventions and discoveries heralding revolutions.

- The invention of pictographs or the first writings in the ancient world gave us written communication. These writings were on stone and remained immobile.
- The invention of paper, papyrus, and wax, culminating in the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, made possible the transfer of documents from one place to another, allowing for uniformity of languages over long distances.
- The latest revolution is the widespread application of electronic technology, manifesting itself in text messages, e-mail, and the transfer of documents over the World Wide Web.



# Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

In 1940, who would have thought it possible for man to walk on the moon? In 1970, who would have believed he could set his finger on the pulse of the world and be only one click away from everything? Is this a blessing or a curse? When it comes to technological advances, it is quite common to encounter two extremes: total rejection or unconditional approval. For some, it seems as if the world only harnesses technology against God and the Faith. For others, it is a divine blessing which allows us to transmit our thoughts, our beliefs, and our love at the speed of light. The prudent attitude probably stands in the middle.

The utter condemnation of social media may be a reflex of self-preservation, and understandably so. This condemnation usually turns out to be a good tactic for a while. But can it be the final answer to form the men and women of tomorrow who are going to be plunged into the "Church of Google"? There must come a time when mom and dad, religious and secular educators alike, will offer guidelines, warnings, and appropriate advice to those under their charge, thus gradually making them take responsibility for their own decisions.

One such educator explained that "in a college environment, dealing with young adults, our role is not to impose but to guide, set rules, and check. The adult needs to stand on his two feet and be responsible for his acts, firstly, in a loosely protected environment and then, on his own, in the real world of work or of modern university."

This issue of *The Angelus* is intended to acknowledge the existence of a new and invasive lifestyle, to appreciate its advantages, and acknowledge its pitfalls. Thus forewarned, it should help us form and inform our conscience and that of those entrusted to us.

"These new possessions and new instruments which are within almost everyone's grasp, introduce a most powerful influence into men's minds, both because they can flood them with light, raise them to nobility, adorn them with beauty, and because they can disfigure them by dimming their luster, dishonor them by a process of corruption, and make them subject to uncontrolled passions." (Pius XII, *Miranda Prorsus* on movies and TV)

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# The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

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# The Screen Teen

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Extracts from Fr. Boubée's study, *Modern Technologies... from superman to the cave man*

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“That little kid is so smart; you should see him on his computer!”  
“I got mine a touch-screen tablet for Christmas.” This commonplace conversation between two mothers is going on while the children focus their lively attention on their little Game Boy, unless they are in the process of sending one of their 50 daily text messages.

The last sixty years have witnessed an astonishing evolution in the tools we use every day. In particular, the world of the electronic screen has made its way into our manner of knowing, our way of communicating, our professional relations, our leisure time, and in many cases, it has become the very foundation of our judgment.

All technology brings with it new and marvelous possibilities in which we are allowed to partake. But an honest analysis will allow

us to draw the line between the *admirable*, the *useful*, and the *harmful*.

## The Human Way of Life

Man is wonderfully structured to attain the highest forms of understanding.

– His senses allow him direct contact with the world around him, and the intellect is thereby able to grasp the nature of things;



- As man grapples with that reality, he can then assemble his ideas, compose them, and link them together. These ideas lead him to make practical and prudent judgments;
- the role of man's will, based on these judgments, is then to move toward the good;
- the perfection of the will's movement is called love;
- the will is meant to regulate the emotions or passions in order to keep them from being as disordered as they would otherwise be, given our fallen nature;
- so structured in this way, man aims at his own perfection, all in respecting that order willed by the Creator which is called *morality*; what is noblest in morality is in fact a form of love which is called *charity*.

These points show how man functions. But the massive presence of new electronic technology has considerably altered these elementary rhythms of man's psychology; so much so that each one of these points calls for its own treatment.

## The Cyber Mind Faces a New Mode of Operation

The widespread arrival of television in the home marked a very clear fault line. We could place that turning point at about 1960. Up until then, man was used to knowing reality as it is, taking it *in*, directly from its source, and then exercising his judgment. That contact with reality necessarily set the passions in motion: but sentiments arose at a human rhythm. Education and experience taught man how to use his reason to regulate those emotions.

Now, with the advent of the television, man was suddenly faced with a massive bombardment of pictures generated on the screen. These pictures are specifically moving and thus they possess a particular power of fascination. This bombardment of pictures hyper-activates the emotions, set off by partial glimpses of reality that are all the more deceptive the more realistic the picture.

This omnipresence of images from the screen frustrates the operation of the intellect: generally

speaking, the sensibility steps in and replaces it. The process of coming to know is thereby gravely affected. The day-to-day functioning of the child—and later the adult—is thereby atrophied. The diminution of the operation of the intellect has become a common phenomenon, this inability to understand, to judge, to look at reality in perspective, to affirm one's personality.

The intellect of modern man is being dragged back to a kind of primitivism in which emoting replaces concrete reasoning or thinking.

## Reality the Way We Want It

The computer came twenty-five years after the television, bringing the possibility for a person to “intervene” in the picture produced on the screen. This intervention happens on very small surfaces, in a simplified manner, and through a person's fingertips. It cannot be compared to man's intervention in reality when he approaches and observes a scene before him. What he sees on the screen is no longer life in the concrete, sensible world around him, but only a very fragmentary picture of that world.

Two novelties arise:

- That portion of man which intervenes in this computer world is not the whole being, with all of his members, and all of his personality.
- The intervention itself no longer entails any physical correlation to or responsibility over a real event: with what devastating ease do children grow accustomed to killing on a screen, or adults to plunging themselves into morally despicable situations. (We are speaking of physical responsibility: there always remains a moral responsibility before God, for the quality of an action as good or bad.)

Man is drawn even more radically out of reality. His behavior is dictated by the imagination.

## The Eradication of Genuine Thought

How many children and even how many

>

## Theme Social Media



adults start writing before they start thinking, and the result is a kaleidoscope of disconnected statements.

All the more so when culture amounts to an Internet cut-and-paste. Many of the assignments given by teachers are really asking for a monstrous caricature of knowledge, since the final product never went through the intellect. No abstraction took place, no comprehension, no judgment in the intellectual sense of the word. How could there be any synthesis, or any rigorous analysis of the essential points of a given topic?

For the older generation, the ever-expanding bazaar of forums, blogs, and other points of exchange on the Internet is, unfortunately, more a kind of zoo because of this absence of reflective thought.

### A False Construction of Personality Through the Game

In the natural order of things, the child or the adolescent prepares himself for his future life as an adult in many ways, and games hold a predominant place among those ways. Games immerse the child in a universe that is “like real

life,” a kind of unreal reality, if we may use that contrast.

For young people especially, their whole being is involved in the game: body, emotions, intellect, and judgment. In a way, they are digesting the enormous amount of information that they have received and they are testing it out in the real world. Even in the gentlest organized game, like a board game, or in a more elaborate and exciting one, like a soccer match, the whole personality is involved: but here we mean *the real personality, in a real world*.

Computer games, game consoles, and little electronic games tear young people out of the true perception of reality through sense and intellect, and plunge them into the entirely unreal. These modern players step into the picture, but not into the real world, through an intense and nearly exclusive use of certain senses. The way the players throw themselves into the game is by reconstructing themselves inside a world that has nothing to do with the one that they are called to live in.

These games, therefore, do not serve the purpose of constructing their personalities for the future, as would the traditional games construct the genuine, legitimate behavior of a child.





What is more, the nervous system is thrown off balance in these games by so much jerking around of the attention, the jolts and shocks, the constant flashes of light, and the situations that are often violent.

## People Present Who Really Aren't Present

The modern world seems to be opening onto a vast field of communication and friendships, or so it appears: the bitter irony is that the contrary is actually the case. Notice that when our modern “techies” are standing right next to you, they are in the process of communicating with someone else who is totally absent from the scene. These individuals who are not present intrude their false presence, while individuals who are truly present on the scene are ignored and become like strangers. So ultimately, people who are absent are always present, and people who are present are always absent! This schizoid-like orientation to one's surroundings is indeed somewhat unsettling.

Two people have just said goodbye, and yet they are immediately calling each other on their cell-phones. Instead of waiting for the next day, two friends communicate at every moment the events of their family life, the emotions they are feeling, whatever is passing through their minds. Inconstancy of thought and impulsiveness become second nature.

In addition, it is becoming impossible to have the effects of normal relationships—charity, friendship, patience, or even education. Relationships are no longer only with people who are present: there is always an unknown “third party” to be considered. For example, a parent scolds one of his children, and the child can immediately turn and complain to someone else through use of the cell phone; in doing so, the child loses all the fruits of that time of necessary reflection on the parent's words—first in the order of his passions, then little by little in the order of reason. He loses that value bestowed on the personality, which is called education.

## False Friendships

At the other end of the spectrum, friendship has another omnipresent new form: all the chains of communication that push young people into relationships with the most people possible, in order to share every *superficial* detail of their lives.

Are they really friends? No, it is not possible for them to be friends: a friend is someone you spend time with.

- True friendships are founded primarily on time genuinely spent together, and not through a screen or through trivial messages sent back and forth.
- Friends are by necessity few in number.
- But most of all, it is the friend who discovers who you are, not you showing yourself off. In these days of “posting,” a person declares himself to be as he would like to appear. A person is basically creating an artificial character for himself.

Rarely in their postings do young people hurriedly proclaim their virtue, because it is easier and gains more notoriety to advertise the unhealthy things, or sinful things, or barriers you have dared to exceed.

There is a kind of unhealthy sensationalism in these friendships: “He dared...,” “He did this...” “She dresses this way...,” “He has this girlfriend...”. There are those many spheres in which the delicacy of the personality learns to recognize what is appropriate to tell and what is inappropriate to tell in the various given circumstances. But in this system, everything becomes public, even the little daily events that should never enter into the particular communication.

We are encountering a gradual loss of all sense: loss of judgment; loss of reserve; loss of good sense; loss of politeness; loss of the meaning of family and friendship. The damage is huge. Certainly, there are cases in which an expansive network of communication is able, by good fortune, to do good in easing someone's suffering...but at the price of how many other communications and friendships destroyed!

# Youth on the Internet

Connected, Depressed, and Alienated

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by Randall C. Flanery, Ph.D.

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The appropriate use of any new significant technology is a challenging matter and has always raised questions regarding its consequences for the individual and within the society. Just as people anguished about the harm that could result with the advent of the telephone, radio, or television, so are we worried about the social consequences of the Internet. We are especially concerned for our youth, who are the most frequent users of the Internet and who prefer text messaging, email, Snapchat, Twitter, and Social Networking Sites like Facebook, all of which are designed to make the exchange of personal information extremely easy.

The ostensible purpose of many of these Internet applications is to enhance human relationships. The combination of human nature and the compelling availability of the Internet

lends itself to a time-consuming, compulsive submission to our devices, such that their use actually has the effect of diminishing human relationships. With increasing use, these devices can lead to loneliness, alienation, depression, and addiction. It is very hard for us humans to remain masters of the technology and not become its slaves.

## Compulsive Use of Digital Devices

The use of the Internet by youth to conduct their personal business has become almost ubiquitous. In this essay, I will use the term “youth” to refer both to teenagers, age 13 to 17 years, and to young adults, 18 to 30 years.



There are many differences related to the developmental stages of life of these two groups; as such, their appropriate use of digital technology will differ respectively. Individuals in both stages are transitioning from the emotional and financial dependence of adolescence, into becoming fully functioning, autonomous adults who have established their own households, are launched on a career, and have found a marriage partner. In both stages, the person is cultivating the habits and beliefs that will be the foundation for living their lives. Thus, an essential task for them is establishing relationships of all kinds.

Contemporary youth can hardly imagine maintaining a network of friends without the cell phone and social media sites. Seventy-five percent of teens and 93% of young adults own mobile phones. Nearly all adolescents and young adults go on line daily, the majority doing so more than a dozen times a day. To what purpose are they accessing the Internet? To obtain information, to acquire things, but definitely for social networking.

On the face of it, access to the Internet, and hence to SNS, is promoting frequent communication with friends. These friends are connected, at least superficially. The Internet transmits images and information almost instantaneously. You can readily post an image of the restaurant you are going to eat at, a selfie of you and your friend, a comment on the food, a comment on the friend, and a comment on the comments of your other friends. This communication has the appearance of a conversation. It appears to promote companionship; you certainly know a lot of details. But does it really enhance the relationship?

## Diminishment of Personal Relationships

Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist and a long time researcher of the use and misuse of computer technology for human purposes, has documented<sup>1</sup> that reliance on modern digital communication has damaged human relationships. We are substituting “sips” of

Internet communication via texts, tweets, Facebook updates, and emails for authentic human-to-human conversation. Convinced by the immediacy and volume of personal information exchanged, and believing that multitasking is actually efficient, “We turn to our phones instead of each other,” with insidious interpersonal consequences.

The specific consequences are that we can no longer sustain attention to one another and that we are losing the capacity to be empathic, thereby degrading human relationships in the process. Turkle sees the proper process of conversing, which is a key to cultivating relationships, as a “virtuous circle” in which we reflect within ourselves, “alone with our thoughts,” which prepares us to talk to others. Self-reflection then leads to conversation in which both parties attend carefully to what is said, how it is said, and what is not said. Essential to the process is empathy, which encompasses one’s being able to imagine the world from another’s perspective and to conceive how the other is thinking and feeling, even if it is not fully articulated. Out of these conversations comes new material, new content to be considered in solitude, which will broaden and deepen our understanding of ourselves and others. An unintended consequence of the ubiquitous availability of digital communication technology, a technology most highly utilized by adolescents and young adults, is that while being connected 24/7, we truly know each other less well, and if we do not exercise prudence about the use of this technology, we will end up lonely and alienated.

Most youth go online multiple times a day, every day, and spend several hours a day on online activities. Youth are even sacrificing their sleep, in order to spend more time “connecting.” When connecting, you are not performing other human activities, including wholeheartedly attending to the person in front of you.

Adolescents are notorious for not wanting to converse with adults, except when they want to, and then only as long as they want to. Even before smartphones they had ways to exclude themselves from everyone else. The smartphone is always available, even in the middle of an undesirable conversation. Furthermore, there >

is nothing like a head down over a phone to shout “Don’t talk to me, I am busy!”

And parents with their own phones are not helping. I am sure you have experienced someone damaging a relationship with you by turning to their phone, mid-sentence. I would wager that you have done the same.

A teenager comes rushing into the home, wanting to tell Mom about the events of the day. Mother is perusing the latest Facebook postings, or searching Pinterest for a chicken recipe.

“Mom ....?”

“Mom....?”

“Mom?”

“In a minute, dear.”

More requests for undivided parental attention, also ignored. The youth starts texting her friends, and she has over 500 on Facebook.

Later, Dad comes rushing in for dinner, taking a business call as he walks through the door. Finally, Dad arrives at the table, placing the phone directly in front of him. Everyone knows that there will be more calls, and Dad must check the baseball score, and arrange a tee-off time. The mere presence of a phone at the table will dampen conversation. Fortunately, the kids are no longer bothered; they have their earbuds in, accessing the Internet. It never turns a deaf ear.

Consider for a moment, what is pushed away to spend several hours a day digitally communicating: Sleep? A phone beside the bed will delay sleep by 30 minutes or more, and your day will start earlier with the first notification you get, always before the alarm rings.

Meals? Breakfast and lunch are multitasking opportunities to update statuses, find out where your acquaintances are, arrange to meet, or simply chat. The volume of information sent and received, the presumed efficiency of multitasking, obscures an essential reality: with increasing connection, there is greater loneliness, and an inability to tolerate being alone.

Yes, you are connected, but do you know what your texting partner is thinking? Or feeling? What is not being said among the many words? Seventy percent of what is communicated derives from how it is said, what is implied, and various nonverbal gestures, none of which will be found in an email or a “like” or a status update.

Quick, superficial, frequent. Easy snippets of adulterated communication is driving out actual conversation, which can only occur face to face, which takes time, and which requires single-minded attention to the other person, followed later by reflection upon what was said. If you can no longer attend fully to the person across from you, how will you be able to reflect upon your own thoughts?

## Internet Addiction

A sad paradox of ubiquitous access to the Internet is that while it is destroying authentic relationships and creating loneliness, the answer to this situation for the compulsive Internet user is to access the Internet even more. Some paltry quality of connection is better than nothing; perhaps having a whole lot of it will finally be satisfying.

Internet Addiction is a newly identified disorder that is considered to be a behavioral addiction. Many ordinary human behaviors can be used addictively: shopping, gambling, sex, for example. Any behavior that produces an immediate positive feeling can become compulsive when used repeatedly to escape from the unpleasant. Unrestricted access to the pleasures of the Internet is most certainly compulsive.

Adolescents and young adults are especially vulnerable to Internet Addiction, given their almost universal use of digital technology. Indications that use of the Internet has become addictive are: increasing use in order to feel satisfied, unable to limit or control use, jeopardizing friend and family relationships, interfering with job or academic performance, concealing the amount of time spent, and using it excessively as means of escape from difficulties and to alleviate dysphoric mood such as depression, guilt, or anxiety. By this definition, up to ten percent of American adolescents and young adults are addicted to using the Internet.

While many use the Internet to bring joy, nothing gladdens me like pictures of grandchildren or snarky jokes sent to me. But for many others, it does not elevate mood, but rather



deflates it. Aggressively pursuing connection via the Internet, *i.e.*, spending ever increasing hours online is associated with depression. While the reasons have not been fully explicated yet, one likely factor is that human interaction is reduced, leading to isolation and alienation, which are fertile emotional states for depression. Another factor is due to social comparison. All humans examine those around them, and compare themselves in order to draw conclusions about their own personal well-being. Since social networking users will likely post only the best and brightest moments of their lives and not the mundane, boring or disappointing, by comparison my life is dull, as am I. A full picture of human life cannot be obtained via Facebook; to get that you would have to engage in a real conversation.

More alarming is that public health officials have begun to notice a previously unidentified group of adolescents at risk for depression, anxiety disorders, and suicide. This at-risk group is characterized by reduced sleep, low physical activity, and high use of social media. Ominously, they are mostly overlooked by adults because these characteristics do not show obvious.

## What Can Parents Do?

Parents can do a number of things, none of which are easy. The first, the biggest, and the most difficult is for the parents or significant adults to model the appropriate Catholic use of digital technology. By that I mean to show how to use a created technological tool for a good end. The authentic connection to another human being is a far greater good than is fact-checking, multitasking, updating statuses, or posting the latest cute picture of your cat, your dinner, or your current do-it-yourself project. Any other measure which might be attempted will be seriously undermined if you can't put your own phone away.

Be a wise-minded, assertive parent. Monitor and limit what is introduced into your home. Decide what devices may be used, how much, and how often. Monitor and censor the content. Use technology to block certain sites and to

monitor what the youth is doing on the device. Some software can generate a list of sites visited. Print the list and review with the user. Consider whether you want your adolescent even to have a smartphone before he or she graduates from high school.

Schedule digital device free time each week. For example, agree as a family when to put all devices away and for particular activities like meals. Don't allow the youth to take the device to their room in the evening or to even leave by the bed.

And please don't despair. If you become discouraged you might abandon the effort and end up abdicating your responsibilities to limit exposure to soul-endangering activities. By not attempting to counter the harm you see, you are allowing the contemporary peer culture to dictate what is acceptable for your child to do. Obviously, the attempt will require persistence and resourcefulness.

While it is challenging, I believe parents can at least be a voice against the harmful use of the digital technology. Other technological advances have posed similar challenges, and have been put to good uses. I trust that this technology will be mastered as well.

Comprehensive information on the use social media can be found in the Pew Report, for example: "Teens, Technology and Friendships": [www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06).

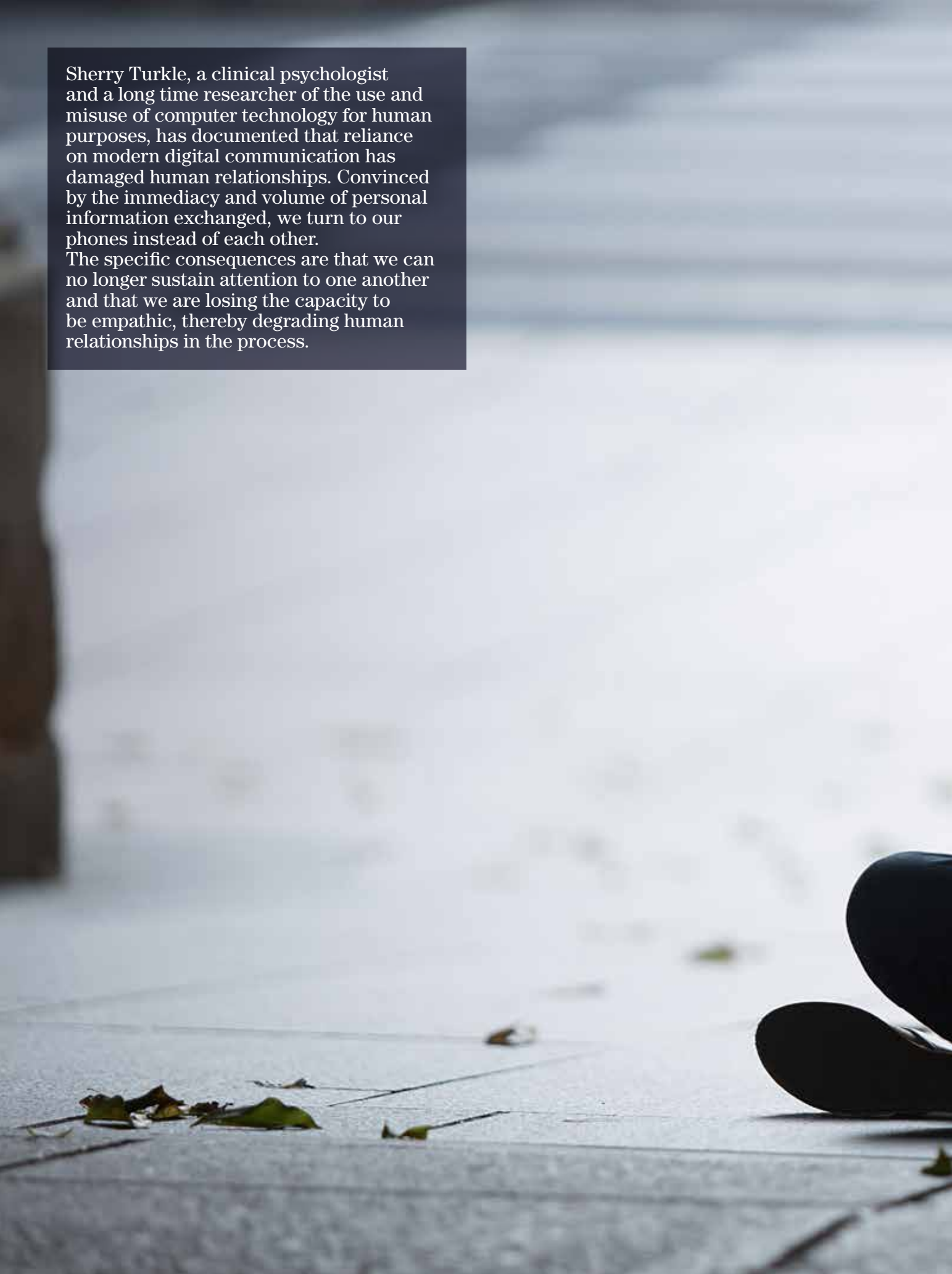
<sup>1</sup> Turkle, Sherry. *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. Penguin Press, New York, New York.



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Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist and a long time researcher of the use and misuse of computer technology for human purposes, has documented that reliance on modern digital communication has damaged human relationships. Convinced by the immediacy and volume of personal information exchanged, we turn to our phones instead of each other.

The specific consequences are that we can no longer sustain attention to one another and that we are losing the capacity to be empathic, thereby degrading human relationships in the process.





# The Virtue of Prudence

Doing the True

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by Dr. Peter Chojnowski

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It was as a young boy come down with a fever stemming from a prior stomach ailment that St. Augustine remembers, in his *Confessions*, an incident which revealed to him a form of worldly “prudence,” which could never come to be equated with the true virtue of prudence. Because of a long standing custom in Catholic circles, based upon a “realistic,” “we can’t be perfect,” “they have to live in the world,” mentality, St. Augustine had attained the middle years of childhood without being baptized. He had indeed entered into the life of the catechumen by being “signed with the sign of his cross and seasoned with his salt,” indicating the initial rites now included in the preparatory part of the traditional sacrament of baptism; but as to the “laver of salvation,” he had been denied this on account of his mother Monica’s fear that the grace of baptism would make the “inevitable” sins of youth even more egregious. When the young Augustine was in danger of death, his mother then arranged for his baptism. The fever, however, broke, meaning that the “prudent” plan of delaying baptism, a grace that would be denied him for some 22 more years, was back in effect. In this regard, St. Augustine relates how the mentality that caused his mother to deny him access to the supernatural fountain of grace, also caused friends





<sup>1</sup> Cited in Peter Chojnowski, *Saint Augustine as Educator*, Vol. 1 (Post Falls, ID, Pelican Project, 2005), pp.19-22.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1966), p. 3.

throughout his adolescence and early manhood to cry, “*sine illum, faciat; nondum enim baptizatus est*” (Let him be! Let him do it! He is not yet baptized!).<sup>1</sup>

## Prudence: The Queen of the Cardinal Virtues

Surely the worldly “prudence” of St. Monica—and this was not to be the last example of this in St. Augustine’s life: for example, St. Monica discouraged him from marrying the woman that he was living with, because her low social station would hinder his career advancement—was not the virtue of prudence that has been upheld as the royal “mother” of all the other Cardinal Virtues,<sup>2</sup> namely, justice, the ultimate virtue shaping our actions towards others; fortitude, the virtue that is our certain ability to attack and, also, hold out against, all of the great obstacles in the way of our ultimate good; and, finally, temperance, the “lowest” of the Cardinal Virtues, which maintains the entire moral person in a oneness of moral vision and psycho-physical alertness that keeps a man from dispersion amidst the ever-intense and ever-present objects of appetite.

Since “the more things change, the more they remain the same,” it can truthfully be said that the same attitude behind the worldly concept of “prudence” is still present with us today. In this regard, the current “prudence” of the world, if the concept is even bantered about now, is nothing but the calculation of self-benefit in the financial or social orders. What should concern us, however, is the way the general concept of “prudence” has been bent by even those who attempt to adhere to the unchanging *mores* and beliefs of the Catholic Church. In these circles, one finds a strange duality which compartmentalizes life in order to avoid rebellion by their children or perceived awkwardness in the face of secular minded people. Here true Christian, and even natural human, prudence is distorted by basing its actions and judgments upon a fundamentally different set of principles and assumptions about human life, than those that the Catholic Faith would warrant. The pragmatic judgment that we must “live in the world,” is used to justify basing the greater part of our lives on liberal principles that we inherit from our immersion in the Liberal Indifferentist State. The way in which we can see that this attitude is erroneous is that the “finality” or ultimate goal of liberal society and Catholic society are not the same at all.

## Prudence as Making Real the Good

“The preeminence of prudence means that realization of the good presupposes knowledge of reality. He alone can do good who knows what things are like and what their situation is.”—Josef Pieper

It is of primary importance that the virtue of prudence is both a moral and an intellectual virtue of the practical intellect. What this simply means is that prudence is concerned both with intellectually identifying the good course of action in a concrete situation, along with bringing about the goodness of the acting man through this rightly identified moral action. What is >



Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430), early Christian theologian and philosopher whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. He is viewed as one of the most important Church Fathers in Western Christianity for his writings in the Patristic Era. Among his most important works are *The City of God* and *Confessions*.

important to remember, also, is that the right action which follows from a practical intellect perfected with the virtue of prudence is a *means* to the attainment of the ultimate good. Prudence, as a perfection of the practical intellect, *does not* tell us what the overall meaning and nature of reality is and, hence, what is in accordance with it. The being of things, and their essential natures and their ultimate states of fulfillment incumbent upon their nature, need to be identified first before prudence can choose the correct means to achieve the correct ends. It is not without purpose that St. Thomas Aquinas treats the Virtue of Faith as the first virtue to be considered in his specified treatment of all the human virtues. Without this supernatural virtue causing us to understand the ultimate purpose of human life, it is difficult to see how prudence could chart the proper course in the sea of human life, since St. Thomas calls prudence a “directing cognition,”<sup>3</sup> when it does not even know what port it is supposed to be heading towards.

### *Memoria*: Well-Spring of Personality and Moral Imagination

St. Augustine, wishing to show that the Holy Trinity has implanted its seal on all of its creation, especially on man, one of its greatest creations, speaks of the human soul as being divided into three separate parts, each mirroring a specific attributed characteristic of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Whereas the Son or the *Verbum* is compared to the human intellect, and the Holy Ghost is compared to the Will, the memory is related to the Divine Person of God the Father on account of His being the principle from which the Son and Holy Ghost proceed.<sup>4</sup> Since man is a being of spiritual soul and physical body, whose every action has either a positive or negative moral quality due to intention and circumstance, each human action has surrounding it, in front of it, and reacting to it a material dimension. Man acts morally amidst the physical things of this world. Since prudence is the virtue of the practical intellect that applies



<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine, *De trinitate* (Coeur d'Alene, ID: Mediatrix Press, 2015), XI, 3-5; XV, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Pieper, p. 15. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classic, 1983), II-II, Q. 49, Art. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *ST*, II-II, Q. 49, Art. 4 in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Latin edition) (Taurini, Italy: Marietti, 1937), pp. 294-295.

<sup>7</sup> Pieper, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Non potest certitudo prudentiae tanta esse quod omnino sollicitudo tollatur* in *ST*, II-II, Q. 47, Art. 9 ad 2.

universal moral norms to the particular situations of a man's life, the images of the particular things, people, and places that have accompanied our past moral life carry through to the present moment and help us situate our particular moral moment and relate it to previous moral acts that, likewise, have taken place amidst the particularities of the material world. The brute matter of the empirical world is transformed into an adequate response to the demand of the real world. Since our moral analysis of the present moment is always saturated by and related to a memory of a similar past instance in our lives, Josef Pieper, citing St. Thomas Aquinas, emphasizes the need for "true to being" memory, undistorted by a malicious, vicious, or simply frightened will.<sup>5</sup>

## *Solertia*: The Decisiveness of the Prudent Man

Just as worldly calculation of personal gain has little to do with the virtue of prudence, which seeks to "make real the good," so too a moral conscience that continually retraces its steps and refuses to act forthrightly and swiftly in the face of ever changing moral circumstances, cannot have perfected prudence. Prudence is meant to realize the good through moral action. The perfection of prudence is the perfection of thought operating in any conditions that reality puts in front of it, no matter how unexpected. One of the parts of prudence is then *solertia* (from *solers citus*),<sup>6</sup> somewhat awkwardly translated as "shrewdness." *Solertia* is the perfected ability by virtue of which man can swiftly decide for the good, avoiding injustice, cowardice, and intemperance. Without this virtue of "objectivity in unexpected situations," perfect prudence is not possible.<sup>7</sup> *Solertia*, or celerity, is the part of prudence that helps to vitiate the indecisiveness, which scruples endlessly over circumstances, motives, and the possible breaking of rules. The scrupulous man wants mathematical certainty in areas of human action that, because they deal with the singular and contingent, do not admit of such certainty. As St. Thomas states, "the certitude of prudence cannot be so great as completely to remove all anxiety."<sup>8</sup>

*Docilitas*, or the ability to take advice or higher instruction, best shows itself in the moral life of man, when he is open to the example that the actions of other superior and good men provide to him; even though the letter of the law may kill, the constant appreciation of good, courageous, agile, intelligent, and prudent men will slowly shape the young soul so that in perfect openness, objective clarity, and joyful exuberance, it may love the good and seek to make it a reality.



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In Comes Google,

# Out Goes the Mind

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by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

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The first time I felt uneasy about the “black box,” my first laptop computer, was when my friend Raymond, a self-taught programmer, started tapping nervously on the keyboard, bringing out flashes of information on the screen. This was hardly human behavior. Either Ray had lost his mind or this was his way of relaxing his tight nerves.

## Just Another Technological Discovery?

It is common knowledge that civilization adapts to technology and that modern inventions deeply affect human behaviors. It is easy indeed to see the change in culture produced by the various modifications of human language alone,

that vital vehicle of thought. Major changes occurred, for example: from the unwritten story of blind Homer, who could remember a 20,000 line *Iliad*, to the same poem couched on papyrus 700 years later as a written text in scriptura continua “withnobreakeandallinone”; continuing changes occurred from the uninterrupted text, to the separate words and sentences; and further changes continued from the hand-written manuscripts, to Guttenberg’s printed books. Man’s mind has certainly gone through new modes of thinking and processing words as human language became fixed, perfected, and multiplied indefinitely. Can we say the same of the latest human invention, the Internet? A 2010 New York Times Best Seller, *The Shallows*, written by Nicholas Carr (W. W. Norton and Cy, New York), squarely addresses the question.



One of the first modern computer experiments was shown at Xerox's Research Center of Palo Alto in the mid-1970s. The presenter demonstrated the flexibility of the system of "multitasking" by having several windows on the screen. On one of them, he was composing software code. He then clicked on another which displayed a newly arrived e-mail message. He quickly read and replied to the message, then hopped back to the programming window and continued working. While most of the audience applauded warmly the feat, someone angrily exclaimed, "Why in the world would you want to be interrupted—and distracted—by e-mail while programming?"



Homer

This is a question few teenagers will ever raise today. "I click, therefore, I am" is their motto and, incidentally, the cause of much stress. Teens and young adults need to know details of the lives of their peers, coupled with a terrific anxiety about being out of the loop. If they stop sending messages, they risk becoming invisible. That is why, in 2010, the average teenager was spending more than 11 hours a day connected to some social media.

The advocates of the Web praise it for its ability to "conduct 34 conversations simultaneously across six different media." They hope that this "technology-induced ADD" will develop new cognitive habits... "to navigate the age of constant connectivity." Leaving room for the hyperbolic twist, there is little doubt that the average computer user is beginning to function

like a PC, categorizing and assessing bits of information, with speed and disorder. In this jungle law of the "survival of the busiest" brain cells, the battle is lost by those cells that support linear thought, the ones we use in traversing a lengthy narrative or an involved argument, the ones we draw on when we contemplate things.

## Deep Mind Boggling

Carr's best seller is riddled with brain studies on neurons and synapses which are as revealing as they are intriguing. We learn that the nervous system is endowed with great plasticity which



Papyrus

allows it to adapt to behavior and environment. But plasticity does not mean elasticity. The paths of least resistance become the vital paths, and they tend to lock us into a rigid behavior, crossing the point of no return. It can have pathological repercussions, with some unsweetened names like depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Knowing what we know today about the brain's plasticity, if one were to set out to invent a medium that would drastically rewire our mental circuits, one would probably end up designing something like the Internet. Repetitive, interactive, addictive stimuli will produce rapid alterations in brain circuits. Chemical changes will become anatomical changes. Said simply: they create different brains.

Just as neurons that fire together wire together, neurons that don't fire together

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don't wire together. What we're not doing when we're online has also a momentous impact. It stifles the time we spend composing sentences and paragraphs, devoted to quiet reflection and contemplation. The circuits that support those old intellectual functions and pursuits weaken and begin to break apart. The brain has to recycle the disused synapses for more pressing work.

And what is this work more pressing than thinking and reading? Book readers have a lot of activity in regions associated with language, memory, and visual processing, but little activity associated with decision making and problem solving. Experienced Net users, by contrast, display extensive activity across the brain region

divided attention, two central features of the Net. And, to top it all, some say that brain overtaxing is connected with ADD.

## The Conditions for Deep Thinking?

The art of book reading is dwindling. Proper readers, a species in danger of extinction, would disengage their attention from the passing stimuli in order to engage it more deeply with an inward flow of words, ideas, and emotions. The reading of a sequence of pages is valuable not only for the knowledge they acquired from the author's



Johannes Gutenberg (1398 - 1468) was a German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher who introduced printing to Europe. His introduction of mechanical movable type printing to Europe started the Printing Revolution and is widely regarded as the most important event of the modern period.



of the prefrontal cortex when they search Web pages. The need to evaluate links and make navigational choices, while sustaining fleeting sensory stimuli (photos, videos, moving items), requires steady mental coordination and decision making. This is distracting the brain from the plain interpreting of a text. To understand the juggling this involves, just imagine reading a book while doing a crossword puzzle; that's the intellectual environment of the Internet.

At that moment, another problem is added which impairs proper thinking. The short-term memory, called working memory, can suffer from overload. If this occurs, we become unable to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, and thus we turn into a virtual zombie. Now, it is notorious that two of the most important sources of overload are extraneous problem-solving and

words. These very words also set off their minds to prolong the process, to connect with images and work out the imagination and past experiences and analogies, and, finally, to create their own ideas and inferences. Adept readers think deeply as they read deeply.

For deep thinking, it is also known that getting away from the problem, taking a walk in the woods and "sleeping over it," allows the brain to become calmer and sharper. This is because the brain can relax and disengage without taxing the working memory. Contemplation and peace are vital as they rejuvenate the cells and prepare them for the next mental exercise.

Scientist Nielsen conducted an eye-tracking study of Web users in order to study the way the average online reader reads. The results were staggering. The vast majority skimmed the text



quickly, their eyes skipping down the page in a pattern that resembled the letter F. F is for fast. In a few seconds the users read your precious content and move on after an average of four seconds per page! Users, including the academic researchers, are “power-browsing” and are going for quick wins. They do not read in the traditional sense. Quantity is gained at the expense of quality, and, paradoxically, the broadening of available information is leading to a narrowing of science.

Finally, the provisional nature of digital text is fast influencing writing styles. A printed book is a finished product. Most conscientious writers were anxious to perfect the works they produced

to it, the information lasts as long as the neuron’s electric charge: a few seconds at best. But the Net users want to be entertained “in real time,” and want to be interrupted right now. It may not be wrong to conclude with Carr that “the Web makes our brains adept at forgetting, inept at remembering.”

Socrates prophesied the advent of a tool to “implant forgetfulness, a recipe not for memory, but for reminder.” Google co-founder Sergey Brin stated: “Certainly if you had all the world’s information directly attached to your brain, or an artificial brain that was smarter than your brain, you’d be better off.”

This point deserves a second thought.



Just as television turned a nation of people who listened to media content into watchers of media content, the emergence of social media has created a nation of media content creators. According to 2011 Pew Research data, nearly 80% of American adults are online and nearly 60% of them use social networking sites. More Americans get their news via the Internet than from newspapers or radio.



with an eye towards eternity. Electronic text is subject to ongoing revision: it becomes cheap in more ways than one. This is best illustrated by the history of correspondence in the last 30 years. In letter writing, formality and eloquence have been sacrificed to Chronos—the god of time.

## Tool of Forgetfulness

What determines what we remember? The key to memory consolidation is attentiveness. For a memory to persist the incoming information must be thoroughly and deeply processed. This means attending to the information and associating it meaningfully and systematically with something already stored in the memory. If unable to attend

Would we really be better off without our personal memory? While surfing the web, we are sacrificing the wealth of connections within our own mind which, chemically but also anatomically, produce the synapses and physically build up memory. Online users do not gain memory the way deep readers and thinkers do, they only gain access to an electronic outside memory. The Web’s connections are not our connections. The thoughts, unless properly processed, are not our thoughts and will never define us. Richard Foreman eloquently explained the stakes:

“I come from a tradition of Western culture in which the ideal was the complex, dense and ‘cathedral-like’ structure of the highly educated and articulate personality. I see within us a new kind of self, evolving under the pressure of >

information overload and the technology of the 'instantly available.' We are drained of our 'inner repertory of dense cultural inheritance and risk turning into pancake people.'

### Redefining Man

Google founder Larry Page, in a 2007 conference to scientists, expressed his view of human life and human intellect:

"My theory is that if you look at your programming, your DNA, it's about 600 megabytes compressed, so it's smaller than any modern operating system, smaller than Linux of Windows... So your program algorithms probably aren't that complicated: [intelligence] is probably more about overall computation."

To him, the brain does not just resemble a computer; it is a computer. For Google, intelligence is the faculty of processing data, and we are approaching the "happy" day when the machine will create intelligence. Google's dream is perhaps simply a boyish desire to create a cool machine that will be able to outthink its creators. However, the problem lies deeper. It consists of the dwarf conception of what a man is, with his depth of thought, creativity and emotion, and human decisions which define him.

Some say Google is God. Others say Google is Satan. On this theological note, Marshall McLuhan, the man who prophesied the advent of the Web and coined the aphorism "the medium is the message," had this to say of the electronic world: "It nourishes the illusion that the world is a spiritual substance, a reasonable facsimile of the Mystical Body, an absorbing manifestation of the antichrist. After all, the Prince of this world is a great electronic engineer."

One scientist tested the relation between multitasking and creativity and inventiveness. The results were clear. The more you multitask, the less deliberative and able you are to reason out a problem. Once you face the screen, you are hard pressed to think outside the box. The constant shifting of your attention when online hampers your ability to think deeply and creatively. Internauts are shallow thinkers because they have no time to challenge incoming

ideas. As a rule, one is never as good as when he focuses on one thing at a time, or, in the word of Seneca: "To be everywhere is to be nowhere."

Another Latin poet, Lucretius, seemed to have had the Net users in mind when he wrote: "They taste from the mouth of others; they search things from hearsay rather than from their own senses." Being in the clutches of the spider's Web, we utterly disconnect from the outer world. This is bound to alter the behavior since what is most human is what is least computable about us, that is to say, connections between our mind and our body, experiences that shape our memory and our thinking, our capacity for emotion and empathy. And such things cannot happen in a flash time. "If things are happening too fast, you may not ever fully experience emotions about other people's psychological states." Frenzied technology feeds frenzied souls, and frenzied souls can hardly be acting humanly.

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It is certain that the Net era is seeing profound revolutionary changes in man's behavior. The challenge we face is to preserve our human personality, created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ. The Net challenge is to not sacrifice our own souls on the altar of the new god of utter distraction, forgetfulness, and mindlessness.



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- Social networking sites are Internet-based services that allow people to communicate and share information with a group.
- Once information is posted to a social networking site, it is no longer private. The more information you post, the more vulnerable you may become. Even when using high-security settings, friends or websites may inadvertently leak your information.
- Personal information you share could be used to conduct attacks against you or your associates. The more information shared, the more likely someone could impersonate you and trick one of your friends into sharing personal information, downloading malware, or providing access to restricted sites.
- Predators, hackers, business competitors, and foreign state actors troll social networking sites looking for information or people to target for exploitation.
- Information gleaned from social networking sites may be used to design a specific attack that does not come by way of the social networking site.

# Rome Speaks on Modern Media

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Pius XII. *Miranda Prorsus* (Extracts) — Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, *Church and Internet*

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## *Miranda Prorsus* (Pius XII, Sept 8, 1957)

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Sermo ad cultores cinematographicae artis ex Italia Romae congregatos, d. 21 Iunii, a. 1955: A. A. S., vol. XLVII, 1955, p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Matth., XI, 30

Just as very great advantages can arise from the wonderful advances which have been made in our day, in technical knowledge concerning Motion Pictures, Radio and Television, so too can very great dangers.

For these new possessions and new instruments which are within almost everyone's grasp, introduce a most powerful influence into men's minds, both because they can flood them with light, raise them to nobility, adorn them with beauty, and because they can disfigure them by dimming their luster, dishonor them by a process of corruption, and make them subject to uncontrolled passions, according as the subjects presented to the senses in these shows are praiseworthy or reprehensible.<sup>1</sup>

In the past century, advancing technical skill in the field of business frequently had this result: machines, which ought to serve men, when brought into use, rather reduced them to a state of slavery and caused grievous harm. Likewise today, unless the mounting development of technical skill, applied to the diffusion of pictures, sounds, and ideas, is subjected to the sweet yoke of the law of Christ,<sup>2</sup> it can be the source of



<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Sermo ad radiophonicae artis cultorum coetum, d. 5 Maii, a. 1950 ex omnibus Nationibus Romae habitum: Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di S. S. Pio XII, vol. XII, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> I Thess. V, 21-22.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Sermo, quinto exeunte saeculo ab Angelici obitu, in Aedibus Vaticanis habitus d. 20 Aprilis, a. 1955: A. A. S., vol. XLVII, 1955, pp. 291-292; Litt. Enc. Musicae Sacrae, d. 25 Decembris, a. 1955: A. A. S., vol. XLVIII, 1956, p. 10.

countless evils, which appear to be all the more serious, because not only material forces but also the minds are unhappily enslaved, and man's inventions are, to that extent, deprived of those advantages which, in the design of God's Providence, ought to be their primary purpose.<sup>3</sup>

### Errors Concerning Freedom of Communication

The Church encourages and supports everything which truly concerns a fuller enrichment of the mind—for She is the patron and fostermother of human knowledge and the noble arts; therefore She cannot permit the violation of those principles and laws which direct and govern man in his path to God, his final end. Let no one, then, be surprised if, in this matter, where many reservations are necessary, the Church acts with due thought and discretion, according to that saying of the Apostle: “But prove all things: hold fast that which is good. From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

Those, therefore, are certainly to be blamed who openly declare that public communication of matters which impede, or are directly opposed to, principles of morality, should be encouraged and carried out so long as the method is in accord with the laws of the liberal or technical arts. In a short discourse, on the occasion of the fifth centenary of the death of Fra Angelico, We recalled to the minds of Our hearers that “it is true that an explicitly moral or religious function is not demanded of art as art”; but “if artistic expression gives publicity to false, empty and confused forms, those not in harmony with the Creator's design; if, rather than lifting mind and heart to noble sentiments, it stirs the baser passions, it might, perhaps, find welcome among some people, but only by nature of its novelty, a quality not always of value and with but slight content of that reality which is possessed by every type of human expression. But such an art would degrade itself, denying its primary and essential element: it would not be universal and perennial as is the human spirit to which it is addressed.”<sup>5</sup>

### Entertainments for Youth

Yet it must be noticed that, in exercising control in this matter, the right training and education of the spectators, of which We have spoken, is not in itself sufficient. Each of the shows must be suited and adapted to the degree of intelligence of each age, the strength of their emotional and imaginative response, and the condition of their morals.

This, indeed, assumes a very great importance because sound radio and television shows, since they easily penetrate right into the domestic circle, threaten to undermine the protective barriers by which the education of the young must be kept safe and sound until such time as advancing age gives the necessary strength to enable them to overcome the buffetings of the world. For this reason, three years ago, We wrote thus to the Bishops of Italy: “Should we not shudder if we reflect attentively that by means of television shows, even within home surroundings all can inhale that poisoned air of “materialistic” doctrines which diffuse notions of empty pleasures and desires of all kinds, in the same way as they did over and over again in cinema halls?”<sup>6</sup>

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## Duty of the Listener

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. Adhortatio de televisione, d. 1 Ianuarii, a. 1954: A. A. S., vol. XLIV, a. 1964, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Gal. V, 9.

Parish priests should warn their flocks that they are forbidden by divine law to listen to radio programs which are dangerous to their Faith or morals, and they should exhort those engaged in the training of youth, to be on the watch and to instill religious principles with regard to the use of radio sets installed in the home.

Moreover, it is the duty of the Bishops to call on the faithful to refrain from listening to stations which are known to broadcast a defence of matter formally opposed to the Catholic Faith.

## Special Problems on Television

But Television, besides the common element which it shares with the other two inventions for spreading information, of which We have already spoken, has a power and efficacy of its own. For, by the art of Television, it is possible for the spectators to grasp by the eye and the ear, events happening far away at the very moment at which they are taking place, and thus to be drawn on, as it were, to take an active part in them; and this sense of immediacy is increased very much by the home surroundings.

This special power which Television enjoys, of giving pleasure within the family circle, is to be reckoned of very great importance, since it can contribute a great deal to the religious life, the intellectual development, and the habits of those who make up the family; of the sons, especially, whom the more modern invention will certainly influence and captivate. But if that saying, “a little leaven corrupteth the whole mass”<sup>7</sup> corresponds at all to the truth, and if physical growth in youths can be prevented, by some infectious germ, from reaching full maturity, much more can some base element of education steal its way into the fibers of the religious life, and check the due shaping of morals. Everyone knows well that, very often, children can avoid the transient attack of a disease outside their own home, but cannot escape it when it lurks within the home itself.

... In this matter, then, prudence and watchful care are especially demanded of those who make use of Television. Due moderation in its use, prudence in admitting the children to viewing according to their different ages, a balanced judgment based on what has been seen before, and finally, exclusion of children from what are in any sense improper spectacles: all these are the duties which weigh heavily on parents and on all engaged in education.

## The Church and Internet <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Feb 22, 2002

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Message for the 35th World Communications Day, n. 3.

While emphasizing what is positive about the Internet, it is important to be clear about what is not. At a very deep level, “the world of the media can sometimes seem indifferent and even hostile to Christian faith and morality. This is partly because media culture is so deeply imbued with a typically postmodern sense that the only absolute truth is that there are no absolute truths or that, if there were, they would be inaccessible to human reason and therefore irrelevant.”<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>10</sup> John Paul II, Message for the 35th World Communications Day, n. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the United States, n. 5, Los Angeles, September 16, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> Ethics in Communications, n. 25.

Among the specific problems presented by the Internet is the presence of hate sites devoted to defaming and attacking religious and ethnic groups. Some of these target the Catholic Church. Like pornography and violence in the media, Internet hate sites are “reflections of the dark side of a human nature marred by sin”<sup>10</sup>

One area for research concerns the suggestion that the wide range of choices regarding consumer products and services available on the Internet may have a spillover effect in regard to religion and encourage a ‘consumer’ approach to matters of faith. Data suggest that some visitors to religious web sites may be on a sort of shopping spree, picking and choosing elements of customized religious packages to suit their personal tastes. The “tendency on the part of some Catholics to be selective in their adherence” to the Church’s teaching is a recognized problem in other contexts;<sup>11</sup> more information is needed about whether and to what extent the problem is exacerbated by the Internet.

A special aspect of the Internet, as we have seen, concerns the sometimes confusing proliferation of unofficial web sites labeled ‘Catholic.’ A system of voluntary certification at the local and national levels under the supervision of representatives of the Magisterium might be helpful in regard to material of a specifically doctrinal or catechetical nature.

Parental supervision should include making sure that filtering technology is used in computers available to children when that is financially and technically feasible, in order to protect them as much as possible from pornography, sexual predators, and other threats. Unsupervised exposure to the Internet should not be allowed.

To children and young people. The Internet is a door opening on a glamorous and exciting world with a powerful formative influence; but not everything on the other side of the door is safe and wholesome and true. “Children and young people should be open to formation regarding media, resisting the easy path of uncritical passivity, peer pressure, and commercial exploitation.”<sup>12</sup> The young owe it to themselves—and to their parents and families and friends, their pastors and teachers, and ultimately to God—to use the Internet well.

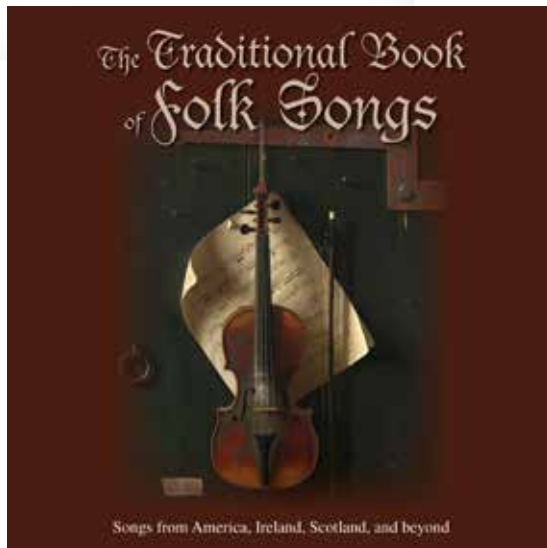
The Internet places in the grasp of young people at an unusually early age an immense capacity for doing good and doing harm, to themselves and others. It can enrich their lives beyond the dreams of earlier generations and empower them to enrich others’ lives in turn. It also can plunge them into consumerism, pornographic and violent fantasy, and pathological isolation.



- The educational impact of wiring up schools and homes and giving computers to kids has been disappointing.
- The University of Chicago’s Austan Goolsbee studied the impact of subsidized Internet rollout in California’s school system in the late 1990s: The program worked to extend Internet access, but there was no impact on learning outcomes.
- As broadband rolled out across North Carolina, Urban Institute researchers found “modest but statistically significant and persistent negative impacts on student math and reading test scores.”
- On the other side of the Atlantic, Carnegie Mellon’s Rodrigo Bello and colleagues looked at schools in Portugal and found significant declines in ninth-grade national exam scores as broadband use increased; meanwhile, “students in schools that block access to websites such as YouTube perform relatively better.”
- And looking at results from across the countries that take part in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), test scores are lower among students who use computers intensively.

# The Traditional Book of Folk Songs

Songs from America, Ireland, Scotland, and beyond



Contains simplified sheet music and easy guitar chords that are quick to learn and fun to play. This songbook is sure to keep everyone—young and old alike—entertained around a campfire or in the living room. It is our hope that having collected these songs into one convenient volume, you will be encouraged to gather your friends and family—and sing! Contains 123 songs.

- American Cowboy Songs
- American Folk Songs
- American Patriotic Songs
- Irish Songs
- Scottish Songs
- English Songs
- Miscellaneous Songs

# The History of Lent

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by Fr. Christopher Danel

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The principal means of preparing for Easter has historically been with a dedicated Fast, along with prayer and almsgiving. It is essentially a time for interior purification and renewal, a sacred time of living the Christian life more intensely. This period begins with the Septuagesima preparation, which leads to Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent, which conclude with Passion Week and Holy Week. Its Latin name, *Quadragesima*, refers to the forty days, while its English name, *Lent*, derives from *lencten*, an Old English term for springtime.

## Septuagesima

This three-week preparation was added gradually to the beginning of Lent, once the

latter was solidly established everywhere as a forty day period. It might be supposed that the Byzantine practice was adopted in the West by way of Italy, but its appearance in the West is rather more widespread than localized. Besides Italy, it was seen in England, Ireland, Spain, Northern Gaul, and Provence. Sources indicate its existence in Rome at the beginning of the sixth century. It had a retrograde development: before *Quadragesima* (fortieth day, beginning of Lent), the preparation was extended an additional week to *Quinquagesima* (fiftieth day, the count being rounded off) and then again to the sixtieth day, *Sexagesima*. The Council of Orleans (AD 541) refers to *Sexagesima*, and certain liturgical peculiarities point to the time when *Sexagesima* existed before *Septuagesima* was added. Some historical liturgical books began





the Matins lessons of Genesis on Sexagesima, which now start instead on the First Sunday of Lent, and the Communion antiphon of the Mass began a series with Psalm 1, although this has since been transposed to Ash Wednesday. Septuagesima Sunday (seventieth day) became firmly established in the Roman Rite at the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century, and has given its name to the entire three week preparation for Lent. The primary characteristic of the season, besides the use of violet vestments, is the laying down (*depositio*) of the Alleluia until Holy Saturday. In some places, a plaque bearing the Alleluia was hanged about a straw man called the “Alleluia man,” and he was immolated in a festive bonfire. The Roman liturgy bids its farewell to the Alleluia at the first Vespers of Septuagesima with the verse *Benedicamus Domino, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

## Ash Wednesday

Until the eighth century, at the latest, the Lenten fast started at the beginning of the sixth week preceding Easter, covering forty days including the Sundays, even though these were not fasting days.

St. Gregory the Great (†604) provided a symbolic interpretation of the six weeks by instructing that fasting six days for six weeks ( $6 \times 6 = 36$ ) was a temporal tithe: for the 365 days given him by God, man consecrates a tenth of these by the fast. When it was deemed more fitting to fast for forty full days, excluding Sundays from the count, four additional days were added to the beginning of Lent to reach the total of forty: Ash Wednesday and the three successive days. The Ambrosian Liturgy (Milan) and the Mozarabic Liturgy (Spain) never added the additional days. The Roman liturgy still retains some of the antique practice of initiating the fast on the first Sunday of Lent, particularly in the Divine Office, which begins its fully Lenten format only then. The liturgical texts of the first Sunday of Lent also refer to the “beginning” of the fast (*initium jejunii*).

With Ash Wednesday established as the beginning of the fast, the practices associated

with the start of Lent were transposed to that day (penance *in cinere et cilicio*—in ashes and sackcloth), and it was given the title *Feria IV cinerum, caput jejunii*—*Ash Wednesday, head [=beginning] of the fast*. The Gospel assigned to the day for centuries, as attested to by St. Maximus of Turin (†465), is the instruction of the Lord on fasting: *Cum jejunatis*—*When you fast, etc.* In Rome, the Papal Mass would be held at Santa Sabina, and as the liturgical procession climbed the steep Aventine Hill to reach it, the antiphon was sung *Immutemur habitu in cinere et cilicio*—*Let us change our garb into ashes and sackcloth*. The phrase *cinere et cilicio* recalls the same penance of Judith in the Old Testament (Jud. 9:1). The primary characteristic of Ash Wednesday is, of course, the imposition of ashes. A council in Benevento (AD 1091) attests to that fact by stipulating that “everyone, clergy and laity, men and women, will receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.” The ashes are made from burning the branches used on the previous Palm Sunday (whether palms or, in the Italian custom, olive branches: *rami olivarum*).

## Lent

Lent is historically inseparable from the Lenten Fast. There are references to the fast in the ante-Nicene Fathers, even in the mid-second century. St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, the disciple of St. Polycarp who sat at the feet of St. John, in a letter to Pope St. Victor I (AD 190), refers to the prepaschal fast as a longstanding custom among most Catholics (*longe ante, apud majores nostros*—*long before, among most of us*). The fourth century provides a greater abundance of sources, at which point writings appear from the East by Sts. Eusebius, Athanasius, and Cyril of Jerusalem, and in the West by St. Augustine (Africa), St. Ambrose (Northern Italy), and Egeria (Spain and the Holy Land). This last source is priceless. The Spanish nun made her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in AD 416 and meticulously recorded all she witnessed in her diary, the *Peregrinatio*, which has been through the centuries an important resource for liturgical history.

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# Faith and Morals

St. Leo the Great (†461) and St. Jerome (†420) both attest to the apostolic origin of the Church's forty day fast, in imitation of the same fast not only of Moses and Elias, who thereby

public life. While a fast prior to Easter was kept universally in the Church, its length was not uniform prior to the fourth century. Furthermore, the fast led up to Good Friday until the fifth century, at which point it was reckoned to conclude at Easter.

In some places the faithful fasted only during the few days preceding Good Friday, whether it be a few days, the whole week, or even forty hours, in commemoration of the forty hours Christ lay in the Sepulchre. There are some indications that the penitential practice in its more rigorous form came from the Patriarchate of Alexandria, known for its asceticism. In Syria the fast was especially rigorous, with the taking of only water, salt, and bread during the week preceding Easter, and nothing eaten at all during the Sacred Triduum. St. Leo attests to the forty day practice in Rome, as does St. Athanasius in a letter he wrote while in the Eternal City in AD 341. St. Peter Chrysologus (†450) indicates that the practice spread from Rome to the influential cities of Turin and Ravenna and beyond.

In the sacred liturgy, there is a distinct penitential tone. The altar is no longer decorated with flowers, the organ is no longer played, and the vestments are violet. Often gold altarware makes way for silver, and standing reliquaries are removed from the altar. Bishops use a simpler miter (or a combination of the *simplex* and the *aurophrygiata*, of yellow-cloth), setting aside the more ornate one called the "precious miter." Historically there were also some mutations in the vestments for deacons and subdeacons, *viz.*, folded chasubles and the deacon's broad-stole.

The most distinctive element of the season, however, is that each day is assigned its own unique Mass texts, which provide a very rich instruction to both the observant faithful and, in earlier centuries, the catechumens. After the Postcommunion, the ferial Lenten Masses also include an *Oratio super populum*—a Prayer over the People.

prepared themselves for the encounter with God, but principally the fast of the Lord Jesus Christ, who consecrated the forty day fast by His own observance of it at the beginning of His

## Laetare Sunday

During the middle portion of Lent occurs what the ancient Roman liturgical documents





termed *Mediana week*, led by *Laetare* Sunday, with its joyful introit *Laetare Jerusalem—Rejoice Jerusalem*. This week has historically been celebrated as the middle of the penitential season, with Tuesday being the exact midpoint. The Gospel assigned to the day for centuries, probably placed there by Pope Hilarion (†468), has been the text from St. John VII, 14: *Jam die festo mediante—About the midst of the feast*, which alludes to the midpoint day. *Laetare* Sunday, with its rose vestments, floral decorations, and organ music, provides a burst of joy and hope, spurring on the faithful to persevere in making a holy Lent. The origin of *Laetare* Sunday is tied to the primitive importance given to *Mediana* week as a whole. At the conclusion of the week comes *Sitientes* Saturday, which has historically been designated as a day for Ordinations.

*Laetare* Sunday, also called Rose Sunday, is the occasion for a quaint custom: on that Sunday, the Pope blessed the “Golden Rose” and originally laid it before the relic of the True Cross in the Basilica of the Holy Cross, which was a custom similar to one used in Byzantium in the tenth century. Later on, the Golden Rose was given to a shrine or to a dignitary, such as when Pope Urban II sent it to the Count of Anjou in AD 1096 for his role in the First Crusade. A Bull of St. Leo IX (AD 1049) decreed that the Golden Rose would be handmade each year by the monks of Alsace.

## Passiontide

The Carolingian liturgical books refer to the fifth Sunday of Lent as *de Passione Domini*, or Passion Sunday. It begins Passiontide, which has its own liturgical customs. First, the prayers at the foot of the altar are truncated, as Psalm 42 is omitted. Second, the *Gloria Patri* disappears from the Mass texts. Third, in a custom dating to at least the ninth century, all crosses and holy images in churches are covered over for the remaining days of Lent. Passion Week concludes the last portion of Lent before the beginning of Holy Week, the most sacred week of the Church year, the customs of which will be considered in a subsequent article.

## The Station Churches

Each day of Lent is assigned a “Station Church” in the City of Rome, as noted in every Missal, and this has its origin in the ancient papal liturgy, designating the church in which the pope would celebrate the Mass of the day. In Rome, the community would assemble at a nearby church called the *collecta*, and after initial prayers, all would process to the station church praying the Litany of the Saints, ending with the *Kyrie eleison*. In succeeding centuries, when the popes no longer celebrated the station Masses in person, the stations were still kept as privileged churches on their assigned days. Under Pope Leo XIII in 1879, in order to preserve and promote the practice, an association was formed called the *Collegium Cultorum Martyrum*, which is still active. The Mass texts often allude to the station church or the martyrs therein, and the significance of the stations for Catholics everywhere still holds. In military terminology, a place of vigil was called a *statio*, and this term was fittingly adopted by the early Christians to signify how we fulfill the Lord’s command at the Holy Mass with a militant piety: “pray and keep watch—*orate et vigilate!*”

## Conclusion

The tenor of Lent as a time for Christians to do penance and unite themselves to the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to rise with Him to a new life is succinctly explained by St. John Chrysostom. The faithful will be, he says, “diligently purified through prayers, through alms, through fasting, through vigils, through tears, through confession and everything besides—*per preces, per eleemosinam, per jejunium, per vigiliis, per lacrimas, per confessionem ac per cetera omnia diligenter expurgati*” (Hom XXX in Gen., 1).



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Like Adam, Christ endured temptation only from without, inasmuch as His human nature was free from all concupiscence; but unlike Adam, He withstood the assaults of the Tempter on all points, thereby affording His mystical members a perfect model of resistance to their spiritual enemy, and a permanent source of victorious help.

Fresco of the Temptation of Jesus in Joriskerk (St. George's church). 19th century in Antwerp, Belgium. Renata Sedmakova | shutterstock.com

# The King's Herald

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by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

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This past year saw the celebration in the French provincial town of Poitiers of its illustrious bishop, Cardinal Pie, who was born 200 years earlier. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, he was a prominent figure of the Catholic hierarchy to request a return of France under Christ's sweet yoke.

Cardinal Louis-Édouard Pie (1815-1880) was arguably the leading French bishop of the 19th century. No other country had been so much affected by the Revolution and, after the Napoleonic wars and the various shortlived attempts at a Christian Restoration, the "little Emperor", Napoleon III (1852-1870), did very little to favor religion. He played too much on the side of the Italian Resorgimento which was dealing its death blow on the Papal Estates to secure the unification of Italy under Masonic auspices.

By that time, the Catholics were divided

behind two religious leaders, the then bishop Pie of Poitiers and Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans. The latter was known for his eloquence and his approach of compromise vis-à-vis the liberal movement set up by Félicité de Laménais. As liberalism became condemned by Gregory XVI in *Mirari Vos*, Dupanloup adopted a mitigated version, voiced by Montalembert in Belgium under the slogan of "A Free Church in the Free State" which begged only for the liberty of the Catholic religion.

This was the context of the long episcopate of



Cardinal Pie and Notre Dame la Grande of Poitiers, his burial place

the bishop of Poitiers. Pope Pius IX appointed Pie to the episcopate on September 28, 1849. In France, he contributed much to the restoration of religious life which had been eradicated for 40 years by the French Revolution. He created many parishes, established in his seminary a canonical faculty of theology, founded for the missions of the diocese the Oblates of Saint Hilary, and brought the Jesuits to Poitiers and the Benedictines to Solesmes and Ligugé.

## His Battles

Very early in his priestly career, Father Pie took to anti-liberal principles. No sooner was he out of the St. Sulpice seminary than, as vicar general of Chartres at age 29, he expressed his

leitmotiv in no uncertain terms: “The liberal neo-Catholic party is child of the Revolution, and the Revolution is satanic in its essence.” His life and his mind would be in perfect harmony with this fundamental thesis.

Cardinal Pie was the champion of orthodoxy against the error of *liberalism* (the State is free from Church laws) and *naturalism* (human life is free from divine laws). He became the flag-bearer in the battle against the Revolution. He wrote two Synod instructions “against the errors of the present days and of philosophy.” This explains why Pius IX requested some of his writings which would become the basis for his most famous publications, the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus of 80 Modern Errors*. Here are some thoughts of Cardinal Pie on this twin scourge:

“The legislation professes indifference, >

an awful thing for a Christian nation...it is naturalism replacing Christianity, man instead of God, the State above the Church...Societies are spiritually dying of this evil awaiting only their temporal death.”

“Germany has tried to turn theology into a transcendental philosophy. France has pretended to control faith by science. Religion, for most people was hardly more than a sentiment, faith an instinct, charity an enthusiasm, prayer a pious reverie...They have systematically pushed away, suppressed, abolished the divine question, pretending to suppress thereby what divides men, and rejecting thus the fundamental stone from the building, under the pretense that it is a stone of scandal and of contradiction.”

Pius IX, who held him in admiration and had wished to create him a cardinal, was forced to desist because his entourage wanted to give equal treatment to the two prominent French figures, Pie and Dupanloup, and Pius IX was adamant that he would not promote Dupanloup forward. As he was the first to die, the obstacle was lifted, and Leo XIII created Bishop Pie a cardinal in 1879, just one year before his death. He was buried in the crypt of Notre Dame la Grande, an exquisite church in the heart of Poitiers (as seen in the aquarelle).

This gesture was a way for the pope to thank him, especially for his work in France and at the First Vatican Council. Indeed, he had been a great artisan of the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility. What is not so well known is that, by his vast experience of apologetic issues against naturalism, he was the main composer of the first decree of Vatican I on faith and reason. Although the French episcopate had a poor reputation as Latinists, Bishop Pie was the exception and, with masterly art, was able to produce concise and clear documents, there where Franzelin, the official Roman apologetist, had come up with a muddled and complex script.

In 1875, the Pope wished to gratify the Bishop of Poitiers with a letter on the occasion of the publication of his *Episcopal Works*: “Not only have you always taught the good doctrine but, with the talent and eloquence which are your hallmark, you have touched with finesse and

prudence such points as were necessary or opportune to clarify... So that, to judge lucidly of questions and to adapt one’s conduct, one needs only to have read your works.”

## His Privileged Disciple

It is hardly surprising that Giuseppe Sarto, barely a bishop at the time of Cardinal Pie’s death, took great interest in his writings.

One time, Canon Vigué went to visit the Pope and had no sooner mentioned the name of his diocese than the Pope exclaimed: “Oh! The diocese of Cardinal Pie,” said the Holy Father, raising his arms as soon as he had heard the name of Poitiers. “I have the works of your cardinal right here, and for years hardly a day has gone by that I haven’t read a few pages.” As he spoke, he took one of the volumes and put it in the hands of his visitors. These could tell, by the wear on the binding, that they must have belonged to the parish priest of Salzano or the spiritual director of the seminary of Treviso long before entering the Vatican. “As soon as I can snatch a few moments,” admitted Pius X on another occasion, “I read something by your great cardinal, Cardinal Pie. He is my mentor.”

Pope Pius X rendered homage to Poitiers in 1912, in which he referred to St. Hilary, Doctor of the Church, the intrepid champion of the divinity of Christ against the Arians. He added: “but alongside of him it is sweet to remember Louis-Edouard Pie, cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, who, like a second Hilary—*alter Hilarius*—avenged the integrity of the Faith against the modern Arians by his victorious eloquence.”

This explains why, often, one can read word for word a text under the Pope’s pen which seems taken from the cardinal. One major instance will illustrate this point beyond doubt. The doctrine of cardinal Pie represents a theology of politics. “We shall always belong to the party of God; we shall deploy all our efforts, we shall dedicate our whole life to the divine cause. If we were to enunciate a motto, it would be this one: *Instaurare omnia in Christo*.” These lines would be echoed in the momentous first encyclical of St. Pius X.





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## His Leitmotiv

To his seminarians, he explained that: “Whereas the kingship of man asserts itself obstinately as a dogma of modern society, let us affirm more than ever the kingship of Christ, His right to be honored, served and obeyed.”

This reign of Christ the King is tied to the mystery of Jesus understood integrally: “Jesus for the earth is something more than the God of heaven; Jesus is God come into his work, it is God with us, and God among us, it is the God of humanity, the God of the nation, the God of the domestic hearth, the God of our first communion, the God of our heart.”

The cardinal would be endlessly the herald of Christ’s dominion over the world: “Has the greatness of kings been diminished by the crosses glittering atop their diadems? Have their thrones been less renowned or less secure on account of their kingship being recognized as an emanation of, and participation in, the kingship of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is King, and the true dignity, the true liberty, the true emancipation of modern nations lies in their right to be governed in a Christian manner. Have such nations fallen short of their glory? Has their fate been less noble, less happy on account of their ruling scepters being bound to submit to the scepter of Jesus?”

He would not tire of letting this doctrine known, to rulers and citizens alike. In his meeting with Emperor Napoleon III, he spoke superbly:

“It is the right of God to command both the State and individuals. Our Lord came to earth for no other reason. He must reign by inspiring the laws, by sanctifying the morals, by enlightening the teaching, by directing the advice, by ruling over the actions of governors and governed. In every place where Jesus Christ does not exercise this reign, there is disorder and decadence...”

The emperor stopped the bishop: “But, do you believe that the period in which we live carries this state of things and that the moment is come to establish this exclusively religious reign which you request? Do you not think, Your Excellency, that this would unleash all evil passions?”

“Sire, when great politicians as your Majesty object that the moment is not come, I can only

bow down because I am no great politician. But I am a bishop and, as a bishop, I answer them: “The moment is not come for Jesus Christ to reign? Well! then, the moment is not come for the governments to last.”

Cardinal Billot, himself a champion against modernism, on the 100th anniversary of his birth made a vibrant eulogy: “Cardinal Pie was a great figure. Now, more than ever in this battle waged between the Church and the Revolution, he remains the man who dominates the situation. He is a light, a standard-bearer, a leader worthy of a rank of honor among those fathers of our generation whom we should praise, whose counsels we should follow, whose example we should imitate, and upon whose teachings we should meditate. If our heart’s ambition is to serve the sacred cause of God and His Holy Church in the troubled times in which we are living we can benefit from placing ourselves at the school of this master.”

# The Role of Parents in Confession

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by Michael J. Rayes

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I smiled when I looked down the line of anxious and intently focused souls: My two adolescent boys were in line for confession that Sunday morning. I turned my head forward and breathed a happy sigh as I gazed upon the closed tabernacle doors. When I know that my family enjoys sanctifying grace, nothing else matters. Bills, politics, work, and unfinished house projects all seem insignificant. Yet I struggle to remember the advice of St. Therese of Lisieux for myself and my children: “Our Lord needs from us neither great deeds nor profound thoughts. Neither intelligence nor talents. He cherishes simplicity.” Regardless of our hardships and our busy schedules, how can parents inculcate in their children a devotion to the sacrament of penance? How do parents know when to push and when to back off regarding their child’s need

for confession?

## Parenting a Habit of Confession

St. John Baptiste de la Salle taught, “Fathers and mothers owe four things to their children: maintenance, instruction, correction, and good example.” You may have to discuss specific sins with your little ones to help them before a particular confession, but it is never licit to ask your child what he or she revealed after they received absolution. You could ask in general, how did it go? Your child may voluntarily reveal his or her sins and imperfections to you anyway, especially if you have already created an environment of open communication. But do not insist. Remember that the Church imposes a seal



on the confessional to protect our souls. Consider the words of St. John Vianney, who spent hours in the confessional: “The home must be in accord with the Church, that all harmful influences be withheld from the souls of children.”

My older adolescent boys are now in the habit of going to confession regularly, meaning every two weeks or so. As younger boys, they needed more coaching and indeed coaxing to frequent the sacrament. I no longer ask how confession went for them, but instead strive to create an environment conducive to communication.

This environment requires deliberate time alone with each boy, within the context of doing something, such as working together in the backyard or running to the hardware store and then stopping for drinks or a snack on the way home. The important thing is that the busy father makes a deliberate effort to spend time with each child at least once a month. This makes it a lot easier for the eager, yet reticent, adolescent to have an open discussion with his father. St. John of the Cross mentioned the challenge of spiritual direction in his classic *Dark Night of the Soul*. “[G]ood and fearful souls who walk along this road and would like to give an account of their spiritual state to him that rules them, are neither able to do so nor know how” (Book II, ch. XVII).

As parents, you can also strongly orient your children’s minds toward the sacrament every night when you lead them in a nightly brief examination of conscience. You could use the phrase “since our last confession” when announcing the examination of sins and reflection on God’s blessings.

## Growing up with the Sacrament

Developing a devotion to the sacrament of penance, or “going to confession,” ideally requires that the child made his first confession barely after reaching the age of reason. The child has opportunities to learn from each parent, who offer their own style of interacting and teaching the child about the sacraments. This best practice of sacramental inculcation also involves both parents following up consistently, encouraging frequent confession and providing examples of

this, as St. John Baptiste de la Salle exhorted.

Parents should also watch for either extreme of despair or presumption. Remind your children that God judges on how much we love Him and on the fruit of this love, which should give hope to struggling souls. At the same time, God’s mercy should not be taken for granted. St. Alphonsus de Liguori in his work, *Preparation for Death*, firmly relates that “the Lord does not instantly punish sinners ... but God keeps an account of them” for the fateful day of judgment (ch. XVIII).

A combination of compunction and hope may thus be seen as two virtues necessary for a balanced approach to the sacrament. This balance helps a child develop a habit and thus a devotion to sacramental confession from the age of reason all the way through young adulthood. Remember, however, that it is never too late to influence your children and shape their habits. Your examples, explanations, patience, and prayers will certainly go a long way no matter the age of your children.

Patience and coaching may be recurring duties of parents. I asked my younger son if he needed to go to confession, but I asked him in a whisper when he walked by me to get to a pew. I was already in the confessional line. “Yeah,” he whispered back. He stood next to me for a moment with a blank look on his cherubic nine year-old face. “I’ll go next week.” With that, he turned on his heels and walked to a pew which held his siblings.

Next week, he walked straight for the confessional without my prompting him and stood in line. I walked over and in a whisper, asked if he remembered his Act of Contrition and did he remember how to begin confession? “Yeah, bless me, Father, for I have sinned, uh...”

## Confession and Older Children

Once a child becomes a young adult and moves away from your home, you of course lose control and even some influence over the child’s spiritual and moral life. It is then time to differentiate between letting go of that which we can no longer truly control, and working harder to practice what we can: our own spiritual practices as >



The confessional is the usual venue for the sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church. Priest and penitent are in separate compartments separated by a grid or lattice. A crucifix is sometimes hung over the grille. The priest will usually sit in the middle and the penitents will enter the compartments to either side of him. The priest can close off the other compartment by a sliding screen so that only one person will be confessing at a time. There is a screen and a kneeler to kneel on so the penitent can confess anonymously. A crucifix or cross might be placed above the screen or anywhere near the penitent to aid in prayer.



parents. The book of Proverbs states it bluntly: “He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool: but he that walketh wisely, he shall be saved” (28:26).

Control is mostly illusory anyway, even when it comes to parenting a seven year old. We coax, we influence, we manipulate with sanctions and rewards, and we are responsible for driving the children to church. We might walk them right up to the confessional, but as they grow older (especially after age 13), it becomes less appropriate to simply tell them, “It’s time for your confession.” They gradually need, over the years, to take this responsibility on their own.

Trust in your child’s baptismal and confirmational grace. The Holy Ghost will definitely prompt them to make a regular confession, and He certainly does a better job at motivating than I as a parent. Consider the importance of providing a good example and have confidence that you are doing what God wants for your adolescent and young adult children, who may seem to have longer and longer cycles between confessions. Reminders are certainly good. Examples are better. Keeping up one’s Catholic spiritual life is imperative. The parents may remind the children about confession, especially if several weeks have passed, but this should be done in a general way if other children are within earshot.

Then there is the psychology of human development, which you can use to your advantage as a Catholic parent. The pioneering Catholic psychiatrist Rudolph Allers wrote that in adolescence, “certain types of authority are rejected altogether, while others are accepted gladly and with an amazing lack of criticism” (*Character Education in Adolescence*, 1940, ch. III). Dr. Allers also wrote that adolescents who revolt against traditional authority are “astonishingly ready to submit to some other authority.” Older teens and young adults should find that a confessor, and especially a regular confessor, can be their ally in the fight for moral purity and against their own sinful inclinations. Adolescents have a natural yearning to pull away from their parents, but they struggle to fill this void. The Catholic priest thus fulfills both a spiritual and a developmental need.

## Development and the Sacraments

Confession grows with the person. The child becomes aware, as well as the parents, that the sacrament of penance is critical to restoring sanctifying grace and staying right with God. Without penance, the other sacraments as the child matures simply would not be possible. Sin and its depressive effects become an insurmountable barrier.

The growing child learns a lot about himself through confession. He strengthens his will and learns more about self-control. Imagine for a moment what your teen would be like if he or she never even once went to confession. The sacrament develops their souls better than anything you could do in the natural realm as a parent. Catholic parents thus have the consolation of knowing that amid all their hardships and duties, they are not alone when raising Catholic souls. Remember the words of Therese of Lisieux when you become tempted toward anxiety over your duties as a parent: God “cherishes simplicity.” Therein lies our peace.



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# The Tradition of Slowness

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by a Benedictine Monk

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Let there be no slothful brother who wastes his time in idleness  
or gossip, neglecting reading, harming himself and disturbing others.  
Let the monk be slow to speak, quick to listen. Let us be certain that we shall  
not be heard for our much speaking. (Rule of St. Benedict)

Slowness, handwriting, reading books ... and being old-fashioned, Tradition lives in the many forms of the true, the good, and the beautiful. But there is also prudence, that guardian of the virtuous. The prudence of ponderation, reflection, and consideration has a loyal ally, that ancient Roman virtue of *discretio*, discretion, meaning balance, measure, and moderation.

Far from pipe-dreams and romanticism, the natural, deliberate, slower pace of things such as handwriting, reading, and ponderation, has been wisely determined by a Divine Intention.

There is indeed a redemptive virtue in all things established by God. St. Benedict writes “Let us hasten to do now, what may profit us for eternity.” In such sublime matters requiring deeper reflection and consideration as eternity, a certain slowing down may be the best thing to hasten.

## Scripta manent

*Written documents endure*

While visiting the archives of Rheims which



conserves one of the three extant letters dictated and signed by St. Joan of Arc, the archivist remarked, “We only have such documents today because they were written, with pen and paper.”

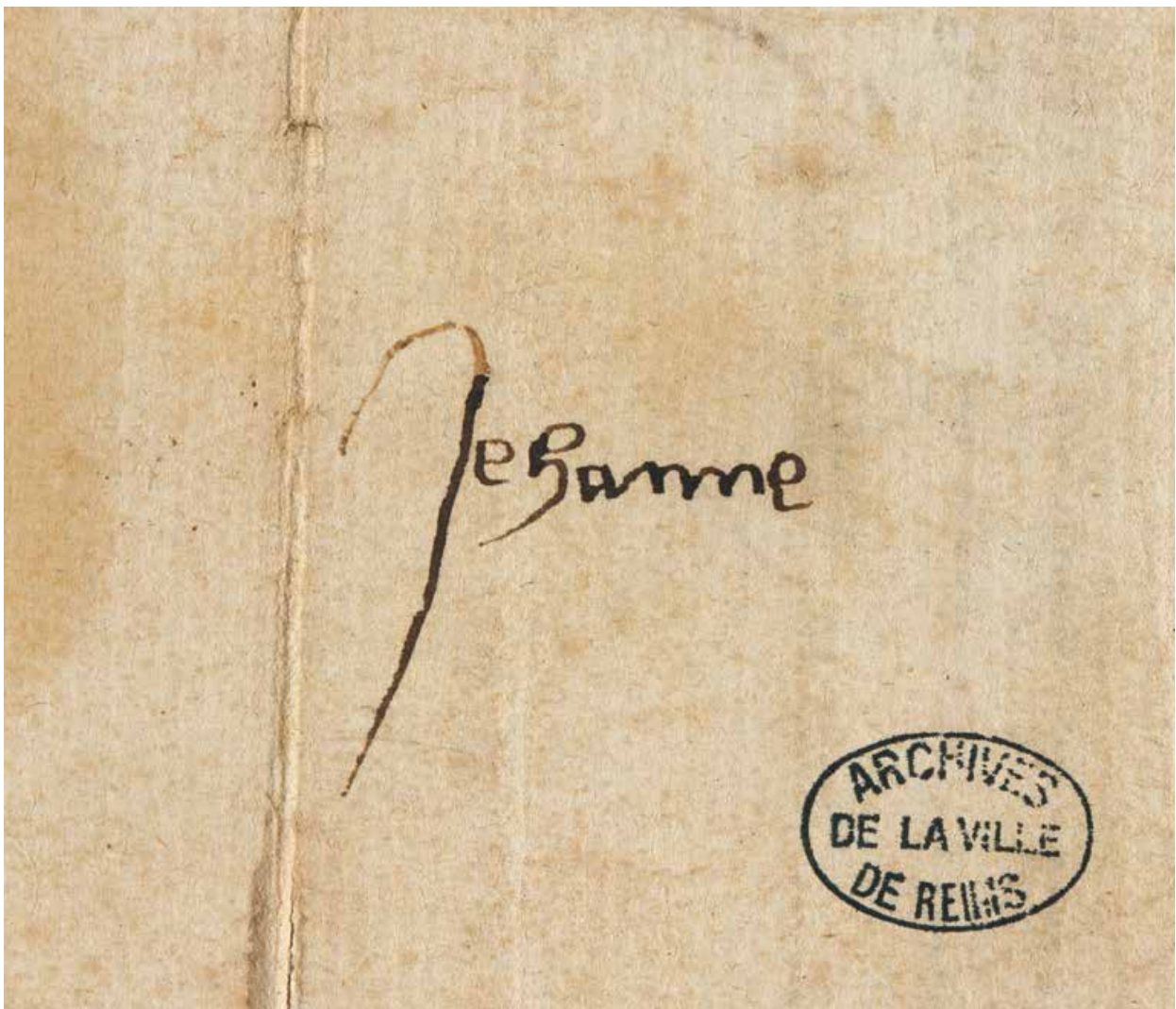
What we admire in such hand-scripted documents is the expression and transmission of something deeply personal about its author, in this case, a lone signature. The signature of St. Joan of Arc has been rigorously analyzed. An effusion of extraordinary traits of soul has been discovered therein. It matters little that she may have been left-handed or even illiterate, but the determined strokes of her signed name, especially the sword-like “J” of *Jehanne*, reveal a soldierly saint, the dynamics of a divine mission

underway, a girl of seventeen willing to obey the voices of saints unto her martyrdom.

## Pen and Ink

*Let each monk be given a pen and paper for writing.*

The art of handwriting belongs to oral communication. Writing is first a self-dictation in one’s thoughts of what the hand will then put to paper. You can hear the voice of the author as you read, but the message is permanent. A handwritten letter, being more pondered and reflected, often says more than words. >



*“A good word is above the best gift.”*

Handwriting is at once acquired virtue and second nature, an intimation of words and forms, a revelation of soul, in a different way than speaking aloud or fingering on a keyboard. We think more slowly and clearly in this quiet process, all in a tempo and cadence which is in harmony with the calm heartbeat, relaxed breathing, and the corresponding strokes of the pen in hand. It is not astonishing that specialists have praised handwriting as having *highly therapeutic effects*.

We admire the graceful, feminine penmanship found in the diary of St. Bernadette and the hand-written memoirs of Sr. Lucia, the celebrated visionary of Fatima. But beyond the charming old-world script of these treasured documents, is something even more profound, the absolute fluidity and clarity of thought, from interior thoughts to words put upon paper, without ever backing up to scratch-out or change a single word, written in permanent ink without rough drafts or notes. They wrote as simply as they lived, in a slower-paced era, thinking and writing in an admirable harmony which further expresses the candid truth of their message.

## Hardbound Books

*“Let them each receive a book...which they shall read through to the end.”*

The benefits of reading a traditional hardbound, letterpress printed book continue far beyond the senses of sight, smell, and touch. Hardbound, cloth or leather, with gilt stampings, protective dust jacket, off-white ecrue paper made from wood pulp, pages sized for turning with a finger, font styles pleasing to the mind’s

eye, line spacing adjusted for concentrated reading, yet the fine art of book making is to produce a permanent document and a *permanent truth*. Permanence is a necessary support of content, a hallmark of spiritual writings.

## The Ladder of Monks

*Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, Contemplatio*

The four-rung ladder of monks is: reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation. This, very briefly, is the supernatural process of union with God, which begins in reading. This ancient ladder is ascended in calm, interior silence, solitude, and most of all, the slowness of the patient expenditure of time. Peace of soul is achieved through this essential exercise of religious and contemplative souls. Each echelon corresponds to something deep within the soul, enflamed by the charity of God, without which we cannot truly live.

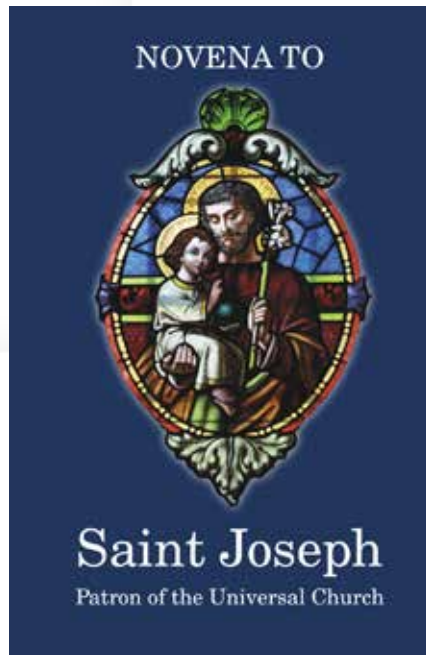
The Ladder of Monks makes use of the unchanging words of divinely inspired books placed on a shelf in the monk’s cell. There they await being opened, when the Holy Ghost will speak to us as we read. As St. Jerome writes, “When we pray we speak to God, when we read, God speaks to us.” What then shall He say to us?

The first and last words of the Rule of St. Benedict are: *“Ausculta...et pervenies—Listen ... and you shall arrive.”*



# Novena to Saint Joseph

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Saint Joseph is patron of the Universal Church. He therefore has a special interest in the needs of all. In Nazareth, the Son of God was subject to him as His foster father. In heaven St. Joseph's prayers and requests are regarded by Christ as "commands."

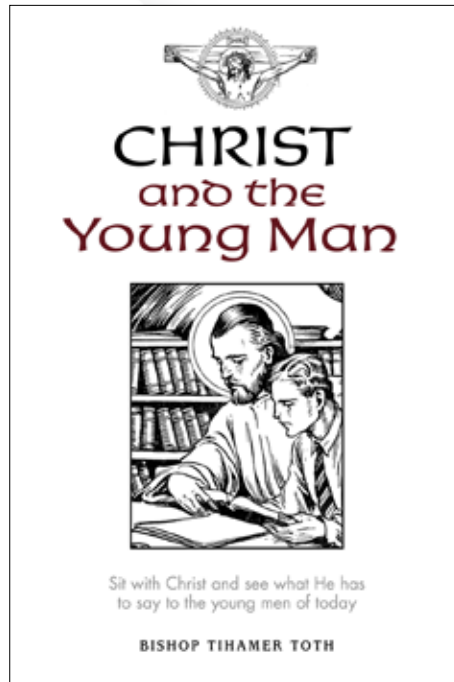
This form of novena was originally devised by the celebrated Fr. Louis Lallemand, S.J. (1587-1633). It has proved particularly effective in obtaining favors through the intercession of St. Joseph. This saintly priest and great master of the spiritual life, to whom St. Joseph never refused anything he asked, ensures those that make this novena that they will obtain everything they ask through the intercession of this great saint if, in turn, they will show him special honor and spread devotion to him among others.

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# Christ and the Young Man

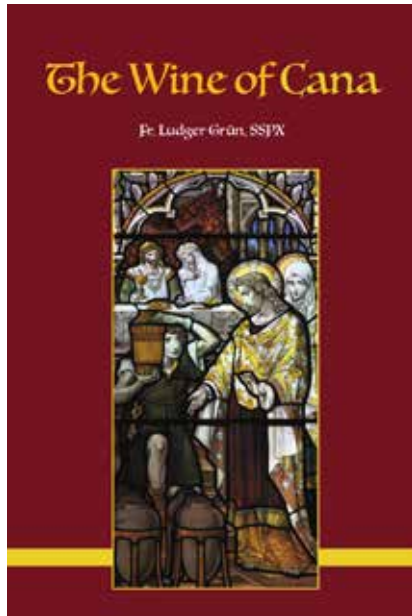
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*Christ and the Young Man* schools the reader in how to be victorious in the spiritual combat: Written specifically for boys • How to handle situations at home and at school • Fighting temptations • Prayer • Meditation • Spiritual Direction • Cultivating the life of the soul • Discerning a vocation • Learning to love the Lord Jesus and to follow Him.

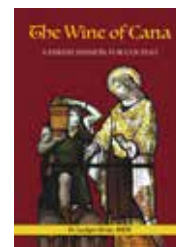
# The Wine of Cana

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Marriage is appointed for the glorification of God throughout life.

Fr. Ludger Grün, SSPX, gives great encouragement to the married couple, when they see how Jesus and Mary come to their aid . . . and, what wonderful chances their marriage gives them to live in the Kingdom of God. This book should also be a reminder that marriage is appointed for the glorification of God throughout life; in the sacrament of marriage the spouses pray, "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come." If they try to follow this precept, then these words of Christ apply: "For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."



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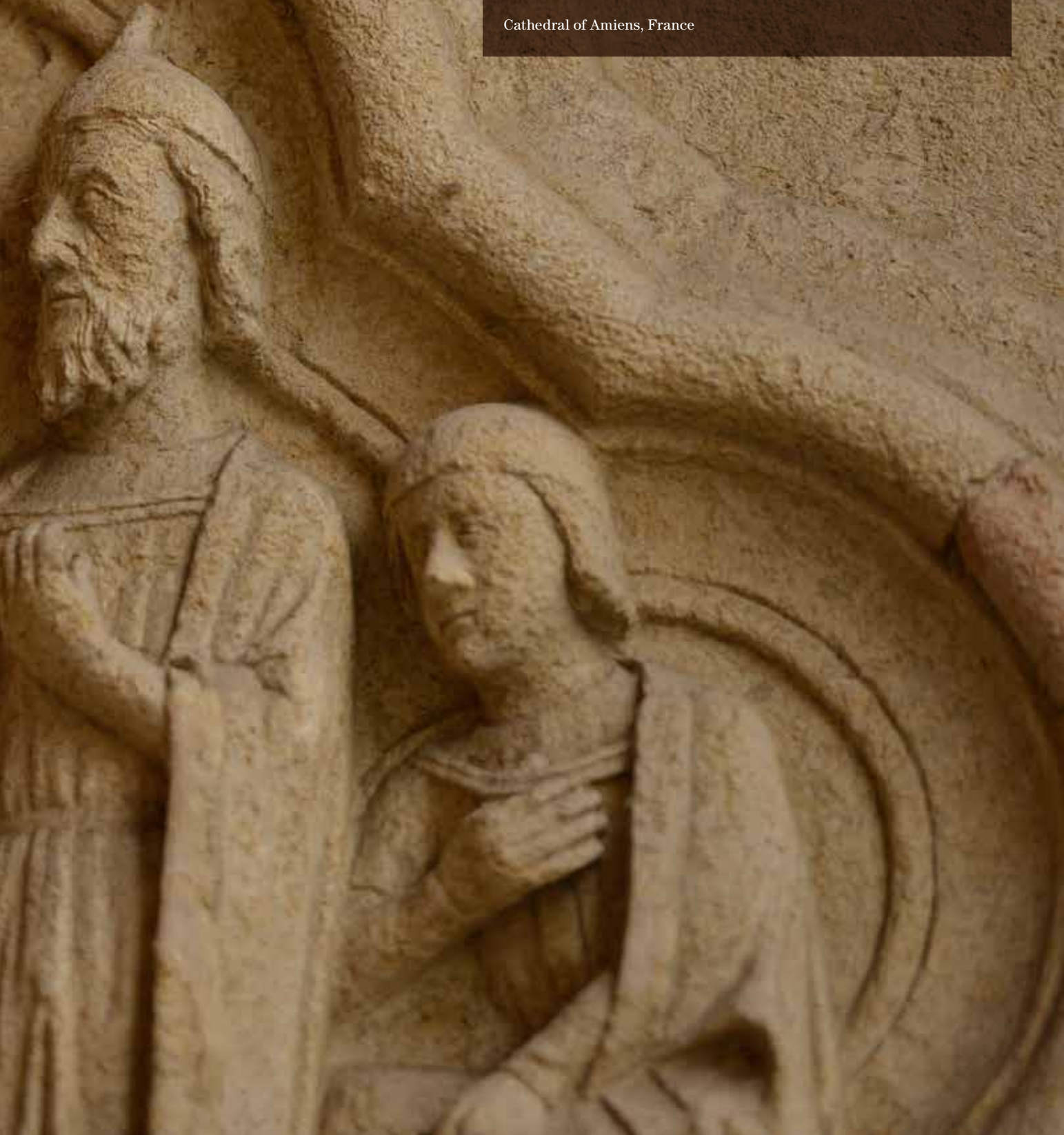
## Audio Set

A Parish Mission for Couples,  
preached by Fr. Ludger Grün at  
Assumption Chapel,  
St. Marys, Kansas.  
March 9-15, 2015.



*Domine non sum dignus*—This prayer is based on two passages from the New Testament. One is Matthew 8:8: “The centurion replied, Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.” The other is found in Mark 7:28. It is a reply from a woman in speaking to Jesus regarding her unworthiness, who said, “but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

Cathedral of Amiens, France



# Mark the Music

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by Fr. Thomas Hufford, SSPX

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In the 1850s, a young cleric from the seminary in Padua formed a schola of little boys, the *Cantores Fanciulli*. That seminarian, Giuseppe Sarto, was passing on to those children the art of chant, a study that he had begun some years before through lessons in his home parish with the curate, Don Pietro.

When Giuseppe was a boy, the two met almost every day during the vacation time. Don Pietro taught him how to listen well, and he cultivated in him a discerning love for sacred music. In time Giuseppe would recognize in sacred music occasions for grace, and the liturgy itself became his chief school of spirituality. He grew to be a man whose heart belonged completely to God, committed to pursuing the common good of the Church.

When Giuseppe became Pope Pius X, this

good shepherd wanted all Catholics to benefit from the grace-filled opportunities of the liturgy, and he intended to obtain this objective in part through education. Our patron's claim regarding the purpose of sacred music reveals also one of the fruits of music education in Catholic schools. Sacred music exists, "so that the faithful through this means may be the more roused to devotion, and better disposed to gather to themselves the fruits of grace." If sacred music fosters in us a disposition for the reception of grace, then music education in Catholic schools fosters a predisposition for it.

A music teacher like Don Pietro hopes that his students will someday be receptive in mind and heart to the graces occasioned by sacred music at Holy Mass, and that they will become men who will serve the common good in the Church, but



his proximate goal is simply that they will love good music. He cannot fail to accomplish this goal if he teaches his young people to listen well.

## Listen Well

St. Thomas's most faithful disciple, Peter of Auvergne, elucidates Aristotle's teaching about music education: Teachers are to train the ears of the young, not by listening exercises alone, but to a great extent through practical work, actually singing and playing musical instruments. To listen well is to bring together the music he hears with some idea or character and thus to interpret the music or even to judge the music as good or bad according to this discerning association. The young people ought to receive musical instruction "up to the point where they can rightly take delight in good melodies and harmonies, and not only in that common music which gives pleasure to vile men and even to beasts."

As the teacher cultivates good listening skills, the beauty of masterworks becomes evident to the young person, and he acquires a love for good music; this is the first fruit of the teacher's labor.

## Dispose the Mind

Pre-conciliar popes claimed that sacred music promotes and defends the Faith. St. Pius X, when he learned from Cardinal Mercier that "the singing of the faithful is spreading in our parishes," replied with satisfaction, "...the surest means of preserving the people from religious indifference is to give them an active part in religious worship." Pope Pius XI directed that priests "should be devoted to the instruction of their people in liturgical music, since this is so closely connected with Christian Doctrine." Pope Pius XII affirmed that for children, hymns "serve as a sort of catechism." For older Catholics, "instructions on sacred music and on sacred liturgy cannot be separated."

It can be said for all of the liturgical symbols and gestures and other signs that they represent some invisible reality to the mind. They are occasions of special graces. St. Thomas has brief

expressions to describe in a general way the spiritual effects signified through the sung parts of the Mass. The Gradual signifies "profectum vitae," or "progress in life"; the Alleuia, "spiritual exultation"; the Tract, "spiritual sighing"; the Offertory, "the joy of those who are offering themselves"; and the Communion antiphon, "the people rejoicing for having received the mysteries." These are special graces that perfect the offering of him who listens well.

Sacred music can convey a particular interpretation of a sacred text through an emphasis of certain words or through a musical illustration of the meaning, or both. Words from the liturgy can sanctify and illuminate the ready mind; a good musical setting draws the mind upward and makes the splendors of their meaning all the more evident. A good education in sacred music provokes an interest and a lively wonder in Catholic truth and beauty, and the contemplation that the sacred music nourishes is a cause of devotion.

The long string of notes found at the end of an alleluia, is called a "jubilus," a joy which words cannot express.

## Move the Heart

Every Catholic educator desires that God will possess the whole heart of the young person. Commenting on a psalm verse that goes, "I will give praise to thee, O Lord, with my whole heart," St. Thomas quotes the prophet Isaias: "...the bed is straitened, so that one must fall out, and a short covering cannot cover both." Here he explains that God "will have the bed of our heart to Himself. He who does not give his whole heart to God, but wants to have something else with Him, loses God. Therefore he who accepts nothing opposed to God, but refers everything unto Him either actually or habitually, is the one who praises God with his whole heart." Where we only reach the memory and understanding of young students, we shouldn't be surprised about some of the crazy things that they do when they become young adults.

A special purpose of sacred music is to reach >

# Christian Culture

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the heart and to provoke our devotion when we praise God. So important is the musical element in producing this effect, that St. Thomas defends the use of sacred music in divine worship, even in the event that the words are not understood. If the one who hears the sacred music cannot understand the words, but knows that they are sung for the praise of God, the music stirs the affections to support his devotion, and this is a sufficient cause for the use of music in Church.

The love of good sacred music not only serves our devotion, but it can be a refuge from evil, for the soul is drawn to things for which it has affection. When St. Thomas prescribes five remedies for bad thoughts, the first one to be taken before all others is that the mind be occupied with prayer. St. Thomas cites St. Paul, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual

canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord,” and he declares that vocal praise in particular is a bridle restraining the soul from the destruction of sin.

## Serve Loyally

Seamen of old knew the value of song for rousing and uniting men in their service of a common good. The sea shanty does not simply coordinate parts mechanically; it animates the society and strengthens the members in their pursuit of a goal. It may be an arduous goal, but through song, its goodness more evidently outweighs the pain involved in attaining it. Indeed, without song, that goodness may not appear to be worth it! Men who fished for menhaden off the Atlantic coast in the 19th century made their own an older saying, “The







spirit will not descend without song.”

What the song achieves for the common good of a ship, music education helps to accomplish for the common good of a civil society. As the shanty buoys the seaman’s will to serve the common good, so all good music directs and cultivates the young person’s inclinations to what is true and good, if he is trained to listen well. Impressions remain long after the external music has ended, and they contribute to a gracious strength of mind, a right attitude that can be called up at will. According to Plato, music education does so much in the way of forming good citizens for the Republic that, in the education of the young, music is sovereign. “Rhythm and harmony most of all insinuate themselves into the inmost part of the soul and most vigorously lay hold of it in bringing grace with them; and they make a man graceful if he is correctly reared, if not, the opposite.” Now Plato’s conception of “grace” is that which makes one well-ordered both in himself and with regard to society; it is the natural graciousness of a man who finds delight in the ready exercise of moral and social virtues for the sake of peace, friendship, and order within a society.

What music education achieves for the common good of a civil society, the education in sacred music accomplishes for the common good of the Church. Pre-conciliar popes wanted this supernatural benefit when they mandated music classes for Catholic schools. Why is instruction in sacred music necessary in primary school, but even more necessary for students in middle school and high school? The reasoning that Pius XII supported with his full authority is that “adolescents must acquire that maturity needed for sound social and religious life.” The music teacher in a Catholic school prepares the young person for the continued education that the liturgy gives to us after lessons in high school have ceased. Thus he assists in the work of training a member of the Mystical Body of Christ to make of his life a continuous sacrifice of praise in Christ and in union with other Catholics. Thus he assists in preparing him to cheerfully serve the common good in the labors, in the storms, and in the battles endured on St. Peter’s Barque.

## Modernist Craft

“There is head music, there is heart music, and there is foot music,” a Church organist once stated. “I played for the Catholic Church when they sang head music. That is what I prefer. But then they went over to foot music...” Though it has a quick and easy access to the heart, foot music was not considered as an apostolic tool for use in Church until the 60s. Sacred music must correspond to the sanctity of the place and the action that it accompanies. If the traditional sacred music of the Church fails to elevate, what is needed is music education.

Now if that is true, why did Catholic youths of the 60s show such enthusiasm for foot music in Church? Did they not go to Catholic schools? Were they not educated in music and liturgy? Did they not recognize that secular music which can be perfectly good in one context can be iconoclastic at Holy Mass?

With few exceptions, music education in the Catholic schools of the 20th century was not yet what the popes called for. In primary schools, it was getting better and better. Also, skilled clergy and lay people established some choir schools and music festivals for choirs. But Catholic high schools, however renowned they were for excellence in every other area of education, tolerated poor music programs. Monsignor Richard Schuler reported in the Summer 1966 issue of *Sacred Music*, “The high schools... especially the boys’ high schools, have done next to nothing with regard to music, either sacred or secular. Surely here Catholic education can justly be indicted for failure to provide for the student’s musical culture or for his basic musical needs as a member of the Church. In some schools there are glee clubs, but this cannot take the place of a program for the training of all.” Few and far between were educators like Don Pietro. Numerous, however, were priests of new liturgical thought, like the Archabbot Rembert Weakland, who found the Achilles heel of the Catholic educational system and got it beating at student hootenanny Masses already in 1965. Mark the music!

# “I’m Proud of You”

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by SSPX Sisters

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“Stand up straight! Pull up your socks! Stop making so much noise! Stop! You are incorrigible! Come here! Don’t go over there! Don’t touch that! Be careful!” Such a litany of orders repeated all day long is enough to tire even the greatest good will. Doubtless, parents have to warn, correct, and admonish their children. But it is important to encourage them just as much and even more, by knowing how to congratulate them wisely. Which approach will be the more stimulating: “You better watch out if you don’t pass next time!” or, “You really are capable of passing if you put your mind to it; I’m sure I could be pleased with you”?

Optimism is a great quality in an educator. It enables him to see the child’s aptitudes (every child has some), and to hope for his progress despite the difficulties, without becoming

discouraged at the length of the task. It enkindles in the child the self-confidence necessary for any undertaking.

Alan is disorderly, and his room is never clean; dirty socks are lying around in the midst of his Playmobiles. Are we to yell at him that he is disorderly and good for nothing and that we have already told him a hundred times to pick up his things? No, of course not! That would only anchor the idea that he will never change. First we have to set a simple, concrete, and accessible objective for him. Success on this one objective will be an encouragement for him to progress on to something more difficult. “In order to learn to keep your room tidy, you will make the effort of putting your clothes away every evening; it isn’t hard, you are capable of doing it and I will help you to remember.” And for a fairly long period



of time (a month, a trimester...), we help him to make this effort and close our eyes to all the rest that will come all in good time. “Good job, you see you are capable of being orderly, for a whole week now you have remembered to put away your clothes all by yourself without me telling you to; very good. Now that you know how to put your clothes away, you can start doing the same with your books when you’ve finished your homework; Papa will build you a bookshelf so it will be easier.”

Oh, a mother’s smile of encouragement: the wonders it can work! “Mom believes in me, she thinks I can do it, so it must be true; I am not going to let her down.” “Very good, my son, good job, I knew you could do it, keep going.” In such a climate of encouragement and tenderness, children’s souls blossom.

We must encourage the effort without waiting for success, like our Father in Heaven who takes our good will into account despite our failures in the work of our sanctification. Nine-year-old Alice took the initiative of vacuuming all by herself; sure, she forgot to vacuum behind the door and under the furniture, but the essential is that she thought of helping out, and that is what we have to encourage; we will teach her to clean properly all in good time. “Thank you, dear, for helping me with the housework, it is such a big help.”

It is especially important to believe in the child’s capacities if he has a timid, fearful, or lethargic temperament. Such children need to acquire self-confidence little by little through small, easy and repeated victories and much encouragement. If on the other hand they are constantly being corrected and reprimanded, they lose their composure and stop making any efforts, convinced that they are useless.

But there are also those who have vain temperaments, and are easily satisfied with themselves, or rich natures that easily succeed in whatever they undertake. With them, encouragement should be carefully measured, in order not to flatter their pride. Joseph is very good at school and gets good grades without much effort: “Papa, I got an 85 in math!” “Yes, but without even trying; if you had applied yourself, you could have gotten a 100...” For children like this, it is the supernatural intention, the

acquisition of virtues, especially humility, that we must encourage. “Joseph, go learn your lessons.” “I don’t need to; I already know them.” “Well, if you don’t need to work on your homework, could you help your little brother with his? God gave you gifts so that you could help others, not so you could take advantage of them just for yourself.” A system that gives all the children in the family the same exact sum of money for every good grade over 75, while it seems fair, is not always in keeping with justice. It doesn’t take into account



the different teachers’ ways of grading and more importantly the differences between the children: Joseph is brilliant and fills his pockets with money easily, whereas his little brother, who is less gifted even though he really applies himself, earns nothing and could easily become jealous.

Can we give money to children when they succeed, as an encouragement? Rewarding an important effort in this way can be a way of helping them to realize that money does not grow on trees but has to be earned with the sweat of one’s brow. But rewarding them in this way should not be a habit, as it could encourage a tendency to avarice and greed. A child should first make efforts in order to please Jesus and to please his parents. The true reward, the reward that counts, is his parents’ smile.

Let us know how to rejoice with our children at the progress they make and render justice for their efforts, as does our Father in Heaven, who takes into account even a glass of water given in His name.

# Seven Thousand Islands

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Interview with Fr. Peter Fortin, SSPX

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**The Angelus:** Fr. Peter Fortin, you have an older brother already a priest in the Society and working now in Australia. Can you present yourself to your US readers?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** I was ordained last year at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary. After a short time spent in Canada caring for the Ottawa chapel, I was transferred to the Philippines on New Year's Eve. When yet a seminarian, a priest asked me where I saw myself after ordination, and my response was "Southeast Asia". In most of our US SSPX chapels, we have Filipinos who had always struck me as being hard working, generous, and overall happy. They have a deep sense of piety, which is part of belonging to a very Catholic culture. The Faith is very much a part of their daily lives. They keep the old Spanish custom of greeting priests and religious by taking their hand and pressing it to their forehead.

**The Angelus:** Have you traveled much in your new mission area?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** I have also travelled to Malaysia and Saba. But I am based in Manila, and I service the missions of Tanay and Baguio. St. Philomena Chapel in Tanay, Rizal is set in the mountains to the southeast of Manila. It is a very beautiful area that overlooks Laguna Lake, which is set in a volcano crater. I am struck by the generosity and fervor of the faithful, who have almost finished their little chapel.

Baguio is very beautiful as well. Set in the mountains to the north of Manila, it was founded as a resort town by Americans over 100 years ago because it is quite cooler at the higher altitude.

The temperature can drop to about 60 degrees at night. During the Second World War, the Japanese took over the area and captured the US service men and executed them.



There is a great appreciation for the US effort to liberate the Philippines from the occupying Japanese forces. MacArthur and the American servicemen are much appreciated. I remember speaking with one of our US parishioners who had gone to Manila in the 1950s, and he told me to give the country a “hello” from him. He said that in all his travels he has never ran across a more amicable people. It is true, the Filipinos are very friendly and altruistic.

**The Angelus:** What is the Filipino way of life? How does it have an impact on the apostolate?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** We are talking about a third world country. This means that the government and institutions thrive on corruption. Truly, it is not so much what you know, but who you know.

This means also that most people live from hand to mouth with no savings for difficult

times, but it is the norm everywhere, and life goes on. That is why they have a cheerful face and never lose hope. Mind you, The Filipinos are very well connected! There is a strong sense of family and friendship. In the Philippines one is never more than three steps away from someone else in a position to help. For a priest, it a beautiful apostolate to see our parishioners really committed to their faith and to Tradition. It is very edifying to see the sacrifices that many make.

**The Angelus:** You are now pretty much settled in your “mission” country. What was your first impression of the surroundings?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** I would not qualify the Philippines as a “mission” country, since it was brought to the Faith in the 16th century. With a population that is 80% Catholic, it is the only >

# Christian Culture

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Catholic country in East Asia. Despite highly corrupt politicians, the laws in this country are very Catholic, particularly against contraception and abortion, although the sects are also in progress here like everywhere else.

**The Angelus:** What about the priory setting and your confreres?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** The priory setting is in a pleasant neighborhood of the greater metro Manila area, which counts close to 27 million people. It presents the picture of every large city: dangerous areas, noise, traffic congestion, and pollution. The one unique aspect is that there are many people, lots of people, everywhere! It is crowded everywhere. The sidewalks, streets, public transit, markets, stores, and shops are packed! The priory likewise is busy servicing a large parish and several chapels throughout East Asia.

**The Angelus:** How does an American priest fare with foreign confreres?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** If one is in a good community, then he has everything, even if some things are lacking, such as American company. Likewise, if there is no good community spirit, life becomes burdensome. Fr. Onoda, the only SSPX Japanese priest as yet, is the prior, and was assigned here on a “temporary” basis, which has lasted now 20 years! I think that he is a priest after the heart of the Archbishop. Other confreres are local: Fr. Saa came back home after a long time in Africa and brought a wealth of knowledge and experience. Fr. Gela is the real “missionary priest” who has many missions in the eastern Visayas region, where the typhoons have hit the islands in the last two years.

**The Angelus:** How indebted are you to the pioneers who sowed the seeds before you in the mission field?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** The real pioneers were the Spanish missionaries, Jesuits, Augustinians, Dominicans, and Franciscans who, through the intercession of Our Lady, were able to take a



pagan land and turn it into a Catholic civilization not unlike that of Mexico. The Archipelago was under the viceroyalty of Mexico for a long time.

In every country where the Society has mass centers there are or have been courageous priests who have fought for Tradition. The Philippines has had their share of a few friendly priests but, they can also pride themselves of a bishop, Bishop Salvador Lazo (+2001). He visited the US in the mid-90s and told his story. His body lies in Our Lady of Victories Church. He exerted a wide influence on the faithful and we still see the fruits of his return to Tradition today.

**The Angelus:** What would you say defines the Catholicity of the Filipinos?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** As in Mexico, there is a deep sense of piety, and devotion to Our Lady is most important to the peoples and has played great roles in their lives. It was through the intercession of Our Lady that Manila was spared from being taken by the Dutch Protestants. The bishop, seeing the immediate danger, asked that

all recite the rosary to be delivered from this danger.

In Mexico and in the Philippines, the Church was suppressed by the government. In the Philippines, the faithful kept the faith without having priests by their devotion to Our Lady, by praying the rosary. Indeed, to be Catholic means to pray the rosary, to belong to Our Lady.

**The Angelus:** Would you share any edifying anecdotes about your apostolate?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** Recently a group of our children in the Philippines learned of a public meeting of a Protestant sect. This Protestant sect had paid a sum of money in order to rent a facility for this event. The children learned of it through the advertisements of the Protestants. They arrived before the meeting and knelt down and began to pray the rosary. The Protestants came and asked them to stop but the children kept praying. They prayed the rosary for about three long hours undisturbed. The Protestants left; there was nothing that they could do. >

# Christian Culture

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Also recently, I administered the sacrament of extreme unction to one of the earlier traditional faithful. I went to bring her Holy Communion several times in the hospital. One time, I had a bad cough, her face lit up and she asked if I would like one of her huge oxygen tanks. We both started to laugh. On the day of her death she received the consolation of the sacraments and she died while the monthly requiem Mass was offered for friends and benefactors.

**The Angelus:** I understand you are at the helm of a school. What are the projections for the school in the years to come?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** The school is a wonderful little school with a family-like atmosphere that exists between the staff, students, and parents. Each successive priest has been able to build upon his predecessor.

I picked up the rudder from my elder brother, Fr. Michael Fortin. In fact, he was transferred to Tynong in Australia, to run a much larger school. I told him that he could probably ride on the torrent of tears shed because of his departure

from here. Thank God, the acorn has grown, and we are proud to announce that we have all the grades available from K-12. We are blessed to have a wonderful faculty. They are very dedicated to our mission of providing the children with a traditional Catholic formation.

**The Angelus:** Has the US contributed to the Philippines, besides the sending of priests?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** In fact, quite a few US priests have made their way through these shores: Fr. Griego, Fr. Purdy, Fr. Michael Fortin, and Fr. John Hattrup, to cite just a few. As I mentioned earlier, in many US chapels, we have Southeast Asian faithful who have been very supportive of the priories in this area. Also, on the more mundane side of things, the medical group ACIM has attracted volunteers from all over the world to bring traditional Catholic volunteers to help typhoon victims and to help the people spiritually and physically. And, needless to say, Americans have sent regular contributions to the Philippines.





**The Angelus:** Is it not rather new in the Philippines to have the involvement of mayors and government officials consecrating their country to the Blessed Mother, thanks to the Society's work?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** Indeed, this has been the case on numerous occasions under Fr. Couture in particular. Now, with the new Asian District Superior, Fr. Stehlin, the confraternity of the "Knights of the Immaculata" has really taken off. The date of 2017 has significance for us as Catholics, for it marks 100 years since the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima to counteract the rise of Communism in 1917.

Our Lady asked for the conversion of Russia and promised that Her Immaculate Heart will triumph. The "Knights of the Immaculata" are an elite group of soldiers who pray for the conversion of their neighbors and offer sacrifices for them. In the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe, we are poor instruments in the hands of Our Lady. She will triumph, and will it be with us as her instruments? It will be through her, the triumph of the Immaculate Heart, that Our Lord will once

again rule in society. Will we be instruments in the hastening of his Kingship?

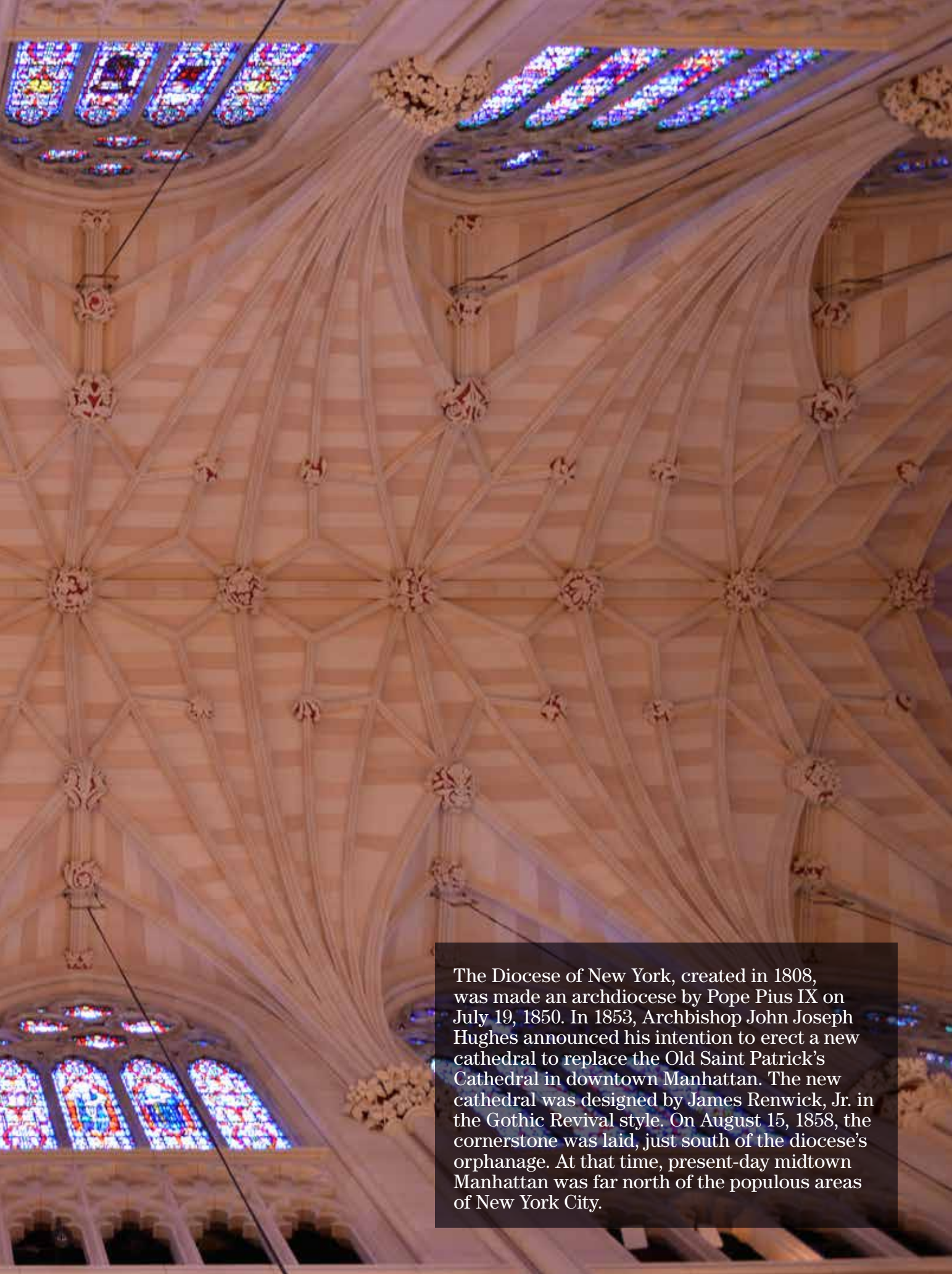
**The Angelus:** Any final thought or wish?

**Fr. Peter Fortin:** Prayers! Especially from those enrolled in the "Knights of the Immaculata." I wish to send greetings to my fellow graduate priests, whom I have not seen since our ordination day. You may also think of sending us devotional books, lives of saints for adults and children, missals for faithful, Bibles either new or slightly used. And many would like their child to receive a traditional Catholic formation in our schools but cannot afford it.

P.S. To make donations from the US to the missions: send checks to the US District payable to

"Society St. Pius X Foreign Mission Trust-Asia" sent to: 11485 N Farley Rd—Platte City MO 64079 (with the special memo Manila Priory).



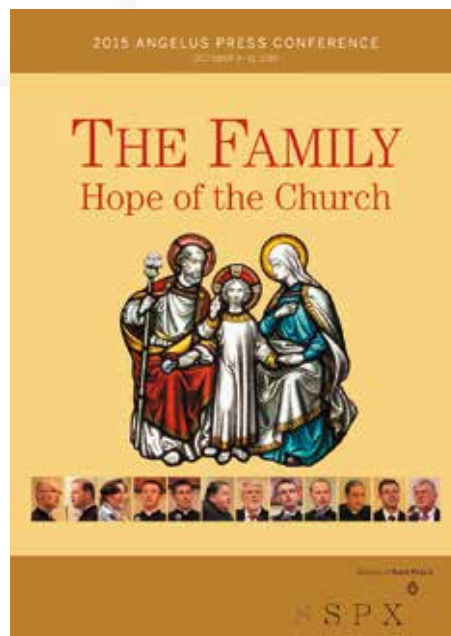


The Diocese of New York, created in 1808, was made an archdiocese by Pope Pius IX on July 19, 1850. In 1853, Archbishop John Joseph Hughes announced his intention to erect a new cathedral to replace the Old Saint Patrick's Cathedral in downtown Manhattan. The new cathedral was designed by James Renwick, Jr. in the Gothic Revival style. On August 15, 1858, the cornerstone was laid, just south of the diocese's orphanage. At that time, present-day midtown Manhattan was far north of the populous areas of New York City.

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# Q & A

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by SSPX priests

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## Is lying ever lawful?

There is little doubt that lying is forbidden by God's law (8th Commandment) and that being a negative commandment (*Thou shalt not lie.*), it obliges always and in every case, unlike a positive commandment (*Thou shalt honor father and mother.*), which obliges only when needed.

This absolute necessity was dramatically shown by Our Lord before Caiphas and the whole Sanhedrin when He answered clearly, "Yes, you have said it," meaning: "I am Christ and the Son

of God." And Our Lord knew full well that his confession would lead to the crucifixion. So, the principle stands that "we must not do evil that some good may come from it" (Rom. 3:8).

This being said, one has no obligation to tell the truth when it is uncalled for. Also, one is entitled to distract the hearers to some other issue. The moralists allow the use of amphibology (a statement which might be taken in two ways, like: "Peter is not at home," meaning: "to see you") if a prudent person would understand it given the circumstances. Similarly, moralists explain that one cannot simulate an action (a minister >

deceitfully withholds the intention of giving absolution), but one may dissimulate an action to make viewers think one is doing something when one is not. Thus it is lawful for a priest who has duly warned his penitent, to give the impression to others he is giving him absolution.

In some recent newsworthy cases, there is controversy and debate as to whether or not certain investigators lied or simply used amphibology and broad mental restriction, dissimulation rather than simulation. We must not, however, let the apparent success of some videos cloud our judgment. If they were obtained by lying, it would be a case of the end justifying the means. The children of light may not use the means and weapons of the children of darkness. The revolution must be fought by a counter-revolution, and not by the principles of the revolution.



## Who are the full members of the Church?

In Eastern Christianity, Baptism, Chrismation (confirmation) and Holy Communion are received in the same ceremony. Thus, even a child is received into the church as a full communicant within the church. Does this mean that in the West, children only baptized are not full members of the Church?

The question raised here is a simple catechism question, answered in the Baltimore Catechism (#2) in q. 169: "In order that a person be a member of the Mystical Body in the full sense, it is necessary that he be baptized, that he profess the Catholic Faith, and that he neither separate himself from the Mystical Body nor be excluded by lawful authority."

In this context, the expression "in the full sense" does not have the modernist connotation

of being "more or less in communion with the Church," but it is excepting the excommunicated who, though baptized and professing the faith, have been excommunicated.

To lose membership in the church, one baptized would have to be either a heretic or apostate, a schismatic or excommunicated. Hence, children only baptized, whether or not they communicate, are full members without any greater or lesser degree.



## Do little children need to receive Communion?

What obligation is there to receive Holy Communion based on the words of Christ: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you"?

It would seem at first sight that infant children should not only conveniently but necessarily receive holy communion at the same time as baptism. This custom has been preserved in the Eastern churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike.

However, it does not follow that little children have a strict necessity to receive Communion. St. Augustine already in the early 5th century explained that "*Nor are you to suppose that children cannot possess life, who are deprived of the body and blood of Christ.*" The Council of Trent condemned those who spoke of necessity, in Can. 4: 'If anyone say that the Holy Communion is necessary for the children before they reach the age of discretion, let him be anathema' (Dz. 937).

St. Thomas Aquinas explains this doctrine of the Church doctrine in his treatise on the Holy Eucharist in two different articles. Speaking of the need of the sacrament (Third Part, q. 73, art. 3), he explains that it is necessary to receive it with an implicit wish. By this he means meaning



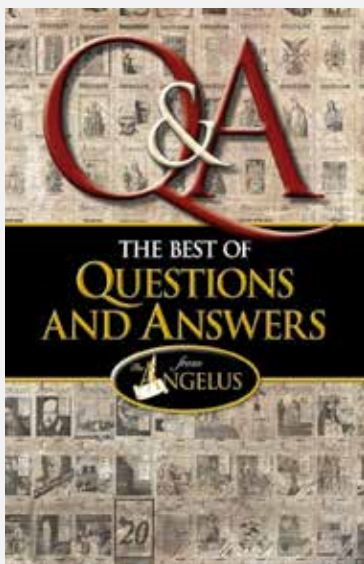
that it is necessary for salvation to begin our spiritual life through Baptism, which tends to its consummation, and is obtained through Holy Communion.

St. Thomas explains in another article (Third Part, q. 80, art. 9) that Holy Communion should be denied to those who never had the use of reason because it was never preceded by any devotion for this sacrament.

Hence, the rule of the Roman Church given in Canon 854 (CIC 1917): “The Holy Eucharist must not be administered to those children who, due to their lack of age, have not acquired the

knowledge and taste of this sacrament. In peril of death, in order for children to be allowed and commanded to receive Holy Communion, it is sufficient that they know how to discern the Body of Christ from common food and adore Him reverently. Outside the peril of death, a fuller knowledge of the Christian doctrine and more accurate preparation is rightly required, by which, according to their means, they can perceive the mysteries of the faith necessary by necessity of means, and by which they can approach devoutly the blessed Eucharist, according to their age.”

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The Marian Apparitions at Lourdes were reported in 1858 by Saint Bernadette Soubirous, the 14-year-old miller's daughter from the town of Lourdes in southern France.

From February 11 to July 16, 1858, Bernadette reported 18 apparitions of "a Lady." She described the lady as wearing a white veil and a blue girdle; she had a golden rose on each foot and held a rosary of pearls. Despite initial skepticism, these apparitions were eventually declared to be worthy of belief after a canonical investigation, and the apparition is known as Our Lady of Lourdes.





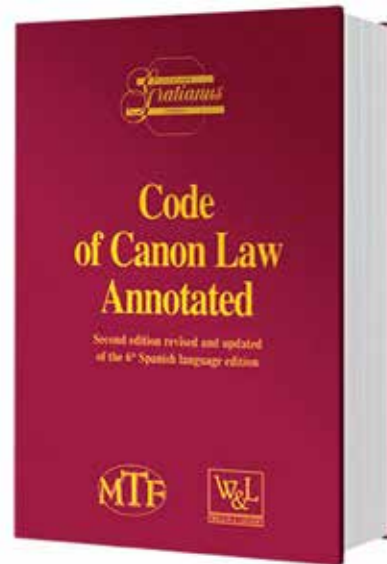


### Pope Francis and the Marriage Annulment Process

On September 8, 2015, Pope Francis issued two *Motu Proprio* (a form of papal instruction given on the pope's own initiative) completely revamping the current process for obtaining a marriage annulment in the Church. The Church, abiding by our Lord's own explicit teaching, has always taught that a valid, sacramental marriage is indissoluble and remains so except by the death of one of the spouses. An annulment is an official declaration by the Church, after an exhaustive judicial process involving sworn testimony and witnesses, that a marriage never existed in the first place for some clearly evident reason. Prior to the promulgation of the revised Code of Canon Law in 1983, the grounds for opening an annulment case were very specific. The 1983 Code broadened the possible grounds to include "psychological immaturity," which quickly became the floodgate through which many annulment cases flowed. The number of annulments in the United States skyrocketed and the vast majority were granted on the grounds of psychological immaturity. This high number of annulments caused the Holy See to revise the annulment process to include an automatic appeal of a nullity verdict to another marriage tribunal, among other items.

The two new documents (*Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* and *Mitis et misericors Iesus*) issued by Pope Francis have effectively done away with much of the judicial process by decreeing that a marriage tribunal must issue a decision regarding a nullity case within 30 days of receiving it. Needless to say, this will make the gathering of evidence and obtaining the sworn testimony of witnesses almost impossible. In speaking of the new process instituted by the pope, Msgr. Pio Vito Pinto, who is currently dean of the Roman Rota (the court responsible for deciding nullity cases appealed to Rome), said the following in an article in the *L'Osservatore Romano*: "So, with this fundamental law, Francis makes a real beginning to his reform: by putting the poor at the center, that is, the divorced and remarried, considered set apart and distant, and asking bishops for a true and proper metanoia. That is to say, a 'conversion,' a change of

mentality which convinces and sustains them in following the invitation of Christ, present in their brother, the Bishop of Rome, to pass from the restricted number of a few thousand annulments to that immeasurable [number] of unfortunates who might have a declaration of nullity—because of evident absence of faith as a bridge to knowledge and thus to the free will [necessary] to give sacramental consent—but are left on the outside by the current system."



These two documents have led a number of bishops and prominent Catholic laymen to state emphatically that there is now, effectively, Catholic "divorce" and that the teaching of our Lord on the indissolubility of marriage is being ignored. Professor Roberto de Mattei made this observation when writing about the situation: "The theoretical affirmation of indissolubility of marriage, is accompanied in practice with the right to a declaration of nullity for every failed marriage bond. It will be enough, in conscience, to deem one's own marriage invalid, in order to have it recognized as null by the Church." There is no doubt that the assault on the Sacrament of Matrimony is continuing unabated.



## Conscience Wrongly Understood

In an interview granted while he was in Rome, Archbishop Blasé Cupich of Chicago made the following statement regarding the divorced and civilly remarried and their decision that they should approach the sacrament of the Eucharist: “If people come to a decision in good conscience then our job is to help them move forward and to respect that.



The conscience is inviolable and we have to respect that when they make decisions, and I’ve always done that.”

This astounding statement clearly shows a false understanding of the Church’s teaching on conscience. The Church has always spoken of the inviolability of one’s conscience and the duty everyone has to follow his or her conscience. This being said, St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us that it is quite possible for a person’s conscience to be in error (*i.e.*, erroneous). It is for this reason that we must look to the teachings of the Church to be our guide and not presume that our conscience is correct. Simply put, the role of the bishop or priest is to work to correct anyone who is following an erroneous conscience. Bishops and priests fail in their duty when they confirm individuals in their error by not clearly articulating the objective truth found in the teachings of Sacred Scripture and Holy Tradition.

The implication in the quote from Archbishop Cupich is that whatever a person’s conscience tells them to do is right for them. In other words, what is subtly hidden here is a rejection of objective truth and a reliance on subjectivism, which holds that something is true only if I accept it as such. Quite obviously, such thinking is at odds with the Faith as well as with philosophical thought up through the Enlightenment.

## China’s One Child Policy Ends

Communist China has announced that it will put an end to its one child per couple policy and allow parents to have two children, all in the name of helping to “balance” the population. In recent years, many have called for an end to this policy, which was implemented in 1979, saying that it was ultimately harming the Chinese people by causing an imbalance in the ratio of men to women and by creating an aging population. With this change in policy, China joins a growing number of industrialized nations that have come

to realize that there is no future for any country that has negative population growth. Europe in particular has been seeing its native populations effectively dying out and, as a result, have opened their borders to immigrants in large numbers. While the immigrant peoples have solved the problem of a shrinking work force, they have often brought their own cultural elements which frequently are at odds with the host country’s long established culture.

### Texas and Planned Parenthood Funding

In mid-October, Texas health officials announced that the state would no longer provide Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood clinics throughout the state. This decision was in the wake of undercover videos coming to light which showed Planned Parenthood personnel discussing the sale of body parts and tissue from the victims of abortions performed in their facilities.

The Texas governor, Greg Abbott, ordered an investigation into Planned Parenthood some months ago and the response to the investigation was the cutting off of Medicaid funding for the organization. Governor Abbott issued a statement saying that the decision by Texas health officials “is another step in providing greater access to safe health care for women while protecting our most vulnerable—the unborn.”

The Texas decision follows moves by other states to stop the public funding of Planned Parenthood. Louisiana governor Bobby Jindel is currently involved in a law suit brought by Planned Parenthood after his state ceased funding of the organization. Additionally, in the U.S. House of Representatives there have been calls to stop federal funding for Planned Parenthood in light of the videos. Although there may not be much success in defunding Planned Parenthood, particularly on the national level, the simple fact that it is even being discussed is indeed progress towards closing down the group that is the largest purveyor of death and contraception in our nation.





## Right to Die Legislation

In October, California became the fifth state to approve so-called “Right to Die” legislation. Governor Jerry Brown, who proclaims himself a Catholic, signed the bill which would allow terminally ill patients to end their lives using drugs prescribed by their physicians. The bill was introduced into the legislature after Brittany Maynard, a California woman with terminal brain cancer, moved to Oregon so

has been approached to introduce a change in the current law which would allow assisted suicide. The Catholic bishops of New York have announced that they will make defeating any such bill a priority, and there are other voices of opposition being raised by other groups. One of these groups, the Patients Rights Action Fund, is led by J.J. Hanson, who himself is suffering from the same form of brain cancer as did Brittany



that she could legally commit suicide with her physician’s assistance. The woman ended her life some months ago to the accolades and sympathy of many in the secular media who praised her courage.

As California was legalizing physician assisted suicide, a judge in New York has dismissed a lawsuit brought by three terminally-ill New Yorkers and five physicians who wanted to overturn a law that makes assisted suicide a felony. Judge Joan Kennedy dismissed the suit saying that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the New York state law prohibiting assisted suicide is legal.

Unfortunately, this ruling has not ended the debate in New York. The state legislature

Maynard. Mr. Hanson, who has a wife and a young son stated: “New York is entirely different than California; when New Yorkers fully understand the impact of assisted suicide and what this can do, they may not necessarily look at it in the same light.” He also added, speaking about Maynard, that he “saw it as a bad example for others who had this form of brain cancer.” He said as well that two times his doctors indicated that he did not have long to live, but a third doctor and subsequent surgery has him successfully managing the disease. This is one more reminder that our lives are not our own and that our life or death needs to remain where it belongs: in the hand of God.



# Vatican II and the Jewish Question

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by Fr. Gabriel Billecocq, SSPX

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## I. History of the Schema at Vatican II

### **The Background**

On June 5, 1960, in the motu proprio *Superno Dei Nutu*, John XXIII outlined the organizational structure for the preparation of the Council. In addition to the eleven commissions he instituted, three secretariats saw the light of day, one of which was to promote the unity of Christians. This secretariat was presided by Agostino Cardinal Bea, assisted by Fr. Johannes Willebrands. The first function of the secretariat was to invite non-Catholic Christians to send observers to the Council, and to help them follow and understand the discussions. But in 1962, the secretariat was, by a decision of John XXIII, given the same status as a conciliar commission with the authority to draft texts and present them in the aula.<sup>1</sup>

Considering its name, it might seem strange that this secretariat should be occupied with the Jews. In reality, even before the secretariat was ranked as a commission, Pope John XXIII, at the suggestion of Jules Isaac, had already verbally commanded Cardinal Bea in 1960 to draw up a schema treating of the Jews. That is how the Jewish Question came to be assigned to that secretariat.

### **The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate***

The cardinal met with several leading Jews at the same time that he began to work on the initial draft of a decree. In June 1962, after bitter discussions, a text forty-two lines long was written and then had to be examined by the central preparatory commission. But a leak to the press raised a commotion over the initiative to have Jewish observers at the Council. The news caused a crisis: the Jews were divided, the Arabs saw in it an implicit recognition of



the State of Israel by the Vatican, and the Oriental patriarchs were worried about the consequences for their communities.

So the text was simply withdrawn.

### Looking for Another Context

But Cardinal Bea submitted a request to the pope, arguing that the Jewish issue was exclusively religious and absolutely not political. That is why, in the second session, on November 18, 1963, a fourth chapter treating of the Jews was presented to the Conciliar Fathers in the schema on ecumenism.

Cardinal Gabriel Tappouni, the first to take the floor, insisted upon the danger of speaking about Jews. Cardinal Ernesto Ruffini, like the others, pointed out that if they were to speak about the Jews, it would also be necessary to speak about the other non-Christian religions. During these discussions, they went so far as to propose inserting the chapter on the Jews in the schema on the Church. On November 21, the part pertaining to the Jews was removed from the schema.

At the third session, a new text was distributed to the Conciliar Fathers. Some expressions had been attenuated (in particular, the question of deicide), chapters on the non-Christian religions had been added, and it was supposed to be an appendix to the schema on the Church in order to clearly indicate that it was a question of a religious vision without any political character. Discussed on September 28 and 29, 1964, the text was then amended and separated from the schema on the Church.

### Final Version

Nonetheless, reactions from the Arab countries during the intersession obliged the secretariat to rework the text. Placing greater emphasis on the positive and unifying aspects of these false religions, the paragraph on the Jews became finally the fourth chapter of an independent declaration on the relations of the Church with the non-Christian religions. This text, *Nostra Aetate*, was voted on and promulgated on October 28, 1965.

## II. Towards an Understanding of Judaism and the Jewish People

During the month of October 1961, Pope John XXIII met with a group of American Jews and, alluding to an episode in the Old Testament, said to them: "It's me, Joseph, your brother." It is not uncommon nowadays to hear the expression "our fathers [better yet, perhaps, "elder brothers"?) in the faith" applied to the Jews. What are we to make of it?

### The Jews in the Old Testament

After the fall of our first parents, God foretold a Messiah to come. We recall how carefully God chose Abraham and made of him the father of a great nation (Gen. 12:2) and promised him the land of Canaan for his posterity (Gen. 12:7). Jacob and his twelve sons constituted the chosen people.

But this people had a theological vocation: to bring forth the Messiah. This was its unique vocation and at the same time a unique vocation in the history of the human race: There is no other people whose finality is essentially supernatural and Messianic. This people as a people is inseparable from its Messianic vocation.

### The Jews and Our Lord

The circumstances of the coming of the Messiah were not unknown to the rulers of the priests. They knew the Scriptures, and particularly the prophecies. In fact, when the Three Kings went to be informed as to the place where the Saviour was to be born, they obtained a clear answer.

It was the high priest's duty to officially recognize the Messiah. The question of Caiaphas is moreover quite explicit: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God" (Mt. 26:63). The Lord's response left no doubt.

It was because He affirmed His divinity and the fulfillment of the prophecies that Jesus Christ was condemned. If the Catechism of the Council of Trent affirms that we have all crucified Our Lord, St. Thomas brings out the theological nuances of this truth: Surely, it was our sins that put Christ to death. But this death came about at the instigation of the Jews, and in particular of the rulers of the priests. That is why the Angelic Doctor affirms that "their ignorance did not excuse them from crime, because >

it was, as it were, affected ignorance. For they saw manifest signs of His Godhead; yet they perverted them out of hatred and envy of Christ; neither would they believe His words, whereby He avowed that He was the Son of God.”<sup>2</sup> A little further he adds: “Affected ignorance does not excuse from guilt, but seems, rather, to aggravate it: for it shows that a man is so strongly attached to sin that he wishes to incur ignorance lest he avoid sinning. The Jews therefore sinned, as crucifiers not only of the Man-Christ, but also as of God<sup>3</sup>.”<sup>4</sup> As Cajetan wrote, they could have known, and they ought to have known.

Our Lord Himself utters these terrible words in their regard: “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin....If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father” (Jn. 15:22, 24).

As for the multitude of the Jews, they did not know the Scriptures and were seduced by the leaders. Their fault is therefore less.

## The Jews in the New Covenant

The death of Our Lord on the Cross marked the end of the Old Covenant: the veil of the temple was rent in two. The Epistle to the Hebrews is quite explicit: “There is indeed a setting aside of the former commandment, because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Heb. 7:18). For it must be understood that the chosen people had not been faithful to its vocation; that is why God reprovved it as a people. Its vocation no longer exists. The Old Alliance having concluded, the Jewish people lost its specificity (the Messianic vocation) and its religion is null and void. It was superseded by Catholicism.

That is why today’s Judaism (under the New Covenant) is necessarily defined as the antithesis of Catholicism. It only exists in opposition to and negation of Catholicism, for it has become empty and purposeless. Judaism is the rejection of the Messiah,<sup>5</sup> of Jesus Christ whom the Jews put to death,<sup>6</sup> and therefore of the Church. By refusing the Messiah and the Church, modern Judaism separates itself from the Judaism of the Old Testament, the vocation of which it repudiated. Judaism therefore refuses itself and denies itself. It is inherent contradiction, perhaps the worst blindness<sup>7</sup> possible.

Catholicism, on the contrary, if it is opposed to

the Judaism of the New Covenant, does not have the same relationship with that of the Old Covenant. The Catholic Church puts an end to Old Testament Judaism, but it assumes it by perfecting it. There is a certain continuation from one to the other with completion (in every sense) of what had only been imperfect.

One may say by way of comparison that Catholicism is to the Judaism of the Old Testament what the butterfly is to the chrysalis: a perfection of life, whereas the chrysalis is henceforth a dead work.

Contrariwise, modern Judaism is not and cannot be the continuation of the religion of the Old Testament: it is even its negation, since it pretends to keep alive that which is nothing more than a past shell, exterior and dead, of the true religion. That is why modern Judaism is death-dealing in every sense and is opposed both to Catholicism and to ancient Judaism.

If, then, we can speak of “our fathers in the faith” among Jews, it is uniquely in reference to the saints of the Old Testament. But in no case can contemporary Jews be spoken of as fathers [or “elder brothers”] in the faith in regard to the same saints, for they have rejected their vocation. It is a lamentable fraud. Consequently, Abraham not being their father in the faith, they are not and cannot be our brothers in the faith. Unless they convert purely and simply to Catholicism...

“So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free” (Gal. 4:31).

## Conclusion

The decree *Nostra Aetate*, drafted in collaboration with Jews, notably Jules Isaac, is absolutely revolutionary: it calls into question all of the theological conclusions on the subject, introduces confusion in the relations between the Church and Judaism, going so far as to put the latter in a position of honor. The visits of the recent popes to synagogues have added unprecedented, ignoble scandals to the theological errors—a manner of denying the work of Our Lord.





### III. Analysis

The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, is the shortest of all the Council documents. Comprising five sections, the first announces the purpose of the document. The second treats of several non-Christian religions, while the third and fourth speak specifically about the Muslim and Jewish religions. Finally, the text concludes with a few lines that can be summed up by an editorial heading: Universal Brotherhood Excluding All Discrimination.

#### The Preamble

The document clearly states that the Council “is giving deeper study to her relationship with non-Christian religions.” She does so in order to fulfill “her task of fostering unity and love among men, and even among nations.” This is an aim that appears noble. But what unity is meant? What sort of love do they intend to foster?

Unity is forged around a common truth or a common action. In short, there must be a point in common in order to achieve this unity. The document makes the observation that all men have the same origin and the same destiny and that they ask themselves the same questions regarding the meaning of life. But it goes even further, stating that all the religions seek to respond to the “profound mysteries of the human condition.” That is why the Declaration seeks to show that there are things in common to all religions, even non-Christian, placing them on an equal footing and in the same stroke erasing their differences...

#### Frightful Confusion

The next three sections review the non-Christian religions, Islam, and Judaism. The Declaration honors them by noticing the “profound religious sense” (§2) they instill in the lives of their adherents. Hinduism expresses it “through an unspent fruitfulness of myths” in order to release men from the anguish of our condition. Buddhism helps men “attain supreme enlightenment.” The Muslims “adore one God living and enduring,” “honor Mary, [Christ’s] virgin mother.” The Jews by their origin have “a common patrimony” with the Christians.

Even if the Declaration states that the Church “proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, in whom men find the fullness of religious life” (§2), the words

used regarding the non-Christian religions are so eulogistic (respect, esteem, fraternal dialogue) as to imply that all these religions can lead man to his last end, which is God.<sup>8</sup>

The Declaration brings out better than anywhere else the error underlying the entire Second Vatican Council: a confusion between the natural and the supernatural. For only once is the word grace used at the end of the Declaration, without expressing its absolute necessity for salvation. Either it is possible to be saved without grace, or else grace is so necessary to nature as to be inherent in it and indistinguishable from it. In either case, there is a serious, and condemned, error. But in the Declaration the Council exults in the natural efforts of these religions, which are, whatever happens, incapable of leading man to eternal beatitude. Finally, all religions would lead equally to God, and prayer-meetings of the religions at Assisi (I, II, III, etc.) are merely the concrete application of this teaching.

#### Truth in Crumbs

As a result of this error, and since only points in common are considered, the differences between the non-Christian religions and Catholicism are no longer expressed as errors in relation to truth, but in terms of more or less, as degrees of truth. In other words, rather than saying what the Church has always said, namely that these non-Christian religions are false religions incapable by themselves of leading men to salvation, the Council, by the honor and esteem it lavishes on these religions, recognizes in them pieces of truth rather than errors. That is why the document speaks only of fullness in relation to Jesus Christ and not exclusivity: “Christ, in whom men may find the fullness of religious life.” In this formulation we find what we have said elsewhere about *Lumen Gentium*: the Church of Christ is broader than Catholic Church, and one can find scattered everywhere pieces of truths of a nature to lead to salvation. In the name of this principle, every man can find in himself a truth as a way that leads to salvation. In other words, it amounts to announcing that “by his Incarnation, He, the son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man,” as is taught in John Paul II’s *Redemptor Hominis*. We always find the same confusion between the natural order and the supernatural order.

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## In Search of a Principle

To give “primary consideration to what human beings have in common” in order to foster unity and love is ultimately to seek the principle common to all religions, which might be otherwise expressed as the common denominator. The last section tells us: men form a brotherhood “in the matter of human dignity and the rights which flow from it.” The religions can no longer be opposed to one another: all men are brothers since they are created in God’s image. Dear human nature...Thanks to it, “any discrimination” is rejected.

For the first time a Council decree looks positively on the non-Christian religions and calls for dialogue in order to convert the false images Catholics have about other religions. The religions can then journey together on a common pilgrimage.

So fie on original sin! Fie on redemption! Fie on Church history! “This most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past” (§3). Let’s all shake hands gladly, peace is at hand! After all, for fifty years, we’ve had ample time to savor it...

Translated from *Fideliter*, March-April 2015, pp. 90-96.  
Translated by A. M. Stinnett.

<sup>1</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate, Dignitatis Humanae, and Dei Verbum* in conjunction with the doctrinal commission.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 47, a. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Which is what is properly termed deicide.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 3.

<sup>5</sup> “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

<sup>6</sup> “And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children” (Matt. 27:25).

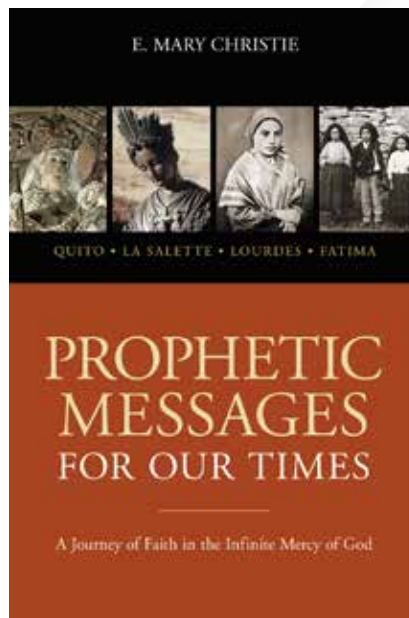
<sup>7</sup> “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (Jn. 1:5).

<sup>8</sup> About the Muslims, Art. 3 states: “Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet.” The grammatical construction of the sentence is interesting: the subordinate clause and the main clause ought to have been reversed for a Catholic worthy of the name.

# Prophetic Messages For Our Times

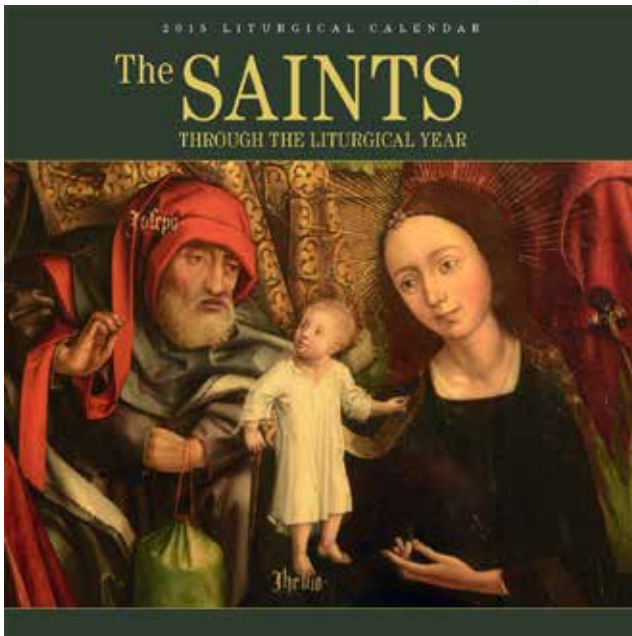
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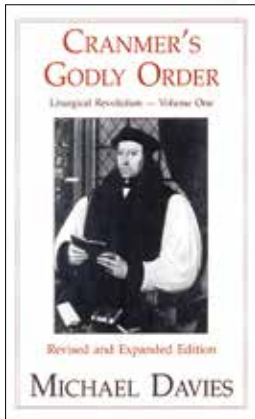


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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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Michael Davies

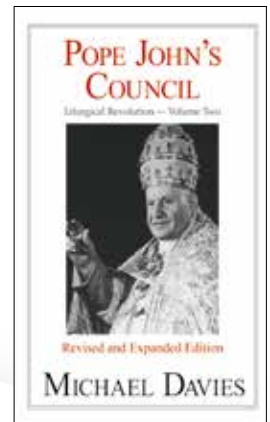
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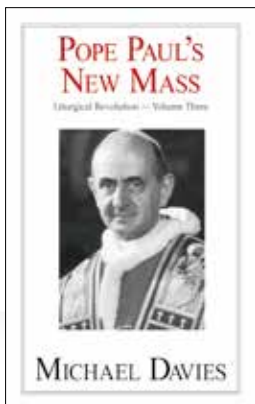
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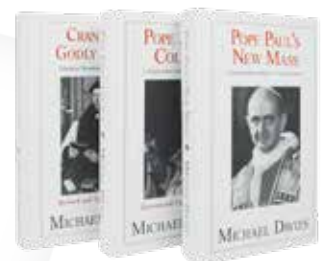
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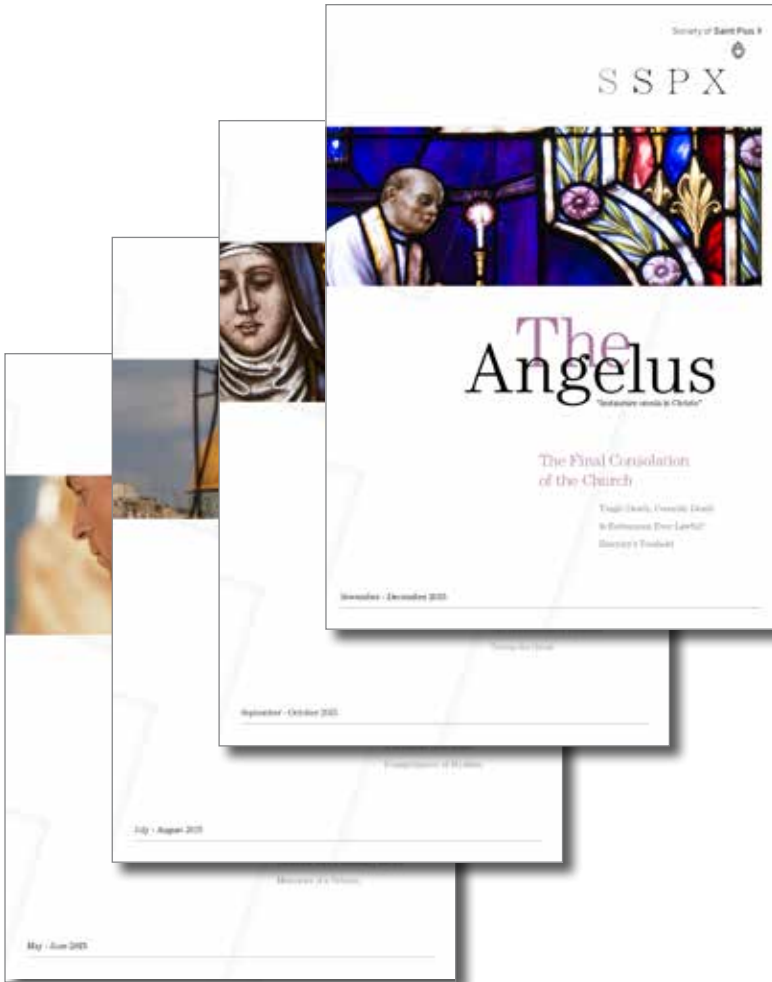
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# The Last Word

Dear Readers,

Curiosity killed the cat...

And unfortunately today it kills many...Cat...holics!

This issue of *The Angelus* has analyzed various harmful consequences of social media. Let me add a last word on what is the vice instrumental to most of these consequences: the vice of curiosity, which St. Thomas (*Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae, q.166) assigns against the virtue of studiousness, a part of the virtue of modesty, which itself is a part of the great virtue of temperance.

"It belongs to temperance to moderate the movement of the appetite, lest it tend excessively to that which is desired naturally. Now just as in respect of his corporeal nature man naturally desires the pleasures of food and of the flesh, so, in respect of his soul, he naturally desires to know something. 'All men have a natural desire for knowledge.' The moderation of this desire pertains to the virtue of studiousness."

When we hear "temperance", we often think first of moderation in bodily matters. Let us not forget that there must be temperance, or moderation in matters pertaining to the soul as well. Humility, for instance moderates the movements of the mind towards some excellence. Studiousness, as said above, moderates the desire to know. To this virtue is opposed the vice of curiosity, which is an immoderate desire to know. "The knowledge of truth, strictly speaking, is good, but it may be evil by accident" teaches St. Thomas, and he gives a lists of how this can happen:

- by taking pride in knowing the truth, according to I Cor. 8:1, "Knowledge puffeth up";
- if we use the knowledge of truth in order to sin, such as for lust or detraction (e.g., malicious blogs..);
- if the pursuit of knowledge distracts us from or harms our duty of state (e.g., business, housework, studies, prayers);
- if there is superstition mixed with it (e.g., fortune tellers);
- if the knowledge turns us away from our last end, "by empty and perishable curiosity";
- if it is something above the capacity of our intelligence.

Another part of this virtue of moderation is called *eutrapelia*, that is the moderation of pleasures in games (cf. *Summa Theologica*, 2a2ae, q.160, a.2). Obviously here too the cyber-world with its games causes incredible damage.

I would dare suggest that just as we need a driver's license to drive a car safely on public roads, so there should be a 'cyber-licence' for those using the internet, issued only to those who have proven excellence in the practice of virtue, especially that of prudence and temperance!

Go and do likewise!

Fr. Daniel Couture

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