



S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Scandal

A Moral Primer on Scandal

Reacting to Scandal

The Sin of Scandal as Seen
by Archbishop Lefebvre



Stained-glass, Church of Saint Severin, Paris, *Jesus and Little Children*, jorisvo / Shutterstock.com

Letter from the Publisher

Dear Reader,

"It is necessary that there be heresies." These words of St. Paul resonate even in those among us who turn a blind eye to evils and mask with rose-colored glasses the face of death around us.

St. Paul's words evoke his efforts to keep his burgeoning communities together amidst the schisms dividing Holy Mother the Church. It brings up the spectacle of apostates who, lulled by the howling of the wind or the latest spiritual fad, are throwing away the precious gift of faith.

In the context of Church history, the 21st-century Catholic Church will no doubt receive the stigma of scandal, not only of scandal in general, but of the type in the apostle's words "which should not even be named among us," so shameful they are. No doubt, entire walls of our society are being eroded under human perversions which threaten the survival of things as basic as the inequality of the sexes and human love. The natural family unit is fast becoming an endangered species.

The titanic struggle between the Woman with Child and the serpent (Gen. 3:15) has taken a dramatic turn. The forces of evil are unleashed with a power never before seen against the very citadel of Christ's mystical body. The priesthood and the Mass have been under siege for decades now. But we might soon witness a revival of the catacombs, the waves of persecutions in heretic and or communist countries where priests and bishops are hunted down like wild boars and a price is set on their head.

It is not our intention to sound the trumpet of defeat and doom in the face of danger. This review of the various faces of the political, societal, and ecclesiastical crisis must encourage us to throw ourselves at the feet of Christ our leader and of His powerful Blessed Mother before throwing ourselves, body and soul, into the struggle for spiritual survival. This is another reason to be the devoted children of Holy Mother the Church who is going through pain and agony, and to help souls along the way. Should we not be the proud imitators of those invulnerable saints who faced the devil and his minions with the simple weapon of faith and the charity of Christ in their heart?

Long live Christ's ambassadors on earth who bring us the bread and water of eternal life!
Long live the pope and the Catholic bishops! Long live Christ and His Holy Church!

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
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Woe to the World

A Moral Primer on Scandal

By Fr. Juan-Carlos Iscara

Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh (Mt. 18:7).

Throughout history, many men and women have committed unspeakable crimes, unspeakable sins, and—out of malice or ignorance, imprudence or carelessness—have led others into sin. The present-day occurrences of those sins are most likely to have an even greater effect, as their publicity is immeasurably amplified by our modern technologies. Indeed, they now cry out to us from the news headlines. Ubiquitous screens parade them before our eyes, and, if we are curious for a better look, a few keystrokes easily bring them back to us. The media dwells on them in almost exquisite detail, and, more often than not, makes a spirited defense of every immorality and

perversion under the sun—except, of course, a carefully selected few that, at least for the time being, are still considered to be beyond the pale. Even worse, yielding to the “spirit of the times,” our civil laws condone, allow, and promote the violation of divine law [As Roberto de Mattei states: <http://www.correspondanceeuropeenne.eu/2017/04/29/eglise-catholique-le-scandale-de-notre-temps/>]. The world is full of scandals...

As much as those scandals shock our moral conscience, and as much as we would prefer not to see them or talk about them, we cannot ignore them. Edmund Burke defined a scandal as an event *upon which it is difficult to speak, and impossible to be silent*. In spite of our moral outrage, spiritual self-preservation and fraternal charity oblige us to speak up.

But before jumping into the fray and adding our



voice to the denunciation of the myriad of crimes that are coming to light today, we should clearly grasp the moral principles that define and describe the sin of scandal, so as not to add our vague, imprecise notions to this ever-increasing moral confusion.

St. Thomas Aquinas, when considering the virtue of charity, [*Cf. Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, q. 43.] lists its external acts: beneficence, almsgiving, and fraternal correction; and then, as is his wont, he explains which vices are opposed to those charitable acts. Among them, scandal is the sin directly opposed to fraternal correction—instead of leading our neighbor away from sin by our warnings and advice, our own sinful actions lead him into sin...

What is “Scandal?”

Etymologically, scandal (from the Greek σκάνδαλον, *skándalon*) is a trap, a stumbling block, any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall.

In today’s language, a “scandal” is an event—either a crime or a transgression of accepted social norms—that provokes indignation or shock in the observers. Thus, it refers to our subjective reactions when witnessing that event.

But the precise theological language, building upon the etymological meaning, defines scandal as *an external act which, posed without sufficient cause, gives our neighbor the occasion of spiritual fall, of sin*. Thus, it refers to the objective quality of the action, its capacity of inducing others to sin.

Definition

First of all, it must be an *external act*—*i.e.* words, gestures, attitudes which are capable of leading another into sin. Even the voluntary omission of an act—one that should have been done to prevent a sin—may have the malice of scandal, in that it may induce others to abstain from doing what is necessary to avoid sin.

Obviously, to be “scandalous,” the act cannot be purely internal. If our thoughts or desires are not

expressed by our words or gestures, they remain unknown to our neighbor and thus cannot have any influence on his conduct—they cannot cause scandal.

In principle, the act must be *reprehensible, evil in itself*. But sometimes, to induce another into sin it might be sufficient that, due to circumstances of place, time or person, the act *appears to be sinful* to the observer, although it is not such. For example, someone may be scandalized at seeing a priest not fasting on Ash Wednesday, when in fact that priest has been dispensed from that obligation due to age or illness—the action appears to be sinful, but it is not.

Indeed, even a good action could be cause of scandal for someone, on account of the circumstances in which it is accomplished.

Finally, it must give *occasion of sin*, or at least of spiritual damage. It does not exercise physical violence on another to force him to commit a sin. It is only a moral cause—it only prompts or encourages another to sin.

For scandal to exist it is sufficient that the act is by itself capable of inducing another to sin, even if the other does not fall into it. There is also scandal if the act is capable of inducing the neighbor to commit another sin, a sin that is different from the bad example received, but which he would not have otherwise committed without that example.

Different Kinds of Scandal?

Yes. If we consider how it is caused, the scandal may be *active* (also called “given”) or *passive* (also called “taken” or “accepted”). But if we consider the intention of he who gives the scandal, it may be *direct* or *indirect*.

Active and Passive Scandals?

As in every relationship, there are two sides of a scandal: that of he who scandalizes and that of he who is scandalized. Thus, active scandal is the action, either evil in itself or only apparently evil, which gives to another the occasion of spiritual ruin. Passive scandal, on the other hand, is the fall of someone caused by that action. >

For example: an active scandal is committed by he who speaks badly about a person, but he who, listening to it, thinks badly of this person and nourishes feelings of hostility or contempt falls into passive scandal.

Active and passive scandals are usually associated, but they may also exist separately.

The active scandal may exist without the passive scandal, for example, if I commit a sin that is capable of inducing the observer into sin, but he resists the temptation and does not fall into it.

Conversely, the passive scandal may exist without the active scandal, for example if I perform an action that is itself either good or indifferent, but nonetheless, due to its appearances or to the mistaken judgment of the observer, it becomes an occasion of sin for him.

Direct and Indirect Scandals?

The scandal is *direct* if the agent has the explicit intention of inducing another into a similar sin.

But it is *indirect* if the agent, while not

intending the fall of another, nonetheless foresees that his action may induce such a fall, even if the action in itself is not sinful or only apparently so.

What Kind of Sin is Scandal?

St. Alphonsus Liguori explains that direct scandal is a sin both against charity and against the virtue that is violated by the one who is scandalized [*Theologia Moralís*, lib. III, n. 45].

In confession, this particular must be clearly stated, that is, one is obliged to confess not only the fact of having caused scandal, but also the species of sin induced.

Are Some Scandals More Serious than Others?

The gravity of this sin is stressed by the harsh sentence that Our Lord passes on those who give scandal: *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his*

But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea (Mt. 18:6).

neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea (Mt. 18:6).

In practice, the scandal is a mortal sin when it leads another to sin mortally, even if the original act was only venial.

But its gravity must be also measured by the real influence that some factors of the sinful act may have on the fall of another. For example, it must be taken into account who is the person who causes the scandal (parent, priest, teacher, friend, *etc.*), or who are the persons scandalized (the weak, children, those not well instructed to be able to resist, *etc.*), or the number of those who fall due to that bad example...

Thus, a public figure, one continuously exposed to the eyes of the world, or one constituted in dignity or entrusted with the guidance of others, sins more seriously than a simple individual by the scandal that he gives, because the impression left is stronger and its effects wider. For example, a father who, by his actions, inspires in his children the contempt for religion is guiltier than others who may give the same bad example, because he uses for the destruction of the souls entrusted to him a power that God has given only for their

edification.

Indirect scandal is not a sin when the act is good or indifferent in itself, or when an honest end is intended, or when done with proportionate cause or motive. Nonetheless, if the scandal can be avoided by giving some explanation to the observer, it must be given. And if the action is not obligatory or strictly necessary, it is better to abstain from it, so as to avoid the risk of giving scandal.

“Necessary” Scandals?

No, of course not!

Those sins are not part of the divine plan for us. Holy Scripture makes it abundantly clear that God is intent on our salvation, not on our damnation: *For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but unto the purchasing of salvation by Our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:9).*

Consequently, He does not want the evils that men commit: *Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man. But >*



Theme Scandal

every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured (Jas. 1:13-14).

What God does desire is our love. But for love to be true it requires having both the freedom to make choices and the opportunity to do so. Therefore, He has created us with a free will. He will not induce us into sin, but neither will He force us into virtuous acts. The choice remains ours.

What Does Our Lord Mean?

Thus, when Our Lord says that sins and scandals are “necessary,” He is simply describing the nature of things in this fallen world—because original sin has wounded us, we are capable of making the wrong choices and, unfortunately, we do make them...thus, scandals are not only likely to happen, but they will assuredly happen...

Crime, sin, and scandal are bound to exist, as St. John Chrysostom says, due to the implacable malice of Satan, the malignity of the men of the world, their aversion and enmity to Christ.

God accepts those things, for the trial of the just, for the discovery of hypocrites, and for the manifestation of His grace, power, and fidelity in the preservation of His children.

Reparation for Scandals

In charity, we have the obligation to make reparation to our neighbor for the bad example given. The obligation is under pain of mortal sin if the scandal was given in grave matter.

When the scandal has been given in private, reparation must be made to those who have been exposed to it. Most of the time, if they have not fallen into sin, it would be enough to give them now a good example that, contradicting our previous behavior, implies our repudiation of it.

However, the difficulty of making efficacious reparation increases when the scandal has been public. In those cases, reparation must be also publicly made to those who have been exposed to it. Sometimes it would be enough to give a good example, but in other cases, an explicit repudiation of our previous action would be required.

The attempts at repairing the damage caused

would be unlikely—even at the best of times—to reach all the people who have been exposed to the scandal.

But our times are not “the best of times,” due to the global reach of the internet. Today, if someone in one small town does something—a crime, a sin—that captures the attention of the media, it will be instantly known by millions of people around the world, it will pop up in every outlet of the social media upon which we are so dependent. And, thanks to various internet search engines, we may be assured that the scandalous example will never fade away from people’s eyes or memories. The public scandal we have given will have acquired a kind of perpetuity and it will continue luring souls into sin well beyond our own lifetime.

In such conditions, any efficacious reparation becomes both physically and morally impossible.

A Final Word

Some of our laws and institutions are scandalous when they declare as *good* some actions which, in truth, are intrinsically evil, thus leading the citizens to commit evil acts. Popular culture is scandalous when it standardizes, even encourages, disordered behaviors that soon everybody will end up considering normal.

The warnings of Our Lord in the Gospel do not directly address those scandals that come from the world, but those that may arise in the community of His disciples—that is, they are addressed to us. Our Lord calls us to be exemplary, so as not to be one of those who scandalize the little ones and the weak. He calls us to the spiritual combat, to fight unceasingly against evil, to the acquisition and increase of virtue, to prayer and penance.

Those who have been perverted by our bad examples must learn from us to repent of their sins, as they learned from us how to commit them. Unfortunately, not all those who followed us in our deviations will imitate us in our penance—for it is much easier to find imitators of our defects than of our virtues, and we will have to cry bitterly over scandals that we will be never be able to repair entirely.



Reacting to Scandal

Dante and the Popes

by Andrew J. Clarendon

In his essay on the development of medieval literature, the renowned historian Christopher Dawson notes that although “Dante’s great poem represents the achievement of a final synthesis of the literary and religious traditions of the Middle Ages,” the *Divine Comedy*, finished in 1321, “also faithfully reflects the crisis of the later Middle Ages,” a crisis that stems from the fact that “the papacy itself had become compromised in his eyes by secularism.” A concrete image of this compromise was the 1309 move of the papal residence to Avignon, France—known by some as the Babylonian Captivity of the popes—which in turn led to the disastrous Great Western Schism, an event Dante did not live to see but would not have surprised him. In short, as the so-called Renaissance—at once a flowering of the High Middle Ages and a corruption of that

civilization—was just beginning, the papacy ceased to be the moral center of Christendom. Dawson notes that “it is to the [Holy Roman] Empire rather than to the papacy that [Dante] looks for the realization of a universal Christian order,” but a such an Empire was already unrealizable in his time; later in the *Divine Comedy* Dante looks to “an apocalyptic figure,” begging for Christ the King to set things right. These wider political and historical issues help to account for Dante’s rather severe account of the papacy of his day. In recounting truly scandalous actions over the course of his epic, Dante not only shows that like everyone else, the pope has a soul to save or lose, but also provides a vision of the balance needed when discussing the unique position of the Vicar of Christ; of all of the popes mentioned in the poem, it is Dante’s >

presentation of his contemporary Boniface VIII in particular that demonstrates such a balance.

Dante's Rebuke to Wayward Clerics

Dante certainly does not condemn Boniface alone; the poet's criticism occurs over the course of a general rebuke of those clerics who were more concerned with material gain than the salvation of souls. The invective begins early in the *Inferno* with some unnamed souls in the circle of the Greedy: "The ones who have the bald spot on their heads / were priests and popes and cardinals, in whom / avarice is most likely to prevail." Later, in Purgatory, the Pilgrim meets Pope Adrian V who says that "only when I became Shepherd of Rome / did I perceive the falseness of the world / . . . / until that time I was a wretched soul, / servant of Avarice." This denunciation of popes and other clerics having been seduced by temporal power and wealth reaches a crescendo in the third part of the eighth circle of hell, the *bolgia* of those damned for simony. Since the poem is set in the year 1300—during the reign of Boniface VIII—the Pilgrim speaks to an earlier pope: Nicholas III, who died in 1280. The former Vicar of Christ is stuffed upside down—the inverted man being a symbol of Satan—in a circular hole that recalls golden coins. In a parody of baptism, which makes one a member of the church, Nicholas does not have water on his head but fire on his feet. Instead of the fire of the Holy Ghost sanctifying the human element of the Church in a Pentecostal image, hellfire burns the soles of the feet. Finally, some critics interpret line 98 to indicate that the Simonists have moneybags at their heads within the hole. As the Pilgrim speaks with Nicholas, the former pope punningly states that he was "so greedy to advance [his family members], that wealth / I pocketed in life, and here myself" and goes on to say that "Beneath my head are pushed down all the others / who came, sinning in simony, before me, / squeezed tightly in the fissure of the rock." With the foresight given to the damned to add to their torment, Nicholas predicts that Boniface VIII will join him when he dies in 1303 and then

after him Clement V—the reigning pope when Dante wrote the *Inferno*—"a lawless shepherd, one whose fouler deeds / make him a fitting cover for us both." For Dante to put three popes from his own time in hell can be shocking to certain sensibilities, but the point is clear: not only is there no instant and automatic canonization for popes, but Dante also gives a more specific warning about those who are more interested in worldly power than the salvation of souls. These men "tear asunder" the Church; their "avarice brings grief upon the world, / crushing the good, exalting the depraved." In other words, the action of these popes is scandalous in the truest sense; as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* puts it: "scandal is a word or action evil in itself, which occasions another's spiritual ruin." In the case of Boniface, Dante goes on in *Inferno* 27 to show him actually inducing another to sin: the pope gives false absolution to Guido da Montefeltro to help plan the destruction of some political enemies. The result is Guido's damnation, abetted by "the Prince of the New Pharisees."

Nuance and Balance in Dante

If Dante had only condemned various contemporary popes—in particular Boniface who was instrumental in the poet's exile from Florence—there would not be that balance and nuance in his presentation of the papacy that makes his poem truly Catholic. It is true that in the *Paradiso*, St. Peter himself gets so angry in contemplating the reign of Boniface that he turns Heaven red and declares the See to be as it were morally vacant. Until his death, however, the pope is still the Vicar of Christ, and he remains a priest forever. To recall this point, in *Purgatorio* 20 Dante has Hugh Capet foretell the mistreatment of Boniface VIII at the hands of some of his French and Italian political enemies. As the historian Warren Carroll recounts, after breaking into the papal palace at Boniface's hometown of Anagni in September 1303, the men seized the pontiff, probably manhandled him, and stole some treasure before the people of Anagni drove them off. The incident was distressing enough that Boniface died about



a month later. Dante's reaction is a famous thundering condemnation: "I see the *fleur-de-lis* enter [Anagni] / and in His vicar Christ made prisoner. / I see the gall and vinegar renewed; / I see Him being mocked a second time, / killed once again between the living thieves." Dorothy Sayers, with her usual insightful commentary, draws together the two sides of Dante's portrayal: "Nothing in Dante is more paradoxical or more magnificent than his treatment of Boniface VIII. Of all his enemies, personal and political, none is so hateful to him as Boniface...[but] to lay hands on him is to crucify Christ afresh. This balance of two equal and opposed indignations, both blazing, and mutually unmitigated, is a triumph of the passionate intellect unsurpassed in literature and scarcely paralleled." The distinction is clear: any problems with the human element of the church—and examples of misguided and sinful clerics and laymen go back to the beginning of Christianity—does not destroy the Bride of Christ, who is forever the *unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*, whose head is Christ.

It follows that scandals of this sort should not be regarded as having too little or too much importance. As Pope Benedict XV notes in his great encyclical on Dante, that while "a mind as devoted to the Church as was that of Dante could not but feel disgust" at clerical or even papal sins, "never did he fail in respect due to the Church and reverence for the 'Supreme Keys.'" In our time of crisis, serious Catholics should keep such a balance as Dante's in mind. Avoiding the Scylla of positivistic papolatry, along with the Charybdis of leaving the Church, is just one facet of today's crisis. May Christ the King, through the Immaculate Heart, send worthy "laborers into His harvest" (Lk. 10:2).

Statue of Dante Alighieri,
piazza dei Signori, Verona,
Italy



Leprosy in the Church of God

By: Fr. Francois-Marie Chautard

“Jerusalem has multiplied her sins; that is why she has become unclean; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she moans and turns her face away. (...) ‘Behold, Jehovah, my misery, because the enemy triumphs!’” (Lam. 1:8).

With a pendular rhythm, the media announces the unworthy fall of ministers of Jesus Christ, whose disqualifications legitimately scandalize believers as well as non-believers. In recent weeks, unfortunately, there are no longer isolated cases of pedophilia or homosexuality that have been revealed, but serial offenses, accompanied by the denunciation of homosexual networks ravaging the very heart of the Vatican. The honor of Jesus Christ, the holiness of the Church, priestly dignity and even the Christian name are regarded as tainted. Many disoriented, saddened or even disgusted faithful ponder these events.

These few considerations will provide them with a few insights for themselves and their loved ones.

Most Serious Faults

The sins incriminated are among the most serious faults. Homosexuality is one of the four sins that cry to Heaven for vengeance; as for pedophilia, its odious character is even more revolting *a fortiori* when these sins are committed by priests whose sanctity of state should elevate them to the summit of perfection.



If they do not perform penance, these men risk falling into the hands of the “vengeful God.” But if they repent and strive to repair their evils, we cannot doubt for a moment that the infinite mercy of God would be accorded to them. No human effort can stifle divine goodness. God demonstrates His converting power in the history of salvation by which He can instantly soften the hearts of the “good thieves.”

If these sins and their penance fall mainly on those who commit them, the prayer and the atonement must be the lot of all Christians, especially the priests. Christ, who was innocent, gave the example by expiating the faults of sinners. Every scandal in the Church must be an invitation to her children toward a life of prayer and penance. Mercy is not only forgiving, but also takes part in expiation.

Notwithstanding this just indignation and necessary atonement, the strong publicity given to these scandals leads one to wonder why the revelations only target Catholic priests and not the representatives of other religions, lay educators, and guilty parents. No doubt it must be remembered that the fault of a priest is more serious than that of any other man. But is it always the suffering of the victims that motivates the news, or is it the identity of the culprit?

The Shadow of Satan

Behind the all too dark reality and the indiscreet display that is made of these scandals stands the shadow of Satan who has a hatred of priests. He strives to make them fall into sin to better drag the priests publically through the mud and with them the honor of the divine master.

If it is right to punish the culprits and make them known to society, it is just as true to remember the many holy priests who have illuminated the Church with their purity and dedication to the youth. Is it necessary to recall the names of St. John Bosco, St. John Baptist de la Salle, St. Michael Garricoits, and Fr. Timon David? Is it necessary to point out the myriad of religious and priests who have devoted their whole lives, often in admirable discretion, to the education of youth? The betrayal of Judas must

not make us forget the martyrdom of the 11 other apostles. Let us not be so overwhelmed with these scandals that we forget that Europe was the place of the highest civilization precisely because it was Catholic. One of the Church’s finest titles of glory is to have raised childhood out of the sad condition it suffered due to paganism.

If we are rightly scandalized by the physical abuse of innocent people, we should be even moreso before the vast majority of modern childhoods. These souls are unjustly deprived of God and the supernatural life by a secular and atheistic education.

At the Origin of These Evils

In the face of these scandals, the nagging question remains: how did we get here? The main causes are ecclesial and profane. Firstly, at the level of the Church, beyond malice and personal weakness, it is evident that there were flaws or even mistakes in the appointment of ecclesiastical superiors, the selection and training of candidates for the priesthood, and the absence of sanctions. It is unlikely, for example, that true homosexual networks have been able to build and maintain themselves, permitting their members to co-opt to the highest positions.

For several decades, before and after the Council, liberalism, progressivism, and naturalism have produced their deleterious effects in many consecrated souls. The disastrous experience of “working priests” was a blatant illustration of this: the priest should be a man like all others; he should work at the factory, no longer wear his ecclesiastical clothing; he should mingle with others. The result was not long in coming and most of these unfortunate priests married and abandoned the priesthood. In saying that it was no longer necessary to condemn the world, speak about sin and the end of life, or to “insist” upon sexual morality that, on the contrary, it was necessary to show openness and to magnify the dignity of man and the human body, what happened? Christian humility, mortification, asceticism, rules of prudence, frequent confession, assiduous prayer, and modesty have been insidiously eclipsed.

The great movement of openness to the

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world advocated by Paul VI during the closing of the Council introduced the spirit of the world with its vices into the sanctuary of the Church.

St. Paul warned the Romans: the sin of infidelity is punished by blindness that leads to sins against nature (Rom. Ch. I). The phenomenon is tragically confirmed in the Church of God: the crisis of faith without precedent is correlatively accompanied by a disastrous moral crisis. It is striking to note that the countries most affected by these evils are those most marked by liberalism and progressivism.

At the level of society: The media has done a fine job of revealing the immorality of religious ministers as if the origin was found solely in the Catholic Church. The problem is more complex; the Church is not of the world but her children live in the world. There is a reciprocal influence that appears in the current scandals. Contemporary society is reaching peaks of immorality: the cinema, internet, television, theater, advertising on any medium, and “art” exhibitions. The media as a whole broadcasts an omnipresent and constant message of lust in its images, the subjects discussed, and the “models” presented.

Promoted by the media, lust and its consequences are institutionalized and legalized by political power: abortion, promotion of homosexuality, “sex education” at school, birth control given to young women, funding of organized pressure groups, *etc.*

And not only is lust encouraged—in almost every form—but those who oppose it are vilified, ridiculed, or even condemned. How many times is the Church mocked because within this world of sin, she advocates authentic consecrated chastity and true chastity in marriage!

Is it any surprise that in this hedonistic and pornographic climate where the slightest sexual innuendo is warmly applauded, men who are consecrated and living in the world are morally weakened, and that the proportion of “rotten fruits” is increased? In our circles of Tradition, we often find the misdeeds to civil society caused by the separation of Church and State. Today, another misdeed is tragically manifested in the wrong done to the Church by the paganization of

the world.

Toward a Reform of the Church?

The situation of the Church is such today that it does not merely require measures of recovery, or, even less so, a relaxation of the priestly requirements, but a real reform.

Without a doubt, it is necessary to change the number of superiors, to ensure the application of penalties, the training of seminarians, and the reinstatement of prudential measures, but all these measures will be sterile if they are not based on an in-depth reform, firstly, of priestly sanctity, secondly, of Christian families from which the majority of solid vocations emerge.

In the Church of God, every authentic reform begins with a restoration of theological life *i.e.* the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. May it please God that this corruption of morals is a providential sign that opens the eyes of many so that the deep and doctrinal causes of this crisis in the Church may finally be discerned and treated. May the life of faith, prayer and penance of Christians hasten this blessed day!

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.



The Subject of Priestly Scandal

in the *Dialogue* of St. Catherine of Siena

by St. Catherine of Siena

While the scandals some of God's ministers commit infamous acts that defile the Church of God, it could be of use to us to reread these extracts from the *Dialogue* of St. Catherine of Siena. As was witnessed by Blessed Raymond of Capoue, her confessor, this work is composed of the revelations of God the Father to the saint, who dictated them in her ecstasies or were heard by her. Their principal interest for us resides in the supernatural spirit with which these priestly scandals must be judged.

Exigence of Sanctity

"I have made them sacred and have called them my priests because I have charged them to give myself to you...angels do not possess this dignity. I have given it to men whom I have chosen for my ministers. I have established them like the angels and they must be terrestrial angels in this life. I demand purity and chastity from all souls; I will that they love me and their neighbor, aid their neighbor as they are able, assist their neighbor by their prayers and living in union with

them, as I have already told you in the treating of this subject. But I expect a much greater purity from my ministers; I demand of them a greater love for me and their neighbor to whom they must administer the body and blood of my Son with ardent charity, thirst for the salvation of souls, and for the praise and glory of my name."

The Guiltiness of Priests

"O temples of the demon! I have chosen you to be angels upon earth, but you are demons; you >

Theme Scandal

do his work! Demons spread their shadows and become cruel executioners. They strive, using their best efforts, temptations and attacks, to destroy grace in souls by making them fall into mortal sin...these evil, unworthy priests, called my ministers, are devils incarnate because by their faults they submit themselves to the will of the demon and they fulfill his functions. They distribute me, the true Sun, in the midst of the shadows of mortal sin and they spread the shadows of their guilty and disorderly lives among reasonable creatures who are confided to them. They trouble and scandalize those that see them live their lives thus, and often due to their bad examples and paths of evil and error, they repel others far from grace and the way of truth.”

Unworthy Priests

“Do not let their vices become a roadblock. Follow my doctrine alone...I am the good and

eternal God; I reward all good and punish all evil. I will not withhold my vengeance. My justice will not spare them because they have had the honor of being my ministers. They will on the contrary, if they do not convert, be punished more severely than others because they will have received more of my goodness; the more they miserably offend me, the more they will be worthy of punishment. You see that they are indeed demons, rather than my elect, of whom I have spoken to you of the angels upon earth who fulfill the functions of the angels.”

Sodomite Priests

“The fools have darkened the light of their intelligence; they no longer see the corruption and the mire in which they are buried. This sin causes me extreme horror such that, to punish this, my vengeance swallowed five cities. My justice cannot withstand this sin which





causes me so much horror...you see, my beloved daughter, how much this sin is odious to me in every creature: but imagine that it must irritate me all the more in those whom I have called to live a life in continence and above all those whom I have separated from the world by the religious or priestly life in order that they may bear fruit in the mystical body of the Church. You could never understand how much this sin displeases me more in those [souls] than in all who live in the world or those who should live in continence.

“All are guilty; the laity are not excused by the sins of their pastors, nor the pastors by those of the laity.”

The Cause

After having pointed out the pride of the unworthy clerics, the Father names others who are responsible:

“All of these evils are caused by superiors who

do not watch over those who are confided to them.”

What Reaction Must We Have Before All of These Scandals?

“All that I have told you, my daughter, is to make you weep more bitterly over the blindness of those who are in this state of damnation, for you to know my mercy better in order that you may place all of your confidence in this mercy, and that you invoke it in presenting these ministers of the holy Church and the universe before me. The more that you offer me these tender and sorrowful desires for them, the more that you witness the love you have for me. Neither yourself, nor my ministers can be useful to me, but you must render me service by this means.”

“Yes, I will let myself be influenced by these desires, tears and prayers of my servants; I will give mercy to my Spouse in reforming Her by holy and good shepherds...I have told you these things...so that you are more ardent in offering me your sweet, tender, and beloved desires for the guilty ones...I do not wish that [their faults] alter the respect due towards them. I have shown you the excellence of my holy ministers in whom shines the precious gem of virtue and justice.”

“Now, my dear daughter, I invite you all, you and my other servants, to mourn over these dead, and to stay like faithful sheep in the garden of the holy Church, nourishing yourselves continually with holy desires, and offering me the incense of your continual prayers for them because I want to show mercy to the world. Do not let yourself be distracted by anything, neither by hurt, nor by prosperity. Do not lift up your head by impatience or by disordered joy, but humbly apply yourself to procure my honor, the salvation of souls, and the reform of the holy Church. You thus prove to me that you love me in truth. You know that I have shown you this: that I want you to be faithful sheep who always nourish yourselves in the garden of the holy Church enduring weariness and pain until the hour of death.”

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.







“We should seek to create within our houses, priories, schools, and seminaries, an ambiance of sanctity, zeal, fervor, charity, and generosity. We must follow this ideal by encouraging what is good and virtuous and chasing away scandal.”

Archbishop Lefebvre with his priests and seminarians in 1957

The Sin of Scandal

Committed by Priests

As Seen by Archbishop Lefebvre

by Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

“By definition, scandal is an action of lesser consequence that leads another to sin which is an occasion of spiritual ruin.”—Archbishop Lefebvre quoting St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, II. II, q. 40, a. 1-3).

Scandal is a sin against the virtue of charity to our neighbor, “because charity commands us to watch over the salvation of our neighbor” (*ibid*).

Scandal or Edification?

“The scandal of secularism is the greatest because it gives the most detestable example.” An entire society, an entire nation which has become atheistic by an anti-Christian or atheistic political regime... On the other hand, the Archbishop liked to say, a nation, a State where the laws and customs are deeply Christian, and therefore Catholic, saves souls. The good examples given by Catholic leaders of State give these immensely edifying examples to a whole nation.

“I remember,” said Archbishop Lefebvre, “having arrived at the seminary in Rome with fallacious ideas. I was persuaded that it was good that the



¹ Archbishop Lefebvre, *Spiritual Conferences*, Ecône, November 30, 1976; *The Little Story of My Long Life*, p.26.

² Archbishop Lefebvre, *Spiritual Conferences*, Ecône, May 18-19, 1972, September 25, 1972.

³ Synthesis of several spiritual conferences of Archbishop Lefebvre on the common life of the clergy.

State was separate from the Church, that the State doesn't call itself Christian. It was in listening to the conversations of my older classmates, but above all my professors and the rector of the seminary, that I understood that I was liberal! That it was necessary for me to carry out my conversion! I was, unknowingly, a victim "scandalized" by the ambient secularism which reigned in France at that time.

It was the encyclicals of Popes Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII, St. Pius X, *etc.*, that helped conform my judgment to the thoughts of the Church. I understood that I had to judge history, events, and men in the light of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His reign."¹

Scandal Given by the Priest and its Remedy

"There are also scandals given by priests: lack of piety, negligence in the church, poor upkeep of altars, of sacred linens, *etc.* Religion, for the faithful, is worth what the priests are worth.

There are also imprudent behaviors committed by our priests: undignified gestures, foul language, or alas, grave sins like alcohol addiction, anger, and violence, which can destroy a parish after having destroyed the reputation of the priest."²

Since the 1970's, the marriage of this or that priest from a parish scandalized the faithful, but since the 1980's, Archbishop Lefebvre heard the fruits of infamous vices practiced within the Roman clergy itself. After sharing the topic of the increasing corruption of clerics to his seminarians, he indicated the remedy to them: the sanctity of the priesthood, the virtue of chastity, of sobriety, of the prudence of the priest. He saw the rotten fruit of Vatican II in these disordered priestly works: "They no longer have," he said, "they no longer have the grace that is necessary for taking up their celibacy!"

The Common Life of the Clergy— Remedy for Sacerdotal Disorder

It is here that Archbishop Lefebvre insisted upon the importance of common life for the clergy. It was a sort of charism that the Archbishop had in creating what he called "the priory" of the priestly Society of Saint Pius X. He detailed the advantages and the exigencies:

"It is a common life of habitation, of prayer, of charity, of mutual support, in which each is responsible for the good example he gives. Each priest is required to have discreet vigilance over the regular presence of his confreres in the moments of prayer, above all during the common morning meditation under the paternal authority of the Prior. It is how I lived in Gabon, then in Dakar with the Holy Ghost Fathers. Thus, normally all is lived peacefully. The regulation of common life in the seminary also applies to the life in a priory. The clergy is trained in the imitation of religious like the missionary priests of St. Vincent de Paul or the '*Messieurs of Saint-Sulpice*,' to participate with delight in a life in common at table, at prayer, in the apostolate. This is a sort of paradise on earth for the priest."³

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A Personal Testimony

If I may give an example, I would mention a number of priests whom I knew in my adolescence. I would say that all, without exception, sustained and nourished my desire to become a priest like them: A priest named Mary celebrated the Sunday Mass at the church of Saint Sulpice in Paris—dialogue Mass in Latin and facing God—with an overwhelming piety; a priest named Leparoux was constantly in the confessional like another Curé of Ars, seated beside his penitents, young and old; a good priest, Fr. Gillet, preached the doctrine of Christian virtue in our catechism.

Later, desirous of entering the seminary but not knowing where, I met the venerable and dear Fr. Louis Coache, in his country parish in Montjavoult. He told me quite simply about his life of mental prayer: “I spend part of my time in the church before the tabernacle; I am the guard dog of Our Lord: I look at Him and He looks at me.”

And my dear high school chaplain! He was all-encouraging with a kind voice among our distractions and troubles. He nourished our souls once a week by showing us the apostolic zeal of St. Paul in his travels, storms, flagellations, imprisonment, fastings, and watchings.

Nothing impure or harmful appeared in the teaching of the evangelical beatitudes which was the program of our second year of “catechism of perseverance” after confirmation. Everything encouraged us to live a holy and missionary life.

The Edification Given by Model Professors

I will finish by giving some memories from my dear seminary of St. Pius X in Ecône during the years 1971-1977. Archbishop Lefebvre desired that the Swiss Canon, Fr. Berthod, should be rector. He was a theologian, a previous student of Fr. Santiago Ramirez, O.P. in Fribourg, a shy and likeable moralist who was faithful to St. Thomas “*durch und durch*” [through and through]. There was also Fr. Edward Guillou, a Benedictine religious from Paris penetrated with liturgical piety, who denounced to us the anti-liturgical heresy of the modernists.

I had the dear Fr. De la Presle as spiritual director, a gentle Discalced Carmelite, who introduced me to the exigencies of the love of God according to St. John of the Cross. And the delightful Dominican Fathers of Fribourg: the teacher of scripture Ceslas Spicq, who exposed the important points against the menacing allegorical modernist. And the dogmatician, Thomas Mehrele, who allowed us to reach the depths of St. Thomas in his Latin text. He also denounced the heresies of Karl Rahner concerning the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption: two religious of exemplary piety whom we would only approach with the greatest respect for their knowledge and orthodoxy. However, the jokes and holy freedom of expression that these men made from time to time would never have dared to be expressed from the pulpit of the University of Fribourg...



The Example of Our Venerable Founder

⁴ Archbishop Lefebvre, *Priestly Retreat*, Ecône, September 21, 1979.

⁵ Archbishop Lefebvre, *Circular Letter*, Dakar, 1965, “For a true update,” *Pastoral Letters and Writings*, p. 224.

⁶ Archbishop Lefebvre, *Circular Letter*, with some precisions from Fr. Gaston Courtois, “To Succeed with Children,” p. 42-43; and Young Priest, *Practical Notes for the priesthood*, 1950, p. 146-147.

Above all, our venerable founder edified us by the care of his cassock, and his impeccably polished shoes, which were reflections of his orderly and gentle soul, but were also reflections of his firmness, which inspired abnegation, poverty, and flight from the spirit of the world.

He made order reign everywhere—in the hallways, the dormitories, and souls. He delivered spiritual conferences in the evenings without an air of public speaking. The Archbishop showed us the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, His knowledge, wisdom, Cross, renouncement, priesthood, zeal for souls, and the sacrifice of the Mass; the Archbishop was a constant source of edification for us.

An Atmosphere of Manly Sanctity and Vigilance

Without a doubt, our venerable Archbishop listed the scandals within the Church. “Those scandals concerning false doctrines, foremost, since the Council; those of the sins of imprudence on the part of priests: words or gestures without self-mastery, those scandals with regard to children or young women, intemperance at table, flirtation with women, pseudo-dating in the confessional as opposed to true spiritual direction, *etc.*”⁴

But immediately after exposing these scandals, he re-fixed his gaze and those of the priests upon the Blessed Sacrament.

“We should seek to create within our houses, priories, schools, and seminaries, an ambiance of sanctity, zeal, fervor, charity, and generosity. We must follow this ideal by encouraging what is good and virtuous and chasing away scandal. There will certainly be difficulties, exercises in patience with charity, perseverance and firmness; one must reprimand and correct, but never endure tolerance regarding scandalous actions by immediately removing those that have caused the scandals.”⁵

He detailed the diverse kinds of scandals to drive out among clerics.

“There are scandals of weakness, imprudence, clumsiness; these are less grave. One teaches young clerics to be the masters of their affections, to avoid every gesture, or every word of affection toward children and young women: a brief glance and a firm handshake shows manly uprightness. Next, there are scandals from the sins of pride, the spirit of rebellion, a deceptive spirit—one that does not understand obedience. These scandals cannot be tolerated long-term without being a grave nuisance to the community. Finally, there are grave moral faults; if they appear more or less accepted, they go on to provoke a chain reaction of falls which poison a house, a diocese—one must attend to these without delay.”⁶

But our founder never cited scandals without proposing the remedy. Self-mastery, renouncement, priestly virtues, virtue of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, immolation of the priest with Jesus—priest and victim, the aid of the other sacraments, spiritual direction, spiritual retreats and of course a tender and profound devotion to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of priests.

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.



The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

The Epistle

by Fr. Christopher Danel

In the Mass, the Savior's entire work of redemption is shown forth and carried out, and the celebration of the Mass embraces in its several parts the whole operation of the Redeemer. As the Lord exercised during His mortal life the office of Mediator, thus He continues to exercise it in His Church, and that in a sacramental manner. There is a profound and interior connection between the teaching of truth and the mystery of the altar, between the word of God and the Divine Eternal Word, who was made flesh and who under the Eucharistic veil is again present and dwells among us.

— Monsignor Nicholas Gihl

Introduction

In this article we will examine the Epistle, 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 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 Teaching of Christ

The first office of the Redeemer consisted in teaching the truth and the law of God exteriorly by the words which fell from His lips, and interiorly by the light which He infused into hearts. Already the Prophet remarks that in the days of the Messiah “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea” (Is. 11: 9). Only after the Lord had as teacher of truth shown the way to Heaven did He die on the Cross the death of reconciliation, in order to unite man again in grace and love with God. Now all this is repeated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Before the Savior descends on the altar at the Consecration as a mystical victim, He speaks words of eternal life to us, first by His prophets and apostles, then through Himself. The Epistle and Gospel come before the sacrificial action. Thus, the announcement of the truth precedes the accomplishment of the sacrifice, for knowledge is the beginning of salvation. The living word of God is the seed whence proceeds the imperishable life of faith, which here below is perfected by grace and in the next life is transformed into glory.

Sacred Scripture

The Church with predilection and preference employs in her liturgy Scriptural words, because they are especially holy and venerable, efficacious and full of grace: they are, indeed, the words of God, words that have the Holy Ghost for their author. In the preceding part of the Mass we already frequently prayed in God’s words; but in the readings now following we have the word of God, by which He speaks to us and instructs us in all doctrine and truth. “For what things soever were written, were written for our instruction: that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). In the midst of a world fallen away from Christianity and hostile to the Church, amid all the sufferings and persecutions that oppress us, amid the storms that rage around us, the imperishable word of God, which does not pass away, though even Heaven and earth should pass

away, encourages and raises us up, and imparts life eternal to all who receive it with faith and docility.

Liturgical History

It is incontestable that from apostolic times the canonical or holy books have been read aloud at the assemblies of divine worship, and principally at the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice. St. Justin Martyr (+ 166 or 167), who describes the order of divine worship among Christians, says that at the Sunday assemblies the writings of the apostles (that is, the books of the New Testament) or the writings of the prophets were read. In the first four centuries the different books of the Bible were read serially (*lectio continua* or *in continua serie*), as they are still in the Breviary. For the highest feasts there were chosen already from the beginning appropriate passages, that is, such passages as had reference to the mysteries celebrated. With the progressive evolution of the ecclesiastical year the *lectio continua* was replaced by a series of biblical extracts arranged for the various feasts and festal seasons. In this matter St. Jerome, who by order of Pope Damasus I (366-384), completed, corrected, and perfected the traditional arrangement of the biblical extracts for the Mass, deserves great credit.

According to a general rule that has few exceptions, every Mass formula has two Biblical readings, the first of which is called the Epistle and the other the Gospel. Ember Wednesdays have two lessons before the Gospel, while on Ember Saturdays there are six lessons (five from the Old Testament and one from the New) before the Gospel. These were formerly read by 12 lectors, each lesson read first in Latin and then in Greek. In the pope’s high mass the Epistle and Gospel are still sung both in Latin and Greek.

The first reading may be taken from any part of the Old and New Testaments; but generally the Epistle is taken from the writings of the apostles. Hence it is that the name *Epistola*, that is, *letter*, was used to designate the first lesson, even when it was not taken from the Epistles of the apostles, but from some other part of Holy Scripture. In regard to the superscription *Lectio libri* >

Spirituality

Sapientiae, it is to be observed that this heading is used not merely for extracts from the Book of Wisdom (Sapientia), but also for portions from Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, and Proverbs. All these taken together are called by the Fathers and in the liturgy Books of Wisdom (*Libri Sapientiales*).

The Ceremonies

From the fact that the Epistle was not sung in former times, but only read, it is introduced with the title *Lectio*, that is, lesson. Subsequent development led to the mode of delivering the Epistle in a tone between singing and simple reading, as is still described in the *Liber Usualis* (although a more ornate tone is frequently used). The simple tone is a manner of singing in which the whole text is delivered in a monotone without modulation, except at an interrogation the voice descends half a tone, but in the last syllable it returns to the dominant tone. The rubrics designate this as chanting (*subdiaconus cantat Epistolam alta voce*). The ancient liturgists called it *choraliter legere*, meaning “reading in

a choral manner.” This way of choral reading served to distinguish the Epistle from the Gospel, as the tone of the former is more restrained, while the singing tone of the Gospel is more melodious and, therefore, more festive.

A cleric ordained to the minor order of *lector* had charge of reading the Epistle perhaps up to the fifth century; but from that time forward the solemn reading of the Epistle was assigned to the subdeacon, who only since the 14th century was especially empowered thereto by the handing to him at his ordination of the book of the Epistles, while it is the office of the deacon to sing the Gospel. In former times the lectors were even allowed to read the Gospel. St. Cyprian mentions this when speaking of the confessors Aurelius and Celerinus whom he had ordained lectors. In a sung Mass without the assistance of the deacon and subdeacon, a lector in surplice may sing the Epistle (*Ritus servandus*, VI, 8). [The 1962 *Ritus servandus* expanded this role by using the term *ministrante* in the cited text.]

In ancient churches, in the space between the sanctuary and the nave of the church, there stood the *ambo*, that is, an immovable tribune or oblong pulpit, which was ascended by a few steps. The





word *ambo* is derived from the Greek *anabaino* or *ambaino* (to ascend); it is also called a *bema*, which designates a step, tribune, or rostrum. If a church had two ambos, as seen in some ancient basilicas, then one served for the reading of the Gospel and the other for that of the Epistle. If there was but one ambo, then the Gospel was read from the highest step and the Epistle from a lower one. The subdeacon no longer reads the Epistle to the people from the ambo, as was formerly done till towards the end of the Middle Ages, but at the left side of the sanctuary turned towards the altar. He must, nevertheless, both before and after reading it make a genuflection in the middle of the altar, as if he had gone to and returned from an ambo on the Gospel side.

Epistle Subordinate to the Gospel

The prominence due to the Gospel over the Epistle was and is now expressed in various ways. The ceremonies surrounding the chanting of the Gospel are very evident, but, as seen in the preceding paragraphs, this prominence is also shown by the tone of delivery, by the person of the reader, and the place of reading. In addition, the subdeacon receives the blessing from the celebrant, who represents Christ, only after he has finished reading, because the Old Law, symbolized by the Epistle, was fulfilled, or annulled by Christ (Mt. 5:17-20); the deacon, on the contrary, is blessed by the celebrant before he reads the Gospel, because the Gospel is derived from Christ. Furthermore, from the most ancient times it is customary to sit with head covered in choir at the solemn reading of the Epistle, whilst from the beginning, the Gospel was listened to standing and with head uncovered. The subordination of the Epistle to the Gospel is signified likewise by the position which both occupy in the rite of the Mass: the Epistle precedes and makes way for the Gospel.

The Gospel places before our eyes the life of Jesus Christ, the word and the example of the Eternal Wisdom made flesh; in it appears the God-man Himself teaching and acting, suffering and triumphing while in the Epistles the Holy

Ghost speaks to us, instructs and admonishes us only by His human messengers and servants. Hence, it is usually said that the instruction of the people takes place at first in the Epistle, in a preparatory and imperfect manner through the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, but that the faithful are more perfectly instructed through the teachings of Christ as contained in the Gospel (*Cf. Summa Theologica* III, q. 83, a. 4). According to the liturgies of the Middle Ages, the Epistle precedes the Gospel, because it represents the law and the prophets, or the efficacy of the Precursor of Christ, or the preaching of the 72 disciples, who prepared the way for the Savior. The Epistle, therefore, is read before the Gospel because it is subordinate to it, prepares for it, paves the way for it, that is, leads to the understanding of it.

Deo Gratias

At the conclusion of the Epistle the acolyte, in the name of the people, answers: *Deo gratias!*—*Thanks be to God!* What is more befitting than that we should thank the Lord from the bottom of our heart for the divine instruction which He has imparted to us by the mouth of His messenger? In the Epistle, Almighty God, so to speak, sends a letter, a writing from Heaven, to us miserable creatures; should we not with faith and reverence receive His words which are of infinite dignity, power and depth of meaning, and obey them with cheerfulness and alacrity? Every word emanating from the mouth of God is supernatural and heavenly food for the life of the soul. Holy Scripture more than any other book is fit “to instruct us unto salvation, to teach, to reprove, to correct, to indoctrinate in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:15-17). By means of the biblical readings the minister of God plants and waters the field of our heart; let us be grateful for this, and the Lord will then give the increase, so that the heavenly seed of the living word may germinate and thrive, blossom and produce fruit thirty, sixty and a hundredfold.





Faithful after a retreat at the chapel of Zapotiltic, Mexico



Darkness or Light from Christ?

by Candidus

Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in the Italian edition of *SiSiNoNo* on February 16, 2018.

I have on my desk a letter that deserves an answer which can be useful to all. The reader writes: “If all you write about in several publications and in your books is true, I am discovering a Catholicism marvelously beautiful and magnificent. It is not true, then, that the Church is obscurantist, as the light that emanates from her message is so abundant that it looks as if the sun had risen in our history.”

Who is the Obscurantist One?

In the 18th century, the Illuminists—the ones who thought that with the “light” of human reason

all problems could be solved—started accusing the Catholic Church of being obscurantist, that is to willingly hide the true problems from man and to keep him ignorant, then to enslave man by requiring obedience to absurdities unacceptable to human reason. The most Christian centuries, like those of the Middle Ages, in their opinion had been dark centuries, gloomy, whereas “the light” started shining only with the “Renaissance” and only with the French Revolution we entered the contemporary age with all its progress.

Catholicism then, according to them, is obscurantist, is darkness. Reason only is, then, light and progress that prevails.

But we believers do not bend and “do not



submit.” Rather, we ask a question and, if you like, as we say nowadays, a challenge: Which is obscurantist?” Catholicism or Illuminism? The believer, in love with Christ, or he who refuses Him and His Church?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, stands out at the beginning of the last 2,000 years, ready to face the third millennium and the centuries to come, more alive than ever, present and operating in history through His Church. History is full, overflowing with Him and His works.

He is the master of humanity, a master capable of astonishing by solving, with His light, any problem of life and society. He promised it: “He that follows me, walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12).

Which Ones are Jesus’ Works?

It will suffice to reflect a bit, even only superficially on history, to discover all that Jesus has accomplished through His Church.

- Rome and its empire were horribly corrupted, despite their power and organization. Slavery and oppression of the weakest, the most immoderate vices involved men, women, and children. The *Satyricon* by Petronius is the mirror of this corruption of the society of the first century, the century of Augustus and Nero. Well, in that Rome and its empire the apostles of Jesus arrived, their weapons being only truth and love. That world, so different from the Gospel, converted: slavery collapsed, men, women and youth were so renewed in their being that they astonished their peers and became role models for every age and everywhere: the Christian martyrs and virgins.
- Italy and all of Europe were swamped by the “barbarians.” They were people coming from the East, full of vitality, who crushed the Roman generals and legions, softened in their vices. Society was swept and put on fire by the violence...pontiffs and bishops living during these centuries announced the Gospel to the “barbarians” of this devastating march. Jesus conquered them, transformed them, made them sons of God and made them brothers to one another and to Roman society, already partially

Christian. From this sprang out a civilization which was the origin of Europe.

The miracle of the conversion to Christ, thus, of a new civilization in His image, took shape and was repeated in every land in Europe and beyond Europe, as far as the missionaries reached: from Germany to England, and to Iceland, from Asia to the Americas.

For centuries, Jesus has been light, salt, leaven, good seed that grows, takes hold, expands, transforms. Thus the time came when Church, family, society, civic power, work, joys and sorrows, the school and the public square, even though among human sins and miseries, became “*one in Christ*.” Marvelous cathedrals arose, and, under their shade (or rather under their light!) the universities were born. At the light of Christ the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas and the *Comedy* of Dante were written; the brushes of Cimabue and of Giotto were at work, the arts, the crafts, social and political life, culture and commerce flourished in a marvelous synthesis of man become “one in Christ.”

Is all this obscurantism? Is all this darkness, superstition, something to forget, or something of which to be ashamed? Europe would not have come into being with all its grandeurs, the Europe that became teacher of the world, if Jesus Christ had not been its origin. Is this obscurantism?

- When men in the 15th and 16th centuries forgot about God or started to put only themselves at the center of attention, paganism came back with all its vices, its orgies, and its corruption which had rotted Europe. So it is, that when man, instead of contemplating Heaven with God in it, looks at himself, he starts quickly to roll in the mud, like a well-known animal...who would deny it?

Here again is the marvel. The Church, torn by Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII, even if all its members were tempted by the miseries of this world, but always in the care of Jesus Christ and always holy like Him, found a new vitality, an overflowing vitality. There bloomed saints, an endless number of saints: Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, >



Philip Neri, Aloysius Gonzaga, Pius V, Charles Borromeo, Joseph Calasanz, Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul, John de La Salle, and the list could go on endlessly; saints who repaired the fiber of the wounded society by the strength of truth and love. This is another wonder from Christ.

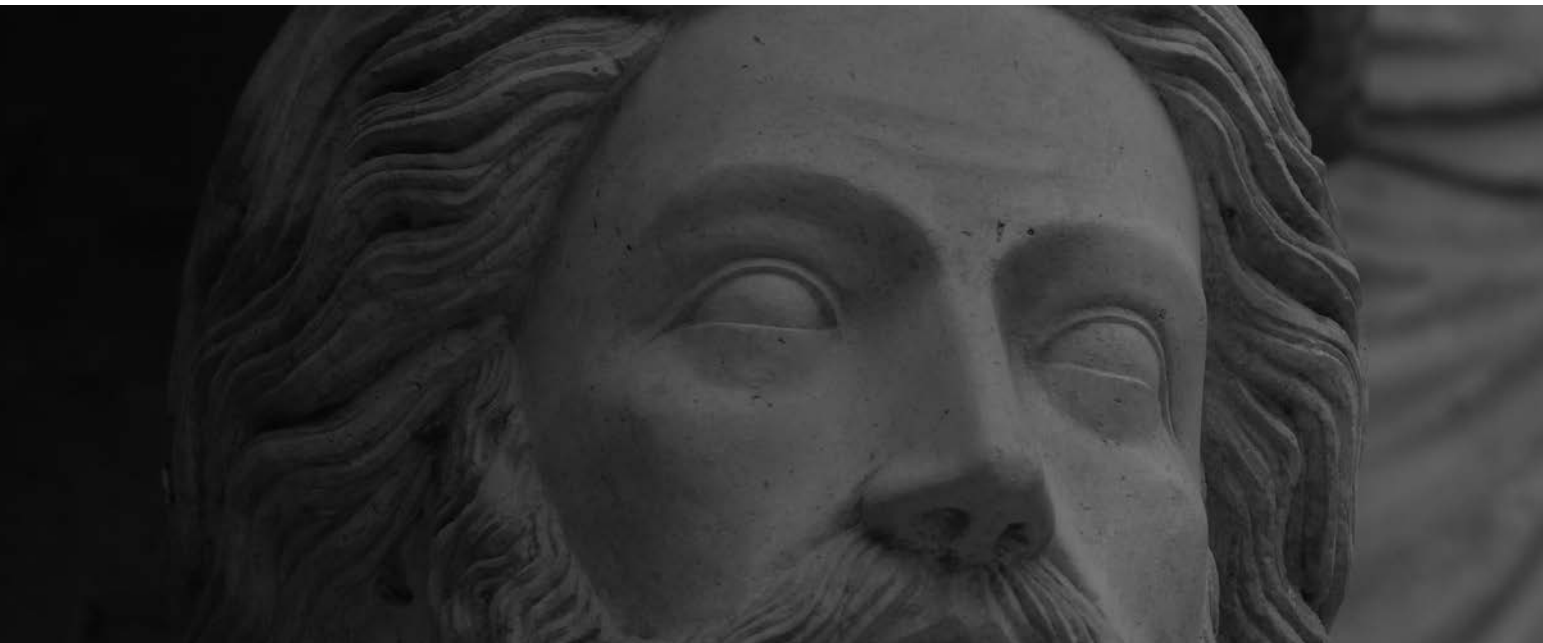
Is all this, then, obscurantism?

it does not hold, does not stand.

Immediately, right after these people spoke, flashes of fire and death appeared. Were they the Illuminati or “Lucifer’s followers?”

It is man who is dying—because his Christ has been denied—in the French Revolution (think about the “terror” and the genocide of the Catholic Vendée) and in the legislation of the 1800s.

It is man who dies in the world wars of the



Man is Fulfilled in Christ

“Crush the infamous one” proclaimed Voltaire in the mid-1700s. “The infamous one” to be crushed was meant to be the Catholic Church. Then came Marx saying that “religion is the opium of the people” and proposed a unified proletariat against States, property owners, and the Church. Next came Nietzsche who said that “God is dead” and that man must be, by will of power, a superman. Kant in the 1700s had already tried to lay the foundations of a morality for the godless man, where man is law to himself.

In a few words: man is the only protagonist of society, man builds on his own, because “Either God is not there, or does not belong there.” This is the secular culture dominating today’s world, but

last century, in communist Russia and in its “satellite” countries, in the China of Mao, in the extermination camps of Stalin and Hitler.

It is man who dies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and it is still man who dies in the poor and miserable vision of life of our own days “with no love and no Christ,” as the secular poet Salvatore Quasimodo (who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1959) also admitted.

It is man who dies, stuffed in affluence, desperate and suicidal in these terrible years of ours. It is man who dies of drugs, of sex, of AIDS. It is man who dies in the “trips” of the discos and in the massacres of Saturday night, in the families disintegrated by passing fancies, by “free love,” by



divorce, in the millions of aborted children, killed before seeing the light.

It is man who dies in the nausea and boredom which lead to inconsiderate actions, done “just to do something” as in a game, to experience new emotions.

Unfortunately—and this is the gravest thing—it is God who dies and by consequence it is man who dies in a “theology without Christ,” which

times, that 2,000 years of holy Catholic Tradition have transmitted, despite all, up to our time.

The work is massive. But in the third millennium Jesus is the only one left who guarantees the value of human reason, the dignity of the person, the sanctity of human life, who points the way to real civilization, who announces the eternal destiny of man. Whoever has authority, but does not speak according to

is taught also by the higher ranks, by those who, like priests, theologians and bishops, should be only a beacon of light, of the light of Jesus Christ in this darkened world. This is the world without Christ, turned into an enemy of man, which has penetrated also among churchmen.

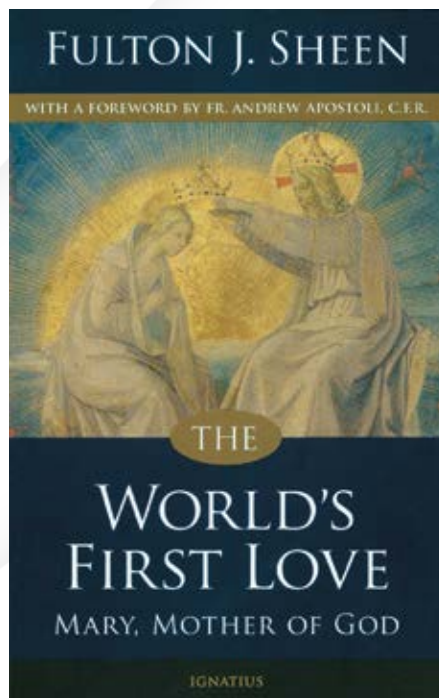
Well, then, ladies and gentlemen, who is the obscurantist?

One who denies God and rejects Jesus Christ and His Church, what can such a man boast about? Maybe that he is happier and worthier than others? Maybe he can brag about the state of ruin of our days? Please, let us stop kidding ourselves! Such people need to ask forgiveness: “Lord, have pity on me!” and then go back to the truth of all

His authority, may tremble and shake, but Jesus Christ does not tremble, nor waver: He is the invincible, the eternal.

We must start over with vigor and courage from Him, because man is fulfilled, is saved only in Christ, as Ernest Hello (19th-century French writer of theology, philosophy, and literature) wrote: “We need Christianity as it is: fiery! Jesus is passion, fervor, fire and conquest. To convert is to turn to Jesus who is the devouring fire and the impetus of joy.”

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The 75th Anniversary of D-Day:

Why Do You Come Back to Normandy?

by an American Monk

Editor's Note: This article was written by an American monk, son of a veteran, after having discovered this piece of history from the first chaplain parachutist fallen on D-Day, also a monk, the Rev. Fr. Ignace Maternowski. His body was found near the Pont La Fiere, scene of the celebrated battle, the bloodiest of the liberation of Normandy. Faced with the fear of the increasing number of wounded, the monk-chaplain crossed the front lines to ask the commander of the German forces the authorization to assemble the wounded from both sides in one station of first aid. The authorization obtained, the priest returned toward the line of the American parachutists, but a German sniper, who ignored the agreement, shot him in the back. Later, the German authorities asked for pardon.

Why Do You Come Back to Normandy?

For the reason of the horrors of every war, what veteran would not wish to just put everything behind him? To this question, I propose the following several responses.

Firstly, from a superficial perspective, one

could say that the old combat soldier was returning to Normandy in order to relive the glory of the victory, the fight, or to participate (with great honor) in the military and civilian celebrations such as the ceremonies and parades that commemorate the original date of the battles and which are frequently held around the >

battle site itself.

In a solemn but cordial climate, one renews friendships, makes conversation, lays wreaths down, recollects oneself in silence to commemorate one's fallen comrades, *etc.*

All of these things are done as veterans, but also as survivors.

There is no need for eloquent words; the veterans who return to Normandy relive the sentiments of the end of a great conflict.

It is already a lot to take in.

But all of this only scratches the surface of the public manifestations organized by diverse authorities. It is evident that one makes a great effort in order not to forget the price of the end of this vast war. To call this a gesture of commemorative honor is really an understatement.

Liberty, even though it is explained using hundreds of definitions, is not something that is free.

From 1939-1945, France was a country that was brutally occupied, oppressed, humiliated, and reduced to a police state. The first American soldiers to arrive had a difficult time restraining the French who, in their delirium of liberation, in seeing the Germans raise their hands as prisoners of war, were immediately tempted to indulge in violent reprisals.

To put these first aspects aside, I consider that other more personal reasons exist for which an American veteran soldier would return to France.

A Sense of Duty

On June 6, 1944, the American soldier arrived in Normandy to accomplish his mission, to do his duty of military service. This combines the wills of several unified nations in one sole will which demands that the soldier bind himself there where he is ordered.

The soldier is mobilized; he obeys; he advances; he retreats; he lunges toward the enemy; he plunges himself in chaos; he faces the fire of combat; he fights both physically and spiritually (body and soul); he is totally engaged. All of this is normal. But this "normal" means that there is also a very small chance that he will

leave alive. The soldier in combat continually lives in tension and fear. This combat provokes conflict from minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day. The intensity of combat is impossible to explain, even more so because the duration is indeterminable. And when this is multiplied by months and years, one can easily understand that the war veteran is marked forever: he is profoundly affected, stigmatized for life. The wounds are most often those that don't meet the eye. Humanly speaking, the soldier asks himself the question: is this war really "human" ...?

The numerous public accounts underline the fact that the war was not the same for all of the combatants. One distinguishes with reason the volunteers from those who were called "conscripts" [A person drafted for military or naval service].

Among the volunteers, the parachutists of J-Day were known and respected by reason of their grave and total sacrifice. Among the 13,700 men who jumped from planes after midnight, 3,000 were already dead before sunrise.

In contrast to certain selected soldiers, the conscripts were there on duty, for better or worse. They were less motivated; they fought to survive. But, in a less glorious context, heroism was seen all the same.

War for the combat soldier doesn't allow him to have an overall perspective, a bird's eye view, a view of the whole conflict like you see in films.

Understand well that war, for the soldier during combat, is merely the few hundred meters before him, behind him and at his sides. He doesn't see more than that. For him, war is a cold reality thrown in his face. He only knows his own horizon.

A World At War

A world war engages several countries; the whole world is implicated. It is enormous! But the combat soldier himself knows only a very small part.

What is more, the soldier doesn't know anything about the advances of the war; who is winning, losing... apart from the incoherent transmissions of poorly-connected walkie-



talkies. He ignores what is happening on the other fronts. The veteran who returns here, desires to better understand what actually happened. He needs to orient himself amidst the drama that he endured. He retraces the steps of his regiment; he rethinks his decisions, good or bad; he relives the moments of victory or defeat. He rediscovers the place where his best friend fell. He looks at the landscape, the roads, the battle fields where many secrets are buried which he would prefer to forget. To interpret these things, the old combatant must be both historian and student in order to understand the incomprehensible through which he lived.

The return to these places of war is not a simple visit to a cemetery or a search for the tomb of a comrade. I believe that the return of a veteran to Normandy is a pilgrimage, a spiritual march in search of serenity and peace deep within the soul. This is why the soldier returns here where he faced death and where he saw so many horrors.

After the struggle of war comes the duty of silence imposed by military law. In effect, before his return to civilian life, the soldier swears to remain silent concerning the [classified] events that he experienced. This makes it that much more important for him to return to the place where he fought. But now that the law of silence has now been lifted, he can experience seeing and perceiving the events of those days more clearly than ever in light of the numerous historical studies which have been authorized in our time.

At Omaha Beach, there is a simple reason for which a cemetery was erected above the

beach. This area was the site of an extreme concentration of human effort, an extreme intensity of heroic suffering, an extreme triumph of hope, and one remembers that the liberation of Europe began at this very place. The price of freedom being the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers. This is war; it is also the price of peace. This war overthrew social order in all of the countries of Europe. Despite a very opinionated concurrence of political context, the soldiers have come here to make an end. The landing places on the beaches possess therefore a sacred valor, both historical and spiritual. Here, blood ran, bullets whizzed, shells burst; yes, it was here that the war entered into its most terrible and deadly phase.

The thousands of crosses that cover the ground and the buried bodies of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice witness from now on that peace and liberty also began again here.

Peace and liberty are the most precious goods of people and individuals; they are the characters of social order and Christianity. This is, in my opinion, the most noble cause for which men accept to confront death.

For a young soldier of 18-19 years old thrown into the fire of combat, in the rage and intensity of the conflict, obliged to face the fiercest army in the world, Normandy will remain a sacred land forever; one cannot describe it otherwise. We are united in this return of the veterans to understand what remains of the war. War is something of a paradox; it is a mystery.

Thank you for reading this.

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.





The present-day cathedral was built between 1170 and the middle of the 13th century through the initiative of Bishop Arnulf. It was the seat of the Bishop of Lisieux until the Diocese of Lisieux was abolished under the Concordat of 1801 and merged into the Diocese of Bayeux. The edifice is 360 feet tall and is a national monument.

Lisieux

The Basilica of St. Thérèse
(1873-1897, Canonized 1925)

by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

The basilica was begun in 1929. My aunts remember seeing vast collection baskets made available to the visitors when it was under construction and Americans throwing dollars in them by the handful.

A Magnificent Exterior

The exterior: the bell tower is separate from the building at the far end of the esplanade. Here are the dimensions of the basilica: height of the dome: 312 feet from the level of the esplanade; length east-west, from the entrance to the apse: 312 feet; width of the aisle, 90 feet; width of the transept 164 feet high under the dome; the total area of 48,438 square feet make the Basilica of Lisieux one of the biggest churches built in the

20th century. The grand façade is flanked by two towers and surmounted by a triangular pediment. In the center, St. Thérèse, hands clasped in prayer, looks upon the pilgrims who have come to pray. The pediment divided into two levels, expresses the great triumph of St. Thérèse: on the upper level, the angels who welcomed her into Heaven; the lower level depicts the people who contributed to the glorification on earth of Thérèse; from left to right, the builder of the basilica and a group of pilgrims including children. The words inscribed horizontally give us the sentence: "O my God, you have surpassed all my expectations, and I will sing your mercies forever more," the antiphon of the Magnificat: "Blessed be the Lord for He has so glorified thy name today that your praise will always be on the lips of men." Lower down, the virtues are shown: faith, hope and charity between,



on the left, justice and prudence and on the right fortitude and temperance.

Between the arch and the gallery, the text gives the essential idea which runs through all the iconography: "Whoever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbleth himself shall be exalted." Around the arch, the months of the year, using familiar scenes, teach us that these lessons are valid in all circumstances. Immediately after the great west door is shown the classic scene from the Gospel: Jesus amid His apostles showing them the child as an example that everyone must follow if he wishes to enter the kingdom of Heaven. On each side of the main door, imposing statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, protectors of the Carmelite Order. The bas-reliefs show, on the left tower, St. Agnes; on the right, St. Cecilia; under the arch, on the left, the Annunciation; on the right, the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. On the side walls, we note the coat of arms of the nations in which the devotion to St. Thérèse has been the greatest. At the summit of the transept we find the Ark of Noah and St. Peter's boat. In the south courtyard is the main sacristy. On each side of the façade, a cloister runs along the top of the supporting walls. The south cloisters, on the right, are a place for meditation for those who wish to pray in silence. In the north cloister, to the left is a souvenir shop.

Inside this huge edifice, no part of the architecture, no columns obstruct the view: the sanctuary is elevated, 4,000 people can take part in the ceremonies. If we start with the right aisle, we see in the southern transept the monumental ciborium which holds the precious reliquary offered by Pius XI to the basilica. It contains a precious relic: two bones from the right arm of the saint. In the center of the balustrade there is a small relic that pilgrims particularly like to venerate. Following the aisle, one comes upon the sanctuary. The Blessed Sacrament is kept in the tabernacle on the high altar. On the tabernacle is a crucifix in bronze. An altar has been added between the stalls. The basilica holds 18 minor altars, each offered by a nation in *ex-voto* to St. Thérèse and dedicated to its respective patron. The names of the chapels are: United States, Portugal, Columbia, Argentina, Great Britain, Brazil, Scotland, Chile, Germany, Ukraine, Cuba,

Italy, Ireland, Spain, Canada, Mexico, Belgium-Netherlands, and Poland.

The Basilica's Mosaics

Mosaics are ever-present in the basilica. At the top of the triumphal arch, God the Father stretches out His arms in a gesture of creation and providence. On each side are the Biblical scenes that relate the numerous divine acts of God's mercy toward those who placed their hope in Him: in ascending order on the north wall, the archangel Raphael leads Tobias, the angel of God, comforting Agar and her son Ismael in the desert, Abraham's sacrifice, Jesse's tree. On the south wall: Daniel in the lion's den, Elias comforted by the angel, Moses and his people led by the angel of God toward the promised land. In the half dome that rises above the sanctuary, the theme of God's mercy is repeated; In the center, Christ is wearing a wide cloak held open by the Virgin Mary, standing, and St. Thérèse, kneeling. Christ is calling His followers, represented by the sheep, to shelter under His protection. Encompassing this scene, two architectural motifs make up the composition of divine love: Bethlehem over which there shines a star, and Jerusalem presenting the Cross.

We can ascend the dome by steps found on the right of the main door. The four pillars are in commemoration of the Evangelists. On the roof surface is shown the triumph that the heavenly Father reserves for those who have shown themselves to be His children within the Blessed Trinity, the eternal source of love. Christ as King and Mary as Queen of all Saints welcome and crown little Thérèse while the choir of angels surround her with an enormous crown of roses. Below the windows each of the Beatitudes is recalled in a text from the Gospels and the image of a saint whose life illustrated this teaching. Starting with the picture that is in the center of the aisles toward the choir, and following on the right: The beatitude of the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. It is illustrated by St. Francis of Assisi, talking to the birds and surrounded by the sheep and the wolf. The beatitude of the merciful: they will obtain mercy: St. Vincent de Paul is seen freeing the galley slaves, then with >





a nun belonging to the order of St. Vincent de Paul [The Sisters of Charity] looking after some orphans.

The beatitude of those who suffer persecution in the name of justice: theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. It is personified by Joan of Arc at the stake. A priest holds out the Cross to her. In the background is shown the old market square of Rouen. The beatitude of those who weep: they shall be comforted: St. Mary Magdalen is seen before Christ's tomb. The beatitude of those who hunger and thirst for justice: St. Teresa of Avila symbolically presenting the rules of the Carmelite Order that she revised, calms the angel of destruction who already has his sword raised over the world. In the background is shown St. John of the Cross. The beatitude of those who are meek: they shall inherit the earth. St. Francis de Sales in the mountains of the Chablais, behind him, St. Jane de Chantal. The beatitude of the peacemakers: they will be called children of God: St. Pius X is shown with on either side the horrors of war and the superior results of peace. The beatitude of the pure of heart: they shall see God. St. Cecilia receives a crown of roses from her husband Valerian; behind them one can see the executioner. Each of the eight scenes is 20 feet wide by 14.27 feet high. An elegant colonnade borders the round gallery. Right up to her celestial triumph, St. Thérèse demonstrates her loving generosity. She is never idle. She has only one idea in mind: To return to earth again to spread the word of love. This is the reason for the inscription of her celebrated promise on the tympanum of the dome: I wish to spend my time in Heaven doing good on earth. Her promise that she will cause a shower of roses to fall from Heaven in transformed in images. On the pendentive is found her other promise: I will redescend (angel of goodness), I will help priests (angel of vocations), the Missionaries (angel of missions), the whole church (angel of the church). Above the west gallery, the middle panel shows St. Thérèse surrounded by four popes who contributed to her glorification: the panel on the left shows the French provinces, recalling the fact that St. Thérèse was proclaimed the second Patroness of France; the panel on the right reminds us that St. Thérèse is the Patroness of Missions.

The fatherly attitude of God should inspire one's

soul to respond as did St. Thérèse by praising and singing His mercies. This is the theme inscribed on the great windows in the lateral bays which give, using the text that is richly illustrated and varied in its composition, the verses from the Psalm *Benedicite*, the Psalm of joy and praise. The soul should above all respond to the gift of God by the giving of oneself in return. This is illustrated in the great stained-glass window in the southern transept. An effort has been made here to translate the most significant page from the book *The Story of a Soul*: To be your spouse, O Jesus! To be a Carmelite...but I feel the desire for other vocations: warrior, priest, apostle, martyr... my vocation is love...thus I will be everything." The main theme in the center shows St. Thérèse kneeling at the foot of the Cross, receiving the shining light of Christ's love and transmitting it to other souls, thus resembling the fountain of life. In this way, she carried out all the vocations she wished to follow and so, there above from left to right, the virgins (Cecilia and Teresa of Avila), the warriors (St. Louis and Joan of Arc), the priests (St. Vincent de Paul and St. Jean Marie Vianney), the doctors (St. John of the Cross and Francis de Sales), the martyrs and missionaries (St. Stephen and St. Agnes, St. Francis Xavier and Theophane Vénard). Alongside this central scene have been accentuated the fundamental vocations of the saint: on the left, her desire to be a missionary (the scene from the Gospel showing the sending of the disciples), on the right, her desire for martyrdom (the massacre of the Innocents). You will have no difficulty noticing that the choice of people and scenes followed the known preferences of the saint. The great stained-glass in the northern transept contributes a new and important development to the main theme of God's paternal Providence toward man, using the Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd, which is known to have played a significant role in St. Thérèse's life. The chapel windows are devoted to the Stations of the Cross.

Inside the Crypt

The entrance to the crypt is on the right at the bottom of the basilica steps. One hundred

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Christian Culture

sixty-four feet long and ninety-eight feet wide, the crypt is entirely covered in marble and mosaics. All the iconography is directed towards expressing God's love for man and the love of men for God. The scriptural texts on the vault and on the floor, repeat this message repeatedly. The main altar is dedicated to St. Thérèse. The statue of the saint shows her eyes and arms raised toward the assurance of God's fatherly love. She seems to be rushing, with her arms outstretched like a child who runs trustingly into her father's arms, toward the divine Person who is beckoning to her. On the right of the main altar, the altar of the Virgin Mary is seen the bronze statue of the Virgin of the Smile,



who was so dear to St. Thérèse.

On the left, in the opposite aisle, stands the altar of the Child Jesus, overlooked by an exact copy of the statue of the Child Jesus to be found in the Carmel that the Saint used to decorate with flowers. Twelve small altars are further dedicated to St. Joseph, St. Joan of Arc, St. John the Evangelist, St. Paul, St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Avila, the Blessed Théophane Vénard, St. John of the Cross, St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Augustine and St. Mary Magdalene. In 1958, the decoration of the crypt was finished with the laying of the five large mosaics in the tympanum. On the north side, above the porch, St. Thérèse's baptism; above the sacristy door: the miracle of the Virgin of the Smile. On the south side, above the porch, the First Communion, the Chapel of the Infant Jesus, St. Thérèse's religious profession, St. Thérèse's death.

On leaving the crypt, pilgrims may want to

visit the permanent exhibition, "The Carmel as St. Thérèse knew it," under the north cloisters on the left. The film, *Vrai visage de Thérèse de Lisieux*, is shown in the hall leading of the square, under the cloister on the south side of the basilica. Then, immediately at the back of the basilica are the Stations of the Cross. An altar, dominated by a huge Cross, overlooks the scene.

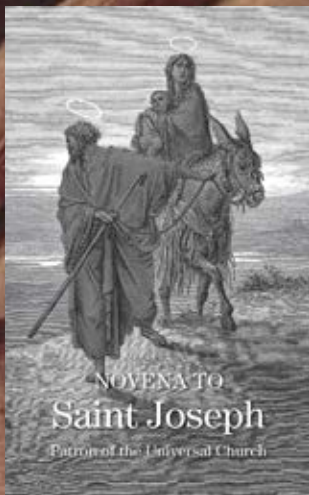
The Town of Lisieux

Lisieux is a town of 27,000 inhabitants, according to the 2007 census. We recommend that you visit Les Buissonnets, where St. Thérèse lived as a child. It is still furnished as it was at the time. The remarkable unity in the structure of the Cathedral of Saint-Pierre (12th-13th centuries) makes of this church one of the most beautiful examples of the Gothic Norman ogival style. St. Thérèse attended Mass there daily with her family. In the northern ambulatory, near the main entrance, is the chapel where St. Thérèse made her first confession. The church of St. Jacques, in the Flamboyant style, was almost destroyed by bombs in 1944. Since then, it has been restored by the Department of Historical Buildings. When one enters the church, on the left, in the first chapel, is the baptistry.

This is where St. Thérèse was baptized on the 4th of January 1873. The baptismal font is made of marble, the altar surmounted by a statue of the saint. A stained-glass window represents the ceremony. One can see some relics: bones of the saint and half of her baptismal robe. The main nave, remarkable for the architecture of its triforium and its vault, lacks the complement of its stained-glass windows which are in store and have not yet been put back in their original place by the Beaux Arts. The magnificent organ case hides part of the big stained-glass window belonging to the same period as the other missing windows. This is the church where St. Thérèse's parents were married. Another place of interest is the Lace School, guardian of the famous traditional "point d'Alençon," with its museum of lace.

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And so, dearly-beloved, let us rejoice with spiritual joy, and let us with gladness pay God worthy thanks and raise our hearts' eyes unimpeded to those heights where Christ is. Minds that have heard the call to be uplifted must not be pressed down by earthly affections, they that are fore-ordained to things eternal must not be taken up with the things that perish; they that have entered on the way of truth must not be entangled in treacherous snares, and the faithful must so take their course through these temporal things as to remember that they are sojourning in the vale of this world, in which, even though they meet with some attractions, they must not sinfully embrace them, but bravely pass through them.

Pope Leo the Great, Sermon 74 on the Ascension
Fresco, Church of St. Servatius, Maastricht, Netherlands

Dealing with Clerical Scandal:

It Takes a Christendom

by Dr. John Rao

Clerical mischief has been a constant fact of life in the history of the Church. Although there have been a fair number of dubious and downright despicable figures on the Throne of St. Peter, the papacy does not come out of a study of clerical scandal through the ages all that badly. The general run of the episcopacy and the clergy, secular and religious, do not fare quite as well. But higher or lower in the hierarchy of scandal that the supreme head or the ordinary members of the clerical state may be, they are perfectly united in one two-fold aspect: the boring repetitiveness of the kind of sins that they commit, and their “fraternal” union with the Christian laity in their succumbing to what are their all too similar trans-vocational temptations.

Surrounded by Wickedness

Clerical scandal in the final analysis does not display shockingly unique characteristics. It reflects instead the evils of the lay environment into which each and every cleric is born in the first place. The problem of scandal is a general one that is admittedly more distressing when speaking about the clergy’s part in it because of the primary

significance of their consecrated persons and labors. But dealing effectively with clerical scandal also requires an assault upon the wickedness of the outside fallen world, with the attack primarily aimed at whatever special form this may take in any given place or time.

In short, it takes a healthy Christendom—even



a tiny modern one as opposed to the grand *res publica Cristiana* of the High Middle Ages—to purge clerical corruption. And when it succeeds in doing so, it enhances the ability of popes, bishops, priests, and religious to perform their higher spiritual mission better, thereby helping the social order that has done the clergy a good turn to stay on even keel and transform itself in Christ still more thoroughly in the future. To state this purgative truth in a more popular fashion, “one hand of Christendom washes the other.”

Two Types of Troublemaking

Individual cases of scandalous behavior aside, let us briefly outline the two basic types of clerical troublemaking in Church History, the first of which is the unedifying desertion from the ranks of the mystical body of Christ of sizeable units of the first estate, manifested in their encouragement of or positive response to heretical attacks on the Catholic message. Such nefarious conduct was all too visible at the time of the great Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the 4th - 7th centuries, and in the days of the Protestant Revolution some thousand years later. The second form of priestly and religious troublemaking is immorality—financial, sexual, and politically ambitious—plain and simple. Terribly prevalent in the Western Church in the miserable era following the collapse of the Carolingian experiment at restoring a Roman and Catholic order from the late 9th through the early 11th centuries, this second plague returned again in a somewhat analogous fashion from the time of the residence of the papacy in Avignon down to that of the Tridentine reform. Immorality has also played a role in inclining clerics to the first form of scandal, whether to justify abandonment of their state in life to further their own vices, or to adopt heresy in a mistaken attempt to overturn undeniable clerical evildoing.

Similarly, peculiar problems aside, the manner in which Catholics historically have successfully struggled against our two basic types of clerical naughtiness also can be summarized rather simply. They merely involve applying the truth noted above: that “it takes a Christendom” to

clean up Holy Mother the Church; that, just as individuals can only be saved by becoming part of a community—the Body of Christ—it is solely through communal effort in every regard that each Christian has even a chance of being kept religiously sane and on the proper path to sanctification.

The Effort to Purge Scandals

Allow me to explore the history of Catholic struggles to purge clerical scandals through emphasis upon the aid of broader communities in a perhaps oddly “ecumenical” way, by borrowing Buddhist terminology used to identify its two main divisions, and a Chinese expression concerning the way in which different and contrasting forces can enter into a mutually profitable “dance” with one another. Let us say that the problem in question has repeatedly been tackled by an appeal to a “Lesser and a Greater Vehicle” of impressive, purgative, communal efficacy, and in a way that illustrates their *yin* and *yang* complementarity.

Employment of the “Lesser Vehicle” has entailed the mobilization of the Catholic *clerical* community in all of its immense variety and proper hierarchy to fight its internal scandals. Psychologically and physically, isolation has always been one of the greatest dangers of clerics, whether as individuals or as members of religious, diocesan, or national groups, all of them inevitably more narrow in their character than the Church Universal. This isolation leaves them badly armed for responding properly to the particular temptations of their all too personal or parochial environments. Hence, moving from the simplest to the most complex levels, reform movements throughout the ages, depending upon the specific scandals that they have had to liquidate and the forces targeted, have understood the necessity of dealing with the weaknesses of the clerical state by similar communal means: by strengthening the bonds of the members of a religious house at risk of internal or external corruption with other endangered houses of their order, often sending some of the healthy members of one of these to cure the sickly colleagues of sister establishments; by linking parish priests more tightly and >

fraternally in orthodox intellectual and spiritual activities, complemented by participation in regular diocesan synods guided by reform bishops; by overcoming the flaws of bad bishops of a given land in subjecting them to the decisions of national assemblies dominated by determined and saintly episcopal confrères; and by the taming of the sins of proud religious orders and uppity national episcopacies through appeal to the universal clerical authority of popes who truly know what it meant to be successors of St. Peter. If any of these communal aspects of the “Lesser Vehicle” are ignored, the isolation of one religious house or community, one diocesan priest, one bishop, or one nation will drastically increase the chance for their particular, local, parochial temptations to triumph, and heretical or immoral tendencies to worm their way in and thrive along with them.

Reformers throughout the history of the Church have understood that the purity of the head of the clerical estate provides the greatest guarantee for the members as a whole. This means that if the papacy falls prey to its own peculiar parochial temptations, the entirety of the clerical body is, will remain, or will soon be put at its greatest risk. This was indeed the case in the pre-Tridentine period, when a reformer such as Gian Pietro Carafa (1476-1559), who ended his career as Pope Paul IV (1555-1559), lambasted the Holy See for thinking of itself as somehow more than the community that it served rather than its supreme authority. He identified “the fundamental cause of the ills of the Church” as “the immense exaggeration of the pontifical power occasioned by the refined adulation of canonists without conscience” (Carafa in Gennaro Maria Monti, ed., *Ricerche su Papa Paolo IV Carafa*, Benevento, 1923, p. 42). This power was then used to coddle heretics, give dispensations for criminal and immoral clerics to continue and even expand upon their nefarious endeavors, and block criticism of its actions through an assertion of nothing more than criminal arrogance.

The Need for Christendom

But this brings me to the importance of the mobilization of the “Greater Vehicle”: Catholic

Christendom in its widest scope. This is indeed the Greater Vehicle for dealing with clerical scandal, first of all because a diseased Christendom can stymie any attempt to improve the situation of a clergy at risk, even when popes who are in fine fettle stand behind it. Steeped in sinful secular concerns, it is most destructive when its reigning evils are simply taken for granted as a particular age’s “common sense.” The bad “spirit of the times”—the *zeitgeist*—this creates always has an advantage in a struggle for control over men’s minds and wills because its erroneous axioms become part of the very atmosphere that they breathe from morning until night. It bends believers to its will by attacking them on two fronts, encouraging acceptance of the present, living, erroneous spirit as the obvious dictate of unquestionably intelligent reasoning, while redirecting any remaining desire to fight “the world” against the dead and buried errors of the *zeitgeist* of times gone by. Once firmly ensconced in the clerical mind and soul, it determines, to its own advantage, the battleground on which the Church should continue to battle and the weapons that she may and may not use. Counsel is thereby given against taking the very measures most useful in dealing with problems and in favor of those designed to worsen them. That which is easy to correct is depicted as being difficult and even impossible; wise policy intended to eradicate sinfulness is ridiculed as the handiwork of the foolish; promotion of evil as “the voice of the Holy Spirit in our times.”

Submission of Christendom to the dictates of a sinful, secular, lay *zeitgeist*, sometimes violent and sometimes subtle, has regularly brought with it the corruption of the clergy, often for long stretches of time, and often even under the rubric of being loyal to the Catholic message as it goes about its work of subversion. Some compelling ground for bending to the “obvious” demands of the world can always be conjured up by it: the demands of Sacred Emperors, Sacred Kings or City-States, Sacred Constitutions, Sacred Power Politics, Sacred Family Noble Requirements; a Sacred Dow Jones and its Sacred Profits; a Sacred Proletariat and its Party Apparatchiks; Sacred Ids, Egos, and Superegos, Sacred Fulfillment of One’s Personality, Sacred Passions, Sacred Dialogue—you name it.



St. Catherine before the Pope at Avignon - Paolo di Giovanni

Corruption of monasteries, bishoprics, diocesan clergies, and Roman Pontiffs throughout the ages has always had more to do with fending off outside political, financial, and powerful family ambitions than the greed and lusts of the clergy when left to its own devices. But these do draw out whatever sins existing clerics are indeed susceptible to committing already, and bring in new recruits to encourage them, fend off Catholic efforts to eradicate them, and open the door to heresy if heretical ideas make their life of scandal still easier. This downward spiraling clergy will then never do anything to transform the lay spirit working hard to pervert it. On the contrary, it will condemn the work of re-Catholicizing the diseased Christendom that feeds the vice in which it now wallows, whether this be a simple cowardly unwillingness to confront a secular world that allows it to survive if it keeps its mouth shut or truly decadent enjoyment of what Christ abhors.

Still, Christendom at large is the “Greater Vehicle” for dealing with clerical scandal for a second reason, because, when possessing at

least certain healthy elements, it has, at crucial moments in Church History, proven to be the only tool possible for reinvigorating its colleague, “Lesser” in its overall impact. This has especially been noticeable when what was most required was the help of the laity in awakening or shaking up the Head of the First Estate, a sleeping or perverse Papacy scandalizing much of the clergy, which itself begged for its assistance. This is what happened in the 10th and 11th centuries, where one sees the reformed monks of Cluny stimulating an Empire healthier than Rome to come to the Eternal City to replace deficient pontiffs with proper ones.

An Ongoing Struggle

Clerical scandal may ultimately be boring in its sinful repetitiveness, but Satan is highly inventive in his use of tools to bring wave after wave of it into the life of the Church. Historical reform movements making great progress in eradicating clerical evils by means of both the Lesser and >

the Greater Vehicle have themselves repeatedly been undermined through demonic persistence and the weakness of our nature, which will always remain badly marred by Original Sin. Services on behalf of reform carried out by religious orders, dioceses, national episcopacies, the papacy, and lay political forces have all at times been brought to a halt and even twisted into agents of the corruption that they sought to end, due, especially to the exaggeration of the parochial pride of each of these forces. *Corruptio optimi pessima!* The “drama of truth” that salvation history places before our eyes is not a mechanical production whose actors play predictable roles. Maneuvering through it is a never-ending dance in which an eye must be kept on all of those prancing around the ballroom and taking steps in different directions at different times to avoid being knocked off course. Hence the need to nurture the principle of *yin* and *yang*, staying on the lookout for the valuable use of contrasting complementary forces, Greater and Lesser Vehicles, clerics and laymen of saintly mettle, depending upon the circumstances of the day.

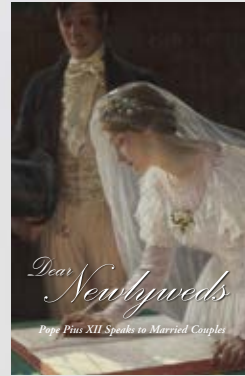
Needless to say, *both* categories of clerical scandal outlined above thrive in our own place and time, with all of the false teaching, persecution of true believers, self-deception, co-habitation with concubines, homosexuality, demoralizing display of a lust for power and riches, and craven flattery of those already possessing these self-deceptive earthly treasures that the cultivation of such failings always tediously guarantees. Moreover, does any truly believing Catholic doubt that Pope Paul IV would utter the same judgment regarding the contemporary papacy and the all too erroneous cheerleaders of an exaggerated, willful, *personal* infallibility aiding heresy and corruption that he pronounced in the 1500’s were he alive today? And, worse still, who is the honest observer of contemporary society who can deny that the sick, secular, modern *zeitgeist*, with its adulation of man’s fallen individual passions and will, and its readiness to justify any and every vice with sufficient strength to press its case, has become the official ideology of most Catholics today, making all appeal to the authoritative intervention of the communal authorities of the Lesser and the Greater Vehicles of Christendom—the only forces

that could work their “magic” to deal with the unspeakable clerical sins paraded before our eyes in the daily press—the one unthinkable thought. What can be done when the salt needed to deal with the problem has itself lost its savor? Or when one cannot even imagine using it at all?

Yes, “it takes a Christendom” to deal with clerical scandal, our Christendom is indeed diseased, but, quite frankly, it has always been somewhat sick and will continue to be subject to illness and infection until the end of time. It was not completely well by any stretch of the imagination when its healthier elements raised their heads in the 10th and 11th century, both *yin* and *yang*, reformed clergy stimulating laity, laity the papacy, and a purified papacy the resistant clerical sinners to “clean up their acts.”

Healthy elements are also at work in today’s seemingly moribund Christendom, in precisely the way that they should be. New clerical orders and less organized communities within mainstream dioceses have emerged to strengthen, through their fraternal union, the fiber of individual priests who would otherwise have been isolated on their own. Militant laity have “voted with their feet” by abandoning sickly parishes to join with them, forming Catholic associations of their own to bring resistant clergy, enslaved to the *zeitgeist*, back to their senses. Honest devotion to the Christian life in communion with others; straightforwardness in dealing with society on the basis of Catholic teachings; a break with the “accepted” ways of “doing business” according to the standards of the *zeitgeist* with its call to earthly prudence will once again show that the explanation of the clerical scandal and the path for dealing with it coming out of “The World” is either self-serving or self-deceptive nonsense—and for the simple reason that they come not from Christ but from the devil. What still is needed for success is to wean the papacy—the head of the clerical estate—away from its love affair with a sinful *zeitgeist*. Whence the final stimulus for that Great Purge will come remains unclear to me. It has emerged from the Greater Vehicle, from Christendom at large, from the Emperor, in the past. But today?

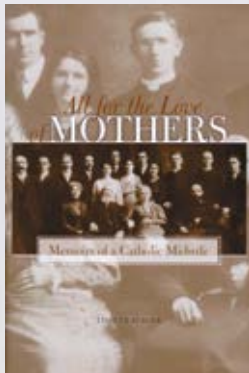
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Protecting the Property of Others

by SSPX Sisters

Who hasn't witnessed two children quarreling over a toy? Oh! How the instinct of ownership is well-rooted in us! It is God who has given it to us, in order that we will seek to acquire and conserve what is necessary for life. Otherwise, who would burden themselves with the care of saving money to buy a house or pay insurance? We would be satisfied with living like nomads.

The instinct of ownership is thus not bad in itself, but our souls are disordered due to the effects of original sin. Instead of contenting ourselves with what is necessary and useful, we are always interested in acquiring more! Let us look at the following examples.

Monica throws a fit: "Adele isn't letting me play with her doll!"

"Don't you have your own?" replies Mother. "Why do you want her doll?"

Yes, Monica had her own, but she considered that the property of another was at the disposition of her caprice.

From here, this bad inclination could quickly grow worse in her.

Cecilia Cony, a Brazilian religious who died in the odor of sanctity (1900-1939), recounted in her childhood memories how one of her friends envied her pretty milk glass.

"May I use Cecilia's glass?" the child asked the maid. Having been refused, she waited for the maid to turn her back so she could bump Cecilia's arm. The glass fell and broke. The little envious one didn't stop there: she ran to the maid and exclaimed: "Cecilia was so mad that you didn't let me use her glass that she threw it on the ground!"

For this, the poor victim was severely punished.



Envy, anger, and lying, which often end by inflicting an unjust punishment...just how far can the disordered love of another's property lead? How can this be corrected? A good place to start would be to cultivate the care of possessions in children.

At school, everyone knows that Marie is orderly; her desk remains very tidy; the pages of books lent by the teacher are not dog-eared; she doesn't scribble on the desk...Why? It is because at home, everyone has their own little private domain which is more or less extensive according to their age. The rules are simple: each child is responsible for maintaining it in order (the mother inspects it from time to time); the brothers and sisters must ask the owner their permission if they wish to borrow something.

As the child grows, the range of objects for which they have access extends. Many things are "theirs" without belonging to them, at least in their own right. Let us profit from daily incidents (which are inevitable!) in order to inculcate the sense of justice to our children. To break a glass by accident while setting the table at home is a small mistake, which often doesn't need to be punished. It would be a shame if the fear of breaking something would paralyze the child from being helpful. On one hand, what belongs to the whole family is not "the property of others." On the other hand, what the school gives the students to use does not belong to them!

Then there are the damages done to what belongs to those outside of our own home. Peter, while playing ball, broke the neighbor's window. This person, a lady with a heart of gold, forgave him completely when he came to apologize. However, Peter's mother insisted: "He must reimburse you! If he goes unpunished this time, what will happen later when he has his driver's license?"

If the damage is expensive, it is up to the parents to judge what restitution will be sufficient in order to inculcate the child with the proper sense of justice, but without giving him an impression of injustice because the punishment was too severe. The lesson will bring lasting fruit if it teaches that the property of others ought to be respected and not only that the window I broke "cost so much."

As the child grows, let us be watchful over his use of the computer. It has become easy to be unjust towards our neighbor without even realizing it!

Thomas, a 15 year-old, has lent a CD to his friend who loved the pieces of music on it. In no time at all, the CD was in the computer and its contents burned onto another CD. "What about the rights of the author?" exclaimed the father of Thomas when he found out. "This CD is worth \$15. It is the same as if you stole it off the shelf of the store." And with a firm hand, his father broke the CD and threw it into the garbage.

What about borrowed property? If Rose asked a friend to lend her a pretty jacket for a wedding, is it legitimate for Rose to keep it once the occasion has passed? Doesn't her friend remain the owner of the jacket? It is necessary to return it to her as soon as possible, or else one risks stealing in an "honest" manner. Let us also make sure to return the objects lent to us in good condition!

St. Paul wrote: "Do not owe your neighbor anything, except to love one another." What a beautiful program! By respecting the property of our neighbor, we respect his person, that is to say we are practicing justice, the essential starting point for practicing fraternal charity.

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.



Joyfully Wrong

Some Inspirations from Hugh of St. Victor

by Douglas LeBlanc

Editor's Note: Hugh of St. Victor was a 12th-century Augustinian monk and scholastic. He is known for both his brilliance and humility. All quotes in the article below are taken from his work *The Didascalicon*.

“I was right all along!”

The savory words often accompany the confirmation of a belief of ours that had previously been cast into doubt. It is a good feeling to be right. Being right means possessing truth. And, unless we let pride and arrogance destroy us, how can possessing that which is right be a bad thing? Additionally, possessing rightness can be helpful to others when we share that rightness with genuine humility and charity. However, while it is good to be right, discovering that fact seems less beneficial to us personally than discovering that we were wrong.

Discovering that we were “right all along” does not give us anything we did not already have. On the other hand, discovering that we were wrong all along is a precious gift. The wise person, says Hugh of St. Victor, “seeks what he lacks, and he considers not how much he knows, but of how much he is ignorant.”

An Unsettling Realization

Yes, at first, it can be unsettling to realize that we were wrong all along. It can be unnerving.



Humiliating, even. However, this is the wrong feeling to have. After all, being blissfully, ignorantly, arrogantly wrong is so much worse than being painfully, obviously, humiliatingly wrong. “Why do you blush to be taught, and yet not blush at your ignorance?” chastises Hugh. Thinking you understand something when you really do not ought to offer no consolation. Why, then, do we often have such a negative reaction to being wrong? “Many are deceived by the desire to appear wise before their time,” explains the Victorine. “They therefore break out into a certain swollen importance and begin to simulate what they are not and to be ashamed of what they are.” In short, pride is the answer; pride causes the negative reaction in us. Hugh chides us for this all-too-common inclination: “Seek to *be* learned rather than merely to seem so.”

Once we accept that our view of reality is incomplete—once we accept that we have a lot to learn—being wrong is no longer a cause for disturbance or disquietude. Rather, it is a

cause for joy: our grasp of reality is becoming more complete! Instead of being ashamed at being wrong, instead of feeling inferior, we should in fact be proud of being found wrong. We are that much closer to truth, and that much less to be mocked for believing a lie. In this light, being wrong can be looked forward to—maybe even looked for. Perhaps we ought to hope that we discover we are wrong once a day, and be disappointed when a day goes by where we do not. “You have drunk at the very fount of philosophy—but would that you thirsted still!” Hugh of St. Victor’s words here are a call to humility, a call to embrace being a lifelong learner.

I hope I’m wrong, but... Ironically, an expression we only use when we know we are not. Perhaps we should use this expression more often, and with more sincerity. *I was right all along!* Who cares about that? Being wrong, or rather realizing we were wrong all along, is much more interesting and much more meaningful.

Eve: A “Saint” for Our Times

Anonymous

Though Eve is generally not called a saint, nevertheless, she is in Heaven, along with her husband, Adam. They can be found in the Roman Martyrology among the many other Old and New Testament citizens of Heaven. But while most canonized saints are such because their lives provide a standard or “canon” for our lives, Eve helps us by indicating what *not* to do.

On the First Woman

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” Nevertheless, I won’t be the first, nor the last person to offer some reflections on this first woman. I do believe she can help us better understand our own lives and the world in which we currently live.

In Genesis 2 we read how good Eve was for Adam. She is a helper to Adam. She comes from Adam’s very side. She gives joy and consolation to Adam’s solitude as he rejoices “this now is... flesh of my flesh.” And Eve is described as so valuable that the man will actually leave his parents in order to join himself to her. In chapter two, Eve is described as all good. She is just like the rest of God’s all-good creation, but she is even more special because she is “bone of Adam’s bone.” We might think this glowing evaluation of Eve was her own take on the relationship.

When we get to Genesis 3, we get a totally different picture of Eve. And it’s not all good. Sometimes, when speaking to spouses, it seems as if they are not describing the same relationship. There is the husband’s point of view and then there is the wife’s point of view. Sometimes it



is hard to believe they are speaking about the same relationship. Perhaps the picture of Eve, in Genesis 3, was from Adam's point of view. For Eve is blamed by Adam for his fall. She also ends up speaking a whole lot more than Adam. And she got into quite a lot of trouble with what she said to the serpent. I think there is a lesson in here... something about modesty in speech?

The Subtle Serpent

The third chapter of Genesis opens up with the serpent. He is described as subtle or crafty. The Hebrew root for "subtle" is the same Hebrew root which described the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the previous verse. In English, this Hebrew root means, "to be bare." Therefore, the subtle serpent is linked to the vulnerable bareness of the first couple. Furthermore, other creatures were like the serpent in being subtle, but the serpent was "more subtle" or more crafty than the other creatures. Because the serpent differed only in degree, and not in kind, from some of the other creatures, this would make it more difficult to differentiate between the serpent's subtleness from the subtleness of the other creatures.

When the serpent enters the conversation with Eve he begins by asking a question, "Why has God commanded that you should not eat of every tree..." By asking this question, traditional Catholic commentators suspect the serpent already had knowledge of Eve's thoughts or inclinations. Eve resonates with the question and goes on to believe the serpent's lies. St. Augustine believes that in order for Eve to actually believe the apparent lies of the serpent, she must have been already inclined to be deceived due to "the love of her own independent authority and a certain proud over-confidence in herself." Perhaps this self-absorption inhibited her from realizing that there was an obvious problem with a serpent that could both reason and speak to her.

Back in Gen. 2:15, God had commanded Adam to "dress and keep" the "paradise of pleasure." Eve certainly would have known of this command given to Adam. Now the Hebrew behind the second verb, "keep" means literally to "put a hedge about." In other words, Adam was commanded to

guard and to protect the garden. However, from what we know of the sacred text, Adam was not told from what the garden needed protecting. God had declared in Genesis 1 that His creation was "all good!" From what, therefore, did the Garden need protection?

In the Garden

"And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good" (Gen. 1:31). There was no perception of evil in the Garden. God even saw that "every thing that creeps on the earth" was good. How easy it must have been to wrongly trust one of God's seemingly good creatures like a creeping serpent. Therefore, faced with the dilemma of trusting one of God's good creatures whom Eve could see, versus trusting God's commandment which she did not directly hear, she did what every sinful creature that was born from her does: she went with what she could see with her own eyes instead of what God had spoken in her mind.

For ancient peoples, the lower bodily part of man's nature, his sensuous part, was termed serpent-like. When things were going well in the Garden, the higher spiritual nature ruled over the lower. But when Eve let her sensual nature rule her judgment, it was the serpent that was speaking to her.

Eve responded to the serpent's question for why God prohibited the eating of every tree, but she got the reason wrong. She added to God's prohibition to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of paradise by saying: "and we should not (even) touch (it)." We might be tempted to think, in dealing with God, being more strict is better. But both Deut. 4:2 and Apoc. 22:18-19 state that *adding* (or subtracting) to the Word of God will result in being removed from the "Book of Life." The scrupulous, in their pride think exactly the same way. They add to what God requires thinking themselves superior to the subtracting lax tendencies of everyone else. "Pride goes before destruction" (Prov. 16:18), and by wrongly adding these limiting words to what God had commanded, Eve made herself even more prone to the craftiness of the serpent. Eve was no longer >

on the solid ground of exact truth. She could be more easily “sifted as wheat” by Satan (Lk. 22:31).

The Temptation of Eve

The serpent is now prepared to lay his hand bare (pun intended). He contradicts God: “No, you shall not die the death” if you eat of this tree. If scrupulous adding to God’s commandments leads to despair in making their fulfillment more difficult, as in a one-two punch, the serpent now introduces the way out of despair through presumptuous laxity. “Don’t worry... the consequence of dying that you fear is not real.” Once the fear of God was removed from Eve’s soul, her sensuous serpentine nature took over. Eve saw 1) that the tree was “good to eat;” 2) it was “fair to the eyes;” 3) “delightful to behold.”

Eve “saw”—meaning understood for herself—the tree was good to eat. Eve was brought to rely fully upon her own judgment. Thus, original sin originates not only from man’s un-subordinated sensual nature, but also from private judgment. Private judgment is the cornerstone of all heresy, especially Protestantism and liberalism.

Naturally, then, as Eve was Adam’s helpmate, she gave the seemingly “good fruit” to her husband and that was the beginning of the end of this “paradise of pleasure.” Adam’s disobedience, aided by Eve, is the essential act that constitutes the “Original Sin.”

Eve’s Lessons for Us Today

Let us draw two lessons from what “saint” Eve can teach us today. The first lesson that Eve can teach us is the constant need that we have to be vigilant to avoid disobeying God’s commandments. We can now understand that Adam (and Eve) were supposed to protect the garden from disobedience. And so, we need to be on guard *always* for the devil prowls around...seeking someone to devour (I Pet. 5:8). When I get into my car my basic operating assumption is, all other cars are being driven either by someone who is having a drug induced psychosis or is just naturally that way.

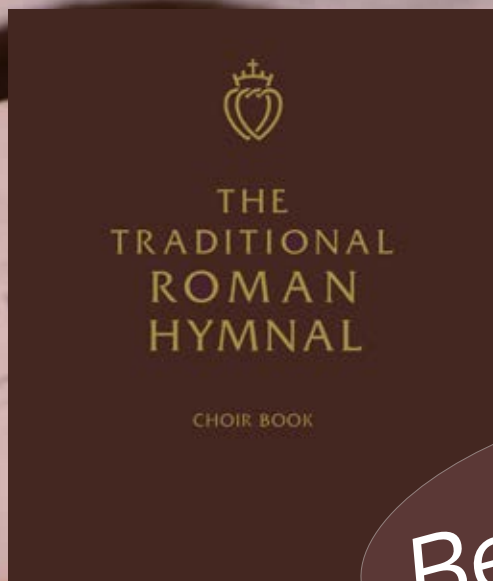
Therefore, I do not assume they will obey traffic

laws and I am always prepared to respond to something going wrong. While living the moral life in a similarly cautious way would not be considered acceptable to many contemporary persons, nevertheless such cautiousness is consistent with the fact that “sin is crouching at the door” much more persistently today than it ever was for Eve’s son, Cain. And so, if innocent and properly ordered Eve needed to be on guard to protect her “paradise of pleasure” from disobedience, how much more do we need to be on guard—we who have lost both innocence and a properly ordered soul.

Another lesson we can learn from Eve is that she didn’t have the faith down pat, as it was needed to be known. If she fell, in part, because of her lack of knowing what God actually said, instead of what she thought He had said, how much more do we need to constantly remind ourselves of the Church’s Faith, especially her doctrine on Original Sin. Our contemporary world is characterized by an amnesia of what Adam and Eve did. This “forgetfulness” was enshrined in the novel theology of many modern theologians, which preceded and influenced the documents of Vatican II and its subsequent magisterial teachings.

Therefore, more so than Eve, we need to remember that like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, we are not in Kansas anymore. But not only are we not in paradise, but as long as we still have one foot on this earth (and have not entered the true paradise in Heaven) we need to regard this life as thoroughly impacted by the disordering effects of original sin. Therefore, to avoid going off the straight and narrow path, we cannot expect the happiness we ultimately desire to occur in this life—which will never be again a “paradise of pleasure.” All this-world utopias are from the satanic serpent. We must instead be willing to suffer—to suffer for the true Faith, and for our sins—both actual and original.

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by Gabriel Sanchez

In Search of an Apologia for Vatican II

Will debate over the Second Vatican Council (otherwise known as “Vatican II”) ever end? Shall a point be reached where critics and defenders alike can agree on what was taught, what it means, and whether or not the Council’s teachings can be framed as continuous with prior Catholic teaching? For an ecclesiastical event that was intended to both clarify doctrine and make it accessible to contemporary sensibilities, Vatican II has wrought an arguably unprecedented amount of confusion and controversy in the Catholic Church.

From St. Vincent to Vatican II

One of the latest installments in the cottage industry of Vatican II apologetics is Fr. Thomas A. Guarino’s *The Disputed Teachings of Vatican II: Continuity and Reversal in Catholic Doctrine* (Eerdmans, 2018). Guarino, a professor of systematic theology at Seton Hall University and a committed ecumenist, has written previously on the 5th-century theologian St. Vincent of Lerins, specifically St. Vincent’s contribution to what Catholics today refer to as “development of doctrine.” It is St. Vincent that Guarino turns to again in his latest work, a move that may strike some as shocking given the perception that St. Vincent was intransigently conservative in his doctrinal views, not to mention his conspicuous absence from Vatican II’s final documents.

St. Vincent is best known for the adage, “We



hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by everyone.” Despite this, Guarino reads St. Vincent as a more dynamic theologian, one who was aware even in the relatively early days of the Catholic Church that doctrine can mature, grow, and develop in the same way a child becomes an adult or a seed springs into a plant. However, not all change can be adjudged good. For St. Vincent, change can either be *profectus*, that is, a legitimate and organic extension of what has been taught before, or *permutatio*, a corruption caused by an alteration or distortion of what was once held. So what was Vatican II? *Profectus* or *permutatio*?

Analogy Covers All Things

In approaching Vatican II, Guarino insists that analogical reasoning was central to the Council. That is, by drawing positive comparisons between, say, Catholicism and other religions and Christian confessions rather than focusing exclusively on differences, Vatican II broke with prior ecumenical councils by not condemning errors and issuing *anathemas*. Doing so fulfilled the Council’s alleged mandate to bring the “medicine of mercy” to the modern world while demonstrating that the Church had a communal role to play in the world rather than an antagonistic one. This was all well and good according to Guarino because this is what Pope John XXIII and many other conciliar bishops wanted; never does he stop to ask whether it was the right way in which to proceed.

As for the application of analogy, Guarino appears most interested in what it can allegedly do for ecumenical relations. Instead of the Church taking a critical and condemnatory position against other Christian communions, analogy allowed the Vatican II bishops to speak of ways in which these non-Catholic churches participated in the true Church of Christ, that is the Catholic Church. Without dismissing the fact that these non-Catholic churches are limited and imperfect, Guarino holds that Vatican II did no wrong in furnishing a fresh sense of unity with these communities while all but ignoring that such an approach was disruptive to prior

ecclesiastical instruction and praxis. Moreover, he fails to appreciate the extent to which this analogical approach contributed less to a sense of unity among all Christians and more to a pervasive feeling of indifference toward the sharp ecclesiastical, theological, and doctrinal issues that remain at the heart of Christian disunity.

More controversial than Vatican II’s ecumenical gestures toward non-Catholic Christians was its declaration on world religions, *Nostra aetate*. Here, analogical reasoning was stretched to its limits as the Council attempted to bring forth similarities not only between Christianity and Judaism, but fundamentally alien religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Interestingly, Guarino highlights Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI’s skepticism on the over-use of analogy in *Nostra aetate* and the hyper-ecumenical outlook it engendered: “it speaks of religion solely in a positive way and it disregards the sick and distorted forms of religion which, from the historical and theological viewpoints, are of far-reaching importance” (from the article “*Fu una giornata splendida*” published October 11, 2012 in *L’Osservatore Romano*).

Guarino, unfortunately, is unmoved by these and other criticisms of misplaced positivity. Sure, perhaps Vatican II was one-sided in its optimistic appraisal of non-Christian religions, but so be it. Taking place in the shadow of World War II, the Holocaust, and the Cold War, the world was weary of negativity, or so says Guarino. Because Vatican II did not go so far as to outright deny Jesus Christ or wholly relativize the Catholic Faith, it did nothing wrong. Disregard the profound sociological upheavals inflicted by the Council such as the vocational crisis and rampant apostasy. Analogy covers all things.

Process, Not *Permutationes*

Although this review cannot cover the myriad of ways Guarino uses analogy to cover or justify Vatican II’s apparent deviations from earlier Catholic teaching and practice, it is worth noting that Guarino is not blind to all conciliar contradictions. Right or wrong, there is some superficial plausibility to Guarino’s thesis that >

Book Review

the Council could organically develop Church teaching by clarifying obscurities and addressing new challenges. Where Guarino recognizes trouble is with respect to blatant attempts by Vatican II to overturn earlier ecclesiastical pronouncements. This is nowhere more apparent than with respect to *Gaudium et Spes*, a conciliar document that Benedict XVI, as Joseph Ratzinger, called a “countersyllabus” to Blessed Pope Pius IX’s 1848 encyclical *Quanta Cura* and its accompanying *Syllabus of Errors*.

Guarino recognizes that *Gaudium et Spes* takes the exact opposite approach to the modern world as the *Syllabus* by both avoiding any condemnatory language against liberalism and, more crucially, openly embracing liberal tenets such as religious liberty and the ideology of progress. How is this a “development?” According to Guarino, it isn’t, or at least not exactly. Obvious reversals of prior teachings are not developments per se but rather part and parcel of the so-called “process of development” on the way to a fully realized teaching. That’s convenient.

But if Guarino’s “process” thesis is true, then what magisterial weight does a contradictory or reversing teaching hold? If those parts of *Gaudium et Spes* which seem to overturn the *Syllabus* are merely a halfway house along the road to a completely blossomed truth, then why do they matter? What if this alleged road is winding and eventually leads back to the earlier starting point, for instance the *Syllabus*’s rejection of liberalism? Would it not be safer to “wait and see” under the protective canopy of Church instructions with a more ancient pedigree than novel (and contradictory) pronouncements which even an apologist such as Guarino is unwilling to imprint the stamp of finality upon? Sadly, these questions are both unasked and unanswered.

liberty which has proven to be Vatican II’s most contentious document. Here, Guarino demonstrates commendable care in highlighting the gulf between the pre- and post-conciliar teachings, even going so far as to include extensive quotes from Popes Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII, and St. Pius X on the matter. In the end, though, Guarino repairs to analogy, holding that because Vatican II had unveiled the positive connections of non-Catholic Christian confessions and even non-Christian religions to Catholicism, the Church’s earlier condemnations have lost their force.

Such an explanation will no doubt ring hollow to traditional Catholics, as will Guarino’s under-developed idea that certain categories of “ordinary” papal teachings, such as those contained in 18th and 19th-century encyclicals, can be dropped on a whim. Guarino either ignores or is unaware of ongoing traditional Catholic arguments for the infallibility of the condemnations issued in *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus*; if those arguments are correct, then what becomes of Guarino’s apologetics? It would seem they cannot stand.

Guarino’s book is hardly the last word on Vatican II. With respect to religious liberty, for example, the English theologian Thomas Pink has proposed reading *Dignitatis Humanae* as a change in ecclesiastical policy rather than doctrine. Pink’s thesis continues to be studied and criticized, just as most discussions of Vatican II are. While traditional Catholics will be leery of what Guarino proposes in his text, *The Disputed Teachings of Vatican II* does represent a thoughtful excursion into some of the Council’s deepest problems and an intelligent, albeit unsatisfactory, attempt at overcoming them.

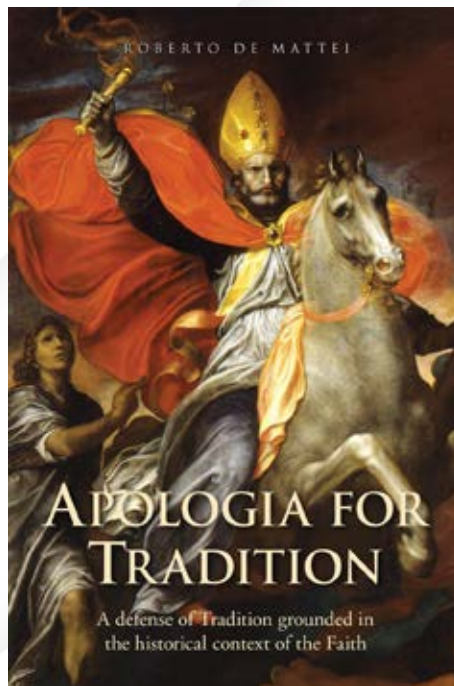
A Closing Remark on Religious Liberty

The Disputed Teachings of Vatican II’s apex is reached in its discussion of *Dignitatis Humane*, the conciliar declaration on religious

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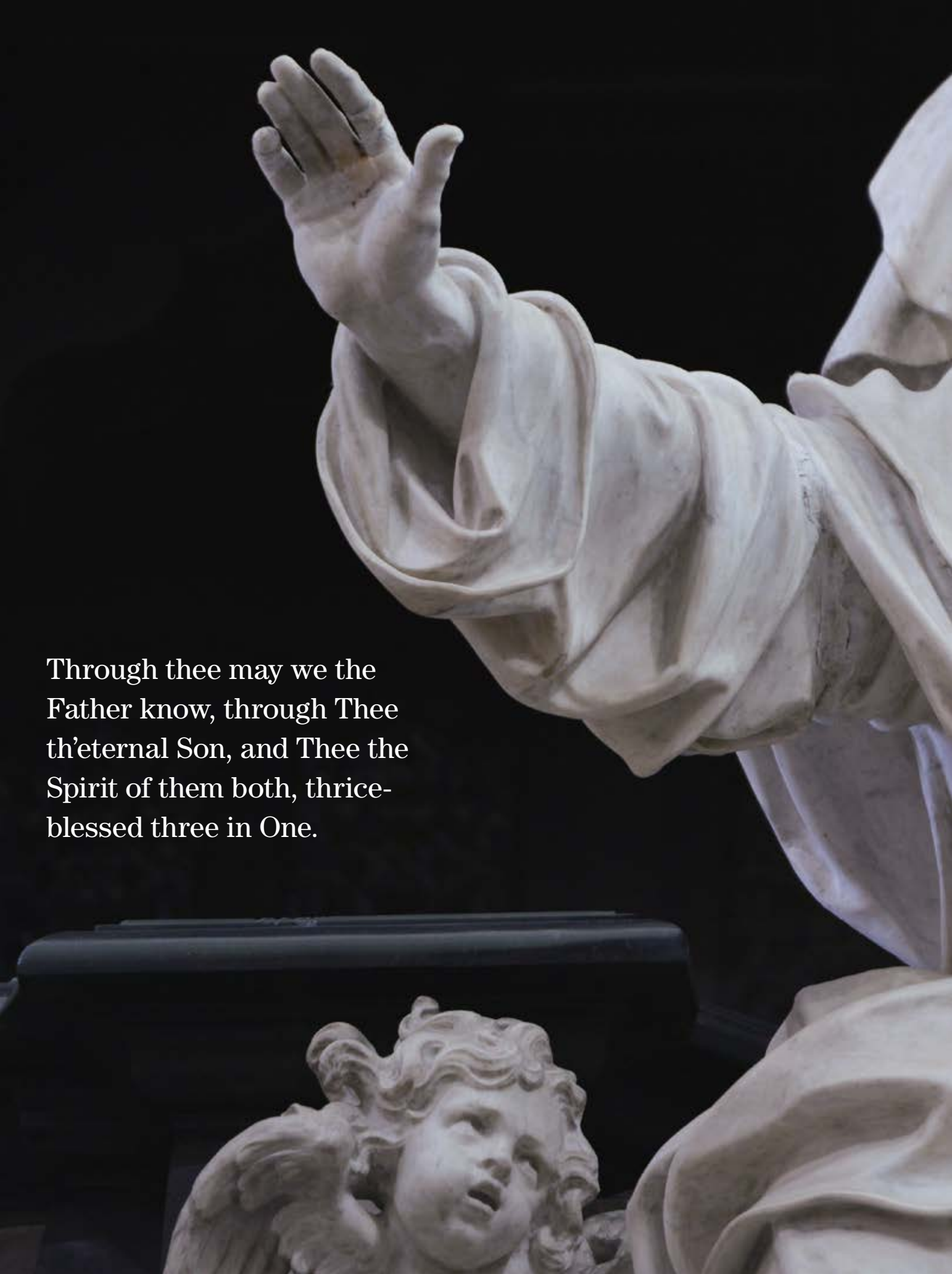
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Cardinal Danneels Dead at 85

Godfried Cardinal Danneels, Archbishop emeritus of Mechlin-Brussels, died on the morning of March 14, 2019. He had been president of the Belgian bishops conference for some 20 years and oversaw the continuing collapse of the Faith in what was once a vibrant Catholic country. For many years it was known that Danneels was an active dissenter from the perennial faith of the Church even in its Vatican II form, and yet he was never disciplined for



his heterodoxy by either Pope John Paul II or Benedict XVI (even when Benedict was head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith as Cardinal Josef Ratzinger).

In addition to his heterodoxy in doctrinal matters, he was also an enabler of priests and bishops who were homosexual abusers of young teenage males. He is infamously remembered for telling a young abuse victim (of Roger Vangheluwe, then-Bishop of Bruges, and a protégé of Danneels) that he should remain silent about the abuse he experienced and that the victim (who was Bishop Vangheluwe's own

nephew) was in some way guilty for the abuse (this was tape recorded).

Cardinal Danneels was also instrumental in the Conclave of 2013 which elected Pope Francis. He was such an ardent supporter that when Francis appeared on the loggia of St. Peter's immediately following his election, Danneels was by his side. By his own admission, he was a prominent member of the "St. Gallan Mafia" who lobbied for Cardinal Bergoglio's election

in the 2005 Conclave which elected Cardinal Ratzinger as Benedict XVI. Though they failed to elect him then, the members of the group were constant critics of the "conservative" Benedict XVI and were determined to see their candidate elected in the 2013 Conclave.

Given Danneels record on covering up homosexual abuse by clergy and publicly being in favor of Belgium's law legalizing so called "same sex marriage," Pope

Francis appointed him as one of his personal representatives to the 2014 and 2015 Synod on the Family. This move by the pope produced a loud outcry from all quarters within the Church, but Francis did not back away from the Danneels appointment.

Pope Francis sent a telegram of condolence to the current Archbishop of Mechlin-Brussels, Cardinal Jozef De Kesel, which read: *Having learned with emotion of the death of Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop emeritus of Mechelen-Brussel, I send my deepest condolences to you and to his family, the*



Bishops of Belgium, the clergy, the consecrated persons and all the faithful affected by this mourning. This zealous pastor served the Church with dedication, not only in his diocese, but also at the national level as president of the Conference of Bishops of Belgium, while being a member of various Roman dicasteries. Attentive to the challenges of the contemporary Church, Cardinal Danneels also took an active role in various Synods of Bishops, including those of 2014 and 2015 on the family. He has been called to God at this time of purification and of walking toward the Resurrection of the Lord. I ask Christ, victor over evil and death, to welcome him in His peace and joy. As a pledge

of comfort, I offer a special apostolic blessing to you and to the relatives of the deceased Cardinal, the pastors, the faithful and all those who will take part in the funeral.

There is little doubt that Pope Francis' praise of Danneels at his death, as well as his desire to appoint him as his special representative of the two Synods on the Family, must call into question how seriously the pope takes the current scandal of sexual abuse within the Church. This is particularly evident given Pope Francis' role in the Theodore McCarrick affair attested to by Archbishop Viganó in his written testimony last year, as well as other equally disturbing examples of papal coverups which are becoming almost too numerous to recall.

The Clerical Abuse Scandal, A Principle Sacrificed and the Seal of the Confessional Under Attack

In the early 2000s, the homosexual abuse of young men by clerics came to the attention of the Church in the United States (and indeed throughout the world) by an exposé published in the *Boston Globe* newspaper which uncovered the malfeasance of the Archbishops of Boston in allowing predator clerics to remain in active ministry. Other media outlets then took up their own investigations and found that this malfeasance wasn't limited to the Archdiocese of Boston, but could be found in many, if not most, of the Catholic dioceses in the United States.

When the full extent of the malfeasance became known, there was a very legitimate outcry from the laity as well as faithful priests for something to be done. The solution, from the American bishops, was the so-called Dallas Charter which gave a protocol for bishops to follow in the event of a reported case of abuse of a minor by a cleric (deacon or priest). The protocol was simple enough: when a report of abuse came to the diocese, the cleric in question would be suspended pending the outcome of a review of the complaint by a board of laity who were "expert" in the

various facets of suspected abuse. If the report was found to be "credible and substantiated," the cleric would be permanently removed from ministry and the case would be referred to the Vatican for a Canonical trial and punishment. Also, at the time the complaint was received, the civil authorities would be contacted to mount their own investigation for possible criminal charges to be brought against the cleric.

Several things should be noted regarding the Dallas Charter:

Firstly, Canon Law (in both the 1917 and 1983 Codes) indicate procedures to be followed by bishops (or superiors of religious orders) when a cleric under their charge commits a crime (sin) against the 6th or 9th Commandment and the punishments to be meted out on the guilty party. The real scandal was that most American bishops simply chose not to enforce Canon Law, for whatever reason. Had they done so, there would have been no scandal in the first place.

Secondly, the Dallas Charter purposefully omitted mentioning bishops in the procedures

News from Tradition

to be followed. Thus, a bishop accused of abuse was not subject to the same protocol that was laid down for deacons and priests. This should come as no surprise since the purported author of the Dallas Charter was none other than Theodore McCarrick; a bishop who had been a serial abuser for at least the past 25 years. The sad truth is that those fully responsible for the scandal (the bishops) made no attempt to police their own.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significant, was that an important principle concerning the hierarchical nature of the Church was sacrificed when the American bishops adopted the Dallas Charter. The principle was that clerics (be they deacons, priests or bishops) can only be judged by their equals (that is, ecclesiastical courts made up of clerics) and if they are found guilty in an ecclesiastical court, they are to be removed from the clerical state and turned over to the civil authorities for trial and punishment if their offense was also a crime under civil law. This was the principle which St. Thomas Becket endured martyrdom to defend. As the noted Italian historian Roberto de Mattei recently pointed out in an interview, *The Church which has its own penal law and tribunals needs to have the courage to challenge the judgment of the world's tribunals, convinced that it is not the world that judges the Church, but the Church that judges the world. The Church should reclaim her sovereignty... I find it extremely serious that the Church has renounced her sovereignty. The Church is a sovereign society, like the State, even if her purpose, unlike the State, is supernatural... If the Church is a sovereign society, it has all the instruments to achieve its own ends of justice. It is not only a purely ethical organism, which strips itself of its judicial dimension, allowing the State to decide everything. The renunciation of sovereignty is a dangerous development.*¹

The Dallas Charter effectively turns the judging of clerics over to the laity (either on the "Lay Review Boards" or the civil authorities) thus making the Church answerable to the State. What has now become *de rigueur* throughout the world, civil tribunals pass judgment on clerics and then the Church takes up the case after having been adjudicated in civil court. The cases of both



McCarrick congratulating Cardinal Farrell on his elevation to the College of Cardinals

Cardinal Pell of Australia and Cardinal Barbarin of France prove the point: they were both found guilty (questionably so, it should be said) in civil courts and are now to be tried in ecclesiastical court.

The Church finds herself in this position since the bishops of the Church, almost to a man, have not done their duty. Their malfeasance has resulted in the sad situation where the civil authority seems to be the only means whereby bishops can be dealt with for their sinful and faithless actions. Sadly, now that the state has stepped in to identify and root out bishops who have failed in their duty to punish abusive clerics, the question must be asked: how much further will the various governments go in trying to control the Church herself?

Unfortunately we have already begun to taste the effects of giving up the Church's sovereignty in regard to the seal of the confessional. Last year,



an Australian Royal Commission into child abuse recommended that clergy be required to report to the civil authority any act of abuse they become aware of during the sacrament of penance.

This past February, a bill was introduced in the California state legislature requiring Catholic priests and other “Christian ministers” to report abuse they become aware of through confession. On March 16th, a member of the New York state legislature introduced a similar bill to that legislature. Although neither the California nor New York bill has yet to come up for a vote in the legislature, given the current climate, its chances of passing are rather great. There can now be little doubt that other states will follow suit.

Although one may rightly ask if laws of this nature could really be enforced since no one but the priest and the penitent would know if abuse has been confessed. As true as this is, is there really any doubt that civil authorities would begin running “sting” operations in order to entrap priests? A police officer posing as a penitent could enter the confessional and confess to abusing a child—if the priest doesn’t report it, he is arrested and charged with failing to report a case of abuse. We are entering a very dark time for the Church.

It is of the greatest irony, that the Catholic teaching on the seal of the confessional became the source of a civil law protecting the priest/penitent relationship. In his book, *A Popular history of the Archdiocese of New York*, Monsignor Florence Cohalan writes: *Although the old Cathedral is his monument, Fr. Kohlmann’s [Vicar General of the Diocese of New York] most important contribution to the welfare of the Church in New York was his role in a lawsuit that brought legal protection to the seal of the confessional in New York and later throughout the country. In March 1813, acting on information received in the confessional, he became the intermediary by whom stolen goods were returned to their owner. When he refused to tell the police or the grand jury or the courts who had given him the goods, his case was put off for further consideration and and was settled finally by a friendly lawsuit. The case was argued on June 8, 1813, before the Court of General Sessions presided over by Mayor DeWitt Clinton. The full court decided unanimously*

*in Fr. Kohlmann’s favor. Later, in 1828, when Clinton was Governor of New York, he persuaded the legislature to pass a law not only allowing but requiring priests and ministers of religion to withhold confidential information.*² This incident occurred when the Church vigorously defended her sovereignty against all civil authority; we are now living in a period in history when those who should have been the defenders of the independence of the Church have sacrificed it on the altar of expediency and public opinion.

As substantial and dangerous as the sacrificing the principle is, particularly as we move forward in history, one cannot ignore another aspect of the Dallas Charter which is also having far reaching ramifications to this very day: the presumption of guilt. At the time an accusation is deemed “credible” by the Lay Board of Review, the cleric is removed immediately from active ministry. It should be noted that a “credible” accusation is one that is not clearly false on initial review. Thus, the cleric in question is effectively punished even before being found guilty of any wrongdoing—hence the presumption of guilt.

Even if, after further investigation, the cleric is exonerated, his good name has invariably been besmirched and, in many cases, beyond redemption. As Avery Cardinal Dulles wrote in his critique of the Dallas Charter in 2004: *At the time when accusations are made, it is often impossible to judge their truth, and this impossibility may persist indefinitely if the accusations are denied and probative evidence is lacking. When dioceses routinely announce that accused priests have been “removed from public ministry because of a credible accusation of sexual abuse of a minor,” such priests are, in effect, branded as guilty. An accusation is deemed credible unless it is manifestly groundless. When priests are treated as guilty, they suffer the loss of their good name and as a consequence find it difficult in the future to function effectively in their God-given vocation, assuming that they are restored to ministry.*³ Some 15 years later the United States bishops have still not found an effective way to restore the good name of a wrongfully accused cleric, something which the 1983 Code of Canon Law insists is the right (restoration of a good name) of every >

person wrongfully accused.

Although the bishops have seen fit to ignore the importance of presumed innocence, some secular writers have not, particularly in light of the “#metoo” movement. The concern is not just for wrongfully accused clerics (who the secular media seems to care little about), but for anyone accused given the current climate. An op-ed piece in the *New York Daily News* written by two women attorneys recently appeared. In it, the attorneys stated the following: *This moment [the time of the #metoo movement] offers an important opportunity for individuals who are compelled to share their stories [of abuse] and seek justice. But the moment is equally dangerous—as it has the potential to unleash a plethora of unfounded claims from which there is no recovery. The accusation alone of child sexual abuse is enough to forever destroy a person’s reputation, personal relationships and employability...*

Incorrect identifications occur far too often, and they may be enhanced by the prospect of implanted and fabricated memories of emotional childhood events. The presumption of innocence along with the constitutional guarantees to legal counsel, the right against self-incrimination, and fundamental fairness at a criminal trial sets our democracy apart...

Recognizing that the levers of justice require periodic realignment, New York State has significantly lowered the bar for prosecution of child predators. On Feb. 14, Gov. Cuomo signed the Child Victim’s Act, which extends the statute of limitations for the criminal prosecution of a sexual offense committed against a child, and shall not begin to run until the child turns 23 years of age. The law also establishes a “look-back window” where victims can file civil lawsuits up to 18 months after the effective date of the statute for previously barred claims and a civil suit can be brought up until the plaintiff reaches the age of 55 years old...

While this law most certainly smooths victims’ path to justice, it could also lead to bad actors posing as victims, extorting funds, suing needlessly for damages and exacting revenge on innocent persons. The tragedy of these incidents is that they not only ruin lives of the wrongfully accused, but they make life considerably more



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo

*difficult for real survivors who have suffered unimaginable abuse, and fought long and hard to be heard.*⁴

Although the bishops’ collective malfeasance regarding removing offending clerics is wholly to blame for this very dangerous state of affairs, one must not forget the role insurance companies are playing as well when it comes to the presumption of guilt. In almost all cases, the insurers of American dioceses and religious orders insist on settling civil cases without a trial. When this occurs, the accused cleric has no opportunity to clear his name in a court of law and because the diocese or religious order has paid (through their insurance company) the accuser a settlement, it appears to the general public that the cleric must be guilty. This, of course, makes it impossible for the cleric’s good name to be restored.

The Dallas Charter has thus violated the important principle of the Church’s sovereignty as well as the principle of “innocence until proven guilty” as enshrined in American jurisprudence. It has never been a more important time for the faithful to pray for their priests.

¹ <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2019/03/de-mattei-interview-in-la-verita-dear.html#more>

² Cohalan, Florence, *A Popular History of the Archdiocese of New York*. Yonkers, N.Y.: United States Catholic Historical Society, 1983.

³ <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/488/article/rights-accused-priests>

⁴ <https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-falsely-accused-sex-crimes-20190321-crvqpph26fc2fcb4mqq3smheuq-story.html>



From Cardinal to Mister

In the latter part of 2018, the homosexual abuse of young men on the part of clerics came roaring back to the front pages with the report that, after an investigation by the Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick had been credibly accused of molesting a teenage male in the sacristy of St. Patrick's Cathedral some 50 years before. Following that announcement, many more facts emerged indicating that this was not an isolated incident but rather that McCarrick was a serial abuser of seminarians and young priests who were in his charge. In response, Pope Francis asked for McCarrick's resignation from the College of Cardinals and effectively suspended him from exercising any priestly ministry (a suspension "a divinis") until an investigation was carried out under Canon Law.

On January 11, 2019, the Congress of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the conclusion of a penal process, issued a decree finding Theodore Edgar McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., guilty of the following delicts while a cleric: solicitation in the sacrament of confession, and sins against the Sixth Commandment with minors and with adults, with the aggravating factor of the abuse of power. The Congress imposed on him the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state. On February 13, 2019, the Ordinary Session (Feria IV) of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith considered the recourse he presented against this decision. Having examined the arguments in the recourse, the Ordinary Session confirmed the decree of the Congress.



This decision was notified to Theodore McCarrick on February 15, 2019. The Holy Father has recognized the definitive nature of this decision made in accordance with law, rendering it a "res iudicata" (i.e., admitting of no further recourse).

With this decree, McCarrick is no longer to be referred to as "bishop" or even "father" but simply as "mister." Although dismissed from the "clerical state," McCarrick still is, by virtue of the indelible character imprinted

This investigation was concluded and the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith issued the following statement:

on the soul through the sacrament of holy orders, a priest and bishop, though absolutely forbidden to exercise the associated powers

>

of their orders except in a case of “danger of death.”

Although the Vatican and Pope Francis obviously hoped this decree would have put an end to the current scandal unleashed upon the Church, it has had the opposite effect simply because so many questions remain unanswered by the Vatican regarding the entire affair.

Additionally, the day before the publication of the decree reducing McCarrick to the lay state, the following announcement was published by the Vatican: *The pope has appointed as Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family*

and Life. The Camerlengo is the Cardinal who effectively organizes the conclave when a pope dies and runs the day-to-day operations of the Church during the *sede vacante* before the election of the new pope.

It should be recalled that Farrell is a protégé of McCarrick, served as an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington during McCarrick’s tenure there and denied any knowledge of rumors concerning McCarrick’s predilection for young seminarians and priests. Thus, Pope Francis has seemingly softened the blow to McCarrick by naming a protégé to the important post of Camerlengo. Once again, Francis has, by his actions rather than his words, indicated that he does not take the McCarrick case very seriously.

Archbishop Sheen Finally Going to Peoria?

As has been written of before in this space, there has been a protracted legal battle between the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Peoria (in the person of Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s niece, Joan Sheen Cunningham) as to whether Sheen’s mortal remains could be removed from the crypt of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York and sent to Peoria in order that his case for beatification could proceed. It now appears that the courts have had their final say.

In early March of this year, a New York Appeals Court handed down a unanimous ruling in favor of Mrs. Cunningham. The justices found that Sheen’s desire to be entombed in St. Patrick’s Cathedral would not have been as compelling as seeing his cause for beatification proceed. Although the ruling seems definitive, the Archdiocese of New York has stated that its attorneys would be reviewing the ruling to decide what next steps could be taken.

For some inexplicable reason, Timothy Cardinal Dolan has adamantly refused to abide by a promise made by his predecessor in the New York Archdiocese, Cardinal Edward Egan, that Sheen’s body could be moved to Peoria.



Before earlier court rulings the Archdiocese has said that it will not proceed with Archbishop Sheen’s cause and would not agree to release his remains. Although the Archdiocese of New York is now indicating that it DOES want to erect a shrine for Sheen in St. Patrick’s and proceed with his cause, this reversal seems to be nothing more than a smoke screen as to the real intentions of Dolan and the Archdiocesan Chancery. One must be forced to ask the simple question: What possible reason could the Archdiocese of New York (or Cardinal Dolan personally) have to want to see Archbishop Sheen’s cause for beatification move forward? Too many unanswered questions from a Cardinal who always speaks of wanting greater “transparency.”



Cultural Revolution,

Cultural Counter-Revolution

by Fr. Alain Lorans, SSPX

Editor's Note: The following is a conference given by Fr. Alain Lorans as part of a summer university course of The Society of Saint Pius X from August 12-16, 2017 on the subject, "To Serve Christianity Today." In order to conserve the proper character of this conference, the oral style has been maintained.

In the course of history, the reaction to revolution was principally manifested at the political and social level, but we mustn't forget that there is an equally important element of society that revolution wishes to sabotage—that of culture. "To serve Christianity today" the topic that we are proposing during this summer university course, implies that we are striving to defend a culture under attack, the Christian culture.

The cultural combat is not always well understood in conservative circles and sometimes in our own [traditional] circles, because one thinks that the importance rests in politics, social elements or

economics; to most, culture appears "less serious," as if it was only an attitude.

The Cultural Revolution of Gramsci

It is important to rid ourselves of this false notion because if we don't understand the importance of culture in the service of civilization, its enemies, who already understand this very well, will use it to their advantage. Here are a few examples:

When Mao, in China, wanted to impose the communist regime, he didn't content himself with using political or economic weapons. Indeed, he wanted to establish a regime with Marxist policies and >

economy, but he also wanted to wage a “cultural revolution.”

For him, it wasn't sufficient to overthrow political structures—which is the program of all revolution and of all kinds of subversions—he demanded an additional change of spirit in order to introduce a revolution into the minds of the Chinese.

He knew that subversion wouldn't be complete with merely the overthrow of exterior structures. This external horror must also change the nature of the people itself at its very depths. What happened was terrible: a number of persecutions under the form of “self-criticism” and “re-education” were aimed especially at the tenants of the culture. Mao proceeded to strip away the “junk” from China, that is to say the benchmarks, the chronicles, the roots of the identity of his country.

Mao's revolution doesn't directly concern us because it doesn't apply to a culture that rests upon historically Christian territory, but we must say that all revolutions want to reach into people's minds, because as long as the subversion hasn't entered their minds, it is not complete. This, then, defines cultural revolution.

Closer to us geographically is the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist himself, who is at the origin of the cultural revolution and *meta*-politics—taken from the Greek *meta*: [after] that which goes above politics, which is culture, precisely.

As with all Marxists, Gramsci's principles rested on the idea that society has an economic infrastructure and an ideological superstructure, the “Bourgeois culture” which is only there to maintain the Bourgeois order and to make the economic and political domination of the Bourgeois acceptable to the proletarians.

He goes further: Culture is in the hands of the Bourgeois who present this as a system of “natural” values, which would only, according to him, be values intended to ensure Bourgeois hegemony in the name of so called “common sense.”

There aren't, for Gramsci, “values” in themselves. It would therefore be of no avail to destroy the people's roots, to work at cutting the people off from their identity; one must subvert even further, go to the heart, even into the minds of the people; one must make them understand that there is no nature, no essence, no “values” in themselves. One must break down and eradicate the idea that human

nature exists independently of economic and social conditions. We are now staring integral revolution in the face.

Defiance is important. This was well perceived when Malraux founded the Houses of Youth and Culture (MJC) in France. The left claimed the group as “theirs” immediately, therefore, these MJC have become the subversive foyers of leftist culture. Some moderates believe themselves to be conservatives. Really, they give themselves away by their default attitude which is marked by materialistic economics. They consider that the moment the quality of life increases, people are thrilled, satisfied. Surveys indicate the morale of the population by their purchasing capacity or the recovery of consumption. But “man liveth not by bread alone,” he also needs intellectual and, most importantly, spiritual nourishment.

Cultural revolution is a revolution in the full sense of the word: it does not content itself with political, economic and social subversion; it attacks the domain of values as well. That is where it reaches the heart of Christianity.

The revolutionaries qualify values as “Bourgeois” in order to disqualify them. They want to remove all pretention toward universality (for values can't be imposed upon all) in the name of a pretend human nature present in every man. In our days, we aren't being subjected to a type of Soviet, police or authoritarian persecution, but there indeed exists a subversion that searches to depose us of our heritage and further, of our very nature.

And since the revolutionaries acknowledge the principle that one cannot destroy something without replacing it, they propose different values to us, other cultural references and even another type of humanity.

In his book, *La crise de la conscience européenne* (The Crisis of European Conscience), Paul Hazard says that every period has an ideal model of humanity¹ that can be seen, not only on a cultural but also a spiritual level. This idea is correct; we can examine this and expound upon it. In the Middle Ages, the ideal was represented by the knight, the defender of the widow and the orphan; During the Renaissance, it was the *condottiere* [a mercenary soldier or leader], the humanist; in the 17th century, it is “the honest man;” in the 18th, the enlightened philosopher; in the 19th, the Bourgeoisie; in the 20th, the



vigorous young elite: hedonist and consumerist; in the 21st, it is the worldly trans-humanist, above good and evil.

Every period thus shows what its ideal was. With La Varende [a French author], in the 20th century, you have again heroes who had a certain chivalrous ideal, where honor was paramount, but it is a species on its way to extinction.

React: A Cultural Counter-Revolution?

So, how do we confront this subversion? Resign ourselves to the inevitable and do nothing?

We find ourselves in a period of decadence. Our contemporaries aren't ready to give their lives for a religious or patriotic cause because there are no longer any transcendental ideals capable of justifying so great a sacrifice. Truly, "heroes are worn out."

Let us not say that this applies particularly to "those on the other side;" we also possess a certain lassitude. We are not immune to the pseudo-values that prevail today. We breathe the air of the times; we are bitten by this century. We are not sheltered from it; our Christian ideal dulls because we do not have the character of our ancestors. Already in the 19th century, Cardinal Pie admonished us: "Man no longer exists, because character no longer exists."

In order to not let ourselves be contaminated by this overwhelming majority that smiles with pity when it sees us, it is indispensable to maintain an attitude of dissidence. One cannot reclaim Christian values for himself that are rejected and mocked today without making some waves. In other words, we must faithfully follow the Gospel that tells us: "You are in the world, but you are not of the world" (*cf.* Jn. 17: 14-18). We are here because we are physically in the world, but is the world integrally within us? Have we adopted these pseudo-values with their false ideal of humanity? Officially no, surreptitiously perhaps. A true cultural counter-revolution consists foremost of knowing the difference and of firmly claiming this dissidence, which is a form of intellectual and spiritual courage.

Within the counter-values of the times that we find in the television [the "boob tube"] there is nothing enthusiastic, nothing that edifies us. On the contrary, this draws us down in general, into mediocrity and sometimes worse.

We must not succumb to the sirens' song and we must push away this invitation to our concupis-

cence. Is this really a great sacrifice?

There are no police on "Mao Hill" who are coming to tell us that we have to read the little red book of president Mao. We aren't familiar with this type of ideological persecution. What we have now is more insidious: we are stripped of our Christian heritage and uprooted from our cultural grounding in Christianity.

Are we actively trying to reclaim these cultural values, to make them ours personally? We all, in short, agree with the spirit of the Crusades, but isn't it often pure rhetoric and accompanied by frightening incapacity? If our will is paralyzed, if our spirit of decision making is frozen, it will serve to nothing.

What are we actually capable of doing? Shouting loud and proud, "God first served!" But then, when we must serve God on a daily basis in the family or at work, no one is willing! It is because we have a platonic conception of the Christian ideal. We have placed it among the archetypes, in the world of super-sensibility which never becomes a reality.

Alternatively, we can live the practice of our religion, and this ideal should manifest itself in the little things; this sacrifice that we have to make in order to reclaim our Christian values demonstrated in the little things, not by fads and trends.

Radical Reaction to a Radical Revolution

Let's go further. The Marxist revolution is already a grave subversion, but cultural revolution is still more dangerous. We are not being directly menaced by Mao or Gramsci, but by their heirs, who are much subtler, who require from us a sharper or simply smarter spirit—certainly not a dull one in any case.

We should see these things for what they are. The world in which we live smothers us with chloroform; you are here in a stage of revival, so to speak; you are not in the hands of anesthesiologists. You are rebels; you make the difference as a Christian; you are "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." You are in the recovery chamber to wake up, not to sleep.

The world in which we live attempts to anesthetize us with two very simple words: consume and enjoy. The world tells us: don't analyze, don't think, don't pray, but rather consume, stuff yourself and please yourself *ad nauseam*. Behold the limitless horizon: consumerism and hedonism. The Christian alternative is "sacrifice yourself; give." >

You understand that it is not a question of culture as a consumer good delivered to us in the form of books, CD's and DVD's, but under the form of a cultural combat. The stakes are high, crucial; it is our soul, those of our families and our country that are on the line.

Baudelaire gave, it seems to me, the best definition of civilization as understood by Christian culture. Civilization is not found in technical progress nor in the sects of yesterday and today, "civilization" he tells us, "is the diminishing of the traces of original sin."² A Christian culture which serves civilization, the Christian today, is he who works to diminish the effects of original sin.

Is that the case with this new genre of literature that offers comfort in soft sadomasochism? No, on the contrary, this rancid literature renders the wounds of original sin more acute, more loathsome; the wound does not scab over, does not heal, does not improve; it weakens it a little more, pulls the infection down further, toward animal concupiscence. It prevents us from accessing the specific difference we possess from animals which is our reason, *a fortiori*, the spiritual life.

The cultural challenge is well understood to be this: to go against the pseudo-values that literary and contemporary cinematic productions present as the ideal of humanity. This is not to say that literature must be cunning or moralistic. It must be complete in showing the struggle between the "old man" and "the new man" to show that there is truly a spiritual combat.

This was clearly manifested in the 17th century in *El Cid* by Corneille or in *Phèdre* by Racine. One sees here a culture that takes humanity in its entirety, not a utopian humanity, rather, a sinful humanity, but which raises itself up, punishes itself, which turns toward its spiritual ideal, and which is not content to say, "please yourself and die."

Today, we have a subversive culture that pulls us downward, that complacently presents as much decadence as possible. The prototype being the "Cannes film festival" [international film festival held in Cannes, France] or anything that could be inverted or perverted and then projected on the big screen.

Decadence is complacency in decline. This decline, resulting from the weakness of human nature since original sin, can be recognized and avoided or people can submit to it. If recognized, this decline

must be followed by a redemptive leap, a *sursum corda*. Accommodating the smug abasement of our societal decline is an unsustainable level of decadence.

Let's be more precise concerning Baudelaire's definition: what are the "traces of original sin"?

They are concupiscence, unbridled sensuality, cowardice, spinelessness, sloth, ignorance, malice. It is what St. John calls the triple concupiscence:³ concupiscence of the body, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Faced with this, we try to be a little more human, a little less beast, and we must endow ourselves with a culture that really cultivates us—that doesn't let us be idle, that doesn't let the weeds grow—a culture that shakes us up as needed, that gathers us, that returns to us, that converts us and obliges us to grow so we can elevate ourselves. This is a culture worthy of its name.

The contrary is barbarism. It is what we call "savage" today. Today's society of emasculated language doesn't call a "spade a spade" anymore. It isn't politically correct to call things by their name; the blind are the "non-seeing," the deaf the "hard of hearing," and when the "savages" steal, pillage, rape, we speak of "incivilities."

In passing, it is very revealing that we are no longer allowed to use the right word, the exact term. We dream here about what Bossuet had to say to his student, the Great Dauphin who, by negligence, contented himself with a "head-in-the-clouds" attitude: "Today you fool yourself in the placement of your words; you don't put the right word in the right place. Suppose in the case that you govern others, you don't put the correct man in the correct place. Because your head is not in order, your government shall be disordered."⁴

True cultivated culture is not merely a fashion trend. Subversive culture renders one a little more beastly, a little more like an animal, a little more barbaric. The definition of Baudelaire is quite correct.

When there is no longer any will "to diminish the traces of original sin," when one cultivates concupiscence, exacerbates sloth, renders ignorance and malice more infectious and corrupt, one creates barbarism, not civilization. One destroys Christianity. This revolution is neither political, nor economic, nor institutional; it is an extremely efficacious cultural revolution.



We are the witnesses and the victims of the omnipresent subculture of the media which is the vehicle for corrupt ideals. Adultery is promoted by the voice of posters as organizations spread them along the walls of the subway. Sensuality is proposed in all of its forms, in all of its false glory, for its primary message for humanity: "It isn't wrong to treat yourself well!" This statement paraphrases Oscar Wilde: "The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it."

The subversive know that they have an ally deep within each of us. We have been baptized; we have the effects of original sin; we have received grace; we also have the "old man" who draws us downward in this beastly culture. The slopes are meant to be slippery so that one cannot climb back up.

The Copernican Revolution

We have seen in depth that subversion consists in the inversion of the natural order. To be precise: instead of affirming the primacy of the object, which is objectivity, one privileges the subject, the subjectivity. A typical thought process might unfold thus: "First of all, this is what I think, it is my opinion, who cares what the reality is, it's what I want, what I think is what counts..."

Today, one gives passion primacy; it gets placed above our reason. May of 1968 [a period of country-wide strikes. Considered a cultural, social, and moral turning point in the history of France] began with the slogan "Imagination is power." The imagination is a sense, an internal sense that we have in common with animals but it is not the queen of our faculties. Certainly it is "the madman of the house" [St. Teresa of Avila]. The imagination of '68 is the fantasy that receives the power to govern institutions and manners. We dream about the rosy life with no responsibilities after the hippie revolution; now it has become the shameless sensual life without any clarity and without counter-revolution!

In order to combat this subversion, one must first identify it. In the military, the worst thing that could happen would be to failure in identifying the enemy, his strategy, his tactics. Here we aren't faced with a potential or virtual enemy, but a very real enemy that hides and we have to learn its weaknesses in order to combat it.

In his great work, *L'intelligence en peril de mort* [Intelligence in Danger of Death]⁵, Marcel De Corte

analyzes this revolution of minds which is the hallmark of the cultural revolution. After the Council the modernists said: we already changed the texts, now we have to overthrow the minds. We pass from words to ideas, from the written word to reason itself; it is an integral and radical subversion. Marcel De Corte tells us that what characterizes our period is that we are no longer in the school of reality. What we would like is to project our ideas and our fantasies upon reality: reality must bend. It is what Kant called a "Copernican Revolution."

The present day culture and its literature is built on this model: it is not what we truly hear, the observation of human nature with its strengths and miseries, but rather the projection of a fantasy, sometimes even a perversion of reality. They tell us: "It's just like that; that's how I feel."

The literature of today is subjectivist and self-absorbed. One exposes and spreads "self." For Leon Daudet, it is the rampant and infectious ego trip. The modern man suffers because of himself; he must pamper his ego. This subject could go on for many pages, but it certainly isn't thus that we can serve Christianity today.

Marcel De Corte gives us an interesting example, almost a diagnosable case with Chateaubriand. At the beginning of his *Memoires d'Outre-Tombe* [Memories from Overseas], he exposes the juvenile folly that he came to understand as the "love fantasy." He dreams of a woman who isn't real, who doesn't exist. He made her, he un-made her, changing the color of her eyes, her hair, taken from ideas from billboards that he saw here and there, collecting separate memories from women that he would notice in his entourage. He made therefore, an imaginary being, with whom he is madly in love, madly in the psychiatric sense of the word. He is so enamored with her that, seeing that she clearly doesn't exist, and the divorce between his rich and fulfilling dream and the poor and intolerable reality, he desired to kill himself and he made the attempt. The aftermath is unknown since we do not have the sequel to his already extensive *Memoires*.

In the opinion of Marcel De Corte, the case of Chateaubriand has symbolic value because it represents the contemporary mentality very well. We bathe in a subjectivist culture which is no longer in the realm of reality, nor from nature—a nature that imposes itself because it is created by God. >

Modern man is a demiurge, a creator who makes his object; he cannot love what he is, he wants to love what he created, that which he dreams. He wants to fabricate his bubble, and make that bubble a reality. What would the apprentice sorcerers of transhumanism say today who are the makers of “virtual reality”!

The cultural counter-revolution cannot be—like Joseph de Maistre announced very justly—a contrary revolution, seeking to counter balance revolution, by becoming the exact opposite of revolution. It is more than just the will to rebel which we spoke about at the beginning. It essentially consists of conversion. The spirit must be converted, turned towards what is real which, for us Christians, is the order created by God of which we are constantly aware.

This attitude which is only the realistic attitude is deeply counter-revolutionary today. Is being a realist to be counter-revolutionary? No! Only a perfectly conscious understanding of revolutionary dangers can operate a real cultural counter-revolution. We can attack cultural revolution at its roots by reorienting the spirit towards reality—by submitting to objective truth. It is the antidote to Mao who said that he wanted to rid himself of the “junk” and to Gramsci who wanted to free people from a natural order which does not depend on us, and all the more from a supernatural order which imposes itself on us. When Baudelaire said that in order to do civilized work, one must work to diminish the effects of original sin, a theologian could add that these effects can be summarized as a bending, a withdrawal, a stunting of oneself; this is why the effects of original sin which are concupiscence, cowardice and the rest... are sterile, sadly infertile and savagely uneducated.

Integral Return to Reality

Still in *L'intelligence en peril de mort*, Marcel De Corte shows where intellectual fecundity is found, where we must search for a radical cultural counter-revolution. Our intelligence proceeds by concepts from which it forms judgments through rigorous reasoning. How is a concept born?

The realist philosopher responds: “In order for there to be a concept, there must first be conception. The concept is the wedding-fruit of the intelligence and reality. In order for this offspring to be born, the intelligence must have exchanges with re-

ality. It is evident that the vigor of a child depends on the health of the father and the mother, and on the strength of their union. It is the intensity, the width, the depth, richness and quality of their relationship tied together by generative elements which will mark that which is conceived by their union, communicating to it the imprint of reality.”⁶

The things of the intellectual life are to be considered with as much simplicity and naturalness as the things of biological life: the word “concept” goes back to the idea of conception, therefore of fertility. Intelligence is not fertile; it cannot conceive a rich and strong idea, unless it is rendered fertile by reality. It is not intelligence itself that is fertile. Self-fertilization may be a “pregnancy,” but it is not real fertility.

Intelligence is really in danger of death since it thinks that it is fertile by itself, making ideas by itself that are no more than idealized fantasies. This gives way to “love phantoms” as with Chateaubriand. But these make-believe loves could never engender anything other than shadows.

The realist cultural counter-revolution, is to admit that we are fertile by reality. Let us go further: I am fertile by nature, by the essence of things, by the nature that God willed by the natural order with the natural law, the natural morals for, despite Gramsci and his successors, there is a natural law. For example, marriage between one man and one woman—which is not “bourgeois” or “macho,” which is not ideological, socio-cultural conditioning.

And there is also a supernatural law: we are wounded, lessened by the effects of original sin; we know that it is due to concupiscence. This supernatural law is willed by Him who created us and who more admirably re-created us—*mirabilis reformasti*—by Christ our Redeemer, who removes from us the “old man” and who makes the “new man” live within us. “All of the rest is only literature,” vain literature, as Peguy proclaimed.

Let us give the last word to Fr. Calmel. Commenting on the words of Phèdre [queen of Athens], taken with devastating and incestuous passion for Hippolyta [her stepson], she wishes to cast away her veils, signs of the dignity of a woman, of step-mother and queen she says, “Woe, that these veils weigh upon me!” Fr. Calmel states that it is not only her veils that weigh upon her, it is the acceptance of human nature, it is the necessity of waging



combat, of domesticating the animal, and of making sure that rationality and, more importantly, spirituality triumphs.

“Woe, that these vain adornments, these veils weigh upon me”⁷ groaned the Racine heroine [Jean-Baptiste Racine was the author of the tragedy *Phèdre*] to the paradox of passion and rage. This terrible verse raises the question of decency very precisely. If the human being succumbs, no longer stands firm, no longer restrains himself...and that is what happens from one day to another, to the one who cuts himself off from God: then, inevitably, the veils become a burden. But if the human being agrees to be such, with the struggle, the effort, the tears and the prayers that this consent requires for his own dignity: then, naturally, the veils are sweet to him like a sacred burden. They are the sign of his ever-visible nobility and condition of his ever-possible salvation.”⁸

Do not deliver yourself from the fight with this name: resignation. One resigns to the human condition if one does not want to be redeemed anymore, if one wishes to roll himself up in concupiscence. If the reason doesn't want to be mistress anymore, one wallows in passion.

To serve Christianity today is to proclaim a difference, affirm an urgency. It is to be a rebel. It requires energy and enthusiasm; we are not made to be mediocre. Do not say that we are fatigued, that we long to be at rest without having worked, without having been wounded. To retreat from this conflict would be the same as retreating from battle. The cultural counter-revolution involves our whole conception of humanity, of Christianity. It is a vast battlefield that opens wide before us.

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.

¹ See Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne*, 1680-1715. 3rd part, Ch. 7, *Vers un nouveau modèle d'humanité*, Paris, 1931.

² Charles Baudelaire, *Mon cœur mis à nu : journal intime* (1887), no. LVIII: “Theory of true civilization. It is not in gas, neither in vapor, neither in turning tables. It is in the diminishing of the stain of original sin.”

³ 1 Jn. 2:16: “Because all that is in the world, the concupiscence of the body, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, comes not from the Father, but the world.”

⁴ See Bossuet, Letter to Pope Innocent XI on the education of the Great Dauphin (March 8, 1679).

⁵ See Marcel De Corte, *L'intelligence en péril de mort*, edition established and edited in the notes by Jean-Claude Absil, L'Homme Nouveau ed., 2017, pp. 231-234.

⁶ Marcel De Corte, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

⁷ Jean Racine, *Phèdre*, I, 3.

⁸ R.-Th. Calmel O.P., *Ecole chrétienne renouvelée*, Ch. XXVIII, *Vigreur et netteté*, Téqui, 1990, P. 179.

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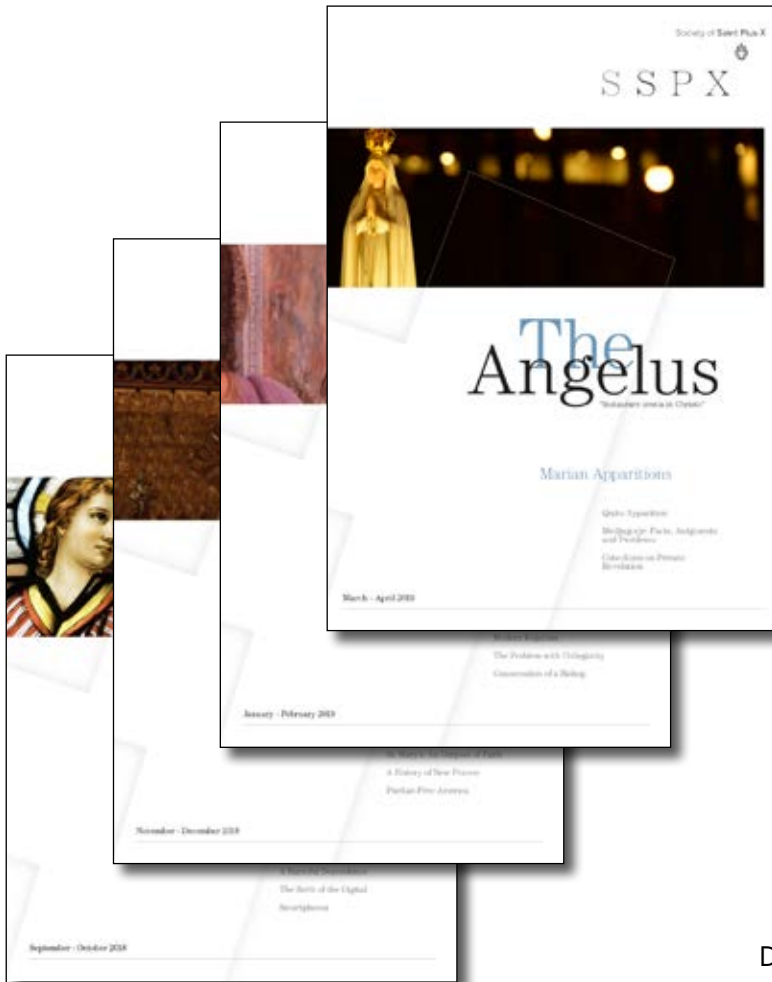
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The Last Word

Dear readers,

Sacred Scripture tells us that when Our Blessed Lord announced, “One of you will betray me,” John rolled over from his reclining seat right onto the Sacred Heart to console Him of this betrayal. Then to John, “leaning on Jesus’ bosom” and to him alone, not even to Peter, did Our Lord discreetly identify the traitor.

The world is full of scandals, indeed, and woe to it because of them. But what have we done and what do we do at the news of these shocking acts? Are we too going to throw the first stone, we who may think that we are “holier than thou?”

The contrite Augustine knew too well, and with good reason, the meaning of his words when he said: “There is not a sin that a man cannot commit, that another man has committed, without the help of He who made man.” Or, in the Pauline expression: “*Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed—caveat!—lest he fall.*”

My last word on this issue of scandals is a triple *agere contra*: they should be for us a lesson in humility, in satisfaction, in missionary charity.

In humility: whatever sad story we hear of someone’s sins, let us remember that we could fall into the exact same sin, and even into worst ones, without the grace of God. “It is by the grace of God that I am what I am.” We all remember the firm declaration “I will die for You!” uttered by a Peter too confident in his own strength. We know what happened after.

A lesson in satisfaction: like John, we too must console the Sacred Heart, “I have sought for a consoler and have found none...” Someone must make penance for these sins. Many religious congregations, such as the Capuchins, have that goal. At Fatima, Our Blessed Lady called on little ones to join in this necessary satisfaction for the sins of poor sinners who might go to hell without *our* penances.

A lesson in missionary charity: “Pray for the conversion of sinners!” Who would have ever thought a Magdalene, a Saul, an Augustine, an Ignatius, a Ratisbonne would have converted and become such saviors of souls, some of them founders of religious orders, in the hands of God? “For nothing is impossible with God!” Someone prayed for them. And their prayers were answered.

Let us pray without ceasing in reparation and for the conversion of poor sinners.

Fr. Daniel Couture

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