



S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Marian Apparitions

Quito Apparition

Medjugorje: Facts, Judgments
and Problems

Catechism on Private
Revelation

“I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: **she shall crush thy head**, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gen. 3:13-15). This translation, found also in many older editions of the Latin Vulgate, is the basis for common depictions in Catholic art of Mary with a serpent beneath her feet.





Letter from the Publisher

Dear Reader,

Lourdes, La Salette, Fatima, Akita. Such names resound deeply in the souls of many good Christians today. There has been a recrudescence of interest in the 19th and 20th century apparitions ever since the turning point of Vatican II. Why is this? People readily invoke the lack of spirituality coming from modern pulpits and ever-changing ceremonies. The normal channels of grace and doctrine suffer from on-going paralysis or are given a charismatic twist. Left thirsty for the divine, spiritual and miraculous, many people have gone to the desert to feed on what manna they could find.

Archbishop Lefebvre was very much aware of it but he was not totally at ease with such enthusiasm. How often did he not complain of the fever of "*apparitionitis*"! Being the missionary that he was, he made sure that his hearers were given sound doctrine and solid moral principles. With all this, they would be able to withstand the heat or cold of the spiritual desert around them.

Almost weekly, some seer was sending him encouragement, warning or advice for his future projects. And, invariably, his answer was that he was following divine Providence and God would let him know the way through the proper channels. "Test the spirits" was certainly his motto when it came to preternatural revelations or miraculous events. As a Church prelate and judge appointed by God over the flock, he could not afford naïvete in accepting messages of a private nature at face value.

The greater the stakes and the seriousness of the message, the more cautious and thorough should the inquiry of the legitimate authorities be. And, so long as both the local and Roman authorities are limping in bringing up a proper judgment on the latest message of the latest seer, it may be a wise method to take things with some reserve and a grain of salt which was taught to us by the example of our dear Founder.

In this issue, old as well as recent Marian apparitions will unfold their secrets under your eyes including Our Lady of Good Success, Medjugorje and La Salette. Each of which raised much interest, caution and certainly some questions along the way. They are speaking for themselves along with various artistic tokens of love for God's mother. As you are reading these stories, our greatest hope is that they will help you to learn and appreciate the mind of the Church on Marian apparitions. She always needs to test the spirits and apply the principles of discernment to the matter at hand. This is probably the best way to serve Our Blessed Mother and defend her inextinguishable privileges.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
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The Quito Apparition

By Fr. Paul Kimball and Renée Godinez

In a very remote country never mentioned in the news, Our Lady appeared centuries ago to a humble convent. Naturally speaking, there is nothing which would prompt anyone to take off the heavy dust covering the story of its events. And, yet, they made their way into the Consecration sermon of Archbishop Lefebvre. It certainly has the hallmark of a genuine apparition with true prophecies dealing with our own day. This is certainly the reason why lately, there has been an accrued recognition of these events and what they portend in our traditional circles.

The Consecration Sermon

On June 30, 1988 Archbishop Lefebvre, as he was making his *apologia* for the Consecration which he called “Operation Survival of Tradition,”

made reference to several private apparitions, Leo XIII’s vision which prompted his exorcism, La Salette’s warning of an eclipse, and also a long reference to Our Lady of Quito. Here are his own words:

“It was not only the good Pope Leo XIII who said these things, but Our Lady prophesied them as well. Just recently, the priest who takes care of the priory of Bogota, Colombia, brought me a book concerning the apparition of Our Lady of Good Success—*Buen Suceso*—of Quito, Ecuador, to a nun shortly after the Council of Trent, so you see, quite a few centuries ago... And Our Lady prophesied, saying explicitly that during the 19th century and most of the 20th century, errors would become more and more widespread in Holy Mother Church, placing her in a catastrophic situation. Morals would become corrupt and the



Faith would disappear. It seems impossible not to see it happening today. I apologize for continuing this account of the apparition but she speaks of a prelate who will absolutely oppose this wave of apostasy and impiety—saving the priesthood by forming good priests. I do not say that prophecy refers to me; you may draw your own conclusions. I was stupefied when reading these lines but I cannot deny them, since they are recorded and deposited in the archives of this apparition.”

The History Behind

In the early 17th century, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared on several occasions to a Spanish Conceptionist sister, Mother Marianna de Jesus Torres, at the convent in Quito, Ecuador. On her first visit (January 16, 1599), Our Lady directed Mother Marianna to commission a life-sized statue of herself holding the Infant Jesus under the title “Maria of Buen Suceso of the Purification.” The title of Our Lady of Good Success is certainly the name with which most faithful are familiar. Given the growing popularity of the devotion, the Franciscan Conceptionist Sisters of the Convent of the Immaculate Conception have issued a clarification of this name requesting faithful and pious apostolates to refer to her as Maria of Buen Suceso of the Purification. This is done to keep the emphasis on the Purification and to avoid the idea that good success is similar to good luck as the Spanish clearly does not translate in this sense.

The statue was begun by a local sculptor, but was miraculously completed in 1611 by St. Francis of Assisi and the entire celestial court. Our Lady also prophesied about many important matters that pertain explicitly to our modern times. Our Lady revealed much to Mother Marianna about our current situation, including:

- The sacrament of Extreme Unction will be little esteemed and many will die without receiving it.
- The sacrament of Matrimony will be attacked and iniquitous laws will make it easy to live in sin.
- There will be an almost total and general corruption of customs.

- Innocence will almost no longer be found in children, nor modesty in women.
- The effects of secular education will be one reason for the lack of priestly and religious vocations.
- The sacred sacrament of Holy Orders will be ridiculed, oppressed, and despised.
- Corrupted priests, who will scandalize the Christian people, will incite the hatred of the enemies of the Catholic Church to fall upon all priests.
- This apparent triumph of Satan will bring enormous sufferings to the good pastors of the Church.
- In this supreme moment of need of the Church, those who should speak will fall silent.

Our Lady said that the message of the apparitions would only become widely known in our days. And she linked the spread of this devotion in our times to her miraculous intervention for the restoration of the Catholic Church, precisely “when almost all would seem lost and paralyzed.” Thus, even though Our Lady’s message is severe, it is also one of great hope. For she promised to succor those who invoke her under this name during these turbulent times.

The revelations of Maria of Buen Suceso and devotion to her miraculous statue were approved by Bishop Salvador de Ribera in 1611 and subsequent bishops up to our times. In 1906, while remodeling the convent, Mother Marianna’s sarcophagus was opened and her body was discovered whole and incorrupt. On February 2, 1991, with approval from Rome, the Archdiocese of Quito performed a canonical coronation of Maria of Buen Suceso of the Purification as “Queen of Quito.”

In the year 1941, Peru had invaded Ecuadorian territory. In the face of this emergency, the Archbishop of Quito ordered *triduum*s, or three days of prayers, in different churches, to be prayed in honor of various titles of the Blessed Virgin, imploring the cessation of hostilities.

On July 24, the *triduum* in honor of Maria of Buen Suceso began in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Three days later, on Sunday, July 27, 1941, from six o’clock in the morning until three o’clock in the afternoon of >

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July 28, that is, during a 20 hour span, the statue of Our Lady of Buen Suceso moved its eyes. This miracle was observed by approximately 30,000 people, who poured into the church to contemplate the wonder. Her face changed alternately from a reddish tone to another tone similar to marble. Her eyes, which normally look downwards, rose up little by little during the miracle until they remained looking towards Heaven in a posture of supplication; then they lowered towards the faithful, and alternated in this way. That same afternoon of July 27, the daily newspapers announced the cessation of hostilities with Peru. The newspapers of the following day described the miracle on the front page, pushing the international events of World War II and the Peruvian invasion into the background.

A Pilgrim's Narration

After months of planning, reading and anticipation, you have finally arrived in Ecuador.

Historic Quito is barely visible in the late night arrival, but you feel the tranquility wrap around you. A serenity settles over you like a warm shawl. The cares of the world melt away. You are finally free to focus on Her and absorb Her messages.

I arose at four-thirty in the morning, quickly dress and slip out the hotel by five o'clock. I don't know exactly where I'm going, but was told by our host "just head up the hill; you'll find the church." The church is unassuming—yet magnificent. There were images on both sides of the nave all the way to the altar. So much to absorb at first glance. And next to the communion rail was "the" statue of Our Lady of Buen Suceso of the Purification. Little did I realize that this was one of only three times each year that the statue is so close you can almost touch it. The remainder of the year it resides in the cloistered convent chapel.

Then the banners came out. Four volunteers were chosen to carry the litter with the smaller replica statue, and we were ready to start our





morning procession. It's still dark and Quito is sleeping. A group of strangers assembled to unite in prayer. Quito is at almost 10,000 ft. above sea level and the city is quite hilly. This first day, the morning rosary procession was deceptively easy. It was only a short path to another nearby church. By the end of the rosary we were back at the church of the Immaculate Conception. The procession each morning to a different church or convent increased in difficulty. We were not only pushing our physical stamina up the steep inclines, but also our motor skills by singing our morning rosary while balancing our pilgrimage prayer guides, rosary, and lit candles. Nevertheless, every day brought its own reward with the visit to another stunning church or the warm welcome of a humble group of sisters anxiously awaiting our arrival in their convent courtyard. I suspected the sisters were welcoming Her statue more than us pilgrims. Mass was at 8 o'clock, so if I hurried back to the hotel I could sneak in a quick nap. This was my routine for nine mornings.

Following Mass and breakfast, we met for a city tour at ten o'clock. Every day unfolds another piece of Quito's rich history. Afternoons were on our own to explore, shop and enjoy the local ambiance. At the height of the Catholic age, the colonial city of Quito boasted over 200 churches. In 1978, UNESCO declared the city a World Heritage Site and brought in financial funding to restore the major churches. The gold leaf is copious and true to original design; original artwork and statues are abundant. Entering a restored church is a time travel back to the 16th and 17th centuries when Catholic fervor was well-reflected in art. Outside, vendors and poverty were everywhere. Walking the cobbled streets with a priest in cassock brought those seeking a blessing and alms.

There was an interior peace at Quito due to the leaving behind of the daily news, personal struggles and anxieties. The world melted away from consciousness. Every day had a rhythm and a focus outside of oneself. Being in the chapel where Our Blessed Mother appeared to Mother Marianna was humbling. Her messages for the 20th century rattled your bones and you could see it all unfolding as foretold. The fact that Her

messages are for our generation made them more poignant and personal. The evening talks given by our priest were illuminating and thoughtful.

The final morning of the pilgrimage, February 2, was the Her long-anticipated feast day of the Purification. The procession swelled to over 2,000 people with their own banners, songs and even police mounted on horseback. Our group blended into the sea of pilgrims proclaiming our Faith. It was a glorious procession of confidence and adoration!

After visiting other sites of Marian apparitions, this pilgrimage would remain as one of the most spiritually invigorating. Joining with a group of like-minded Catholics, and led by a priest of the SSPX, I gained a spiritual calm that carried me for weeks. There were several priests and religious of various orders that were available for casual discussion and confession. This pilgrimage was longer than a typical "visit" to a Marian site. There was time to disconnect from the world, absorb, reflect and connect Her messages to our times. Every day was a spiritual renewal and a history lesson. Every day had structure and free time to pursue personal interests. Evenings brought an inspirational talk and camaraderie. What more could anyone ask?

As it is now drawing to a year since my pilgrimage last January, I am digging deep into my memories to draw upon the peace and serenity that She imparted to me. Mary our Mother always looks out for us and only wants the best for us. She wants us to join her in Heaven. She gave us messages for our present times. She foresaw our foibles 400 years ago. Her messages were unimaginable at the time, but so real today.

If you are so moved and have the opportunity, I highly recommend this pilgrimage. It's like nothing else you might experience. It is a meditative retreat without imposed silence and set in the preserved historical backdrop of the time of the apparitions. The immense spirituality of the experience settles into your very being, and you appreciate the fullness of your Catholic heritage. It's a lesson in history, contemporary life struggles, and the love of Our Mother for our salvation.

Medjugorje

Facts, Judgments and Problems

by Fr. Pierre Duverger, SSPX

Summary of Facts

On June 24, 1981, six children in the town of Medjugorje, Yugoslavia (today, Bosnia-Herzegovina), allegedly experienced apparitions from the Blessed Virgin Mary. The apparition conveyed a message of peace for the world, a call to conversion, prayer and fasting. It also entrusted the children with secret messages about future events. The apparitions themselves have continued almost daily since 1981, with three of the now adult visionaries continuing to experience them regularly. Originally occurring on a hilltop near the town, they have since occurred wherever the visionaries happen to be.

The news that Our Lady might be appearing immediately began to attract pilgrims to Medjugorje, first from the surrounding

countryside, and then, despite the communist government of that day, from Europe and the whole world. These included clergy and theologians, as well as experts from the physical and medical sciences. The private judgment of these early visitors did much to bolster people's belief in the events at Medjugorje. In addition, some pilgrims reported seeing the sun spin and being able to look at it without pain or eye damage, others that their rosaries turned gold colored. Others claimed that remarkable physical or moral healings had taken place.

Ecclesiastical Judgments

Per the 1978 "Norms of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on



the Manner of Proceeding in Judging Presumed Apparitions and Revelations,” the competent authority to judge of the authenticity of apparitions is the diocesan bishop. However, he might decide that the matter needs more study and would then refer it to the national bishops’ conference. The possible judgments are: *constat* or *non constat de supernaturalitate*: it is evident, or it is not evident, to be of supernatural origin.



On Wednesday, June 24, 1981, the feast of St. John the Baptist, six children between 12 and 20 years old were walking on Mount Crnica (today called the Apparition Hill). They say that they saw in the sky an evanescent figure of a beautiful and luminous young woman with a child in her arms. They say that they immediately understood that the figure was the Virgin Mary.

Diocesan Bishop vs. Rome

After an initial favorable response (hoping that Our Lady was to put an end to the Herzegovina case, 10-year resistance of the Franciscans to the Holy See’s decree concerning the turning over of the Medjugorje parish to the Diocese), Bishop Pavao Zanic of Mostar, in whose diocese Medjugorje is found, concluded as soon as 1982, that the apparitions could not be authentic. He denounced to Rome what he was thinking to be a diabolical manifestation. Advised to go slowly, he established a commission of theologians, scientific experts and religious superiors to investigate the events in 1982-1984 and again in 1984-1986 with additional members.

In October 1983, Hans Urs von Balthasar,

declared: “What is happening at Medjugorje is truly of God [...]. It is certain that the pope is interested in Medjugorje.” With these words began the Roman support of the apparitions in opposition to the Ordinary’s judgment.

In January 1984, Bishop Zanic published a second warning, denouncing to the Italian Bishops’ Conference then to the Yugoslav Conference what was happening at Medjugorje. In October he published, in Croatian and Italian, his *Posizione*, denouncing the lies and exposing the “charismatic magician” responsible for manipulating the seers: Fr. Tomislav Vlasic.

In Rome, Cardinal Ratzinger and von Balthasar answered with declarations in favor of Medjugorje. Meanwhile, Archbishop Frane Franic of Split-Makarska, publicly supported the apparitions.

Despite Zanic’s legitimate complaints, Cardinal Casaroli, Secretary of State and the pope himself requested his silence. However, in November 1985, the intrepid bishop announced the diocesan commission’s definitive report to be published in May of the following year. In April, he submitted it to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger, who ordered the dossier to be transferred to the Congregation. The negative report would never be published.

Bishops’ Conference Commission

Since the events exceeded the scope of the diocese, the then-Yugoslavian bishops’ conference was asked to complement the study with additional research. A new commission studied the events from 1987 to 1990. During those years, Charismatic lobbyists and the Vatican’s *Ostpolitik* worked in favor of Medjugorje, apparitions which were in line with the “Perestroika” and the new ecumenism in vogue. In March 1990, Bishop Zanic published another condemnation renewing his 1984 accusations. The Bishops’ Conference report was eventually published in April 1991:

“...based on the research that has been done, it is not possible to state that there were >

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apparitions or supernatural revelations.”

The contradiction appearing in the conclusion will become the attitude adopted by Rome. Meanwhile the supernatural nature of the apparitions, messages and ecstasies was denied and the pastoral care of the pilgrims was recommended to the local bishop.

Same Condemnation, Same Tolerance

Bishop Zanic’s successor, Bishop Ratko Perić, appointed in 1993, condemned Medjugorje in his 1995 book *Prijestolje Mudrosti (Seat of Wisdom)*. Two years later, he re-stated his conviction that the apparitions of Medjugorje are obviously not supernatural.

Over the years, Rome adopted a more tolerant position. The daily messages and the scandals of the priests involved in Medjugorje brought Cardinal Ratzinger to distance himself from Medjugorje, declaring that neither he nor John Paul II had ever recognized the apparitions as authentic.

In March 2010, Benedict XVI established a Roman commission to study the topic in further detail.

In October 2013, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith directed that clerics and the faithful “are not permitted to participate in meetings, conferences or public celebrations during which the credibility of such ‘apparitions’ would be taken for granted.”

In January 2014, the Roman Commission communicated its findings to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which had not yet submitted its report to the pope for a final decision.

In February 2017, Pope Francis named Archbishop Hoser as a special envoy to Medjugorje then later [May 2018] as Apostolic Visitor to oversee the pastoral needs of both the local parish and pilgrims.

On December 10, 2017 in *Il Giornale*, Archbishop Hoser stated another contradictory attitude: “While it is absolutely true that pilgrimages to Medjugorje can be organized, they must have nothing to do with the apparitions or

the seers.”

The public and constant condemnation of the apparitions issued by the two successive competent judges as well as the negative conclusions of first three commissions are based on indisputably recorded facts. It seems impossible that a future conclusion of the Holy See could contradict this constant judgement unless facts and testimonies are changed.

The Problems

The First Apparitions:

The first apparitions in Medjugorje provoked terror and panic to the seers. Soon the apparitions would start to appear anywhere and everywhere as Bishop Zanic explained in July 1987:

“The Madonna started to appear on the Podbrdo of the Mountain Crnica, but when the militia forbade people from going there, she came into houses, into forests, fields, vineyards and tobacco fields; she appeared in the church, on the altar, in the sacristy, in the choir loft, on the roof, on the church steeple, on the roads, on the way to Cerno, in a car, on buses, in classrooms, in several places in Mostar and Sarajevo, in monasteries in Zagreb, Varazdin, Switzerland and Italy, once again on the Podbrdo, atop Krizevac, in the parish, in the rectory, *etc.*”...

On July 3, 1981, the seers declared that it was the last apparition. Since then, the apparitions occur daily and even happen to different seers, which is calculated to be more than 45,000 times.

On the 5th apparition, the “Madonna” seems embarrassed before the request to produce a sign proving her authenticity. The sign would never happen. This would be, six years later, a motive for Bishop Zanic’s gratitude.

“Thank you, Madonna, because with your long silence of six years you have demonstrated that you have not spoken here, nor appeared, nor given any message or secret, nor promised a special sign.” (Declaration of the Bishop of Mostar in Medjugorje, July 25, 1987)

Doctrinal Problems:

Several points are of concern: the resurrection



of the flesh; hell, where the damned are still “children of God” and where—according to Mirjana—“people come to feel comfortable,” the mediation of Mary, denied by the apparition: “I do not say [I am mediatrix] of all graces. I receive from God what I obtain through prayer.... Jesus prefers that you address to Him directly, moreso than through an intermediary.”

On October 1st, 1981, to the written question “Are all religions good?” the seers transmitted the answer: “All religions are equal before God.”

And also: “Peace, peace, peace...nothing but peace. Be reconciled. All religions are the same before God. God commands in all these religions as a king does in his realm.”

Ongoing Lies:

On June 30, 1981, the apparition declared that it would only appear only three more times. Several times, it promised the realization of a great sign for precise dates. It affirmed that it will quickly appease the quarrel opposing the Franciscans to the Diocese. Bishop Zanic

affirmed having caught all the seers in lies. For example, about the reason for being on the hill during the first apparition: to hide and smoke. In July, they admitted it to Bishop Zanic, then obstinately denied it to Fr. Rene Laurentin, and eventually—five years later—Ivanka would admit it to Fr. Laurentin.

The Franciscans of Medjugorje, directors and confidants of the seers lied also. Fr. Vlastic perjured himself about Vicka’s diaries, Fr. Joko Zovko added messages the seers never talked about...

The contradictions of Fr. Laurentin, propagandist of Medjugorje are so numerous that they should exclude him of being taken seriously.

The Apparition Supports the Franciscans’ Rebellion:

Since December 1981, the apparition constantly supported the lack of discipline from the Franciscans of Medjugorje, encouraging them to ignore the sanctions imposed on them by Bishop Zanic and their ecclesiastical superior. >



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When Fr. Ivica Vego was expelled from the Franciscan Order for his disobedience and bad example, the apparition supported him. According to Vicka's diaries and the seers' declarations, it said 13 times that he was innocent and the bishop wrong. Eventually, Ivica Vego, abandoning the religious life, went to live with the nun he had a child with...

Sexual misconducts happened also to Fr. Jozo Zosko, ex-parish priest of Medjugorje and to Fr. Vlasic who was eventually laicized after being investigated "for the diffusion of dubious doctrine, manipulation of consciences, suspected mysticism and disobedience towards legitimately issued orders."

Strangeness, Oddness, and Eccentricity:

In his 2017 statement, Bishop Perić explained that a study of the transcripts of interviews with the six visionaries shows that the "Madonna" usually speaks only when spoken to, "she laughs in a strange way. In response to certain questions she disappears and then returns, ...she allows some of those present to step on her veil lying on the ground, to touch her clothes and her body."

These touching sessions are disturbing and frequent. Witnesses reported the "Madonna allowed all those who wanted to come forward and touch her," the seers guided them saying: "now you are touching her veil, her head, her hand, her dress..."

Let us also mention the swallows and the "black butterfly" that accompany the apparition, "beautiful like an actress" according to Jakov; the trembling of its hands, the fainting of the seers when holy water is throw in its direction.

Greediness and Business:

Medjugorje became a lucrative business for the seers, its propagandists and the whole town. Bishop Zanic declared it plainly: "Laurentin and the others are very wealthy liars. All those who have written and published books, who have filmed and reproduced video cassettes, who diffuse souvenirs, *etc.* They have all made themselves very, very rich. For money plays a very important role in this whole affair."

Mirjana, the mother of two children, runs a guesthouse for pilgrims, very close to where

Ivan and Jakov live. The Medjugorje locals have nicknamed the street where visionaries live, *Millionaire Street.*

How Was That Possible?

The apparitions were announced to Fr. Vlasic in an alleged prophecy by Sr. Briege McKenna during the Rome International Meeting of the Charismatic Movement of May 1981. Through its messages, Medjugorje supports the Charismatic Movement, its doctrines, its practices, its leaders.

Frs. Zovko and Vlasic, in charge of the parish and pilgrimage, Bishop Franic, the seers, the propagandists of Medjugorje were or became Charismatics.

The most famous lobbyist of Medjugorje, French Charismatic and priest, Fr. Rene Laurentin worked hard in selecting, editing, and promoting the apparitions in opposition to the local bishops. He received great benefits from the sale of his books. After Cardinal Ratzinger's letter denying the support given to Medjugorje, he even declared several times that he had never said or written that Our Lady appeared in Medjugorje!

The political context and the new ecumenism have also played their role in the support that Rome gave to the partisans of Medjugorje against the constant condemnation of the local bishops.

A Common Objection—The Good Fruits:

The piety of the pilgrims is often brought as an objection. How can manipulation, lies or diabolical influence bring such fruits like confessions and conversions?

The answer is given by Bishop Zanic: "Here people are praying and fasting a lot, inspired as they are, of course, by the belief that these events are indeed supernatural."

Conclusion

Fr. Dugandzig, rector of Medjugorje in 1987 reproached Bishop Zanic "You are actually working to prove that it is Satan in person who is at work and that, since the time of Jesus Christ, this is his greatest deception." It seems difficult not to subscribe to such an observation.



Picturing Our Lady: Richard Crashaw's

“The Tear”

by Andrew J. Clarendon

Although only a privileged few have seen Our Lady on this side of eternity, artists through the centuries have created various representations to convey this or that aspect of she who is our Blessed Mother. One thinks of the beautiful and even miraculous paintings around the world or of the many musical compositions of the *Ave Maria* or *Magnificat*. The poets have also used the art of musical speech to praise Our Lady. From St. Ephrem's hymns on the *Theotokos* to the Marian poetry of St. Thérèse of the Little Flower, the saints have given the Church verses of doctrine and devotion. In world literature, the summit is Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a thoroughly Marian poem by the “most eloquent singer of the Christian idea.” Even the non-Catholic William Wordsworth, writing in a more modern time, calls the Blessed Mother “Our tainted nature's

solitary boast.” It is nevertheless true that literature in English, although often Christian in imagery and spirit, suffers from the effects of the Protestant Revolution. The father of English poetry, Chaucer, who died in 1400, was, of course, a Catholic and wrote several poems in praise of Mary. But by the time modern English—different from Chaucer's Middle English—was fully evolved in the 17th-century, England was largely Protestant with an increasing movement away from Catholic beliefs and traditions.

A not-so-subtle anti-Catholicism over the centuries helps us to account for both the lack of English Catholic poets and the relative obscurity of many of those who were. A good example is Richard Crashaw, a convert and mystical Catholic poet, whose work deserves more recognition than it enjoys today. >

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The Life of Crashaw

Richard Crashaw was born around 1613, some 60 years after Henry VIII's lust and Thomas Cranmer's heresy began England's separation from 1,000 years of Catholicism. In addition to the martyrdoms under Henry's daughter Elizabeth—most famously St. Edmund Campion's—that were cast by the government as political events, it was after the Gunpowder Plot

his father's death, young Richard attended the Charterhouse School in London where he started writing some verse and then went on to Cambridge, the *alma mater* of many famous English poets. While at Cambridge, Crashaw was increasingly attracted to High Church Anglicanism, which emphasizes the connections with England's Catholic heritage. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, for example, called for "beauty in holiness" and "more reverence

The Tear

What bright soft thing is this,
Sweet Mary, thy fair eyes' expense?
A moist spark it is,
A wat'ry diamond, from whence
The very term, I think, was found
The water of a diamond.

O 'tis not a tear,
'Tis a star about to drop
From thine eye its sphere;
The sun will stoop and take it up.
Proud will his sister be to wear
This thine eyes' jewel in her ear.

O 'tis a tear
Too true a tear; for no sad eyne,
How sad so e're,
Rain so true a tear as thine;
Each drop leaving a place so dear,
Weeps for itself, is its own tear.

Such a pearl as this is,
Slipped from Aurora's dewy breast
The rose bud's sweet lip kisses;
And such the rose itself, when vexed
With ungentle flames, does shed,
Sweating in too warm a bed.

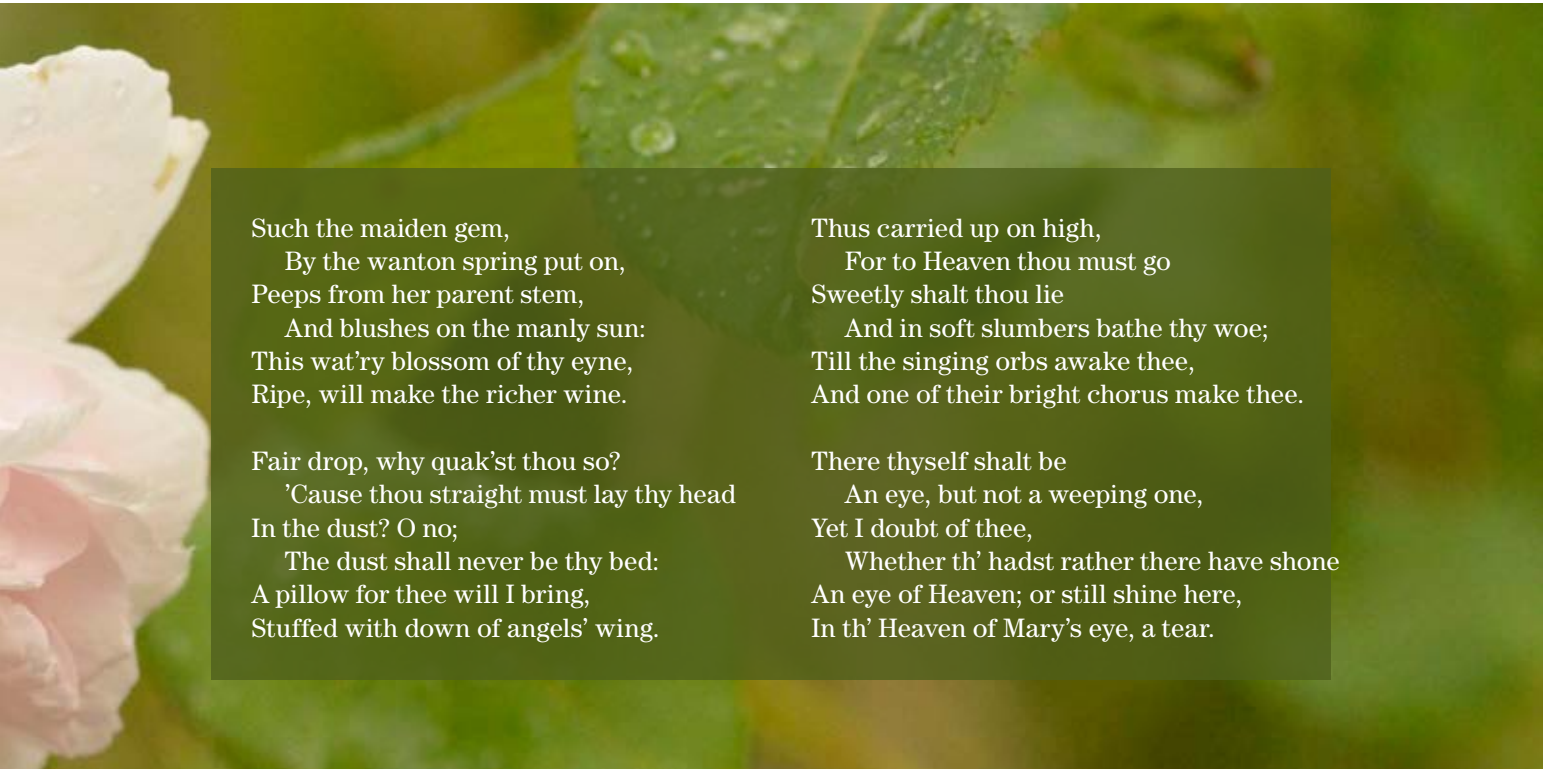
of 1605 that anti-Catholicism became equated with English patriotism. The real question—and a central issue during the subsequent Civil War of 1642-1651—became how near or far from the Old Faith the Anglican ritual and practices would end up, with various forces wanting to push the English church toward the Calvinistic Puritans. Crashaw's father William was a fiercely anti-Catholic Anglican theologian and cleric whose views inclined to the Puritan side. After

and decorum in church ceremonial and service, in the decoration of churches, and in the elaboration of the ritual." In 1638, Crashaw was awarded a Master of Arts and ordained in the Church of England. He was also friends with Nicholas Ferrar, whose semi-monastic High Church community at Little Gidding was later made famous by T. S. Eliot. Having been cited for "excessive Mariolatry" in 1641, Crashaw was expelled from his church by Puritans during



the Civil War and fled into exile in 1644. Already deeply attracted to the Catholic imagery and practice of the Counter-Reformation era and influenced by the spirituality of St. Teresa of Ávila, Crashaw converted. After facing poverty and ill-health, Crashaw, now a Catholic priest, eventually received a position with an Italian Cardinal, but died a short time later, in 1649. Already known for a book of epigrams on sacred subjects, such as the *Wedding at Cana*, and his

between things. He is also associated with the Baroque movement in poetry. Better known in music, architecture, sculpture, and painting, this style is characterized by an abundance of detail and ornamentation, by energy and movement, by contrasts and surprise. The great themes in Crashaw are a confidence in the love God has for man and a celebration of the purity and virtue of the Blessed Mother or other saints in an impassioned, almost ecstatic voice. He is thus



Such the maiden gem,
By the wanton spring put on,
Peeps from her parent stem,
And blushes on the manly sun:
This wat'ry blossom of thy eyne,
Ripe, will make the richer wine.

Fair drop, why quak'st thou so?
'Cause thou straight must lay thy head
In the dust? O no;
The dust shall never be thy bed:
A pillow for thee will I bring,
Stuffed with down of angels' wing.

Thus carried up on high,
For to Heaven thou must go
Sweetly shalt thou lie
And in soft slumbers bathe thy woe;
Till the singing orbs awake thee,
And one of their bright chorus make thee.

There thyself shalt be
An eye, but not a weeping one,
Yet I doubt of thee,
Whether th' hadst rather there have shone
An eye of Heaven; or still shine here,
In th' Heaven of Mary's eye, a tear.

Steps to the Temple, a volume of hymns to Our Lord was published after his death.

The Metaphysical School

As a poet, Crashaw is best known as a member of the so-called "Metaphysical" school: poets who employ striking metaphors and images to convey complex and interesting comparisons

one of those poetic painters of Our Lady who produces images of her so that we may know and love her better.

One such example is his meditation on a tear of the Blessed Mother. Whether it comes from some painting or only his imagination is unknown, but it is already unusual to focus from the beginning of the poem on a single tear. Further, the discussion is centered on the tear itself, not on the cause of Our Lady's weeping. >

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All the poet gives is that the tear is a great “expense,” like a rich diamond.

The first stanza is remarkable for the various contrasts the poet employs to introduce the tear—beginning with a question as if it is not clear what exactly the poet perceives. The tear is “bright” like a “spark” of fire or a hard, glittering diamond, but it is also water that appears to be “soft.” Hence, amid this mixture of elements, the poet gives a wonderful oxymoron in line three: “A moist spark it is.” Next, the poet extends the concept by calling the tear a star, likening Mary’s eye to one of the celestial spheres that make up the universe. The tear is like a meteorite, perhaps, coming down to earth, when the sun, now personified, takes up the “jewel,” this diamond or star, to adorn “his sister.” The sun is the Son, Christ, who wishes to adorn His sister—the Christian Soul—with this symbol of Mary’s compassion and beauty. The soul is decorated with the graces acquired through Our Lady’s mediation as a diamond shines in the ear of a beautiful maiden. Despite this joyful sentiment, it remains true that the Blessed Mother is weeping; the beauty of the tear cannot fully overcome the sense of sorrow. So, after affirming the tear is the truest tear that can be shed, the tear itself starts weeping because it leaves “a place so dear,” the heavenly sphere of Mary’s eye.

The next two stanzas are in the spirit of the Canticle of Canticles: the tear, now “a pearl,” is compared to dew on a rose in the springtime. We might think of May, Mary’s month. Here again, is the action of Christ, a sort of holy violence to create something higher. The dewdrop is on the “lip” or edge of the rosebud until the sunlight causes the rosebud to shed, or “sweat,” the dew. These “ungentle flames” also act on the dewdrop itself, which “blushes on the manly sun.”

Then the conclusion, recalling the wedding at Cana: “This wat’ry blossom of thy eyne, / Ripe, will make the richer wine.” From the tear of Mary comes joy, the joy of the eternal nuptial feast in Paradise. The poem concludes by affirming that this “fair drop” will not fall in the dust and be lost; rather, the poet places it on a pillow and has it carried to Heaven where the music of the heavenly spheres wakes it and makes it a new star, another voice in the celestial chorus.

Higher than all the stars and, we might add, with the moon under her feet, is the Blessed Mother herself, and so the poet affirms that the tear would have rather stayed in the heaven of Mary’s eye than to have become one of the stars of physical heaven.

Such rich verse as this meditation on a tear is part of our Catholic heritage in the English-speaking world. These artistic gems, some better known than others, are many opportunities to work to “restore all things in Christ.” If Dostoevsky was right and “beauty will save the world,” then it is precisely to these makers of beauty that we must turn, both passing on the cultural tradition and inspiring new manifestations of the same eternal theme.



Catechism on

Private Revelation

by Kevin Symonds

Editor's Note: These extracts are taken from *Refractions of Light*, by Kevin Symonds (En Route Books and Media, St. Louis MO, 2015). In his book, Mr. Symonds is using the latest official Church document which sums up fairly well the traditional Church teaching on private revelations.

1. What is private revelation?

Private revelation is the supernatural manifestation of a hidden truth by means of a vision, a word, or only a prophetic instinct. The term refers to all the visions and revelations that have taken place since the completion of the New Testament.

2. What is the purpose of private revelation?

The purpose of private revelation is to provide emphasis on a particular aspect of the Gospel

at a specific moment in time so as to lead the faithful to a deepening of faith, hope and charity.

3. How does the Church respond to claims of private revelations?

The Church exercises great caution with respect to claims of private revelations as she follows the Apostolic mandate to “test the spirits.” It is also commonly said that the Church moves slowly in these matters.

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7. How are alleged private revelations to be discerned?

The Church has published the *Normae S. Congregationis* (May 2012). These norms offer two, three-tiered structures that claims to private revelations can go through.

8. What is the first structure?

The first structure concerns the competent Ecclesiastical Authority and is delineated as follows:

- The local Ordinary.
- The Conference of Bishops (or Synod in the Eastern Churches).
- The Congregation for the Faith and the pope.

9. What is the second structure?

- The second structure concerns the process of discernment and approbation of an alleged private revelation. It is delineated as follows:
 - Initial judgment on the facts using positive and negative criteria.
 - Permission may be given for certain public demonstrations of cult and devotion while still investigating the facts in question (otherwise known as the “response of the faithful”).
 - Full judgment on the supernatural character of the supposed events.

10. What are the negative criteria?

The negative criteria are as follows:
Manifest error concerning the fact.

Doctrinal errors attributed to God, the Virgin Mary or saints in their manifestations. Vigilance is necessary against the possibility of human additions or errors being made in the alleged revelations.

Evidence of a gain of profit strictly connected to the fact.

The alleged visionary or followers commit gravely immoral acts at the time of the alleged revelation or on their occasion.

The alleged visionary demonstrates psychic disorders or psychopathic tendencies that clearly influenced the allegedly supernatural fact.

11. What are the positive criteria?

- The positive criteria are as follows:
- There exists moral certitude or at least great probability the alleged revelations are real.
- The one claiming revelations demonstrates psychological equilibrium, honesty and rectitude of moral life, sincerity and habitual docility towards Ecclesiastical Authority, and capacity for returning to the normal regimen of a life of faith.
- There is true theological and spiritual doctrine and immunity from error.
- There is healthy devotion and abundant and constant spiritual fruit.

20. Are the negative and positive criteria meant to be the only criteria the Church uses in her discernment of alleged private revelations?

No, the criteria mentioned in the *Normae* are not peremptory but rather indicative, and they should be applied cumulatively or with some mutual convergence. For instance, there is nothing in the *Normae* about miracles as a criterion, yet they have a role in the discernment of a case.

21. Is there a fundamental principle by which the Church discerns alleged private revelations?

There is a fundamental principle that the Church uses to discern alleged private revelations: The criterion for the truth and value of [alleged] private revelation is...its orientation to Christ Himself. When it leads us away from Him, when it becomes independent of Him or even presents itself as another and better plan of salvation, more important than the Gospel, then it certainly does not come from the Holy Spirit, who guides us more deeply into the Gospel and not away from it. This does not mean that a private revelation will not offer new emphases or give rise to new devotional forms, or deepen and spread older forms. But in all of this there must be a nurturing of faith, hope and charity, which are the unchanging path to salvation for everyone.



22. Who determines if alleged private revelations are from God or not?

The competent Ecclesiastical Authority determines the character of such claims, and firstly the local Ordinary.

26. In what four ways can a local Ordinary intervene?

The four ways are as follows:

- When devotion on the part of the faithful begins quasi-spontaneously because of alleged private revelations.
- The faithful request the competent Ecclesiastical Authority to intervene.
- When grave circumstances warrant immediate intervention of the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- The Ecclesiastical Authority may also refrain from making any judgment and taking any direct action.

31. What then does “supernatural” mean in the theology of private revelation?

In the theology of private revelation, the term “supernatural” means three things:

- The alleged private revelations are truly from God.
- They are declared to be such by the authority of the Church.
- The faithful can trust in the authenticity of the claims if they so choose.

32. Why is it that, “...the faithful can trust...if they so choose”?

The faithful are not bound to believe in alleged private revelations, but only in public revelation.

34. What is the distinction between “public” and “private” revelation?

According to the Congregation for the Faith, the distinction between the two is as follows:

The term “public revelation” refers to the revealing action of God directed to humanity as a whole and which finds its literary expression in the two parts of the Bible: the Old and New Testaments. It is called “Revelation” because in

it God gradually made Himself known to men, to the point of becoming man Himself, in order to draw to Himself the whole world and unite it with Himself through His Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. Public revelation “demands faith” and private revelation “is a help to that faith.” It is not that faith in itself.

35. Does believing in alleged private revelations mean a person has put faith in them?

Yes, but there is a difference between the theological virtue of faith and human faith. An individual can believe in alleged private revelations on human faith but he or she does not give the assent of divine or Catholic Faith, which is given only to divine revelation.

37. If alleged private revelations contain a message of world-wide importance, must the faithful believe in the alleged message?

The Church distinguishes between “obligation” and “disregard” with respect to an alleged private revelation: [s]uch a message [*i.e.* alleged private revelations] can be a genuine help in understanding the Gospel and living it better at a particular moment in time; therefore, it should not be disregarded. It is a help which is offered, but which one is not obliged to use.

38. What is the distinction between “obliged” and “disregarded”?

Legitimate private revelations should not be taken lightly. God has offered them for a reason and the faithful should seriously consider the message being given. However, private revelations (whether legitimate or fraudulent) do not enjoy an obligatory character—the faithful are not *obliged* to believe in them.

68. In what manner is a judgment made on the supernatural character of a claim to private revelations?

After investigating the facts of a case, the local Ordinary renders his judgment publicly by way >

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of one of three Latin expressions:

Constat de supernaturalitate—There is evidence of the supernatural

Non constat de supernaturalitate—There is no evidence of the supernatural

Constat de non supernaturalitate—There is evidence of the non supernatural

79. May Catholics disregard a directive on alleged private revelations issued by a local Ordinary who does not or is said not to believe in *any* private revelation?

The faithful may not disregard a directive by the local Ordinary even though he may not be inclined to believe in any private revelation.

94. Why are obedience and humility the fundamental virtues?

The purpose of legitimate private revelations is to lead the faithful to greater holiness, including the person said to be receiving the alleged revelations. Pride is the deadliest sin and humility is necessary to combat it. Obedience safeguards against self-will. If a person is possessed of his or her own self-will and not obedient to the Church and her representatives, such actions are sure signs of pride and disobedience. These actions are critical in the discernment of alleged private revelations.

179. Does the Church provide the faithful with a teaching on any signs of false private revelations to detect a diabolical origin?

The Church's tradition on the interior life of virtue provides the faithful with some general signs to help discern a possible diabolical origin other than the positive and negative signs mentioned above.

180. What are those signs?

According to the Dominican theologian, Dom Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, in *Three Ages of the Interior Life*, the following are to be looked at as signs of the evil spirit:

1. Pride in the soul that leads to trouble, discouragement and even despair.
2. An exaggerated mortification.
3. False humility spurred on by spiritual pride.
4. A focus upon what is most extraordinary

and marvelous to make the faithful feel esteemed or bring about what is foreign to our vocation.

5. Presumption, which undermines the theological virtue of hope.

6. The creation of self-love in the faithful.

7. Engendering dissensions and hatreds as opposed to peace.

8. Evident sin which cannot be concealed creates confusion, vexation and discouragement in the soul.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange ends by saying, "the lack of humility and obedience is a certain indication that it is not God who guides [the person in question]."

186. What are some examples of good and bad fruits?

Good fruits are those things that encourage people in holiness such as increase in one's prayer life, conversion, increased docility to the laws and teachings of the Church, increase in virtue.

Bad fruits lead one away from God. Examples are: disobedience to the Church and her representatives, misrepresentation of the Church or her representatives, increase in pride, choosing alleged revelations over and above the teaching authority of the Church.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's signs of the evil spirit as given above are also examples of negative fruits. In all things, we would do well to heed the advice of St. Teresa of Avila who wrote in *The Interior Castle*: "Such [mystical] experiences, if we use them aright, prepare us to be better servants of God; but sometimes it is the weakest whom God leads by this road; and so there is no ground here either for approval or for condemnation. We must base our judgments on the virtues. The saintliest will be she who serves Our Lord with the greatest mortification and humility and purity of conscience."



A Debate on the Mountain

Our Lady of La Salette

by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX, vs. Advocate

Context on the Debate

In order to illustrate the sound principles which ought to come into play in order to judge the veracity or falsity of private apparitions, we offer our readers, under the form of debate, a free discussion concerning the apparitions of Our Lady of La Salette, France. Our friendly “skirmish” consists of four sections. After giving the context of the apparitions and the topic of debate, an anonymous Advocate will take the side of the opposition. Fr. Dominique Bourmaud will give the defense of the apparitions, before a conclusion summing up the results.

Due to the economy of space, this debate is limited in its scope. It is not concerned with the public text of September 19, 1846. It is not putting into question the secret of Maximin for Pius IX, which concerned mostly his relation with

Napoleon III. What is at stake here is the veracity of the apparitions of La Salette taken as a whole. This includes the judgment of the mental and spiritual sanity of the seers, especially Melanie. It also treats the private revelation of Melanie as contained in its definitive form in 1879. This form has been attacked both as to its content and to its diffusion. Regarding the diffusion, indeed, the secret was the object of successive sanctions by the Roman authorities in 1880, 1915, 1922 and 1957. Regarding the content, it must be said that this revelation was written in an apocalyptic and prophetic vein and was susceptible to playing into the hands of Freemasonry against the Catholic Church.

Before we close this introduction and proceed to the debate, we bring up the fact that Traditional Catholics are far from having a >

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uniform opinion regarding the apparition. Some are strongly unfavorable to the private revelation of Melanie, whereas others, like Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who mentions publicly: “Of course, you well know the apparitions of Our Lady at La Salette, where she says that Rome will lose the Faith, that there will be an ‘eclipse’ in Rome; an eclipse, see what Our Lady means by this” (Episcopal Consecrations of June 30, 1988).

Fr. Bourmaud—A Short History of La Salette

A small paddock in the French Alps next to a hamlet called La Salette was the object of much talk in the 19th century. Was it the Blessed Mother who, weeping and dressed in mournful attire with the instruments of the Passion, really appeared to Mélanie Calvat and Maximin Giraud on September 19, 1846?

An enthusiastic wave of approval fell upon this “Sacred Mountain” which received the seal of approval of the local Bishop of Grenoble three years later. Indeed, the only thing divulged at that time to the public was the short Marian message which scolded “the peasants for working on Sunday, to the carriage drivers for swearing and others for going to the butcher shop like dogs during Lent.” There was mention of a famine, and eventually one came to devastate France’s wheat harvest in the 1850s alongside the infamous potato famine in France.

At this juncture, events took a sour turn. The favorable Bishop of Grenoble died and was replaced by one much more suspicious of the apparitions, especially as those who claimed to have seen Our Lady were asked to put to writing a short version of the message she divulged to them in 1851. It was not until 1858 that the apparition allowed one of the seers, Melanie, to reveal the entire Secret of La Salette, which she wrote at different times until the final version was published with the *Imprimatur* of the Bishop of Lecce, Italy.

The historical context of the alleged apparition is bleak. It was the time of a rabid assault against the Faith (Renan’s blasphemous *Life of Jesus* was published in 1864 in France) and the Pontifical


States in Italy fell. (Napoleon III is mentioned especially in Maximin’s secret to the pope earlier on). Here is an extract of Maximin’s private revelation: “Let the pope not come out of Rome after 1859. Let him distrust Napoleon whose heart is divided and, when he wants to become both pope and emperor, soon God will withdraw from him; he is this eagle which, intent in rising upwards, will fall upon the sword which he wished to use to force nations to elevate him.”

All these versions of Melanie’s secret contain highly suspicious texts which raised more than one eyebrow. For example: “In 1864, Lucifer with a great number of demons will be detached from hell: they will slowly abolish the Faith, including in souls consecrated to God; they will blind them in such a way that, without a special grace, these people will absorb the mindset of these evil angels; several religious houses will totally lose the Faith and will damn many others...Rome will lose the Faith and become the seat of the Antichrist.” Along with this unsettling secret, Melanie also wrote the rule of the Order of the Mother of God, a religious Order which is yet to see the light of day.

At that time, Pius IX and, later on, Leo XIII, showed themselves personally favorable to the apparitions at La Salette and grateful for the secret letters sent to them. Yet, in France’s divided episcopate and in Roman circles, the wind eventually turned against the seers and their alleged private revelations. From then on, it is especially Melanie who was under assault. She was sent into exile in England and made her way into southern Italy where she found powerful allies who saw in her a living saint and a stigmatist. After a long time she finally returned to France, treated by many as a mad woman who should have been committed.

Advocate—Some Concerns about La Salette

As an introduction, allow me to state two things which will color the whole of my response. Firstly, I write primarily as an *advocatus diaboli*: not someone who is sure of the veracity of the claims either way. Rather, I see enough >



In 1846, the village of La Salette consisted of eight or nine scattered hamlets. The population was about 800, principally small farmers with their families and dependents. On the evening of Saturday September 19, 1846, Maximin Giraud and Mélanie Calvat returned from the mountain where they had been tending their cows and reported seeing “a beautiful lady” on Mount Sous-Les Baises, weeping bitterly. They described her as sitting with her elbows resting on her knees and her face buried in her hands. She was clothed in a white robe studded with pearls; and a gold-colored apron; white shoes with roses about her feet and a high headdress. Around her neck she wore a crucifix suspended from a small chain.

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questions to be raised and answered before a balanced consideration can be reached.

Secondly, I can only emphasize what was printed in Mr. Symonds's brief catechism. When the Church approves an apparition, it is not a positive approval meaning an imposition of an obligation for the faithful to believe in one or any of them. It simply means that the original message of La Salette, when the Church approved it, was limited to a judgment of nothing against faith and morals at the time.

The 1917 Catholic Encyclopedia quotes Pope Benedict XVI on this point: "It is not obligatory nor even possible to give them the assent of Catholic Faith, but only of human faith, in conformity with the dictates of prudence, which presents them to us as probable and worthy of pious belief."

Let us begin where there is no substantial controversy. In 1846, when Maximin and Melanie, 11 and 14 respectively at the time, first reported their vision, the Church, through the local bishop, went through the normal procedures. While it is true that there was controversy from the beginning—as there seems to be with any private revelation—after several years, the local bishop (Bishop de Bruillard) approved it as worthy of belief.

But there is more to the story. Beyond what was communicated in 1846—the necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, the widespread use and tolerance of blasphemy, and the encouragement to pray daily—Our Lady supposedly gave a private revelation to each of the seers. This is precisely where the real controversy begins and where complications arise.

In 1851, five years after the apparition, Bishop de Bruillard asks Maximin and Melanie to commit their secrets to writing so that they might be sent to the Holy Father, who was then Pius IX. Although the secrets were indeed sent to and received by the Holy Father, we have no record of his reaction. Here is a brief quote from Maximin's secret:

"[T]he Faith will die out in France: three quarters of France will not practice religion anymore, or almost no more...Then, afterward, nations will convert, the Faith will be rekindled

everywhere. A great country, now Protestant, in the north of Europe, will be converted; by the support of this country all the other nations of the world will be converted. Before all that arrives, great disorders will arrive in the Church and everywhere. Then, afterward, our Holy Father the pope will be persecuted. His successor will be a pontiff that nobody expects. Then, after, a great peace will come, but it will not last a long time. A monster will come to disturb it. All that I tell you here will arrive in the other century, at the latest in the year 2,000."

As I write, it is 2019. I leave it to the reader to formulate his own judgment. Melanie's original private revelation, meaning the one submitted in 1851, is even more specific and dire:

"Paris, this city soiled by all kinds of crimes, will perish infallibly. Marseilles will be destroyed in a little time. When these things arrive, the disorder will be complete on the earth, the world will be given up to its impious passions. The pope will be persecuted from all sides, they will shoot at him, they will want to put him to death, but no one will be able to do it, the Vicar of God will triumph again this time...A great king will go up on the throne, and will reign a few years. Religion will re-flourish and spread all over the world, and there will be a great abundance, the world, glad not to be lacking anything, will fall again into its disorders, will give up God, and will be prone to its criminal passions...Lastly, hell will reign on earth. It will be then that the Antichrist will be born of a Sister, but woe to her! Many will believe in him, because he will claim to have come from Heaven, woe to those who will believe in him! That time is not far away, twice 50 years will not go by."

What happened to Maximin and Melanie? Maximin died at the age of 39, having tried a vocation and served in the military. He professed his belief in the apparitions until the end, even writing an autobiography defending his account. It is, however, Melanie's life and actions which primarily concern us.

In 1851, at the age of 20, Melanie took the habit with the Sisters of Providence, where she had boarded for several years. In 1854, the new bishop of Grenoble refused to allow her to be professed; Melanie saw in this political intrigue and changed norms for convents.



In 1855, she moved to a Carmel in England, where she made temporary vows. In 1858, she wrote to the Holy Father, asking permission to reveal her private revelation, pleading that she had been instructed to do so that year. While Pius IX did not do so, he did later dispense Melanie from her vow at the Carmel. She then spent time in a convent in France, then Greece, then France again.

In 1870, she moved to Italy where she knew several friendly bishops. She stayed in Italy until she died in 1904. In 1873, she wrote her new, longer, version of the secret at the request of the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples. In the meantime, she drafted constitutions for two new religious orders connected to La Salette—one for men and another for women. The local bishop refused and several years of appeals followed, eventually leading to a meeting between Melanie and Pope Leo XIII in 1878. The “Melanists,” or devoted followers of Melanie, published a transcript of sorts, claiming the Holy Father was favorable. As it stands, however, Leo XIII made no decision and there is no evidence of a report of the meeting from the side of Rome.

In 1879, she published (for the first time) the secret *in toto* with the *imprimatur* of the local bishop in Italy. Creating a storm in France, the matter was referred to Rome. The involvement of Cardinal Caterini, who wrote a letter to the bishop of Troyes in 1880, is a matter of some dispute since it remains unclear whether he acted in his official capacity as Secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office or not. Regardless, Melanie’s book would be placed in the Index.

In 1892, Melanie finished writing her autobiography, which she had done under the direction of Fr. Gilbert Combe, a priest drawn to her by his interest in prophecies, especially ones that touched on politics. In 1894, he published another version of Melanie’s secret, along with his own speculation, trying to interpret her prophecies and attaching dates to them. It was, again, put in the Index. It was characters like Fr. Combe (alas, not alone!) that prompted Jacques Maritain later to say: “There was a small number of fanatics who made the Secret of La Salette a partisan affair, and whose aberrant

interpretations, and their manner of using prophecies like a railway timetable, could only compromise the cause which they claimed to defend.”

The position of Rome seems clear enough: originally prohibited under Leo XIII and Benedict XV, Pius XI later reaffirmed Rome’s stance on the second secret. Ironically, it was only with the elimination of the Index following the Second Vatican Council that most Catholics could technically read the second secret. (Interestingly, however, Monsignor Bloy, one of his Melanie’s closest defenders, was put up for beatification twice before the Council: in 1936, and 1951. Both times it was refused in part because of his connection with the controversy. In 1985, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith “permanently” shut the door on this process.)

Without repeating the bulk of these apocalyptic prophecies again here (all of which are widely available), it must be said that the outlandish or “over-the-top” nature of the private revelatory secrets given to the seers, ostensibly by Our Lady of La Salette, are, as Fr. Bourmaud noted, apocalyptic in tone. They say much of the great travail and woes to come, but very little of the love and compassion Our Lord expresses through His Sacred Heart. While there is a longstanding tradition of Our Lady presenting dire warnings to the faithful, the shaky history surrounding the La Salette secrets and the seers they were entrusted to presents ample room for pause.

Fr. Bourmaud—In Defense of La Salette

So much negativity has surrounded the private revelation and the seers, both from the laity and the Church hierarchy, that it throws a veil of suspicion and serious doubt as to the veracity of the apparitions altogether. Can something be said in Our Lady of La Salette’s defense? It seems so indeed and, although the arguments in favor may not totally wipe away the stain and sting of uneasiness, it may shed some light as to the how and why the seers, particularly Melanie and her secret, were such a sign of contradiction. >

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We shall divide the arguments by bringing up firstly the content, and then touch on the Roman censures of the secret.

Firstly, Fr. Del Magno presented a report largely favorable to the Holy Office.

“The secret is prophetic and we all know that such style resolves in threats which are conditional. Ninive converted and the punishment announced was averted. Hence, if these prophetic statements contain some dogmatic errors and calls to heresy and schism, the Church must publicly condemn them. Otherwise, the Church never got involved and avoided approving their publication according to the just axiom: *De futuris contingentibus nulla determinata veritatis*—No determination of truth regarding contingent future events... Having read the content of the alleged secret of Melanie, I found nothing against the dogma, the precepts of the Church or the sources of the Faith as received by the Church.”

Secondly, Bishop Zola, the bishop of Lecce who granted the *Imprimatur* to the secret in 1879, was even more positive.

“By the constitution of Pius IV *Dominici Gregis*, the bishop should oppose only the publication of books which are either heretical, or suspect of heretical depravity, or which harm morals or piety. Yet, no such things can be imputed to Melanie’s writings, on the contrary. Besides, having had in my hands the manuscript of the secret for a long time, I can testify to the accomplishment of predictions contained in it, and I am willing to swear it before God. Hence, I am convinced of the authenticity of the revelation by the virtues of the happy shepherdess, by the concordant sentiment of several bishops and, especially, by the accomplishment of the prophecies.”

Thirdly, readers may very well wonder why the secret was revealed little by little, and not right away in 1846. Here is how Melanie explained it:

“If the secret had contained the praises of the clergy, be assured that I would not have tarried long to publish it. I am certain that the publication of the secret, as the merciful Blessed

Mother Mary gave it to me, will make me many enemies.”

Now let us turn to those who besmirched the private revelations of La Salette.

The first attack against the private revelation was the letter of Cardinal Caterini in 1880. After the publication of the secret in 1879 in Lecce and Lyons, some French leaders led by Bishop Cortet of Troyes opposed it. The congregation of the Index refused to condemn something which dealt only with affirmation of facts and not with doctrine. It diverted the judgment to the Holy Office which was also largely favorable to the secret. Yet, the opposition finally prevailed—although under cover since Leo XIII knew the secret and approved it—and prevented the diffusion of the secret.

As an anecdote, it is said that Caterini’s letter to Cortet said the following: “Let them be withdrawn from the hands of the faithful, but maintain them in the hands of the clergy for their profit.” This would seem to be sufficient proof of the divinity of the message. Needless to say, this line was quickly silenced from the French publications.

Besides this prevention, the secret was published several times and a new Roman commission in 1881 examined the secret by papal order and found it irreproachable. And so, it seems as if the so-called “condemnation” was the work of a Roman faction conniving with 12 French prelates whose tendencies were much more Gallican [those who wished to restrict papal authority], not to say Republican, than Roman.

After the publication of more polemical writings, the Holy Office in 1915 made another decision about La Salette, complaining about the constant discussions relative to the secret: “The Sacred Congregation orders that all faithful, of whichever country, abstain to discuss the topic under any pretext or form.”

However, this decree did not prevent the reading and diffusion of Melanie’s private revelation itself which had been sealed and had the seal of the *Imprimatur*. It simply sanctioned abusive and non-authorized commentaries, but it did not sanction those submitted to ecclesiastical authorities. This is how Jacques Maritain wrote



to Cardinal Billot about it, who, by way of reply, said that the publication of the private revelation was inopportune, but at the same time asked his own opinion on the matter.

Finally, the Holy Office condemned the publication of the booklet *The Apparition of the Blessed Virgin* edited by the Société Saint-Augustin. Most likely, what prompted this decree was the renewal of the polemics which the earlier decree wished to suppress. But the main reason for Rome's reaction was probably the surreptitious addition of a letter from Mariavé (Dr. Grémillion) which contained language quite abusive of the authorities. All in all, it seems plausible that the Roman decisions to stall the diffusion of the secret were more prudential and circumstantial than theological.

As a closing note and in order to complete the defense's plea, it is most interesting to study the portrait of the seer herself. Fr. Laurentin's book *Découverte du Secret de La Salette* has a chapter dedicated to prove the psychological and supernatural balance of the seers, and particularly of Melanie persecuted many French ecclesiastics. Was Melanie mentally unstable? Were her stigmata legitimate or not? These remain hotly contested points of debate that are unlikely to be unraveled in the near future.

Concluding Postscript

The ongoing debate over La Salette has wider implications. While many Catholics today, including non-traditionalists, generally accept the possibility of Marian apparitions and private revelation, there are those Catholics who find in them a source of annoyance or embarrassment. For every powerful testimony concerning the rightly famous apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima or the miracles wrought in the borderlands of East and West at the Pochaev Lavra in Ukraine, there are public spectacles like "Our Lady of the Underpass"—a salt stain under a highway bridge in Chicago that was purported to be an image of Our Lady.

The debate over the veracity of any private revelation typically comes down to the content of the message and the character of those who

allegedly received the revelation. Taking these points out of order, it should be stated that no man is without sin. Even the greatest saints of the Church struggled with personal flaws, some of which haunted them for the duration of their lives. Nowhere has the Church ever taught that those blessed with receiving private revelations had to be perfect, either before or after. God can use very imperfect instruments to carry out his divine plan. Think, for instance, of Jonah, arguably the most obstinate prophet in Scripture and yet one of Our Lord's most successful in terms of turning the hearts of those to whom he preached.

As for the content of private revelations such as La Salette, few of us want to think of wrath, turmoil, and judgment, and yet they are all part of the human experience in this postlapsarian world. Yes, God is love, but He is also a Father who corrects His children, especially at the height of their disobedience. Although not all of the private revelations allegedly given by Our Lady of La Salette have come to pass (as far as we can tell), that does not foreclose the possibility that they will. Moreover, perhaps these dire warnings are just that: warnings. Their consequences can still be averted so long as we proceed in the manner God wishes and choose to rely on His mercy rather than our own fickle preferences.

The debate over La Salette and other apparitions and revelations is far from over. No doubt that is a good thing. By reflecting seriously on these potentially miraculous occurrences, our hearts and minds are naturally drawn to God the Father, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Our Blessed Mother, and all the saints. While reasonable minds may disagree about the veracity of this or that miracle or revelation, all of us who hold to the Faith know that God is not an abstraction, some distant "watchmaker" unconcerned with His creation, but rather the One who has made all things shining in His unfathomable love and desires the salvation of all.





For St. Peter Julian Eymard, La Salette was a place of great religious significance almost from the moment he first heard the reports of what happened there. La Salette was an event that occurred in Fr. Eymard's lifetime and in his own part of the world. In correspondence with his sisters in December 1846, he observed that some people were making fun of the children's story. It is clear that Eymard recognized and accepted the miraculous nature of La Salette from the outset, long before the Church had formally investigated the event and before he had ever visited the place.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

The Collect

by Fr. Christopher Danel

The Church prays with a lively faith in the mediation of Jesus Christ, and an unshaken confidence in His merits; as Christ has merited grace for us all, He has therefore also secured a favorable answer to our prayers. For Christ's sake, we are favored and blessed by God. Whenever God looks upon the face of His Anointed, in whom He is eternally well-pleased, He will, through Christ and for the sake of Christ, graciously receive and hear our petitions by pouring out upon us His abundant mercies and blessings.

– Monsignor Nicholas Gihl

Introduction

In this article we will examine the Collect, presenting the work of Monsignor Nicholas Gihl in his fundamental liturgical commentary *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically, and Ascetically Explained*. Monsignor Gihl was a priest of the Archdiocese of Freiburg in Breisgau whose work of liturgical research took place during the time frame spanning the pontificates of Popes Pius IX to

Pius XI, including that of Pope St. Pius X. The early years of his work were contemporaneous with the last years in the work of Dom Prosper Guéranger. The English translation of his study appeared in 1902; the original is: Gihl, Nikolaus. *Messopfer dogmatisch, liturgisch und aszetisch erklärt*. Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1877.



The Collect

After the *Gloria* or the *Kyrie* follows the principal prayer, that is, the particular prayer of the day or of the feast, and which, as a rule, is called the Collect. Like the Mass prayers in general, this prayer before the Epistle is not merely a private prayer of the priest, but a liturgical one, that is, a public prayer which the celebrant recites in the name and by the commission of the Church, and with a special intention for the welfare of the whole Christian people.

The priest stands at the altar as mediator between God and man, he presents there the desires and interests of all before the throne of God. The faithful assisting at the Sacrifice are of one heart and one soul; they pray interiorly and unite with the priest who, as their representative, gathers up and collects, so to say, their supplications and desires to present them before God. The celebrant is the angel of the Lord who puts the holy incense, namely, the devout prayers of fervent Christians, into the golden chalice of his heart, whence they sweetly ascend to the throne of the Most High (Apoc. 8:3-4).

As a collective prayer, the Collect is still to be considered under another aspect. It is considered, namely, as a prayer which, in comprehensive brevity, embodies the most important petitions, that is, the sum or idea of all that we, in consideration of the day's celebration, especially seek to obtain from God.

Finally, some persons discover in the word *Collecta* an admonition for priest and people to gather and keep all their senses and thoughts collected together, in order to offer to God in profound recollection of spirit (*collectis animis*) the supplications comprised in the prayer.

Dominus Vobiscum

The priest kisses the altar and would not turn to the people without having previously evinced this reverence toward the sanctuary. The priest would at the same time indicate that all the help and all the blessings of grace that he wishes to the people present must come from the altar and from our union with the Savior sacrificing Himself upon it. With hands joined before >

his breast and with downcast eyes, the priest with grave and measured step turns toward the people; then, while slowly extending and joining the hands, he salutes the entire Church in the person of those present with the benediction "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you."

This formula of well-wishing dates back to the Old Testament. In the book of Ruth it is related that Booz greeted his reapers in the field with the words: "*Dominus vobiscum*" (Ruth 2:4). To the blessed Virgin the Archangel Gabriel said: "*Dominus tecum*" (Lk. 1:28). The aforesaid salutation is frequently repeated during the celebration of Mass (eight times), in order to constantly excite, increase and awaken afresh the spiritual union and the communion of prayer during the Holy Sacrifice between the priest and the people.

And how do the people respond to this greeting of the priest? By the mouth of the acolyte or by chanting, they answer with the corresponding greeting: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*." The same or a similar wish for a blessing was frequently employed by St. Paul in his Epistles (cf. II Tim. 4:22; Gal. 6:22). Out of gratitude for the imparted salutation and blessing, the people express the wish that the Lord would, with His enlightening and strengthening grace, replenish and penetrate the spirit of the celebrant, that he may, as a man of God, and a truly spiritual man, be enabled to present in a worthy manner the petitions and supplications of the whole Church. The priest does indeed greatly stand in need of the assistance of this grace, when he is standing at the altar; the priest appears at the altar by commission of the Church, the immaculate Spouse of Christ, there to recite for the welfare and salvation of the living and the dead those venerable prayers which she herself, inspired by the Holy Ghost, has composed and prescribed.

The bishop ordinarily salutes the faithful during Holy Mass with the *Dominus vobiscum*, except that before the Collect the bishop's salutation on those days on which the *Gloria* is said, is: "*Pax vobis* – Peace be to you!" Both the sacerdotal and the episcopal salutation come from the lips of the representative of Christ, not as some mere empty wish, but as a blessing spoken with the efficacy of a higher power,

containing within itself supernatural strength; so that in reality it imparts the good it expresses to all whose hearts are susceptible to it. "The Lord stands at the door and knocks; to anyone who hears His voice and opens the door to Him, He will come and enter with His peace" (Apoc. 3:20).

The Form of the Collect

After this introduction follows the Collect itself, a prayer distinguished as much for the beauty and perfection of its form as for the copiousness and depth of its contents. The Collect is, therefore, a prayer of petition for the particular grace of the day: but in what form is this petition clothed? Amid all the variety and diversity of the Collects, there still prevails a certain uniformity in their construction, which shows that they have been composed after a specified and general rule. The petition is not simply presented to God by itself, but is supported by other acts of prayer, in order that it may be made so much the more fervent and efficacious. St. Paul mentions supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings (I Tim. 2:1). These four methods of prayer are not only found alternately in the course of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, but they are, for the most part, combined in each Collect, which forms these acts into a perfect and most effectual prayer of petition. The person praying must approach God, draw nigh unto God, elevate himself to God (*oratio*); and then present his petitions (*postulatio*), and to obtain more speedily what is asked for, he joins to it his motives: one of which is gratitude or thanksgiving (*gratiarum actio*); for in so far as we are grateful for benefits received, do we obtain graces yet more plentifully; but the most efficient means for having our petitions granted is to beg them of God by the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ: hence the concluding words "through Christ our Lord," words which express the entreaty (*obsecratio*). Thus, the Church complies with the admonition of the Apostle: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6).



Offered to the Holy Trinity

The prayers of the Holy Mass may be addressed to the holy and indivisible Trinity or to any one of the divine Persons: when the latter is done, it is self-evident that the other two Persons are not excluded, but rather virtually included, and to make this obvious they are, as a rule, expressly mentioned. It is the same with respect to the Collects. Whether they be directed to the Father or to the Son, there follows at any rate at the conclusion an explicit confession and solemn acknowledgment of the Holy Trinity.

The Collects were originally and without exception (and are now usually) addressed to the Father. For the Father is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity and as such He is, in a manner, the original source not only of the divine nature which from all eternity He imparts to the Son and with the Son to the Holy Ghost, but of all created things. To the Father are principally attributed (appropriated) power and majesty, revealed in the creation of the world; the Father has sent us His only-begotten Son, and together with Him He has given us all things. Jesus Christ Himself offered His whole life, actions, sufferings and especially His prayers to God the Father. The Savior in His prayer to God was not only our advocate, but also our model and leader in prayer. He always prayed to His Father to show that the Father is His origin. The Father, whom Jesus, from eternity, receives His divine nature and by whom His human nature also was created, and from whom it received all the good that it possessed. Inasmuch as the Church when praying usually has recourse to the Father, she in this respect follows not merely the example but, moreover, the teaching of Christ, who said to His Apostles: “Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you” (Jn. 16:23). In this we see another example of why the Collects, for the most part, are addressed to the Father. Our petitions should be presented “in the name of Jesus.” Jesus is the Mediator through whom all our prayers and supplications ascend to Heaven, and through whom all graces and merits descend upon earth; hence for the sake of the Son we pray to the Father who sent Him, by concluding the Collects with these words

“through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This rule is especially observed at Holy Mass, in which the Son offers Himself to the heavenly Father.

Some of the Collects are addressed to the second Person of the Holy Trinity, because they have a particular and closer relation to the mystery of the Incarnation or to the Incarnate Word. On the other hand, we do not find in our Missal a single Collect addressed to the Holy Ghost, while in the liturgy there are other prayers to the Holy Ghost and hymns in His honor wherein He is invoked and glorified as God.

The form of the conclusion of the Collect is modified in a five-fold manner, according as the Collect is addressed to the Father or to the Son. (According as in a Collect addressed to the Father mention is made of the second or third divine Person). The usual form of conclusion is as follows: *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum*—Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.” Thus, the Collects end and thus they rise to a magnificent praise of the Most Holy Trinity.

Conclusion

Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum: How solemn, how overpowering, how grand are these words! With what courage and confidence, with what consolation and consciousness of victory should they fill us! “Were it not for the intercession of our Mediator, without doubt, the cry of our supplication would go up unheard in the presence of God” (St. Gregory the Great, *Moralium*). In our prayers, therefore, we put our trust and reliance in the power and goodness, in the merits and mercy of our living and reigning Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. Thus sings the Church in the sequence for Easter: “The Prince of life, who died, now liveth and reigneth.” *Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus!*

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“Ah, my children, you must be sure to say your prayers well, morning and evening. When you cannot do better, say at least an Our Father and a Hail Mary; but when you have time, say more.”

Our Lady to the Children at La Salette



Fairy Tales

by Jane Spencer

“Someday, you will be old enough to read fairy tales again.” C.S. Lewis wrote this letter to his goddaughter; his contemporary, Tolkien, said that only those with the heart of a child could enter fairyland, this being the key to all adventures. To be childlike is the work of a lifetime, and this is why fairy tales can’t be outgrown. Today, then, I will try to persuade you to re-visit a land that you might not have set foot in since you were very small. Though you have grown, you may find to your delight that it has grown with you.

Today, firstly, we’ll look at what exactly the fairytale is; then, I’ll propose three powers that strengthen the person that breathes the air of fairyland often. And with a bit of luck, you’ll see that whether you realize it or not, you’ve been clinging to the spirit of the fairy tale ever since you embarked on the perilous road of Christian

warfare.

But let’s begin by getting a clear understanding of our subject. Most of us owe our notion of fairy tales not to their original authors—the Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Anderson or Andrew Lang—but to Walt Disney who, even Wikipedia will admit, “altered gruesome fairy tales in order to make them more appropriate for children.”

As a result, many of us grew up unaware of things like the true fate of Cinderella’s stepsisters; in case you’ve ever had suspicions that Disney was too easy on them, I’d like to satisfy your sense of justice with the account of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, two researchers in the 19th century who drew many original fairy tales from German folklore: “When the wedding was going to take place, the two false sisters came...to take part in [Cinderella’s] good >

fortune. As the bridal party was going to the church...[a pair of] doves picked out...the eyes of each of them...And so for their wickedness...they were punished with blindness for the rest of their days.”

If you find this version upsetting, I don't suggest that you look into the real fate of the Goose Girl's unfaithful servant, or the rude dwarf in Snow White and Rose Red. In fact, you might hesitate before delving into a book of original fairy tales. But that would mean you'd also miss some of the most joyful moments in all of literature, such as the happy reunion of Rapunzel with her husband the blind Prince: “He heard a voice which seemed very familiar to him, and he went towards it. Rapunzel knew him at once, and fell weeping upon his neck. Two of her tears fell upon his eyes, and they immediately grew quite clear, and he could see as well as ever.”

I'm not claiming that all original fairy tales are pleasant. Actually many of them are brutal and graphic...for example, who knew that Snow White's stepmother actually wanted to eat Snow White's lungs and liver—not just lock her heart in a golden box. Nevertheless, there's something more realistically evil about this version—and consequently, more realistically joyful about Snow White's escape. And as we'll see, realism is essential to a fairytale. So, we'll dismiss Disney's work as a corruption in which the princesses and heroes are sentimental, and the villains' downfall undeservedly tame—a mercy which, by the way, no child watching the film would approve of. Chesterton remarks that children are “innocent and love justice; while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy.”

The true fairyland which we will now examine is a place of wonder, “wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds...shoreless seas and stars uncounted...both joy and sorrow sharp as swords” (Tolkien). The definition of a fairy tale, according to Tolkien, is one which involves a solemn and pure magic... and essential to the story is its implicit, or indirect depiction of “moral and religious truth.”

Now that we've defined fairy tales, let's move on to our second point of examining the three powers they inspire: Realism, Heroism, and Romance.

The first of these may come as a shock if you've been thinking of fire-breathing dragons, elves, and giants. But as Tolkien points out, fairy tales don't deal with what can physically happen in our day-to-day surroundings, but with what the human heart desires—which is every bit as real and much more important. Speaking of his own youth, he confesses: “I desired dragons with a profound desire.” The fact that our hearts yearn to encounter the fantastic beasts or the beautiful heroes of fairy tales suggests that for us, reality means much more than our material surroundings. Just as our bodies inhabit a physical world, our souls inhabit a great spiritual realm of conflicting forces. And it's these forces—the good and the evil—which find their embodied battlegrounds in the land of the fairies. This land is, in fact, one of countless miniature incarnations—in which the story-teller makes intangible realities like purity, jealousy, malice or wisdom take flesh so that his audience can better understand them. Then, when we encounter these same realities hidden in the more common occurrences of our daily lives, we know more clearly how beautiful or hideous they truly are. That's why fairy tales, read analogically, are realistic. By looking through them like a magic mirror, we see our own lives transformed, charged with a deeper and more moving significance than meets the senses. Tolkien claims that fairy tales offer us an escape from the materialism of the modern world to the spirituality which is much more human. “Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home?... The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it.” Fairy tales are realistic because they clear our eyes so that we see the spiritual life beneath every natural occurrence in our lives.

If the first power of fairy tales enriches our perceptions of our world, the second translates into action; Heroism is the power by which we do great deeds and fight bravely for the good even when we can't physically see the scope of the battle.

St. Paul said that “our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.” This is easy to lose sight of in our world,



where the forces of good and evil which surround us hide themselves under the most common facades; in other words, our wolves usually seem like grandmothers, and often, the great prince looks like nothing but a frog. Consequently, we easily forget how exciting the battle we fight is, and our motivation flags.

Here is a modern fairy tale-gone-wrong: Once upon a time, a hero was accidentally born into an average 21st-century home. While he longed for dragons to conquer and a Holy Grail to pursue, he found himself surrounded by mundane things like velcro tennis shoes, TV's, fruit roll-ups, and plastic toys. True, he was scrupulously shielded from gruesome fairy tales; these were replaced by the Cookie Monster, Clifford the Big Red Dog, Sponge Bob Square-Pants, and Minions. After a disappointing childhood, this would-be hero slouched into a mediocre youth, and finally resigned himself to an adulthood of comfortable

emptiness; like J. Alfred Prufrock, he “measured out [his] life with coffee spoons,” doing the ordinary, and nothing but the ordinary.

This is, indeed, a tragedy...not because the hero isn't given heroic opportunities, but because he doesn't see them right beneath his nose. It certainly doesn't help that a materialistic, sanitized, safety-consumer, but ultimately downright ugly culture discourages him from trying to see more than meets the eye. He asks himself: “If my life is nothing more than these things which I see, how could I be a hero? Why should I care to be a hero?”

As we've seen, the mind trained by fairy tales understands that the modern world which he physically perceives is only the outer crust of a timeless and dynamic spiritual conflict, a warring of principalities and powers whose battlefield, as Dostoyevsky says, is “the human heart.” Surely in this battle there is motivation for nobility. >

Spirituality

According to Aristotle, the virtue of magnanimity comes only with meriting extraordinary honors; this is exactly what fairy tales make explicit: they embody the evil as a malicious giant or a liver-eating witch, who must be faced and slain courageously. Conversely, the princess who embodies goodness is so beautiful that one would die for her in a moment. The mind trained by fairy tales senses the potency for valor in every moment. He is motivated to conquer even commonplace temptations and choose the good. He embarks on noble quests, and wins success.

This brings us to the final point: the crowning quality of the fairy tale. To step back for a moment: first, we saw how they give a realistic vision, then how they inspire heroic action; now, we'll look at the result...the moral of the story.

As Tolkien says, fairy tales are all, at root, romances. They re-awaken our desire for the Good by showing just a hint of its true beauty and great power.

While tragedy is the highest form of human drama, Tolkien points out that for fairy tales the case is just the opposite. Tragedies hinge on a catastrophe: a sudden dire turn of events; in the realm of fairy tales, however, the rule is what Tolkien terms eucatastrophe: "the sudden joyous 'turn'...The joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe...is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence...of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat..."

We have an instinct for the rules of fairyland—rules which characterize any romance. For example, the dragon is always slain. The lovers are always united in the end. But we also know that these rules seem to lose their strength in our day-to-day struggles on this earth; and when, outside of the gates of fairyland, we see lost kingdoms, broken hearts, and the triumph of evil men, we lose our confidence. It is in these moments that a belief in fairy tales—in the essence of the fairy tale—is profoundly necessary, and very realistic. We call it the virtue of hope. By it we trust that the great Lover whose image fairy tales merely reflect will ultimately

win; that He will overcome the Dragon.

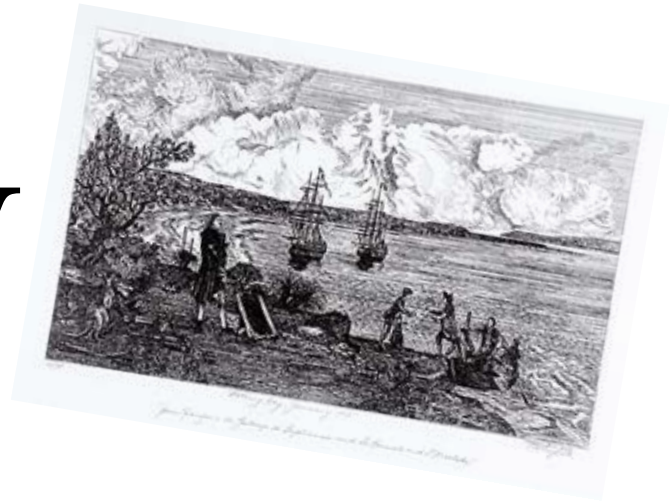
As Tolkien says, the happy ending of the fairy tale is "a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality...It is not only a 'consolation' for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, 'Is it true?'"

In conclusion, we've seen that original fairy tales are realistic, inspiring, and always romances. On the next rainy day when you don't have much to do, you might dust off that old childhood book, and refresh yourself. Tolkien loved to discuss these stories with his friend C.S. Lewis, who went so far as to view the entire history of Christianity as the prototype of all fairy tales. Just as the author of a fairy tale expresses truths with what we would call fantastic characters, Lewis says that "Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call 'real things.'" And in case you're wondering if this greatest, truest story will have a eucatastrophe, it is foretold in the book of the Apocalypse: "I saw a great multitude...standing before the throne...in the sight of the Lamb... These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb... They shall no more hunger nor thirst...for the Lamb...shall lead them to the fountains of the water of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."



The
First Masses
in Australia at

Botany Bay



by Frank Carleton

On Saturday January 26, 1788, the two ships of the Lapérouse Expedition entered Botany Bay. They exchanged courtesies with the departing vessels of the British First Fleet then en route to Sydney Cove whence the first British settlement was being transferred. The French vessels anchored near the north headland of Botany Bay. Each ship carried a priest doing the duties of both chaplain and scientific savant. Aboard Lapérouse's ship, the *Boussole* was the Abbé Jean-André Mongez (1751-1788?), canon of St. Genevieve in Paris who enjoyed a published scientific reputation in ornithology, entomology and chemistry. Aboard the second ship, the *Astrolabe*, was a conventual Franciscan friar, Père Claude-François-Joseph Receveur (1757-1788) whose name in religion was Laurent. He was a naturalist who had read a number of papers to the *Académie des Sciences* at whose behest he

was appointed to the expedition. His specialty was geology, especially volcanic phenomena and during the voyage he collected geological and mineralogical specimens. His order's members were known as *cordeliers* from the cord girdle with three knots they wore about their grey habits. Since 1788, Père Receveur's grave on the north headland of Botany Bay has recalled the lengthy local stay of the Lapérouse Expedition before it sailed into oblivion.

Two Priests for the Task

The appointment of two priests to the Lapérouse Expedition was consequent upon a letter of the 21st of April, 1785 from Lapérouse to the Director of Naval Ports and Arsenals while the expedition >

Spirituality

was fitting out at Brest. He sought a priest “able to say Mass for us and to have talent” meaning scientific talent. Two ships required a priest for each vessel. The religious duties of chaplains in the royal navy of the Ancien Régime were specified in a copious royal Ordonnance concerning the Marine of 1765 which laid down the duties of all types of naval personnel. The chaplain (*aumônier*) of a naval vessel was obliged to lead daily morning and evening prayer in an audible voice with the crew kneeling. Public prayers like the *Angelus* were



announced before each meal by the ship’s bell. Mass was to be said on Sundays and feast days without exception unless bad weather prevented it and on other days as often as possible. This obligation was of obvious crucial importance for the inception of the Mass in New Holland during the Lapérouse Expedition’s Botany Bay sojourn from January 26 - March 10, 1788.

Amongst a miscellany of Lapérouse and associated papers in the Mitchell Library in Sydney is a *billet de demande* [requisition] dated July 8, 1785 which requests the provision of a ship’s chapel and its contents for a four-year voyage aboard the *Boussole*. When a naval chaplain took the Blessed Sacrament from such a location to the sick, the crew knelt with their heads bare. At least once a week

the chaplain was required to explain familiarly in French the Epistle and the Gospel of the Sunday or the feast.

Sunday January 27th, the day after the expedition’s arrival in Botany Bay was Sexagesima, the first of seven Sundays during the expedition’s stay. Up to February 17th, the day of Père Receveur’s death, there were 13 feast days, three of which fell on Sundays.

The two priests of the Lapérouse Expedition introduced the traditional Latin Mass of the Roman rite to Australia in early 1788 by reason of the obligation binding on French naval chaplains to say Mass on Sundays and feast days. And the Masses said by the Abbe Mongez after Père Receveur’s death from the February 18th to March 10th add to the total number said at Botany Bay. Masses on four Sundays and seven following feasts including St. Peter’s Chair at Antioch (February 22nd), St. Mathias Apostle (February 24th), St. Thomas Aquinas (March 7th) can be presumed. It is reasonable to conclude that well over 30 Masses were said at Botany Bay by both priests during the Lapérouse Expedition’s lengthy Botany Bay sojourn. They first brought the Mass to Australia.

The Liturgical Arrangements

The liturgical practice of the Navy of the Ancien Régime was for an altar to be erected on the poop deck (*sur la dunette*) and for the crew to be assembled below it by a drum beat, “*battre la Messe*” repeated three times. The ship’s colours would be lowered three times at each of the elevations of the Host and the chalice when drums beat a general salute. In 1964, an altar stone in four composite fragments with its five consecration crosses, still clearly defined, was recovered from the wreck of the *Boussole* at Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands where the two ships foundered in a hurricane within weeks of departing Botany Bay. This sacred artifact was placed on display in the Lapérouse Museum at La Perouse on Botany Bay at its opening in February, 1988 but returned to the Musée de la Marine in Paris in 2008 for a permanent Lapérouse voyage display from 2016.

Upon arrival, local security was uppermost in Lapérouse’s mind in the light of recent tragic



experiences, he had received orders in the course of the voyage to *reconnaître* [figure out] what the British were doing at Botany Bay as a matter of naval and political intelligence. It was also necessary to assemble two longboats from pre-fabricated parts to replace those lost at Maouna (now Tutuila) in the Navigators Islands (present day Samoa) in the murderous affray of December 6, 1787. On that occasion, the Vicomte Fleuriot de Langle, commander of the *Astrolabe*, and 11 other men were brutally massacred while another 10, including Père Receveur, were wounded and two French longboats destroyed. Therefore, at Botany Bay, the French established a fortified encampment and planted a garden which survived in a wild state for many years afterwards. Tents, including one equipped as an observatory for astronomical observations, were set up within a stockade defended by two small cannons and a ditch.

During this period, there was a succession of 11 cordial visits by British parties to the French at Botany Bay and by French parties to Sydney Cove over land and by sea. As Surgeon Worgan wrote in terms similar to other British First Fleet writers: "... there was a constant succession of mutual good offices passing between us. We visited each other frequently, sometimes the parties going by water, sometimes by land (for it is only 8 to 10 miles over) and the little difficulties and fatigues which the voyagers or the travellers underwent were thought amply compensated if they could obtain social exchange with one another."

The First Two Masses

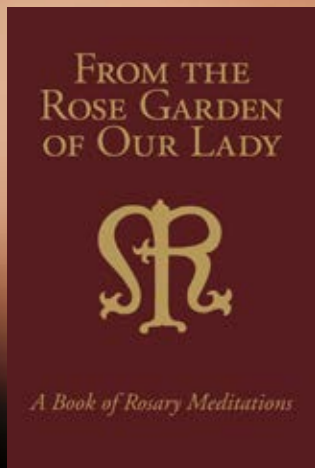
The first two Masses would have occurred either on the day of arrival, the feast of St. Polycarp or the next day, Sexagesima. It may be inferred that Mass was only said aboard the two ships by their respective chaplains during the course of the voyage. Nor does Lapérouse's journal record the expedition's officers, scientific savants and men ever attending Mass ashore when they landed in Catholic countries. Not at Concepcion in Chile (February 24 – March 15, 1786), nor at Monterey in California (September 15 - 22, 1786) nor at Manila in the Philippines (February 29 – April 9, 1787), all Spanish possessions, nor in Portuguese Macao

(January 3 - February 5, 1787). Considerations of security, logistics and personnel deployment would have been paramount at Botany Bay. The notion of landing either or both ships' crews for Mass in an insecure location at Botany Bay was absurd. The two ships there carried over 170 men comprising officers, crew and scientific savants. And the vessels' safety and security would have required some personnel to remain on board in any circumstance.

The occasion and circumstances of Père Receveur's death on February 17, 1788 remain a mystery. It has sometimes been supposed that he died as the result of wounds sustained in the murderous December 1787 affray on Maouna which he escaped by swimming offshore. But this is highly improbable for, 12 days before the priest's death, Lapérouse wrote to the Minister of Marine: "We reached Botany Bay without a single case of sickness in either vessel." The possibility of sudden violent death must be considered. Earlier in the voyage Lapérouse had described Père Receveur as "an intrepid naturalist who went ashore at every opportunity to collect geological specimens." Did he stray alone too far along the shore of Botany Bay away from the French encampment and encounter a hostile aboriginal ambush? On February 21st, four days after Père Receveur's death, Lieutenant William Bradley wrote: "Some of the officers of the Boussole came from Botany Bay to visit the governor. They inform us that the natives are exceedingly troublesome there and that whenever they meet an unarmed man they attack him."

Père Receveur's grave received its Latin epigraph which translates: "Here lies L. Receveur from the Friars Minor, Priest of France, scientist in the circumnavigation of the world under the leadership of Lapérouse, Died February 17th in the year 1788." This grave on the north side headland of Botany Bay has recalled the earliest contact between France and Australia and the inception of the Mass during the first weeks of the British settlement. Every year on the Sunday closest to the February 17th anniversary of Père Receveur's death occurs the annual Père Receveur Commemoration: Mass in the same rite used by the two priests of the Lapérouse Expedition celebrated on the verandah of the La Perouse Museum near Père Receveur's grave by a priest of the Society of Saint Pius X.

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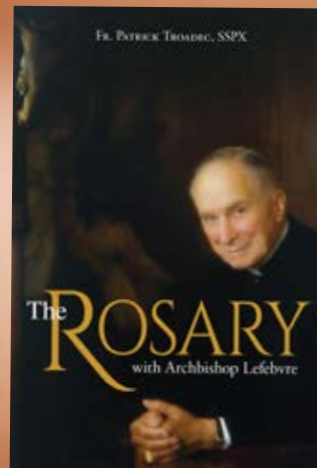


From the Rose Garden of Our Lady

Hear me and understand well, my little son, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear this sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother?

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Build Me a Temple

by a Benedictine monk

In his Rule, St. Benedict speaks of the Oratory of the Monastery as the sacred place of prayer where the monk is called seven times a day and once at night to offer to God the sacrifice of praise. He calls it a place where the soul can go and contact God in secret: "Let the Oratory be what its name implies, and let nothing else be done or kept there ...if anyone wish to pray secretly, let him just go in and pray: not in a loud voice, but with tears and fervor of heart" (Ch. 52). His great respect for the sacred asks that his monks reserve the Oratory exclusively for God and all that pertains to God.

In the various apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout history, she almost always asks for the building of a temple on the site of the apparition. The temple would start as a very modest construction that often would grow to become a major basilica. This is perhaps an

image of our souls becoming a temple of God. The dignity of the human soul is to become the dwelling place of God Himself. In this spiritual temple, where the sacrifice of praise is offered on the altar of our hearts, the Catholic Church is represented in all of its vitality. Our souls really do reflect the qualities of the Church, the dwelling place of God with men.

The Church is essentially the kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of St. Luke reminds us that the kingdom of God is within us. A soul in the state of grace is truly the kingdom where God reigns. "The Lord will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Lk. 1:32). Our souls were created to reflect this happy kingdom, which is one of truth and goodness, where God must reign over our intelligence and our will.



The soul must be a kingdom of truth. Our thoughts must be in perfect conformity with God's thoughts. He says in scripture that He is the truth. Any thought contrary to truth, or one that is deceitful or lying is a thought opposed to God and as such must be banned from the kingdom of our soul. The corruption of the world is overwhelming and unfortunately, we are often attracted to the deceitfulness of the lying world. Our Lord tells us to have confidence because He has overcome the world, but how did He conquer the world? His conquest was one of truth over the iniquity of lies. "... For this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice." We too can overcome the deceits of this world by listening to the truth. Good thoughts come from God and, as such, will never die. One good thought of a child of God is of greater value than the entire material universe because it is of the spiritual realm. It will always triumph over evil because a certain presence of God is found in truth, which will always overcome the lies of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Our soul must also become the kingdom of goodness, the only object of our desires. In the Kingdom of God there can be no evil, no impurity, no hatred, no jealousy, absolutely nothing that can injure the love of God and neighbor. In this kingdom, our will must be attached to the will of God and everything that pleases Him. In the purity

of our heart, our love of God and neighbor is what pleases God the most. Jesus tells us that this great law of charity is upon what the prophets and the law depend.

In this kingdom of our soul, Our Lord is the true King by the very fact that He created our soul and through His Passion and death He "re-possesses" it by a true conquest. There is only one condition that this King obliges His subjects to embrace before He will reign in the interior of their hearts. He asks us to freely choose Him, to open the doors of our minds and our hearts to welcome Him into His kingdom. He asks us to think of pure and good thoughts, to live in the perfect bond of charity by loving God and neighbor. If we refuse to seek after truth and goodness, we will choose iniquity and live a life of hatred. "...He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul" (Ps. 10).

If we are faithful to maintain our thoughts and love submitted to God, we will accomplish what the Blessed Virgin Mary asks in all of her apparitions: "Build me a temple." The same thought is echoed by St. Benedict: "Let the Oratory be what its name implies, and let nothing else be done or kept there ...if anyone wish to pray secretly, let him just go in and pray: not in a loud voice, but with tears and fervor of heart" (Ch. 52). May this oratory be the image of our souls where God is kept and His holy will accomplished, and where we can secretly enter and pray to our true King, Jesus Christ.



A Marian Catechism in Music

The *Ave Maria* by Josquin Desprez

by Dr. Andrew Childs

Ad Jesum per Mariam. This axiom of elegant simplicity and ultimate power stands as a supreme consolation to Catholics and a sobering rebuke to those who refuse Catholic Mariology. To dismiss the critical role the Blessed Virgin Mary plays in the plan of salvation represents not only a separation from Catholic doctrine, but from any reasonable conception of Christianity. The enemies of the Church deride as misty speculative theology the idea that the one chosen by God as His portal to humanity will also serve as humanity's gate to Heaven; this is in fact a matter of simple sense. For those outside the Church who would claim to believe in the Blessed Trinity, the denial of her primacy implies a denial of His divinity: Christ as God made man is made of her flesh, and His extension of unique and powerful privilege to her could not reasonably

have ended abruptly with His birth. As St. Bernard recalls to us:

“God, I repeat, to whom the angels are subject, whom the Principalities and Powers do obey, was subject to Mary; and not only to Mary, but to Joseph also for Mary's sake. Marvel, therefore, both at God and man, and choose that which giveth greater wonder, whether it be the most loving condescension of the Son, or the exceeding great dignity of His Mother. Both amaze us, both are marvelous. That God should obey a woman is lowliness without parallel; that woman should rule over God, an elevation beyond comparison.”

On the Importance of the Work

What follows will not debate the veracity or



particulars of any Marian apparition, though it seems unlikely that the Mother of God, after having cooperated so completely with the plan of salvation by bringing a divine Son into the world to be crucified before her eyes in reparation to her divine Spouse for the sins of mankind, would after the fact fail to manifest herself on occasion to men in tangible ways. Rather, this brief consideration will explore a supreme musical expression of Marian devotion, the *Ave Maria* by Josquin Desprez (c.1440-1521). Speaking generally, great composers—historically important composers—tend either to innovate (think Beethoven), or to perfect (think Mozart). Without embarking on too technical an explanation of his importance, Josquin’s work represents perhaps the crucial link between the melismatic modality of the pre-Renaissance, and the text-driven, harmonically motivated polyphony of the pre-Baroque—put simply, the technical and stylistic bridge connecting Dufay and Ockeghem with Palestrina.

Renaissance musicologist Gustave Reese states, “That Josquin was the greatest composer of the high Renaissance, the most varied in invention and the most profound in expression, has become almost a commonplace of musical history.” Though now lesser-known than Palestrina (1525-1594), scholars and performers at the time of his death considered him as important to music as they did Virgil to literature and Michelangelo to art. Widely published, disseminated, and emulated over a compositional career spanning nearly 60 years, one contemporary critic half-jokingly speculated, “now that Josquin is dead, he is putting out more works than when he was still alive.” Martin Luther, proving ultimately a better judge of musical quality than a Master of Theology, said of him, “Josquin is a master of the notes, which must express what he desires; on the other hand, other composers must do as the notes will.”

Mystery surrounds his early life. Born somewhere in northern France—perhaps near Condé-sur-l’Escaut, midway between Paris and Brussels—sometime around 1440, he first appears on a roster of singers for the Milan Cathedral listed as a “biscantor”—or adult singer rather than a choirboy—in 1459. In the service of

Ascanio Cardinal Sforza, he appears on the roster of the papal chapel choir through the 1490’s. He worked in France, once composing a motet for King Louis XII, *Memor esto verbi servo tuo*, “Remember thy word to thy servant,” to remind the King of a promised but forgotten benefice (the



King immediately honored his commitment). He worked briefly in Ferrara but forfeited his job to Jacob Obrecht—an important composer in his own right—when plague broke out (Obrecht died of the plague in 1505). He spent his remaining years as provost of the church of Notre Dame in Condé-sur-l’Escaut.

The *Ave Maria* crowns the middle period of Josquin’s compositional career, written likely sometime before 1490. Catechetical, meditative, and stylistically integrated, the motet, in seven sections, makes a concise yet profound examination of five crucial episodes in the life of Our Lady: her Conception, birth, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption. Each episode manifests some aspect of her unique privilege as spouse of the Holy Ghost and *Theotokos*, and Josquin provides distinct music for each >

section, in terms of texture, counterpoint, rhythmic complexity, and meter. The supplication that closes the piece remains one of the most profound and starkly beautiful musical utterances ever composed.

Angelic Salutation—“Hail, Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, Serene Virgin”

The initial melodic fragment is a study in reverence and humility, perfectly outlining both the word stresses in its rising-then-falling contour, and the C-major tonality. In the first phrase, “*Ave Maria, Gratia plena*,” each voice, from highest to lowest, restates the phrase in its own range creating a marvelous effect of gentle descent and arrival. The voices overlap so subtly that each remains distinct, delivering the individual salutation in turn. Immediately, the second phrase begins in the soprano, the first half of the second line of the text, “*gratia plena*,” overlapping the final initial utterance of the bass. Josquin reverses the shape of the initial melodic fragment here—falling-then-rising—creating a perfectly rounded pair of phrases. The music of the second line of the couplet imitates the melodic fragments of the opening line, but with a flourish of rhythmic complexity and playful contrapuntal interplay between the voices that seems to indicate the delight of the angelic messenger. The bass alone maintains a staid composure and restores order to close this wondrous opening section by gently guiding the other three voices to the final C-major cadence.

“Hail to Her, Whose Conception, Full of Solemn Jubilation Fills Heaven and Earth with New Joy”

The texts of the five strophes consist of pairs of rhyming couplets. Josquin immediately changes texture, from the strict imitation of the opening salutation, to duets between the

upper and lower voices on the rising-then-falling melodic phrase “*Ave cujus conceptio*.” The subtle but delightful rhythmic variation between the duet partners underscores the individuality of the voices. After the two-measure soprano and alto duet, the tenor and bass would seem to have their turn, but after only half a measure, the alto immediately joins in, descending below the tenor as if attempting to escape detection in the duet turned trio. Finally, Josquin brings all the voices together at “*solemni plena gaudia*,” in a robust celebration of tightly overlapping and imitative lines, each with its own rhythmic interest.

“Hail to Her Whose Birth Was our Solemn Feast, Like the Morning Star Rising, Foretelling the True Sun”

Summarizing the procedures employed so far, Josquin returns initially to the duet texture and echoes the melody of the Salutation. The pairs of voices—soprano and alto, tenor and bass—now finish each other’s phrases in the first line, while in the second line reverting to the pattern of descending sequential entrances. The stability of this section highlights the clear textual opposition and wordplay between the “lucifer” of the morning sun, and the True “Sun.”

“Hail, Pious Humility, Fruitful Without a Man, Whose Annunciation Was Our Salvation”

The text underscores the fact that no distinction exists between the person of the Blessed Virgin and her virtues; she who refers to herself as the Immaculate Conception the poet addresses as pious humility. Here, Josquin employs the duet texture scrupulously and in perfect accord with the text: the soprano and alto sing “Hail, pious humility,” trading the rhythmic variations of the first strophe, and “untouched” by the pair of men’s voices who sing “fruitful without



a man” with great respect (and perhaps the slightest hint of mirthful irony). They repeat this procedure with the phrases “*cujus annunciatio*,” and “*nostra fuit salvatio*.” An additional half bar at the final cadence provides enhanced stability, in preparation for the breathtaking metrical shift about to occur.

“Hail, True Virginity, Immaculate Chastity, Whose Purification Purged Our Sins”

We reach the poetic and musical heart of the masterpiece. Until now, Josquin has employed a duple meter, referred to as “imperfect” in medieval and early Renaissance music theory. As the poet addresses Our Lady as “true virginity, immaculate chastity,” Josquin shifts seamlessly to triple, or “perfect” meter, barely perceptible if the performers maintain the proper Renaissance metrical relationship, where the pulse of the duple half bar equals the whole triple bar (half-note=dotted-half-note). This relationship enlivens the triple meter in a marvelous way, increasing the relative speed of the “small” beats (now a 3:2 ratio), creating an exciting sense of increased forward momentum, while maintaining the stability of the constant “big” beat pulse (conducting equal quarter-notes destroys this effect, proportionally slowing the triple meter). The tenor, delayed by a single small beat on each entrance, heightens the full texture, allowing for a continuous reinforcement of the word stress by way of an echo effect. For the astute listener or performer, Josquin embeds a cadential hemiola, one final magnificent layer of rhythmic detail and vitality. The entire section soars, radiating love and joy.

“Hail, Most Excellent in All Angelic Virtues, Whose Assumption Was Our Glorification”

The alto lingers an extra bar, repeating the word “*purgatio*” of the previous strophe. This

serves both to underscore the importance of the theological concept, and to allow a single voice to navigate the return of the duple meter (the effect feels something like exiting a moving walkway). Josquin again employs a combination of procedures, melodic imitation and paired entrances of upper and lower voices. Once again, the duet teams repeat rather than complete each other’s phrases, lending a sense of rhetorical relaxation; the music seems to taper to the close as the soprano drops out for the final phrase, a rhythmically dazzling though melodically and dynamically subdued trio for alto, tenor, and bass which ends in hushed reverence on an open cadence, one lacking the emotional definition of a major or minor third.

Supplication—“O Mother of God, Remember Me”

The piece has ended; so definitely, that Josquin indicates a half bar of silence. What follows transcends all that has preceded it, which structurally, rhetorically, and musically is essentially perfect. For the final supplication, complete in itself, Josquin strips all art away. Stylistically, he disappears completely, and these few bars echo—as Gregorian chant does—immortality, no longer bound by any recognizable marks of chronological identification. A bare altar of petition remains, the soul with direct, humble, and confident recourse to the *Theotokos*. Josquin employs a near-perfect homophonic texture, seemingly incongruous after the subdued virtuosity of the motet, yet fitting given the petition: “O mother of God”—the bass and tenor give the slightest rhythmic hint of disquiet, perhaps a remembrance of things past which have made imploring the aid of the Mediatrix so necessary—“remember me”—the alto, with the humble confidence of one who hopes, alters her line, dipping from the fifth to the third scale degree, allowing for a stunning ascending passing tone, highlighting the word “*mei*.” The final open cadential “*Amen*” puts the piece to rest and the soul at peace, as the final vision of the Immaculate fades into the dream of Heaven.

Mother of God, remember me. Amen.

Remember,
O most chaste spouse
of the Virgin Mary, that
never was it known that
anyone who implored your
help and sought your
intercession was left
unassisted.

Full of confidence
in your power, I fly unto
you and beg your protection.

Despise not, O Guardian
of the Redeemer, my humble
supplication, but in your bounty,
hear and answer me.

Amen.



Eastern Marian Apparitions

“Orthodoxy” and the West

by John Rao, PhD

Marian devotion is a hallmark of Eastern Christianity, as anyone who has entered into one of its churches and seen the central role played therein by the holy icons of the *Theotokos* can testify. It is, therefore, no surprise that believers who pray before these images on a regular basis would turn to them for miraculous aid in times of danger. Perhaps the most famous of such calls for help took place in 622, when the Patriarch Sergius, serving as regent in the absence of the Emperor and the imperial army, processed around the walls of Constantinople with a beloved Marian icon to save the city from a deadly Avar invasion.

Eastern apparitions of the Mother of God are also not unknown. Russians believe that Mary visited both Sergius of Radonezh (1314-1392) as well as the man whom he blessed to lead

the fight against the Tatars, Dmitri Donskoy (1350-1389), the Grand Prince of Moscow. But here, too, her most renowned appearance was in Constantinople, in 911. This is reputed to have taken place during another threatening invasion, at the Church of Blachernae, where Mary's robe, veil, and part of her belt, transported from Palestine in the 5th century, had long been venerated. The following description of what gave birth to the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, celebrated by Eastern Christians annually on October 1st, comes from the website of the Orthodox Church in America:

“On Sunday, October 1, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the fool-for-Christ St. Andrew (October 2), at the fourth hour, lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most



Holy Lady *Theotokos* coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the saints. St. John the Baptist and the holy apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees, the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the Bishop's Throne, she continued her prayer.

After completing her prayer, she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady *Theotokos* was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed "more than the rays of the sun." St. Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing

beside him, "Do you see, brother, the Holy *Theotokos*, praying for all the world?" Epiphanius answered, "I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe."

The ever-blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, "O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them go away from my icon unheard."

Serious Recognition of Mary

Given such serious recognition of the reality of Marian apparitions in the East, what can >

we say about the reaction of easterners to those claimed to have occurred in western, Roman Catholic lands? The answer to this question depends upon what one means by oriental Christians. There are, of course, many of these in union with Rome who not only honor the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy *Theotokos*, but also publicly accept what the Latin Church approves with respect to Marian apparitions in the West. But then we have to consider the “Eastern Orthodox,” who, except for rare, brief, and brittle intervals, have officially been at odds with the Holy See since 1053. And here a basic existential problem emerges.

The difficulty lies in the fact that there are numerous “Eastern Orthodoxies,” both historically and in contemporary life, with considerable differences among their members, particularly with respect to judgments regarding developments in the Latin Church and how to respond to them. Where Mary is concerned, it is certainly the case that there is a general “Eastern Orthodox” rejection of the two modern Roman pronouncements concerning the Mother of God—the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption—although often on the basis of arguments that “reach” for grounds for an opposition that might otherwise not have been offered if the pope had not been centrally involved in proclaiming them.

On the other hand, there are, historically, a considerable number of important Orthodox thinkers who are much more in agreement with the Latin Church on a variety of theological questions than with what is today presented as dogmatic by the most vociferous defenders of “Eastern Orthodoxy.” One can see this by examining everything from the debates at the 15th-century Council of Florence over apparent points of disagreement to century-long discussions of the reception or rejection of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi. Most importantly, the reality of eastern division is apparent with respect to the writings of the “neptic” or “watchful fathers,” transmitted in the 18th century by the collection of texts called the *Philokalia*, and associated with the quietist and anti-intellectual practices of *hesychasm*, as

most vigorously promoted by Gregory of Palamas (1296-1359). Readers interested in learning more about these writings, the spirituality connected with it, and their consequences can look back to a previous article that I wrote on this subject in *The Angelus* (“World War One and the Russian Diaspora: Spread of Truths and Errors” March-April 2018).

Hostility Toward Catholicism

The most clearly formulated hostility to things western, at least in my own experience, can be found in the “orthodox” arguments coming from Russian, post-revolutionary Russian expatriate, and Russian-influenced western convert communities and activists. But who in the “Eastern Orthodox” world can decide whether they or some of their more western-friendly co-religionists are correct? That community possesses no universally accepted machinery for settling disputes about such matters, with some easterners even still insisting that there can be no ecumenical council to resolve disputes without an emperor to preside over it.

What this all means, when translated into an investigation into the “Eastern Orthodox” attitude towards Marian apparitions in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, is that one has to be careful in distinguishing the sources consulted. Are they based upon the Christian spirit of ordinary pious men and women? Are they steeped primarily in the teachings of the first Ecumenical Councils and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church recognized by *all* easterners? Are they expressions of opinions chiefly shaped by irritation with papal involvement in approving and interpreting the apparitions in question? Or are the judgments that are made the product of the anti-intellectual, quietist spirituality of the *Philokalia*, *hesychasm*, and the 19th century Russian mystical tradition that emerged from them and has now won for itself a western-wide clientele?

Having put the reader on warning about these difficulties, let me now note that the answer to the question “what do the ‘Eastern Orthodox’ think?” about western Marian apparitions is



“everything imaginable.” Articles regarding such apparitions from official and popular sources that are readily available on the internet show that many of our “orthodox” separated brethren share the same concerns that we do regarding the potential for deluded or manipulative claims of visitations by the Mother of God—with Medjugorje as the current prime example of that critique—but are often greatly attracted to the western pilgrimage sites at Lourdes and Fatima. Bernadette and the children in Portugal are frequently appreciated for their innocence, which is taken as a sign of the truth of what they saw, and the spirit of repentance evoked by the Fatima message wins it approval in circles that admit that “something” of divine origin did indeed happen there. In fact, there are even attempts to give to these apparitions an eastern twist, as, for example, in a rather friendly article by an English convert to Orthodoxy, who says that “when Bernadette was asked about the exact outward appearance of the Mother of God and was shown a catalogue of images, she innocently, but truthfully at once chose not the resemblance of a Roman Catholic statue, but that of an Orthodox icon.”

Objections to Marian Dogmas

Objections arise regarding whatever ties them with “unacceptable” Roman teachings and papal politics. Hence, the association of Lourdes with the recently proclaimed dogma of the Immaculate Conception is interpreted by those friendly to the apparition as a distortion of the original vision and by the more hostile as discrediting it entirely. Fatima, with its call for the consecration and conversion of a Russia which is now viewed by fervent “orthodox” as herself the only hope for the salvation of an atheistic and libertine West, arouses still more criticism, chastised as self-condemned for Russophobia or lamented as a victim of kidnapping by the papacy to support its never-ending hunt for Roman hegemony.

Just how vociferous the critique can be, especially from Russian-influenced sources, is illustrated by a widely read and extensively commented upon article of a convert from

Anglicanism by the name of Miriam Lambouras entitled: “The Marian Apparitions: Divine Intervention or Delusion?” (orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/marian_apparitions.aspx). Here, amidst totally legitimate questions regarding the validity and politicization of certain visions—once again, especially that of Medjugorje—one encounters what can often be found elsewhere in “orthodox” arguments: a seeming blindness to the incredibly political and national parochialism prevalent in much of the eastern world, and a “reaching” for arguments to show how western spirituality perversely differs from eastern beliefs and practices that a more friendly eye might think to be similar. Worst of all is the author’s willingness to call up classical naturalist Enlightenment arguments to try to equate Marian devotion in the West to ancient, pagan “Mother Goddess” worship or psychological disturbances that can all too readily be turned to crush Russian “Orthodoxy” as well.

Western converts from Roman Catholicism influenced by Russian “Orthodoxy” are very much in the public religious eye in our time, Rod Dreher chief among them. Given the ever-wider knowledge of contemporary scandals in the Latin Church, the danger of their attracting other Catholics to join them is great. It is this that makes it necessary to put the faithful on warning regarding what may or may not lie behind the arguments put forward by them. The “gut feeling” of many Eastern Orthodox believers is that the western Marian apparitions are true, and that “temptation” is a major and open reason why articles seeking to discredit them are written. The “gut feeling” comes from the true heart of the brilliant Eastern Christian tradition that the Universal Church as a whole must appreciate. The critique, many legitimate and generally discussed issues aside, leads, ultimately to a different kind of “orthodoxy” than that of the Eastern Church Fathers we all share in common; one that denigrates speculative theology as a purely Latin corruption, leading men and women into a quietist, spiritual “black hole.” And going that pathway truly might lead people to delusion by a Mother Goddess rather than enlightenment by the Virgin.

The Family Meal

by the Sisters of the Society of Saint Pius X

Seven o'clock: Kevin, 11 years old, comes home. The apartment is empty, Dad and Mom are still working. He opens the freezer, chooses an ice-cream cone that he inhales, then sits down in front of his Play Station while munching peanuts. It is only proper that he lifts his gaze from his game that he is absorbed in when his mother finally comes home; she is tired from her day, heats up some tea, and crunches an apple before looking at a magazine.

This same evening, in a neighboring apartment, Vianney has already been home for nearly two hours. Mother was there to welcome him, to listen to his stories from school, and help him with his homework. When Father returns, he sits down with the other members of the family to steaming pumpkin soup that follows an appetizing casserole of vegetables with bacon.

Here in a few words are two instances of daily family life...almost two separate civilizations. And without hesitation, we have chosen the veritable family life, the one where parents and children are found together around the table for meals.

Why is it important not to leave the children alone to eat at their leisure? A first reason is the health of the child. There is a good bet that, left to himself, he will choose pizza and cookies in preference to salad and green beans...and too bad for the balance that does not allow self-service in the refrigerator.

At a higher level, the family meal is also an excellent instructor of the will.

One practices life skills there; it is a school of self-control. One learns to eat what is served without arguing, instead of leaving free reign >

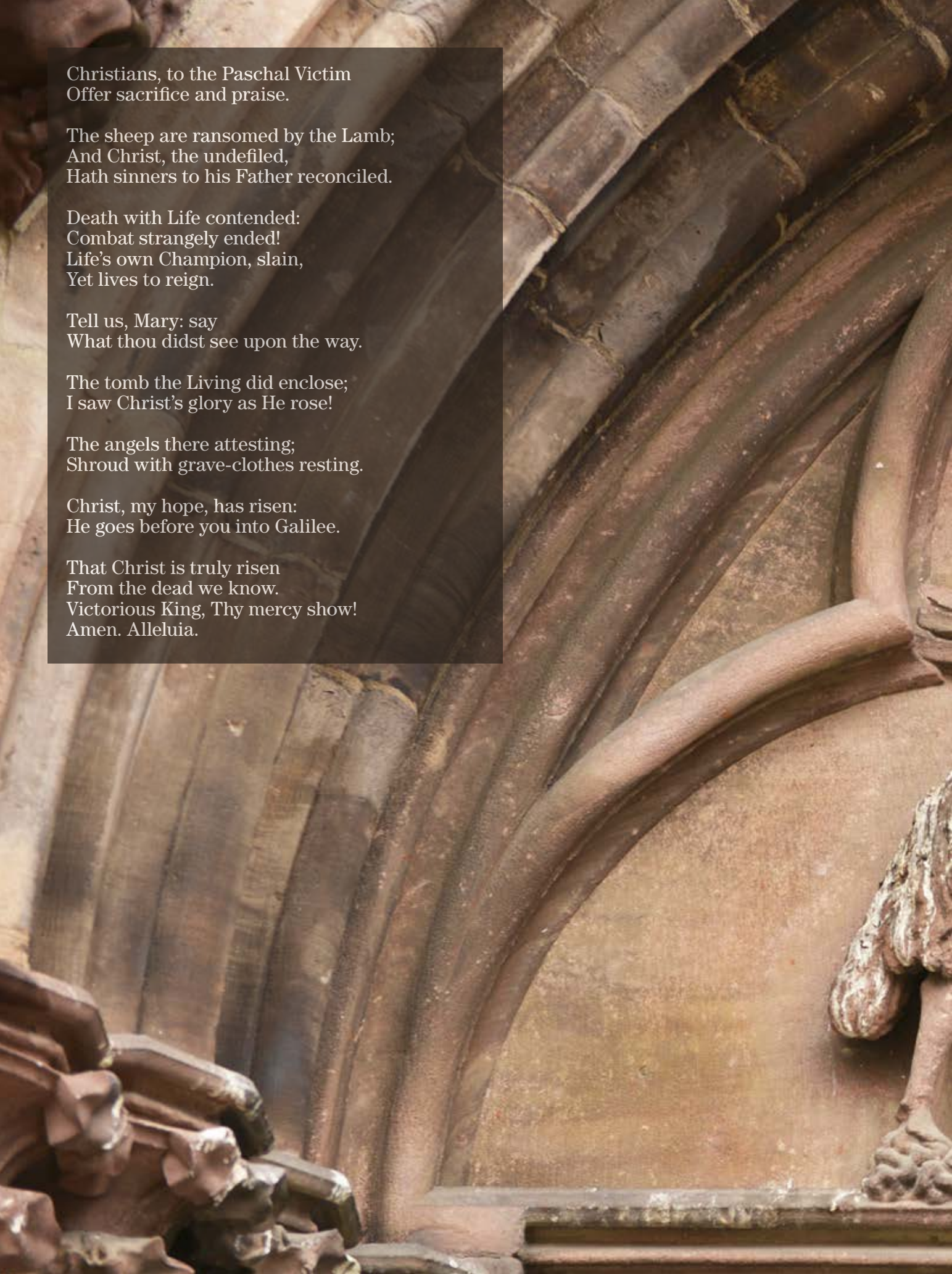


to his caprices to choose what flatters his tastes. Certainly, it is not forbidden to have preferences in food, while learning to still eat that which is less pleasing. What a lovely opportunity to “make a sacrifice!” Thus, the “animal” part of oneself gives way little by little to reason and the life of grace. It is for this reason that snacking between meals is not encouraged (snack time for the little children is considered as a meal). Only the mother has the right to open the refrigerator, in order to make a meal for everyone. If not, it invites the reign of capricious instincts, unworthy of a child of God.

Finally, there is a third reason that the meal is a strong time of family unity. Everyone is there sharing the discoveries, adventures, or the difficulties of the day. It is up to the father and the mother to watch over the conversation

in order that it remains charitable, instructive, or recreational, but never evil or pessimistic. Because a family is not a sum of juxtaposed individuals, it is a living organism, where everyone gives of themselves for the happiness of everyone. Yes, it is quite the opposite of individualism, promoted by the example given in the beginning of this article. At table, characters show themselves and rub against each other, so many occasions “to educate,” that is to say to raise the souls of our children, by judicious remarks, encouragements and gentle teasing, which is the salt of friendship!

In the Gospel, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a banquet. May our humble meals on earth be not too pale of a reflection!



Christians, to the Paschal Victim
Offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
And Christ, the undefiled,
Hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with Life contended:
Combat strangely ended!
Life's own Champion, slain,
Yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say
What thou didst see upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as He rose!

The angels there attesting;
Shroud with grave-clothes resting.

Christ, my hope, has risen:
He goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen
From the dead we know.
Victorious King, Thy mercy show!
Amen. Alleluia.



Notre-Dame de la Garde

by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

Neither apparition nor miracle explain the building. Just someone who in 1214 felt inspired to erect a small chapel to honor the Virgin Mary on top of a hill facing the city of Marseille. This hill was called La Garde, hence the denomination of Notre-Dame de la Garde. After 1524, this chapel was enclosed in the fortress built by King Francis I. It should have been closed to the public, being a military place, but the king decided that in peace time the faithful could have access to the chapel by crossing a drawbridge, which the soldiers left lowered in the daytime. There is no other known example of a sanctuary made inside an active fortress being left open to the public for such a long time: 1525-1941. Notre-Dame de la Garde holds a very important place in the Marseille inhabitants' hearts. The basilica, with its bell tower, belfry and statue is also a

major local landmark. One can find it on most posters for all kinds of events taking place in Marseille.

The Bell Tower

The square bell tower houses a huge bell, 8,234 kilograms, erected in 1845. The bell tower is surmounted by a belfry of 12.5 meters, which itself supports a monumental statue of the Virgin, 9,796 kilograms, that dominates the shrine and the city. It is made of copper, gilded with gold leaf. The statue is re-gilded every 25 years. By day, it reflects the beautiful Provence light and by night it is lit up by powerful floodlights. On the *esplanade*, one admires the statue representing St. Veronica wiping Christ's face.



A slab on its pedestal recalls the thousands of missionaries who, in the past centuries, left for distant countries in Asia or Africa to spread the Good News, after having implored Our Lady's assistance from this height. On a side wall in the entrance hall built in 1950 above a huge door one can see the *escutcheon* of King Francis I and in a circle towards the right, the arms of France with a salamander below, which has been damaged by erosion. This wall's building enclosed stones taken from the 16th-century fortification, especially those surrounding the door. The drawbridge is visible from there on the right. The modern lobby was built in 1950 and recently totally renovated and replaced with a monumental door surmounted by a mosaic. This building houses, on the ground floor, a huge hall and another room for children's groups. On

the second level, there is the museum of Notre-Dame de la Garde, opened since 2013, and on the next level, the restaurant kept by the Missionary Workers of the "Living Water." The restaurant is closed on Mondays. On the fourth level, not far away from the upper basilica, is a religious souvenir shop. The elevator A is reserved for the basilica and the shop. The elevator B goes to the museum, the restaurant, the crypt and the *ex-voto* area.

In front of the basilica's monumental doors one can admire the statue representing the prophet Isaiah, who predicted the Virgin Mary and the statue of St. John the Apostle to whom the crucified Jesus entrusted Mary as his mother on Good Friday. The tympanum above the main entrance is decorated with a mosaic showing the Virgin Mary's Assumption. One enters >

through heavy bronze doors. Designed between 1853 and 1870, the actual sanctuary replaces the original chapel built in 1214. It is built in the Romanesque-Byzantine style. The arcades are Romanesque. The Byzantine influence is visible in the use of a variety of colored marbles (in the interior walls, the white limestone alternates with layers of green), as well in the four domes and the polychrome pictorial mosaics inspired by very beautiful mosaics from the 5th and 6th centuries found in Rome and Ravenna. These mosaics laid between 1886 and 1892 were restored in 2006-2008. Numerous *ex-voto* meet the visitor's eyes. They are sailors' votive offerings, such as model ships hung by ropes in sign of thanksgiving, paintings and marble slabs covering the side walls of the basilica. In the first side vault at the right, dedicated to St. Roch, one can find several military *ex-voto*. In several side vaults there are shrines with saints' relics. One side vault is dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, object of notable devotion in Provence. This chapel is decorated with votive offerings by sailors saved from a great storm. On a marble slab are engraved the names of the 42 cardinals, archbishops and bishops who assisted at the consecration of the sanctuary on June 4, 1864. The next chapel dedicated to St. Peter also houses sailors' offerings. The altar-table, consecrated in 1986, encloses the relics of several young Africans from Uganda, martyred in 1886. Poignantly, they were baptized by a missionary priest who, before embarking for Africa, had visited Notre-Dame de la Garde on Easter Sunday 1878.

The High Altar and the Blessed Virgin Mary

The high altar in the back of the choir was consecrated in April 1886 by the Cardinal of Algiers. The silver statue of the Virgin Mary commissioned in 1837 was solemnly crowned in June 1931 at a great festival in Marseille that attracted several hundreds of thousands of people. A magnificent mosaic dominates the high altar in the apse. In the central medallion, a ship navigates on a stormy sea: it is the symbol of the Church which also navigates amidst the

world's difficulties. On the sail, one can see the Virgin Mary's monogram and, in the sky above, at the left, an M surrounded by rays, since the Virgin is also called the "Star of the Sea." This reminds us that the Virgin Mary helps the Church in its journey towards Christ, whose presence is symbolized by a Cross above the lighthouse. The mosaic that adorns the medallion, representing foliage and birds, is one of the most beautiful created in 19th-century France. Under this mosaic, nine medallions illustrate as many invocations from the Loreto litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary. From left to right: Ark of the Covenant, Mirror of Justice, Seat of Wisdom, Tower of David, Mystical Rose, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Spiritual Vessel, Gate of Heaven. Above the apse vault, a mosaic represents the Annunciation. Inside the great *cupola*, at the angles, the four evangelists are featured with their symbols, namely Matthew (a man), Mark (a lion), Luke (a bull), and John (an eagle).

Entirely gilded, the three *cupolas* in the nave vault magnificently reflect the light. In Latin or Greek, engraved on white *bandeaux*, twelve texts by Christian authors present Old Testament prophecies concerning the Virgin Mary. In the *cupola* by the choir, the medallions show Noah's Ark opening at the end of the flood with the rainbow, Jacob's Ladder and the Burning Bush. The central medallions represent Aaron's flowered rod, the Menorah and the Incensory in the Jerusalem Temple. Next to the entrance, the medallions show the vine, the lilies surrounded by thorns, the olive tree and the palm. Each medallion illustrates a text, the whole vault being a short summary of the Old Testament. Situated in front of the Annunciation medallion which is the first episode, this ceiling recalls how the Old Testament leads to the New One. In the left chapel next to the choir, dedicated to St. Joseph, several slabs recall the visits of some saints, such as Thérèse de Lisieux who visited the basilica on November 29, 1887. In St. Lazarus' vault, the man Jesus raised from the dead, to whom much devotion is shown in Provence, the first bishop of Marseille, several *ex-voto* depict people on their sick-beds. The small statue of the Virgin Mary in St. Charles' vault is an alabaster copy of the wooden statue that was there in the 13th century,



destroyed in the time of the French Revolution.

Inside the Crypt

Entering the crypt, the visitor is met by two huge monuments: at the right, the statue of Pope Pius IX, at the left, the statue of the Bishop of Marseille who laid the basilica's first stone. He founded the Oblates of St. Mary the Immaculate, who served the sanctuary between 1831 and 1903. He was proclaimed a saint in 1995. The crypt entirely dug out of the rock is soberly decorated. At the entrance one sees on the right a large 16th-century crucifix. One side vault is dedicated to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, another to the Holy Family represented in a ceramic work. Behind the altar, a beautiful statue called the "Virgin with the Bouquet" was presented in 1807 by a former sailor. The beautiful folds of Mary's cloak are to be admired. Another side vault contains the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament, which means, we are to guess, it is not in the church itself. In the next side vault, a priest is ready to assist the pilgrims. One can also admire a beautiful "Deposition from the Cross" and a statue of St. Anthony of Padua. Prayer intentions can be placed in a trunk: they will be given to the Virgin Mary after the Sunday Mass.

Leaving the crypt, after several steps, one can reach the drawbridge. It is still in use and raised every night and lowered every morning. Descending the *esplanade* by the staircase at his left, the visitor reaches the main bastion belonging to the fort built by King Francis I in the 16th century. From the angles, one can admire the pink stones from a nearby quarry. We must not forget that the sanctuary was built inside a fortification that was then in use. In 1886, a garrison consisting of three barracks was still there. Since 1934, the fortress has no longer been in use. Since 1941, it has belonged to the archdiocese, having been donated by the French State, together with various buildings and the land on the top of the hill. Another building was erected then in order to house the Catholic Sisters who worked for the shrine.

Of course, visitors will not leave the hill without taking a tour of the terraces surrounding

the basilica. They will discover from there the most beautiful urban panorama in France: the whole of the city of Marseille, surrounded by mountains, the Ancient Harbor, the Mediterranean, the islands (in the island of "If" which supposedly jailed the Count of Monte-Cristo), and surrounding the city, miles and miles of beautiful beaches. The city is now guarded by the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the top of the hill, "*la Bonne Mère*," the Good Mother, watches faithfully over the city and farther away, toward the sea...



Notre-Dame de la Garde (literally: Our Lady of the Guard) is a basilica in Marseille, France, and the city's best-known symbol. It was built on the foundations of an ancient military fort at the highest natural point in Marseille, a 489-foot limestone outcropping on the south side of the Old Port of Marseille. Construction of the basilica began in 1852 and lasted for 21 years. It was originally an enlargement of a medieval chapel, but was transformed into a new structure at the request of Fr. Bernard, the chaplain. The plans were made and developed by the architect Henri-Jacques Espérandieu. It was consecrated while still unfinished on June 5, 1864.





DEUS IRIS CAELI ET TERRAE RECORDA DE VICTORIS

OMNIA QUAERUNT DOMINUM
DEUS ANIMAS PAREM
DEUS

ATIA: PLENA



by Fr. Juan-Carlos Iscara, SSPX

Is it a mortal sin, a blasphemy, to say “Oh, my God!”?

The second Commandment prescribes that we must not take the name of the Lord “in vain”—that is, that we must not use His name in an empty, worthless way, for no good purpose. The precept demands respect for the Lord’s name and forbids every improper use of it. In practice, this means that we must not introduce the divine Name into our own speech except to bless, praise and glorify it. We should abstain from blasphemy, that is, from any words or expressions that imply

contempt or hatred, reproach or defiance of God. Moreover, we should not make promises casually invoking God’s name, and neither should we take oaths that misuse His name.

Unfortunately, in our daily speech, the name of God is frequently used for the most trivial matters, either as a spontaneous exclamation when we are surprised, or casually invoked in proof of almost everything. The habitual, unthinking and careless use of God’s name is certainly a lack of respect towards Him and, as such, a venial sin, but it is not a blasphemy, even



when it is used to express negative feelings, as long as it is without hostility towards God, without any thought of dishonor to God or any intent to detract from His goodness.

However, in some circumstances, when we are startled or shocked by some unexpected event, for example, if we happen to witness a terrible accident or when we receive unexpected joyful news, the use of this expression could be an act of religion—in the examples mentioned, it could become a prayer calling upon God’s help in the midst of a tragedy, or a prayer of thanksgiving for those welcome news. In consequence, the sinfulness or not of this expression will depend on the circumstances and the intention of the person.

Even if most people use this expression spontaneously, without any thought of disrespect towards God, it is still an unnecessary, irreverent use of His name. If we have acquired this habit, we must strive to overcome it.



Many spiritual authors recommend the “practice of the presence of God.”
What is it? How is it done?

From our Catechism, we have learned that God is everywhere, that He is truly and intimately present to all things. He gives life and preserves all things in existence—nothing could exist or continue to exist without God’s presence. Absolutely nothing escapes His gaze, but all things are open to His eyes. He keeps all things subject to His power: with one word He creates, and with one word He could annihilate what He has created. In this manner, God is present to the

soul at all times, in all conditions—even to the soul in the state of mortal sin.

There is also a special type of presence, effected through grace and the operations that flow from grace. God dwells in the soul as a friend, enabling the soul to share in His own divine life. This kind of presence exists only in the souls in the state of grace.

The practice of the presence of God consists in recalling as frequently as possible that God is present in all places, at all times, and consequently doing all things in the sight of God. If a person is convinced that God sees him, he will strive to avoid any sin or imperfection and to be as recollected as possible in God’s presence. Thus, this practice will urge us to avoid even the slightest deliberate fault; it will impel us to do all things with the greatest possible perfection; it will enable us to be modest in our behavior at all times; it will increase our fortitude in the struggles we must face in our Christian life. This practice will keep our souls in a spirit of prayer and lead us to a greater, more intimate union with God.

There are different methods of practicing the presence of God.

One consists in visualizing God as ever watching us from above. We do not see Him, but He is really there and we cannot do anything that escapes His divine gaze. For this, we are aided by the use of crucifixes and religious images placed prominently around us.

Another method is that of interior recollection—that is, to live in an ever-increasing awareness of God’s presence in the soul. It should not be confused with an egoistic introspection, or a mechanical observance of rules of external behavior. Interior recollection is turning our thoughts inward, not to seek ourselves, but to seek God who is present in our souls. It is one of the necessary conditions to develop a spirit of prayer.

Various spiritual authors have proposed other methods, which may be helpful to some people—for example, to see the hand of God in all the events of our lives, either adverse or prosperous; to see God in all the natural wonders that surround us; to see God in our superiors or in our neighbors; *etc.* >

Christian Culture

Which are the most ancient extant objects that make reference to the devotion to Our Lady?

By the mid-2nd century, a pilgrim came to Rome, Abercius, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia Salutaris (a big name for a very small town in what is now Turkey). Being an old man, on returning from his long journey he prepared his tomb, with an inscription that is now in the Lateran Museum.

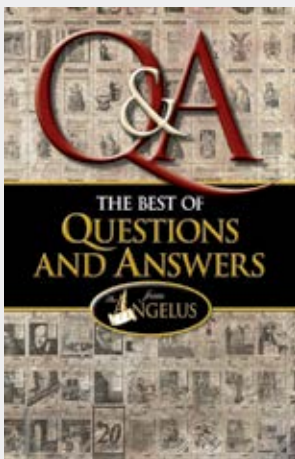
This inscription gives testimony, mostly in veiled terms, not only to the spread of Christianity, to the preeminence of the Roman See, to Baptism and the Eucharist, but it also mentions Our Lady: “Faith everywhere led me forward, and everywhere provided as my food a Fish of exceeding great size, and perfect, which a holy Virgin drew with her hands from a fountain and this faith ever gives to its friends to eat, it having wine of great virtue, and giving it mingled with bread.” The mention of the “Fish” is an acronym for *Iesous Christos, Theou Yios, Soter*, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior,” as St. Augustine explains (*De Civ. Dei*, XVIII: 23), and the Virgin is the one who has brought Christ to us.

From almost a century later, we have a fragment of Egyptian papyrus, in Greek, now in

John Rylands Library, Manchester, UK. It is dated from c. 250-280, a period of increasingly violent and methodical persecutions (Valerian, Decius, building up to Diocletian). It contains a version of a prayer we still use, the *Sub tuum praesidium*: “Under your mercy we take refuge, O Mother of God! Our prayers do not despise in our necessities, but from the danger deliver us, only pure, only blessed.”

Some scholars of a Modernistic or rationalistic leaning, simply because the prayer uses the expression “Mother of God,” have asserted that it could have been written only after the council of Ephesus, in the first half of the 5th century. But paleographic analysis firmly places it in the second half of the 3rd century—that is, almost 200 years before Ephesus and in the same period in which the images of Our Lady were being painted in the Roman catacombs. It expresses the faith of the Church regarding Our Lady, in a simple, succinct way. She is the Mother of God, the *Theotokos*, “God-bearer,” *Deipara*, *Dei Genetrix*, “birth-giver of God.” She has an unheard-of power of intercession—without giving Her yet the title, She is acknowledged as the *Mediatrix* of all graces. Finally, she is the “only blessed,” especially chosen by God, and She is the “only pure,” perpetually Virgin.

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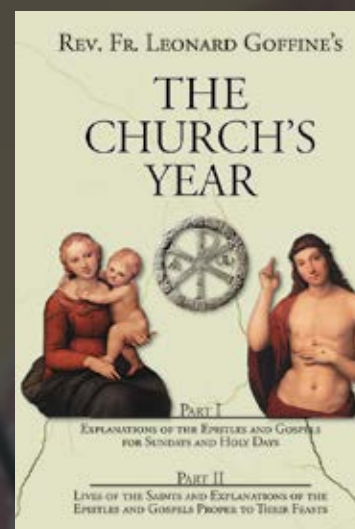


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Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

At a time in the Church's history when any good news is hard to find, there came the announcement that a miracle had been attributed to the intercession of Bl. John Henry Newman, paving the way for his canonization. The miracle was the inexplicable healing of an expectant mother from life-threatening complications from her pregnancy after praying for Newman's intercession. Her doctors testified that they had no medical explanation for her sudden and complete recovery.

Sadly, and unfairly, Cardinal Newman has been seen by some in traditional Catholic circles as being the forerunner of many of the damaging ideas coming out of Vatican II. This is so because the modernist innovators, in an attempt to validate their ideas, began to spread the thinking that Vatican II was "Newman's Council." Needless to say, this is demonstrably untrue. Even from before his conversion to the Faith, Newman was writing against the "liberals" in the Church of England who held the same ideas as those whom Pope St. Pius X would call Modernists some 40 years later.

Interestingly, it was Newman's historical research into the Arian crisis and St. Athanasius that started him on the path to the Church from Anglicanism. Through this research, he came to see that the Protestant Revolution was an abandonment of what the Church in the first centuries believed. He also came to see, contrary to what he originally hoped to prove, that Anglicanism was not the *via media* (middle road) between Protestantism and Catholicism, but rather just another Protestant sect which kept a liturgical character about it.

After his conversion from Anglicanism, Newman faced many hardships. He was abandoned by much of his family and many former friends. Colleagues wanted nothing to do with him for becoming a papist. They even went so far as to say that he was always a "crypto-Catholic" who passed himself off as an Anglican. Sadly, some Catholics in England would not accept him as a "real" Catholic and saw him as a "plant" by the Anglicans seeking to destroy the Church.

In 1879, Pope Leo XIII raised Newman to the College of Cardinals (which Newman saw as his vindication from the accusation that he was not a "real" Catholic). In his short speech given after



he was presented with the document naming him a Cardinal, Newman stated: "For 30, 40, 50 years I have resisted to the best of my powers the spirit of liberalism in religion... Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste, not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy. Devotion is not necessarily founded on faith. Men who go to Protestant churches and to Catholic, may get good things from both and belong to neither. They may fraternize together in spiritual thoughts and feelings, without having any views at all of doctrine in common, or seeing the need of them. Since, then, religion is so personal a peculiarity and so private a possession, we must of necessity ignore it in the intercourse of man with man. If a man puts on a



new religion every morning, what is that to you? It is as impertinent to think about a man's religion as about his sources of income or the management of his family. Religion is in no sense the bond of society...

The general character of this great *apostasía* is one and the same everywhere...I lament it deeply, because I foresee that it may be the ruin of many souls; but I have no fear at all that it really can do aught of serious harm to the Word of God, to Holy Church, to our Almighty King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, faithful and true, or to His Vicar on earth. Christianity has been too often in what seemed deadly peril, that we should fear any new trial for it now. So far is certain; on the other hand, what is uncertain, and in these great contests commonly is uncertain, and what is commonly a great surprise, when it is witnessed, is the particular mode by which, in the event, Providence rescues and saves His elect inheritance. Sometimes our enemy is turned into a friend; sometimes he is despoiled

of that special virulence of evil which was so threatening; sometimes he falls to pieces of himself; sometimes he does just so much as is beneficial, and then is removed. Commonly, the Church has nothing more to do than to go on in her own proper duties, in confidence and peace, to stand still and to see the salvation of God."

In reading these words from Newman, it becomes obvious that he in no way ever espoused those ideas which would come to infect the Church at Vatican II, and would certainly have been a clear voice condemning the errors of Vatican II were he alive today.

Cardinal Newman died in 1889 and was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. Blessed John Henry Newman, pray for us!

All of Newman's writings may be found online here: www.newmanreader.org

Cambodia Commemorates the Fall of Communism

January 7, 2019 was the 40th anniversary of the fall of the Khmer Rouge reign of terror; over 60,000 Cambodians commemorated this fortunate event in the presence of their Prime Minister Hun Sen.

In the packed Olympic stadium, the head of the Cambodian government called the fall of the communist regime a "second birth" for his country.

Between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge party imposed a reign of terror based on a faithful application of the principles of Communism. Over 2 million Cambodians, nearly a quarter of the entire population at the time, perished, most of them in atrocious conditions.

The Catholic Church in Cambodia suffered greatly from the persecution organized by the Khmer Rouge; we must not forget that Christianity has never been more than tolerated on this Khmer land where Buddhism is the official religion.

In the 18th century, many Catholics

persecuted in Vietnam emigrated to Cambodia; thus, in 1970, the Church had 65,000 faithful, 90% of whom were Vietnamese.

But when General Lon Nol came into power that same year, he stirred up ethnic enmities and organized pogroms against the Vietnamese: 40,000 of them returned to their native land.

Of the Catholics who were still there when the communists arrived in 1975, 48.6% fell victim to the Pol Pot regime, advances Marek Sliwinski's report published in 1995, *Le genocide khmer rouge : une analyse démographique* (The Khmer Rouge Genocide – A Demographic Analysis). This made Catholics the religious community most affected by the communist regime, proportionately speaking.

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity. In 2006, the Church consisted of 22,000 Catholics—7,000 Cambodian, and the rest Vietnamese—with an average of 200 catechumens requesting baptism every year.

Archbishop Viganò Vindicated

The name of Archbishop Carlo Viganò has become, for most Catholics, very well known over the past six months—certainly more well known than when he was Papal Nuncio to the United States from 2011 until 2016—due to the three letters of testimony he has written concerning the continuing coverup of the malicious deeds of Archbishop Theodore McCarrick. Although there have been numerous attempts to discredit the archbishop, none of these attempts have been characterized by a refutation of the charges he made, but rather they were simply *ad hominem* attacks on the Archbishop's character.

One part of Archbishop Viganò's testimony had to do with Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington,

In early January 2019, the Catholic News Agency (CNA) reported that Wuerl, while Bishop of Pittsburgh, reported to them that McCarrick had committed sexual abuses in 2004 and that Wuerl had forwarded the report to the Papal Nuncio in Washington, D.C. The Diocese of Pittsburgh, in a press release, confirms the veracity of the CNA report.

Sadly, but typically, Wuerl tried to claim that what he meant when he said he had “no knowledge” of McCarrick's deeds was that he had no knowledge of his abuse of minors (the 2004 report dealt only with the abuse of an adult male). Within a day of this monstrous prevarication, a tape of a CBS “This Morning” interview with



D.C. (now retired, but appointed by Pope Francis as apostolic administrator until the naming of the new archbishop). Viganò stated very clearly in his letters that Wuerl was well aware of the sexual abuse of seminarians and young priests by McCarrick. Following the publication of Archbishop Viganò's testimony, Wuerl made the rounds of various media outlets denying any knowledge of McCarrick's sinful and scandalous behavior. In a subsequent letter Archbishop Viganò stated that Wuerl was lying when he made the claim of not having any knowledge.

Wuerl shows him being asked specifically “Were you aware of the rumors McCarrick was having relations with other priests?” to which he responded “No, no.”

The evidence is in and it is clear that Archbishop Viganò's accusations regarding Wuerl were completely accurate—Wuerl did indeed know about McCarrick's actions and that he is a first class liar. With this revelation, it is now almost impossible to paint Archbishop Viganò as a discontented crank who is merely trying to make Pope Francis look bad, as many have tried to do.



Faithful Chinese Catholics Abandoned by Pope Francis

As had been rumored for months, the Vatican and the Communist Chinese Government have signed an accord wherein the communists will be able to nominate the bishops of the Church in China in exchange for the pope being recognized as the head of the Church. The pope will, at least on paper, have the right to *veto* any particular nominee, though this is seen as a placation of the Underground Catholic Church (*i.e.*, those bishops, priests and faithful who have refused to join the Catholic Patriotic Association which is the puppet of the communist government and refused to acknowledge papal authority).



Official Portrait of a Catholic Patriotic Association Bishop
The Future of the Church in China?

Under the agreement, the Underground Church will be subsumed into the Patriotic Association. It has been well circulated that Pope Francis himself was anxious to have the agreement signed.

To make matters even worse, the Vatican representative, Archbishop Claudio Celli, handed several underground Catholic bishops letters signed by Cardinals Parolin and Filoni asking them to resign their dioceses in order to make way for new bishops chosen by the Chinese government. It was implied that Pope Francis expected them to do so as a “gesture of obedience.” It should be noted that these

bishops have been persecuted by the government and even spent time in prison for their faithfulness to the true Faith.

Cardinal Joseph Zen, the emeritus Archbishop of Hong Kong, who has been very vocal in warning against this precise type of sell out of faithful Chinese Catholics (he once said: *the Vatican is helping the government to annihilate the underground Church that Beijing was not able to crush.*) seems himself to have caved to the prevailing attitude in the post-conciliar Church that the pope must always be obeyed even if he commands something evil. Cardinal Zen stated: “I have told these two bishops that they should not resign voluntarily so as not to cooperate with evil. But I have also advised them to obey if the pope orders it, because a pope’s command must always be obeyed. . . There is the problem of the seven bishops excommunicated and pardoned by Francis. So far none of them have been placed at the head of a diocese. If this happens, I will be silent for ever, because that would be unacceptable and would force me to decide to rebel against the pope or to remain silent. I will be silent.” It is indeed a sad state of affairs when the seeming champion of the Underground Catholic Church in China falls under the sway of “papatry.”



Joseph Cardinal Zen
Archbishop Emeritus of Hong Kong



If one does away with the fact of the Resurrection, one also does away with the Cross, for both stand and fall together, and one would then have to find a new center for the whole message of the Gospel.





The 20th Century Herald

Jacques Maritain

by Prof. Luis Roldán. Translation by Inés de Erasquin

Part II of a Conference on Catholic Liberalism given by Prof. Luis Roldán, at La Reja Seminary (2012)

Maritain is a curious fellow; a man who came from a Protestant family, converted to Catholicism and, through the first part of the 20th century, especially the 1920s, became renowned as the principal expert on Thomism. Thanks to the publication of some of his works—the *Introduction to Philosophy*, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, *Three Reformers*, and two books which he later did not want to publish, *Théonas* and *Antimoderne*—he grew famous as a Catholic intellectual, absolutely faithful to Catholic doctrine, and promoter of St. Thomas; but the condemnation of *Action Française*, to which he belonged or at least was very close to it, drove him to change direction. In the 1920s, he began to publish

other books; especially in the first, *Religion and Culture*, he tried to revise the condemnation of the modern world and Liberalism that the Magisterium maintained.

The Spanish Civil War

One of the first public acts in which Maritain showed his thread-bareness, as it were, happened during the Spanish War. In 1936, the Spanish War broke out; and for most Spanish Catholics, it was very clear that the fundamental motive was the defense of the Faith, which was under attack by atheistic Communism, Freemasonry *etcetera*. In 1937, Maritain published an article in the newspaper *La Croix*, the official newspaper of France, in which he said that “In Spain, really, everyone is mistaken.” He went on to say, more or less, “In Spain, there is one group that believes it defends religion, but re-



ally they are defending a sociopolitical system that oppresses the working classes, defending injustice; and there is another group that believes it is attacking the Church, but in reality they are defending the rights of man, the dignity of the workers and so forth." He concretely denies the right to rise up; because, he says, the Catholics—as Spain is a democratic republic—could and should fight against anti-Christian legislature, but only through legal means. This was the first time that Maritain showed his true colors. Fortunately, in the Spain of that time, his doctrine was not very established; but nonetheless, it did continue to spread, as a few years later came the Second World War and Maritain, who was married to a Jew—Raïssa—exiled himself to North America. There he was transformed into a new expert on Catholic doctrine. He would go about to all the universities, and in the 1940s, he published one of his most influential works: *Integral Humanism*. Another book came later—*Human Rights and Natural Law*. In these he finished formulating his new political doctrine; and he also had to re-formulate his approach to history on a more systematic level. He bases his teaching primarily on the distinction between the individual and the person. The "individual" is considered as the purely material aspect of man, who is thus reduced to a total dependence on the state. Here, he leaves behind all the theories of St. Thomas Aquinas, which he does not apply, turning instead to the primacy of the "greater good." The "person," on the other hand, is oriented solely to God, and is not subordinate to the state, nor is he subordinate to the greater good.

We cannot discuss all the errors of Maritain, but basically, the fundamental problem he has is that the distinction of the person and the individual is unsustainable. Every human person is a human individual, and every individual human is a human person! But the fundamental error consists in his confusing what we might call the ontological dignity of man, with his practical or moral dignity. When I assess the ontological dignity of something—that is, the dignity or worth that it has in being what it is—I am not thinking of a practical object. Let us say, for example, that a mouse, from an ontological point of view, has more worth than a nugget of gold; because the nugget of gold is an inanimate object, while the mouse is a living being. Now no one, in the normal course of things, would consider trading a mouse for a nug-

get of gold. I think of something that Fr. Calderón's father says that has always delighted me about the relationship between intelligence and thought. "A thought is something accidental, fleeting. From the ontological point of view, intelligence is much more worthy of esteem; it's the superior faculty of man. But considering from a practical point of view, intelligence is a potential thing; thought is the action. Intelligence drives you to think."

From this point, Maritain went on to systematize his political doctrine by saying that fundamentally, these rights of man, which were the "rights" of the French Revolution, are actually Catholic truths. To understand this better, we would have to look at history, which Maritain does do. One of the first major difficulties for liberal Catholics is that the Church is a few centuries old, so one has to consider all its history. Thus, Maritain had to reinterpret history; he said that there were different epochs of history from the viewpoint of the relationship of Church and State. The first epoch, what we can call the "sacral state," would roughly correspond to the Middle Ages. At this stage the power of the Catholic Church nearly blotted out human nature, which gave way to a sort of supernaturalism. Since this went against the order of things that God wants, says Maritain, a reaction had to occur. This reaction was the "lay State"—the French Revolution—which sought to eliminate religion everywhere. And, he adds, this is obviously bad, but understandable; there was too much of the Church! But now, after all the drama of the World Wars, perhaps man can come to an accord and establish a third epoch—by way of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis—which is the secular state. A secular State is basically the ideal of Lammenais, a free Church in a free State: a state organized in a democratic manner, which is the only way that conforms to our natural rights, because it is the only one that respects the dignity of the human person; in which the Church has freedom to preach, but cannot demand any privileged situation, nor of special union with the State; much less, of course, may it use civil law or policy to impede the manifestation of any other cult that is not Catholic.

Historical Inaccuracies

This is the scheme of Maritain. To begin with, this is just wrong historically! To anyone who studies medieval history, the first thing that calls our atten- >

tion is the number of conflicts there were between the papacy and the Empire! The medieval Kings were anything but a bunch of servile little altar boys enslaved to clerical power! On the contrary, to find such a lay model we have to look at the post-Conciliar laity, the lay-adult followers of the Council! This scheme of Maritain's has no foundation in reality; it cannot be verified by history; it is incorrect. The other element he brings up is that this "sacral state" of his is a violation of human dignity; and where do we find such a violation? In that, fundamentally, there is no respect for the right to religious liberty. And here Maritain had his moment of triumph at the Second Vatican Council, especially in certain paragraphs of *Gaudium et Spes*, and especially in the document *Dignitatis Humanæ*. It is impossible to understand this document without having read the work of Maritain. Here, then, is the nucleus of Maritain's error, which consists of this confusion regarding human dignity. Be it noted that this concept of human rights is a theme that swirls through the whole Second Vatican Council and post-Conciliar magisterium; it has become the new topic of debate for contemporary modernists.

It would be worth it to add a little paragraph about this topic. What is dignity, or worthiness? We could say that it is what is deserved, merited; a criminal condemned to death for a terrible crime has received a worthy punishment; a deserved punishment. A hero of his country who has conducted himself brilliantly in war and has a fine monument built to him, we may say, has received a worthy prize. Worth or dignity is what man merits. So the fundamental question that we must ask ourselves about human rights, is asking why a man deserves something. A teacher of mine once said to me, "Today, I was talking to my son about the titles of human dignity. A title is a condition or quality of an individual which places him in a determined position, to make him obliged to do something, or deserving to receive something." It is very clear that in a man, when considering his human dignity, there are different aspects we can consider. Firstly, we can make an analysis of human dignity in the light of reason; and indeed, we can say that there is a natural dignity to man. Indeed, man, by the simple fact of being human, of being a human person, of being a rational animal, deserves to be treated as such. For example, though a person should commit the worst of crimes,

no punishment that should corrupt him morally may be applied to him. And certainly, by virtue of this ontological or natural dignity of man, we could conclude that man has certain (very imprecise) rights; for example, this right not to be corrupted. This dignity, because it is essential, is the same in both the worst of criminals and the greatest of men.

But the right that is most important, both in light of ethics and of politics, is not this last; it is practical dignity, moral dignity. Pope Leo XIII mentions this in the beginning of his encyclical *Libertas*, which is the greatest document of the Church against Liberalism. Those of you who haven't read it—I recommend that you do; or better, that you *study* it! Leo XIII, in this document, says very clearly that the dignity of man does consist of being a rational animal; but fundamentally, it consists of what man does. If I progress in virtue through using my freedom of action to follow God's law, the moral law, I augment my moral dignity. And this moral dignity is not the same in the worst of delinquents and the greatest of the saints; this is what makes us build a monument to the one, and condemn the other to death. Our ontological dignity is the same; our moral dignity is not. And in the juridical and political scheme of things, the most relevant thing is this practical dignity. We can also take into consideration the idea of supernatural dignity. This idea of dignity appears in the sermons of St. Leo: "Christian, acknowledge your dignity;" and what is that dignity? That we are called to eternal life, the life of grace obtained by baptism.

A Failure to Make Distinctions

In Maritain, all these aspects are confused. Basically, he does not want to distinguish between ontological and practical dignity. We may note that *Dignitatis Humanæ*, when it touches on the right to religious liberty, it is mentioned as an objective right, founded on the dignity of the human person; a right that is held just as much by the one who seeks truth as the one who refuses it—he who desires good is the same as he who desires evil. From this basis springs the ideal of egalitarian democracy: as we are all equal in ontological dignity, we should all have the same right to participate in politics. Therefore, democracy is the only form of government that corresponds with our natural rights. Any form of government that establishes distinction, be it of class or of function, violates human rights.



The second element visible in Maritain through this fundamental Liberalism is something we have mentioned in previous lectures: namely, *nominalism*—disdain for social conditions. In *Dignitatis Humanæ* this is very plain to see—the idea that the only thing the Church needs is freedom. Here, at its depths, there is a sort of “angelism”; the idea that man, without exterior influences, always does good. There a denial or forgetfulness, implicit at the very least, of the dogma of original sin. This idea is also seen in the work of Rousseau, and almost all the liberals maintain some shade of it. Rousseau’s idea is just this: that man acts badly because he is corrupted by society, but that his nature itself is good; which is a problem, because it ends up confusing nature with spontaneity.

We may define Rousseau’s doctrine as something like this: a Bengal tiger which is captured and shut up in a circus, obliged to jump through fiery hoops and do pirouettes, loses its fur and doesn’t reproduce, is corrupted; because his nature is violated. Man, he says, is the same; he should be allowed to act freely and spontaneously, and he would act well. I don’t remember who it is that tells that when Rousseau sent in his contribution to the Encyclopedia, Voltaire—who was a cretin, but nonetheless an intelligent fellow—reading his work, commented, “I have never seen such a strong attempt to make us all walk on all fours.”

In these ideas is a forgetfulness that human liberty, if man really is free, is a situational liberty; it has conditions placed upon it by social means. And this conditioning always exists. Life in society, for good or ill, conditions me. The action of a normal traditional Catholic family is not the same as that of a broken family. It is not the same to live in an economy that is truly oriented toward the common good, marked by justice, as to live in an economy that is unhinged. It is not the same to breathe in a Catholic culture, as to breathe in a totally revolutionary one. Man’s liberty is purely situational. This is why, in that beautiful book of Archbishop Lefebvre’s, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, there is a chapter that is called “On Good Influence.” Note that the theme of *Dignitatis Humanæ* is immunity from influence. Absolute immunity from influence is impossible. For that we would have to live like Robinson Crusoe, on a desert island. If I have any kind of social life, there are some limits involved. I have a neighbor who

takes the bus with me, the one that is always playing his radio, the one who keeps knocking on my door; human freedom always has limits.

The Folly of “Complete Liberty”

The idea of complete liberty is impossible, utopian; and it belittles the effect of social conditions. This is why liberals, in their analysis of politics, commit a fundamental error when they admit democracy as the only possible form of government; not only because democracy is false, but because they do not admit what we might call, for lack of a better term, the formal logic of institutions: the fact that at the moment of its organization, every institution has an internal logic which over time imposes itself over the will of its members. One of the greatest errors of the liberal Catholic is to acknowledge modern democracy, thinking that modern democracy is neutral. No! Modern democracy has a formal logic, and history has shown it. For this reason all the attempts of Christian democratic parties to evangelize democracy have failed.

The strongest example is that of Italy, which has been ruled by a hegemonic party for 50 years. And yet, Italy has abortion; it has divorce; it has the separation of Church and State; it has a liberal, or Marxist economy. And all this—why? Because they were all evil people? I don’t believe that it’s because they were all evil people. It is because they did not take into account that every institution has a formal logic. This is the other fundamental error of Liberalism, and today, we live with it. The concrete form of Liberalism that all of you will have to face, when you go out into the world, is principally Catholic Liberalism. In our countries—if it were not for Catholic Liberalism—absolute, atheistic Liberalism would be a mere intellectual curiosity, found in small groups. Catholic Liberalism is the Liberalism that we run into on a daily basis. And today, the principal issue that we have to deal with is the idea of separation of Church and State, which liberals have tried to disguise with a new face, which they call “healthy laicism.”

The issue to note is that, curiously, the phrase, “a healthy and legitimate laicism” is not mentioned by the Second Vatican Council. I have never found it. It is mentioned in a discourse of Pius XII; but I noticed that this discourse didn’t seem to appear anywhere until a friend of mine, a fellow-graduate >

of the Universidad Católica Argentina, rescued the text and published an article which scandalized the liberals. Pius XII gave this talk to the Italian *Marche*; and what he says is that this “healthy and legitimate laicism” consists of making a distinction between political power and ecclesiastical power—but never in *separating* them! And he talked about a Catholic Italy, about the Catholic *Marche*, and so on. The liberals could not stand this speech from Pius XII.

In what, then, does this “healthy and legitimate laicism” consist? Basically, it is the scheme of Maritain: the free Church in a free State; the idea of a purely neutral State, which does not support the Catholic Faith, but does not persecute it either, and within which the Church can carry out Her apostolic mission with freedom. This is the dominant doctrine today; this is the line of thought of Benedict XVI. In a book he published some years ago—I have the '82 edition, but I think it is older—called *Compendium of Moral Theology*, he plainly says that *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dignitatis Humanae* have acted as a true counter-Syllabus. That is to say, their idea was to reconcile the Church with the world as it was after 1789. Later he returns to this topic, speaking of religious liberty, and says, “This is not indifferentism.” The interpretation he gives is to say that man does not have the right, in the moral sense, to follow any religion; rather, he is morally obliged to follow the true religion. However, he adds, political and juridical order cannot promote one specific religion.

The Distinction Between Ethics and Rights

His problem is the distinction between morals and rights, or more exactly, between ethics and rights. This can be argued on many points; but I believe that the best way to confront this proposal of a “healthy laicism,” or of religious liberty, is not only to show that is a false doctrine, but rather, that it is impossible—unverifiable in practice. It is something that does not happen in real life; it's like talking about a horse with eight legs—something that does not conform to reality. Horses have four legs! Here and there, one might find a deformed one with three or perhaps five legs; but none with eight!

This, then, is the great lie that is hidden in the idea of a secular State—a purely lay State. This is impossible to find: why? Because in any societal group—and let us look at something closer than the large political community, which seems too large and

distant—its form, that which makes it what it is, is fundamentally an agreement of wills—be it a group of friends that get together to play a game of ball, or a gang of delinquents that agree to a kidnapping for ransom. This agreement of wills, this concord, is always dependent on a certain worldview. Let's take the example of our gang of kidnapers. They have agreed to carry out a kidnapping for ransom. Therefore, they have agreed that kidnapping for ransom is a good thing. This idea, this worldview, is—to put a label on it—the public orthodoxy of that group. But what happens if, amid this gang of kidnapers, one of the kidnapers says to himself one day, “I'm going to start speaking against kidnapping”? There are several possible outcomes—we can think of at least three. The first outcome is that nobody listens. With that outcome, it's possible that our man will decide to leave the gang. Another possibility is that he is successful, and manages to convince the rest of the group that kidnapping is a bad thing. And there goes the gang. The third possibility is that the leader of the gang says to him, “Look, you stop bothering us about this, or you can leave”; because, indeed, the very existence of the group depends on maintaining its particular public orthodoxy.

This has been verified over and over in history. When we analyze the relationship of the Church with the various nations, this sort of public orthodoxy always exists. What happens is that it can always change content, but it never disappears. It is very interesting to see it in the way the conversion of Rome to Christianity unfolded. Why did Rome persecute Christianity if there was almost total religious freedom in Rome? In Rome, there was a temple to Isis; in Athens St. Paul even ran into an altar “To the Unknown God.” The pagan's problem is certainly not that he lacks gods; more likely that he has too many! But the unity of the Roman Empire rested on a public orthodoxy that demanded recognition of the primacy of the *Pax Romana*. The idea of the Empire was that one could worship whomever one liked; but over and above each person's particular belief stood the greatness of Rome. The refusal of the Church to admit this is what led to martyrdom and persecution. And it is very interesting that one of the last persecutors was Galerius, one of Diocletian's men, who wrote the first edict of toleration of Christianity—predating that of Constantine—in 311 AD. He said, “Here, the Christians adore neither



their own God nor the pagan gods. So I will permit them to adore their God, on condition that they pray for Rome.” There was a transitional period between 311 and 385, which was when Theodosius, under the influence of St. Ambrose, declared Catholicism the official religion of the Roman Empire. And then, they realized that there could not be a political order without a public orthodoxy. Insofar as they could, the Romans defended their pagan orthodoxy, and when they discovered that it didn’t work, many of those same pagans became the promulgators of a Catholic State, because they did realize that there could be no society without an official religion.

The same thing, in reverse, occurs in the modern era. Today we discussed the chapter on civil religion of the *Social Contract* of Rousseau. You may say that I’m cheating a bit, because I am taking all my examples from Europe, and Liberalism in France has always been against the Church and what have you. Why don’t I give the example of the United States? Well, because all liberals follow the same example, even in otherwise good books.

The Church and Political Power

The other day I was re-reading a book by Fr. Hillaire, *Demonstrated Religion*; and in his arguments for setting aside persecution of the Church, he sets forth the example of the United States. He says, “Look, here in the United States is the perfect model. The Church prospers, there’s a republic, there’s democracy. They don’t burn churches, they don’t kill priests or arrest them...” Maritain would also say that the United States is the model of democracy. Many teachers would say that the North American system is the model of healthy and legitimate laicism—a place where separation of Church and State unfolds freely. This is false. The US is also a confessional State of sorts. It has a rather confused, but deist religion, and also submits to the Church in daily life.

There’s a very interesting article published not long ago by a North American professor, Christopher Ferrara, who is the president of the American Catholic Lawyers’ Association, in which he analyzes the jurisprudence of the US Supreme Court, and in particular the voting of one of the justices, Justice Scalia, who passes for Catholic—a man of *Opus Dei*. Ferrara shows that there is also

a system of public orthodoxy in the United States. North America has a system of separation of Church and State—of religious liberty.

But what happens when there is an action that someone wants to carry out because of religious commitment that clashes with a legal norm? Scalia says that “If someone, for example, wants an abortion, in a democracy, the State should permit abortion. To say that it is against natural law is to place oneself above the democratic state and presume to decide, in opposition to the majority, what is good and what is evil. I don’t believe that’s my job.” In other words, the problem remains present—the same problem that doctors have who refuse to perform abortions in states where abortion is legalized by society...and we can give many more examples.

Every concrete political organization always has a certain confessional aspect; it always has a public orthodoxy. Because of this, the idea that the Church can survive in a sort of limbo in which it is neither persecuted nor united to the political power is a utopian idea; it has never been fulfilled in history and never will be.

The Church is either persecuted, or it informs the political power; or else it is transitioning from one of those states to the other. Do not accept, as a real possibility, the true separation of the Church and the State. The idea is always present which Father very astutely put at the head of today’s program: Christ always reigns. He reigns, either as He should, or because society has turned anti-Christian. The utopian possibility of the modern Catholic liberals, the idea of a free Church in a free State, is something that has never occurred and will never occur in history.

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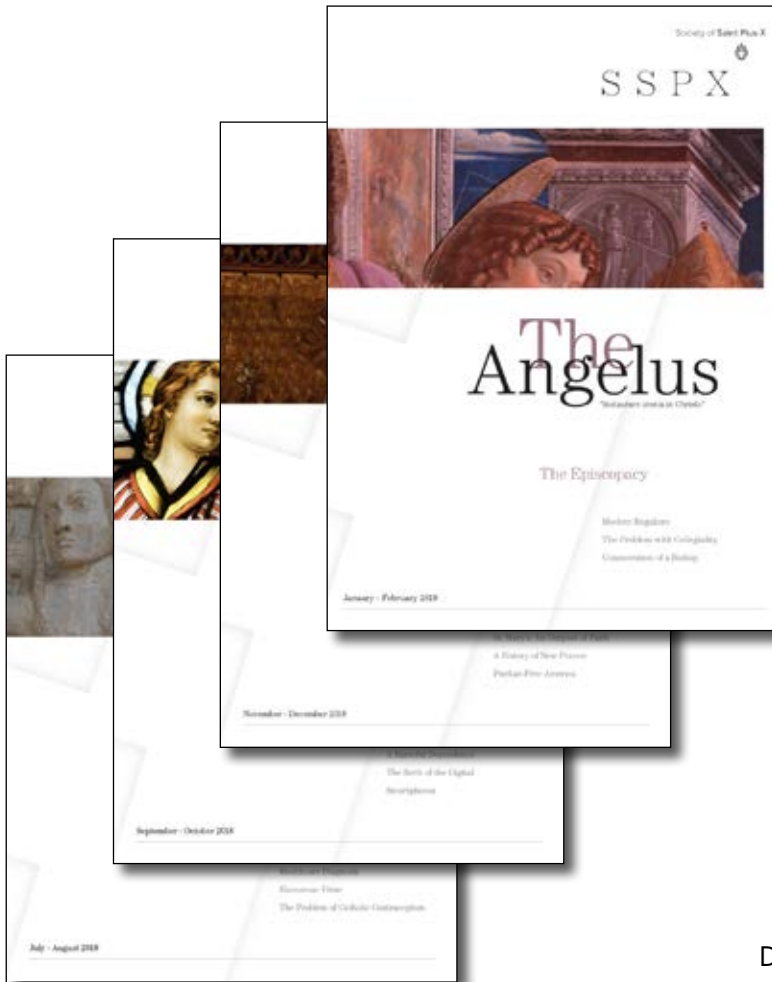
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The Last Word

Dear readers,

“Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be” (Lk. 1:29).

In this beautiful mystery of the Annunciation, remembered at every *Ave Maria*, we have from Our Lady herself an important key to the question of private revelations, even for her own apparitions. This key is the virtue of prudence, which always stands in a middle between too much and too little in everything.

Here we see Our Lady *troubled* by the angelic apparition and laudatory greeting, and we see her *thinking within herself*. The rest of the story shows how she then discerned that this angel really came from God, and at the end how she consented to his heavenly request: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*.

It is the Church that examines and discerns between true apparitions of Our Lady, of Our Lord and of the Saints, and false ones. It is the Church that tells us, based on the classic rules of discernment of spirits, such as those of St. Ignatius, if we can believe or if we must reject a particular apparition. Faith is always given to God through the Church: “He who hears you, hears me!”

The major problem we face today in this field is basically ignorance both of the nature of these supernatural manifestations and of the rules of prudence. The essential principles of discernment are contained in the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, nn. 328-336. I highly recommend the commentary of these by Rev. Fr. L. Barrielle, SSPX, published by Angelus Press [*Rules for Discerning the Spirits*]. I suggest also the Jesuit Scaramelli’s *Discernment of Spirits* (available only in second hand editions, in French, Italian or Spanish...). He expounds on the Ignatian rules and helps souls to discern, directly or indirectly, whether these supernatural manifestations come from God or from the devil. “By their fruits you shall know them.”

Fr. Daniel Couture

Society of Saint Pius X



SSPX

The Society of Saint Pius X is an international priestly society of almost 700 priests. Its main purpose is the formation and support of priests.

The goal of the Society of Saint Pius X is to preserve the Catholic Faith in its fullness and purity, not changing, adding to or subtracting from the truth that the Church has always taught, and to diffuse its virtues, especially through the Roman Catholic priesthood. Authentic spiritual life, the sacraments, and the traditional liturgy are its primary means to foster virtue and sanctity and to bring the divine life of grace to souls.

The Angelus, in helping the whole man, tries to be an outlet for the work of the Society, helping them reach souls. We aspire to help deepen your spiritual life, nourish your studies, understand the history of Christendom, and restore the reign of Christ the King in Christian culture in every aspect.

\$ 9.00