



S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Angels: The Messengers of God

“Love’s fire”: Angels in
the Divine Comedy

The Human Side of Angels

Making artistic Sense of the Angels

The Smiling Angel is a stunning piece of art from the 1200's adorning the façade of the prestigious cathedral of Reims. Smashed to pieces during the heavy bombardment of WWI by the Germans, the pieces were carefully preserved and finally restored to their original places. Called also the "Smile of Reims," it gives us insights into the "psychology" of these mysterious creatures. The Smiling Angel is evidently beaming with joy, with a real touch of humor, as he is looking you in the face. Perhaps this is a latent message of bliss awaiting those of us who go through this vale of tears.





Letter from the Publisher

Dear readers,

The Angelus magazine has a place in each traditional family because it fulfills a purpose in the combat for Tradition. It provides food for thought to the heads of our spiritual family, and helps them to formulate the right principles which they will apply practically to life's circumstances.

This is what we have been doing since the creation of the magazine, almost 40 years ago. This is what we have done again this past year. We cannot afford to leave aside the burning questions of the day: The American geopolitical issues, such as the Middle East, and the papacy dilemma, along with the ecumenical thrust towards Luther.

And so, at first glance, it may seem incongruous and obsolete to focus on the abstract question of angels. We believe in angels and in their activity among men, but this remains most likely an academic topic with little to no impact on our day to day struggles in this finite world of ours. Is this to say that angels have no history and are disinterested with our lot? Anyone who has been involved with souls knows that the struggle is between good and evil: The good influences led by our good God and His angels and the bad ones, led by the devil and his allies within and without. Any priest will tell you that he feels like an exorcist as he puts on the confessional stole or administers the sacraments, climbs up the altar and defends Catholic principles throughout his day to day pastoral problems.

This issue, joined by the loose thread of the angelic kingdom, offers various spotlights on the angels, whether it be in literature and music, in theology and human psychology touching on repentance or fragility, or in the seeming oddity of exorcism today. It also covers interesting topics like St. Bernard and Fatima—we can never hear enough of it. Here, we initiate the liturgical study of the Roman rite which will guide us throughout this year. The issue concludes with *The Angel of the Storm*, a must read of John Senior in the section "Theological Studies."

It is our hope that, as you go through this magazine, you realize how close we are to the original purpose of *The Angelus*, offering us the principles to combat God's battles with all his auxiliary troops.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
Publisher

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“Love’s fire”:

Angels in the *Divine Comedy*

by Andrew J. Clarendon

The Dominican Father Paul O’Sullivan describes angels as “pure spirits, the mighty Princes of Heaven who stand before God, gazing on His unveiled presence...[the] burning fires of love, filled to overflowing with the plenitude of happiness...[who] who are the perfect images of God, mirrors of His Divine perfections...each in his own special way.” While the superior angels, such as the highest hierarchy of the choirs of the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, especially “are said to assist before the throne of God,” it also true that the angels are sometimes sent by God for a particular purpose or mission outside of Heaven. The word angel itself is derived from the Hebrew word for messenger, and it is one of the consoling features of our faith that each human being has his own guardian angel, “a gift of divine providence.” As angels are

pure spirits who only appear to man’s physical senses for extraordinary reasons, the images of Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel in Scripture, or the guardian angels in the lives of the saints, involve the angels “stooping to our limitations, bowing to our penchant for thinking in pictures... [taking on] the appearances of bodies for our comfort...that we might the more easily accept the angel, his message, his companionship.” It is only natural that the great artists should follow the angels’ own direction and attempt to convey some sense of these beings in physical form—one thinks of Fra Angelico’s depiction of the Annunciation or the stained glass windows of Chartres, for example. Among the poets, the greatest and most extensive treatment is, unsurprisingly, that of the *Divine Comedy*, in which Dante first shows angels as the helpmates



of human souls in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* before presenting the higher choirs in *Paradiso*.

The Angelic and the Demonic

Mirroring the angelic—and demonic— influences in our earthly life, Dante not only includes the fallen angels in his presentation of hell, but also includes an impressive episode of an angel who is sent by God to assist in the Pilgrim in his journey. Having passed the sins

putti as in later Renaissance art, Dante presents a warrior angel, a prince of Heaven who easily opens the Gate of Dis with a wand of office and scornfully upbraids the demons before going back to Heaven. As human beings alone are no match for the fallen angelic intellect, so are the demons no match for one vested in God's power. Msgr. Glenn's summary of St. Thomas' *Summa* shows how this scene illustrates the angels as instruments: "When God has an angel apply its powers to a creature, the angel is *sent* to that creature. God is the sender and the first principle



of the flesh in upper hell, the Pilgrim and his guide Virgil find the gates of the infernal fortress of Dis, barred against them. From the rampart "more than a thousand fiendish angels" scream at them as Dante Christianizes pagan myth and has "three hellish Furies stained with blood" call on Medusa to turn the Pilgrim into stone. The journey to God is unable to proceed; the Pilgrim and his guide are completely outmatched, and all that Virgil can do to help is to cover the Pilgrim's eyes lest the paralyzing despair of Medusa destroy him. "A blast of sound, shot through with fear" announces the arrival of God's messenger, and the explosion of the conflict between grace and demonic insolence causes "Hell [to] begin to tremble." The demons and the damned scatter as the angel imitates the Lord, walking on the water of the nearby river Styx. Not one for depictions of

of the effect produced by the angel sent; God is also the ultimate goal or final cause of the work so produced. The angel is God's minister or intelligent instrument; by its being sent, it renders ministry to God."

Understandably, the good angels are much more involved in the operation of Purgatory, where, although the poor souls are much in need of help, their salvation is sure and their arrival home is only a matter of time. The central metaphor of the whole *Divine Comedy* is that of the exodus, so it is fitting that the souls arrive to the great mountain of Purgatory in a boat driven by a gloriously bright angel and are singing Psalm 113: "*In exitu Israël de Aegypto.*" Higher up, in a valley that makes up part of ante-Purgatory—a place of delay in which certain souls must wait before beginning the work of Purgatory >

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proper—Dante presents a short allegorical scene that again illustrates the role of the angels in our lives. Every evening a serpent, “the very one, perhaps, / that offered Eve the bitter fruit to eat,” attempts to enter the valley and every evening two angels come “From Mary’s bosom... / to guard [the souls] from the serpent in the vale.” It is not that the souls in Purgatory are in real danger; the point is both that the serpent never gives up trying and, more importantly, that the angels always come to help the souls. Mark Musa further compares this scene to St. Bernard of Clairvaux’s famous sermon on the three advents of Christ: these messengers of God are symbols of the daily coming of Christ into “the hearts of individuals in order to protect them from temptation and insure their salvation.” All through the seven-storied mountain of Purgatory, the holy angels are there as the representations of this or that aspect of God, from the Angel of Confession at the gate to Purgatory proper and the Angels of the Beatitudes at the end of each terrace, to the angels that make up the heavenly pageants in Earthly Paradise at the summit. These mighty angels give glory to God by helping human souls to someday join them in experiencing the Beatific Vision.

A Higher Vision

Although they are great friends to men as these instruments of God, Dante reserves the presentation of the greater mission of the angels for the *Paradiso*. After moving through the cosmos with Beatrice, his new guide, the Pilgrim is at the curved edge of the universe when he has his first vision of God: a small but intense point of light. Around the point of light “a ring of fire whirl[s]” at great speed, followed by eight others—the nine choirs of angels circling the Trinity. Beatrice’s explanation makes the vision and the meaning clear to the Pilgrim:

On that Point
depend all nature and all of the heavens.
Observe the circle nearest it, and know
the reason for its spinning at such speed
is that Love’s fire burns it into motion.

This first choir, the Seraphim, is more capable of loving and knowing God, is closest to Him, and therefore is more filled with His glory. The ultimate reality of the universe, even in the physical sense, is that it starts with God, who communicates Himself to the choir of the Seraphim, who in turn give all that they know and love to the next choir—although each of “these cannot perfectly receive all that is given”—and so on down through the cosmos. Also of note is the ceaseless activity; the angels in their choirs are “showers of light... / like molten iron in fire spurting sparks.” It is the same in the Heavenly Court itself. Dante pictures the realm of the saints as a great white rose in bloom and the angels like bees that “spread the peace and ardor of the love” God, so many that “this screen of flying plenitude” would block out all light were they not diaphanous spirits. In this hive of activity, the angels “soaring see and sing / the glory of the One who stirs their love, / the goodness which made them great as they are.” The central purpose of the angels is therefore praise; with all of the force of their angelic wills, forever fixed, they mirror the One Who Is, the “Eternal Goodness that divides Itself / into these countless mirrors that reflect / Itself, remaining One, as It was always.”

Dante thus presents the nature and various functions of the angels in his poem of the next life, all the while affirming that the angels are part of the natural world, “creatures as natural as oaks, or sunsets, or birds, or men.” It is consoling that these our ontological older brothers are with us and for us, “friendly with that staunch friendship that endures, even heightens, throughout our weaknesses, our failures, our pettiness, our positive malice.” To be known and loved by such beings is itself a tremendous thought, all the more so that these mirrors of the Divine desire to help us poor men become as they are—adorers of God unveiled—guiding us to the Source of love Itself, “the love that moves the sun and all the other stars.”



The Human Side of Angels

by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

Angels seem to live in horizons foreign to us, so foreign that we can only babble two words about them, make an act of faith, and soon forget about them. Although not accurate, this can hardly satisfy your legitimate curiosity to delve into the angelic state.

Angels are God's highest creatures. The Nicene Creed alludes to them when speaking of God's creative act which made all things 'visible and invisible... those in heaven and those on earth.' They inhabit neither a material body nor the material world. They live in a place rather by acting upon other creatures: just think of the way the devils have power from God to possess humans. Angels are the greatest creatures that came out of the hand of God. Their keen mind can perceive immediately and infallibly the

consequences of their acts. One mental leap suffices for them to reach the highest causes of things. Their will, too, wants to jump directly to the infinite. St. Thomas admits that, from the purely natural perspective, the angel cannot sin. No angel could love himself without loving firstly and more intensely this God found in the depth of his nature.

I realize that you are eager to get to the question of the angelic sin. Yet, perhaps, we need to consolidate our understanding of the angels by contrasting them with men.

Angels indeed surpass men in natural perfection, especially our spiritual faculties. Our intelligence and will could never measure up to them. Man lives in a material physical world and knows everything from sense perception, >

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groping through thick matter, slowly, painfully and with much error. Likewise, his love may be biased because the good he yearns for can be colored by his passions and his sinful habits: the lustful man runs after his mistress as the drunkard after the bottle, and both are rushing to their own ruin.

If this is correct, and it is, could we not call man the diminished version of the angel?

Is man a “diminished version,” a second rate angel? This description would not go well with Christian writers. Like the angel, man is created in the image and likeness of God. Like him too, he possesses intelligence and will and is called to the same supernatural destiny. Indeed, it would be difficult to speak of diminution when speaking of the beatific vision of the greatest saints in heaven compared to angels. There is no second class citizen in heaven and the natural distinction of angels and men does not seem to apply to Fra Angelico’s frescoes of paradise. So, definitely no! Man is not a diminished angel no more than he is a fallen angel.

To compare man and the angel makes the mind want to reach the skies. It seems idyllic.

Man’s life is an adventure whose history is made of multiple histories of men saying yes and no to choices. He may dream of flying over the skies with wings outspread, of becoming pure spirituality. He may imagine shooting a single arrow reaching its target with an assured mind, and moving a will with no hesitation and no flaws. He may aspire to being absolutely free while resting in the immutable good. This ideal scenario exists perhaps in fictional novels, never in real life. And to dream of the angel’s life is also to forget that this dream of a perfect life could also be a nightmare. And for aspiring to become angelic, man may well turn into a beast.

By the “nightmare” of “turning into a beast”, are you hinting at the sin of the angels?

I am indeed! The fall of the angels has always fascinated the medieval writers, because it is a

choice topic to understand angelology. St. John Damascene explains that “death is to man what the fall is to the angel”: its crucial existential moment. St. Anselm’s *de Casu Diaboli*—of the fall of the devil—is a classic along with St. Thomas’ treatises on angels and evil—*de Angelis, de Malo*. St. Anselm, a Benedictine contemplative, studied man through angelic lenses. The monastery provided for him a spiritual vantage point, and it gave him a quasi angelic nostalgia of shedding off ignorance and errors inseparable of men buried in worldly affairs. His view of man is angelic: man is the obscure negative of the angel, of this spiritual sunflower ever turned to God. The perfect man must look always up to heaven and get his feet off the ground!

Is this elevated vision shared by all medieval writers?

St. Thomas Aquinas, for one, has another view. He, too, is fascinated by the fall of the angels and uses it as a point of contrast, but also of contact, with men. Unlike St. Anselm, he studies angels through human lenses. We could sum it up by saying that his angelology is an anthropological angelology. If his study of man does not draw much from the angels, that of angels constantly gets its light from man. For St. Thomas, in the act of sinning, in that eternal instant, the angel goes through a crisis and becomes, so to speak, almost human. And this quasi humanity tells a lot about man’s humanity. Man constantly has to navigate in midstream between the banks of good and evil. His liberty too is irresolute, incapable of a definite choice. This very imperfection is the reason for his ability to promise and betray, and to repent again.

To speak of the human power to err and to sin is a daily experience. And St. Paul spoke eloquently of that: “law of the flesh which struggles against the law of the spirit” whereby “I do what I should not and do not what I should.” But what about the angels, these pure spirits naturally unable to commit a mistake and to have a misplaced love?

All this is very true. True also is the fact that



angels naturally have the capacity to know and contemplate God in his effects. They know Him as one knows an artist through his masterworks. This being said, every intelligent creature as such is fallible and subject to a moral choice, angels not excepted. And, when God makes a sudden intrusion into the angelic world and offers another mode of knowledge and a supernatural life, then the angel is out of his natural depth and is liable to drown. St. Thomas nonchalantly explains that angels can err incidentally regarding the special dispositions of divine Providence.

What does this intellectual error consist of?

Angels naturally know things by bending back onto themselves, and digging within their own essence to find things previously infused into them at creation. From this angelic way of knowing, of itself inoffensive, we can surmise that angels tend to rely on nothing but what they have within. Added to this, their natural knowledge of all things, in clear day light, is amply satisfying, even if it is limited. Faced with an intrusion of God—they could say an encroachment—Who offered them to embark in the adventure of salvation, by submitting to His own terms, some angels must have hesitated. They must have thought twice and, instinctively, had refused to subject their minds to something alien and outside of them, to something offered to them in the obscurity of the faith.

We always speak of the angel's rebellion as a sin of pride. Is this correct?

Church tradition has always maintained this. Each angel, created immediately in grace according to St. Thomas, was given the choice of rejecting or of entering the plan of salvation offered by God. This rejection, this disobedience of God's plan, stemmed from pride. It was because he positively loved his own excellence that he rejected God's dominion over him. The angel chose himself and refused to be chosen. He wanted to remain master and ruler of his destiny. So doing, he dug his own hell, and his state became worse than that of the worst beast.

We speak of rebellion. This suggests a group

insurrection behind the leader of the pack...

Tradition has it that many angels fell prey to this pride and went headlong into the fire of hell which, said Our Lord: "was created by God for Satan and his followers." Another interesting light is given by St. Thomas on the sin of the angels. Angels, unlike men, received at creation a supernatural gift proportionate to their nature. This means that the highest ranking angels—and there are traditionally nine choirs of angels—were more graced than any others. This means that Lucifer, the greatest angel was granted greater graces and was more loved by God more than any other. This suggests strongly that Lucifer, when offered to submit to God's plan, went back upon himself and contemplated creatures in his own essence, and found that he was higher and better than anyone else, short of the invisible God. Unable to venerate lesser creatures, and unwilling to bow before God, he fell into self adoration. His sin was to refuse God, the greatest being, and fall into narcissism, embracing a warped self love and self aggrandizement.

Yet, did we not say angels naturally are bound to love God?

There is a dual movement within the fallen angels. Although they are at enmity with God and hate His punishment, each fiber of their being has that natural propensity towards its Creator and Lord. To me, this inner contradiction, this schizophrenic attitude describes best the struggle and hellish despair of the bad angels: thrust with great force to love God with all their powerful spirit, they have forever rejected his company and He, in turn, says to them forever: "Depart from Me, ye cursed!" Likewise, I believe heaven and purgatory are explained by this same inclination of the human soul.

Are you trying to say that there is a point of union between the damned and the elect?>

I believe so. Let me explain myself: In heaven, the blessed souls are free from any obstacle which could halt their possession and enjoyment of God. Their natural inclination is in perfect harmony with the supernatural reward: God appears to them face to face, throwing them >

into an endless ecstasy of love. In purgatory, souls suffer from this same thrust towards God, and yet, they cannot yet enjoy His presence due to their own imperfections. And this eagerness of wanting God is their purge and their purgatory. Hence, the natural love of the creature for its God has opposite effects for souls tuned up differently. It turns into a hatred of love for the damned; into a delayed thirst of love for purgatory; and into the zenith of full love for the blessed.

Our poor mind finds it difficult to reconcile God's justice with the eternal punishment of one instant of madness. Is there a flip side to this hard punishment in the huge reward of the other angels? Or does this short lived trial lessen their merit?

I do not believe so. The fall of the bad angels was so culpable as to force God to create an eternal hell for them, which suggests a grave and indelible sin. This is because, without extenuating circumstances of passion or error as for men, they chose their ultimate end in that one decisive moment. This moment of liberty knew no repentance, and therefore, could know no pardon. By contrast, we must say that the decision to submit to God's supernatural offer was of great merit to the good angels. We know only the names of three angels—archangels rather—as given us in Sacred Scripture, and St. Michael is said to have answered the '*Non serviam*' of Lucifer with the battle cry of '*Quis ut Deus*'—who is like God? This angelic cry signifies the perfect act of submission to God's will. It echoes the other historical intrusion of God in the material world when Mary answers the angel with her "Fiat."

Who is freer in the last analysis: the angel before the fall, or the good angel after the fall?

No one has any doubt that men have much liberty compared to the angels, whose liberty leaves no room for a U-turn. But, in fact, we view liberty as the ability to choose: the more choice, the longer we enjoy it, the freer we think we are! Thus, we conclude that more liberty is given to angels before the fall since they face a choice, a single and unique choice unlike men. Angels

'enjoy' the precarious and fragile liberty as they are about to make an eternal choice: a jump either into the abyss of hell or through the bridge to heaven.

You seem to have reservation with this interpretation of "liberty as the ability to choose." Why is that?

True liberty must lead to one's perfection. If this is so, it must be found eminently in God and the blessed. Yet, neither has the choice of sin. In Christian territory, liberty is never mistress of the end but only of the means. Using my God-given liberty to rebel against Him and rush into a wall is self-destruction, not self-perfection. The ability to sin denotes slavery and lack of liberty. Using my liberty to change the goal posts, to reject my last end, is an act of enslavement. This is what St. Thomas says, not without nostalgia: "This is why the liberty of the [blessed] angels is superior to ours, since we have the ability to sin."



Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus:

Making Artistic Sense of the Angels



by Dr. Andrew Childs

Angels have long held a pride of place in art. They intoxicate the artistic imagination, adorning countless churches in painted, mosaic, sculpted, and carved depictions ranging from the sublime—in gloriously idealized human form—to the fanciful, and on occasion, the hideous. We know that they sing—continuously, in the

case of the Seraphim surrounding the throne of God—and composers, as we will consider below, have made frequent and wondrous attempts to depict their musical utterance. Of all the created order, few things fascinate artist and observer as angels do; from earliest childhood, we know of their existence, and try somehow to make >

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sense of them. They inspire awe, reverence, fear, consolation, even nagging guilt—anyone possessing even the slightest *sensus Catholicus* knows deep down that he remains under constant angelic surveillance. If we speak to them, they answer in our own voice; when they appear, they reveal themselves in human form. A bridge between creation and the Creator, they have been at work throughout recorded time, charged to insert themselves at some of the most spectacular moments in human history: tempting Eve and Adam; staying the hand of Abraham; guiding Moses and the Israelites in the Exodus; announcing the Incarnation to the Blessed Virgin; leading the Holy Family to safety; appearing to the seers at Fatima; providing aid and comfort to God Himself after His temptation in the desert, and most poignantly, in His agony in the Garden.

The Place of Angels in Creation

God created angels in grace, not glory. He created them in sanctifying grace, but not confirming grace; hence, some could fall. (St. Thomas Aquinas considers the angels in detail in the *Summa Theologica*, Qq. Ia: 50-64, 106-114.) Angels either chose God and gained the Beatific Vision, or refused God through pride and envy—the only sins possible to the non-sensible intelligence—losing the possibility of the Beatific Vision forever: Angels are still bright, though the brightest fell. (Hamlet, in Act 4, scene 3, speaks truth: Lucifer, perhaps the brightest of the angelic intelligences, is thought to be a Princely Seraph, of the highest order of the ranks of angels.) What has followed since that moment constitutes the high drama of creation: the fight between God and the devil for the human soul destined to spend eternity either in heaven or in hell. “What is man,” sings the Psalmist, “that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visit him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor.”

Angels, though more perfectly able to deduce the likelihood of future events, do not know the future—they can convince us of what may happen, but do not know that it will. Fallen

angels, willfully separated from divine wisdom, can err in knowledge of the supernatural. The angelic intellect possesses imparted knowledge, and as such, does not reason, though it understands human reasoning. Though demons can use this knowledge against us, they cannot, however penetrate directly into minds and wills: we remain free. Lucifer’s non serviam was a rejection of God through pride, not a fore-knowledge of the inheritance of human beings—at the moment of Lucifer’s rebellion, not-yet created rational, flesh-bound animals. Lucifer could not deceive himself: he knew he could not *be* God, but wanted to be *as* God. Soon enough, he saw God’s plan for mankind—the offer of the Beatific Vision he had rejected—and he has focused his hatred of God on us ever since. This promise of salvation for man represents an inconceivable usurpation of an angelic inheritance: beatitude bestowed upon matter.

The Devil and the demons will challenge God for our souls, and the battleground, as we have considered before, is the human heart. Angels have intellectual knowledge imparted by God, but not sense knowledge; they have no senses—though they understand and can influence our emotions, they have none of their own. Of all created things, we alone feel emotion illuminated by intellect. In one of the most beautiful manifestations of God’s mercy and love for us, He shares this capacity with us: the Sacred Heart, fully human and fully Divine, rejoices and breaks with ours. Through particularly human, emotional means, music seeks to order the human condition—a fantastic confluence of intellect, will, emotion, passions, appetite, and animal instinct—as God would have it by elevating our lower nature, through our heart and ultimately our intellect, toward Him. The Devil seeks to invert and reverse this process, using our hearts to dull our intellect, drawing us in a passionate descent to hell.

Let us listen to the angels from Isaias 6:13:

“I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated: and His train filled the temple. Upon it stood the Seraphim: the one had six wings, and the other had six wings: with two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and



with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory.”

What follows will consider briefly—either by introduction or reminder—six musical interpretations of the seraphic utterance: motet settings of “Duo seraphim” by Guerrero, Victoria, and Monteverdi; and polyphonic Mass settings of the “Sanctus” by Palestrina, Byrd, and finally Bach. The first five of these quintessentially Catholic works come not surprisingly from the Counter-Reformation period, unmatched in its outpouring of apologetic musical perfection. The last, from the B-minor Mass—perhaps the definitive musical masterwork, written by the Lutheran Bach—stands in majestic opposition to Protestant heresy: God’s “deference” to Bach’s genius in providing the ultimate pure musical exegesis of the unaltered Catholic Mass confirms His unchangeable dominion, and Luther’s ultimate shame.

Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599), “Duo Seraphim”

Guerrero, Cristobal de Morales, and Victoria were the three great priest-composers of the Spanish Counter-Reformation period. Though certainly lesser known than Victoria, Guerrero may well have lived a more eventful life: returning from the Holy Land, his ship was attacked by pirates; he was imprisoned, and had to be ransomed by the Cathedral of Seville.

Though hardly derivative, his “Duo Seraphim” displays an amazing breadth of Renaissance styles, especially in the use of texture and harmonic shifts. He treats the opening phrases, “Duo seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum/ Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Domine Deus Sabaoth,” with a poignant clarity reminiscent of Byrd’s Mass settings. At “Plena est omnis terra Gloria ejus,” he dramatically enhances the choral texture rivalling the opulent grandeur of Gabrieli. He then grafts text from the first >



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Epistle of John (as do Victoria and Monteverdi) which references the Trinity: “Tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in caelo; Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus.” Here, the dramatic harmonic shifts resemble Gesualdo, though with superior elegance. His repeated text, “Sanctus Dominus/Plena est terra” resumes the broader texture; the final “Amen,” avoids all elaboration, a proper liturgical punctuation.

Tomás Luis de Vittoria (1548-1611), “Duo Seraphim”

Historians frequently refer to Victoria as the “Spanish Palestrina,” hardly an offense, but unwittingly trite given Victoria’s talent and musical service to the Church. Sent by Phillip II to study in Rome, he established himself as one of the most respected figures in the Church. He returned to Spain in 1587, and, apart from various travels, including several return trips to Rome, remained there in the service of the Dowager Empress Maria in the Discalced Monastery of Santa Clara in Madrid as her chaplain and Maestro. After her death in 1603, he demoted himself to the position of organist, a post he retained until he died.

We hear in Victoria’s setting the otherworldly seamless texture that defined Palestrina, but expressed through a lighter texture, which allows for a sublime clarity of text expression, enhanced by tasteful, overlapping repetitions of specific words creating a wonderful echoing effect, particularly at the initial utterance of “Sanctus.” His subtle shift to triple meter on the text “Et in tres unum sunt,” both delights, and underscores Doctrinal truth.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1653), “Duo Seraphim,” Vespro della Beata Virgine (1610)

Written most likely as an audition piece for the job of Maestro di Capella of St. Mark’s in Venice (a job he secured in 1613), Monteverdi creates a grand and highly virtuosic conception of the Vespers service. At 90 minutes, it is a full-length music drama in which Monteverdi made no attempt to obscure his theatrical style. The piece alternates between Gregorian antiphons coupled with Psalms in madrigal style, and free-standing motets, such as “Duo Seraphim,” ending with a multi-movement Magnificat setting, and a sonata.

At the beginning of the “Duo Seraphim,” ostensibly a duet for two tenors (it becomes a trio), Monteverdi intertwines the two tenor voices in a series of rising and falling suspensions on the text “Duo Seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum” in what may be the most glorious 45 seconds of vocal duet ever composed. The vocal gymnastics displayed in the “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus” are formidable, a nod to the prevailing style, but also an indication of the celestial capacities in question. In the latter half of the piece, the two seraphic tenors are joined by a third of equal facility: admittedly theatrical, but stunningly effective. On the text, “Et in tres,” the three individual voices begin on separate notes, yet join to sing in unison on the words “unum sunt,” an example of Monteverdi’s sensitivity to word-painting, the “literal” depiction of specific text.

This setting displays as well as any of his works Monteverdi’s ability to transcend the period to which he clearly belongs, confirming his closing of the Renaissance.





Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594), “Sanctus,” Missa Papae Marcelli

We know Palestrina simply as “The Prince of Music.” He expressed in music, with an unmistakable elegance unknown before and unmatched since, the majestic renunciation of Protestant error by the Council of Trent. Charged to “save polyphony from banishment” at the Council due to excesses that had overtaken liturgical composition—and admittedly these existed—he created a definitive “champion” in the *Missa Papae Marcelli*, composed in honor of Pope Marcellus II, in 1562.

Rather than overwhelm heaven with majesty, Palestrina’s angels seem to whisper with total sublimity, “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.” Though at “Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua” he changes mood and contrapuntal pace (the rate at which the individual voices enter), any effect here, through either increased tempo or volume, sufficiently dramatic to upset the overall mood represents interpretive excess: the supreme challenge in reading Palestrina lies in the discipline required to maintain ethereal calm. The music defies theatrical effect. Palestrina supplies the needed increase in intensity at “Hosanna in excelsis,” by again increasing the contrapuntal pacing. Few moments typify the “Palestrina style” as poignantly as the “Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini,” a return to the hushed tones of the opening. The “Hosanna” returns to close the movement with restrained joy.

William Byrd (ca. 1540-1623), “Sanctus,” Mass for Five Voices

After his retirement from the Protestant English court in the 1490’s, Recusant Catholic William Byrd devoted himself to the composition of music for the persecuted English Catholic Church. At a time of martyrs for the Faith, he “sacrificed...everything for faith—his position, the court, and all those aspirations common to men who seek preferment in royal circles

as a means of improving their fortunes.” If the Spanish Renaissance masters deserve to be better-known, Byrd must be. He composed music of unmatched poignancy and clarity, possessing a uniquely pliant and delicate harmonic palette and exceptionally sensitive contrapuntal tendencies. His three Catholic Masses—for Three, Four, and Five voices—represent a continuously rewarding and humbling revelation for the Catholic listener.

If Palestrina’s seraphs sing in tones of hushed yet joyful majesty, Byrd’s seem to weep, expressing perfect sympathy with those suffering gruesome torture and death for love of their God and His Church. The opening “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,” a full minute of heart-breaking beauty, seems more a plea than an ejaculation of praise. Anguish and urgency are notable in “Dominus Deus Sabaoth,” setting up a textural and dynamic contrast at “pleni sunt coeli et terra,” a remarkably humble admission rather than an overt statement of praise. At the first “Hosanna,” we hear majesty for the first time, though only briefly: the return to the hushed dynamics and reduced texture of “pleni” at the “Benedictus” stand out in touching relief. Though we hear genuine joy in the final “Hosanna,” it is clearly an expression of one who suffers greatly for love.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), “Sanctus,” Mass in B-minor (1749)

I stand by my statement that the B-minor Mass, Bach’s final summary statement, is the greatest single musical composition in history (“single,” rather than a body of work like Gregorian chant, or a set of symphonies, sonatas, or operas, *etc.*) By way of an excusable tangent above the footnote line—usually indulged below it—let me defend the statement. Reverse engineering of the “greatest piece ever-written” involves many steps. Though most of these steps remain open to some debate, probability continually shifts toward the B-minor Mass. The process goes something like this: Art, as all things—angels included!—conforms to hierarchy: good, better, better yet, potentially best, best: TGE (The Greatest Ever) >

would necessarily be “good” rather than “bad,” and “high” rather than “low”: only a Modernist would argue otherwise. TGE would likely be large, rather than small—a multi-movement work has an immediate advantage due to the range of contrast and styles available to the composer in his “single” piece; he also has the added benefit of being able to create a narrative through-line based on non-musical principles. TGE would likely come from the top of the Western Music “bell curve,” the 17th-19th centuries: anything earlier or later finds itself in periods of stylistic extremes more limiting than liberating, either bound to a modal conception of harmony in the case of “early” music, or in the case of modern music, bound by...nothing, but the tyranny of innovation, the sound of which demonstrates that the lack of rules results not in ultimate freedom, but utter chaos.

TGE would likely be vocal rather than instrumental: the emotional amplification of intellectual concepts and universal themes provided by a text not only allows the composer to craft formally cohesive pieces—the sum of varying yet interdependent parts in the case of a multi-movement work—but pieces informed by dramatic literal narrative; ordering through intellectual as well as emotional means necessarily yields works of a higher order. TGE could come from either the secular or the sacred realm, but, again invoking hierarchy, liturgical works would seem to have an advantage. TGE would set the greatest possible text: the lopsidedness of opera—magnificent music ‘glorifying’ trivial or scandalous themes—disqualifies it as a genre, though some compelling individual cases exist. This leads us to the B-minor Mass, a high-art, large-scale vocal work written in 1749, which sets—with dazzling variety and unfathomable depth—the unabridged text of the Mass in Latin.

Bach and the Mass

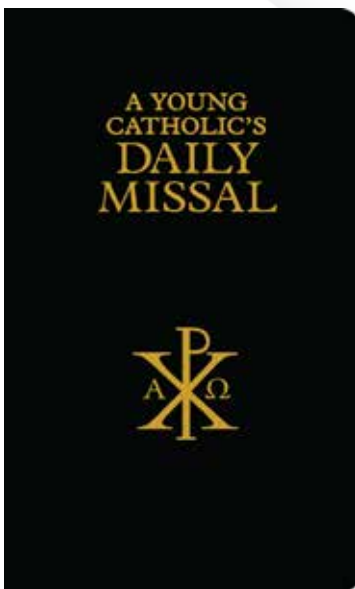
Observe not only the fact that the Lutheran J.S. Bach composed the ultimate musical expression of the Mass, but also the irony and necessity. Bach neither adds nor subtracts from the Mass

text, but in his organization, and in the elaborate care he takes setting specific texts—providing dramatic as well as musical contrasts—he exceeds all reasonable liturgical boundaries: it’s too big. A Catholic composer could not have conceived of a Mass of this scale, yet Bach, free from liturgical parameters, provides a supreme musical meditation on the Mass that would be impossible in the actual time of a celebrated Mass. In short, the Mass in B-minor is the Catholic statement only a Protestant could make.

The opening of the “Sanctus” explodes in grandeur. The basses proclaim, reinforced by brass and tympani, “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,” in a way which more resembles these instruments than the other five voices, which, in contrast spin unbroken lines of dense but not obscure counterpoint. The soprano hovers in pulsating triplets throughout the “Domine Deus Sabaoth,” while the basses punctuate with relentless octaves, moving up and down throughout the scale: the effect is pure majesty. They defer momentarily to join the upper voices in a sequence of ascending utterance of the word “Sabaoth” that gives a glimpse of the divine. These few moments are not so much a superlative execution of compositional techniques as the momentary organic absorption of the exceptional artist into Divine inspiration: though we will never know on earth the sounds of heaven, Bach seems to part the veil. In the fugue that follows on “Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria Tua,” Bach unleashes on his voices a contrapuntal fury he usually reserved for himself—and future organists—yet this yields pure exhilaration.


Angels are real; they are numberless; they exist to help us attain the Beatific Vision they already possess. There exists in all these masterworks—and many others that treat of the same subject—a sense of the heavenly host, created by God for His good pleasure and our aid. They angels remind us of the supernatural end of creation, providing a living link between earth and heaven, motivated by God’s love for us. The artist, in daring to represent the angelic hymn in sound, attempts in our name to return the favor.

A Young Catholic's Daily Missal



The *Young Catholic's Daily Missal* is designed to open up the spiritual treasures of the Mass for young Catholics from the time of their First Communion up through their preteen years. This missal conforms to the rubrics and norms of the *1962 Missale Romanum* and includes the full Ordinary of the Mass in Latin and English, and the Masses for Sundays and Holydays in English with paraphrases of the Propers. For all the other days of the year, there are explanations, printed in smaller type, of the Introit, Epistle and Gospel. These, along with the Common of Saints, make this missal ideal for daily use. Finally, this missal contains morning and evening prayers; instructions on the meaning of the Mass; and an array of traditional devotions. Illustrated throughout.

42 ORDINARY OF THE MASS




THE PRIEST KISSES THE ALTAR

MY God, the Priest walks up the steps to the altar, and kisses it with respect. I cannot do that, but yet I should like to assist him. So while he prays aloud and in Latin, I will say the very same thing to myself in English, My God. Thou hast pardoned the Priest his sins; pardon me mine, because I am sorry that I ever did them.

I know that I do not deserve Thy pardon; for I always begin again to offend Thee. Do not think of me, but of the Saints whose relics are inside the altar, and of all the Saints in glory. For their sakes pardon me all my sins.

43 INTROIT



INTROIT

Read this Introit, if you have not yet marked in your little missal. It belongs to the feast of the Sacred Heart.

THU divine Heart of Jesus loves us; He has delivered us from the sin that kills the soul, and He gives us His graces.

You must not think any more of yourself; think of Him Who is about to come as a victim on the altar.

If you wish God to be very much pleased with you, promise Him that you will do everything as well as you can; so that when He comes you may be able to say to Him: My God, I intend to work for Thee, in order to please Thee. Whatever I do will be done for Thee. My Jesus, I give Thee this day.

280 PROPER OF THE SEASON

must love your enemies and pray for those who do you harm. Only then will you be the children of God; for you will do as God does. You know that God does good even to enemies; God makes His sun shine upon the good and the bad. Be good like the good God.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

INTROIT. God has heard Me, and has had mercy on Me, says Jesus, upon the cross. With Jesus let us say: I thank Thee, O God, because Thou hast delivered me from my enemies.

GOSPEL. O God, hear our prayer, and help us to keep all the days of Lent well. By making many sacrifices, to cure our soul make rock for us.

DEVOTION. If you are good to your mother, if you are charitable, says Jesus, God will reward you. He thought Jesus back to life after He was dead, and placed Him in heaven; He will give life to your soul, and give you heaven, if you do all you should to honor God, especially on Sundays.


Verse of Act 16:26-27.

GOSPEL. It was dark at night; the Apostles were in a boat upon the lake, and had great difficulty in rowing, for the wind was high. Jesus came to them, walking upon the water, when it was bound. They sight. The Apostles thought they saw a ghost and were afraid. He stepped into the boat and the wind stopped. When they came to the shore, Jesus asked the task to Him and He healed them. Always have confidence in Jesus, and He will always help you.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

In the city of Rome the Mass is said today in the church of Saint John Lateran. The patron of this church are Jesus the Saviour and Saint John the Baptist. Jesus, who was baptised by Saint John over us.

281 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



INTROIT. With Jesus in the desert we pray to God, for He has promised to help us if we say our prayers well.

PRAYERS. O God, every year we begin the holy season of Lent on this day as the Church wishes us to do. Great that we may be really good, and make our little sacrifices generously.

EPISTLE. Saint Paul repeats what the prophet Isaiah said: Now is the right time to do penance; do not let the chance slip away. Now is the right time to correct our

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VARIOUS DEVOTIONS

DEVOTIONS TO OUR LORD

Litany of the Holy Name

LORD, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Jesus, hear us.
Jesus, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God, the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Ghost,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Jesus, Son of the living God,

LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME

Jesus, splendor of the Father, have mercy on us.
 Jesus, brightness of eternal light,
 Jesus, King of glory,
 Jesus, saint of justice,
 Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,
 Jesus, most lovable,
 Jesus, most admirable,
 Jesus, mighty God,
 Jesus, Father of the world to come,
 Jesus, Angel of great counsel,
 Jesus, most powerful,
 Jesus, most patient,
 Jesus, most obedient,
 Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
 Jesus, lover of chastity,
 Jesus, lover of us,
 Jesus, God of peace,
 Jesus, author of life,
 Jesus, example of virtues,
 Jesus, zealous lover of souls,
 Jesus, our God,
 Jesus, our refuge,
 Jesus, Father of the poor,
 Jesus, treasure of the faithful,
 Jesus, Good Shepherd,
 Jesus, true light,
 Jesus, infinite goodness,
 Jesus, our way and our life,

Exorcism Today

Interview with an Exorcist

Editor's Note: The following is an interview with an exorcist. The conversational style has been retained throughout.

In many countries, more people believe that Satan is superior to God. Could this increased belief in Satan be a way to get people back to God?

To me, this phenomenon suggests that most people are desensitized about Satan, and treat him as a fairy tale evil spirit. This has been promoted by Halloween celebrations as well as *Harry Potter* movies. There is a sick fascination for Satan, in the exact proportion as the Catholic religion is losing ground unfortunately.

In the course of the exorcisms which you have performed, how could you recognized

the presence of Satan?

I think that his personal characters are hatred, the fake and the ugly, typically the opposite of the Christian disciple who is enamored of charity, the true and the beautiful. In all the exorcisms I have performed, there is this terrifying abominable side of Satan who hates souls, whose aim is to deter them from their eternal destiny and, to reach his goal, will use all types of lies and disgusting behavior.

Have you experienced something comparable to the session in the movie *The Exorcist*?

Yes, I was in the Philippines and, accompanied by a doctor, we assisted a lady, whose past had been involved with a sorcerer who finally cast a spell on her. She is Catholic and suffers much



from being possessed. During confession and communion, she falls into a trance. But, I must let the doctor describe the session: “What I witnessed was the first part of the movie *The Exorcist*. Plunged into a state of catalepsy, two demons with different tones of voice spoke through her mouth. We were in extreme conditions. What took place then is beyond any medical concept. The symptoms of this kind lady, who explains her case with her soft voice, refer to no classification or clinical graphic ever described in medical literature.” The bishop of the place had already imposed hands on this lady but without success. What was needed was to practice the Great Exorcism with the necessary authorizations. Her husband, Mike, dedicated to the work of Tradition, told me: “It does not happen when she goes to the Novus Ordo!”

Have you not thought that, among those who approach you for an exorcism, they would be better off seeing a doctor?

It is often difficult to discern psychological illness from possession. In a society where people have lost their bearings and their roots along with their faith, mental unbalance is on the increase. Yet, there are still real cases of diabolical activity. One might say that, of all those who approach the Church, just a few would do well to undergo an exorcism, whereas most would be treated by medicine and another large number by prayers and frequent sacramental practice.

Am I to understand that the Church gives a warning of prudence to the priest?

Indeed, and to prove it, let me simply quote one of the guidelines before the great exorcism given from the Church ritual: “Especially, he [the exorcist] should not believe too readily that a person is possessed by an evil spirit; but he ought to ascertain the signs by which a person possessed can be distinguished from one who is suffering from melancholy or some other illness.”

Are there any sure signs of possession?

Again, the ritual gives some sure signs: “ability to speak with some facility in a strange tongue or to understand it when spoken by another; display

of powers which are beyond the subject’s age and natural condition; and various other indications which, when taken together as a whole, pile up the evidence.”

How does the devil manifest unusual activity on people?

We often speak of possession, which is the taking control of the body by the demon. But there are also less radical influences. The lighter ones are called infestations, limited to a place or an object, of which St. John Vianney suffered much during the nights in his rectory of Ars. Then, you have corporal obsessions where the demon attacks directly persons with exterior visions, as those mentioned by St. Teresa of Avila. Finally, you have the interior obsessions which affect the mental faculties with either drowsiness or, on the contrary, excitation of the imagination, or unusual temptations against faith, purity or life.

Are these troubled souls the initiators or the victims of their sorry lot?

Well! Satan is not the god of Evil. He can act only in as much as God allows him to. So, usually, he cannot reach someone unless he is allowed to come in, like a dog on leash is dangerous only to those who approach him. And, so, a Catholic assiduous to sacraments will have little to fear from Satan. Obviously, he will be subject to temptations, but he will be protected from extraordinary evil force. On the other hand, he who does not practice his religion is an easy prey for Satan. And it is noticeable that possessions and suchlike are often the results of sins of explicit superstition invoking evils spirits. You call them, and they come in force! Sometimes, however, it comes from an outsider: magic, incantations and spells cast by sorcerers on the victim.

Isn’t the priest as a man in a lesser position against the angelic adversary?

The priest as a man is obviously limited. But, in as much as he is acting as God’s representative, under proper obedience to his superiors’ command and after due inquiry of the case, he has a divine mandate. He is also >



St. Exuperius drives out a demon, Cathedral of Bayeux, France



equipped with formidable prayers from the ritual. And, as the ritual indicates, “He will bid the unclean spirit keep silence and answer only when asked. Let him pronounce the exorcisms in a commanding and authoritative voice, and at the same time with great confidence, humility and fervor; and when he sees that the spirit is sorely vexed, then he oppresses and threatens all the more.” That is why it is important for him to use the Church prayers, speaking properly the Latin he uses. We had cases in which the evil one mocked the sloppy pronunciation of the priest’s prayers, but also, I said the Hail Mary in English with no effect whereas the devil was really upset when I pronounced it in Latin!

Have these exorcisms helped souls to progress spiritually?

Absolutely! It is wonderful to see the power of the Church manifested through the exorcisms, because, once more, this is a struggle between the Church and Satan. That is why the Church sets strict laws to the “wrestling match” so to speak. The priest is God’s athlete who must firstly go to confession, fast and say his Mass before affronting the evil one. Moreover, he is to stick to the text of the ritual. And, as long as he remains within the obedience of the Church, he has nothing to fear. In these rites and prayers, it is easy to notice the power of the dogma of the Holy Trinity which Satan cannot bear... or of the Blessed Virgin, “powerful as an army in battle array,” against whom Satan can only lament and hide. I have often witnessed that those victims of possession, once delivered, made a true conversion to God. They naturally feel gratitude towards the Church who liberated them from the devil’s clutches, and much confidence in the Blessed Virgin who has great power over him too.

Do you not think that this apostolate is an anachronism in the 21st century?

Not at all. If it will raise some smile from some who are skeptical about Satan’s influence, this priestly power given has a place and time for its exercise. We often sense the struggle with the evil spirit simply by hearing long lines of confessions and teaching the faith to catechumens. In other words, beyond the

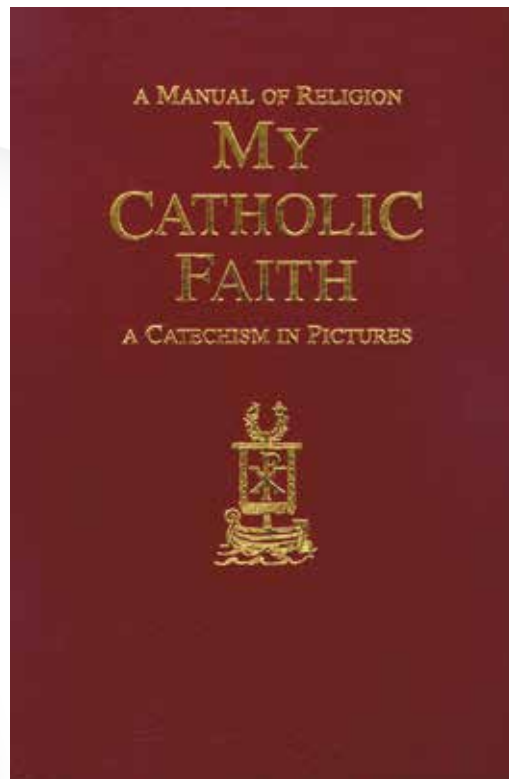
exorcism proper, there is always the eternal struggle between God and Satan about taking possession of the human soul. In this, there is no anachronism to speak of casting out devils. But, getting back to this specific apostolate, renowned exorcists usually compare the battle going on against the devil to the dual between the exorcist and the sorcerer, whose arena is the possessed body, whose weapons are the sorcerer’s spell and, for the exorcist, the rites of the Church, the sacramentals, the penances and prayer.

So, to conclude, in this day and age, can we say that there is more work than ever for exorcists?

I would not dare give a straight answer to this quibble. But I would say the following: what is clear is that Satan is running a race against the clock and he knows that in the end, he won’t be able to harm souls. And that is why he is multiplying his influence today. On the other hand, that is why it is our duty as priests to use this religious priesthood and our faith to give souls to God and God to souls, knowing that our heavenly Father will ensure our protection.

My Catholic Faith

A Catechism in Pictures



The classic 1954 edition of the best catechism you will ever find. Perfect for adults and children. As young children look at the picture, you read the simple caption and explain it further. At the same time, there are questions and answers for older readers. The answer in large type is for adults and older children. This is followed by an explanation in smaller text which gives a full explanation for adults. The perfect way to pass on the Faith. Abundant Scriptural quotations make it excellent for proving Catholic Doctrine to "Bible-believing" Protestants. It's also an excellent tool for dealing with liberal Catholics because two subjects of utmost importance are thoroughly treated: the true nature of the Catholic Church (today denied by false ecumenism) and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (today obscured by the New Mass). Profusely illustrated!



The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

The Grandeur of the Roman Rite

by Fr. Christopher Danel

“Countless goods, incomprehensible wonders and mysteries are contained in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This holy Sacrifice is too great, too precious and too glorious to be adequately expressed in words or to receive an appropriate name: it surpasses all created knowledge, it is unspeakably grand and sublime.” – Msgr. Nicholas Gihl

Introduction

Of the commentaries on the liturgy of the Roman Rite, one of the most edifying is *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically, and Ascetically Explained*, by Rev. Dr. Nicholas Gihl. We will henceforth examine some aspects of the Mass of the Roman Rite

based on his fundamental opus and presenting his work.

A word about the author is in order. Monsignor Gihl was a priest of the Archdiocese of Freiburg in Breisgau, in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, whose liturgical expertise was appreciated in Rome during his lifetime. He earned his doctorate during the pontificate of Pope Pius IX and published his principal study at the very end of the same, sealing it with his preface from St. Peter’s Basilica in 1877. He was active during the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X, was created a Monsignor by Pope Benedict XV, and was later honored also by Pope Pius XI.

The French translation of the study was received with great acclaim, after which the first English translation appeared in 1902, published by Herder in St. Louis. The

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Faith and Morals

priests of the *American Ecclesiastical Review* described the work as follows: “The immediate object of Dr. Gihl’s volume is not so much to rehearse the historical data which mark the development of the Catholic liturgy, as rather to lead his readers to a deeper appreciation of the devotional significance of each rite.... It treats of the reality, the essence and efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and shows us its distinctive and important place in the organic structure of the Church” (AER, vol. XXVII, n. 6, pp. 692-3).

The original study is: Gihl, Nikolaus. *Messopfer dogmatisch, liturgisch und aszetisch erklärt*. Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1877.

The Term *Missa*

This article will focus on some preliminaries of the Mass: its name, its origin, and its grandeur. We begin with the name customarily given to the Holy Sacrifice in our Rite. Almost the only one





used since late antiquity is the term *Missa*. In the beginning it referred to the dismissal of those assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and by extension became applied to the divine worship itself. Although it is unclear precisely when this took place, by the time of St. Ambrose (+397) it was commonly employed. This Doctor of the Church used the term in his writings in such a way that it clearly was already in his time the traditional term used to refer to the Holy Sacrifice.

After this primary explanation, Msgr. Gehr

expounds upon a second one which was developed by the liturgists of the Middle Ages. “The Eucharistic Sacrifice is called *Missa*, because in it there is a sending forth (*missa = transmissio*) from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. The Church sends up to the throne of God by the ministry of the priest the Eucharistic Sacrifice and prayers, and the necessities and desires of the faithful; God in return sends down upon men the riches of heavenly grace and blessing. Or we may put it >



in a different way: Christ is sent into the world by the Father as a sacrifice, and in turn He is sent back again to heaven by the faithful as a sacrifice, in order to reconcile us to the Father and to procure for us all blessings. This signification of the *Missa* is implied by the very nature of the thing, and thus far undoubtedly contains truth; but this point of view probably did not determine the selection of the expression *Missa* to designate the, Holy Sacrifice : in other words, the faithful of the first ages did not choose the word *Missa* to express that in the Sacrifice the above mentioned mission or sending forth from God to man and from man to God takes place; it was only later that this was so understood and explained.”

Jesus Christ and the Apostles

The First Mass was offered by Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Cenacle in Jerusalem on the evening of Maundy Thursday, the eve of his Crucifixion. At the Last Supper, He gave the Apostles the mission and mandate to continue this Sacrifice in His Church for all time and conferred His Priesthood upon them. By His command, then, they celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass wherever they went on their missionary journeys. The Mass of Christ was their sole model and they devotedly carried out what He had done before them. According to His instructions and the light given to them by the Holy Ghost, they added various prayers and ceremonies to the essential act of the Sacrifice according to the circumstances of time and place, so that the greatest glory would be given to God by the sacred liturgy and that souls would be supremely edified by its observance.

Msgr. Gühr describes this development of the Apostolic liturgy in the East and West: “The Apostles, who had been instructed by the Lord Himself in the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and were filled with the Holy Ghost, assuredly observed a fixed order in the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice[.] The essential and fundamental features of the sacrificial rite, introduced and enlarged upon by the Apostles, were preserved with fidelity and reverence

in the churches founded by them and their successors; but in the course of time, according as it was deemed necessary or expedient, it was always more and more developed, enriched and perfected, yet after a different manner, in the various churches of the East and West. ‘The Lord never ceases to be present to His beloved Spouse the Church, never fails to be at her side in her office of teaching and to accompany her in her operation with His blessing,’ consequently, He had the power, as He also had the will, to bequeath to the chiefs and shepherds of the Church the right to give to the Sacrifice instituted by Himself the most natural and the wisest development and the best adapted form, that is, to give it due liturgical form and solemnity.”

Thus it is clear that the Church’s liturgy traces directly to the twelve Apostles themselves. The liturgy of the Roman Rite, furthermore, traces directly to St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles and first Pontiff of Rome. Pope Innocent I (402-417) wrote to the Bishop of Gubbio about the ceremonies of the Mass, adding, “Who does not know that what has been handed down by Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, to the Roman Church is still observed unto this day, and must be observed by all?” Therefore St. Peter is recognized as the founder of the Roman Rite, and in celebrating it and establishing it in Rome, he followed the outline given out by Christ and laid the essential foundation for all of its later organic development. The nineteenth-century liturgist Rev. Dr. Joseph Kössing of Regensburg aptly described, “This liturgy, as yet a tender plant, was brought by St. Peter, the Prince of the Church, into the garden of the Roman Church, where by his nursing care and that of his successors, assisted by the Holy Ghost, it has grown to a large tree, and although the trunk has long ago attained its full growth, it nevertheless shoots forth in every century new branches and new blossoms.”

The Grandeur of the Rite

Msgr. Gühr describes the grandeur of the Roman Rite, the *grande dame* amongst Holy Church’s liturgical rites, in the following eulogium:



“Thus has the Church in the course of time set the jewel of the Holy Sacrifice in the most magnificent manner with heavenly wisdom and skill for the praise of God and the edification of the faithful, by surrounding it with the precious decorations of holy prayers, of holy hymns, lessons and ceremonies. She has enveloped the celebration of the adorable Sacrifice in a mystic veil, in order to fill the hearts and minds of the faithful with religious awe and profound reverence, and to urge them to earnest, pious contemplation and meditation. The beauty, the worth and the perfection of the Roman liturgy of the Mass are universally acknowledged and admired.”

Father Faber referred to the Holy Sacrifice as the most beautiful thing this side of heaven. He furthermore remarks, “It came forth out of the grand mind of the Church, and lifted us out of earth and out of self, and wrapped us round in a cloud of mystical sweetness and the sublimities of a more than angelic liturgy, and purified us almost without ourselves, and charmed us with celestial charming, so that our very senses seem to find vision, hearing, fragrance, taste and touch, beyond what earth can give.”

The liturgical prayers of the Church exceed all others, as Cardinal Wiseman of Westminster wrote in 1854: “If we examine each prayer separately, it is perfect; perfect in construction, perfect in thought, and perfect in expression. If we consider the manner in which they are brought together, we are struck with the brevity of each, with the sudden but beautiful transitions, and the almost stanza-like effect, with which they succeed one another, forming a lyrical composition of surpassing beauty. If we take the entire service, as a whole, it is constructed with the most admirable symmetry, proportioned in its parts with perfect judgment and so exquisitely arranged, as to excite and preserve an unbroken interest in the sacred action. No doubt, to give full force and value to this sacred rite, its entire ceremonial is to be considered. The assistants, with their noble vestments, the chant, the incense, the more varied ceremonies which belong to a solemn Mass, are all calculated to increase veneration and admiration. But still, the essential beauties remain, whether the holy

rite be performed under the golden vault of St. Peter’s, with all the pomp and circumstance befitting its celebration by the Sovereign Pontiff, or in a wretched wigwam, erected in haste by some poor savages for their missionary.”

The Rite is admirably structured and composed, as the Prussian liturgist Fr. J. H. Oswald wrote in 1877: “That overruling influence of the Spirit of God, that directs even in secondary matters the affairs of the visible Church, nowhere else appears so marked and evident as in the arrangement of the rite of the Holy Mass, which, . . . in its present state forms such a beautiful, perfect whole, yea, a splendid work, that it excites the admiration of every reflecting mind. Even the bitterest adversaries of the Church do not deny it; unprejudiced, aesthetic judges of good taste admit that even from their own standpoint the Mass is to be classed as one of the greatest masterpieces ever composed. Thus, the momentous sacrifice is encompassed with magnificent ceremonies: it is our duty to study, to penetrate more and more into their meaning, and to expound what we have learned[.]”

Conclusion

In concluding his treatment of what he terms the preliminaries of the rite, Msgr. Gühr sums up with fervor: “The Roman liturgy has for some centuries been a complete masterpiece of art wonderful in the harmony and union of its parts. The most sacred and venerable prayers and chants, breathing religious fervor and tenderness, follow most ingeniously upon one another, and together with the most appropriate and significant actions and ceremonies, form a beautiful whole, serving as a protecting garment and a worthy ornament to the divine mystery of the Holy Sacrifice. Their language, for its kind and object, cannot be surpassed; for it is biblical, ancient, simple, grave, dignified, solid, full of the spirit of faith, humility and devotion, and penetrated with the perfume of piety and holiness.”

And of Persons There Are Only These:

Human, Angelic, and Divine

by Dr. Michael Berton

It is impossible for anyone to have no notion of angels. However, contemporary depictions are often caricatures of their true nature. Many ancient cultures evidenced belief in immaterial agents of good or evil. Moreover, certain philosophical movements in those eras postulated spiritual beings that complemented earlier mythical depictions. These attempted to explain reality in terms of a great chain of existents above material things that mediates the sub-lunar world with its ultimate cause or principle. Such often implied that things necessarily poured forth from that source in a cascade of evermore complex, changeable, limited beings. The virtually infinite highest principle, seemingly, acted without liberty and from necessity, finding its power exhausted in the formless, unlimited, infinite potentiality of the co-eternal, uncreated principle of unformed matter.

The Assumptions of Man

A central assumption was that the universe has an eternal duration of endlessly great repetitive cycles, with its ultimate necessity only occasionally disrupted by idiosyncratic, chance events and actions. To accept this narrative

about the universe and ourselves, of course, raises unsolvable problems concerning human liberty. Such assumptions imply the ultimate source of existing as being unable to bring forth limited, less simple, material things without the necessary assistance of co-eternal spiritual intermediaries to assure that it may remain pure



and uncorrupted by lesser effects, yet in some way be credited with bringing them forth.

As many Fathers and Doctors of the Church pondered the full implications of the *Book of Genesis* and the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity, it was apparent the aforementioned assumptions had to be corrected. How could it be otherwise if one ponders attentively the insistence in *Genesis* that the Creator made “be” the universe and sustains or conserves it in “being” here and now? This must also apply to purely spiritual beings. Further, how could such be reconciled with the Revelation made to Moses of the Proper Name of the Creator as “I AM (Who) I AM,” an affirmation profoundly reiterated in a different context by our Lord Jesus Christ when He confirmed that “Before Abraham was, I am?”

These certitudes granted by Faith in Revelation confirmed that the entirety of creation presupposed absolutely nothing, except the Infinite, Subsisting Being of the Eternal Trinity. In an instant, with no necessity imposed on that supreme act of loving generosity, the unified Divine Will made this entire contingent universe of myriads of interacting kinds of existents. And it was freely chosen as the most fitting to manifest the Divine Goodness from among all possibles within the Infinite Understanding of the Trinity.

The Experience of Orders

Henceforth, purely spiritual beings could only be understood as creatures that came “to be” at an instant coinciding with the origin of the universe initiating time. Each, like all things, must be sustained in being by the same act of generosity that was Creation, even though their existing is not inherently measured by time but rather “*aeuum*.” This notion was assimilated from prior philosophical reflections based upon a reasonable conclusion: things encountered within experience, evidence different kinds or orders in which the highest, most interior acts of one rank, approximates the lowest acts of other kinds or orders.

Since each rank or order is distinguished by

its innermost, comprehensive, intensive acts, we may truly distinguish a human from all living, sensing, animate things by referring to ourselves as reasoning animate beings. At the heart of reasoning to learn further truths there is operative an enduring, intuitive intellectual inclination to discern true from false, and a willful inclination towards what seems good from non-good or evil. Such approximate the lowest acts of angelic intellectual intuition and volitional efficacy.

In contrast, an angel’s inmost life is to be a purely immaterial intuitive intellectual, volitional person. Once an angel’s choice was made about accepting supernatural Beatitude, no further determination would be possible. Unlike human persons, who can continue purgation after death if not stained by Original Sin or Mortal sin, demons can neither repent nor reform.

The Creation of the Angels

At the instant of each angel’s creation, its intellectual understanding was infused with all knowledge proportioned to its capacity and mission, and its will was granted all power required to execute its intentions instantly and effortlessly. This approximates, analogically, the intuitive comprehension of Divine Knowledge and Divine Power. However, all known within Infinite Divine Knowledge as actual or potential is grasped eternally, totally, simultaneously, as subject to the unqualifiedly all-powerful Divine Will that alone can truly make knowns be, so long as they imply no contradiction.

Granted immediately an efficacious will to desire and act in relation to what they intuitively know, angels need not reason or analyze to comprehend causes, nor meditate to achieve a comprehensive synthesis of what they know and love, as human persons must. What angels know and will to act upon may be measured by time, but angelic intentionality is not. Any angel instantly is where he intends to be and act.

Being relegated to instrumental roles, angels no longer could be viewed as supernatural, except in the sense that, being purely spiritual persons, they are “supra” material >

and temporal natures. Due to their pure immateriality, they better image the utter infinite simplicity of the Divine Being. Yet, they are creatures that began “to be” in an instant in relation to the Eternally Subsisting Divine Persons, and like all others, their existence is sustained continually by the unique, Infinite, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Triune Creator.

Scripture offers many insights into angels’ roles. In all instances, angels are portrayed as having comprehension of specific things and persons. This contrasts with certain ancient philosophical depictions of spiritual beings as knowing little or nothing of corruptible particulars. How can one accept such after hearing the assurance in *Psalms* that God commands His angels to guard us in our ways, referring to an angel for each created human person? Even the highest ranks of angels comprehend all that lower angels know and do in detail through ever more comprehensive and extensive intuitive vision.

A Whole and Dynamic Relationship

For those who confirm the Faith by living in accord with orthodoxy and orthopraxy, the existence and nature of angels are woven into the fabric of ordinary daily life. Of course, we have no commonly available sensible evidence to demonstrate their existence and nature, and this is why empirical-mathematical sciences can say absolutely nothing about either issue. Nonetheless, their incredible numbers have been acknowledged by saints and mystics. Saint Thomas Aquinas insisted that the number of angels exceeds all created things comprising the universe; and mystical visionaries such as Venerable Catherine Emmerich remarked that if we could behold the angelic hosts ministering to Creation with physical eyes it would seem that the light of the sun would be eclipsed and the world cast into shadow.

Not only are our physical sciences unable to aid us concerning the existence and nature of angels; they also are inadequate in explaining what life essentially is in different biological

sciences. Such sciences analyze and explain in meticulous detail how physical processes of living things function, but what life is can only be answered philosophically, and even then, only fully with inspiration from Revelation and sacred theology. Measuring quantitative magnitudes does not directly aid us in considering what essentially lies at the heart of what it is to be a human person. Persons, alone, possess immaterial powers of intellect to attain the true and will to desire the good in order to exercise true liberty, which finds its ultimate goal in Truth and Good.

Unlike ourselves, who partake the species of humanity, for being material and bodily enters into our personal nature, every created pure spirit is a unique species of angel. Michael, said of an angel, designates a specifically distinct angelic person from Gabriel or Raphael, and so on. There are more species of angels than we can possibly imagine or calculate in this life, even in the light of Faith. Since no angelic person is generated with ancestral heritage, none share a common transmitted nature with others. Yet, we rank them according to the infused comprehension of creation proportioned to their nature and dignity that accords with their roles and missions. And so, we distinguish Angels, Archangels, Seraphs, Cherubs, Thrones and Dominations, and so on.

On the Nature of Angels and Ourselves

Each angel intuitively and directly comprehends, according to its proportional capacity, the Eternal Life of the Triune Creator, even though certain ranks also direct their intention to attend to created particulars measured by time. This is why the guardian angel of one human being may act in regard to his charge in ways contrary or opposed to that of another human being. Yet both are faithful to their mission and the common good deigned by Providence. Consider, for example, angels of honorable soldiers locked in mortal combat representing differing countries or principalities in a war.

St. Thomas Aquinas judged that angels were



created perfect in regard to the happiness or blessedness their natures could attain, something that human persons can only achieve by timely action and effort. However, no angel possessed ultimate, supernatural Beatitude whereby “We shall see God as He is.” Such is beyond the power of any created intellect to consider or will to secure. This is central in explaining how bad angels perversely desired equality with the Creator. By choosing to remain fixed in the fullness of natural beatitude granted through their created powers, certain angels refused the gift of supernatural Beatitude God would have granted them. Thus, they condemned themselves to aeviternal bitter torment by choosing natural beatitude as an idol that precludes supernatural Beatitude. Lucifer and his allies may enjoy residues of their natural ontological splendor, but as persons they are most wretched.

Some have postulated that the Triune Creator, having made the natures of angelic and human persons, might “mercifully” annul the causal efficacy of the supreme natural gift He instilled in them as created images of the Trinity, namely, their personal liberty. These counterfeit theologians suggest that no consequences proper to the nature of created persons misusing liberty can be irrevocable.

Such conjectures covertly retrieve aspects of the doctrine of apokatastasis that was considered plausible by some early Church Fathers imbued with Neo-Platonic philosophical teachings. Such sentimentalism or outright heresy ultimately imply erroneous views mentioned earlier, such as eternity of the universe in endless cycles; nebulous views of the status of purely spiritual beings and human souls that permit transmigration to be rationalized, and ignoring real, discernible, differences between substantive natures of beings. Such also implies that the Infinite Creator’s original intention lacked integrity and was only apparently coherent, as well as that Christ’s Redemptive Sanctifying Grace is the least precious of all goods.

Human persons, in common with angels who chose rightly in accepting the gift of supernatural Beatitude, can only fulfill their inmost nature by striving to maintain a unified intention of loving the Creator above all things. This intention to

compensate for the loss of Original Justice is why our lives must constitute a “tradition,” a unity of habituation or enculturation in which perfective refinements only are added to our understanding and love. Just as with civic and sacred traditions into which we are born, no subtraction or eradication of what preceded ought to occur except in regard to what is discerned to be an impediment to true human integrity, what is evil.

To believe one might subtract, abrogate, or obrogate that which was good and true, or add that which contradicts the same, implies auto-destruction of one’s history and destiny. It is analogous to claiming that what definitely was established as being inherently evil or untrue now may be considered its opposite, whether about physical things or moral action. Angels need not have these concerns since their choice instantly determined their eternal destiny. We, however, from our instant of fruitful conception, restlessly desire a goal grasped as in a glass darkly. But it is the same granted to angels who chose wisely: union with the Infinite, Omniscient, Omnipotent Trinity of Eternal Persons, Subsisting Truth and Good.



ΑΡΧΙΣΤΡ. ΜΙΧ. ΑΝΓΕΛ.

St. Michael the Archangel, whose name means, "one who is like God," led the army of angels who cast Satan and the rebellious angels into Hell at the end of time. He is depicted as leading the souls of the departed from this life to present them to our Lord for the particular judgment.

Mosaic of Saint Michael on the facade of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Trieste, Italy



Do the Angels Move the Heavens?

by Fr. Paul Robinson, SSPX

If you take some time to head outside each evening for a month and make some close observations of the stars, you will notice two things. Firstly, the stars make a complete rotation in the sky roughly every 24 hours. Secondly, the stars always keep the same positions relative to one another. Practically all of the ancient civilizations were profoundly, and even obsessively, aware of these two facts about the heavens. For them, the heavens seemed the best place to start in order to discover the ultimate meaning of the universe, and so they gazed intently at the skies, looking for answers.

A persistent question naturally arose for the ancient stargazer contemplating these two star facts, their perfectly circular and seemingly eternal rotations: what makes the stars go round? In this article, we will consider three different

answers: the ones of Aristotle, the medieval scholastics, and Newton.

Aristotle's Notions of Motion

Aristotle of Stagira, affectionately dubbed "The Philosopher" by his fans throughout the ages, had an answer for just about everything. As such, there was no chance that he would leave the celestial motion question unaddressed. His answer, in itself, was simple: Love makes the world go round. The philosophical argumentation behind the answer, however, takes some effort to untangle.

The question, for Aristotle, was not so much, "What moves the stars?" as "Where does movement as such come from?" One's answer to



the first question would only be satisfactory if the second question could be addressed.

To discover the origin of all motion that exists in the entire universe, The Philosopher had to think very carefully about what motion is in itself. By all accounts, he did a great job. According to Etienne Gilson, “No one has ever better discerned the mystery that the very familiarity of movement hides from our eyes.” Aristotle formulated a key principle for understanding causes of motion, the principle that “Whatever is moved is moved by another.” In other words, all motion requires two aspects, one mover and the other moved, one active and the other passive. If mover and moved are the same in every respect, then movement does not take place.

Consider my fingers typing this article. For my index finger to move, it has to receive a nerve impulse that has its origin in my brain. If I were not to send that impulse to my finger and instead waited for my finger to move itself, I would be waiting forever. The reason is that my finger cannot be both what moves itself and what is moved by itself at the same time. For that to be so, it would have to be both active and non-active at the very same moment, and in the same respect, which is a contradiction.

Back to The Philosopher, he leveraged his motion principle to discover where motion comes from. “If everything in motion, he reasoned, has a certain dependence on a mover, then all of the motions that I see around me must have their source in something independent of movement, in something unmoved.” The ultimate source of motion must be an Unmoved Mover, a being that causes movement in other things, but himself does not move. Unless such a being exists, there is no way for us to account for the existence of any movement at all.

But how do you move other things without being in motion yourself? Easy, says Aristotle. You do it by way of attraction. Consider a painting hanging on the wall at The Louvre. It is not moving. It is just existing there, in its artistic beauty. Even though it does not move, however, it has the power to move everyone in the art gallery. They are attracted to the painting and so walk towards it, without the painting having done anything other than hang on the wall.

Thus, Aristotle concludes, the ultimate reason for the movement of the heavens is the attraction exercised by the First Unmoved Mover on the stars. This is “the love that moves the stars” of which Dante speaks in the last line of his *Divine Comedy*.

The Angels of the Schools

It is one thing for your ideas to hold sway for a few years. It is another thing for them to hold sway for a few millennia. Such was the case with Aristotle’s notions of motion. When the scholars of the Catholic Middle Ages started translating Aristotle into Latin and studying him closely, they found his ideas extremely compelling. To their credit, however, they did not become “Aristolators” or worshippers of Aristotle who thought he was some demi-god gifted with philosophical infallibility.

The reason they did not follow Aristotle in every iota of his works and pomps was that he contradicted the Catholic Faith in some of his teachings. For instance, to prove that a First Unmoved Mover must exist, The Philosopher first tries to prove that the motion of the universe is eternal. The Catholic Faith, meanwhile, teaches that the universe came into being at some limited time in the past.

Scholastic philosophers, then, had to do some sifting when they encountered the Aristotelian corpus. When they came to his teaching on physical motion, they did not like the idea of stars moving by an innate attraction. They knew from Genesis that the heavenly bodies are lower than human beings. Mars, Mercury, and Jupiter cannot be closer to the deity than souls endowed with sanctifying grace. As such, the heavenly bodies are surely not striving to imitate God. The reason for their motion must be assigned to some other cause.

The best way to please both Aristotle and be faithful to the faith was to say that the *angels* were moving the heavens. “Most [medieval natural philosophers] assumed that [God] assigned an angel to move each orb.” This idea enabled medieval scholastics to keep Aristotle’s system of astronomy, wherein the heavenly

bodies had the same motions he had envisioned. It was just the *cause* of the motion that was different.

Buridan's Impetus

One medieval thinker of the 14th century, however, realized that we do not need the angels to explain celestial motion. His name was Father Jean Buridan and he taught at the medieval University of Paris. In one of his works, Buridan sets out to explain why rocks move the way that they do when we throw them.

Aristotle, of course, said that a certain *attraction* explains their movement (as we saw, he explained the totality of motion in this way). Rocks really, really want to be on the ground. When they are thrown, the air surrounding the rocks keeps them off the ground for a while until their attraction for the ground overcomes the air, enabling them to return to terra firma.

For Buridan, this did not make much sense. With all due respect to Aristotle, he said, it is obvious that air does not help rocks to fly, but rather *hinders* them. Just like when we are running, we are held back by the wind, so too the air around a rock must slow it down. The real reason why the rock stays above the ground, Buridan claimed, was that our hand imparts an *impetus* to the rock that remains in it for a time, before slowly dissipating.

This makes sense and seems quite reasonable, especially to modern ears, accustomed to scientific notions of force. But Buridan went further. He realized that physical motion on Earth is really not essentially different from physical motion in the heavens. Thus, he said, perhaps the heavenly bodies are moving in space for the same reason that rocks move in space: they have been pushed. Perhaps, at the moment of Creation, God pushed the planets and, since there is no friction or contrary winds in space, they have been moving ever since, without needing the angels to keep them going around in circles.

Newtonian Physics

When the apple dropped out of the tree to plunk down on the head of Isaac Newton (1642–1727), in the perhaps apocryphal story, Newton simply repeated the same reasoning process that Buridan had performed centuries before. The physical force that makes the apple fall to the ground—gravity—must also exist in the heavens. Perhaps gravity, then, is what is making the planets turn.

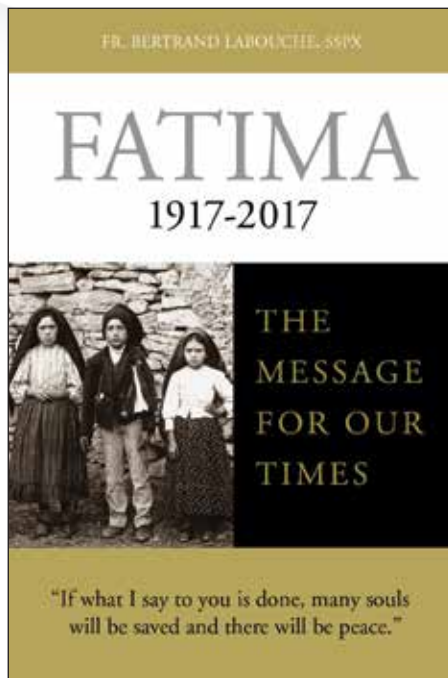
This apple-induced idea led Newton to construct mathematical formulas for the way gravity works on earth. Then, he applied those formulas to the movements of the planets around the sun. What he discovered was that his formulas—what today are called Newton's three laws—were able to describe planetary motion almost perfectly.

With his achievement, Newton was able to provide a purely physical explanation for the motions of the heavens, without, by any means, excluding the need for divine causality. God provides to the planets their being and the natural laws by which they operate. And they dutifully follow those laws.

For Aristotle, stars move because of their attraction to the First Unmoved Mover. Today, we know that this is incorrect, thanks to the Catholic Middle Ages. Using ideas taken from divine revelation, medieval scholastics were able to formulate ideas about forces that pushed the planets forward. The impetus from these thinkers was what ultimately pushed the human mind forward to give birth to what we now know as modern science.

Author's Note: The subject of this article is covered in detail in chapters 4 and 5 of my book *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* (Gracewing, 2018).

Fatima: The Message for Our Times



The 20th and 21st centuries must be understood in the light of Fatima. Mary's visit to this little hamlet in Portugal is a fact that is part of contemporary history. The Message of Fatima concerns all of us. Its blessed influence can touch all of us, touch families, touch nations: "If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace."

This book brings to life the extraordinary marvels of Fatima



Guardian Angel with the Child, painting from the side altar in the baroque Jesuit Church, Vienna (18th century) Shutterstock.com | Renata Sedmakova



The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century and Its

Guardian Angels

by Dr. John Rao

Any Christian interested in the springtime of western Christendom—and the absurdity of Enlightenment denigration of the “Dark Ages” along with it—should pick up the Harvard historian Charles Homer Haskins’ classic work, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. This justly celebrated text, published and republished since 1927, catalogues the manifold intellectual and cultural achievements, as well as the general spirit of rebirth and hope, characterizing what was an overwhelmingly religion-driven age, Catholic to its very core.

A Formidable Challenge

Even if the renaissance in question brought up many problems that profound thinkers and

saints would be forced to struggle to overcome from the 1100s down to our own time, these dilemmas emerged in the midst of a commitment to one unified goal: the need to fulfill the message of the Incarnation by transforming all things natural through the supernatural teaching and grace of Christ. Aside from its consequences for civilization in general, what that commitment engendered was a substantive respect for the complexity of social life and the central importance of the individual person within it underscoring our purely naturalist contemporaries’ celebration of “diversity” and “human dignity” for the empty sloganeering that it really is.

Every era has its key movers and shakers—its “guardian angels”—and I would like to call attention to two of these with respect to the >

twelfth century renaissance, the first of whom is unfamiliar to most of us: a professor at the budding University of Paris known in his day by

always in the context of a rich and diverse social order that cannot be reduced to one, monolithic Leviathan.



the name of Peter “the Cantor” (d. 1197). Peter Cantor insisted that transformation in Christ required ecclesiastical guidance not of some undifferentiated mass community, but, rather, of a multifaceted network of societies with immensely varied vocations in life, each made real through the work of its individual members, and each presenting peculiar obstacles to holiness. In short, the Church had to construct as many supernatural pastoral ladders to heaven as there were distinct natural human activities, socially organized, but always with the awareness that it was the individual representatives of these activities who were destined for eternal life.

It was this project of individual redemption through recognition of different pastoral approaches to diverse social vocations that Innocent III, perhaps the most famous and grateful pupil of Peter Cantor, took up at the end of the century. Innocent applied it to individual Christians in general by means of a more refined spelling out of the basic social activity of the Church as a whole in the Fourth Lateran Council. He also utilized it in dealing with more specific concerns, as with his support for institutional guidance of persons engaged in higher education, men and women committed to St. Francis’ life of Apostolic Poverty, and even the special pastoral labor involved in redemption of those who had fallen into the unacceptable “profession” of ladies of the night. If time and space permitted, it would be equally possible to demonstrate that the great scholastic systems of men like St. Thomas Aquinas are characterized by their concern for individual minds, souls, and redemption, but

St. Bernard’s Heroic Witness

Our second and much more famous protagonist in this task of sanctifying the individual through a natural world of varied human vocations is St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Yes, it is true that the great saint’s suspicion of the possibly secularizing effects of the work of contemporary philosophers illustrates the kind of battles that emerged as a result of the century’s mobilization of all of the manifold natural tools at man’s disposal. Nevertheless, he served as a “guardian angel” for one of the most dangerous and destructive of the many human social groups whose individual members were in desperate need of redemption; the group that historically was the very first target for transformation in Christ: the military, whose natural soldiering vocation had to be redirected from its march to hell to the service of a just cause that might actually aid it in its own peculiar ascent of Mount Carmel.

This labor—so politically incorrect in our own time, which loves to deal with its most difficult problems by refusing to acknowledge them as such—began in the tenth century through the monks of Cluny and their efforts to turn the existing, anarchic soldiery, sarcastically labeled “the *malitia*”, into an honest Christian *militia*. They accomplished this work by convincing at least some members of the *malitia* to abandon their evil ways and use their arms to guard otherwise helpless pilgrims on the perilous road to the shrine of Santiago de Compostella in Spain instead. This enterprise ultimately gave birth



to the crusading movement, the justification for which lay in its call to protect pilgrims en route to Jerusalem, to defend an Eastern Roman Empire under renewed threat from the Moslems, and to recover a Holy Land unjustly taken from the Christian world five hundred years earlier. And it was this work that also led to the creation of the Knights of the Temple, those “fighting men of prayer” who dedicated themselves to the safeguard of worshipers coming to King David’s city and found their own individual guardian angel in St. Bernard. Our guardian angel took up this role in a letter to Hugues de Payens (c. 1070-1136), the Templars’ founder, entitled *In Praise of the New Knighthood*. Eager to aid the Knights both in their recruitment as well as in their hunt for material support, he expressed therein his admiration for their ability to root their peculiar natural vocation in its proper supernatural end.

“Thus in a wondrous and unique manner they appear gentler than lambs, yet fiercer than lions. I do not know if it would be more appropriate to refer to them as monks or as soldiers, unless perhaps it would be better to recognize them as being both. Indeed they lack neither monastic meekness nor military might. What can we say of this, except that this has been done by the Lord,

to be just as multifaceted as the Renaissance Christendom world in which it was born, also creating a whole new genre of chivalric literature in its train, one that sang of the Christian soldiery as a force defending all that was beautiful, deserving of love, and generally weak in consequence. In doing so, it also aroused in its “guardian angel” a conscious desire to adopt—and purify—this often rather capricious troubadour tool, utilizing its theme of romantic love to lead the soldiers under his guidance to the deepest form of loving union: that sought by God Himself with each and every individual soul. Hence his commentary on the *Canticle of Canticles* and its symbol of human love as a ladder conveying us to the loving union God set out to achieve on a higher level through the Incarnation:

“But if she loves with her whole being, nothing is lacking where everything is given. To love so ardently then is to share the marriage bond; she cannot love so much and not be totally loved, and it is in the perfect union of two hearts that complete and total marriage consists. Or are we to doubt that the soul is loved by the Word first and with a greater love?

Because we are carnal and born of



and it is marvelous in our eyes? These are the picked troops of God, whom he has recruited from the ends of the earth; the valiant men of Israel chosen to guard well and faithfully that tomb which is the bed of the true Solomon, each man sword in hand, and superbly trained to war.”

A New Knighthood

In the long run, this “new knighthood” proved

concupiscence and of the flesh, our love must needs come from the flesh. If this love be well guided, it will gradually become, under the influence of grace, a spiritual love, for “that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards, that which is spiritual” (I Cor. 15:46).

Our twelfth century renaissance knew that redemption of distinct individuals through the diverse social institutions organizing their varied vocations in life gains its crucial aid from the >

revelation and grace coming through the Mystical Body of Christ the Incarnate Word. Hence, it cannot come as a surprise that a man like St. Bernard would probe these for an ever-deeper understanding of their treasures. Such probing led this “guardian angel” to a study of the *real* guardian angels, to whom, as Fr. Pierre Pourrat says, “Christian piety had hardly directed its attention” before his homilies on the subject. (*Christian Spirituality*, II, 60).

In a characteristic application of twelfth-century developments, the Abbot of Clairvaux does not discuss angels as watching over us in some monolithic fashion, but with clear distinctions. As Pourrat indicates, he sees angels as the protectors not only of the Church as a whole, but of each and every single Christian edifice in its own way, so much so that “the heavenly spirits, in choir, blend with the psalmody of the monks” (p. 60). Marvelous as this is, their protection is distinguished still further, with St. Bernard proclaiming his astonishment with God that “His angels, those sublime spirits so happy and so near His throne, His familiar and, we may say, His intimate friends” are given the task of protecting each and every individual in each and every one of their vocations in life. (p. 60) His exhortation to us to honor these extremely personal protectors and the incalculable aid that they offer to us can be summarized in the homily that is read in the Breviary on October 2nd:

“Although we may be but little children, and the way that remains for us to pass over before we reach salvation be very long, and not only very long but also full of danger—for all that, what is there for us to fear, who are guided by such guardians? It is impossible for them to be overthrown or seduced, still less for them to seduce us, they who keep us in all our ways. They are faithful, they are prudent, they are powerful; wherefore fear? Let us follow them, let us cling to their footsteps, and we shall thus abide under the protection of the God of heavens.

“Shouldst thou foresee a grave temptation or fear a great trial, invoke thy guardian, thy guide, thy refuge in oppression and in distress. Call on him and say, ‘Lord, save us, for we perish.’

He does not sleep, he does not slumber...O my brethren, may your guardian angels be your intimate friends; be unceasingly with those who, when you often think of them and devoutly pray to them, guard and console you every moment.”

I may be wrong, but I believe that the Church has generally counseled against our attempting to dwell any further on this magnificent reality, as, for example, by “naming” our individual guardian angel. Perhaps this is deemed much too arrogant on our part. Perhaps it is due to the fact that our guardians themselves carry out their labors as members of their own diverse angelic societies, and, that it is best to make clear that they, just like we ourselves, can only be what they are meant to be individually through the communities that God has placed them in. Perhaps any human project of personalizing them further than Scripture, which has named only a few angels, would cheapen their grandeur and work for us, just as the naturalist demand for individuals to think and act purely on their earthly plane alone actually cheapens and destroys us in the Divine plan.

Whatever the case may be in this regard, it strikes me as particularly fitting that in the mysterious Providence of God, the development of devotion to our guardian angels should have been left to the twelfth century. For nothing can be more aesthetically complete than seeing how a renaissance that achieved its work by plunging into the “dirt” of all earthly vocations marred by sin—the particularly “dirty” one of soldiering included—discovered, as it went about its labors, that all of the angels of God were there beside them, individually aiding each and every man and woman to be truly reborn and transformed in Christ.



Fatima and the Present Life

by Fr. Alvaro Calderón, SSPX

The message of all anti-modernistic or counterrevolutionary apparitions – if we may use these ugly names for such beautiful realities – correspond to the first law of Divine love: the deeper the human misery, the greater God’s mercy manifests itself. For instance, Saint John of the Cross, in the first of his *Sayings of Light and Love*, says: “The Lord has always revealed the treasures of His wisdom and spirit to souls, but now when the face of evil exposes itself more and more [he is speaking at the time when Protestantism had engulfed half of Christendom], so does God reveal His treasures more.”

To young Lucia, anxious because she will not be taken to heaven soon, the words of the Blessed Mother, “My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God”, are but an echo of the loving words to Juan Diego at Tepeyac,

“Am I not here, who am your mother? Are you not under my protection?”

The way to God in these terrible times of the manifestation of the mystery of iniquity, and our refuge, are the Two Hearts united: the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is what Heaven and the Popes have proposed as the means of protection for the faithful and the Church. And it is what the message of Fatima states formally and explicitly.

The message of Fatima has a special character: the Blessed Mother came to warn us of the seriousness of the times.

“Seriousness”: this is the term that describes the tone, the mood of the soul, so to speak, of the Fatima message. The word *serious* is short for *severe*, which has more negative connotations, but we would dare say is more accurate in this >

instance. Severe means rigorous here, with the rigor of truth. While the Blessed Mother appears at Fatima very loving indeed, she is also serious. The little shepherds say so time and again. She does not cry, but neither does she smile. She spoke to those truly innocent children of sinners, of how deeply God is offended, of the punishments men are calling on themselves by their sins. Unlike at La Salette, the Blessed Mother at Fatima did not cry because the confidence in her intercession softens her sadness; but she did not smile either, and that showed her indignation at the offences committed against God.

Everything the beautiful Lady said and asked of the children is serious, even severe, very severe. They were small children and yet she showed them hell, a vision that would have literally scared them to death had she not been present with them. She talked to the children about a girl that will be in purgatory till the end of time. She asked of the children prayers and sacrifices and encouraged them to a life of prayer and penance that would seem to us cruel, had she not been their guide. Furthermore, the Blessed Mother told the children that she would soon take them to heaven; news that did not sadden them, but would so sadden their parents. Jacinta's mother, though a good Catholic woman, nevertheless rejected the idea of her two older daughters becoming nuns, and Jacinta prophesied that the Blessed Mother would take them to heaven while still young (as it indeed happened). Could it be that the Blessed Mother warns us that in these times it would be preferable for the children to die while still young rather than remain in families that will not protect them? The miracle of October 13th, by which the Blessed Mother confirmed her presence, was terrifying and was obviously a preview of what will take place on the *Dies Irae*, the day of the wrath of God at the end of time, when "the sun shall be darkened, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved."

The message of Fatima which in itself is a loving one, at the same time is a message of rigor, severity, and seriousness. After the apparition, the little shepherds of Fatima ceased to play. We, too, must get to work.

This begs repeating especially to us, priests. The Blessed Mother told us to "Pray and make

penance for sinners". The Society of Saint Pius X received a great grace of preservation amid these perverse times; and yet we, its priests, perhaps have not taken it all very seriously.

Parents, you may not have taken your duties seriously, either. How many dads are wasting their time on the internet, [on video games, on Netflix]; how many moms are going about here and there [spend time on Facebook, Pinterest], when the education of the children demands so much dedication. The Blessed Mother gave us a lesson on how to educate children. Her pedagogy with the little shepherds, so loving and therefore so strict (because reality is hard), is not an extraordinary pedagogy for visionary children, it is an example for all moms and dads. A mother must be able to tell her children, "Do not be afraid, my heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God." If the fathers have a generous and provident love, they will be able to be demanding in regards to their children's faults, leading them to God. The times do not allow for anything else.

Dear young men, do not waste your time, as so many do. Do not get distracted, claiming to be Catholic and even calling yourselves champions of Tradition whilst accepting yet another drink.

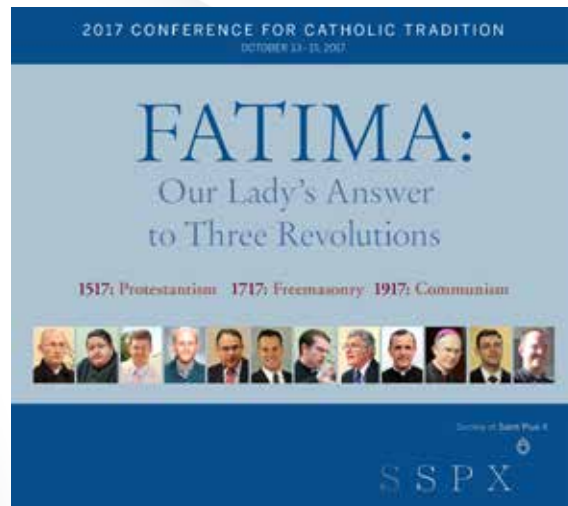
Dear young ladies, how many of you are wasting time chatting on your cells, wasting so much time and money on makeup and tempted by immodest fashions. These are the fashions that lead to the abyss that terrified the little Fatima shepherds. Jacinta, young as she was, cautioned us in very somber terms.

Let us, therefore, get to work. We are living in very serious times; let us, therefore, be more serious. True love is serious. Let us, then, pray; let us pray more. Let there not be one day without praying the rosary, let us not miss attending a single Mass. And let us do penance, especially the conscious performance of our duty of state. Our duty of state, if done in earnest is a constant and significant penance. As the world has not only not converted, but has deteriorated more and more, for sure we will have to face calamities; but let us not fear, we have a safe refuge in the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Editor's Note: This article by Fr. Alvaro Calderón was translated by Laura Garza from *Iesus Christus* #158, pp. 22-23

2017: Fatima—Our Lady's Answer to Three Revolutions

1517: Protestantism • 1717: Freemasonry •
1917 Communism



To commemorate the centenary of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima, Angelus Press once again brought together some of the best Catholic thinkers, speakers, and writers to consider this year's topic and explore the three revolutions and how the message of Fatima can be seen as Heaven's response to these attacks. Learn what we can do to follow Our Lady and overcome these revolutionary influences in our lives. Conferences include: "Martin Luther: The Person Behind Protestantism," "Communist Principle Still Alive Today," "Freemasonry: the anti-Church," Archbishop Lefebvre and the Three Revolutions," "Fatima and the Mass." "St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Militia Immaculata, and Communism."



The Language of the Angels

by a Benedictine Monk

One of the greatest difficulties of being a foreigner is the lack of communication with the citizens of his adopted country. The language barrier separates him from the others in a sometimes-brutal way. The Jewish people of the Old Testament departing from Egypt certainly experienced this: "...when he came out of the land of Egypt: he heard a tongue which he knew not" (Ps. 80:6). Their sense of confusion in a foreign land, listening to a strange tongue, perpetually wandering through the desert must have been a cause of great suffering. They were guided by a supernatural presence of a pillar of light by night and a column of cloud during the day until they finally reached the Promised Land.

In Search of Our True Fatherland

This pilgrimage of the Jews in the desert is often compared to the earthly existence of man wandering through life like a foreigner seeking his true Fatherland. Like the wandering Jews, our souls were born into this land of exile, surrounded with great dangers and even greater

graces. We too were granted a guide, like a pillar of light, from the Fatherland to lead us into the Kingdom of Heaven. Our guide is our Guardian Angel who is a citizen with full rights and privileges of our true Fatherland. We were born in this land of exile and we do not even speak the language of our real family. We are like foreigners, separated from the citizens of our own country, on the wrong side of the border and listening to an unknown language. Our guide is



here to teach us the new language, which was intended to be our mother tongue, the language of God and His angels. Like foreigners struggling with a new language, we strive to learn to speak with the angels in heaven. What is this mysterious language spoken in this Kingdom of Light where only “adorers in spirit and truth” are admitted?

God is a pure Spirit and therefore His language must be spiritual. He eternally pronounces His Word. In the infinite depths of His Being, He speaks only One Word, “... and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” All of God’s thought is completely contained in His Word, which expresses His Being in the most perfect way. His Word is so perfect and beautiful that there can be no other spoken by Him; He has been saying and will say this same Word for all of eternity. His Spoken Word is, of course, His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ. The angels, being pure spirits, communicate with God in a language that cannot be expressed with material words. They must be able to listen to the Word of God to be able to repeat it. The good angels opened their spirits to this divine Word and being filled with light they were admitted to the Kingdom of the Father where they contemplate His divine beauty.

The bad angels refused to receive this light and willfully threw themselves into the darkness of hell. Their words are of despair and blasphemy, anger and bitterness, incessant bickering, murder and war; motivated in their angelic intellects by the darkest of hatreds. They chose to never listen to God and they refuse to speak His only-begotten Word. The fallen angels try to persuade man to learn this horrible language of hatred, which belongs to the kingdom of the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the language of sin and despair, the language of bitter revolt against God composed by love of self that excludes God and neighbor. Modern man in this valley of tears speaks it fluently.

The Language of the Kingdom of God

As human beings we must learn the language of the Kingdom of God. Our good angels teach us

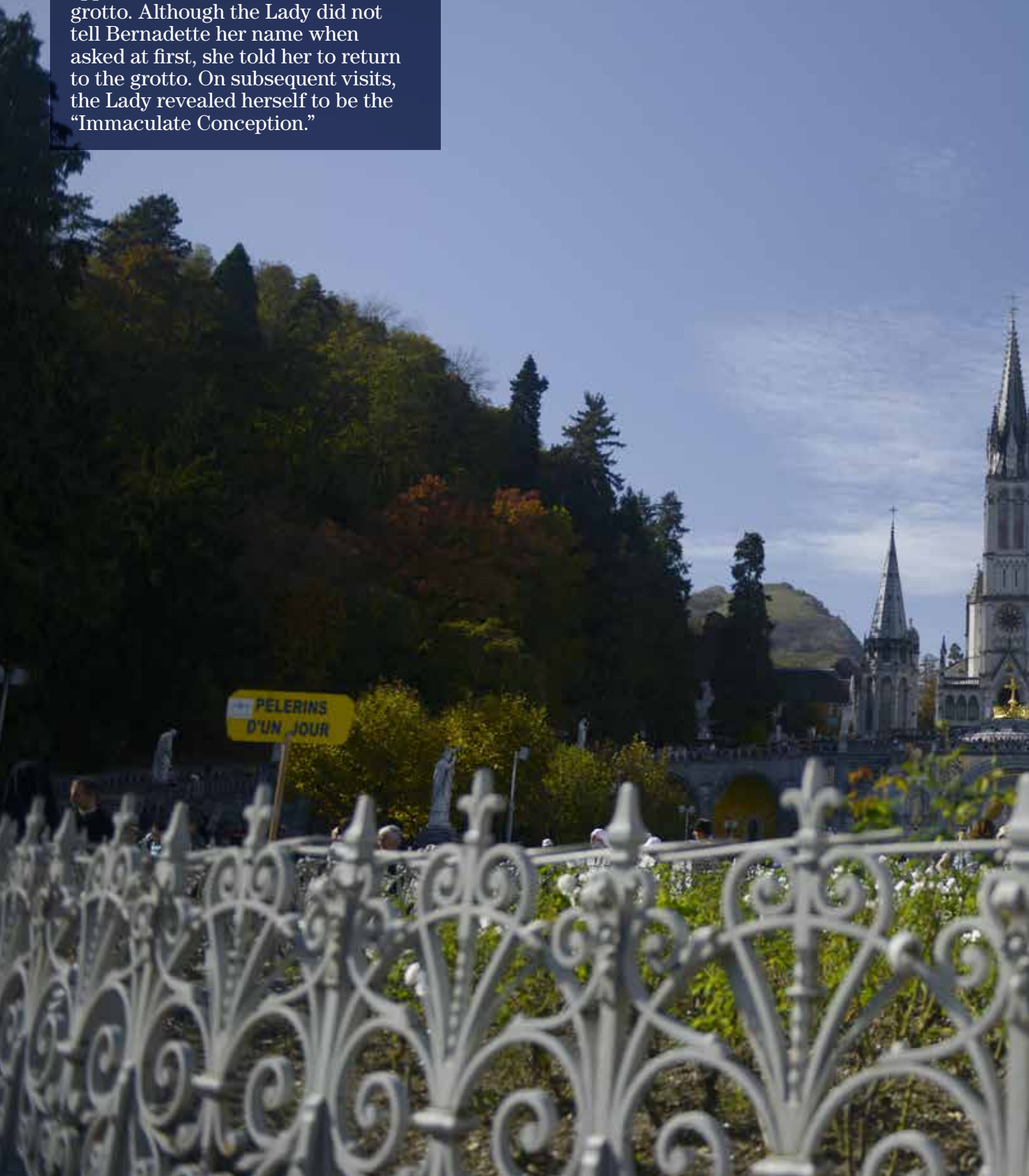
this language spoken by the citizens of heaven. Since the blessed in heaven see God, they see all creatures in and through God, and only as God sees them. Their manner of speaking is through God and only as God speaks to them. The words spoken in the kingdom of heaven can only be motivated by charity, that is to say our love of God and neighbor.

The common Preface that we pray almost every ferial day at mass encourages us to mysteriously join our voices with those of the angels:

“... through Christ Our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the Dominions worship it, the Powers stand in awe. The heavens, and all the heavenly hosts and the blessed Seraphim join together in celebrating their joy. With whom we pray Thee, join our voices also while we say with lowly praise: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts...”

Our Holy Mother the Church asks that we join our voices with the nine choirs of angels to chant the praise of God. The spiritual language they speak is that of Charity. To join our voices to theirs, we must learn this foreign language, which was meant to be our mother tongue. The language of the angels is one of truth, goodness and beauty. They refuse to communicate anything false, evil, ugly and impure. This is our true mother tongue, which we have lost through negligence, disuse and sin. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy has given us a guardian angel that speaks this language fluently. He lives in the Kingdom of our Fatherland and in order to guide us there, he teaches us our mother tongue that our first parents were unable to teach us. This mysterious language is essentially contained in the person of Our Lord. In a Kingdom where there is no hatred, bickering or war, the subject of conversation can only be an expression of what God is. Once the soul knows God, all that his intellect is concerned with is God. The resulting conversations can only concern the things that please God. “May our conversation be in heaven...” with our angel who eternally contemplates the beauty of the Face of God.

In the evening of February 11, 1858, Bernadette Soubirous went to fetch some firewood with her sister and another companion when a Lady who was indescribably beautiful appeared to her at the Massabielle grotto. Although the Lady did not tell Bernadette her name when asked at first, she told her to return to the grotto. On subsequent visits, the Lady revealed herself to be the "Immaculate Conception."





Lourdes

Apparitions of the Immaculate Conception
February 11 - March 2, 1858

by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

Who was Bernadette Soubirous? Born on January 7, 1844, she was the daughter of a miller reduced to poverty. A simple young shepherdess, submissive, sickly, unappreciated, but who had the incredible possibility of seeing, many times, the mother of Our Lord.

The First Apparition

The first apparition took place on February 11, 1858 in the grotto of Massiabelle. Here is the manner in which Bernadette narrated what happened: "I saw a lady dressed in white; She wore a white dress and a white veil with a blue waistband and a yellow rose on each of her feet. Her rosary was yellow too. She took the rosary from her arm and made the sign of the Cross. I

managed to do likewise. The Apparition moved the rosary beads between her fingers without moving her lips. When it was over she made a sign to me to come near her, but I did not dare." The second apparition took place three days later with about ten people present who saw Bernadette in ecstasy. The third apparition, on February 18, was one of the four longest. For the first time, the Virgin spoke: "Would you be so good as to come back here for fifteen days. I do not promise you happiness in this world, but in the next." The fourth and fifth apparitions took place on the following two days. By then, 30 people were present at the grotto. The next day was for Bernadette her first official questioning by Jacomet, the commissaire de police. The next day the Virgin did not appear, and on her way back from the grotto, Bernadette said in a



discouraged voice: “I don’t know what I did to cause the Lady not to appear!”

Dr. Dozous was invited to come to the grotto the following day to observe Bernadette first hand, and to uncover in the name of medical science the “sham of Massiabelle.” Dozous went home deeply shaken in his incredulity. He became, however, one of the most prominent witnesses in the events at Lourdes. On the following day, 300 people were present. The Apparition said to Bernadette: “Repentance! Repentance! Repentance! Pray to God for sinners” and asked her “to climb on her knees into the grotto and to kiss the ground in a sign of repentance for sinners”. The ninth apparition explains the origin of the spring of water. Bernadette explained: “The vision told me to go and drink from the spring. Since I did not see it, I went to drink from the river. She told me it was not there I was to drink and with her finger pointed under the rock. I went there and found only a little brackish water. I put my hand into it but was unable to take any. Then I dug with my hands and so could take some. Three times I threw the water away since it was dirty; the fourth time I managed to drink. She made me eat some of the grass which grew around the spring.” On that evening of February 25th, Bernadette was interrogated by the Imperial Procurator. She was threatened with prison if she did not promise not to return to the grotto, but Bernadette made no such promise. On Friday the 26th, there was no apparition. By contrast, the next day the apparition occurred as 800 people looked on. The apparition indeed came the following day; nearly 1,100 people were there. There was an unpleasant surprise in store for Bernadette: a policeman invited her to accompany him to appear before the Examining Magistrate. Jacomet, the Commissaire de Police and the bailiff were present for the interrogation. This was Bernadette’s third questioning. She responded to their usual threats of imprisonment with serenity and firmness.

On March 1, the twelfth apparition took place. Some 1,300 people were present. For the first time, a priest, Abbé Dézirat, was there to witness Bernadette’s ecstasy. The following day, 1,600 people were present at the grotto. In Bernadette’s

words: “The Lady told me to go to tell the priests to build a Shrine there. I went to the parish priest to give him the message. He stared at me for a moment and then spoke to me reassuringly: ‘What is this Lady’s name?’ I told him I did not know. He told me to ask her name. The next day I asked but she only smiled.” The parish priest of



Lourdes assumed a position of doubt regarding the seer.

Making Sense of a Miracle

The priest’s uneasiness about the events at Massiabelle provoked him into saying a few rather unkind words. Bernadette was nervous >

Christian Culture



“I do not promise to make you happy
in this world but in the other.”



and afraid and forgot to tell him the second part of the message: the desire to make the grotto a place of pilgrimage. Bernadette went back to the priest that evening. He heard her out and then said: "Ask this Lady's name and when we know it we shall build the Shrine and organize a pilgrimage."

On March 3, there was no apparition in the early morning, but after school, Bernadette felt that "irresistible force to return to the grotto" and Our Lady indeed appeared. For the third time, she went to see the parish priest. No longer is he uncertain and tolerant but rather skeptical and reproving. The following day, some 7,000 to 8,000 people were at the grotto. The apparition lasted some 45 minutes with the usual prayers, ecstasy and penitential gestures. Once again, the Apparition just smiles when she is asked for her name. The crowd is not happy but the public authorities are. The parish priest refuses to make a move before knowing her identity. There is no apparition for some 20 days. For many, the events of the grotto became a fading memory. Bernadette returned to silence and to anonymity. On the Feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette felt again that "irresistible force." The Lady appeared, and Bernadette, again, four times, asked her who she was. Finally, the answer came. Bernadette explains: "She raised her eyes to heaven, joined her hands about her breast and said to me: 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' These are the last words she addressed to me." Bernadette ran to the priest.

He suddenly came to realize the meaning of the whole thing. He became more and more convinced that the events of Massiabelle were of supernatural origin and that little Bernadette was becoming the messenger to the world of the Immaculate Virgin of Lourdes. Then there was another interval when no apparitions occurred: it lasted 10 days. The events of the 26th had brought the grotto to the forefront of public attention and renewed the influx of pilgrims. The local authorities were alarmed and took drastic measures. On March 27, Bernadette was subjected to a medical and psychiatric examination. The intention of this examination was to confine Bernadette in a sanatorium for those suffering from mental problems and

mental imbalance. After two hours, the doctors advised that the whole thing be adjourned. During the 17th apparition, the miracle of the candle occurred. During her ecstasy, Bernadette held her hands cupped around the flame of her candle. Dr. Dozous examined the child's hands: they were completely unharmed without the least sign of a burn. Two days later he told Jacomet: "Now I believe! I have seen with my own eyes." The third interval of three months was the longest in the history of the apparitions. During that time, Bernadette made her First Holy Communion, and Jacomet promulgated a decree: the taking of water from the spring at the grotto was prohibited; access to the property called Massiabelle was prohibited; a barricade was going to be erected to prevent access to the grotto; any contravention of this Ordinance would be prosecuted. Bernadette did not mention the 18th and final apparition in her account. Why this silence? Because she regarded it as being private, as exclusively to her personally. The grotto was blocked off, but she felt the irresistible force. She took another path and came to a meadow that lay on the other bank of the river. From this spot, she saw the Immaculate Virgin for the last time. Her ecstasy lasted 15 minutes. When it was over, Bernadette rose to her feet in her customary slow and recollected way. Her Mission accomplished, Bernadette entered the convent of Nevers in 1866. She learnt how to read and write. Her health took a turn for the worse and she died on April 16, 1879. Her incorruptible body can be seen in a crystal reliquary in the convent.

Lourdes Today

A town of 15,000 inhabitants, Lourdes sees 5 million pilgrims every year. The shrines consist of five basilicas. They are, in respective order of construction: The Crypt, The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, The Basilica of the Rosary, The Basilica of St. Pius X, and The Saint Bernadette Church. The first three named are built one on top of the other. The Basilica of St. Pius X has a modern design being built in reinforced concrete. Four basilicas may seem



like a lot but, granted the influx of pilgrims, they are not enough. So, a fifth church with a capacity of 5,000 was built. The first building, The Crypt, is the response to the desire of the Immaculate Conception in her 13th apparition. The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception is noted for its stained-glass windows. On the upper level, they depict biblical scenes involving the Immaculate Conception from the origins of mankind until the solemn definition of the dogma by Pius IX. Below, 23 stained-glass windows narrate the story of Lourdes. It is known as the upper basilica since it stands on top of the other two. It is built in Gothic style. It consists of a single nave 170 feet long and 70 feet wide. The nave and choir are surrounded by fifteen chapels. The bell tower is square-shaped with an octagonal steeple rising to 230 feet. The upper basilica can hold some 600 people. The Rosary Basilica shows a façade with a majestic doorway which encloses a bas-relief of a group of figures: Our Lady holds the infant Jesus in one arm and a rosary in the other. The internal structure is in the form of a Greek cross; its architectural style is, however, Romanesque-Byzantine. The church is 170 feet long, 158 feet wide and can accommodate 2,000 people. Its main attractions are the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary represented in splendid mosaics. The huge mosaic in the apse represents the Immaculate Conception.

The spring of water flows from the bottom of the grotto to the left as you face it. It is protected by a pane of crystal and is also illuminated. The first immersions in this water and the first cures began at once. Every year, about 400,000 pilgrims, the sick and the healthy alike, bathe in the tubs. The water is channeled into a reservoir of some 120 thousand gallons which was constructed under the basilicas. This feeds the 20 little fountain heads on the left side of the grotto and the 16 baths on the right. Hundreds of people bathe in this water daily. The water is changed twice every twenty-four hour period. No one has ever contracted an illness from it. If you go in May as I did, the water in the tub is in fact melted snow from the mountains.

The Miracles of Lourdes

To speak of Lourdes is to speak of miracles. What procedure is used to determine conclusively whether these really are miracles? In 1882, the Lourdes Medical Bureau was set up. Since 1947, a second permanent body has existed in Paris: The International Medical Committee. The doctors have access to the medical records. If the cure is held medically inexplicable, the miraculous cure is or is not confirmed. The criteria used in the evaluation are as follows: The cure itself must be sudden, unforeseen, total, without any period of convalescence, and permanent. It will only be accepted after 4-5 years. The sickness prior must have been grave, organic and objectively ascertained. Since 1858 about 6,000 have been examined. Of these, only 67 have been declared miracles.

When in Lourdes, you cannot miss the Way of the Cross. It winds around a green hillside which rises beside the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. It extends nearly one mile. The path for the most part is beaten earth. The groups of statues in cast-iron are a little larger than life-size. Recently, a fifteenth station has been added: The Resurrection.

During the pilgrimage season, from Easter to mid-October, two processions take place daily. The Blessed Sacrament Procession begins at 4:30 pm. It begins from the grotto, winds its way slowly along the Gave stream, across the Esplanade and ends in front of the Rosary Basilica. It is followed by Benediction. The Torchlight Procession follows the same route and ends with the singing of the *Salve Regina*.

The story of Lourdes is destined to be one of faith, a message of hope, a constant call to repentance and prayer, and a beacon lighted by the Immaculate Virgin for millions of people longing to find or better understand the meaning of God in their lives.



Singers Today, Catholics Tomorrow

by SSPX Sisters

So many Catholic mothers today weep over a child gone astray in our poor world! When the prodigal son hastened home, it was because of the thought of the incomparable joy he had once known in his father's home. Parents have a very simple means of developing and fostering this joy in their children: song. Education is above all a respiration, and song spreads the perfume of good humor that is so conducive to physical and moral health, it helps to awaken the intelligence, removes the danger of vice and corruption, and contributes to the flowering of virtue. And it is so natural an inclination for human beings that they can scarcely refuse to quench their thirst with it. What will our children sing later on, when their heart fills with enthusiasm, if no one forms them with beautiful music? They will take pleasure in modern songs, those influential agents of moral

depravation. Yes, song is powerful over the heart of man, for the bad or for the good. And we might add that it stimulates the capacity to listen, which can spare a child many difficulties in school; plus, the study of rhythm influences the order of the brain, developing logic and the capacity to reason.

Music and Music

How to go about it concretely? By listening to beautiful pieces of music or songs, we form our children's ear; prefer baroque music (Vivaldi, Bach, Handel, *etc.*) or classical music (Haydn, Mozart, *etc.*) and folk songs. The harmony of the sounds should elevate the sentiments and not excite them; romantic music that is more passionate is to be used sparingly. We must obviously keep the



doors of our homes resolutely closed to diabolical music such as rock music that too many young Catholics enjoy listening or dancing to, because of their parents. Yes, we must know how to give our children their fill of beauty, and later on ugliness will disgust them. Parents should play a CD sometimes in the car or on Sundays and feast days in the living room. And they should be the first to sing; fathers can sing for their children a good old folk song or Catholic song, with a tone and gestures that will captivate their audience; when putting the little ones to bed, mothers can reward them for a day well spent by singing them a hymn or lullaby.

In All Circumstances

Little ones will quickly learn the children's songs that the whole family sings for them with the appropriate gestures and dances ("Here we go Looby Loo"). As they grow, they will join their voices to those of their parents in the car, while doing dishes, and during evenings spent together as a family. It is good to sing rounds; they are easy and teach children to hold their voices without being thrown off by the others. Thus, song becomes a pastime and banishes boredom. But that is not all, like we said: we should also use it in difficult, more tense moments ("No matter what, I always go on smiling..."). How many conflicts are calmed, how many disputes between brothers and sisters can be dissipated by singing together: there

is nothing like a song for creating a common spirit. We can sing while working to keep the atmosphere joyful, or on walks to encourage the little ones ("Row, row, row that boat"). Holidays should be full of song; before opening their presents, the little ones can process to the nativity scene in the living room to sing a hymn to the Child Jesus. And it is often a simple way of pleasing others. It is good to prepare a song for a visit to the grandparents, for a family party, a wedding anniversary, and why not with adapted lyrics composed by the older children. Older children should be encouraged to participate in the school choir where they will learn a healthy control of their breathing and voices along with a priceless collection of polyphony pieces.

Lastly and above all, we must not isolate this need for song and this joy found in singing from the spiritual lives of our children: we can sing at night prayers, sing the *Gloria Patri's* in the rosary, and grace before and after meals, and we should love to participate in the sung Mass on Sunday. Singing is praying twice, with one's body and soul. And as the dispositions of the body help those of the soul, song makes prayer more ardent and more fervent: see how abundantly the liturgy uses chant.

"Singing belongs to one who loves," says St. Augustine. Where there is love, there is joy, and joy is the mother of song. For the Church, song is a need, it is the expression of her love. Let us foster this need in our children, and the day will come when they will be constantly singing deep down in their souls the interior song we call thanksgiving.

And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, He also took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke 2:25. Stained glass window, Ridgefield





Q&A

by Fr. Juan-Carlos Iscara, SSPX

Note: This set of questions and answers has been prompted by the recent discussions over Pope Francis’s *Amoris Laetitia*, and its “pastoral” consideration of allowing the divorced and remarried to be admitted to the sacraments. Here we set down the moral principles which should guide the answer to be given, not only to that particular problem, but also to a question that we are often asked in our ministry. (This set of Q&A is based on the excellent article by Rev. Fr. Hervé Gresland, SSPX, published in *Le Rocher c’est le Christ* n. 109, October-November 2017.)

What (or who) is a “public sinner”?

A “public sinner” is a *person who lives habitually in the state of grave sin*—which sin is also *notorious* and *scandalous*. “To live habitually in sin” means that the person has not simply committed isolated sinful acts, but lives in such a manner that the situation of sin is perpetuated. “Notorious” means that this habitual sinful state is known by many as a fact and is therefore impossible to conceal. Moreover,



the sin committed has the particular malice of being “scandalous”—it offers the public a bad example which also encourages others to commit the same sin.

Among “public sinners” are to be counted those who have abandoned the Catholic faith, either by going over to non-Catholic groups or sects, or by habitually living in impiety, that is, habitually refusing to worship God, to follow His law, or to accept the truths of faith. Among such sinners are also to be counted those who have a state of life or an occupation that is gravely sinful (for example, usurers, prostitutes, “psychics,” *etc.*) and also those who live as husband and wife without being truly married.



What is the Church’s attitude towards public sinners?

From her origins and urged by Our Lord’s command (Mt. 7:6), the Church has maintained towards public sinners a severe policy of *exclusion*—they cannot be admitted to communion, they cannot act as godparents, they cannot receive a Catholic burial....To admit public sinners to the sacraments would constitute a formal cooperation in their public sacrilege and in the ensuing scandal, as well as an implicit acceptance or approval of the sin that has brought them to this state.

Such exclusion of the unworthy is a grave duty of the ministers of the Church, who must also act with supernatural prudence and fortitude. In this matter, the Church proceeds, not with the intention of offending or hurting anybody, but with the intention of defending the honor of God and of our holy religion, and saving souls. The sinner, who is thus excluded from the reception of the sacraments, must see this exclusion as a special call to penance, as the last recourse of a loving mother, the Church, to bring a lost sheep to the

fold.

To be readmitted to the reception of the sacraments, the public sinner must dispose himself, first as “sinner,” by a sincere contrition, and second as “public,” by a public manifestation of his repentance and by repairing the scandal given. Therefore, if his sinful behavior is tied to a permanent external circumstance (such as living in concubinage, or keeping what he has stolen, *etc.*), he must publicly remedy that situation.



What should be our attitude towards public sinners?

The attitude of the Church teaches us how we are to behave with public sinners: we must follow what Catholic moral doctrine dictates regarding participation in an evil action perpetrated by another.

Although sin is a personal act, we share responsibility for any sin in which we cooperate in some way. We may cooperate in the commission of a sin by directly and voluntarily participating in it, or again by ordering, advising, praising, or approving of it. But we may also become responsible for a sin by omission, that is, by not hindering or denouncing a sinful action or by remaining silent when it is committed.

Sin cannot be approved or encouraged in any way. To approve of a sinful action is to associate oneself with the evil intention of the sinner, and thus renders one culpable of sin. Allowing another to commit a sin may also be culpable, because we have the duty not only of avoiding sin ourselves, but also of opposing sin. If there is no grave obstacle or inconvenience, charity towards our neighbor demands that we try to stop him from committing a sin or, at least, that we do not participate in his sin in any way, whether by our silence or inaction.

In today’s world, we see immorality all >

around us, widely promoted by the media, who also presses us to accept it in the name of tolerance and out of respect for our neighbor's liberty to do as he pleases... The possibilities for confronting such an onslaught of moral deviance are limited, but we must at least be firm in defending the law of God and upholding especially the Catholic moral principles regarding family and marriage, which are currently under violent attack. We must strive to conform our personal lives to God's law and, in the measure possible, to make His law respected around us, beginning with our own families. In this respect, one of our foremost duties will be (again, insofar as we are able) to protect our families from the scandal of public sinners.

Q&A

What should we do when asked to attend a relative's "marriage" that will certainly be invalid in God's eyes?

The general moral principles stated above are clear, but their application to concrete cases is difficult and delicate: if we do not react, we risk getting used to sin and, in the end, accepting it as normal; if we react in the wrong way, we risk doing more harm than good...We cannot treat as husband and wife those who are not such in the eyes of God. To do so would be to participate, by our consent, in their sin. At the same time, the matter must be handled with great prudence, charity and fortitude.

Therefore, we should not attend the "nuptials" of a Catholic who marries outside the Church, because such a ceremony is not a true marriage. The Catholic "spouse" commits a mortal sin by attempting to marry in such a way, and enters into a state of life which will perpetuate the sin, thus becoming a "public sinner." Likewise,

we should not attend the reception after the "wedding," for what is there to celebrate? That a soul has chosen to sin and to remain in sin? Certainly not.

To receive an invalidly married couple in the context of family gatherings undermines the very notion of the Catholic family, which must be based on true marriage. The family may receive one of its members who is in the state of sin, but alone, without the putative "spouse," who is not part of the family. Perhaps the family member who is in sin will refuse to come without the "spouse." Then, painful as it will be for the rest of the family, he or she will not be able to come – the moral good of the family must take precedence.

Outside of family gatherings, it is permissible to meet the so-called "spouses" in order not to break completely the family ties that may lead them back to the fold, however, there must be some basis for the hope that one day their consciences will be enlightened and open to grace. If such meetings do take place, it must be clear to the couple and to other, that they are not in approval of the sinful situation, even if years have passed since the situation began.

The firmness of these principles does not exclude charity towards the persons involved, quite the contrary! God hates sin, but inclines with mercy towards the sinner who is willing to return to Him. We must imitate Him. There is no need to lose our temper or to be unnecessarily hurtful. We must explain our attitude calmly and with great charity. True charity towards our neighbor demands both that we help the sinner abandon the state of sin and also that we do not allow the scandal of sin, by our inaction, to spread to others.

A prudential note...

These guidelines are dictated by the general moral principles, but what appears here as a straightforward analysis, is, in real life, a complex and usually painful decision.

Each concrete case will be different, according to the circumstances and the persons and families involved. In these situations, there are many variables which, when taken into consideration, may incline us more towards leniency or perhaps to greater severity.



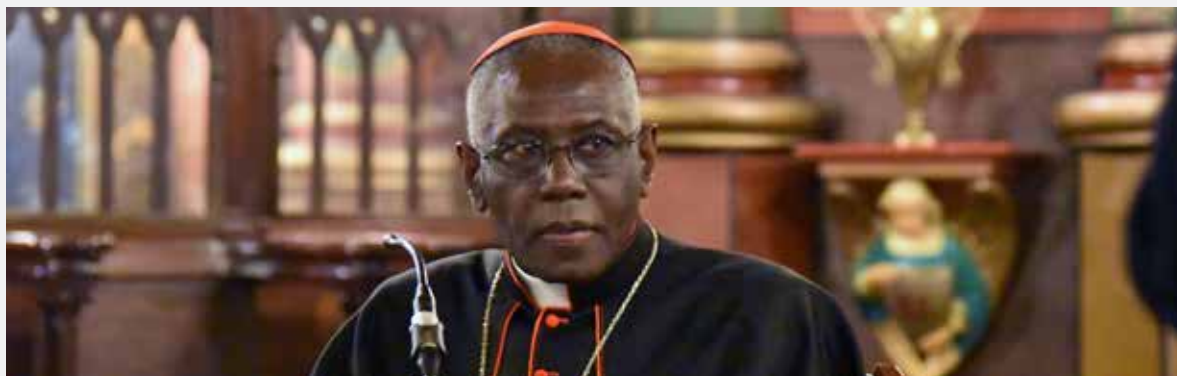
And So “Synodality” Begins to Take Shape

On September 3 2017, Pope Francis issued a Motu Proprio entitled *Magnum Principium* by which he modified Canon 838 of the Code of Canon Law (the Code of 1983). Canon 838 deals specifically with the translation of liturgical texts from Latin into the various vernacular languages, and mandated that the Holy See must give its official approval to any translations of the Roman Missal and Ritual before they can be used. The modification ordered by Pope Francis removes this requirement and allows the various National Episcopal Conferences to give approval to the official texts of the Mass (*Novus Ordo*) prepared in the vernacular.

While this change seems relatively minor and of no real concern to Catholics assisting at the Traditional Mass, it does signal the beginning

to introduce into the Catholic Church practices found in the various schismatic and heretical Orthodox churches. Synodality is one of the major cornerstones of the Orthodox and is best defined as doctrine being defined and guarded by a synod of bishops rather than in the Petrine Office. This effectively dismantles two of the four marks of the Church (Oneness and Catholicity) by destroying the unity and universal nature of doctrine.

When questioned about the Motu Proprio *Magnum Principium*, Cardinal Sarah, the Prefect for the Congregation of Divine Worship (CDW), wrote that Rome would still have final approval of any translations prepared by the various Episcopal Conferences. Within a few days of the publication of the Cardinal’s words,



of one of Pope Francis’ stated goals: the giving of doctrinal authority to the various National Episcopal Conferences. This would open the door to the possibility that Catholic dogma could vary from country to country (although an impossibility in reality since truths of the Faith are perennially valid everywhere and unchangeable), much the same way as various Episcopal Conferences have made divorce and remarriage not an obstacle to receiving the Sacraments in some countries, while others have upheld the traditional teaching of the Church in this matter in light of *Amoris Latitiae*. Ever since becoming Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has made no secret of his desire

Pope Francis wrote a public letter to Cardinal Sarah correcting the Cardinal and stating that he fully intended to cede control over the translation of Liturgical texts to the Episcopal Conferences. This sort of public rebuke of a cardinal by a pope was unheard of until now. Following this, there is legitimate speculation as to how long Cardinal Sarah will remain as Prefect of CDW. Additionally, Cardinal Mueller stated, in reference to the Motu Proprio that: “In case of doubt, the final authority cannot be with the bishops’ conferences. This would destroy the unity of the Church’s faith, commitment and prayer.”

The “Celebration” Continues

As has been mentioned in previous “Church in the World” columns, the Vatican of Pope Francis has been encouraging the “celebration” of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s revolt against the Church including a joint prayer service presided over by Francis and a female Lutheran “bishop” which took place in Sweden last year. In October of last year, the seeming rehabilitation of Martin Luther continued unabated, as several bishops made remarks (either in print or verbally)



which effectively praised Luther as a reformer. Bishop Nunzio Galantino, the secretary-general of the Italian Bishops Conference went so far as to call Luther’s revolt “an event of the Holy Spirit” in a conference given at the Pontifical Lateran University on October 19, 2017. Bishop Galantino was appointed to his post by Pope Francis.

In response to Galantino, Cardinal Gerhard Mueller, the former Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote an article for an Italian Catholic journal rebuking those who try and see Luther’s actions as anything but a revolt against the Church herself. Mueller stated:

“...in the book written by Luther in 1520, *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae*, it is absolutely clear that Luther has left behind all of the principles of the Catholic Faith, Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, the magisterium of the Pope and the Councils, and of the episcopate. In this sense, he upended the concept of the

homogeneous development of Christian doctrine as explained in the Middle Ages, even denying that a sacrament is an efficacious sign of the grace contained therein. He replaced this objective efficacy of the sacraments with a subjective faith. Here, Luther abolished five sacraments, and he also denied the Eucharist: the sacrificial character of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and the real conversion of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he called the sacrament of episcopal ordination, the sacrament of Orders, an invention of the Pope—whom he called the Antichrist—and not part of the Church of Jesus Christ...

It is therefore unacceptable to assert that Luther’s reform “was an event of the Holy Spirit.” On the contrary, it was against the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit helps the Church to maintain her continuity through the Church’s magisterium, above all in the service of the Petrine ministry: on Peter has Jesus founded His Church (Mt. 16:18), which is “the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15). The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself.

While Cardinal Mueller’s response is laudatory, it must be remembered that he no longer speaks on behalf of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, and therefore he is not in a position to penalize Bishop Galantino or demand a retraction of his statements.

Aside from the public statements of various bishops, the Vatican itself has been working on painting the Protestant revolt in a positive light. The *Osservatore Romano*, the official newspaper of the Holy See has itself published numerous articles consistent with Bishop Galantino’s understanding of Luther. The Vatican Philatelic Office issued a stamp commemorating the anniversary which shows the Crucifixion of Our Lord and at the base of the Cross are the figures of Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon (the original “theologian” of Protestantism). The stamp is an affront to Catholic sensibilities since it replaces the traditional figures of Our Lady and St. John with arch heretics!



There is little doubt that Pope Francis is just ramping up the “ecumania” which has been the hallmark of Vatican policies since Vatican II. It appears that any and all teachings of the Faith are to be sacrificed at the altar of intercommunion with the various Protestant sects.

(The translation of Cardinal Mueller’s article is from Lifesite News and is available here: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/cardinal-mueller-luthers-reform-was-against-the-holy-spirit>)

Young Americans are losing the sense of Christmas

Based on a survey organized by the *Pew Forum* website in December 2013, Christmas in the U.S. is becoming less religious and more “cultural.”¹ As Christmas and Easter are the main religious feasts for Christians and remain attended by virtually all of them (96% to be precise), only one American out of two will attend Christmas services this year, *vs.* two out of three in the previous generation. Young adults under age 30 are far less likely than older Americans to say they see Christmas as more of a religious than a cultural holiday, and this applies also to Christians: young people are more likely than older adults to view Christmas as more of a cultural than a religious holiday

On an more optimistic mood, Nine-in-ten Americans celebrate Christmas, and three-quarters say they believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. The non-Christians celebrate Christmas too, but mostly as a cultural and family holiday. The way they celebrated Christmas is rooted in their past experience as children: mostly with family gatherings, caroling around the Christmas tree, and the exchanging of gifts. But fewer Americans sent Christmas or holiday cards this year, and the trend is to send family pictures and news.

¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/12/18/celebrating-christmas-and-the-holidays-then-and-now/>



Capuchin Theologian Dismissed by the USCCB

Fr. Thomas G. Weinandy, a Capuchin Franciscan priest and well known theologian, was fired by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as a theological advisor within hours of publishing the letter he wrote to Pope Francis expressing his concern about Francis' words and actions. Fr. Weinandy decided to make his letter to Pope Francis public after receiving no response from the Pope, even though he had hand delivered the letter to Francis personally.



In the letter, which was very respectful in its tone, Fr. Weinandy called the pope's attention to the fact that:

"...a chronic confusion seems to mark your pontificate... Allow me to offer a few brief examples. First there is the disputed Chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia*. I need not share my own concerns about its content. Others, not only theologians, but also cardinals and bishops, have already done that. The main source of concern is the manner of your teaching. In *Amoris Laetitia*, your guidance at times seems intentionally ambiguous, thus inviting both a traditional interpretation of Catholic teaching on marriage and divorce as well as one that might imply a change in that teaching... Second, too often your manner seems to demean the

importance of Church doctrine. Again and again you portray doctrine as dead and bookish, and far from the pastoral concerns of everyday life. Your critics have been accused, in your own words, of making doctrine an ideology... the Church is one body, the Mystical Body of Christ, and you are commissioned by the Lord himself to promote and strengthen her unity. But your actions and words too often seem intent on doing the opposite. Encouraging a form of 'synodality' that allows and promotes various doctrinal and moral options within the Church can only lead to more theological and pastoral confusion. Such synodality is unwise and, in practice, works against collegial unity among bishops."

Towards the conclusion of his letter, Fr. Weinandy states:

"Holy Father, this brings me to my final concern. You have often spoken about the need for transparency within the Church. You have frequently encouraged, particularly during the two past synods, all persons, especially bishops, to speak their mind and not be fearful of what the pope may think. But have you noticed that the majority of bishops throughout the world are remarkably silent? Why is this? Bishops are quick learners, and what many have learned from your pontificate is not that you are open to criticism, but that you resent it. Many bishops are silent because they desire to be loyal to you, and so they do not express—at least publicly; privately is another matter—the concerns that your pontificate raises. Many fear that if they speak their mind, they will be marginalized or worse."

It is very clear from the USCCB's immediate firing of Fr. Weinandy that his final observation is completely accurate. Many have expressed similar concerns that any deviation from the "party line" being promoted by the Vatican of Pope Francis will not be tolerated and those who do will be immediately crushed without mercy.



St. John Paul I?

The Italian press is reporting that the cause for the canonization of Pope John Paul I is accelerating. Cardinal Albino Luciani, the then Patriarch of Venice, was elected to the papacy in September of 1978 following the death of Pope Paul VI which occurred the preceding August 6, and took the unusual dual papal name of John Paul. Given the moniker “the Smiling Pope” by the press, John Paul reigned for a mere 33 days and died on September 28, 1978. As of now, Papa Luciani is the only post Vatican II pope who has not been either beatified or canonized. The report states that the heroic virtue of John Paul I has been established and is simply awaiting the approval of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and Pope Francis.

Many conspiracy theories have arisen over the past 40 years as to the exact cause of death of John Paul I. Officially his death was ruled as natural, the result of a heart attack, but some began to speculate that Cardinal Luciani was on the verge of exposing the activity of Freemasons in the Vatican as well as financial improprieties of the Institute for Religious Works (the “Vatican Bank”) and was therefore murdered to stop his speculated



actions. Other theorists have speculated that Luciani was of a traditional mindset and was ready to reverse many of the progressive actions of Paul VI.

Irrespective of these conspiracy theories, there is little doubt that the proposed canonization of John Paul I will be used as a tool to shore up the legacy of the Second Vatican Council.

Ancient Fresco Discovered in Norcia

In the autumn of 2016, a major earthquake caused massive destruction in the Italian city of Norcia, the birthplace of St. Benedict, the Father of Western Monasticism. In addition to the destruction of the town, the Basilica of St. Benedict was almost completely destroyed, as was the Benedictine monastery attached to it (the monks of Norcia had begun celebrating the Traditional Mass with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI some years ago).

News has now come from the Heritage Office of Umbria that in the process of clearing away the remains of the Basilica, an ancient fresco of St. Benedict has been discovered. The fresco had been covered over some centuries ago and is considered to be of great cultural, not to mention religious, significance.

Sadly, it is also being reported that although

the Basilica will be rebuilt, the diocesan plans are calling for a modern structure as opposed to attempting to replicate the original architecture. There is no information on whether the newly discovered fresco will be incorporated into the new Basilica or placed in a museum setting.



The Clandestine Church Takes Action for a Bishop's Liberation

A prayer chain was launched in December of 2017 for the liberation of the bishop of the diocese of Wenzhou, who has been under house arrest for seven months.

On May 18, Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin disappeared from his diocese after being “invited” to meet with the local Bureau of Religious Affairs. Six months later, the faithful of the diocese have decided to pray and fast for their bishop on the 18th of every month.

A few days before the 19th congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the prelate was supposedly led from Beijing to Xining, a city in the province of Qinghai, 1,500 miles from his home. This is the fourth time the bishop has disappeared like this since he succeeded Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang at the head of the diocese in September of 2016.

Last June, the German ambassador in Beijing and Greg Burke, director of the Holy See Press Office, both asked the Chinese authorities to restore Bishop Shao's freedom.

According to Ucanews, the authorities have

informed Bishop Shao that in order to obtain his freedom he will have to recognize the Church's independence from the Holy See and concelebrate a Mass with a bishop not recognized by the Vatican.



Human Stem Cells Used as Spare Parts

With a revision of the law on bioethics scheduled for 2018, a team of French biologists has just tested a therapy using embryonic human stem cells to treat an eye disease.

Retinitis pigmentosa affects nearly 30,000 patients in France. Macular degeneration due to age affects over 1.5 million.

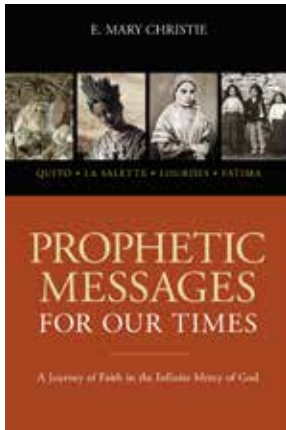
The December 20, 2017 issue of the journal *Science Translational Medicine* reveals the results of an experiment conducted on rats. After placing on the surface of their retina a “patch” made of modified embryonic human stem cells, researchers observed that the rats with transplants performed better and for a longer period of time on the visual acuity test than animals of other groups.

In the light of these results, an authorization request for a clinical trial on human patients

will be filed in March of 2018.

Based on natural law and God's sovereignty over all creatures, the Catholic Church forbids the manipulation—and destruction—of human embryos, even for therapeutic purposes: one cannot do wrong for a good cause.





Prophetic Messages For Our Times

Quito • La Salette • Lourdes • Fatima

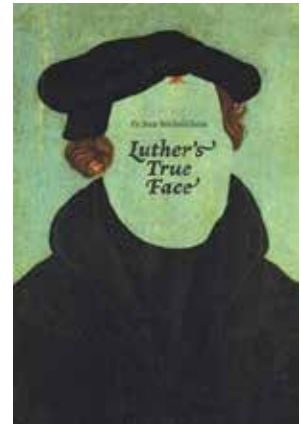
Provides, in a brief and profound manner, the history and meaning of four of the most relevant Marian apparitions for our day: Quito, La Salette, Lourdes, and Fatima. The messages of Our Lady, while sometimes dire, offer hope and consolation to the faithful, yet, more importantly, reveal sure remedies for overcoming the evils of today and the innumerable graces to those that follow her direction. How fortunate we are to have such a Blessed Mother, so desirous to draw souls into the heavenly embrace of her Divine Son.

158 pp.—Flexible hardcover—STK# 8698—\$16.95

Luther's True Face

by Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize, SSPX

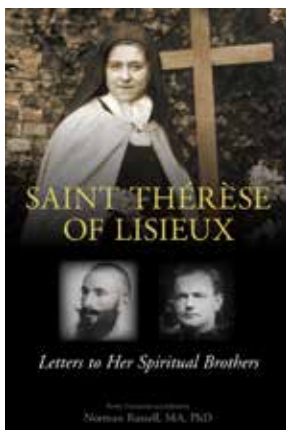
Written by French scholar and clergyman, Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize, of the Society of Saint Pius X, *Luther's True Face* provides an in-depth look at the "Father of Protestantism." More than just a theological analysis, Fr. Gleize's study offers crucial historical details about Luther's life, the times in which he lived, and the state of the Catholic Church in the early 16th century. Also included in this first English edition of *Luther's True Face* is an introduction by Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, several appendices, and a copy of Pope Pius XI's landmark encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (on religious unity). While Fr. Gleize approaches his subject matter through a Thomistic lens and delves deeply into Luther's doctrine, this volume is accessible to all Catholics who wish to learn about the origins of Protestantism and come away with a deeper understanding of what continues to divide Catholics and Protestants to this very day.



152 pp.—Softcover—Photographs—STK# 8699—\$12.95

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Letters to Her Spiritual Brothers



Correspondence between St. Thérèse of Lisieux and missionaries Fr. Adolphe Roulland and Fr. Maurice Bellière covering the practical and spiritual aspects of religious, clerical, and missionary life in the 19th century. The letters offer a unique glimpse into the soul of one of the most beloved saints in recent history. Although more than a century has passed since they were written, these letters confront perennial themes familiar to all Christians. Every Catholic, whether clerical, religious, or lay, will discover immense spiritual benefits in this unique collection.

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St. Mary's Church in Lübeck (Marienkirche, officially St. Marien zu Lübeck) was built between 1250 and 1350. It has always been a symbol of the power and prosperity of the old Hanseatic city. It is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the old Hanseatic City of Lübeck. St. Mary's epitomizes the northern German Brick Gothic and sets the standard for about 70 other churches in the Baltic region, making it a building of enormous architectural significance. St. Mary's Church embodied the towering style of Gothic architecture using northern German brick. It has the tallest brick vault in the world, the height of the central nave being 126 ft.





The Angel of the Storm

by Dr. John Senior

As you go by a field of buckwheat after a thunderstorm, you will often notice that the buckwheat has been scorched quite black. It looks as though a flame had passed over it, and then the farmer says "It's got that from the lightning." But how has it happened? I will tell you what the sparrow told me, and the sparrow heard it from an old willow tree that stood—and is still standing—by the side of a field of buckwheat. It's quite a venerable great willow, but wrinkled and aged, with a crack down the middle—and grass and brambles growing out of the crack! The tree leans forward, and the branches hang right down to the ground like long green hair.

In all the fields round about, there was corn growing, rye and barley and oats—yes, the lovely oats that have the appearance, when ripe, of a whole string of little yellow canaries on a bough. The corn was a wonderful sight; and the heavier the crop,

the deeper it stooped in meek humility. But there was also a field of buckwheat; it was just in front of the old willow. The buckwheat didn't stoop like the other corn; it held itself up proudly and stiffly. "I must be just as rich as the grain," it said, "and I'm much better-looking. My blossoms are beautiful, like apple-blossoms; it's quite a pleasure to look upon me and mine. Do you know anyone finer, my dear willow?" The willow tree nodded his head as if to say, "You may be sure I do!" But the buckwheat was simply bursting with pride and said, "The stupid tree! He's so old that his stomach has grass growing on it." And now a terrible storm blew up. All the flowers in the field folded their leaves or bent their delicate heads while the storm passed over them. But the buckwheat stood up straight in its pride. "Stoop down like us!" cried the flowers. "No need whatever for me to!" answered the buckwheat. "Stoop down



like us!" cried the corn. "Here comes the angel of the storm in full flight. He has wings that reach from the clouds right down to the earth; he will strike straight over you, before you can cry for mercy!"

"Very well, but I refuse to stoop," said the buckwheat. "Shut up your blossoms and bend down your leaves!" said the old willow. "Don't look up at the lightning when the cloud bursts; even mankind daren't do that, for in the lightning one may see into God's heaven. But even man can be blinded by the sight of that; what ever would happen to us plants, if we dared so much—we who are far inferior?" "Far inferior?" said the buckwheat. "Well, now I'm going to look into God's heaven"; and in arrogance and pride it did so. The lightning was so fierce that the whole earth seemed to be wrapped in flame. When the storm passed away, there in the pure still air stood flowers and corn, all refreshed by the rain; but the buckwheat had been scorched coal-black by the lightning. It was now a dead useless weed on the field. And the old willow stirred his branches in the wind, and big drops of water fell from his green leaves, just as though the tree was crying. And the sparrows asked, "What are you crying for? It's so lovely here. Look how the sun is shining, how the clouds are sailing by. Can't you smell the perfume of the flowers and bushes? Why should you cry, dear willow?" Then the willow tree told them about the buckwheat's pride and arrogance—and punishment, for that always follows. I, who tell the tale, I heard it from the sparrows. It was they who told it to me, one evening when I begged them for a story.

Cardinal John Newman's Warning

At the end of this tale as it is finely printed on thick rag paper in the little edition published at Odense, Denmark, in its rich, red leather cover embossed with a golden flower, is an illustration taken from the original drawings by Wilhelm Pederson of the great Angel of the Storm, grasping bolts of lightning in his hands, his long hair flying in the wind, his huge wings spread behind him in his flight.

"Stoop down like us," cried the corn. "Here comes the Angel of the Storm in full flight. He has wings that reach from the clouds right down to the earth; he will strike straight over you, before you can cry for mercy."

Do you think there really are angels of the

storms?

Before you start to answer that, take note of two severe warnings Cardinal Newman gives to anyone who writes or speaks on angels: In a sermon he preached on the Feast of St. Michael, he says: "Many a man can write and talk beautifully about [the angels] who is not at all better or nearer heaven for all his excellent words."

He means that in meditating on the joys of heaven and in particular the choirs of angels, we run the risk that these anticipations will satisfy us prematurely as a sentiment; as if we could enjoy the end without placing the necessary means whereas these things have been revealed to us for a definite, practical purpose.

Cardinal Newman says:

"Let us beware lest we make the contemplation of them a mere feeling, and a sort of luxury of the imagination. This World is to be a world of practice and labour; God reveals to us glimpses of the Third Heaven for our comfort; but if we indulge in these as the end of our present being, not trying day by day to purify ourselves for the future enjoyment of the fullness of them, they become but a snare of our enemy. The services of religion, day by day, obedience to God in our calling and in ordinary matters, endeavours to imitate our Saviour Christ in word and deed, constant prayer to Him, and dependence on Him, these are the due preparation for receiving and profiting by His revelations."

Newman's second warning is even more severe than the first, because the consequence of failing to heed it is worse even than a snare of the enemy—it is a vice, the more dangerous for its attractive, highly-polished, spiritual appearance. Newman calls it the vice of a dark age. He scarcely thought of it as a present danger in his own; but in ours—well, anyone with an eye can see that this dark age is in fact returning now.

The New Gnosticism

Gnosticism, which infected the Church of the first centuries, reappearing under different names and guises several times since, is born again today in the super-spiritualism associated with the new theology and in extravagant forms of charismatic prayer. In the ancient days it festered first in the synagogues >

of Alexandria and from them the infection spread to the Christian churches as well. St. Paul himself condemns the idolatry of angels practiced among the Colossians who had fostered a false ecumenism between the Church and the pagan cults of the Aeons, or Intermediaries, so-called emanations of God, just as Thomas Merton, Teilhard de Chardin and even Jacques Maritain in our time tried to bridge the abyss between the Catholic mystics like St. John of the Cross and the Oriental swamis. One thinks of Merton or Teilhard more in pity than in anger because they were neither learned nor smart, but what are we to think of Maritain who was certainly both?

Jacques Maritain

This sensitive, gifted intelligence, distinguishing with exquisite subtlety and precision the teaching of St. Thomas on the mysteries of grace, proceeds to isolate the truth that Christ died for all from the other truths which limit and define it. He cites a contemporary Carmelite theologian in support of his view, who writes,

“St. Thomas, speaking of those who lived before the coming of Christ and who were saved by following the voice of conscience, says: “Even though they did not have explicit faith (in a Mediator), they did nevertheless have implicit faith in Him through their faith in Divine Providence, believing that God would save men by such means as pleased Him.” Thus, believing God saves men by means pleasing to Him is having an implicit faith in Christ, the Redeemer. It is difficult to contend that conditions have changed for those who, because they lived after Christ, have never heard mention of him.”

Well, yes, provided that we add the note of invincibility to their never having heard and provided that we have clear knowledge of their definitions of God, Providence, Mediator and Salvation. For example, if there were evidence (which there is not) that Plato or Aristotle believed God “saved,” one could, I think, at least morally conclude from what St. Thomas says and the study of their work to their implicit faith in Christ. But Maritain applies this carefully discriminated argument indiscriminately to an appalling assortment of cases in which there is certain evidence to the contrary.

“We know [Maritain writes] that unbaptized persons, even though they are not stamped with the seal of faith, so as to participate through the virtue

of the Church in the proper work of the Church (which is the redemption continued), can nevertheless (inasmuch as they receive without knowing it the supernatural life of the selfsame blood which circulates within the Church and of the same spirit which rests upon it) belong invisibly to Christ’s Church. Thus they can have sanctifying grace, and, as a result, theological faith and the infused gifts.”

So far so good, but look at the utterly imprudent judgment which follows:

“Works like those of Louis Massignon and Asin Palacios on Islam, present-day studies devoted to Hassidism, the personal testimonies to a Mukerji or a Father Wallace to Hindu spirituality, or even the works of contemporary ethnologists on the prayer of primitive peoples—all these being precious factual confirmation to this view of the spirit. And those are but the first explorations in a complicated and difficult terrain.”

From St. John of the Cross to Ramakrishna

He even goes so far as to include some whom anyone of common sense would either pity as lunatics or flee from as demonic. For example, he writes,

“The saints who visibly belong to the Church enable us to recognize their far-off brethren who do not know Her and yet belong to Her invisibly—St. John of the Cross enables us to do justice to Ramakrishna.”

Ramakrishna was an atheist, a pervert, and, worse, a sentimentalist. One of his American imports, Swami Nihilananda, in the introduction to a widely circulated book blasphemously entitled *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, gives the biographical details:

“Some time in November 1874, Sri Ramakrishna was seized with an irresistible desire to learn the truth of the Christian religion. He began to listen to readings from the Bible...[and] became fascinated by the life and teachings of Jesus.”

Comment: What has become of invincible ignorance? St. Thomas has been cited speaking about those who, living before the coming of Christ could not have known him; a contemporary Carmelite theologian extends this saving ignorance to those living after Christ but who “have never heard mention of him,” and Maritain now saves Sri Ramakrishna who explicitly studied and “became fascinated by the life and teachings of Jesus.”

But it is worse than that:



“One day [Nihilananda reports] he was seated in the parlour of Jadu Mallick’s garden house...when his eyes became fixed on a painting of the Madonna and Child. Intently watching it, he became gradually overwhelmed with divine emotion. The figures in the picture took on life, and the rays of light emanating from them entered his soul.... And breaking through the barriers of creed and religion...[Note that phrase: when a Catholic does that he fulfills the formal definition of apostasy]... breaking through the barriers of creed and religion, he entered a new realm of ecstasy. Christ possessed his soul. On the fourth day, in the afternoon, as he was walking in the garden, he saw coming toward him a person with beautiful large eyes, serene countenance and fair skin. As the two faced each other, a voice rang out in the depths of Sri Ramakrishna’s soul: “Behold the Christ, who shed His heart’s blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men. It is He, the Master Yogi, Love Incarnate.” The Son of Man embraced the Son of the Divine Mother and merged in him. Sri Ramakrishna realized his identity with Christ, as he had already realized his identity with Kali, Rama, Hanuma, Radha, Krishna, Brahman and Mohammed. [Mohammed would have slit his throat.]

Thus [Sri Ramakrishna] experienced the truth that Christianity too was a path leading to God-Consciousness. Till the last moment of his life he believed that Christ was an Incarnation of God. But Christ for him was not the only Incarnation; there were others—Buddha, for instance, and Krishna.”

St. Thomas teaches that if in invincible ignorance one believed in Jesus’ Name which means “God saves,” even though he didn’t know the Jesus born in Bethlehem and died on Calvary, that such belief could constitute an implicit and sufficient faith. But Ramakrishna thinks that all gods save, that salvation is something called “God-Consciousness” and that God is a symbol of one’s self. Ramakrishna also practiced forms of sexual yoga, achieving states of consciousness which psychiatrists identify as pathologically regressive and clinically insane. I could quote some passages to shock and disgust, but it is even more shocking that Maritain, a Nobel Prize winner, by everyone’s account a brilliant Catholic philosopher, and a strong influence on Pope Paul VI and many bishops and *periti* at the Council,

should have confused such stuff with sanctity. Such stuff has no more to do with St. John of the Cross than theology with insanity.

Extraordinary in the Service of the Ordinary

True doctrine is always sound doctrine, by which I mean healthy doctrine; and the practices deriving from it have always had the ring of common sense. Fanaticism, excess, especially spiritual excess, enthusiasm, the exotic, the Oriental, primitive, depraved, and, worst of all, the simpering sentimentality of “Ah, we all love God, you in your way, I in mine”—these are symptoms of an avarice of spirit, a gluttony, and, finally, a lust.

There are extraordinary and sometimes shocking cases of authentic Catholic charismatic grace, but nonetheless in the ordinary way of salvation, grace inheres in sound minds and bodies in a healthy Christian culture which might be best summed up as a good sense of humor and humility.

God for His reasons has enriched the Church with prophecies and other extraordinary graces—but always for the purpose of leading souls to heaven by converting them back to the ordinary things. The extraordinary is for the sake of the ordinary—not the other way around. Our Lady at Fatima did not tell us to have visions—even of her loveliest self; but to pray the Rosary, wear the scapular, do penance, make reparation and exercise the natural and spiritual virtues according to our station in life.

St. Louis

Once a priest who doubted the Real Presence was given the miraculous grace of conversion when at his Mass the Sacred Host bled on the corporal right in front of him. The congregation was amazed. One of them immediately ran across the city and found the King, where he often was, sitting alone before the Tabernacle in his private chapel. When the messenger blurted out the news, the King sat still. “Sire,” the man said, “Will you not come at once to see this great vision?” St. Louis replied, “I am grateful for this grace; it is a blessing to the priest, the congregation and our city. But as for myself, I must confess—*Deo gratias*—I have so far had the greater grace to have no need of such events to believe Our Blessed Lord dwells behind that little golden door there on the altar. Blessed are they who see and believe, but more blessed are those who believe >

not having seen.”

St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross explicitly says that if you do receive extraordinary graces, you must earnestly pray for them to be taken away—even if they are real. If God wants you as His instrument, the graces will be given to you willy-nilly; but to desire them is a sin of spiritual avarice.

The Noonday Devil

Twenty years ago I was struck by the title of a book, the contents of which I have since forgotten; it was called *The Noonday Devil*, taken from one of the great prayers of Compline, Psalm 90: “*Non timebis a timore nocturno, a sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris; ab incursu, et daemonio meridiano.*”—“Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark, of invasion, or of the noonday devil.”

Who is this noonday devil? The book, as I remember, suggested that he represents the temptations that come to us in middle age—at the mid-life crisis as they call it; which is sensible enough. But reading the psalm week after week at Compline, especially late at night, I had often felt that this *daemonium meridianum* who appears in the brightness of high noon must be something worse; and he is.

The Church, of course, has never left us alone, like the Protestants, with private interpretation of scripture. We have the whole Catholic Tradition; and St. Bernard has devoted no less than eighteen sermons to this one psalm alone. When I came upon them in the course of tracking down something else not long ago, I immediately stopped what I was doing, eagerly searching out his explication of this phrase that had haunted me for twenty years.

The Four Principles of Temptation

St. Bernard says that the four things listed in the verse—the nightly fear, the arrow, the business, and the noonday devil—are the four principles of all temptation. By a principle he means the beginning which virtually contains its possible developments, as an acorn virtually contains the oak or at the moment of conception the fertilized ovum virtually contains the man. St. Bernard says that all the thousands of varieties of temptation can be reduced

to these four principal kinds:

Night, in Scripture, usually means adversity; and the first adversity for souls who turn to God is the rebellion of the flesh, which fights the stronger as it is suppressed. No wonder it produces a fear that we shall lose the fight! And fear itself becomes a worse temptation than desire if it stifles recourse to the one sure remedy—prayer and meditation on these sins in the light of truth. Concupiscence is like a furnace, St. Bernard says; but if truth is the fire, it teaches so as not to burn us up, but purify—the word “pure” derives from *pyr*, the Greek for “fire.”

But, then, if truth succeeds and conquers fear and the night of sin dissolves as it will, beware the delicate but deadly arrow of vainglory. This is the second temptation that never attacks the fearful soul still struggling with his ups and downs; this one attacks the fervent who succeed and become susceptible to praise and self-esteem. This is the devil of the devout Catholic who goes to daily Mass, confession every month, says his rosary and thinks that’s all there is—when there is so much more!—failing to remember in the light of truth that goodness is not an achievement but a gift: What have you that you have not received?

All right, suppose you have survived these first two temptations. Suppose the devil finds he can’t assail you with your fears of failure or your vain illusions of success? Then he will try you with some real success. When vain failure and vainglory fail, he will offer you real glory. This is the business walking in the darkness, the third temptation to use your gifts for real accomplishment in business, teaching, preaching, writing, professional practice, politics, ecclesiastic office, even to the mitre and the hat. Whereas, whatever your ambition is, the truth is, it is nothing, because the world is nothing and nothing profits if you lose your soul. Even spiritual success is nothing if it is measured by the world, and they say: “How good he is; he is a saint.” This is the temptation facing Catholics who at last break from the ghetto to become senator or member of the board. It is then that the devil suggests that he can win an even greater good—for God and for the Church, of course—if he reneges on only this or this; for example, that he can win against abortion if his party overlooks contraception, failing to see that though abortion is the worse evil in its immediate



consequences, contraception is worse in its malice because it is more spiritual deliberately to use a faculty against itself, *contra naturam*, even than, *praeter naturam*, to commit murder, as lying, for example, is more spiritual than theft.

These first three cardinal temptations constitute exactly those the devil tried against Our Lord. Not even Lucifer, St. Bernard says, dared tempt him with the fourth: This is the devil at noon who brings us visions, spiritual locutions, mystical feelings, words and touches, the devil of the “neo” in Neo-Thomists who, like Maritain, adapt St. Thomas to the genius of themselves; the devil of false ecumenism, experimental liturgies, the pseudo-spirit of Vatican II. This is the devil who appears when we think our prayers are finally answered and we have begun to become theologians, mystics and saints.

St. Bernard writes:

“What does [the devil] do against those he sees really love justice and hate iniquity? What else but clothe iniquity in the image of virtue. The ones he knows are perfect lovers of the good, he tries to persuade to evil under the appearance not just of ordinary but of perfect good; so that the person who most loves good will consent the quickest and easily run and fall. This is, therefore, the devil not just of the daytime but of noon. Is this not what Mary feared at the novel salutation of the angel?”

Materialists have always sought to justify sin as natural good—birds do it, bees do it; it is a universal urge and I can’t help it. This is a low-grade devil not even of the terror of the night, but of the night before. You find him hanging out in low places like the writings of Sigmund Freud and Margaret Meade, and he has wormed his way from them through the sinks and drains of post-Conciliar reform into neo-Catholic catechisms and marriage manuals. But the noonday devil proposes something far less gross, more subtle and especially attractive to sensitive souls, to those advanced in spiritual life, especially to contemplatives. This is the devil who says that there is a “spirituality of the body.” It is not as Freud and the others taught, that religion symbolizes sex; sex, to them, symbolizes religion. “Concupiscence is caritas. Copulation is a form of prayer.” As a father and grandfather I want to make clear I have nothing against copulation, but from considerable personal experience I can assure all these contemplatives that it isn’t prayer. These oh so sensitive theologians

begin by stating what the Church has always taught, that there are two ends of marriage; children, yes, but also mutual love—lets call it “unitive experience” which is a mystical term. “So sex, you see, is a sign of the mystical marriage St. Bernard and St. John of the Cross describe, which is, you see, a kind of tantric or sexual yoga!” Suffice it to say that some of this has actually infected Catholic monasteries, convents and seminaries where the sin of singular friendship has sunk to actual vice. In the face of which our best and instant recourse is a special prayer to St. Michael authorized by a prophetic pope as early as Newman’s day when these devils still seemed fast asleep. They are wide awake and prowling now at noon, seeking the ruin of the most tender, most generous and vulnerable souls:

“O glorious Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle and in the fearful warfare that we are waging against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the evil spirits....That first enemy of mankind and a murderer from the beginning has regained his confidence. Changing himself into an angel of light, he goes about with the whole multitude of the wicked spirits to invade the earth and blot out the Name of God and of His Christ....This wicked serpent like an unclean torrent, pours into men of depraved minds and corrupt hearts the poison of his malice, the spirit of lying, impiety and blasphemy, and the deadly breath of impurity and every form of vice and iniquity. These crafty enemies of mankind have filled to overflowing with gall and wormwood the Church, which is the Bride of the Lamb without spot: they have laid profane hands upon her most sacred treasures. Make haste, therefore, O invincible Prince, to help the people of God against the inroads of the lost spirits and grant us the victory. Amen.”

Darkness at Noon

These are the sins of an age of darkness—at noon. But, of course, this darkness would never have occurred if the grosser and simpler sins of the age of light had not occurred first—I mean the false light of rationalism; the light of a materialist and skeptical age which denied the presence and even the existence of angels.

Many a parent, horrified at a son or daughter trafficking with the noonday devils of the Oriental cults, has failed to see that his own addiction to the >

business walking in the darkness—that is, to his own ambitious drive for money, power and success—had cut that son or daughter off from the holy Angels of the true, Catholic and once perfectly ordinary spiritual life. If Hindus and their Catholic converts practice a false angelism, the great mass of western men, including Catholics, exclude the holy Angels from their daily lives. Traditional Catholics, of course, continue to hold the existence of angels as a dogma of the Faith and most of us recite a prayer to our Guardian Angel every night and morning. But we do not integrate this dogma of the Faith into our daily lives, our businesses, schools, political and social institutions, and do we especially fail to recognize their presence in the science of physical nature which dominates the age? As Newman stressed, the most common and most pernicious form of infidelity is not conscious heresy in which doctrine is denied, but the failure to take doctrine seriously. Materialism had been the ordinary unacknowledged philosophy of the vast majority of Catholics long before the great disaster of the Vatican Council. Generations who accepted the Creed in the abstract, had nonetheless practiced an idolatrous science as pragmatically true. Many a Catholic, fervently praying to his Guardian Angel in the morning, has gone to the office, school or shop utterly failing to acknowledge the existence much less the presence of angels in the chemical, biological and social processes of the actual work he does.

The Reality of the Angels

Is there an Angel of the Storm? *Carissimi*, as the old writers would say at this point—Beloved in Christ; I am embarrassed to use such language, unused to it as I am, but the subject calls for it; we are on holy ground. I wonder if you thought Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale was just fiction? That angels of the storms, like talking sparrows and weeping willows are just pretty metaphors, just ways of talking, in a word, just fantasy?

St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor—angelic both in his chastity and in his doctrine on the angels—says that there really are spirits presiding over all the species and motions of the universe, moving, governing, regulating the stars and the motions of the elements such as winds and tides.

"It is generally found both in human affairs and in natural things [St. Thomas says] that every par-

ticular power is governed and ruled by the universal power of the king. Among the angels also, the superior angels who preside over the inferior, possess a more universal knowledge. Now it is manifest that the power of any individual body is more particular than the power of any spiritual substance; for every corporeal form is a form individualized by matter, and determined to the here and now; whereas immaterial forms are absolute and intelligible. Therefore, as the inferior angels, who have the less universal forms, are ruled by the superior, so are all corporeal things ruled by the angels."

The Four Roles of the Angels

Angels work at four assignments in the physical universe exactly as they are enumerated in the well known prayer to our Guardian Angel: "Ever this day (or night) be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide." *Illumina, custodi, rege et gubernata*. The act of illumination proper to angels is the light of understanding, not of the sun, moon, stars or any physical or chemical variety of light. St. Augustine says that on the first day of creation when God said "*Fiat lux*— Let there be light," He created the angels. The sun and other stars of course were not created until the third day. When angels perform their office of illumination, it is an act of understanding the principles and reasons of things, perfectly and instantly without any need of science, experiment and reason. When angels guard, they perform their military service against the inroads of the fallen angels—they keep watch and keep off. When angels rule, they discern by prudence how the natural law applies to particular cases; when they guide, they actually apply force and direction in the execution of those laws.

Newman's Sermon on the Angels

There have been ages of the world as Newman said, in which men have thought too much of angels, attributing to them divine prerogatives; and many highly gifted souls are trafficking with devils at noon today; but for the great, slow majority of Catholics, the body of Newman's "Sermon on the Angels" still holds true. He directs it to the scientific and technological spirit of the age:

"There have been ages of the world in which men have thought too much of angels, and paid them excessive honor; honored them so perversely as to



forget the supreme worship due to Almighty God. This is the sin of a dark age. But the sin of what is called an educated age, such as our own, is just the reverse: to account slightly of them or not at all; to ascribe all we see around us, not to their agency, but to certain assumed laws of nature. This, I say, is likely to be our sin, in proportion as we are initiated into the learning of this world; this is the danger of many pursuits, now in fashion—chemistry, geology, and the like; the danger that is, of resting in things seen, and forgetting unseen things.

Why do rivers flow? Why does rain fall? Why does the sun warm us? And the wind, why does it blow?... These events which we ascribe to chance or to nature are duties done to that God who maketh His Angels to be winds, and His Ministers a flame of fire.

For example, it was an Angel which gave to the pool at Bethesda its medicinal quality; and there is no reason why we should doubt that other health-springs in this and other countries are made such, by a like unseen ministry. The fires on Mount Sinai, the thunders and lightnings, were the work of Angels; and in the Apocalypse we read of the Angels restraining the four winds. The earthquake at the resurrection was the work of an Angel. And in the Apocalypse the earth is smitten in various ways by Angels of vengeance.

Thus wherever we look abroad, we are reminded of those most gracious and holy beings, the servants of the Holiest, who deign to minister to the heirs of salvation. Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God in heaven....Vain man would be wise, and he curiously examines the works of nature, as if they were lifeless and senseless; as if he alone had intelligence, and they were base inert matter....So, tracing the order of things, seeking for causes in that order, giving names to the wonders he meets with and thinking he understands what he has given a name to. At length he forms a theory, and recommends it in writing, and calls himself a scientist.

Now let us consider what the real state of the case is. Supposing the inquirer I have been describing, when examining a flower, or an herb, or a pebble, or a ray of light, which he treats as something beneath him in the scale of existence, suddenly discovered that he was in the presence of

some powerful being who was hidden behind the visible things he was inspecting, who, though concealing his wise hand, was giving them their beauty, grace, and perfection, as God's instruments for their purpose, nay whose robe and ornaments those wondrous objects were, which he was so eager to analyze—what would be his thoughts?... The very lowest of His Angels is indefinitely above us in this our present state; how high then must be the Lord of Angels! The very Seraphim hide their faces before His Glory, while they praise Him; how shamefaced then should sinners be, when they come into His presence!"

Five Practical Proposals

Well, one must conclude upon some practical advice: Surely Newman is right and surely we have failed to integrate our faith in general, and the doctrine of angels in particular into the business of everyday life, particularly in science. It is also true in politics. Just as there are angels of the storms, so there are angels of institutions: angels of the United States, of the several states, angels of cities. His biographer says that St. Francis de Sales on entering Chablais, saluted the angel of the province. Because they enjoy the Beatific Vision, in the strict sense, angels can't be sad, but metaphorically it can't be false to say the angels of our cities weep at our sins and infidelities and I suggest nothing less than the restoration of our gratitude and the recognition of our dependence on these great insulted beings as they preside over nature, nations, cities, institutions and persons. So I propose five practical actions:

First, that you restore the nightly reading in your homes of tales and stories like Andersen's, derived from the great Catholic culture of the Middle Ages, so that the memories and imaginations of children are nurtured on these holy presences, so that your sons and daughters will grow like the corn and oats and not the arrogant buckwheat of a scientific age. Of course I read that tale of Andersen's not only in illustration of how good literature contains in a poetic mode true doctrine; but also because I think it is itself a prophecy: If Fatima is true, and the world grows worse; if no sufficient number is found to carry out Our Lady's strict commands, the Angel of the Storm will come with bolts of lightning in his hands; but if we fold our leaves and bend our >

heads, when the storm has passed away—if not in this world, hopefully the next—in the pure still air we shall stand with the flowers and the corn, all refreshed by the rain.

Second, when you get up in the morning, sit before a window facing east, where St. Thomas says the angels gather, and watch the work of this great spirit of the sun, singing the glory of God with his brothers of the earth and the air; so that you don't just pray to them as blank abstractions, but love them in their beauty and truth.

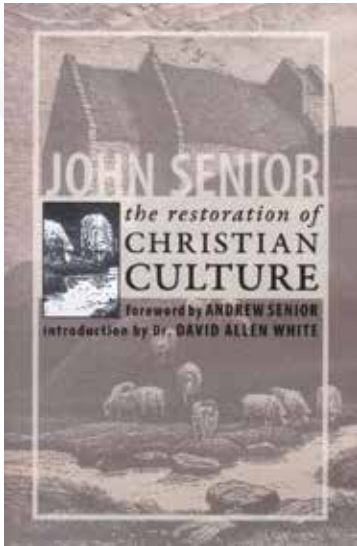
Third, whenever you approach a city, salute its angel; after all, you stop for the traffic signs; recognize his governance as well. And whenever you pass by a Masonic Temple or some other place where there is the real presence of evil, invoke the angels, for your own protection, and, as Psalm 8 says: *ut destruas inimicum et ultorem*.

Fourth, remember every time you say the perfect prayer to your Guardian Angel, that his little offices are precisely the same four for the greater spirits—the Virtues—work for every species and every force throughout the universe: to light and guard, to rule and guide. This is true of sun, moon, wind, tides, the tides of history and the Church.

Fifth, there are also angels of the Church: of these St. Michael has been named. In honor of the Queen of Angels, to whom our lives and hopes must be consecrated, as the angels are, to whom the whole creation is a gift of her Son—a marvelous play full of music, color and light, which the angels perform just to please the Queen of Heaven every day, and so to honor her and save the world from the evil angels and ourselves—we might recite the other famous prayer to her great servant:

“St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into Hell Satan and the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”

Our Lady, Queen of Angels, pray for us.



The Restoration of Christian Culture

Dr. John Senior

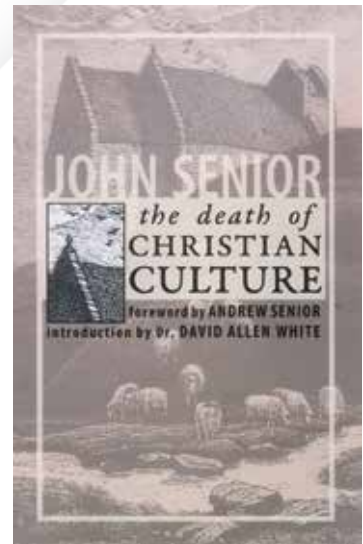
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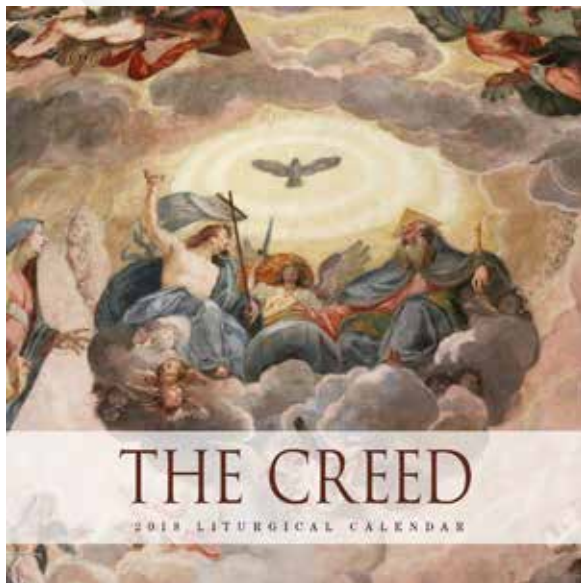
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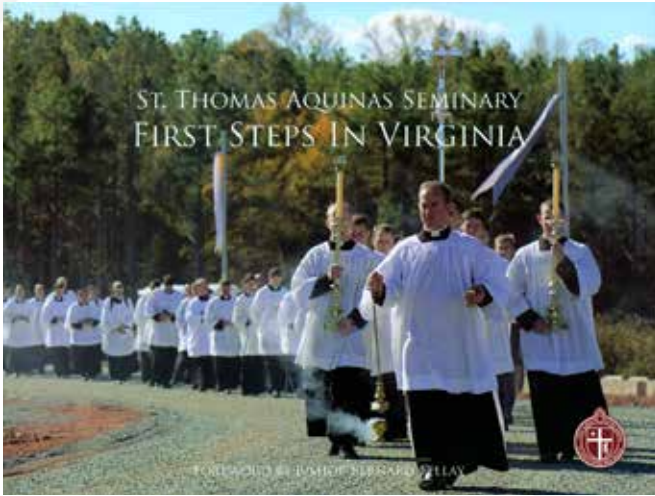
The Creed

2018 Liturgical calendar



The Apostles' Creed, one of the Church's great professions of faith, was once known by heart by Catholics all over the world. Often incorporated into morning and evening prayers, this creed simply but powerfully calls to mind the core tenets of the Faith while orienting the heart and mind to God. To bring the Apostles' Creed's centrality to the forefront, reminding us of the creed's truth and vigorous beauty, Angelus Press has chosen it as the theme for the 2018 calendar. Each month features an artistic depiction of one of the articles of the Creed.

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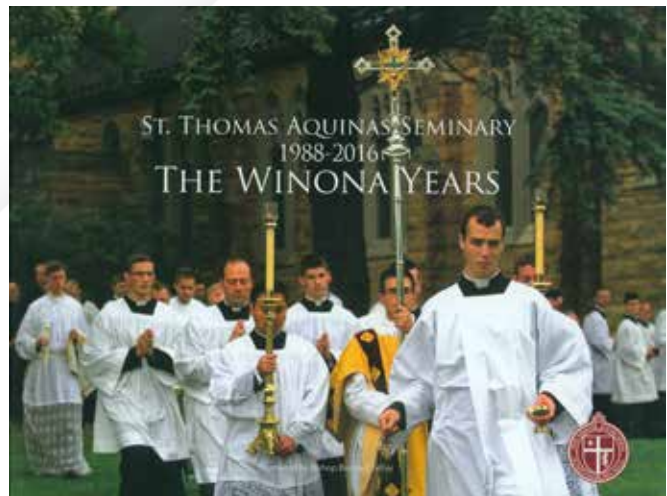
First Steps—St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary

Having outgrown its home of over 25 years in Winona, Minnesota, 2016 saw the St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary relocate to a newly constructed facility in Buckingham, Virginia, where they will be able to continue their mission of forming Catholic priests for generations to come. *St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, First Steps In Virginia*. depicts in vivid detail the construction of the new Seminary, its inauguration and the entire moving process, with all the labor and excitement that a project of this magnitude entails.

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The Last Word

Dear readers,

“Take Notice of him, Hear His Voice”

“They have ears and hear not” (Ps. 113:14). This is said firstly about the idols of pagans, it is clear, but since “what things soever were written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), I ask our readers the question: have you ever heard your guardian angel talking to you?

Such a question implies a number of other questions: Can angels talk? Do they talk to each other? To us? How can we hear them? How can we discern their voice? Can we talk to them? Can they speak at a distance?

St. Thomas Aquinas studies at length the “speech of angels”. It is one of these odd questions which, nevertheless can have a deep effect on our spiritual life as it can constantly lift us into the supernatural world any time, anywhere. It can make us say like the Apostle: “Our life is in Heaven” (Phil. 3:20).

“To speak to another only means to make known the mental concept to another.” We humans must use our tongues to speak to the ears of others. Angels, however, not having bodies, put thoughts directly in the mind of others, other angels or men, and he does this at will, *i.e.*, to many or to all as he wills, and “in this way one angel speaks to another”.

“Behold I will send my angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice...” (Ex. 23:20)

In order to discern which thoughts comes from our angel, we have to be familiar with the rules of discernment of spirits as they are taught by St. Ignatius. Since our angel wants our sanctification, his thoughts will be directed to the fulfillment of our duty of state, towards the avoidance of anything sinful, towards the practice of virtue and of sacrifices.

Let us indeed “take notice of him”.

And when we think that our angel is in Heaven, contemplating the Most Holy Trinity, receiving orders from his Queen, while at the same time at our side, devotion to our angel will truly dispose us to be docile to do God’s will in all things.

“Angel of God, my guardian dear... be at my side! From stain of sin, oh, keep me free, and at my death my helper be!”

Fr. Daniel Couture

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