



S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

The Synod and the Family

Marriage and Family

Ideology at Work

Synodal Results



Let it be as well a crusade for Christian families. Let Our Lord truly reign in your homes! Cast away, I beg of you, anything which impedes children from entering your family. Everywhere the large family was the joy and prosperity of the Church. There are that many more chosen souls for heaven! Therefore, do not listen to these abominable slogans which destroy the family, which ruin health, which ruin the household, and provoke divorce. (Archbishop Lefebvre, Jubilee Sermon)



Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Certainly the year 2015 will go down in history as the year which delivered a major assault on the family. Earlier in the year, 2015 saw the adoption of “gay marriage” as a constitutional right in many “civilized” nations, on the dubious basis of non-discrimination. At the close of 2015, we saw within the Church cardinal fighting cardinal over the sanctity of marriage.

The 2015 Synod of bishops looked at the practical problems of the family in our times and tried to offer human solutions. Its solutions begin with a naturalistic and materialistic approach, abandoning the God-given higher view of man, and end with the destruction of man. In the past, the Church had always begun with the higher view of man, in order to lift him up to his dignity as a child of God.

In addition to an analysis and refutation of the highly polemical issues of the past synod, we must in all necessity return to the pure source of the Church’s teaching on marriage and family challenges. This issue of *The Angelus* will give us an interesting insight into the preparatory conciliar schema which, unfortunately, was not adopted at Vatican II. You will also find within this issue the call of Archbishop Lefebvre for a crusade which urged the young adults of 40 years ago to form Catholic families, open to life and open to God and vocations, as they had always been in previous times in the Church.

History and personal experience, examples drawn from the Holy Family, the position of the family unit within society: such are some of the pieces of the puzzle—or rather the mosaic—which compose this present issue.

The aim of these pieces is to give all readers a more coherent understanding of what God had in mind when he created our first parents, and how, by raising their children, married couples can achieve that Christian perfection of intimate union with God. No marriage is perfect, and no family will ever be the carbon copy of the Holy Family of Nazareth. But God can never lead us into evil and, by our being faithful to His word, along with our bearing the inevitable tears and crosses, we will receive the blessings and joys He grants to those faithful to His law.

It has been said that this age is not made for the weak, but for souls who are ready to make the sacrifices necessary for bringing order to their lives, for bringing God into their families, and for raising dedicated children to serve Him best. May this magazine help guide parents and all educators to the long-lasting pillars of Christian family life.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
Publisher

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Marriage and Family

Extracts from the Preparatory Schema to Vatican II

For over two years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, 72 preparatory schemas were drafted, covering everything from religious life, through the modern world, to Sacred Scripture. Archbishop Lefebvre, who worked on them, testified to the fact that they all reflected traditional Catholic doctrine. Sadly, however, the entire body of work was dismissed at the First Session of the Council. Here are presented extracts from the second part of the schema, the full version of the first chapter, and only the errors touching on the other chapters.

Divinely Established Order

The Origin, Nature, and Dignity of Marriage

God provided for the multiplication of the human race by instituting marriage (see Gen. 1:28; 2:18-24; Mt. 19:4). By its origin, purpose, and function, therefore, marriage is of its nature good and holy. Indeed for the baptized it is a Sacrament, a dignity to which Christ elevated it. The Sacred Synod teaches that this sacrament is constituted between Christians by the very fact

that two baptized persons, a man and a woman, legitimately join themselves by one and the same mutual and valid consent in a true marriage. By the very will of God the Father and of Jesus Christ, therefore, such a human consent, even in a Christian marriage, is so essential that without it there is no Sacrament; it is so personal that it cannot be supplied by any other consent or human power; it is so one and indivisible that



between the baptized there can be no true and valid marriage without it being by that very fact a Sacrament. By this sacramental character, the dignity, nobility and splendor of Christian spouses is so great that they themselves not only represent the most pure and most fruitful union of Christ with the Church (see Eph. 5:32-33), but they themselves, in the person of Christ and the Church, are made the ministers of this Sacrament through a valid consent mutually manifested and accepted externally in the rite, and by this consent they constitute the sign by which grace is conferred on those who place no obstacle in its way. As the Council of Trent teaches, by the grace which Christ himself merited for us by his passion, natural love is perfected, the indissoluble unity is confirmed, and the spouses are sanctified. And thus in truth the spouses in their own state can and should be a symbol of the grace and love of the Savior.

The Properties of Marriage

Although, considered in itself, Christian marriage does not constitute a state of evangelical perfection, nonetheless according to Christ's laws, it also requires its own perfection. In the first place, the reigning divine order with regard to the properties, purposes, and goods of marriage must be preserved even if this may require heroic acts. Restoring what had fallen, Christ established that not only Christian marriage but marriage for all be permanently one and, further, so indissoluble that it can never be dissolved by the will of the parties or indeed by any merely human authority. Unity and indissolubility, therefore, are such intrinsic and essential properties of any marriage that they are not even subject to the contrary will of the contracting parties and therefore must be necessarily and perpetually accepted by anyone who wishes to contract a true marriage. Human beings lack any power in this matter, and, therefore, anything proposed or done by them against the unity and indissolubility of marriage, neither responds to the demands of nature or the good of society nor belongs to the progress of human culture, but rather is to be considered an act of no value, which reveals the most wretched moral regression of man the sinner from original

justice. For what offends the divine order can in no way profit the individual, the family, or civil society.

The Ends of Marriage

Of itself, furthermore, and independently of the intentions of the contracting parties, marriage has its own divinely established objective ends. Among these, if careful consideration is given to the divine institution of marriage itself and to nature itself as well as to the magisterium of the Church, the primary end of marriage is only the procreation and education of children, even if a particular marriage is not fruitful. By pursuing this end, man, by the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood, cooperates with God, creator and sanctifier of souls, in the propagation and sanctification of the human race. For this reason, the procreation of children, although it is not the object of the marriage consent, is nonetheless of itself so connatural to every marriage, indeed in this sense is essential, that in every valid consent a perpetual and exclusive right to acts of themselves naturally apt for the generation of children is included as the proper object to be handed over; in fact it is so primary and predominant that it does not depend on any other intended ends, even ones indicated by nature, and indeed it cannot be equated or confused with them. The other objective ends of marriage, which arise from the nature of marriage itself but are secondary, are the mutual help and solace of the spouses in the communion of domestic life and what is called the remedy for concupiscence. For in a marriage concupiscence is correctly directed by conjugal fidelity, and therefore, subject to reason, serves chastity and is ennobled by it. Rightly understood, these ends establish rights, although subordinate ones, in a marriage, and therefore, although secondary in themselves, they are not to be despised or thought little of, but are to be promoted in the required way by true charity.

While the procreation of children is legitimately obtained only in a marriage, concupiscence can also by the help of divine grace be conquered outside of marriage. Insofar, however, as the mutual assistance and remedy for concupiscence are to be attained in marriage >

itself, they participate in the specific nature of the conjugal union and thus differ in kind from any other assistance, even that which comes from a friendship. Other subjective purposes, by which people are not rarely immediately and primarily moved to enter a marriage, do not obstruct a marriage, provided that they do not contradict the ends indicated by nature itself but are subordinated to them.

The faithful should remember that all the ends of marriage, both objective and subjective, even that primary one by which men are associated with God in his creative work, cannot be perfectly attained unless a marriage is informed by true and right conjugal love, which, enriched by supernatural love and the grace of Christ, in Christian marriages, more and more contributes to the attainment of the ends.

The Power of the Church

As belonging to the divine order, marriage was entrusted by Christ, not to individuals, but to the Church that it might preserve, explain, and determine the doctrine and norms by which it is governed. The Church must exercise this power not only for the good of souls but also for the benefit of the Christian faith and the growth of the Mystical Body. For this reason, Christ, who wished the Church to defend to the utmost the indissolubility which He restored to marriage, also gave it the power, within limits and conditions established by divine law, to dissolve the bond of all other marriages, both natural and sacramental, always excepting, however, a marriage consummated after the baptism of both parties.

The Competence of Civil Authority

Without doubt, legitimate civil authority enjoys competence with regard to the merely civil effects of marriage, even of the baptized, in accord with the norm of natural law and the right requirements of the common good. In virtue of its own law, it also enjoys the power, on its part and in its own field, to state, apply, and urge the marital requirements of the natural law. But it enjoys no power with regard either to the dissolution of the bond of any validly entered marriage, or to the sacramental character of Christian marriage, or to other goods divinely

linked with marriage, or to impediments established by the Church, or to judicial judgements passed by the Church. These things, since they belong to God and not to Caesar, are the competence of the Church alone (see Mt. 22:21).

Errors are Repudiated

The Sacred Synod knows how greatly the salvation of the Mystical Body of Christ depends on a right acknowledgment of the divine order with regard to marriage. To defend it, it knows first of all that it is its duty to condemn all the radical errors of those who maintain that marriage in its origin and constitution is some merely social phenomenon in continuous evolution and without any natural or supernatural value, and that it does not come from God and from Christ and is not subject to the power of the Church in the new economy of salvation. Likewise it condemns those errors by which it is held that the marriage of Christians either is not a sacrament or that the sacrament itself is something accessory and separable from the contract itself. It also rejects the view of those who state that the use of marriage is the specific means for attaining that perfection by which man is truly and properly an image of God and the Most Holy Trinity. It severely rejects the errors and theories by which is denied the immutable divine order with regard to the properties and purposes of marriage. And it explicitly confutes as a supreme calumny the statement that the indissolubility of marriage does not come from God but is a cruel invention of the Church, no less cruelly retained. Finally, it rejects the theories by which, in an inversion of the right order of values, the primary purpose of marriage is esteemed less than biological and personal values and conjugal love, in the objective order itself, is proclaimed to be the primary purpose.

Errors on Marriage

Teaching the Rights, Obligations, and Virtues

The Sacred Synod must severely condemn so-called “temporary” or “experimental” or



“companionate” marriages. It also rejects as unworthy of a man and especially of a Christian those instructions by which through various skills a real hedonism in sacred and holy marriage is propagated. It also rejects theories by which a violation of marital fidelity is considered allowed to spouses, either when the mutual love between the couple has failed or when the sexual impulse is falsely thought to be impossible to keep within the limits of monogamous marriage. It is also mistaken to state that civil authority itself never has the power to punish adulterers, and indeed with an equal penalty for both men and women. It also rebukes those who say, and indeed under the pretext of benefitting the Church, that mixed marriages are generally and in themselves to be fostered rather than tolerated. That position is also mistaken which maintains that a marriage can be declared invalid or dissolved solely because of a failure of love. Finally the Sacred Synod most severely condemns so-called “free love,” by which, under a false pretext of constructing a new fraternity and society, sin is committed against the divine order and a lethal wound is inflicted not only on marriage but also on the family and society.

The Divinely Established Order

It is mistaken, therefore, to deny the divine origin of the family and to subvert the order which God set within it or to remove it from the control and influence of the divine order and of the Church. And therefore this Sacred Synod, while it defends the rights of the woman, rejects that evil form of emancipation by which, whether as a daughter or a wife or a mother, her proper nature, function, and role are disfigured by some false view of her equality with the man. Nor does it approve of that way of acting by which some people, indeed civil authority itself, moved by some false exaltation of freedom, either denies or belittles or, what is worse, practically destroys, to the detriment of the family’s good, the natural and distinct qualities of man and woman.

The Care of Children

When weighing demographic questions, it is mistaken and indeed injurious to human and Christian dignity to consider the procreation

of people and their families only in relation to the service of civil society or truly to dishonor them by discussing them as if they were animal species. For this reason, the Sacred Synod, while it most urgently exhorts all to provide as much effective help as possible to families burdened with a number of children, at the same time severely condemns the recommending and the spread of shameful contraceptive means in order to limit children; instead of defending the good of peoples, as is sometimes thought today, they corrupt the whole social order. The Sacred Synod also condemns all theories that in any way deny the rights of the Church and of the family with regard to the education of children, or which assign primary rights in this area to civil authority; and it most seriously condemns those who directly support or formally cooperate in the passage of wicked laws about marriage and the family. As for the education of children, it condemns the views of any moral doctrine which defames the Church as if in its moral education, instead of the law of liberty and love, it exclusively favored a moral education resting only on laws and fear, is negative, and contradicts, as they say, authentic Christian doctrine and method. How false such accusations or malevolent insinuations against the Church are will be clear if it is recalled that the Church in its teaching about Christian education, has always had before her eyes the example of the divine Teacher, who on the one hand entrusted to the Church the new and great commandment of charity, but on the other urged even the negative precepts of the Decalogue (see Mt. 19:18), and indeed urgently proposed His own self-abnegation and cross (see Mt. 16:24). And if the Apostle, led by the divine Spirit, warns all the faithful to work out their salvation in fear and trembling (see Phil. 1:12), those who engage themselves by divine will in the equally onerous and glorious task of Christian education know that those words apply to themselves for two reasons.

Ideology at Work

Synodal Intervention of Anca-Maria Cernea, M.D.

Your Holiness, Synod Fathers, Brothers and Sisters:¹

I represent the Association of Catholic Doctors from Bucharest. I am from the Romanian Greek Catholic Church. My father was a Christian political leader who was imprisoned by the communists. My parents at that time were engaged to be married, but their wedding took place 17 years later because my father was in confinement for 17 years. My mother waited all those years for my father, although she didn't even know if he was still alive. They had been heroically faithful to God and to their engagement.

Their example shows that God's grace can overcome terrible social circumstances and material poverty. We, as Catholic doctors

defending life and family, can see that the crisis in the family is, first of all, a spiritual battle. Material poverty and consumerism are not the primary cause of this crisis.

The primary cause of the sexual and cultural revolution is ideological. Our Lady of Fatima had said that Russia's errors would spread all over the world. These errors commenced in the early 20th century in a violent form, classical Marxism, with the killing of tens of millions. Now this destruction persists mostly by cultural Marxism. There is continuity from Lenin's sexual revolution, through Gramsci and the Frankfurt school, to the current gay-rights and gender ideology.

Classical Marxism pretended to redesign society through violent take-over of property. Now the revolution goes deeper; it pretends



to redefine family, sexual identity, and human nature. This ideology calls itself progressive. But it is nothing else than the ancient offer from the insidious serpent: that man take control, replace God, and arrange salvation here, in this world. It

liberation from sin: salvation. Our Church was suppressed by the soviet occupation. But none of our 12 bishops betrayed their communion with the Holy Father. Our Church survived thanks to our bishops' determination and example in



is an error of religious nature.

The task of the shepherds is to recognize it, and warn the flock against this danger:

“Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The Church's mission is to save souls. Evil, in this world, comes from sin. Not from income disparity or “climate change.” The solution is: evangelization and conversion, not an ever-increasing governmental control. Not a world government. These are nowadays the main agents imposing cultural Marxism on our nations, under the form of population control, reproductive health, gay rights, gender education, and so on.

What the world desperately needs now is not the limitation of freedom but real freedom,

resisting the prisons and the terror. Our bishops asked the community not to follow the world, not to cooperate with the communists!

Now we need Rome to tell the world: “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near”.

Not only us, the Catholic laity, but also many Christian Orthodox are anxiously praying for this Synod. Because, as they say, if the Catholic Church gives in to the spirit of this world, it is going to be very difficult for all the other Christians to resist it.

¹ <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/pt/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/16/0790/01735.html#e>

Synodal Results

by Fr. Daniel Couture, SSPX

After the 2015 Synod, perhaps more than ever in the history of the Church, we have to make an act of blind faith in the promise of indefectibility made to Peter: “The gates of hell will *not* prevail! *Non praevalent!*” The Synod we have just witnessed in the last year brings to our minds the moment Our Blessed Lord expired on the Cross. The disciples present and the holy women must have shaken their heads in disbelief: “No, it is not possible, He cannot die, He who cured so many, He who raised Lazarus from the dead just two weeks ago cannot be dead! It is not possible!” But the reality was there: Our Lord had expired. With the paleness of death, He was slowly stiffening in the rigor mortis as He was laid in the arms of His Sorrowful Mother. “*Dux vitae mortuus*—The Prince of life is dead.”

This is somewhat how we feel after this

document of October 24, 2015 was approved by two-thirds of the Synod Fathers. “No, it is not possible, it cannot go this far! Our Lord cannot allow the enemies of the Church to prevail this far!”

“Her adversaries are become her lords, her enemies are enriched: because the Lord hath spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities: her children are led into captivity: before the face of the oppressor. And from the daughter of Sion all her beauty is departed.” (Lam. 1:5-6)

We are now living what I would call the afternoon of the Good Friday of the Church. This is no longer the abandonment of the disciples of Gethsemane—as we could say was the vote on religious liberty in 1965 where the Pope and 2,308 bishops agreed to abandon Our Lord, to



uncrown Him from the public sphere. Neither are we witnessing the humiliations of Good Friday morning, where the Son of God was put at the same level as a vile murderer—a humiliation we have seen re-enacted in all the meetings of religions organized by the Vatican since the Assisi meeting in 1986. This Synod has gone further still, in the logic of the Council texts and spirit.

“Our fathers have sinned, and are not: and we have borne their iniquities. Servants have ruled over us: there was none to redeem us out of their hand.” (Lam. 5:7-8)

With the final document of this Synod, yet to be approved by Pope Francis—and the *Motu Proprio* of September 8, 2015 simplifying the processes of annulments, (a document which was described as the door to Catholic divorce by some cardinals)—we see the imminent danger that the Holy Father could be:

- Surrendering to local bishops some of his exclusive papal moral authority;
- Allowing them to “discern,” thus to possibly approve, justify, legalize public breaches to the Sixth Commandment (not just for divorce and adultery but also for sins against nature), and consequently to the Ninth, and the Fourth, and the Fifth Commandments as well;
- Replacing the natural law as the source of morality by “the internal forum,” that is, by the sole personal conscience independent of natural law. It no longer needs to be formed, educated by the Church, but is to be judged case by case. Professor de Mattei rightly compares this to the language of *Dignitatis Humanae*, as morality always follows doctrine: “it is not about an ‘affirmative’ right to adultery, but a ‘negative’ right of not being prevented from exercising it” (*Corrispondenza Romana*, Oct. 26).
- Allowing the legalization of Eucharistic sacrileges by allowing the bishops “to discern” if divorcee-remarried, or people living in concubinage, or homosexuals may be allowed to receive holy communion.

We too shake our heads in disbelief, no this is not possible! But the reality of the Final Relation is there, with more than two thirds of the

Synodal Fathers’ approval, and with the personal interventions of the Holy Father in many aspects of the Synod, we can fear the worst.

“Yet the Son of man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?” (Lk. 18:8). Such a question of Our Divine Savior implied that something tragic would happen “on earth” which would shake the faith of a great number of Catholics. Obviously when Our Lord speaks of Faith, He speaks of faith “operating through charity,” or in other words, the theological virtue of faith in someone who is in the state of grace. Let us never forget that when one loses sanctifying grace through a single mortal sin, he loses the theological virtue of charity. And although the habits of hope and faith remain, they become dead, not sufficient for salvation.

The recent Synod—a simple consultative meeting devoid of any authority in the Church—might be a formidable step towards leading people to this loss of live faith.

With all the appalling ignorance of the Faith today, and the lack of clarity in the exposition of the Faith, particularly concerning the infallibility of the Holy Father, with prelates of the Church publicly dissenting with Catholic doctrine and morals, the ordinary Catholic will be led to consider this Synod as the authentic teaching of the Church, especially if, with or without papal approval, local bishops and the Bishops’ Conferences endorse all that is clearly stated and all that is implied in the final text of the Synod.

Nevertheless, *sursum corda!* If Our Lord allowed his dear friend Lazarus to die, it was for a greater good—the glory of his Father—and to test the faith of his friends. There is the reason of our hope.


“Martha therefore said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but now also I know that what things soever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.’ Jesus saith to her, ‘Thy brother shall rise again.’ Martha saith to him, ‘I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, in the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?’ She saith to him, ‘Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ >

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the son of God, that art come into this world.' Jesus saith to her, 'Did not I say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?' (..)

They took therefore the stone away. And Jesus, lifting his eyes upward, said, 'Father, I give thee

thanks that thou hast heard me. And I did know that thou dost always hear me, but for the people that standeth about, have I said it; that they may believe that thou hast sent me.' " (Jn. 11:21-42)

A photograph showing the backs of several men in red and gold vestments, likely a synod, seated in a row. They are wearing red mitres and gold stoles. The scene is set in a formal, possibly ecclesiastical, environment.

With all the appalling ignorance of the Faith today, and the lack of clarity in the exposition of the Faith, particularly concerning the infallibility of the Holy Father, with prelates of the Church publicly dissenting with Catholic doctrine and morals, the ordinary Catholic will be led to consider this Synod as the authentic teaching of the Church



A Season for Everything

The Synod as Optimal Friend and Miserable Foe

by Dr. John Rao

“When springtime comes,” an old friend of mine at graduate school used to say, his face beaming with the widest smile, “young men’s hearts turn to scholarship applications.” He had good reason to be joyful. At that long-distant date, money for further study gushed like oil—although for just as many pointless or even nefarious projects as for positively beneficial ones.

“When storms rage against the Ship of Faith,” much of Church History cries out, “Catholic hearts yearn for ecclesiastical assemblies to meet to quell them.” And that desire has indeed frequently been happily requited. But just as with the cash flowing from scholarly foundations’ faucets, not everything that has poured forth from the gatherings in question—both in terms of teaching as well as pastoral consequences—

has automatically worked out to the benefit of Christ’s cause. For as excellent in theory and as optimal under particular circumstances as ecclesiastical assemblies may be, their outcomes have also often been hideously embarrassing, painfully shameful, and horrifically scandalous. In other words—*corruptio optimi pessima!*

Now “synods” are the kind of meetings we are concerned with here, and, strictly speaking, that term encompasses all church assemblies, ecumenical councils included. Nevertheless, synods, in the sense that preoccupies believing Catholics today, have historically been more local affairs than ecumenical councils, dealing with specific doctrinal and pastoral matters affecting a given regional, national, provincial, metropolitan, or diocesan jurisdiction. Yes, there are examples of still more grand meetings bearing the name >

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of synod. One thinks immediately of the sort of gathering that is the catalyst for this article, or perhaps the various governing bodies of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the “permanent synod” of Constantinople in particular. Still, it is the synod’s less ambitious expression that has been much more common in the West—and, I might add, much more successful.

Synodus Optima

What would one need to do to ensure a truly successful synod, a *synodus optima*? A glance at Church History uncovers three indispensable ingredients, the first of which is a serious and substantive understanding of exactly how to respond to a clearly recognized problem.

Dr. William Marra, my much missed predecessor as chairman of the Roman Forum and one of the first activists in the home schooling movement, used to complain that most of the projects suggested to him by opponents of the official school system indicated a vivid awareness of the clear and present dangers that it represented but a lack of any real idea of what a proper education that could repair the damage being done to children would really involve. Quite frankly, a good number of the justly forgotten synods that I have encountered in the long history of the Church suffered from this flaw compounded—that is to say, that their participants displayed not just intellectual confusion or emptiness, but an utter ignorance of or indifference to the problems that they should have been working to correct.

Still, many of these witless non-events were called in obedience to commands to convene them at determined intervals issued by previous and much more serious synods. Such synods had real Catholic leaders: men who could indeed boast a substantive sense of “what’s what”; men who combined their knowledge of the faith, awareness of threats to its existence, and effective problem-solving skills with possession of the second necessary ingredient for a *synodus optima*: honest to goodness apostolic fervor as their primary stimulus to action.

This ingredient is indispensable because it is

only when such disinterested fervor dominates a synod that any of its otherwise most impeccable teachings or undeniably pragmatic programs can have a truly solid impact. But when that fervor does so rule, the saintly effects emerging therefrom are phenomenal. Holy synods can remove existing tumors from the Mystical Body of Christ and continue to work beneficial effects on the subsequent rote-like gatherings mentioned above—if, that is to say, their less gifted participants prove smart enough simply to reiterate the injunctions of their earlier apostolic betters and keep their unenlightened mouths tightly shut.

Effective Synod

The number of effective gatherings dealing with real problems based on substantive knowledge and backed by a truly apostolic fervor is astonishing. Nearly two centuries of African Synods starting in 220 A.D. did yeoman service on behalf of the truth in that exceedingly turbulent Roman region. Northumbria’s Whitby Synod of 664 brought the rich culture of this British province, fed by both Irish and Benedictine monastic influences, into mainstream contact with the rest of the Roman Church. A so-called Germanic Synod of 742/743 played an integral part in St. Boniface and Chrodegang of Metz’s program for solidifying the Catholicism of the Kingdom of the Franks. There would have been no successful battle against the heresies of Monotheletism and Iconoclasm in the seventh and eighth centuries without those impressive Roman Synods that were often strongly promoted by Greek exiles moved to righteous anger over the Byzantine Caesaropapism with which they were all too familiar. In fact, the whole of the High Middle Ages would have been a fantasy had Pope St. Leo IX (1049-1054) not taken the idea of the synod “on the road” round Europe: to fight many a dramatic local battle against simony and for the restoration of the badly lapsed tradition of clerical celibacy. The same thing would have been true had Pope St. Gregory VII (1073-1085) not used another round of Roman Synods to promote universal



papal jurisdictional power.

These were Catholic Synods at their best: valuable because they brought a greater awareness of all manner of issues concerning orthodoxy, heresy, true Christian moral behavior, and gaps to transformation in Christ in every realm of human activity—to both clergy and laity alike. They accomplished their praiseworthy labor by kneading this manifold awareness deeply into the very base of the Church pyramid, stirring up souls and tapping into talents that might have been sorely neglected by a centralized, “top-level,” purely “universalist” approach towards healing Christian wounds.

Perhaps never was this value more perceived and exploited than in the Counter Reformation era, especially in response to the Council of Trent’s call for annual diocesan synods to be held everywhere throughout the Roman Church. Contemporary success stories regarding the reinvigoration of the life of the clergy and the faithful due to the actions of synod after synod abound—from the Milan of St. Charles Borromeo to Bourbon France to the many areas of Central Europe being won back from an initial flirtation with Protestantism. Christopher F. Black’s *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) is just one of innumerable modern works detailing this extraordinary Counter Reformation use of the synod, strongly backed by papal and episcopal authority, which continued with happy results until the middle of the eighteenth century.

Means to Pervert

Alas, every coin has two sides. When the dominant presence of a truly apostolic spirit was lacking, even the most solid and justifiable of synods could prove to have disappointing or counterproductive consequences. One major example of what can go wrong can be found in the Metropolitan Synod of Embrun, in southeastern France, which was held in 1727. Called at the instigation of Louis XV’s Prime Minister, Cardinal André-Hercule de Fleury, Embrun was meant to help strike a deathblow to the Jansenist inspired “Appellant Crisis.” The

Appellants were a group of bishops, doctors of the Sorbonne, and parish priests who petitioned for a rejection or major revision of the Apostolic Constitution *Unigenitus*, promulgated by Pope Clement XI as part of the ongoing battle against Jansenism in 1713. Eighty-year-old Bishop Jean Soanen of Senez, a suffragan diocese of Embrun, was one of the most virulent initial proponents of the Appellant cause. The Synod in question removed him from his See, sending him to a monastic exile where he remained until his death in 1740.

Whatever the innate justice of the measures taken, much of their effectiveness was badly thwarted by the heavy-handedness of the synodal procedures and the contrast of the manifest (though wrong-headed) selflessness of Soanen with the well known political ambitiousness of the presiding judge, Archbishop and later Cardinal Pierre Guérin de Tencin of Embrun. The “Crime of Embrun” became the stimulus for the creation of a brilliantly effective Jansenist propaganda campaign, orchestrated to a large degree by the weekly clandestine journal, *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*. This popularized the battle of “sincere, holy, and free Catholics”—symbolized by the aged “confessor” Soanen—against the “hypocritical, self-interested, and despotic spirit”—represented by men like de Tencin. But shoring up the fading Jansenist cause was just part of the damage done, as the wretched periodical and its fellow travellers went on to play a major role in the denigration and weakening of all papal, episcopal, and monarchical authority in pre-revolutionary France.

Let us not demonize de Tencin. He seems to have been a rather typical man on the move with all too ordinary human desires for swift promotion that working together with the king’s chief minister might easily satisfy. Nevertheless, mention of his case does segue nicely into a discussion of the third prerequisite for holding a *synodus optima*: the right political and sociological conditions. As far as I am concerned, these were *not* lacking for Embrun, given that Fleury and his sovereign were properly concerned for ridding France of the Jansenist pestilence. Embrun’s problem was simply >

the dubious motivation of its personnel and the character of its proceedings. But the same cannot be said for many another synod's external climate through all the long, long centuries of universal and local Church battling with outside secularizing elements. These have often been so overwhelmingly negative as to counsel against calling any ecclesiastical gathering while they held sway. Such assemblies could not help but be corrupted under them.

Even many a conservative Catholic would not deny that the existing conditions surrounding the Roman Cadaver Synod of 897—domination of the Papacy by competing and blood thirsty local “noble” families—made it highly unlikely that tasteful ecclesiastical actions would emerge from its deliberations. After all, its *raison d'être* and chief action were the trial of the unearthed corpse of the ruling pontiff's predecessor, Formosus, dressed smartly once again in his papal vestments. When Formosus, who obviously could not defend himself, was inevitably found guilty of crimes against God and man, he was stripped of his clothing and three of the rotting fingers of his right hand before eventually being tossed into the Tiber River with weights to drag him to its murky depths. *Corruptio optimi pessima!*

Contemporary Synod

Yet many otherwise astute observers of the contemporary scene still find it difficult to admit that a myriad of external, anti-Catholic, naturalist, and immoral forces so weigh down on every aspect of our lives today that hoping for conclusions of contemporary Roman Synods to be worthy of anything other than being tossed deeper into the Tiber than Formosus' corpse is tantamount to tempting Providence. And that is especially true when pontiffs behind such Synods are eager to demonstrate the “mercy” of the Catholic Church by responding “graciously” to the tug of the ever-tightening secularist leash around their throats. All that such Synods might be good for is the purpose that the Count Cavour, the master liberal manipulator of the Italian *Risorgimento*, understood that modern

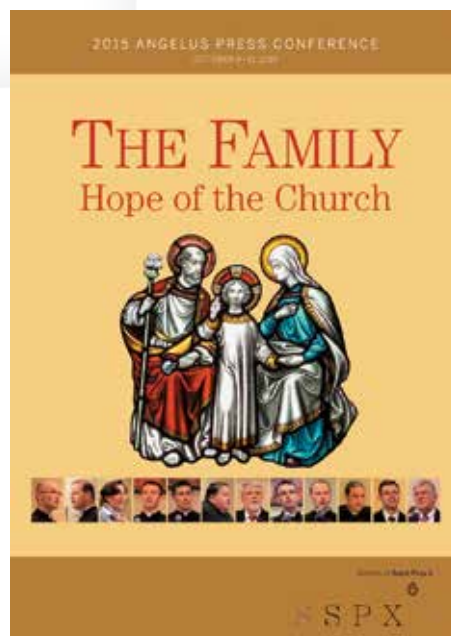
parliaments innately serve: giving a semblance of general support for whatever it is that the powers that be want to have done; in other words, for the more effective perpetrating of a fraud.

“For everything there is a season,” the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us. Given constantly changing political and sociological conditions, the fluctuations of Catholic leadership between apostolic fervor and less exalted motivations, and the highs and lows in human perception, wisdom, and pastoral pragmatism, this judgment holds true for every valid tool at the Church's disposal throughout her history as well. By this, I do not mean to say that synods once had value and no longer do so. I am applying the Ecclesiastes argument with a slight twist. What I wish to indicate is simply that under the three good conditions noted above a synod can be *optima*; when they are lacking, *pessima*—or, perhaps, just witless and best held in winter when the need for large quantities of hot air is at its height.

All of us in the Traditionalist Movement should be aiming at learning from the present nightmare—the worst in Church History—so as to make any future Restoration better than what existed before the debacle began. We shall have learned a highly profitable lesson indeed if we would recognize that popes, bishops, councils, synods, emperors, kings, and laity are all indispensable to the life of the Mystical Body, but can all have their particular “seasons” when they are *best* called upon to bring the Church back to her senses. Even the horror that we call “modernity” may be of value—in God's Providence—as a “season” which we can use for our graduate college education in how to rebuild Christendom. What that might be I am not exactly certain just yet. But I am ready to keep an open mind regarding Church historians a thousand years hence possibly discovering it.

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The Family

Tempering the Political, Intimating the Eternal

by Dr. Michael Berton

No human institution is more primordial than the family. It is the proto-society that has to be presupposed by anyone who would properly understand the political. Those with a propensity to interpret or treat all things in the manner of mathematical or quantitative abstractions tend to consider the family as a simple unit able to be reduced to a mere numbered, mechanical component of the city or state. Plato, in exploring the need for authority and power in the city or political, came close to reducing or equating the family with the city or state. He was nonetheless innocent of advocating a full ideology in which the family might be annihilated at the whim of those with political power who would seek to realize some sort of utopian vision that would eradicate all diversity or difference of orders within the unity of creation, the very ground of

subsidiarity within the political.

Component of the City

Later history, however, would not be lacking persons aspiring to such. They would, if need be, use any means to achieve diabolical visions in which the being of things in their similarities and differences, their very diversity in unity, might be obliterated under the weight of a homogeneous society. And so, at different times and in sundry places, persons have achieved power who sought in various ways to suppress or dispose of the family as a relevant political factor, and thus absorb all power and authority dispersed in the city or state within the bosom of those who govern, particularly in that most



destructive of all centuries, the twentieth. Yet, eventually even the most strident experiments in communistic or socialist governance grudgingly had to acknowledge that such is impossible to accomplish totally.

Interestingly, Plato's greatest student, Aristotle, shifted to a more comprehensive consideration of how the city or state and political was related to the family, perhaps because one of his primary interests was in living things rather than in taking a mathematical approach towards reality. As he realized, in the society established by a man and a woman one can detect various forms of rule or relations between superior and inferior that exist and which are held in tension. Between the father and his children there is a royal rule, while between the father-husband and wife-mother the rule or governance is royal and political, which means not merely one of command but also of mutual deliberation. Spouses, therefore, constitute a relation of rule that is similar to an aristocracy. However, the reason the relation of father and mother to children is royal or benignly king-like is due to the fact that it is only gradually that children come to exercise the power of understanding or reason so that they can deliberate prudently and reflectively choose what is good and true. Until then, they must be directed, enculturated to act in conformity with reason by instilling virtuous habits.

In contrast to the relations that inherently exist between the spouses and the parents and their children, one finds between and among the children themselves tendencies toward the democratic or a rule among equals, and especially among brothers there is at times an inclination towards alternating with each other a role of privilege or honor. Along with such certain children may also, at different times and in distinct intensities, evidence tendencies towards a privileged elitism or oligarchical rule in relation to their siblings. However, it is the business of the parents to temper these legitimate dispositions or inclinations and maintain them in a living tension, for by sustaining a healthy living unity among these bonds one avoids the potential of the family falling into anarchy, an absence of any ruling or guiding principle, or even into

some form of tyranny, in which the entire familial society is subjected to the private whims and passions of one or a few of its members.

Needless to say, Aristotle's insights are profound in many ways. His depiction, although thoroughly philosophical, puts before a Christian philosopher important considerations that can illuminate how the family has been subjected to many vicissitudes in varying times and contexts throughout the history of civilization since it was first constituted in *Genesis* by the Creator. After all, even after the original integrity and order among our human powers and Creation itself were affected by the loss of original justice, the essential nature of the family remained and was to be chosen as the Providential means through which the Promise of Redemption given in the Covenant to Abraham would be intimated and fulfilled. Yet this fulfillment utterly exceeded what had been anticipated by the Jews in the Covenant, just as the Holy Family as vessel of the Incarnation fulfilled the essential nature of matrimony, yet totally exceeded such in terms of fruition and effect.

Intrinsic Ends

For these reasons and more, perhaps this is why in eras that eschew temperance the monogamous family is constantly and insidiously threatened by the promotion of divorce, contraception, and abortion. These respectively compromise, even nullify, the ennobling personal binding promise that confects marriage, the intimate relation of unitive friendship with procreative fruition, and the very effect and sign of fruition manifesting the common good that is one with marital society, the promise of legitimate offspring. And so, even though these aberrations may be purportedly sanctioned by human positive law, they inherently undermine not only the encouragement of virtue, but also, by promoting fictional "rights" unrelated to obligations rooted in the real structure of the human constitution, they ultimately contradict the intrinsic ends or finalities of jurisprudence, which is reason's determination of what is >

Theme Family and Synod

truly right or just.

In this sense, in so far as the family and marriage are not only permitted but encouraged to be according to what they tend to be by their very nature, they are resilient to and even temper any presumption of human lawmakers who aspire to attain unlimited power over things human and divine. This tempering in relation to things political, however, is arguably only sustainable inasmuch as the family incarnates temperance within its own interior social constitution. To diminish the integrity of the family in any way must go hand in hand with seeking unrestrained expansion of power by government, whether such be in the service of lust for empire and power over others or for its corollary of unlimited monetary wealth.

In this broad meaning the term “temperance” refers to moderation common to all the moral virtues, whether such be justice anchored in the will or courage in the emotions or passions related to pain, deprivation, and fear. The permeating of the political order with temperance, thus, presupposes the vigilant inculcation of temperance in the strict sense within families and their members, for the family is, to say the least, the basis of all political existence.

School for Social Virtues

Being the primordial school in which liberty

begins to find its perfecting limits through the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage and temperance, it is obvious that the family implies temperance in the strict or narrow meaning of the term as well. Now, there are certain intellectual virtues or habits that concern our attained knowledge of reality and things, such as the spontaneous understanding of principles, the habits involved in demonstrative knowledges or sciences, and the habitual possession of wisdom or comprehending things in light of all contributing causes, especially those most profound. One of the cardinal virtues, prudence, also concerns intellect, but as turned towards action. Another virtue, that of art or making, also concerns the use of intelligence in the activity of producing that which an artist or maker conceives as capable of being brought to exist.

First of all, a person may possess the intellectual virtues of understanding of speculative principles, of demonstrative science, and even a semblance of wisdom in certain limited ways, as well as expertise in the production or arts, fine or not, yet that same person may lack moral integrity attained through the cardinal virtues. A brilliant mathematician, physicist, painter, composer, or designer may be excellent in those domains, yet be an immoral woman or man in terms of what she or he chooses as goals and means to achieve those ends. And it is obvious that if one lacks moral integrity concerning what truly ought to be done

The School of Athens is one of a group of four main frescoes painted by Raphael on the walls of the Stanza.





and what proper means should be used for those ends there is a lack of prudence. In turn, this implies related disorders or vices within the will and the irascible and concupiscible appetites, the former mainly pertaining to privations or pains and the latter to attainable pleasurable goods, due to a lack of the other cardinal virtues. Instead, one will encounter only their counterfeited or adulterated semblances.

Temperance, thus, along with courage and justice, by being either present as operative habits or absent and mimicked by opposed vices, affects the unity of human existence, even to the point of indirectly disposing one to exercise choice either for better or worse regarding ends and means prudently. Some persons tend to overlook the fact that these different sorts of perfecting virtues or moral habituation are interrelated. Others tend to believe that all of them are merely a matter of simply training one's will power. Both of these views are incorrect on the whole, although each acknowledges a truth. The virtues may be considered individually and one's disposition of will is important in inculcating them in a sustained manner. However, the complex unity of ourselves as enfolded souls possessing intellect and will makes the matter more subtle.

There are four unified domains of interrelated powers within our soul-body unity that can be subject to instilling each of the cardinal virtues, and since we are living unities, these virtues also have a profound unity and are

interrelated to one another in different ways. Some are rooted directly within the soul's powers of intellect-reason and will, while others are rooted in our ensouled bodily being. Intellectual reason and the will must be habituated with prudence or a disposition towards right acts for good ends using good means in appropriate circumstances, and the overarching appetite for good that is will requires the instilled habit of justice to be disposed towards rendering to each person, whether created or God, what is due or appropriate.

In contrast, the irascible emotions or passions are subject to courage in the right use of force in confronting pain, suffering and difficult to attain goods, while the concupiscible emotions or passions deal with pleasurable goods and are in need of temperance, so that one will desire proportionally what is proper to one's person, particularly in regard to pleasures related to touch, food and generation. There are many intriguing details that might be developed from this overall depiction, but most of them are readily available in the many reliable presentations of Ethics as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas.

As for how parents instill these virtues, they do so with rituals, gestures, words, silences, acts and omissions. With firm constancy, they gently guide and tutor the heirs of their very own personal history and lineage towards a life's odyssey, the details of which are known only >

Plato and Aristotle appear to be the central figures in the scene.



by the Creator Trinity, towards a goal that can be but that same Eternal Trinity. They already have done so by their fervent loyalty and devotion one to another as spouses, for in having made their covenant they chose monogamy and tempered any possible disposition towards bigamy, whether such be polyandry or polygamy.

Example of Virtue

Both of these imply not only an adulteration of what the family always intimated, that as vessel through which the Incarnation would occur, but also aberrations within the social order in which marriage would be subservient to the mere conservation of limited material wealth or resources among certain castes by permitting some women to have many husbands, or one in which children may readily be cast one against another in fratricide, since legitimacy and inheritance have been compromised, as may occur within Islamic cultures and others permitting the possession of many wives by one husband.

Parents thus are and ought to be for their children the first known exemplars of virtue and grace. In performing their roles diligently and generously, there is already bequeathed a tacit awareness of what it is to temper one's own will and appetites in the service of others, of laying down one's life for one's friends. In the midst of the unique idiosyncrasies that always are proper to familial existence, it is the parents who exercise royal and political rule between themselves and royal rule over those given to them until these, also, eventually are capable of going forth and exercising self-rule in the light of the gifts of reason and grace. It is the parents who set limits and order, but they are only able to do so because they have instilled order within themselves, likely beginning under the tutelage of their own parents, and if blessed, with the assistance of sanctifying grace.

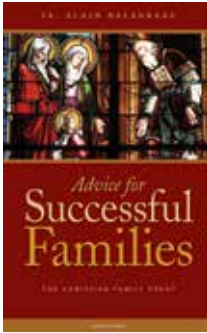
Yet it is an order that is durably flexible yet consistent, just as is natural law impressed within the being of man by the Creator, that can permit spontaneity and liberty yet always temper tendencies towards anarchy or absence of rule

and measure, as well as tyrannical selfishness. From the *horarium* of the family that accords with its own unique living rhythms, to the unique tone and temper permeating the daily routine of familial functions, the consistent yet flexible temperance incarnated within the customs of the integral family is capable of accommodating the most vigorous of its members as well as the weakest, those within its ranks with the most exuberant constitutions and mannerisms and those possessing the most refined, even fragile sensibilities or vulnerabilities.

Never autocratic or despotic, familial temperance must dispose each of its members towards all the other virtues in accord with due measure or intensity, species or number, and weight or end, not according to a preconceived rationalistic program imposed as some uniform inflexible model, but rather through those very personal bonds and inclinations established from the *Genesis* of history by the Creator. In the economy of grace offered through Christ even the natural propensities noted by Aristotle that rise within familial bonds are able to be transfigured. As St. Paul in *Ephesians* (5:31-32) remarks in a passage that occasionally has been totally misinterpreted by some in order to imply that wives should be subject to their husbands as indentured servants or even slaves, there are profound analogies between the grandeur of marriage as intended by our Creator and the bond that exists between "Christ and the Church." And it is these very bonds and inclinations that have been redeemed and sanctified through Him conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin spouse of Joseph at a definite time, in a definite place, to a definite royal lineage, Who tempered all humanity's woes by fulfilling a unique promise that only the Eternal Exemplar of Temperance would accomplish.

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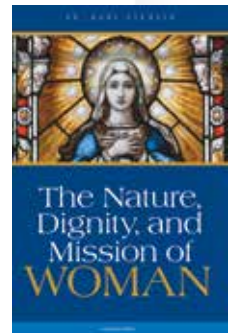


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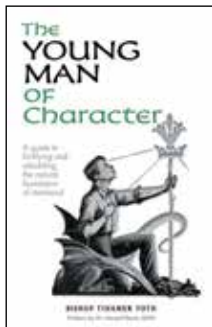


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Bishop Tihamer Toth

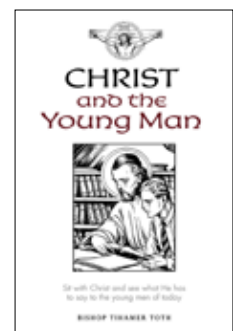
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Gargoyles

Monsters, humorous, decorative embellishment



Gothic
Cathedral,
Freiburg,
Germany



Peering down from dizzying heights, these stone monsters have stared so for centuries. And not peering only, but pouring out profusely from their bowels, it seems, onto the paving below. They are known as gargoyles, from an old French word “*gargouille*,” meaning “throat.” They ascended their lofty perches during the rise of Gothic architecture in France and became a feature of the Gothic style as it spread throughout Europe. The gargoyle is essentially functional, channeling rainwater from towering roofs and away from the walls of churches. They are in fact the medieval form of a downspout. The medievals did not invent the idea but rather improved it. Today, remnants of ancient Greek structures¹ have monstrous lion heads ranked as a form of gutter, performing the same function though not as effectively or spectacularly as their medieval descendants. Greek marble walls still show their unfortunate water stains. The medievals were not as ignorant of classical times as many think and took the idea, projecting their creations further from the walls. This feature also lent itself humorously to decorative embellishment. What one sees today of the gargoyle is actually only half its length, the rest buried in the wall counterbalancing the great weight of stone, sometimes at least ten feet in length.

But why monsters and fantastic creatures? The symbolism could be in the water, expelled by these demons and chimeras, as forces of evil being directed away from the church. Some attribute the gargoyles to represent those banished from heaven, where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” A church is, after all, the “*Janua Coeli*” (Gate of Heaven), the “antechamber” to Heaven. But according to the French Catholic historian, Emile Male, the stone-carvers had complete freedom to personify these functional elements according to their fancy.² What we see is the result of vivid and playful imagination and not something specifically theological or even intentionally symbolic. These medieval monsters of yesterday are rather comical and tame in comparison to the creations of our own age, where ugliness is preferred to beauty and horror revealed in for pleasure.

¹ The Tower of the Winds in Athens.

² Emile Male (1862-1954): *Religious Art in France of the 18th Century*, p. 60: “When left to their own devices the craftsmen of the 13th Century were like artists of every age”.





Family Table Talk

Angelus Press Conference 2015

Roundtable with Frs. Beck & Goldade, Dr. Flanery and Miss Temple

Is there such a thing as a vocation to the single life for those who would prefer to get married but, due to various circumstances, do not?

God is not trumped by circumstances. Those who do not marry can do a great deal of good which they could not accomplish otherwise. There is an invitation to a higher spiritual life, joyful in its own way. Certain vocations lend themselves to the single life, such as education, healthcare, and missionary work.

Fr. de Chivré said beautiful things on the single life (see older issues of *The Angelus*.) He explains that there is an order of redemption and that a soul has a mission and a relationship with God before its masculine and feminine aspect. The most important thing is our spiritual life, whichever state in life we come to undertake.

Nobility and status consist primarily in intimacy with God.

Some may look at the question in another form, asking essentially this: "Is it okay for me to remain single simply because I shun the responsibility?" No! We are called to make a difference for other souls. It is not a question of running away from our call and saying: "You know what? I have listened to these conferences on the family and forget it! A family means too much suffering and work!"

Is faith such an important element in choosing the children's school that academics don't matter?

Various elements enter into the education of your child. Your obligation is to educate your child in every aspect. When you are deciding



which is the best school, you weigh many factors, and this includes whether or not the child's faith will be reinforced in that school. Academics are very important as well, and a competent Catholic individual needs the education and training resulting from solid academic study. You have to have the right balance. Another consideration in choosing the school: a child in class with a teacher who wants to be there teaching is more enriched and benefited than a child with a teacher who just fulfills a job to make a living, and God knows that our SSPX school teachers do not make money! On the other hand, if your child is not learning at the chosen school, it would not be the right instinct to reassure yourself and simply say: "At least his soul is saved."

How is it possible to strike a balance between forming children both in the fear and in the love of God?

Here, we need to distinguish the term "fear." There is a fear that I may be beaten but there is also a good fear: the respectful and filial fear which I owe my father.

Correction is essential to any education. There is a need for the sense of mystery and awe for the father who has not yet used all his strength. That strength is used to punish but also to protect the weak and foster their growth.

A true father must correct his child and yet remain paternal. So the question may be how he chastises. To punish harshly and selfishly will crush the child. Punishment needs to elevate him to the good, so that at some point, the child understands that the punishment is not only penal but also corrective.

Morality and purity need to be instilled in children. Why does Catholic education make frequent use of literature which may have problematic scenes or authors?

The principle we need to invoke here is one which Pius XI takes from St. Basil: "The good teacher imitates the bee which takes the good and leaves the rest." As St. Ambrose says: "Do not leave without taking in the gold of the Egyptians." In other words, we cannot deprive ourselves of the wealth of the classics, which fed our forefathers. Abandoning the classics because we

find there a "slight taint" would be tragic. In our schools, we take into account the maturity and judgment of the child. Else, we would have to exclude all of Shakespeare, for example, which has much "low humor."

Whether we like it or not, children, all children, are exposed to evil as they grow up, even if it is in the form of billboards on the highway or magazines at the checkout of the grocery store. Living in a bubble is unhealthy.

The best way to prepare children is to administer the preparation in a controlled way. It is necessary to inoculate children via vaccines to confront disease, and, thus, we can prepare them by inoculation to confront evil. Also, in the masterpieces of literature, good is presented clearly as good and evil as evil. In this way your children learn to distinguish between good and evil and to form moral judgments on human actions.

Another crucial choice for parents is whether or not to allow children to pursue studies at the college level. Any advice on this matter?

This issue perhaps confuses two issues: the natural need to grow in knowledge, and the unconscious assumption that college life is a dangerous place for souls. Going on to university is a hazard for every young person, and probably more so for men than for women, who tend to be more responsible at the same age. There is always a risk because one has all the liberties of adulthood without its full competence and maturity. Going away from the home, released from all kinds of protections, is a real challenge. We must also consider this: just because young college students may sleep at home and attend college by day does not mean they are protected. They may have a very different life there by day, as if you had, in fact, sent them away.

It seems that many who fall away from the Faith do so between the years of 18 and 30. Is there anything in particular that parents can do for children in this age group?

It is a highly vulnerable age period. In ancient times, Aristotle had already complained about its vulnerability. To wish to eliminate the risk, one would have to eliminate human nature. >

Faith and Morals

You cannot tame the torrent, but you can build bridges over it. You ought to maintain that relationship with the prodigal child or children as best as you can. And under the right circumstances, they will return.

We need to realize how a cultural life in the home and the love of literature and history, more than talking about the trivial, superficial, or worldly news, can protect your children. Discussing universal ideas and principles in your daily conversation will greatly impact your children. It will be the meeting of the minds and, after the crazy twenties, the children will have maintained that relationship with you. It will not be your pretending that they are eleven that will get them to stay with you when they grow up.

We need to stress the importance of the integrity of the Catholic family life. Too often, life is compartmentalized: there is religion, and there is everyday life. Compartmentalization cannot work because the children, however little when they absorb it, are still affected by it as they become older. It is the integrated atmosphere that shapes their minds, hearts, and souls. Then, when it comes to movies, TV, and other entertainments, ideally, they will instinctively ask themselves: "Do these fit the Faith or not? Is this relaxation encouraging charity in the home?" When children go out into the world, they have already been formed; they already have a vision. They are inexperienced, but they do have the tools and God's grace. And, because you are wise, they know that their parents are not far away.

Some have theorized that higher education is improper for Catholic women? Can you address this claim?

The problem is often worded like this: "Higher education is for 'career-oriented' individuals. But a woman is not to be a career person; therefore, she is not to pursue higher education." Yet, the woman, no less than the man, needs to develop her mind because she, as well, is a born educator. When she does not follow education in a formal sense in college, she is still working on it by reading literature in her domestic setting.

If we fulfill our duty in our schools and seriously give students a solid high school education, our children will be less fragile in

facing life. They won't so much need education at a higher level. The general level of education now is substantially lower than it had been in previous eras. Just imagine that the programs at St. Mary's one hundred years ago had a very demanding level of composition in Latin and Greek.

We tend to ask ourselves: What type of college? What type of education? And why do you wish to pursue this? The liberal arts at the college level is no waste of time. A certain depth of soul is attained by studying the works that comprise a college liberal arts course of studies. This attainable depth is greater and much more accessible at college than at the age of fifteen. It is amazing to see how the students mature after even two years of college, at the age of 19 or 20. They profit so much more. They know who they are, where they come from, and what they are about. They are so much more ready for the world. A place like St. Mary's can be a great help.

What about recreation and competitive games for young ladies?

The popes have strong words against women's sports in public, as this runs counter to modesty. There is a Catholic sense of mystery inherent in women, with the truer sense shown by wearing the veil. Hence, it does not seem correct for women to completely exteriorize themselves. The girls are taking their definitive form, which is that of a gentle but strong woman, whose mission is to become the peacemaker. Out there in the world, there are many championships between schools for the sake of beating the others and boasting that one's team is the best. The competitive spirit, in which one wins by dominating, is not helpful for a girl. When she is at school, competition translates to: "I am better than you"; at the parish level, it is: "My family has to shine." Scouting and camping are less competitive and more constructive, and they are true schools of courage. The SSPX frequently organizes volleyball tournaments which are mainly geared at socializing and enjoying each other's company.

Boys are different. They play in teams and even if playing becomes rough at times, when the game is over, they leave after shaking hands and that is all. Girls do not do that: they are sensitive and become deeply offended.



In society at large, one of the reasons birth control is advocated is because of the perceived danger of over-population. How can a Catholic respond to this?

The objection to unrestricted population growth runs thus: “The planet cannot support the present population, and so, having children is irresponsible.” Well! We do not know what God’s ultimate plan is, and to pretend to command problems of that magnitude is sheer presumption. It has been said that wherever the Our Father is prayed, people suffer no hunger.

We cannot sacrifice human life for the physical world: this would be sacrificing the higher for the lower. Perhaps much of the problem of wealth and human needs is a question of distribution and, more deeply, of selfish calculation: “I have a lot and I want even more.” This is the real problem over and beyond the number of children you have. Selfishness is behind this exaggeration. People do not think about heaven. They do not think what life is all about. They want to get as much as they can out of life on earth.

By way of conclusion, can you recommend a particular book or two on any of the topics from this weekend’s conference?

Raising a family is too broad a topic to narrow down to a manual. It is a lifelong project that does not stop once the children move out of the house. Consistent and routine learning and readjusting are necessary in order to become an assertive and resourceful parent.

It is important to get away from mundane and daily duties. Get above material concerns. Strive for that vision of peace which Archbishop Lefebvre had. Work on your soul. Read spiritual books to feed your spiritual life, for instance *The Mass of St. Pius V* explained by Fr. de Chivré, or *The Spiritual Life* by Archbishop Lefebvre.

Fr. Iscara was asked how, among so many books of history available out there, he was able to steer the right course. He explained that the more you read, the more apt you are to see what is good and what is not; and what is in line and what is out of line. So, by broadening your reading rather than just studying one author, soon enough, you will acquire a comprehensive picture. If you are short of time, two excellent

sources are the books of James Stenson on education, and Fr. Edward Leen’s *What is Education?* On the question of family itself, there is Georges Kelly’s *The Catholic Family Manual*.





Marriage of St. Joseph and Our Lady,
Sablon Church, Brussels, Belgium

Holy Week and Easter

by Fr. Christopher Danel

The forty days of Lent come to their dramatic conclusion with Holy Week—or Great Week, as it is known in the East—and it is a week that is liturgically unlike any other. In fact it is the nucleus and cradle of the whole development of the Church's year, and it leads to the celebration of Easter Sunday as well as to the joyous solemnity of Eastertide, the fifty-day time of rejoicing in the Resurrection of Christ.

Palm Sunday

The origins of the liturgical rites of Palm Sunday are traced to Jerusalem, wherein the triumphal entry of the Lord into the city was reenacted each year with special solemnity by the Christians there. It was celebrated in the mid-afternoon, and

began on the Mount of Olives, at the shrine-church erected on the site of the Ascension. Descending from thence into the city, the faithful gave forth their praise of Hosannas and waved their palm branches as the Bishop of Jerusalem rode upon the donkey. The ceremony spread throughout the East, and then to Rome. In its Roman adaptation, the Passion of St. Matthew was sung (as it is today), and it was adorned with magnificent hymns such as the *Gloria laus*, composed by Bishop Theodulf d'Orleans (†821), and the *Ingrediente Domino*. The former is sung as the processional cross knocks upon the church door (the cross opens heaven to men), and the latter as the procession enters the church, after which the Mass would begin. It was a widespread custom for the little Gospel and blessing of palms to take place in one location apart from the parish church, such as a rural



chapel, and for the procession to then make its way toward the parish.

The Sacred Triduum

The Sacred Triduum is the complex of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. St. Ambrose refers to it as the triduum (three days) in which Christ “suffered, rested, and rose” (*et passus est, et requievit, et resurrexit*). The Sacred Triduum contains the most impressive ceremonies commemorating and reliving these actions of the Lamb of God. In addition to the Masses—of distinctive types (*in Coena Domini*, Presanctified, and Vigil)—there are also the ceremonies of the Divine Office and related devotional exercises. Regarding the former, the most distinctive part is the Office of Tenebrae, *i.e.*, the Matins and Lauds of each day. For many centuries, the liturgical days of the Triduum were balanced between Mass in the morning and Tenebrae in the evening (as the light of day gave over to the shadows of night), which was the night office anticipated for the following day. The current use, after Pope Pius XII, is rather for Tenebrae to be celebrated each day in the morning, and the Mass in the evening.

Maundy Thursday

Like Palm Sunday, the ceremonies of the Sacred Triduum developed in Jerusalem. The faithful there would ceremonially relive all of the events of the Passion on the places and at the times when they took place. The Spanish pilgrim-nun Egeria wrote of these ceremonies in her pilgrimage diary, which she composed in AD 381-384. She refers to two Masses on Maundy Thursday, one in the large Basilica as a Lenten Mass, and the second celebrated beside it on Mount Calvary, at the foot of the Cross, as the commemoration of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, even though the site of the Cenacle was located some distance away.

Rome in earlier centuries also used an earlier Lenten Mass, which was for the reconciliation of the penitents and which was later abrogated. In addition, on this day the Chrismal Mass was added

for Cathedrals or any place in which a Bishop will bless Holy Oils. The principal Mass in the Roman liturgy for Maundy Thursday, however, is that which is termed *in Coena Domini* (in reference to the Last Supper); it is celebrated with exceptional solemnity. The hour for the celebration of this Mass varied over the years between Sext and None, *i.e.*, between noon and three o'clock, but eventually came to be celebrated on the morning of Maundy Thursday until it was restored to the evening by Pope Pius XII.

The most important characteristic of the Mass *in Coena Domini* is the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the ornately-decorated altar of repose, traditionally called The Sepulcher. Transferred there to the accompaniment of the sequence *Pange Lingua*, the Eucharistic King receives homage from the faithful for some hours after the Mass, and the altars of the church are stripped. Another distinctive characteristic of Maundy Thursday is that which gives the day its name: the *Maundy*, that is, the washing of feet. It is historically a clerical custom. In the Apostolic Palace, and in later years at St. Peter's, on the afternoon of this Thursday, the Pope washed the feet of twelve priests, in imitation of the action of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, when He washed the feet of the twelve Apostles. At the time of St. Gregory the Great, an angel miraculously appeared among them, which led to the custom of including thirteen priests. The ceremony was eventually developed such that it was a complete liturgy of its own, with chanted lessons, and was carried out not only by the Pope, but by bishops in their residences as well. It was approved as an optional rite for parishes by the legislation of Pius XII, whereby it can be inserted into the Mass *in Coena Domini* after the Gospel, with the recipients of the washing being twelve laymen.

Good Friday

The primitive source of the origin of the rites of Good Friday once again are from Egeria, describing the ceremonies of Jerusalem toward the close of the fourth century. The faithful there would make their pilgrimage to each of the holy sites through the day, starting on Thursday >

evening at the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, then on Friday to the Cenacle—where the scourging pillar was kept as a relic—and onward to Golgotha, where they venerated the relics of the True Cross. Each of these visits included a liturgy of its own.

For Rome, the Gregorian Sacramentary traces the outline of the papal ceremonies, but covers mainly the texts employed. In the eighth century, the veneration of the True Cross became more developed in the papal liturgy. The Pope would lead a procession from the Lateran to the Basilica of the Holy Cross, acting as thurifer, walking before the relic which was held by a deacon. The ceremonies of the parish churches of Rome, however, were a bit different; those were the ones that spread later through the West and are those known altogether as the Mass of the Presanctified, with the reading of the Passion, the solemn prayers, adoration of the Cross, and Holy Communion (which from the thirteenth century until the reign of Pius XII was received by the priest alone). The adoration of the Cross is accompanied by the Greek texts of the *Improperia*. The term “Mass of the Presanctified” refers to the fact that there is not a Mass celebrated, properly speaking, but rather a liturgy in which the Holy Eucharist consecrated the day before is venerated and received.

Holy Saturday

This day is consecrated to the Easter Vigil, which St. Augustine called “the mother of all holy vigils”. The Vigil originally was celebrated beginning on the night of Holy Saturday. In later centuries, it was moved earlier in the day, eventually settling into the morning hours of Saturday, with the fast being broken at noon, the Vigil having by then concluded; during the pontificate of Pius XII it was moved to the evening hours once again. The third-century Syrian *Didascalia Apostolorum* provides an ancient synopsis of the rite: “You shall come together and watch and keep vigil all the night with prayers and intercessions, and with reading of the Prophets, and with the Gospel and with Psalms ... until the third hour in the night after the Sabbath; and then break your fasts.... And then offer your oblations;

and thereafter eat and make good cheer, and rejoice and be glad, because the earnest of our resurrection, Christ, is risen. And this shall be a law to you forever, unto the end of the world.”

The Easter Vigil benefitted from two subsequent expansions on this primitive template. The first was the celebration of baptisms at the Vigil, which was mainly due to the Peace of Constantine (AD 313), after which the many converts were baptized solemnly at the Vigil each year. This gave a distinct imprint to the whole rite (as described more in depth in our article “Baptism and the Easter Vigil”, *The Angelus*, March-April, 2014), by including the procession to the baptistery accompanied by the Litany of the Saints, consecration of the font, and the baptism and confirmation of the catechumens.

The second expansion consisted of the introduction of a typical lamp-lighting ceremony, called a *lucernarium*, which is seen also in Vespers according to some rites. (It is traditionally accompanied by the hymn *Phos Hilaron*, a panegyric on the “joyous light of the Father’s eternal glory.”) For the Easter Vigil, though, the *lucernarium* was to take on an even greater significance, as a new fire would be freshly kindled with flint and the main candle lighted would be the ornately decorated Paschal Candle; both the new fire and the standing Candle are representative of the Resurrection. The *Praeconium paschale* or *Exultet*, the unique proclamation composed for this, which St. Jerome calls the *carmen cerei*, is at the same time a paean to Paschal Candle itself and a recapitulation of the whole theology of the Vigil, which it describes in part in the following terms: “Let the angelic choirs of heaven rejoice; ...this is the Paschal solemnity, in which that true Lamb is slain; ...this is the night which purged away the darkness of sinners by the light of the pillar; ...this is the night in which Jesus Christ rose victorious from the grave, destroying the bonds of death; O happy fault (*O felix culpa!*) that merited so great a Redeemer! ...O truly blessed night (*O vere beata nox!*) which alone deserved to know the time and hour in which Christ rose again from the grave! O truly blessed night...in which heavenly things are united to those of earth! Receive, O holy Father, [this Candle] nourished by the melting wax, which the mother bee produced for the substance of this precious lamp.”



The *Exultet* is seen in the parochial liturgy of Rome in the seventh century and in the papal liturgy in the eleventh century. The collect for blessing the new fire as well as the *Lumen Christi* procession appear in the Pontifical of the twelfth century. For seven centuries, beginning in the thirteenth, a three-branched candle was used for the procession, whereas the Paschal Candle was lighted during the *Exultet* in its own elaborate stand, without having been carried in. Besides being ornately decorated, the candle was sometimes of very great size. The Paschal Candle of Westminster Abbey once reached the weight of eight hundred pounds during the medieval era. In cases such as those, a smaller decorated candle (the size of most modern Paschal Candles) was blessed alongside the Paschal Candle and it was this candle that was carried to the baptistery for the blessing of the font. The Paschal Candle is a liturgical symbol of the Risen Christ which is exclusive to the Office ceremonies and Masses of Paschaltide. It remains on the Gospel side of the sanctuary until Ascension Thursday, at which time it is retired, and its cereous successor reappears at the Easter Vigil the following year.

It is at the Mass of the Easter Vigil that the Alleluia returns, and in fine form, with its triple and ascending intonation. *Alleluia* is the recapitulation of the Resurrection in one single word. The pontifical ceremonies contain

the solemn announcement of the subdeacon, “*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum, quod est: Alleluia!*—I announce to you good news, which is: Alleluia!”

Easter Sunday

Originally, the lengthy Vigil itself contained the single Mass for the Resurrection, as is still seen in the Eastern liturgies. But it was not long before a second Mass was added to the morning of Easter day. St. Augustine attests to this practice in North Africa in his day, as he preached a sermon at the morning Mass notwithstanding his fatigue from the Vigil ceremonies of the preceding night, which he points out to the faithful. In Rome, St. Leo the Great preached at the Vigil alone; the texts for the morning Mass appeared later there, in the seventh century. A later but felicitous addition to the Easter Mass was one of the four sequences maintained by St. Pius V for the 1570 Missal: the famous *Victimae Paschali laudes*, attributed to Wipo of Burgundy (†1048) and set to music so often by the Renaissance and Baroque composers. The whole Easter Mass is pervaded through and through with Paschal rejoicing: *RESURREXI, et adhuc tecum sum, alleluia!*—I arose, and am still with Thee, alleluia!

A Domestic Crusade

Extracts from the Jubilee sermon given by Archbishop Lefebvre, September 23, 1979

(...)

It is not surprising that the Cross no longer triumphs: because the sacrifice no longer triumphs. It is not surprising that men no longer think of anything but raising their standard of living, that they seek only money, riches, pleasures, comfort, and the easy ways of this world. They have lost the sense of sacrifice.

What does it remain for us to do, my dear brethren, if in this manner we deepen our understanding of the great mystery which is the Mass? Well, I think I can say what we should have a crusade! A crusade supported by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by that invincible rock, that inexhaustible source of grace, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

This we see every day. You are here because

you love the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. And these young seminarians who are in the seminaries in Ecône, in the United States, and in Germany—why do they come into our seminaries? For the Holy Mass, for the Holy Mass of All Time, which is the source of grace, the source of the Holy Ghost, the source of Christian civilization; that is the reason for the priest.

Spirit of Sacrifice

It is necessary that we undertake a crusade, a crusade which is based precisely upon these notions of immutability and of sacrifice, in order to recreate Christianity, to re-establish a Christendom such as the Church desires, such as She has always done, with the same principles,



the same Sacrifice of the Mass, the same sacraments, the same catechism, the same Holy Scripture. We must recreate this Christendom! It is to you, my dear brethren, you who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that our Lord Jesus Christ addressed Himself in saying: “Do not lose the fruit of My Blood, do not abandon My Calvary, do not abandon My Sacrifice.” And the Virgin Mary, who stands beneath the Cross, tells you the same thing as well. It is she, whose heart is pierced, full of sufferings and sorrow, yet at the same time filled with the joy of uniting herself to the Sacrifice of her Divine Son. She says to you as well: “Let us be Christians; let us be Catholics.”

Let us not be borne away by all these worldly ideas, by all these currents of thought which are in the world, and which draw us to sin and to hell. If we want to go to heaven we must follow Our Lord Jesus Christ. We must carry our cross and follow Our Lord Jesus Christ, imitating Him in His Cross, in His suffering, and in His Sacrifice.

Thus I ask the youth, the young people who are here in this hall, to ask us to explain to them these things that are so beautiful and so great, so as to choose their vocations, whatever be the calling that they may elect—be they priests or religious men and women, or married by the Sacrament of Matrimony, and, therefore, in the Cross of Jesus Christ, and in the Blood of Jesus Christ, married in the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them comprehend the greatness of matrimony, and let them prepare themselves worthily for it—by purity and chastity, by prayer and reflection. Let them not be carried away by all the passions which engulf the world. Thus let this be the crusade of the young who must aspire to the true ideal.

Let it be as well a crusade for Christian families. You Christian families who are here, consecrate yourselves to the Heart of Jesus, to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Oh, pray together in the family! I know that many of those among you already do so, but may there always be more and more of you who do so with fervor. Let Our Lord truly reign in your homes!

Cast away, I beg of you, anything which impedes children from entering your family.

There is no greater gift that the good God can bestow upon your hearths than to have many children. Have big families. It is the glory of the Catholic Church—the large family! It has been so in Canada, it has been so in Holland, it has been so in Switzerland, and it has been so in France—everywhere the large family was the joy and prosperity of the Church. There are that many more chosen souls for heaven! Therefore, do not limit, I beg you, the gifts of God; do not listen to these abominable slogans which destroy the family, which ruin health, which ruin the household, and provoke divorce.

And I wish that, in these troubled times, in this degenerate urban atmosphere in which we are living, that you return to the land whenever possible. The land is healthy; the land teaches one to know God; the land draws one to God; it calms temperaments and characters, and encourages the children to work.

And if it is necessary, yes, you yourselves will make the school for your children. If the schools should corrupt your children, what are you going to do? Deliver them to the corrupters? To those who teach these abominable sexual practices in the schools? To the so-called “Catholic” schools run by religious men and women where they simply teach sin? In reality that is what they are teaching to the children: they corrupt them from their most tender youth. Are you to put up with that? It is inconceivable! Rather that your children be poor, that they be removed from this apparent science that the world possesses, but that they be good children, Christian children, Catholic children, who love their holy religion, who love to pray, and who love to work: children who love the earth which the good God has made.

Catholic Leaders

Finally, a crusade as well for heads of families. You who are the heads of your households, you have a grave responsibility in your countries. You do not have the right to let your country be invaded by socialism and communism! You do not have the right, or else you are no longer Catholic! You must fight at the time of elections in order that you may have Catholic mayors, Catholic >

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deputies, so that France finally may become Catholic again. That is not mere politics, that is to wage a good campaign, a campaign such as was waged by the saints; such as was waged by the popes who opposed Attila; such as was waged by St. Remy, who converted Clovis; such as was waged by Joan of Arc, who saved France from

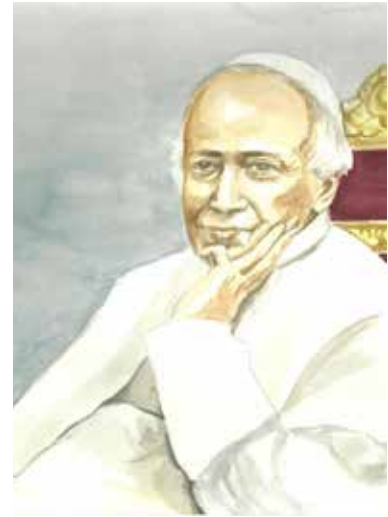
Protestantism. If Joan of Arc had not been raised up in France, we would all be Protestants! It was in order to keep France Catholic that Our Lord raised up Joan of Arc, that child of seventeen years, who drove the English out of France. That, too, is waging a political campaign.



25 years ago, after a long illness, he died on March 25, 1991, at the hospital in Martigny. He was solemnly buried in Ecône on April 2, where he rests in the crypt of the seminary.



Facing the Liberals



by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

Pope Pius IX had the longest pontificate in the history of the papacy, from 1846 to 1878. His great charity and amiability had made him beloved by the people, while his friendliness towards some of the revolutionaries had gained for him the name of liberal. His first great political act was the granting of a general amnesty to political exiles and prisoners on July 16, 1846. It did not occur to the kindly nature of Pius IX that many of the pardoned political offenders would use their liberty to further their revolutionary ideas.

That he was not in accord with the radical ideas of the times he clearly demonstrated by his encyclical of 1846 in which he laments the oppression of Catholic interests, intrigues against the Holy See, machinations of secret societies, sectarian bitterness, the Bible associations, indifferentism, false philosophy, communism, and

the licentious press.

Yet, the pope's blindness on political issues anguished the faithful Austrian Prime Minister Metternich, who prophesied in 1847: "The Pope reveals himself every day more and more lacking in practical sense. A good priest, he has never turned his mind toward matters of government. And if matters follow their natural course now, he will be driven out of Rome."

But the more concessions the Pope made, the greater and more insistent became the demands. Secret clubs of Rome, especially the "Circolo Romano," under the direction of Ciceruacchio, stirred up the mob with their radicalism and were the real rulers of Rome. Riot followed riot; the Pope was denounced as a traitor to his country; his prime minister Rossi was stabbed to death while ascending the steps of the Cancelleria, whither >

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he had gone to open the parliament; and on the following day the Pope himself was besieged in the Quirinal. Palma, a papal prelate who was standing at a window, was shot, and the Pope was forced to promise a democratic ministry.

Pius IX escaped from the Quirinal in disguise on November 24, and fled to Gaëta, where he was joined by many of the cardinals. In 1850, Pius IX returned to Rome. He took office in the Vatican Palace and no longer at the Quirinale, which twenty years later would become the Palace of the newly established republic of Italy, after the spoliation of the Pontifical Estate. Deprived of much of his stately authority over the Papal States, gradually fallen to revolutionary hands, the Pope turned more than ever to spiritual matters.

Pope Pius IX sought the re-establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy in England, with Wiseman as Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster, along with other bishops. Later, the Holy Father did the same thing for Holland.

It is astounding how fearlessly he fought, in the midst of many and severe trials, against the false liberalism which threatened to destroy the very essence of faith and religion. In his Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of December 8, 1864, he condemned sixteen propositions touching on errors of the age, notably religious liberty. This Encyclical was accompanied by the famous *Syllabus* of errors, a table of eighty previously condemned propositions promoting pantheism, naturalism, rationalism, indifferentism, socialism, communism, freemasonry, and the various kinds of religious liberalism. Its most famous article, the 80th, stigmatized as an error the view that “the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself to and agree with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.”

Though misunderstandings and malice combined in representing the *Syllabus* as a veritable embodiment of religious narrow-mindedness and cringing servility to papal authority, it performed an inestimable service to the Church and to society at large by unmasking the false liberalism which had begun to insinuate its subtle poison into the very marrow of Catholicism. Liberal Catholics detested it, and did all they could to prevent it from being known. It is no wonder that then Cardinal Ratzinger declared

the Vatican II document on the “Church in the Modern World” an anti-syllabus.

Throughout his whole life Pius IX was very devoted to the Blessed Virgin. As early as 1849, when he was an exile at Gaëta, he issued letters to the bishops of the Church asking their views on the subject of the Immaculate Conception, and on December 8, 1854, in the presence of more than 200 bishops, he proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin as a dogma of the Church. He also fostered the devotion to the Sacred Heart and, at his instance, the Catholic world was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 16, 1875.

On June 29, 1869, he issued the Bull *Æterni Patris*, convoking the First Vatican Council, which he opened in the presence of 700 bishops on December 8, 1869. During its fourth solemn session, on July 18, 1870, papal infallibility was defined as a dogma of the Church. As the Franco-Prussian war broke out, the Council was adjourned, and soon after, the Pope became virtually a prisoner of the Vatican as the Risorgimento’s troops invaded the capital. Cardinal Pie could bitterly complain of Napoleon III’s tacit agreement with the revolutionaries: “Pilate washes his hands while Christ is sentenced to death.”

Pius reigned for another eight years, which saw an increasing gulf between the Vatican and the Italian government. These years witnessed also a general outbreak of anticlericalism in western Europe, which, in Germany, culminated in Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf*—“Culture struggle,” which Pius condemned in the encyclical *Quod Nunquam*. He died three years later, having seen in his long pontificate the creation of the modern papacy, which would be resolved only in 1929 at the Lateran concordat with Mussolini. The longest pontificate in history had been rich both in political and in spiritual events and certainly emphasized the indomitable temper of a Pope in the face of the revolution.



Fr. Dominique Bourmaud has spent the past 26 years teaching at the Society seminaries in America, Argentina, and Australia. He is presently stationed at St. Vincent’s Priory, Kansas City, where he is in charge of the priests’ training program.



Salvation through the Family

A Meditation on the Restoration of Human Nature

by a Benedictine Monk

In our most prayerful moments, and in the most sacred of contexts, how often do we say “Father... Son...Mother...?” Every day the liturgical prayers of the Church speak this language of a family. It is a consolation of the divine will that family relations be placed well within our sense of the Faith, and deeply rooted in our own salvation.

After the fall of our first parents, the Creator, in His merciful justice, imposed a manifold penance of seemingly severe condemnatory punishments. Punitive yet medicinal, looking infinitely beyond the immediate crisis of Original Sin, He established each of them as salutary remedies for the restoration of human nature.

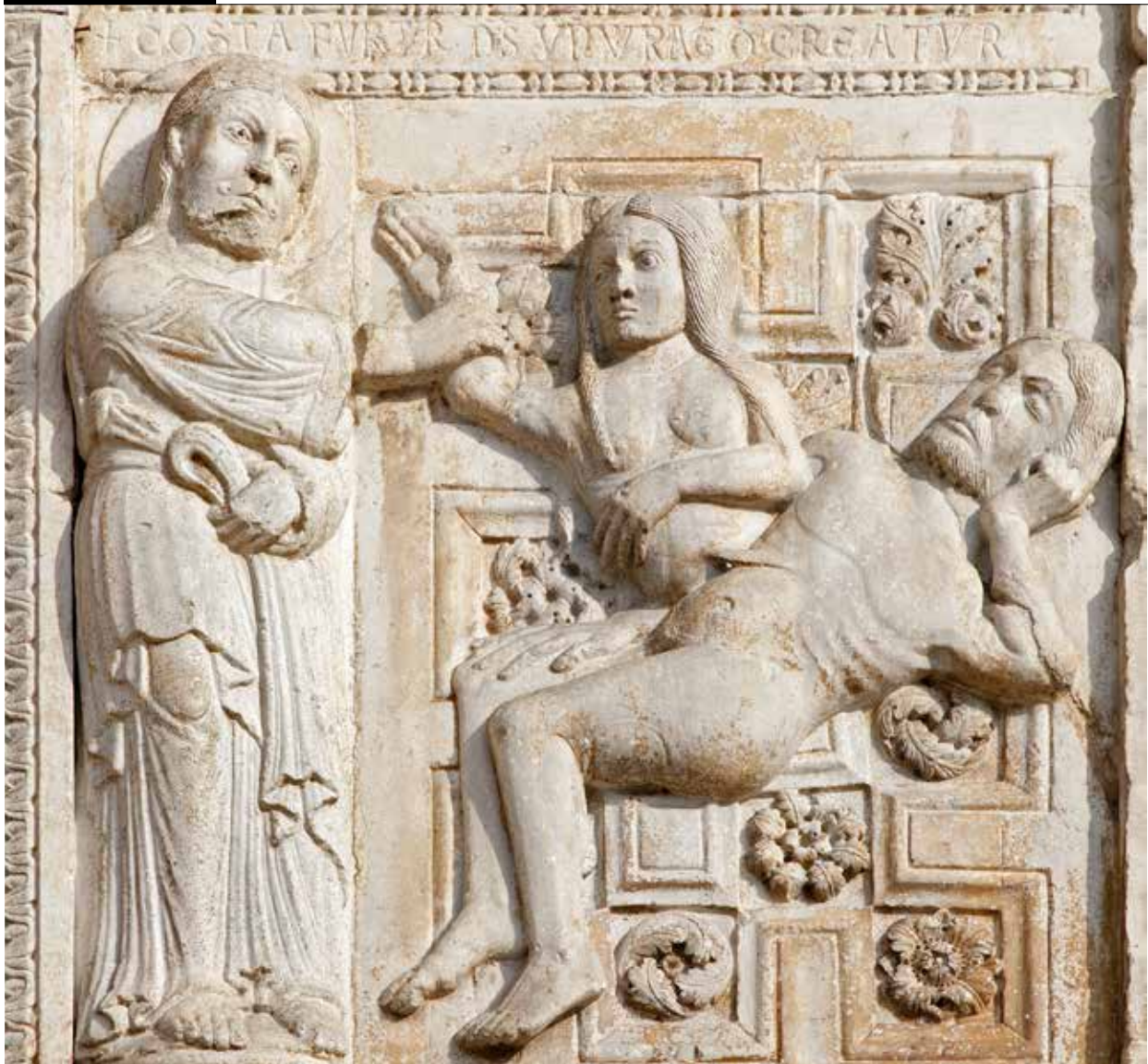
Adam and Eve would be banished from Paradise, that place of great beauty, where they had lived with God in perfect charity and the unimpeded state of grace. Though the wicked serpent

had known the human weakness of pride and disobedience, the battle for charity was not lost.

The fourfold sentence is found in Genesis III: firstly, parenting and the raising of the family, by bearing children in the “multiplication of sorrows”; secondly, manual work, by laboring to produce their sustenance “by the sweat of the brow”; thirdly, unflattering modesty, by the wearing of a divinely fashioned garment; fourthly, the penance and expiation of exile, by banishment into the created world at large. All four are laid down by the hand of God and necessarily interrelate, *modestia* being at the heart of every human regard towards the divine.

Deeper examination of these four punishments reveals a redeeming appearance of the great cardinal virtues. In the raising of the family, prudence. In manual work, fortitude. In modesty, >

Spirituality



The creation of woman, from the facade of the Romanesque Basilica San Zeno, Verona, Renata Sedmakova / shutterstock.com

temperance. In banishment, justice. In this fourfold outpouring of virtue, as the outflowing of the four rivers of Paradise, we can only adore the infinite wisdom of the Creator for concealing in austere penance such gifts of hope. “Where sin abounded, grace has superabounded...”

Of these salutary means to restoration, the first one, the raising of the family, and the corresponding necessary prudence, would become a foundational principle of Christendom, entering into the closest collaboration with the work of God, in the transmitting of life, according to both nature and grace.

This would be the essential condition of

humanity in the expectation of the great messianic coming of Our Lord, who with Our Lady, would be the new Adam and the new Eve, and the Church, the eternal family.

Before defining the family, human nature before and after the fall of Original Sin must be understood, according to the simple axiom: as a man is and was meant to be according to the mind of his Creator, therein shall be found the model of his restoration.

Man, created *in abstracto* from that most fundamental of substances, the slime of the earth, was then “placed in Paradise.” He must now rediscover his masculine nature, his innate sense



of the abstract and of the fundamental which were his origins, necessary for the problem solving of domestic economics, *prudentia oeconomica*. His sense of self is, as one “placed,” positioned in a greater scheme by the divine hand, entrusted with a mission of greatness, as the executor of the divine will and the receptor of charity, as a beloved son, in order to “maintain, uphold and guard” the works of God, *ut operaretur et custodiret*.

Man’s natural sense can be recovered if it be elevated through grace to an inherent sense of the divine. His constant need for recourse to divine counsel, his dependence upon divine assistance, would be his necessary reference to his origins, when he first “walked with God” in the innocence of charity, in the state of grace.

Now he must apply all that he presently is and all that he was meant to be, in the perfection and wisdom of the mind of God, to a threefold restoration: authority, hierarchy and unity. The state of paternal authority in fatherhood, to the re-ordering of hierarchy by placing the divine foremost, and unity, the family bond of charity by establishing the union of affections.

But, alas, man’s fallen nature is permanently wounded with the reversals of Original Sin. He who was justly judged as responsible for the fall of Eve, in desperation blamed God. Despite his remonstrations, the sentence stood unmitigated. As he hid from God, he will hide again, masking his confusion and guilt through retaliation in vain arguing and the resentment of authority. He will over-react to correction, rebel and flee from the justice of reform, he will over-judge, question authority, even that of his own paternity, and doubt the Providence of God.

Accused of neglecting his spouse, he will attempt to deflect his guilt by projecting it onto others. He will lack consideration, he will too hastily discern basing his judgment on externals, losing focus on the essential and be distracted by secondary things. He will stubbornly tend towards independence, self-actuation and human prudence. Should he see that he has been disciplined in justice and fairness, he will brood in melancholy and self-pity. He will lose faith in the grace of divine friendship which was once his unfailing guiding light.

Woman, created in Paradise, possesses the attributes of that place of great beauty which is

her origin. Her life began in the sleep of man, not the slumber of dreams but the mystical repose of contemplation, wherein the rib that shields the heart was freed and formed into feminine nature.

She must now be the spouse, the helpmate, finding her sense of place at the side of man’s heart, whence she first breathed the breath of life. She delights in the affections of man, who first called her *Virago*, heroine.

Beauty and charity are her origins, they will be her defense against the false beauties of vanity, immodesty and self-deceit, against the false charities of sentimentality, self-pity and self-love.

Now she must have recourse to her original greatness through harmonious union with man, resisting rivalry and the illusory reasonableness of temptation which captivated her curiosity and prompted her fall.

She must “become what she is,” rediscovering in the depths of her feminine nature the sanctuary of life, a domestic refuge of divine contemplation which was the original condition of her birth, which she will communicate through motherhood in the nurturing of innocence.

Our meditation concludes with the finding of the Child Jesus, the revelation of prudence, *and they were all astonished at his prudence and answers*. Prudence, the revelation, the answer, the *eliciter of the more salutary*, discerns the right way, the more noble, to the greater end, which is God. This, in the very person of Jesus, thought to be lost, now recovered from the dangers of travel. His return home to his parents, and in the contemplative sense, to the home of every family, to be their salvation, which is the meaning of his name.

To fallen human nature, the Catholic family is salvation, the exalted means to eternal happiness, the triumph of prudence. As divinely appointed delegates, man and woman are henceforth privileged participants in the *Work of Life*, as inscribed in the book of Genesis, though no longer in the quest of a *material return* to Paradise Lost, which is an error of naturalism, wherein nature alone suffices. Our Lord, who is the new Adam, directs man’s desire to return from exile not back to Paradise but to the “many mansions” of his Father’s house, the Kingdom of Heaven.



Saint- Nicolas du Chardonnet

by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

The story of Saint-Nicolas of Bari, and the miraculous benefits with which he supplied his parishioners and neighboring villagers, is illustrated by the amazing history and development of the church of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, 5th arrondissement, in Paris. First of all: Why Chardonnet? Because in 1239 a chapel was constructed on a site in a field planted with thistles (*chardons*). The thistles, in those days, were used in the carding and combing of linen and wool cloth. As the population of the region grew, several structures were added to the chapel, until in 1656, a total reconstruction of the complex took place. Because of financial problems, the reconstruction was not completed until around 1763. Later the church was closed, remodeled and, during the Revolution, was spoiled of its works of art. In

1802 it was given back to the Catholics, and little by little, the works of art were recovered. Since 1977, the church has been ours, that is, the home exclusively of the SSPX. At that time, Monseigneur Francois Ducaud-Bourget, who was ordained in 1934, had refused to go along with progressives of his day, disdaining their modernist innovations. Independently of the diocese, he rented meeting places where he could offer the Latin Mass. Two of these meeting places were la Salle Wagram, a banquet hall near the Arch of Triumph, and a room in Maubert Mutualité lecture hall. On February 27, 1977, he had a plan: When traditionalists met at Maubert that Sunday, Monseigneur Ducaud-Bourget led everyone across the street to Saint-Nicolas, which had been practically abandoned. From 1968 to 1977, priests from Saint-Séverin would open the >





door of Saint-Nicolas for a single novus ordo Mass only once a week, for which just a hand full of parishioners showed up. It was Monseigneur's intention, said Father Norber, to say the Mass at Saint-Nicolas that particular Sunday in February, pray during the day, and leave. But there were so many people who stayed that day, and the next, and the next, and Saint-Nicolas became permanently occupied. Of course, their occupation was illegal. Police entered the church with guns, opened the tabernacles, and forced priests and nuns out, says Father Gaudrey. Churches in France belong not to the diocese but to the State. But what could the State do against a group of peaceful worshipers? Months later, the State issued a decree of expulsion, but it was never executed. Officials understood it was better to keep silent than to give the traditionalists a lot of publicity. Monseigneur Ducaud-Bourget was getting old and was anxious to continue his traditional efforts. This is when he reached out to Archbishop Marcel Lefèbvre. The rest is history. Since then, Saint-Nicolas, although not the official center of the SSPX in France, has become its de facto national center. Let us not forget that Cardinal Stickler in 1995 stated that the Latin traditional Mass was never prohibited. Today Saint-Nicolas boasts of some 7000 parishioners.





The church is oriented north to south now, but in the 17th century the main door was on la rue des Bernardins. The main doorway has remarkable wood carvings designed by Le Brun, the Louis XIV painter and Saint-Nicolas parishioner. It offers the best exterior features which display the classical ornamentation prevailing at the time, with ionic and composite pilasters, triangular frontons, and sculpted angels. The two doors have delicately sculpted heads of cherubs and festoons. The flying buttresses gracefully display winding or sinuous lines, which are very characteristic of the Louis XIV period, and the high windows are decorated with elegant garlands. The bell tower, dating from 1625, is reminiscent of the end of the Gothic style; in fact, it is the bell tower of the preceding church. In 1856, the bell tower was given four bells: Napoléone, Louise, Eugénie, and Hortense, in honor of the imperial couple who accepted to sponsor them. The Jesuit-style interior is liberally decorated. Shining chandeliers and large windows provide a light and airy atmosphere. The keystone has a date of 1666. The marble decoration of the sanctuary, as well as that of the church pillars, goes back to the 18th century. The altar is made of green marble (1814). The chandeliers of the sanctuary are in the style of

Louis XVI. The decoration of the nave is the work of Le Brun. Unfortunately, the glazing has suffered. Remaining from the 17th century are only the borders of the high windows in the sanctuary and of the transept, as well as those of the sanctuary chapels. The ambulatory chapels are all enclosed by pseudo-marble rails installed in 1880. The Stations of the Cross were added in 1869. The many side chapels are often used by visiting priests who need to celebrate their daily Mass.

When entering the church, on the right side, there is an 18th century canvas of *La Presentation de Jesus au Temple*, and on the left side, a Le Brun painting of *Saint-John devant la Porte latine* (1660). It is one of Le Brun's early works which he produced at the age of 23 for the church; this painting still hangs where it was originally placed in his time. The painting depicts the martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist, who was tortured in Rome under Trajan. He survived that torture unharmed and later died a natural death. Le Brun chooses the moment when the Evangelist is about to be lifted into a cauldron of boiling oil. Angels observe the proceedings with flowers and palm branches, symbols of his martyrdom. The composition strongly emphasizes the violent movement which

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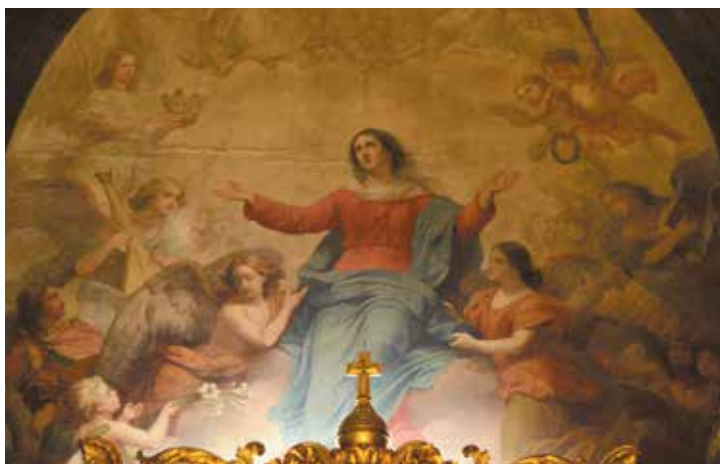
Christian Culture

dominates the painting. Le Brun is evidently concerned in representing the emotion of the event in the expressive faces and gestures of the participants. The baptismal fonts, dating from the 18th century, are made of red marble. The copper lid is of the 19th century. On the left side is the *Baptismal of Christ* (1846), and on the right, *Jesus Curing the Blind Man of Jericho* (1858).

- Chapelle Saint-Joseph has, on the left, an altar in the style of Louis XV. Above it, is a 17th century *Dreams of Joseph*. On the right side, *The Annunciation* (17th century), and in the back, a statue of *Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus*. In the vestibule of the Chapelle des catechismes, we see on the left side, *le Martyre de Sainte-Juliette*, and on the right, *Saint-Francis-de-Sales Receiving Extreme Unction*; both were painted around 1760.
- Chapelle du Calvaire et des Martyres features, on the left side, *Descente de Croix* (1850). On the right is *Sortie de Tombeau* (1852). The altar has a beautiful bas-relief representing the *Mise au tombeau*. The East Transept has, on the right, a statue of *Saint-Anthony of Padua*, and on the left, pictures of *Notre-Dame-du-Perpetuel-Secours* (1880).
- Chapelle de la Communion au de Saint-

Sacrement stands exactly on the ground of the sanctuary of the previous church. The stained glass windows on the right are reminiscent of *Saint-Genèveve*. The Chapelle of Saint-Sacrament was built only in 1710, the new church being raised as the old one was being demolished. The two buildings, therefore, co-existed for a long time. Until 1906, Chapelle of Saint-Sacrament was the chapel of the Seminary. The wooden altar is painted to look like marble. Above the altar is a painting of the *Pèlerins d'Emmaus* (1706). On each side are two large canvases, the *Sacrifice of Melchisedech*, and *Manna*. On each side of the altar are two rows of stalls (18th century).

- Chapelle Saint-Victor features an altar from the 18th century. On the right side is the *Martyre of Saint-Adrien*, and on the left, *Deploration de Croix*.
- Chapelle Saint-François-de-Sales has a very beautiful altar dating from Napoleon, with a statue of *Saint-François-de-Sales*. The Sacristy is composed of several rooms. The many altar boys vest downstairs; they wear gorgeous lace surplices. Some vestments are from the 18th and 19th centuries, and the altar cards date from the days of Louis XIII.
- Chapelle du Sacré-Cœur has the oldest stained





glass window of the complex. On the left is a 17th century altar with a statue of the *Sacred Heart*, and on the right, a painting of *L'incrédulité de Saint-Thomas* (1860).

- Chapelle de Sainte-Thérèse features, on the left wall, *Jesus on the Cross Between the Two Thieves* (1610), and on the right, the *Extase of Saint-Theresa of Avila* (1730).
- Chapelle Sainte-Geneviève, until the Revolution, was reserved for the daughters of Sainte-Geneviève. On the right is a painting of *Sainte-Geneviève* (18th century), and in the back is a very beautiful reliquary showcase. The altar is in the style Louis XV, and above the altar is *la Ville de Paris aux pieds de Sainte-Geneviève*.
- Chapelle of Our Lady used to be twice as large until the Boulevard Saint-Germain was built. All of the decoration is in the Second Empire style, with statues of the *Curé d'Ars* and *Saint-Michael*. Above the altar is the *Virgin*. In the left tympanum is the *Wedding of Our Lady*, and in the right tympanum are the *Presentation in the Temple*, and on the sides, *Saint-Joachim and Sainte-Anne*. On a green marble stand is a bust of *Monseigneur Ducaud-Bourget*.
- Chapelle Marie-Reine-du-Clergé (or Saint-

Clair) displays a 17th century altar, and above it is a painting of the *Predication of Saint-Clair* (1820).

- Chapelle Saint-Charles has a 17th century altar. A painting of *Saint-Charles Borromée* is above the altar. There are tiles from the 18th century, and a ceiling painted by Charles Le Brun.
- Chapelle Sainte-Anne or Sacré-Cœur de Marie displays on the right, a First Empire altar, and in the niche above, is a statue of *Sainte-Anne*; on the left, an 18th century painting of the *Wedding of Our Lady*.
- Chapelle Saint-Bernard features, on the left, *Saint-Bruno Celebrating Mass* (1700). On the right, there is an altar of the same era surmounted by a wooden statue representing *Saint-Bernard*.
- Chapelle Saint-Pierre features, on the right, a First Empire altar with a 17th century bas-relief showing *Saint Pierre Crying*; on the left, *la mort d'Ananias* (1678); towards the left, there is a very nice bust of *Saint Pius X* (1907). In the West transept, on the right, is a statue of *Notre Dame de Lourdes*, and on the left, a statue of *Saint-Nicolas*.
- Chapelle Saint-Vincent-de-Paul has, on the right, a First Empire altar with a statue of *Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, and on the back wall, a statue of *Sainte-Louise-de-Marillac*. On the left, there is *Saint-François d'Assise Receiving the Stigmata*.
- Chapelle des Ames du Purgatoire displays, on the right, *Descente de Croix* (first half of 17th century), and an altar and bas-relief from the First Empire. On the left, is *Les Ames du Purgatoire* (18th century).
- Chapelle Sainte-Catherine features, on the left, the *Baptism of Christ* (1758), and on the right, *Sainte-Catherine* (1753). The altar is from the First Empire.

There are old and beautiful confessionals in all chapels, each with a sign indicating which languages the priests speak.

See my article: "Cérémonial au Séminaire Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet à l'époque de Louis XIV". *Cérémonies et rituels en France au xviii^e siècle*. North American Society for Seventeenth Century French Literature, 2001, vol.4, 157-162.



The Synod of Adultery

St. Theodore the Studite vs. Constantine VI

by Roberto de Mattei

“The Synod of Adultery,” an assembly of Bishops in the ninth century, made history when they wanted to approve the praxis of a second marriage after the repudiation of a legitimate wife. St. Theodore the Studite (759-826) was the one who opposed it the most vigorously and for this was persecuted, imprisoned, and three times exiled.

Imperial Power

It all started in January 795, when the Roman Emperor of the East (*Basileus*) Constantine VI (771-797) had his wife Maria of Armenia locked up in a monastery and began an illicit union with Theodora, the lady-in-waiting to his mother Irene. A few months later, the Emperor had her

proclaimed “Augusta” Theodora, but being unable to convince the Patriarch Tarasios (730-806) to celebrate the new wedding, he finally found a minister willing to do so in the priest Joseph, hegumen (head) of the Monastery of Kathara on the Island of Ithaca, who officially blessed the adulterous union.

St. Theodore, born in Constantinople in 759, was at that time a monk in the Monastery of Saccudium in Bithynia, where his uncle Plato was the Abbot. He was also venerated as a saint. Theodore reports that the unjust divorce produced great perturbation in the entire Christian population: *concussus est mundus*¹, and along with St. Plato, he protested energetically, in the name of the indissolubility of the marriage-bond. He wrote: “the Emperor must consider himself an adulterer and consequently, the priest, Joseph, must consider



himself guilty for having blessed the adulterers and for having admitted them to the Eucharist.” By “crowning adultery, the priest, Joseph, is in opposition to the teachings of Christ and has violated the law of God”². For Theodore, the Patriarch Tarasios had likewise to be condemned, since, even if not approving the new marriage, he showed himself tolerant of it, thus avoiding the Emperor’s excommunication and the priest Joseph’s punishment.

This behavior was typical of a sector in the Oriental Church, which proclaimed the indissolubility of marriage, but in practice, showed a certain submission to the imperial powers, thus, sowing confusion among the peoples and stirring up protest from the most fervent Catholics.

Religious Resistance

Basing himself on the authority of St. Basil, Theodore claimed the faculty conceded to subjects, of denouncing the errors of their superiors³, and the monks of Saccudium broke communion with the Patriarch because of his complicity in the Emperor’s divorce. This triggered off the so-called “moicheiana question” (from *moicheia* = adultery) which placed Theodore in conflict, not only with the imperial government, but with the Patriarchs of Constantinople themselves.

It is not a very well-known story, but some years ago, Professor Dante Gemmiti disclosed it through a careful, historical reconstruction based on the Greek and Latin sources⁴ which confirm that ecclesiastical discipline of the Oriental Church in the first millennium still respected the principle of the indissolubility of marriage.

In September 796, Plato and Theodore, along with a certain number of monks, were arrested, imprisoned, then exiled to Thessalonica, where they arrived on March 25, 797. In Constantinople, however, the population judged Constantine a sinner who continued to give public scandal; following the example of Theodore and Plato, the opposition increased day after day. Their exile was brief, as the young Constantine, following a palace conspiracy, had been blinded by his mother, who had taken upon herself the governing of the Empire. Irene called back the exiles, who moved



St. Theodore the Studite

to the urban Monastery of Studios, along with most of the community of monks from Saccudium. Theodore and Plato were reconciled with the Patriarch Tarasios, who, after Irene’s accession >

to power, had Constantine and hegumen Joseph publicly condemned for the imperial divorce.

Also Irene's reign was brief. On October 31, 802, her minister, Nikephoros, following a palace revolt, proclaimed himself Emperor. When Tarasios died shortly afterwards, the new *basileus* had a high-ranked imperial functionary elected Patriarch of Constantinople, who was also called Nikephoros (758-829). In a Synod convoked and presided by him, about the middle of the year 806, he reintegrated hegumen Joseph (deposed by Tarasios) to his office. Theodore, who was then head of the monastic community in Studios (since Plato had retired to the life of a recluse), strongly protested the rehabilitation of hegumen Joseph, and when the latter took up his sacerdotal ministry again, Theodore broke communion also with the new Patriarch.

The reaction was not late in coming. The Studios Monastery was occupied militarily; Plato, Theodore, and Theodore's brother Joseph (the Archbishop of Thessalonica) were arrested, condemned, and exiled. In 808, the Emperor convoked another Synod which met in January 809. This was the one Theodore defined "*moechosynodus*" the "Synod of Adultery" in a letter of 809 to the monk Arsenius.⁵ The Synod of Bishops recognized the legitimacy of Constantine's second marriage; confirmed the rehabilitation of hegumen Joseph; and anathematized Theodore, Plato, and Theodore's brother Joseph, who was deposed from the office as Archbishop of Thessalonica.

In order to justify the Emperor's divorce, the Synod used the principle of the "economy of saints" (tolerance in praxis). However, for Theodore there was no motivation that could justify the transgression of a Divine Law. By referring to the teachings of St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. John Chrysostom, he declared the discipline of the "economy of saints," according to which a lesser evil could be tolerated in some circumstances, devoid of any scriptural basis—as in this case of the Emperor's adulterous marriage.

Some years later the Emperor Nikephoros died in the war against the Bulgarians (July 25, 811) and another imperial functionary ascended to the throne, Michael I. The new *basileus* called Theodore back from exile and he became the

Emperor's chief adviser. However, the peace didn't last long. In the summer of 813, the Bulgarians inflicted a very severe defeat on Michael I at Adrianople, and the army proclaimed Leo V, the Armenian (775-820) the Emperor.

When Leo deposed the Patriarch Nikephoros and had the veneration of images condemned, Theodore took on the leadership of resistance against the iconoclasm. Indeed, Theodore is distinguished in the history of the Church, not only as the opponent of the "Synod of Adultery" but also as one of the great defenders of sacred images during the second phase of the iconoclasm.

So on Palm Sunday of 815, it was possible to witness a procession of a thousand monks of Studios, inside their monastery—but very much in view—carrying the sacred icons to the solemn acclamation chants in their honor.

The monks' procession triggered off a reaction from the police.

Between 815 and 821, Theodore was whipped, imprisoned, and exiled to various places in Asia Minor. Finally he was able to return to Constantinople, but not to his own monastery. He then settled with his monks on the other side of the Bosphorus, at Prinkipo, where he died on November 11, 826.

The "*non licet*" (Mt. 14, 3-11) that St. John the Baptist set against the tetrarch Herod for his adultery, has resounded a number of times in the history of the Church. St. Theodore Studite, a simple religious who dared challenge the imperial power and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of his time, can be considered one of the heavenly protectors of those who, even today, being faced with the threats in changing Catholic practices on marriage, have the courage to repeat an inflexible *non licet*.

¹ Epist. II.n. 181, in pg. 99, coll. 1559-1560CD

² Epist. I. 32, pg. 99, coll. 1015/1061C

³ Epist. I, n.5, pg. 99, coll. 923-924, 925-926D

⁴ *Theodore Studite, and the Moicheian Question*, LER Marigliano, 1993

⁵ Epist. I. n.38, PG 99, coll. 1041-1042

(Translation: Contributor Francesca Romana, Source: <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/08/roberto-de-mattei-synod-of-adultery.html>)



Quiet Heroism

Dr. Randall Flanery

I will assume that you understand and accept the theological basis for being a Catholic family, and furthermore, that you wish to employ all of the graces and virtues available to you, in order to live as a Catholic family as best you can. What is it like, psychologically, to live as a traditional Catholic family in a culture which tends to impose practices that are antithetical to Christ-centered family life?

Quiet Resistance

Living as a Catholic and as a member of a Catholic family means that you are different in many ways from your neighbors, co-workers, and most of the individuals you come in contact with as you go about your daily life. It will not take

that long, usually, before those you encounter will notice that you are different in some important ways. The reactions of others to families who are obviously Catholic can range from the amusing to the hurtful. Other than an eye roll or some murmuring, most reactions are essentially non-events. Here are some examples, both large and small.

- On the rare occasion that mom and dad venture out to the grocery or to a restaurant with all seven kids in tow, you might hear a sarcastic “Are all of those yours?”
- Your young adult, just for getting an Accutane prescription for acne is asked with astonishment by the dermatologist, “He is not sexually active?” “Has no intention of being active?”
- Similarly, your MD is actively urging birth >



- control to you.
- Your co-workers look at you questioningly when you tell them about your vacation: retreat, Ordinations, Dad’s work week at La Salette.
- You are simply saying grace before a business lunch while others at the table are watching quizzically.
- You provoke snickers or even groans when you let it known in a college literature or history class that you are Catholic.

All of these interactions elicit this message: “You are wrong, you don’t fit in. Change or get out of here!” Most will be indifferent, some will murmur, and a few overly sensitive individuals will say that you are shaming them.

Resisting the coercion to conform is conducted daily without fanfare or drama. The effort is not aggressive but subtle. We hope it doesn’t make the papers or the blogosphere. But it will linger on whether we want to engage in the conflict or not. As Catholics, we cannot battle in the same way as those who oppose us do. The pressure is unjust; we are simply doing what we ought. We are not even advocating, except by example, that others imitate us.

The subtle pressure that is encountered whenever you leave your home can result in what we psychologists call a “victim mentality.” It is characterized by a pervasive feeling that you have been harmed, that it is at least in part your own fault rather than the fault of others, and that you possess a sense of powerlessness to face the music. It is fundamentally an unbalanced view of one’s self, which can render you depressed, passive, cynical, hopeless, or irritable and short-tempered.

Most families I know take on this challenge quietly, admirably, and mostly effectively. It is not flashy but it is heroic. And it is not necessarily done that well but, as Chesterton said, “if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.”

I think that much of the heroism that is required in meeting this challenge is because you realize you are in the uncomfortable position of being in the world but not of the world. I have observed, and have been tempted myself, to adopt one of two extremes: either to retreat and

withdraw, or to aggressively look for a fight. He who avoids the world is living in self-absorption and loneliness, heading towards the ghetto mindset. The other option, looking for the trouble that you know is there, is going to cause just that... trouble!

What are Catholic Parents To Do?

I have had the opportunity to observe a number of families who have quietly, modestly, persistently, and effectively managed to navigate the challenges of being fully Catholic in a culture that does not support it, and at times attempts to actively suppress it. Interestingly, most of these individuals are well respected in their communities and seen as upright citizens contributing to the common good. What are they doing to be so quietly heroic?

The parents of these families, I would say, from the perspective of natural science, are resilient, assertive Catholic men and women. They are resilient in the face of cultural pressures to not be so obviously Catholic, and when confronting those challenging life events that beset us as humans, they remain Catholic in addressing them. In the home, and especially there, the parents are assertive regarding how their family members will live their lives. Their parental recipe consists of an active, energetic approach, balancing firm insistence on certain standards of behavior with a flexible compassion for the defects that all humans possess. For the sake of clarity, I have summarized the aspects of the heroic parental approach in the following ten points.

1. Know and constantly explain the reasons for what you are doing. I am speaking of the principle that is the basis for the action or decision, not simply the rule that is being followed. In order to do so, you need to know your own faith (catechism) and you need to attend to your own spiritual life.

2. Be an assertive parent. Know and filter what comes into your home. Know and guide what your children do out of the home. Support and challenge family members to be Catholic when



they go out into the world. Set limits. State clearly what you need from children, then kindly, gently, and firmly insist on it.

3. Have high expectations, for your children and for yourself. Children mostly live up (or down) to the expectations that they believe the important people have for them. So do adults.

4. Aspire for children to be good people. Hoping that they will just be happy, is setting the bar too low.

5. Be a role model of striving for virtue and holiness.

6. Be humble. Once you have a good grasp on who you are and how you fit in God's world, you will have to be humble.

7. Do not insist upon everyone acknowledging that you are right.

8. Sacrifice. If you are to live in a Catholic family, it is given that you will sacrifice: money, time, creature comforts, *etc.* You might as well embrace it.

9. Be willing to ask for help, and be open to being guided.

10. Allow trusted others to help you raise your children.

Spend Time with the Family

Acting as described above is no guarantee that your children will turn out to be good Catholics. When God gave you free will, he also granted it to your children. I have seen excellent parents who have done an excellent job preparing their children's souls and, yet, one of them, once adult, decides to go and re-enact the story of the Prodigal Son. Remember that the ingrate did return. I have to assume that that father was doing something which stayed with that young man, and it drew him back when he most needed it.

Do not neglect your relationship with your spouse. Take the time for adult conversation and for doing the things you enjoy together. If your wife is a treasure, you will want to spend time with your treasure. Make time for that in the same way that you allocate time for your children.

It is easy to forget that debt to the children,

but, besides providing material things for them, they need to be with you and know that you are available to talk to them. And pay attention to your relationships. The communication will break down if you do not observe the proper ratio of positive to negative interactions: at least three to one, three positive comments to one negative. Don't let contempt creep into your attitude. With children, repeatedly and explicitly acknowledge how pleased you are of their trying to get the trash out and to set the table, however awkward the result sometimes.

I will describe how some of these actions come into play in aspects of having a family. There are some challenges that are predictable; it is best to have a plan. I will discuss managing contemporary digital devices and assuring your child a Catholic education.

Be Assertive Parents

Not only do parents have to worry about what their children confront when they venture into the world, parents also have to be ready to intervene with what is brought into the home. Among US teens, a cellphone is seen as an essential tool for maintaining friendships; without a cell phone you will be a pariah. An argument is sometimes made that a cell phone promotes connection and safety, as if it was a necessity. While there is some validity to this argument, do you really need Internet access for it? Is checking Facebook or watching YouTube videos essential to safety?

This is a prime opportunity to be an assertive Catholic parent. The first question should be: "Does my child really need that digital toy?" There really is a difference between playing Battleship on a game boy and playing the game against a real person. Do you want him playing soccer on a video screen or in the backyard?

Know what your children are bringing into the home, either in their digital device or what they are watching. I would urge that you review movies, TV shows, songs, and games before your children engage. Be prepared to say no, even it means you have to give up access to things you enjoy. Install child controls, or better: get rid of >

the element entirely.

If you are an assertive Catholic parent, you will be making your child different from many of their peers. I do not think teens, and certainly not preteens, need cellphones. If you are really concerned about easy communication, use a cell phone that is only a phone, and take it back when they return home.

Instruct children about what is acceptable entertainment in other people's homes. Tell your children that if they find themselves watching something inappropriate, they should call you, the parents, to come and to get them. Also tell your children that, in general, they cannot be in a friend's house without an adult present, unless you okay it. In other words, the child is expected to behave in a moral Catholic way even when the parents will never know, although we almost always do.

Assure a Catholic Education

Obtaining a Catholic education for your children is a fundamental obligation, one of the most challenging tasks of parents, and one you cannot possibly do all yourself. I will assert that whenever possible, and even when you think it is not possible, you send your children to Society schools. There are circumstances in which families do not have that option, or have compelling reasons to choose an alternative. A child with a special condition, which cannot be provided for otherwise, will require special services elsewhere. But I have heard many other reasons: expense; my child does not want to go; teachers are not well enough trained; the school is not adequately stocked with computers, lab equipment, fine arts classes, the latest books. As well: "You mean besides paying tuition, I also have to help mow the grass and paint classrooms?" And: "No! anything but not fund-raisers!!!!!"

Are these really sufficient reasons not to send your child? There are indeed sacrifices to be made, and they will hurt, but there will be benefits. Relating this to the same aspect in my own life, I can say that after the first three, all my children went to boarding schools. We, their

parents, were less involved with our children than were the staff members. There is no denying the sacrifices, but there is no better preparation for youth to grow into resilient, assertive Catholics who are just like you. And, prior to making a final decision, I would urge you to consult a priest, as well as other parents.

And what are the benefits? The first and the best: Catholic young men and women who are also well educated. Despite the lack of up-to-date equipment, fewer elective classes, and few teachers with the higher degrees, none of the children were hampered by their education, but rather they were better prepared than were many of their peers. They went to college with substantial benefits on the natural level: self-discipline, respect for authority, and ability to write a coherent essay and to think logically.

A more crucial benefit is that if you want to fill up our seminaries, monasteries, and convents with religious, it really, really, really helps to have and support Catholic schools. While it does happen that religious come from families that were not especially Catholic or that did not attend Society schools, the example given by the number and quality of living, breathing priests, sisters, brothers, and committed Catholic laity shows that God's plan for your child might include the religious life, which is supported by attending a Society school.

It is difficult enough to be a Catholic adult, and it is even more challenging to be a Catholic teenager and young adult. As a parent, please realize that if you are intent on your child behaving as a young Catholic ought to, he or she will be acting notably different from most American youth. This difference can be distressing for adolescents who, by virtue of the developmental stage of life they are in, want to fit in with their peers and to feel confident about themselves as individuals.



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Ad Multos Annos!

Interview with Fr. Franz Schmidberger, SSPX

Angelus Press: Father, this year you are celebrating your 40th anniversary as a priest. Forty years ago in the middle of the post-conciliar confusion, the Society of St. Pius X had just been formed. It would enter into a gigantic struggle to preserve Tradition! You followed all the twists and turns of those battles, first as the Superior General of the Society from 1982 to 1994, and then in the various combat positions you held. Currently you are the rector of the SSPX German-speaking seminary in Zaitzkofen, where you reside. What were your reasons for entering Archbishop Lefebvre's seminary?

Fr. Schmidberger: On October 14, 1972, after earning a degree in mathematics, I entered the Seminary of St. Pius X in Ecône because, like other young people from a student group in Munich to which I belonged, I was categorically

opposed to the *Novus Ordo Missae* and the whole modernization of the Church. I could never have entered a seminary which had adopted the new liturgy, and I also did not want to be ordained by a bishop who celebrated the New Mass.

Angelus Press: How would you summarize your time at the seminary?

Fr. Schmidberger: At first it was a matter of improving my competency in French, which dated back to secondary school. But afterwards the seminary in Ecône was, for me, a true time of grace. We had excellent instructors in all disciplines: Fr. Gottlieb for Spirituality; Canon Berthod, seminary rector and moral theology professor; Fr. Ceslas Spicq for exegesis; and another Dominican from Fribourg University, Fr. Thomas Mehrle, for dogmatic theology. >

We received our formation in prayer and the spiritual combat from Fr. Barrielle, the spiritual director who also transmitted to us the inestimable treasure of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. He did everything he could so that we would, in turn, would be able to preach the Ignatian Exercises. We cannot thank him enough for that.

But most of all, there was the figure of the archbishop himself, who, as a man of the Church, set the course, and, as a true father of his seminarians, instilled in our hearts an aversion for modern errors, liberalism, and secularism. Among the major events of the seminary, we experienced the canonical visitation in November 1974, and the completely illegal suppression of the Society on May 6, 1975, which caused the departure of a dozen seminarians.

Angelus Press: During the same year you received the order of subdiaconate, the diaconate, and the priesthood! You were ordained a priest on December 8, 1975, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Can you explain these circumstances?

Fr. Schmidberger: Since I had already studied philosophy in Munich, after the Year of Spirituality I was immediately enrolled in third-year seminary classes. So, as a matter of course, I received ordination to the subdiaconate on June 29, 1975, during the Holy Year. A little earlier, the archbishop put me in charge of the organization of the German-speaking seminary in Weissbad, (Switzerland), which actually opened its doors on July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. A young, newly-ordained French priest was to be the rector. In mid-September, after a preparatory meeting, he said to the archbishop, "I cannot stay alone here; Fr. Schmidberger must come to help me."

So at the end of the retreat that started the academic year, the archbishop ordained me deacon in Weissbad on the feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then priest in Ecône on December 8th. I was overjoyed at having received all three major orders during the Holy Year.

Angelus Press: You worked alongside

Archbishop Lefebvre for many years. How did it happen that he entrusted the direction of the Society to you during his lifetime?

Fr. Schmidberger: In 1976, he entrusted the direction of the German-speaking seminary to me, at first for two years in Weissbad, then for a year in Zaitzkofen. Later he named me head of the District of Germany and Austria, which in those early years was regarded as one unit.

A wise man who did not seek his own glorification, he was worried about the continuation of his work after his death and thought about a successor whom he could assist with his advice and support during the rest of his lifetime.

So, on his recommendation, the General Chapter in 1982 chose your humble servant to be Vicar General with right of succeeding him as the head of the Society. Then in 1983, on occasion of the priestly ordinations in Ecône, he announced his decision to resign as leader of the Society and asked the members from then on to turn to his successor.

Angelus Press: What are your memories of 1988?

Fr. Schmidberger: Our revered founder spoke to me for the very first time about his idea of consecrating bishops in August 1983, after he had experienced problems with his health. With the Assisi Meeting in 1986 and the thoroughly disappointing responses to our *Dubia* (questions) about religious liberty, we decided by common consent to make a final attempt to come to a peaceful resolution about our status. We accepted Rome's proposal for a canonical visitation by Cardinal Gagnon and Msgr. Perl from November 8 to December 8, 1987. The archbishop saw that he could not have any confidence, despite the very positive report of this visit, in the people in Rome at that time.

Despite the pressure, the influence, and the pleas from all sides, he was prepared, for the good of the Church, to proceed with the consecrations on June 30. Indeed, a single thought guided him: without Catholic bishops there are no Catholic priests; without Catholic priests there is no Holy Mass. For that reason, the episcopal candidates were selected by common



consent between Archbishop Lefebvre and the Superior General.

Angelus Press: After the consecrations in 1988, you were the Superior General of a little congregation having difficulties with Rome and having five bishops, including the founder! But its missionary expansion was unbelievable. How did you experience these contradictions?

Fr. Schmidberger: When the archbishop relinquished control of the Society in 1983, it had foundations in 12 countries: France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England,

Ireland, the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Australia. Five more foundations were added in 1984: Mexico, Columbia, South Africa, Holland, and Portugal. The Society was established in Gabon, India, New Zealand, and Chile in 1986, and in Zimbabwe in 1987. Then in 1988 Holy Cross Seminary in Australia opened its doors.

Angelus Press: After that, the external expansion was slowed strategically, particularly because it was necessary to strengthen the internal work. It was not until 1993 that we would see the first foundation in Poland and the >



extension of the apostolate to the countries of Eastern Europe.

Fr. Schmidberger: Priestly ordinations in those years were very numerous. The seminary in Ecône was so crowded that it became necessary to subdivide it and to start a new seminary in Flavigny, France in 1986.

Of course it was not easy to direct this work, because it was necessary to strengthen internal cohesiveness and at the same time respond to requests by the faithful throughout the world who were begging for us to come. With the grace of God, the Society succeeded rather well, not without many difficulties, trials, and crosses, but also with much joy and profound consolations.

Angelus Press: Do you have any special memory from those years of missionary expansion?

Fr. Schmidberger: Everywhere people thanked us for our help in keeping the Catholic Faith. Could there be any greater joy than to contribute to sustaining the Faith in the hearts of many families and celebrating the Holy Mass, according to its ancient and venerable rite in numerous countries? All this has left beautiful memories deeply engraved in my mind and always lifts my soul in gratitude and awe towards God.

December 8, 1984 was an absolutely unforgettable day when the Society, with all the superiors gathered in Ecône, solemnly consecrated itself to the Mother of God, so that it would no longer be *our* work, but *her* work, and so that she might keep each one of its members staunchly faithful through all trials.

Angelus Press: At the death of the archbishop, you had become an orphan. To what extent did the archbishop continue to be your counselor, and how?

Fr. Schmidberger: First, let me answer this way: shortly after the death of this great man, Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum asked me if there were any miracles attributed to Archbishop Lefebvre. I told him that the greatest miracle that he did every day was the maintenance of the Society, as well as its continual expansion. The cardinal smiled and seemed satisfied with this

answer.

In addition, our founding father left all of us a rich inheritance, especially this watchword: “Neither liberal, nor modernist, nor schismatic,” (*i.e.*, separated from Rome or falling into the sedevacantist error), but to remain Catholic, Roman Catholic. Furthermore, we simply follow his teaching, his spirituality, his numerous spiritual instructions, and his example so as to remain on the path he had charted. And most certainly, from his place in eternity, he supports in a special way those who bear the responsibility for the Society of St. Pius X, just as he did during his lifetime.

Angelus Press: Do you have a greater sense of all of Archbishop Lefebvre’s virtues now that he has let you direct his work?

Fr. Schmidberger: The archbishop gave us a wonderful example of humility and a sense of the common good, whether for the work that he had founded or for the Church. After his resignation, he took second place at the table, leaving the first to the Superior General. In such moments, it is a matter of recalling Christ’s words: “When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: ‘We are unprofitable servants.’” (Lk. 17:10).

Finally, we have the obligation—or rather, we have the honor—of serving a cause that goes far beyond our little selves: God and His kingdom on earth. What a grace, what a privilege!

Angelus Press: From the Society’s beginnings, you have been closest to Archbishop Lefebvre in his dealings with Rome. The circumstances changed from Paul VI to John Paul II. The Archbishop negotiated an agreement before yielding to evidence that he would not receive the needed help for Tradition. Then he consecrated the bishops. In your opinion, did he think that nothing else could be done with the Roman authorities and that only a miracle could convert them? Did he give you any instructions, advice for the future?

Fr. Schmidberger: After the episcopal consecrations, Archbishop Lefebvre very probably counted on the *possibility* of new discussions with Rome. One day, with regard to



the future direction of the Society and especially the forthcoming General Chapter in 1994, he told me in very precise terms:

“If Rome approaches you with new contacts, it would be better for a bishop not to be Superior General, because it might be difficult for Roman officials to deal with an ‘excommunicated’ bishop. If that proves not to be the case, then a bishop also could take over the leadership of the Society.”

He really expected that one day things would become normalized, would have to become normalized, especially given the facts: on the one hand the decline and the rapid, continual breakdown of the official Church; on the other hand the continual extension and growth of the Society.

Specifically in regard to such contacts, the archbishop gave us our marching orders: there can be no compromises on doctrine nor on the integrality of the Catholic Faith, but there could be flexibility in applying these principles. In other words: *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo* [unbending in the essentials, but gently in manner]. If the Roman officials, particularly the pope himself, calls us to lend a hand in the re-Christianization of society, then we can only be glad, while keeping watch over the conservation of our integrity, to remain what we are.

Angelus Press: Catholic Tradition through the profession of the Faith and its many works is very much alive today. The torch has been passed on to the next generation. What encouragement can you offer to those who are tempted by weariness or bitterness? What would you say to the young people who are now benefiting from the treasures that were preserved at the cost of such great efforts?

Fr. Schmidberger: There is only one solution: fight to the death modernism and liberalism in the heart of the Church with the weapons of the Spirit, *i.e.*, with sound teaching, a profound spirituality based on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and by a holy life. It is only when faith, liturgy, and life are completely in agreement and completely harmonious that our position is convincing, and, in the long run, will win the victory. Let us therefore continue to fight. God

Himself, in His own good time, will give the victory in the Church and in society, not to *us*, but to Christ the King and Eternal High Priest.

Moreover even here there are small signs of visible progress, for instance the formal granting of jurisdiction to hear confessions to the priests of the Society during the Holy Year, regardless of the fact that we are giving this Sacrament validly and licitly on the basis of the state of necessity in the Church. To sum up, weariness and bitterness are both very bad advisors, especially in today’s difficult situation.

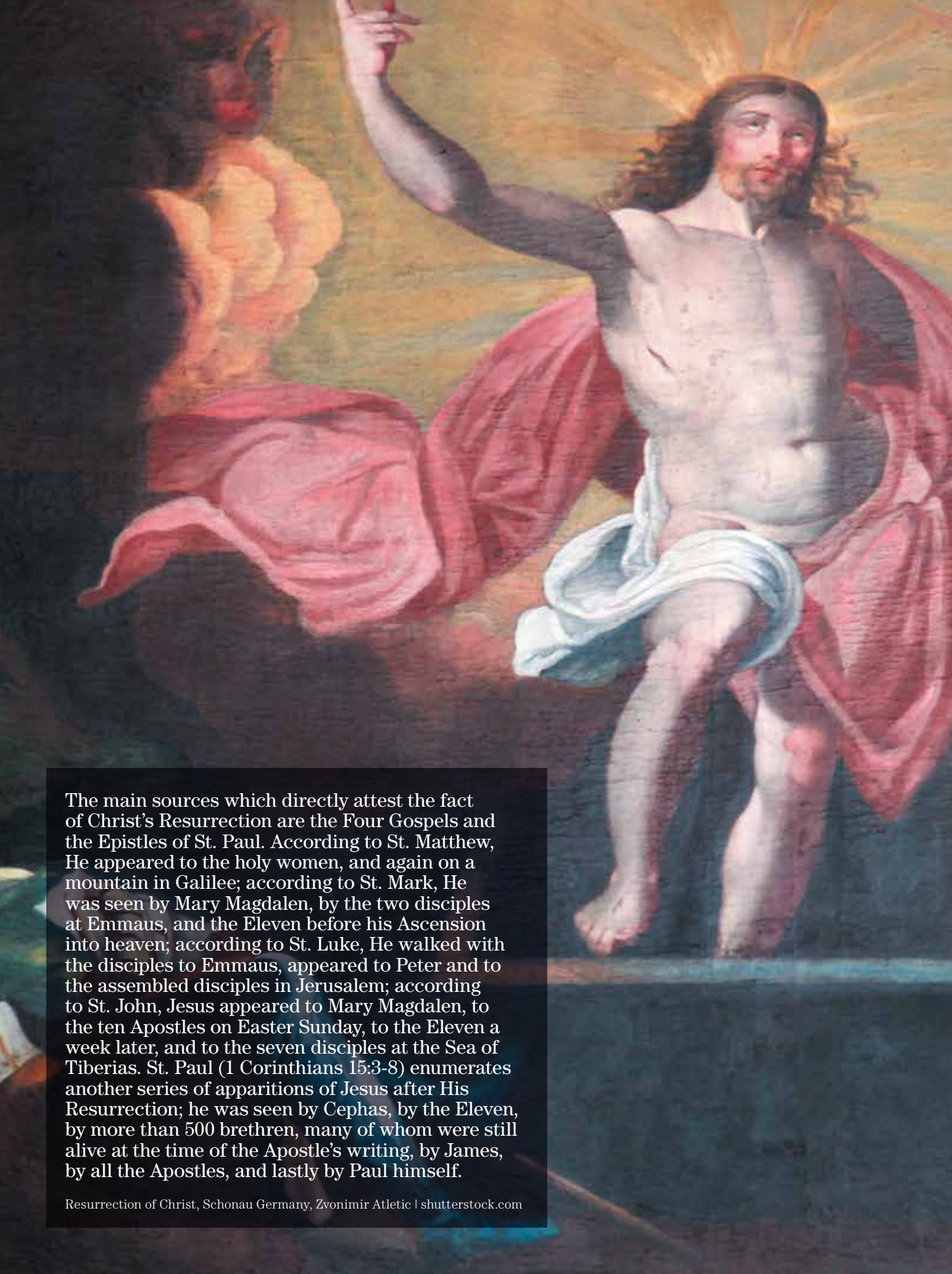
Angelus Press: This past year you traveled to the United States to preach the retreats for the priests. You likewise visited several of our American chapels. What were your impressions? What message do you have for our American readers?

Fr. Schmidberger: These two journeys to the United States of America allowed me to see that the apostolate there is flourishing. I can only congratulate my colleagues, thank them for their work, and encourage them to continue on this Catholic path. There is no other solution for the problems in the Church and in society.

I would like to thank the American faithful just as much for their energetic support and their help throughout these years. Their loyalty has paid off and borne much fruit. Keep working, dear faithful, with all your talents, all your abilities. With a clear mind and an ardent heart, continue to support this work, which is not our work, but properly that of Our Lady, of her Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart.

Angelus Press: With all our heart we thank you, Father. Along with our congratulations and thanks for these 40 years of faithful service, be assured of our prayers. *Ad multos annos!* We make our own this prayer offered by Archbishop Lefebvre on the day of your ordination:

“Fidelity, if it is linked to the virtue of faith at its foundation, in its practice is linked to the virtue of fortitude. It is this fortitude, this gift of fortitude, that we ask the Holy Ghost to give to you in your priesthood.”



The main sources which directly attest the fact of Christ's Resurrection are the Four Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. According to St. Matthew, He appeared to the holy women, and again on a mountain in Galilee; according to St. Mark, He was seen by Mary Magdalen, by the two disciples at Emmaus, and the Eleven before his Ascension into heaven; according to St. Luke, He walked with the disciples to Emmaus, appeared to Peter and to the assembled disciples in Jerusalem; according to St. John, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen, to the ten Apostles on Easter Sunday, to the Eleven a week later, and to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. St. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) enumerates another series of apparitions of Jesus after His Resurrection; he was seen by Cephas, by the Eleven, by more than 500 brethren, many of whom were still alive at the time of the Apostle's writing, by James, by all the Apostles, and lastly by Paul himself.



O&A

by Fr. Juan-Carlos Iscara, SSPX

How can we explain the loss of a family spirit today?

All modern society is experiencing a loss of family spirit. The first reason we have to bring up is the growing invasion of sentiment over nature or duty. One's personal feelings are more important than the Ten Commandments, one's urges and passion more important than reason. There is also the new priority of personal freedom which allows everything and anything to be done simply because it is the expression of the person. Modern man is defined by freedom,

and he follows what conscience he wants to, whether his conscience has been duly formed or deformed. So, this recipe, applied to human generation, identifies sexual activity with self-gratification and animal functions and not at all with otherness and genuine love for the spouse and children.

This is directly opposed to the Church's teaching on the ends of marriage. If we set aside the incidental ends sought in a marriage, such as honor, wealth, and beauty, the proper ends of marriage are procreation and mutual help. Of these two, procreation is essential and primary, >



whereas the mutual help, along with the relief of concupiscence, is second and always subservient to it. Said otherwise, you cannot marry someone without being willing to open this marriage to human life. It is because the couple is open to having children that they seek the common life of roof and bed.

in order to avoid having children and uses this method to enjoy their organic activity without the risk of pregnancy. The name appears purely contraceptive. The Church prefers the term “Periodic Continence,” which stresses the partial abstention from conjugal relations, and thus, the virtue of temperance.

This might seem to be a mere battle of words, but this dual signification does not amount to the same thing. Periodic continence indicates clearly that the method is kept within boundaries. It should be periodic, within the fertile periods but also within the limits of the grave reasons urging its use. It speaks of continence which is ruled by temperance and prudence. Much prudent deliberation is needed before the spouses may be allowed to use it. Conditions must be weighed and met before going ahead (see Pius XII’s discourse to Midwives, October 29, 1951; November 26, 1951). This is not promoted but tolerated: the good is openly and absolutely promoted, something less good and tainted with evil, on the other hand, is tolerated. Hence, there is a certain reluctance which always accompanies the Church’s teachings on such matters, and this is to be explained with discretion on a one-to-one basis, and not trumpeted from the house-tops.



Does the order in the ends of marriage come from busy brains of obscure theologians?

Some may well say that when we are speaking of an order in the ends of marriage that this is the result for a abstract obscure reasoning of theologians out of touch with real marital issues, but this not at all true. God instituted marriage at the beginning of the creation of man: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen. 1:28). And this is a biological fact, manifested by the distinction of the sexes and the purpose of the sexual organs, called “genital,” precisely because this is what they are used for—to “engender”!



Is this a critique of the way the Church today promotes NFP?

Indeed. Today, no one gets married unless he has been bombarded with family planning and all its minute details. The final text of the Family Synod, published in October 2015, speaks of this, the fruit of a consensual dialogue between the spouses, in respect of the times and the dignity of the partner. It encourages the recourse to the methods founded on the “Natural rhythms of fecundity” (*Humanae Vitae* 11). Given as it is in the context of the modern selfish and >



What are we to think of Natural Family Planning (NFP) as a method?

The term NFP is a rather unsuitable expression. It signifies that the couple plans

Christian Culture

childless society, this is not bad. Yet, it tends to give it a public promotion which is out of place. Such matters are more suited to private conjugal conversations and to discussions in which advice is sought from the local pastor.

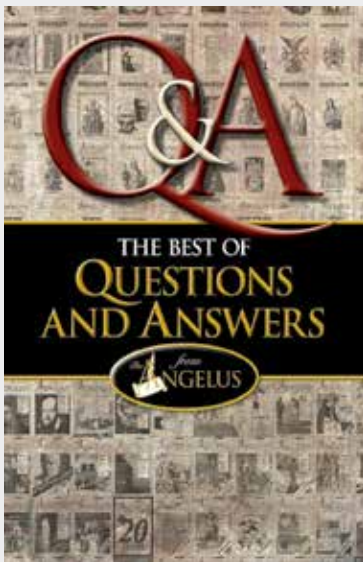


What reasons are given by Pius XII to allow periodic continence?

A. Such method can only be used when there is some grave reason because, as a rule, choosing the fertility periods as a matter of fact is the

mark of selfishness and concupiscence. Hence, the Pope mentions that to counter the natural order of things and allow for this method, one must have very grave reasons (medical, or things affecting the health of the mother; eugenic, or things affecting the health of the progeny; economic, such as living already at the poverty level; or social, such as the inability for parents to cope with education). Moreover, Pius XII explains clearly that periodic continence can last only so long as the reasons exist. And it must meet with the approval of both partners for, indeed, such a method demands no little self-control and could occasion serious temptations of faults against the marriage vows.

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Towards a “Protestantization” and an “Anglicanization”

In the French newspaper *Présent* on November 13, in answer to Anne Le Pape’s questions, Bishop Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary bishop of Astana in Kazakhstan, declared:

“This last assembly of the synod showed the entire world the image of a profoundly divided episcopate, some of whom wanted to change doctrinal and disciplinary measures which had already been decided by the pontifical Magisterium and the ordinary and universal Magisterium, in particular: the grave immorality and unnatural nature of acts of sodomy, and of practicing homosexuality; the impossibility of admitting impenitent adulterers to the sacraments; and the immorality of all practical forms of divorce. Not since the Arian crisis in the 4th century have we heard of Catholic bishops insolently and shamelessly proclaiming heresies or semi-heresies in an official assembly of the Church.”

The world was able to witness this appalling fact during the synod sessions. Bishop Schneider also said:

“It was also clear that the control of the principal administrative structures of the Synod (‘the behind-the-scenes power’) was resolutely placed in the hands of ecclesiastics who were in support of the said doctrines and semi-heretical practices. This display of power leads to the impression that in our days, one is free and has every right in the Church to propagate unorthodox theories with impunity, and even to be rewarded in the end for doing so. The nature of the bishops’ magisterial ministry consists in keeping and faithfully administering the deposit of the Faith, which does not personally or individually belong to them. One of the most important expressions of this ministry consists in shedding light upon the Catholic truths, without changing their meaning. On the contrary, in the Synod there was an eclipse of the truth which has caused a general confusion as to the discipline of the Church regarding divorced and civilly remarried Catholics. Pope St. Gregory I explains in the *Pastoral Rule*, II, 7, that in the head of the body of the Church, the bishops have the function of the eyes, and that if the bishops adopt the spirit of the world, they fill the eyes of the Church with a dust that clouds her vision.”



Have the worries you voiced for the future of the family proven justified? Some of the Synod Fathers feared there would be ambiguous declarations. What was the outcome?

Among other ambiguous declarations, I would like to point out the ones I consider the most dangerous, as they undermine the very bases of Catholic truths:

- The accent placed on the positive qualities of persons living in an objective and permanent state of sin, thus minimizing the reality and gravity of the evil. It is a sort of moral camouflage and a spiritual illusion.
- The improper and inadmissible application of the principle of moral imputability to the case of irregular conjugal unions. This presupposes, or at least favors, the theory of a “fundamental option” and the theory that denies the distinction between venial sin and mortal or grave sin, both of which theories are condemned by the Magisterium.
- Making admittance to Holy Communion depend, in the end, on the divorced person’s own decision, according to the state of his conscience and his discernment in his “heart of hearts” with the help of his confessor, without requiring a life of complete continence. This opens the door to the Protestant principle of subjective judgment, and thus to a sort of “Protestantization.”
- Making admittance to Holy Communion for divorced and civilly remarried Catholics depend on the position of the local bishop. This opens the door to the principle of doctrinal and disciplinary particularism, and therefore to a sort of “Anglicanization,” which leads to the dissolution of true catholicity.

Issues of Death and of Life

Over the course of the past year, there have been numerous examples of individuals who have demanded, and often won, the “right to die with dignity.” In all of these cases, the persons involved were suffering from chronic, incurable or terminal illnesses and wanted to end their lives before they became completely incapacitated. As abhorrent as these cases have appeared to the correctly-formed Catholic conscience, one could at least understand the reasoning of the persons involved, as faulty as it may be.

Late last year another “right to die” came to the attention of the world which, in addition to defying the moral law, defied human reason. A British woman decided that she wanted to discontinue her life-preserving kidney dialysis because, as she put it, her life had “lost its sparkle” and that she did not want to be “ugly or old.” Sad to say, the judge in the case decided that she did indeed have the right to stop the dialysis, even though this was against the advice of her physicians and family.

To the judge’s credit, in acknowledging that she had the right to refuse treatment under the law, he clearly saw her decision as wrong. He wrote, *C [the woman’s identity in court papers] has led a life characterized by impulsive and self-centered decision-making without guilt or regret, has had four marriages and a number of affairs and has, it is said, spent the money of her husbands and lovers recklessly before moving on when things got difficult or the money ran out. It is clear that during her life C has placed a significant premium on youth and beauty and on living a life that, in C’s words, ‘sparkles.’ My decision does no more than confirm that in law C is entitled to refuse the treatment offered to her for her benefit by her dedicated treating team.*

It is most distressing that God’s precious gift of life could be so easily tossed aside by the loss of “sparkle” in one’s existence or because one does not want to be “ugly or old,” as if loss of sparkle, age, or beauty indicated the value of

one’s life.

While this was transpiring in Great Britain, a man from Texas was put in jail for brandishing a gun in order to prevent his comatose son from being taken off life support following a stroke. Doctors in the hospital had declared the son brain dead and had alerted an organ donor group about his imminent death. Believing that his son might still recover, the man entered the hospital room and held hospital staff at bay until he was arrested.

This story did end happily. The father was released from jail and his son has made a significant recovery—called a miracle by doctors—and had nothing but praise for his father. He stated that: *There was a law broken [entering the hospital with a gun], but it was broken for all the right reasons. I’m here now because of it... It was love. It was love. It’s the duty of a parent to protect your children and that’s all he did. Everything good that made me a man is because of that man sitting next to me.*

Although this incident did end well, it is very important to remember that there is much pressure placed on doctors by the various organ donor groups to declare a patient “brain dead” as quickly as possible. Sad to say, the “harvesting” of human organs is fast becoming a lucrative enterprise, and this often leads to not only pressure being put on doctors to declare brain death, but also on grieving family members to agree to the organ donation.

Any Catholic family faced with a situation similar to the one above should consult their parish priest for moral guidance on how to proceed. Many hospitals take the organs from the patients while they are still on life support and their hearts are still beating; in this case, it is the taking of the organs which causes the death of the patient, which is, of course, a sin against the 5th Commandment.



The Vatican and the Environment

Ever since the publication of Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, the Vatican has been working overtime in order to promote the environmentalist agenda, which is more rooted in secular humanism than in the Faith.

On December 8, 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a light display was projected onto the facade of St. Peter's Basilica. The theme of the display revolved around the protection of "mother earth" and even included some images of ancient pagan deities. Archbishop Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, stated that the light show: *present[s] images inspired of Mercy, of humanity, of the natural world, and of climate*

a means of preserving the resources of the earth. The Cardinal made the following astonishing remarks: *This has been talked about, and the Holy Father on his trip back from the Philippines also invited people to some form of birth control, because the church has never been against birth control and people spacing out births and all of that. So yes, it can offer a solution...*

Having more mouths to feed is a challenge for us to be productive also, which is one of the key issues being treated over here, the cultivation and production of food, and its distribution...

So yes, it engages us in food security management, so we ensure that everybody is fed and all of that. The amount of population



changes. The Archbishop also noted that it was intended to emphasize the Vatican's support of the United Nations Climate Control Conference going on in Paris at the time of the light show. Many Catholics voiced their outrage that St. Peter's Basilica should be used for such a secular purpose, especially one which effectively glorified the worship of "mother earth" and included pagan deities.

In another incident, Peter Cardinal Turkson, in Paris for the U.N. Climate Control Conference, spoke about controlling the population growth as

that is critical for the realization of this is still something we need to discover, yet the Holy Father has also called for a certain amount of control of birth."

Although the Cardinal did make clear that the controlling of births could not be brought about using artificial means, it is obvious that his remarks cannot be reconciled with the Church's traditional teaching regarding procreation.

It appears more and more obvious that Pope Francis has aligned his vision of the Church with the vision of the secular world.

Journalistic Hypocrisy

In mid December 2015, the news media reported with horror that the Islamic State (ISIS) had killed 38 babies after a Sharia law judge ordered a fatwa authorizing its members to, *kill newborn babies with Down Syndrome and congenital deformities and disabled children*. Not surprisingly, and quite rightly, the news media condemned these latest actions and made the obvious reference to the killing of the mentally and physically disabled in Nazi Germany.

A day or two after this news came to light, Bethany Mandel wrote an Op-Ed piece for the *New York Post*, which, like all the major newspapers throughout the country, had the story of the ISIS fatwa prominently featured. Mrs. Mandel wrote about a new “reality series” created for a major television network which featured young adults with Down Syndrome. Regarding the series, she wrote: “I’m here. I’m alive. I’m human.” That’s what John, one of the stars of A&E’s new reality show “Born This Way,” proclaimed during the premiere episode last week.

You see, John has Down syndrome. It seems bizarre that someone capable of formulating a sentence thinks it’s necessary to defend his own humanity, but sadly, John was speaking for himself and millions of others like him who, based on a prenatal genetic test, were recommended for abortion. John survived. Most don’t. The statistics are hard to pin down, but experts estimate 90 percent of babies with Down syndrome are never born. Think about the last time you saw a child with the telltale facial features indicative of the genetic condition. It’s far more likely you’ll see them in an adult, who was born before prenatal testing became routine. That doesn’t mean Down syndrome is becoming less prevalent; it means that parents are less and less likely to carry these pregnancies to term.

After writing about why some of the families chose to be part of this series, Mandel drove home

her point very succinctly when she stated: Weeding out genetic diseases like Down, whose sufferers can and still do lead full and healthy lives, is eugenics, pure and simple. The most extreme version comes from the barbaric terrorists of ISIS, who reportedly issued a decree to execute babies born with Down and other genetic diseases... The fact that we need a TV show to humanize individuals with Down syndrome is deeply troubling to begin with.



Those with disabilities are suddenly expendable and deemed unworthy of the effort it takes to raise them. We need convincing to believe in their value as human beings. When John’s mother was told she was pregnant with a child with Down, she was told by doctors, “Don’t expect a lot . . . He will never be a productive member of society.” With more and more babies with Down aborted, it has become vital to show the world just how wonderful and, yes, normal, life with a Down syndrome family member can be.

Clearly Mrs. Mandel recognized the irony (indeed, the hypocrisy) of a news media condemning the actions of ISIS while saying nary a word about the number of Down Syndrome children who are murdered in their mothers’ wombs right here in the United States.

(nypost.com/2015/12/14/the-people-that-so-many-of-us-dont-consider-people/)



Bakers Pay the Price

The owners of an Oregon bakery, Aaron and Melissa Klein, were ordered to pay \$144,000 in damages by the state Labor Commissioner because they refused to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple's "wedding." The Kleins stated that their religious beliefs prohibited them from participating in a same sex "marriage." Disregarding this argument, the Commissioner found that the Kleins had violated the lesbians'

civil rights and imposed the \$144,000 fine. The Kleins have appealed the Commissioner's decision, but in the meantime had to pay the fine in order to avoid any further penalties.

There can be little doubt that this is just the first in a long line of penalties and persecutions awaiting any business, group, or individual who has the courage to stand up to the homosexual lobby.

Persecution of Christians Continues

Throughout the end of 2015 and into the New Year, the news for Catholics living in areas controlled by Islamic governments has been grim.

The parishioners of the Catholic parish in Garissa, Kenya must pass through several security officials with hand held metal detectors before being able to enter the church to assist at Holy Mass. These security precautions were put in place by government officials in the wake of the killing of nearly 150 Christians by Muslims last April. At least in Kenya, which is 80% Christian, the government has made efforts to offer security against the growing threat of violence aimed at the followers of Our Lord. The April attack was not the first of its kind, though it was the most deadly. In 2012, parishioners entering the Church were attacked by grenade-throwing Muslims intent upon killing as many people as possible. Fortunately the attack did not result in any deaths and relatively few injuries.

As Catholics throughout the world prepared to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord, word came that the countries of Somalia and Brunei, both of which are overwhelmingly Muslim, had banned the public celebration of Christmas. Brunei, a small sultanate in Southeast Asia, which is ruled by Sharia law, has imposed a fine of \$20,000, up to five years in prison, or both for anyone who is caught publicly celebrating Christmas. Brunei's sultan outlawed Christmas on the grounds that celebrating it "excessively and openly" could

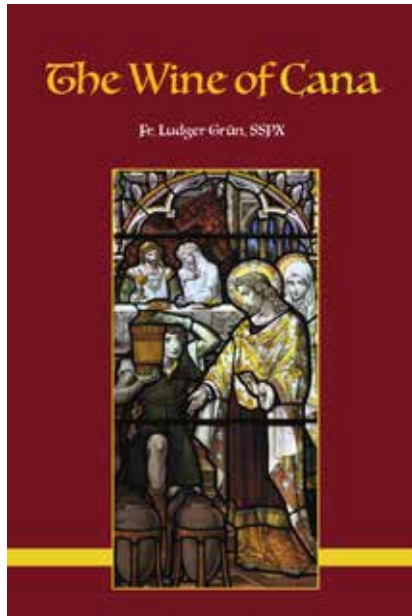
lead his Muslim population astray. Somalia has also banned the celebration of the Nativity for the same reason—that public displays of the Christian faith could harm the faith and sensibilities of the Muslim population.

Although the continued silence by western governments regarding this ongoing persecution



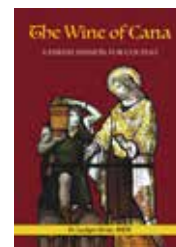
is troubling, what is even more disturbing is the silence of Rome. It would almost appear that there is a fear, on the part of the Vatican, that raising any sort of public outcry would damage the ecumenical effort of Pope Francis to reach out to Muslims.

The Wine of Cana



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



Virgin, Wife and Mother

by Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta, SSPX

Introduction

The intent and purpose of this conference is to develop some considerations, based on the Gospel and on Catholic doctrine, and to raise and direct our gaze beyond the sad and suffocating reality that surrounds us towards the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—and in a special manner to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, model and guide of every Christian, but most especially, of the Christian wife and mother.

Attack on the Family

It is our lot to live through times never before imagined in the history of humanity and in the history of the Church: a total and systematic attack on the institution of the family, on marriage and the spouses, and on parents and children. This is an attack on the natural order and above all on the

supernatural order, that is, on the sacrament of matrimony and on the sanctity of the family. This is an attack, finally—and this is the most surprising—emanating from within society and from within the very bosom of the Church.

It is evident—it is, as they say, public and notorious—that a very important number of shepherds, those who comprise the hierarchy of the Church, in their eagerness to be reconciled with the modern world and to arrive at the ultimate consequences of the liberal principles adopted by the Second Vatican Council, are totally dedicated to a real moral revolution within the Church.

Now is not the right time to expand on this subject. Suffice it to keep in mind for the purpose of this conference that, in the Church—and this supremely concerns us as Catholics—we are living through a most grievous attempt to subvert the doctrine on the family and to attack in an unprecedented >

manner the sanctity of matrimony and, what is far worse, the sanctity of the Church Herself, Her doctrine, Her discipline, Her institutions and Her members.

The Remedy

You would then understand how, in the face of these joint attacks of impiety and heresy, it is very useful for us to contemplate, defend, and above all, to live the ideal of the Holy Family, to imitate the example of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, God's masterpiece among purely human creatures, and at the same time to direct our gaze and our prayers towards Her who is the protector and the guardian of faith and of virtue, of truth, and of holiness.

Impossible Ideal?

Here someone might object: But Hers is an ideal which is so perfect that it is unrealizable, so high that it is not of this world. To which we simply answer with the words of Our Lord in the Gospel: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48) As St. Jerome says, "God does not ask the impossible, but teaches and commands perfection."

St. Augustine teaches that the unique example of the Holy Family of Nazareth highlights concretely the spiritual and supernatural aspect of Christian marriage. While maintaining the value of the primary end of married life, which is to give children to the Church, the Holy Family's example manifests the excellence and even the superiority of the union of hearts and orientates the spouses to the most elevated practice of the evangelical virtues.

Thus, the ideal that we are about to consider reveals to us that which is highest and most perfect in matrimony and motherhood, that perfection which each wife is to imitate and practice according to her own condition, in order to tend steadily to the perfection of the Christian wife and mother, whose model is the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

For this, we shall consider Our Lady firstly as the spouse of St. Joseph, then as mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, we shall draw some conclusions, applying them to the Catholic wife and mother.

The Most Holy Virgin as Spouse of St. Joseph

Why Matrimony?

The first question that comes to mind is why did the Most Blessed Virgin voluntarily choose matrimony? The ultimate reason is in fulfillment of her perfect conformity with the Will of God and the total abandonment of self into the hands of God. She was following Divine Providence rather than anticipating it. Besides, she chose matrimony because it presented itself not only as reconcilable with, but very well-suited to, her vow of virginity, given the conditions in those days of a young Hebrew maiden who was descendent and heiress of David. The marriage to St. Joseph was in view of the common ideal of purity and virginity that animated those two hearts.

The plans and designs of Divine Providence were admirably ordered towards the virginal conception of the Messiah, to the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Redemption.

Suitable Marriage

Why was this marriage suitable with regard to our human condition? Among the reasons St. Thomas gives, there are two that are of greatest importance to our theme.

It was suitable, in the first place, to symbolize the union of Christ and the Church, a union in which, while the Church Herself remained a virgin, She was united to Her spouse, Christ. If every matrimony symbolizes this union, the marriage of the Virgin and St. Joseph symbolizes it perfectly. As Mary is figure and archetype of the Church, so like her, the Church, remaining virgin, is nonetheless fertile by the Holy Ghost. This admirable image sheds light on the greatness of Christian marriage, just as does St. Paul, who says: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the Church, being Himself Savior of His Body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it: That he might sanctify it..." (Eph. 5:22-26). Certainly Mary and Joseph fully accomplished this ideal, giving an example to Christian couples.



It was suitable, secondly, that in one person, Mary most Holy, virginity and matrimony should be honored at the same time, to the everlasting reproof of those who would hurl invectives and attacks against one or the other, or against both, as in our current times. And we may also add that this second reason gives to wives an example of the spirit of chastity and purity which should animate them.

True Marriage

There are some who, unable to reconcile virginity and matrimony, have cast doubts upon and even denied the reality of the matrimony between Mary and Joseph. Nonetheless, it is necessary to say that this fact is beyond all doubt, since Sacred Scripture provides clear and explicit testimony.

St. Matthew says, "Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (1:16), and in the verses that follow he says, "Joseph her husband, being a just man..." (1:19). The evangelist gives to the Most Holy Virgin the name of wife: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife," and he gives us the reason: "for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost." (1:20)

St. Luke says, referring to the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census ordered by Augustus, "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child" (Lk 2:4-5).

The Gospels call Joseph the father of Christ. And, likewise, Jesus is called the son of Joseph. Besides, Mary and Joseph are named the parents of Jesus. And the only explanation for this is that Joseph, by a true and lawful matrimony, was the husband of Mary. St. Augustine says concerning this, "They were both worthy, by their faithful marriage, to be called parents of Christ, and not only was she worthy to be called mother of Christ, but he also father, as the spouse of His mother; and he is father and spouse through affection, not through the flesh." Thus, there was between Joseph and Mary a true marriage.

First End and Goods of Marriage

St. Thomas, for his part, says that between "the

Virgin, Mother of God, and St. Joseph there was an absolutely true marriage, because it realizes the primary perfection of matrimony, which consists in an indissoluble union of souls, in virtue of which the spouses are to keep for each other an unalterable fidelity.

After pointing out that their marriage also realized the second perfection as to the education of children, St. Thomas concludes with the classic text of St. Augustine, "We see all the goods of marriage realized in the parents of Christ: offspring, fidelity, and the sacrament. The offspring is the same Lord Jesus; fidelity in that there was no adultery whatsoever; the sacrament in that neither was there divorce. "

It is precisely these goods of matrimony, lived and kept in an eminent way by St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary, which are attacked even in the bosom of the Church, as for example: "paternal responsibility" and communion to "divorced and remarried persons."

Sublime Perfection

It is fitting for us to reflect now on the sublime union of the Virgin with St. Joseph; there had to exist between them an extraordinarily perfect harmony of hearts and of affections.

It is impossible to imagine that the Lord, who had prepared for Himself such a perfect mother, would not also have prepared with a superabundance of grace the "spouse" of His mother, the head of the family, and him whom Jesus would call "father."

There would necessarily have been harmony of hearts and wills, of affections and of mutual understanding. Now, then, to say harmony and understanding with respect to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is to affirm the most sublime excellence in St. Joseph and the most ineffable union of hearts. The perfection of Mary demanded also the perfection of Joseph and the greatest harmony with Mary's heart, from which we can deduce how perfect and sublime was their marital union.

Marriage and Virginity

How can we reconcile the marriage of Mary Most Holy with the vow of virginity? According to St. Thomas, as well as in the opinion of the best mariologists, God made it known to Mary the certainty that this marriage would not only bring no blem- >

ish whatsoever to her purity, but was also indispensable to her. And Mary accepted from the very Hand of God the hand of Joseph, who in turn was animated by the same sentiment as his most chaste spouse.

In fact, the marriage of the Virgin, far from casting a shadow over her virginity, does nothing but make its incomparable splendor stand out forcefully. Bossuet describes it admirably:

“In the union of Mary and Joseph, St. Augustine sees above all the contract which binds them mutually, and it is precisely here, in the mutual self-donation, that we must admire the triumph of purity together with the reality of that marriage. For Mary truly belongs to Joseph and Joseph to the heavenly Mary, and this through real marriage; in virtue of which, the one gives himself to the other. But, in what way does one give one to the other? Purity, behold your triumph! Each gives to the other his virginity, and over this virginity they reciprocally yield a mutual right. Which right? That of preserving each other’s virginity. Yes, Mary has the right to guard Joseph’s virginity, and Joseph has the right to guard the virginity of Mary. Neither the one nor the other can dispose of it, and all the fidelity of this marriage consists in the custody of virginity. This is the promise that joins them; this is the pact that unites them. It is two virginities which unite to be mutually preserved for eternity, through a chaste correspondence of modest desires, like two stars that do not collide, except to radiate their light. Such is the bond of this marriage, says St. Augustine, so much more stable as more inviolable must be its promises, precisely because they are holier.” (*1st Panegyric of St. Joseph*)

Authority and Obedience in the Holy Family

The gospel of the loss and finding of Jesus in the Temple clearly shows us what was the practice of authority and of obedience in the Holy Family. Giving the primacy to St. Joseph, the Virgin says to Jesus: “Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing”; and the evangelist sums up the relationship between parents and Child with these few profound words, “and he was subject to them.” (Lk. 2:48 and 51)

The holy Gospels indicate in many other ways the special preeminence of St. Joseph: for example, in giving the genealogy of the Savior or in the account of the flight to Egypt, in which the obedience of the

Virgin Mary shines forth. The predominant character of all these accounts is the perfect and lasting subjection of Mary to Joseph and of Jesus to Joseph and Mary. In this there is the evocative and enlightening inversion of two orders, that of perfection and that of hierarchical authority. In the order of dignity the chain is: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; in the order of family hierarchy, it is to the contrary: Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

The obedience and humility of this voluntary subjection of Our Lord and of Mary Most Holy will be, for all ages, the best response to rebellious souls who neither respect nor obey the hierarchies and authorities constituted by God Himself.

Mutual Love

Let us now consider the mutual love of the spouses.

The Most Holy Virgin freely and fully consented to take St. Joseph for her husband. Her Immaculate Heart surely loved St. Joseph with the true love of a fiancée and a wife.

Under the divine impulse and following the designs of divine Providence, she went ahead with matrimony and motioned her heart to love Joseph. She did this with simplicity, respecting the order of charity, and following the Will of God, an admirable example for young Christians in the choice both of a state in life and of a particular spouse!

This love, then, of Mary and of Joseph, was a real love of wife and of husband. St. Augustine celebrates the harmonies of this marriage, in which nothing was missing in the union of thoughts and desires, of hearts and of wills. Within this love they shared the joys and the sorrows—as detailed in the gospel of the Infancy—and within which they were one in loving Jesus, in perfect harmony and, as it were, fused together as parents.

St. Joseph as Model

We may draw a spiritually useful conclusion from what we have said: St. Joseph is at the same time the model of husbands and of souls consecrated to Mary.

As St. Thomas teaches, when God gives someone a mission, He gives him also all the appropriate graces to fulfill it well. Surely it was so with St. Joseph, as spouse of the Virgin Mary. And so it is with all spouses, principally through the sacrament



of matrimony.

However, the indispensable grace needed to become the ideal spouse of Mary is precisely that of a consecration, which is a total and perpetual dedication to Mary, with the consequent intimate life of union with her. In marriage one affirms, in fact, a total and perpetual dedication, one affirms a full and perpetual community of life.

St. Joseph gave himself totally to Mary, just as Mary gave herself to Joseph. He who loves gives himself, and the purer is his love, so the more total is his gift. The Virgin Mary was the pivot around which life revolved; Joseph was united to her in mind, heart, and action.

Thus, he lived completely and continuously with Mary and for Mary. With Mary: in her company, in her presence. With her, in fact, he lived, he prayed, rejoiced, and suffered; with her in life and in death. For Mary: he always did everything for love of Mary, to please her, to support her, to protect her, to honor her.

That is why St. Joseph is the perfect model of the good husband, the patron and example of every person consecrated to the Blessed Virgin.

The Most Holy Virgin as Mother of Christ

The Most Holy Virgin Mary is really and truly the Mother of God, since she brought forth, according to the flesh, the Incarnate Word of God. This can be deduced with certainty from two truths expressly revealed in Sacred Scripture: that Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and that Jesus is God.

One of the effects of this Divine Maternity is the establishment in the Virgin Mary of a true affinity with God and a very special relationship with each Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. That is why she has been called “the complement of the Trinity.”

Perhaps the most admirable aspect of her relation with the Son, with Jesus, is that of her perfect likeness to and harmony with Him.

Supernatural

In the first place, theirs was a supernatural harmony. We know what richness of virtue and plenitude of grace inundated the soul of the Virgin Mary.

Although one’s sanctity is essentially a reflection of that of Our Lord, the Common Model, this reflection presents a different expression in each soul and in each saint. By contrast, the one that shines admirably in the Virgin is precisely an integral likeness, capable of harmonizing integrally with her Divine Son—a spiritual harmony—and it allows her to completely understand His Heart, as is the case of every maternal heart. The greatness and perfection of Jesus was profoundly interior; that of the Most Blessed Virgin had to be interior too, that is to say, of grace, of wisdom, of virtue.

Physical and Psychological Harmony

Just as there was in the supernatural order a correspondence between Jesus and Mary, so was there harmony in the natural order. The action of the Holy Ghost fully realized the motherhood of Mary Most Holy: with supreme perfection the life of the Virgin poured itself out on her Son, communicating to Him her natural qualities.

If the communication of the life of the mother creates, in accordance with the natural law, a physical and psychological likeness between mother and child, this must have taken place with particular intensity in this case, as there was no paternal concourse.

Jesus was, then, physically very like the Virgin: the perfection of His body was a reflection of the perfection of the immaculate body of Mary. And, since the specific temperament is joined to the corporal element, so also there was an admirable psychological likeness.

Divine Providence, in forming the body of Mary, had in mind the humanity that the Word would assume in her, just as in forming her most pure Heart, It had in mind the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Her Love for Jesus

There was a harmony of sentiments between Jesus and Mary, the harmony of love. In Mary love and devotion to God were united, in the measure of her plenitude of grace, with the affection full of tenderness towards her Son, as in the most tender of mothers towards the most lovable child, in the measure of the unlimited natural and supernatural perfection, and the infinite grandeur and perfection of her Son.

To give a singular intensity to her maternal ten- >

derness, there was the exceptional sensibility of her Immaculate Heart, full of grace and prepared by God to make her—as Coredemptrix—the co-sufferer with Jesus in His suffering. There was also the special fact that the Divine Son, without a natural father, was in a special way wholly hers.

He was both God and her Son! All hers and an infinite treasure, the masterpiece of God, the God-Man.

Her Love for Us

But in the Most Holy Virgin, her love for Jesus could not be separated from her love for us. She could not for an instant forget Jesus as our Savior and victim for our redemption, which is the very reason for her motherhood.

Her maternal tenderness, therefore, overflowed—from the Annunciation through Calvary and to heavenly bliss—to each one of us. And as things that are equivalent are equally loved, in the grand vision of redemption and of the love in which Jesus was presented to her as victim to be totally immolated for each soul, each one of us in her eyes acquired, in a certain way, as much value and became as lovable as was Jesus Himself to her. She loved us then and she loves us now with the same love as she loves Jesus and as she loves our being part of Our Lord, the Head of the Mystical Body. In a certain way, the love and tenderness that she had for Jesus overflowed upon us all.

Characteristics of Her Love

From the aforesaid and from all passages of the Gospel that speak of the Blessed Virgin, we can deduce the most important traits of her heart's motherly love: a love supernatural and natural, superabundant and full of tenderness, communicative and expansive, disinterested to the point of total surrender, strong and self-sacrificing.

Conclusion

Now it is time to draw conclusions and make applications.

Keeping in mind these reflections concerning the Most Holy Virgin Mary and about the dispositions of her Immaculate Heart, we can trace the outline and draw the portrait of the Catholic wife and mother.

This portrait can be summarized in the love, in the vocation to love that gives and gives itself generously and totally. It shall be a family life devoted to husband and children, to be the heart of the home and the family's bond of unity.

And what shall be the characteristic traits of this charity?

Towards the husband it shall take the form of a love that is faithful, serviceable, chaste and modest, and respectful and obedient.

To the children it shall be, before and above all, spiritual and supernatural. And I would like to insist on this, which is also a grave obligation for the father. St. Augustine says boldly that "indeed, one has the intention to engender in order to regenerate, that is to say, that those who are born children of this world, be reborn as children of God." And he adds elsewhere: "This intention in the union of Christians is not ordained for the purpose of giving life to children so that they go no farther than this world, but that they be regenerated in Christ, so that they may never part from Him." And in another complementary text: "In providing for the children, it is needed to receive them with love and to educate them religiously."

It is particularly the honor and privilege of the mother to transmit faith and religion; to form Jesus in the hearts of her children; to educate them in piety, in the fear and the love of God. Her main mission shall be to elevate them to the supernatural order in such a way that they remain in it, with a solid spiritual foundation. It is not a matter merely of having children, but to bring forth children for the Church and for heaven.

And given the weak and vulnerable condition of children, in both body and soul, her love towards them shall need to be at once merciful, solicitous, strong, and self-sacrificing.

Her love towards all members of the family should be sweet, kind, tender, discrete, and cheerful. It is mainly the mother who makes the house a home and the family a refuge of peace.

Finally, charity shall be extended in sacrifice, even to the point of separation and the giving of the children to God or in matrimony, and, perhaps, in some cases, by shedding abundant tears for the



conversion of a child, as did St. Monica: "The son of so many tears offered to God cannot be lost." And she merited for us St. Augustine.

The vocation of the Christian wife and mother is a vocation to charity that is both sublime and demanding. It is a vocation to be in the family and in the world a mirror of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of God and our Mother.

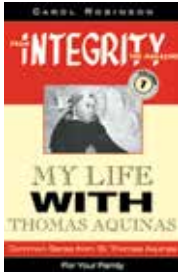
I shall finish with the words of St. Bernard:

"She is therefore that glorious Star which arose from Jacob, and which cast its radiance over the whole world, the Star whose splendor rejoices heaven, terrifies hell, and sheds its mild and beneficent influence on the poor exiles of earth. She is truly the Star which, being placed over this world's tempestuous sea, shines forth by the lustre of her merits and example."

"O you who find yourself tossed about by the storms of life, turn not your eyes from the brightness of this Star, if you would not be overwhelmed by its boisterous waves. If the winds of temptations rise, if you fall among the rocks of tribulations, look up at the Star, call on Mary. If anger, covetousness, or other passions beat on the vessel of your soul, look up to Mary. If you begin to sink in the gulf of melancholy and despair, think on Mary. In dangers, in distress, in perplexities, think on Mary, call on Mary. Let her not depart from your lips, let her not depart from your heart, and, that you may win the suffrage of her prayers, never depart from the example of her life. Following her, you will never go astray; when you implore her aid, you will never yield to despair; thinking on her, you will not err; under her patronage you will never wander; beneath her protection you will not fear; she being your guide, you will not weary; if she be your propitious Star, you will arrive safely in the port, and experience for yourself the truth of the words, 'And the Virgin's name was Mary.'" (Homily II "*Missus est*" #17).

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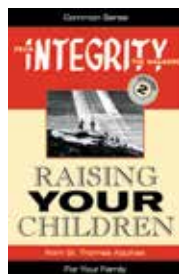
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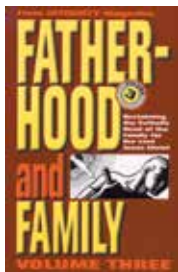
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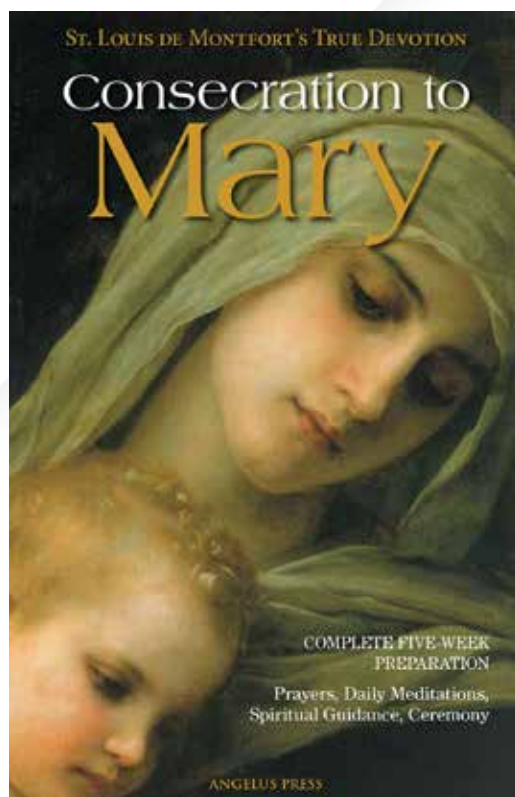
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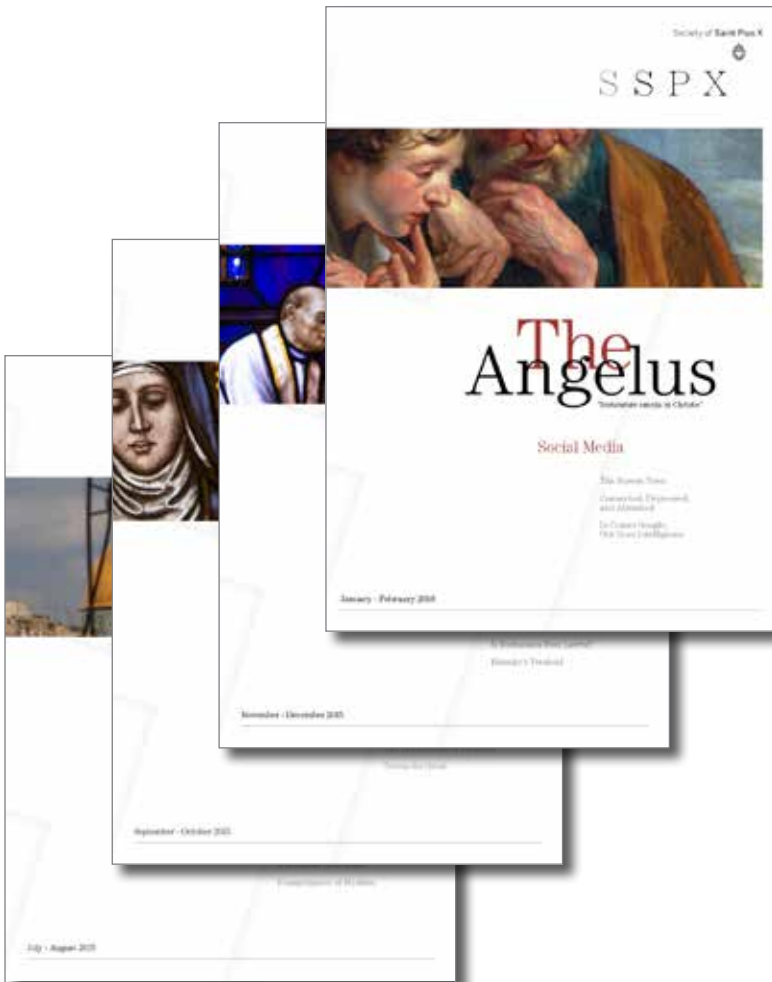
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The Last Word

Dear Readers,

Back to basics, to the basics of our faith in the sacrament of matrimony!

Instituted by God before the fall of our first parents for the propagation of mankind, marriage has always been considered by all developed civilizations an institution tied to religion and to sacred matters. Before Our Lord Jesus Christ, it was already a sacred sign of something holy, although not yet a sacrament: "Marriage has been from the very beginning an image of the Incarnation of the Word" (Leo XIII).

Tradition then adds that it was likely at Cana where that Our Lord, by His presence and His first miracle, added a new supernatural, sacramental virtue to this mysterious link between a man and a woman, and a new and great signification: His sacrificing love for His Church.

Remember: we are created in the image of God, and the charity of Christ remains forever. Therefore, Christian matrimony in the Divine Plan eminently signifies this Divine Love, faithful and fruitful, and is thus exclusive and indissoluble.

"What God has joined together..." applies not simply to the marriage bond, but also to the indissoluble union between the contract and the sacrament for two baptized persons. These two states are also so "one" that Pope Pius IX condemned those who say that "by virtue of a purely civil contract there can be a true marriage between Christians" or, in other words, he condemned those who say that "it is false to say that the contract of marriage between Christians is always a sacrament, or, if there is not contract, there is no sacrament" (Syllabus #73, #66). For two Christians, contract and sacrament are always one. One alone cannot receive the sacrament; it's either both or nothing.

The conciliar revolution now deepens: by seeking to separate the contract and the sacrament of matrimony (which is the motive behind the recognition of civil unions and the issue of communion to divorcees), matrimony, originally instituted as a sacrament of the New Law "as a remedy against the wound of sin" (St. Thomas), now is reduced to a simple civil union. This singular status will rather establish people in the state of sin, out of which it will be very difficult to emerge, thus to be saved eternally.

Have mercy on us, O Lord! *Exsurge, Domine!*

Fr. Daniel Couture

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