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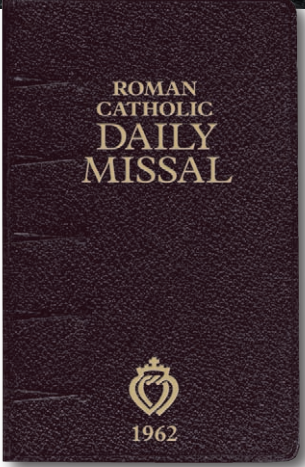
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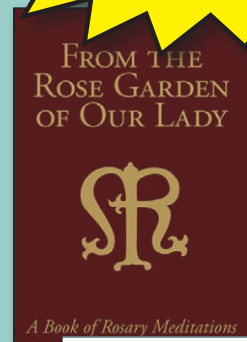
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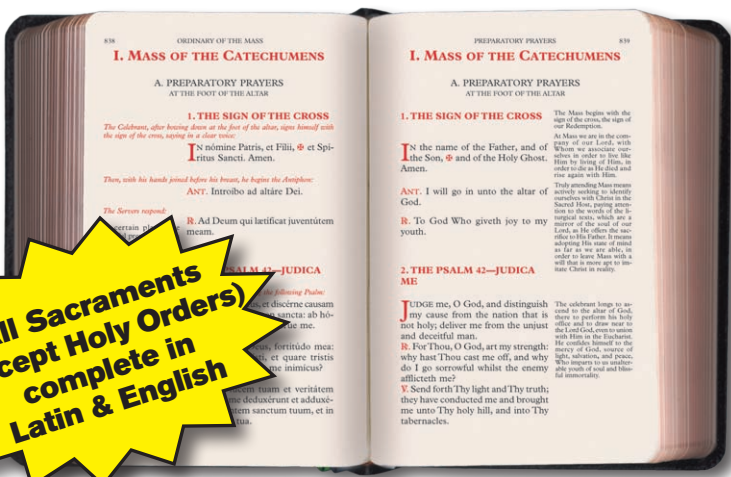
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—Pope St. Pius X

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OUR LADY OF PER



On December 11, 1865, Pope Pius IX entrusted the holy image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to the Redemptorists. “Make it known to the whole world,” he commanded them. In honor of her June Feastday, *The Angelus* discusses the symbolism of the image and its history.



PETUAL HELP



FEASTDAY
JUNE 27

As in the holy Shroud we can contemplate the face of Our Lord, so in the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, copy of the painting by St. Luke, can we discover the true face of Mary. The image [see magazine cover] is a painting on wood approximately 20" x 16". On a rather brilliant gold background several personages appear. The Virgin Mary, carrying on her left arm the Child Jesus, holds the central place. The gold, still brilliant, symbolizes the uncreated light, heaven. Mary, who occupies the most important place against this heavenly backdrop, reminds us that she is the gate of heaven, *Janua Coeli*.

The Virgin is cloaked in royal purple: her dress is red, and her mantle, draped over her head as a veil, is blue. The folds of mantle and veil are streaked with gold. The Old Testament only knew one shade of blue: violet. The fabric which covered the arc of the covenant was of this hue (Num. 4,6,12). Now, is not Mary the veritable Ark of the Covenant? The high priest, called by his functions to communicate directly with God, also wore garments of this color. Mary is not a priest, but she gives us the priest *par excellence*: since our Lord became priest by the very act of the Incarnation, it must be said that the first priestly ordination was celebrated in the virginal womb of Mary, that the ordination was only accomplished with the consent of Mary, and that the subject of the ordination was furnished by Mary.

On the veil shines a star—*Stella Maris*—the star that shows the way, which was followed by the Magi, of which St. Bernard sings in praise:

Mary is that splendid star that rises above the vastness of the sea, brilliant by her merits, shining by her examples. O you who feel yourself to be far from land, swept away by the currents of the world in the midst of storms and tempests, take not your eyes off the light of this star if you do not wish to sink. If the wind of temptations blows, if the reef of tribulations threatens the way, look at the star, call on Mary. If you are tossed by the waves of pride, ambition, detraction, or jealousy, look at the star, call on Mary. If anger, avarice, or impure desires buffet the vessel of your soul, look at Mary. If, troubled by the enormity of your crimes, shamed by the turpitudes on your conscience, frightened by the dread of judgment you begin to slide into sadness or slip into despair, think of Mary. In perils, in anguish, in doubts, think of Mary, invoke Mary.¹

The star is also the symbol of virginity. On the veil of the icon of the Virgin of the Passion, we see three, since Mary is Virgin before, during, and after childbirth. The wide halo that encircles her head is artistically embellished. Above the Madonna's head read four letters in Greek: **MP-ΘΥ**, beginning and ending initials which mean "Mother of God," (**M**[H^TH] **P** **Θ**[E^O] **Υ**).

The divine Child is seated on His Mother's left arm; he is not clothed as a child, but as a man. He wears a green tunic secured by a red sash and partly covered by a deep yellow cloak. His head is also encircled by a halo, a little less wide and ornate than that of the Madonna, but marked by a cross. Above His left shoulder, at His eye level, we read these letters: **IC-XC**, that is, "Jesus Christ" (**I**[H^EOY] **Σ** **X**[PI^ET^O] **Σ**).

The Child does not look at His Mother, but looks back and turns His eyes towards a vision that fixes His gaze and impresses on his gentle features a look of fright. What is the vision? Two angels, one on the right, St. Gabriel, who presents Him with the cross and four nails; the other, on the left, St. Michael, who carries in a sacred vessel the instruments of the Passion: the lance which will pierce Jesus' side, and the reed.

The image is not just a representation, but a liturgical celebration. We can identify the two angels, because each one bears the Greek inscription of his name above his head: on the right, **Θ APT** for "Archangel Gabriel" (**Θ** **AP**[AΓΓEΛOΓ] **Γ**[A^BPIHΛ]), whose name means "God is my strength", and, on the left, **Θ APM** for "Archangel Michael" (**Θ** **AP**[AΓΓEΛOΣ] **M**[IXAHA]), whose name means "Who is like unto God?". The entire history of salvation is summed up by the presence of these two celestial spirits: Gabriel, the angel of the Incarnation, and Michael, angel of the victory over the Dragon.

At the extremities of the arc of the covenant were two cherubim facing each other, dominating the propitiatory, a sort of great plate in gold on which the high priest, once a year, poured the blood of the victim. Here it is the Archangels Gabriel and

Michael who flank the ark of the new covenant, the *Theotokos* (Mother of God), bearing the instruments for immolation of the victim. Jesus turns His face toward the new propitiatory, the cross, on which the Lamb of God will be immolated as propitiatory sacrifice.

At the sight of these instruments of death, the Child seeks the protection of His Mother and seizes her right hand, symbol of strength. The two little hands clasping the thumb of Mary's hand are in the center of the icon: the most important place. Jesus asks His Mother to lend Him "a strong hand" and we know that she will do that to the bitter end, standing at the foot of the Cross.

This majestic hand holding the two little hands of the Child indicates Mary's *universal mediation*, but her attitude—her head inclined toward her Son and her right hand pointing to Him—reminds us that Jesus is our salvation. It is a wonderful representation of the *Auxilium Christianorum*, of her who is the perpetual help of Christians.

But what especially characterizes this image is the Madonna's expression, which perfectly reflects the scene we have just described. In the look Mary directs to onlookers, as in her entire countenance, one perceives an indefinable, sweet sadness mixed with tender compassion, a perfect commentary on the word of the old man Simeon: "A sword will pierce your heart" (Lk. 2:35). It is the face of the *Co-redemptrix*, Our Lady of Seven Sorrows.

She also has seen the cross presented to her Son: her heart suffers, but with what calm, what serenity, what celestial resignation! It seems that the terror of the Divine Child in the presence of the instruments of torture which are shown to Him have reminded Mary of her other children on earth, painfully making their way in sorrow and tears, and too often alarmed by the sight of their cross.

Under the impression of the pity she feels, her mouth remains closed, for the *Fiat* has been pronounced. She remains silent, but by squeezing the

HISTORY OF THE PICTURE



little left hand, that of the heart, she seems to confirm her accord and say to us:

I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me....He that hearkeneth to me shall not be confounded, and they that work by me shall not sin.²


There remains one odd but meaningful detail to mention: the Child is losing the sandal of His left foot! Some commentators explain it as an effect of the Child's fright. At the sight of the instruments of the Passion, scared, He would have thrown Himself into His mother's arms, breaking the strap of His sandal in His haste. But a child who is afraid turns his eyes away. Here Jesus, faced with the Passion offered to Him by His Father through the tokens presented by the celestial messengers, consents.

Now, we know that there was a Jewish custom that consisted of taking off one's shoe and giving it to the neighbor in order to symbolize the transfer of ownership by inheritance or by sale. Thus, when Booz prepared to buy a parcel sold by Noemi, the kinsman who yielded his right of purchase to Booz removed his sandal as a testimony of cession of right (Ruth 4:7). In other words, Jesus seems to declare here: "I remove my sandal and give it to you to signify that you no longer owe me anything! I pay the price needed to redeem you, to be loved by you."

This gesture also occurs in the Levitical law expressed in Deuteronomy 25:5: "When brethren dwell together, and one of them dieth without children, the wife of the deceased shall not marry to another: but his brother shall take her, and raise up seed for his brother." If the brother-in-law refuses his right,... the widow "shall come to him before the ancients, and shall take off his shoe from his foot, and spit in his face, and say: So shall it be done to the man that will not build up his brother's house" (Deut. 25:9). In His Passion, Jesus no longer has His sandals, they spit on Him and mock Him.

Lastly, on June 23, 1867, Msgr. Louis Antici-Mattei, Archbishop of Constantinople, solemnly crowned the image with a golden diadem offered by the chapter of the Vatican basilica. Ever since, the Popes have not ceased to personally honor it and to enrich the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help:

Pope Pius IX, as we have seen, came and prostrated himself before the miraculous image. The Redemptorists offered him a copy, which he placed in his private oratory and ordered that a candle burn before it continuously. When the Russians of Zotomir asked him to send them the most venerated Madonna of Rome, Pius IX sent them an image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Pope Leo XIII had it ever before his eyes because he kept in his office a little image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. When Pope St. Pius X received the extraordinary visit of Menelik II, Emperor of Ethiopia on October 7, 1907, he offered his wife, the Empress Taitou, a reproduction of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. He attached an indulgence of 300 days to the invocation: "Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us." Pope Benedict XV had a copy of Our Lady of Perpetual Help above his throne and allowed the Redemptorists to add to the Litanies of Loreto after "Mother of Good Counsel" "Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us." Pope Pius XI approved the novena in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help: it involves honoring Our Lady of Perpetual Help on nine consecutive Saturdays. Pope Pius XII allowed the transfer of this novena of nine Saturdays to the following Sundays. After the ceremony of canonization of St. Maria Goretti, Pius XII offered the mother, present at her daughter's canonization, a precious icon in silver representing Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Pope Paul VI allowed the transfer of the nine consecutive Saturdays to any *weekday* for nine consecutive weeks.

"Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray that the Names of Jesus and Mary be the breath of my soul!" 



In a leaflet by a certain Fr. Segalen, which at least has the merit of being well-illustrated, he asserts:

Many believed in centuries past that it was a portrait of the Blessed Virgin Mary painted by the hand of St. Luke. It is for this reason that they called this icon "The Virgin of St. Luke." We know that that is a legend, but a legend that rests on a fact: the Gospel according to St. Luke offers us the most beautiful portrait of the Virgin Mary.

We would like to know how Fr. Segalen knows that it was not St. Luke who originally painted this image. Today, what man can neither explain nor verify he qualifies as "legend," using this word not with its original meaning of "that which must be read," but as meaning a fable.

St. Luke, a doctor by training, was a cultivated man. He did not know our Lord, but he was closely acquainted with the Mother of God, which allowed him to reveal to us in his Gospel the secrets of which only Mary had been witness.

A very serious, if not absolutely certain, tradition teaches us that St. Luke was also a painter. From his intimate relationship with Mary undoubtedly was born his desire to transmit to the faithful not only a glimpse of the soul of the most holy Virgin, but also the traits of her countenance. Which is what he did.

Tradition relates that the Blessed Virgin, on seeing the portrait, attached to it this blessing: "*Gratia mea eam comitabitur*—My favor will always accompany this image." This story is recounted notably by Fr. Henze, the author who has most carefully studied the entire history of this miraculous painting.³

Another portrait attributed to St. Luke is venerated in a side chapel of the Church of St. Mary Major at Rome under the title *Salus Populi Romani*. A number of similarities exist between the two icons.

Two recent facts would uphold the tradition which recognizes in this painting a portrait of the Blessed Virgin. When this icon was shown to St. Bernadette, she recognized in it the traits of the Lady who had appeared at the grotto of Massabielle: "Bernadette was shown a collection of engravings all of which portrayed the Blessed Virgin. When shown the Virgin of St. Luke," writes Fr. Cros, "Bernadette pointed to it, saying, 'There is something there!...' As for the other images, she only looked on them indifferently."⁴

And Sister Lucy responded similarly to Fr. McGlynn, who asked her what the Virgin looked like: "Her face is the same as that of Our Lady of Perpetual Help."⁵

This image was venerated at Jerusalem for nearly four centuries. The first document which testifies to the existence of the painting of the Virgin by St. Luke dates from 444. It was at this epoch that it was offered to the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius II, a very pious emperor who reigned from 408 to 450 over the eastern Roman Empire. Eudoxia entrusted this precious treasure to the emperor's sister, St. Pulcheria. The latter had a church built at Constantinople and deposited in it the precious relic, which was the object of a very great veneration. Every Tuesday, a procession left the sanctuary and the holy image was carried throughout the city. The people multiplied their homage, and Mary, faithful to her promise, multiplied her favors. "My favor will always accompany this image."

Until the reign of Baldwin II, Count of Flanders, Emperor of the East (1240-73), and beyond, the holy image was involved in the most important events in the history of Catholicism in the East. The Virgin had received the Greek name of *Hodigitria*, which means *guide*.

Alas! dark days fell upon Constantinople. On May 30, 1453, the Turks seized Constantinople, and Mohammed II destroyed with his own hand the precious image, which perished forever. Fortunately, numerous copies had been made, among which was one by the monk St. Lazarus, who died in 860. This religious, who lived at the time of the Iconoclast

SALUS POPULI ROMANI



emperor Theophilus had his hands burned for having painted this image of the Virgin.⁶

The work of St. Lazarus differs from the original portrait by the addition of two angels on either side of Mary's face presenting the instruments of the Passion, which won for it the title of "Virgin with Two Archangels" or "Virgin of the Passion," the most widely used name in the Orient, principally in Russia where one of the copies of the Constantinople painting was venerated at Moscow. This imitation, which is the work of the artist Gregory, was the object of miracles. In 1641, by order of Czar Alexis Mikhailovitch, it was transported to Moscow, and at the spot where it was received, near the Tver gate, a church was built in its honor, then a monastery. Its name "Virgin of the Passion" came from the placement of two angels, one to the left and one to the right of the Virgin's head, holding the instruments of the Savior's Passion. The common inspiration of the icons of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the Virgin of the Passion is obvious, as we can see from the illustrations.

But let us leave this imitation from the East to return to that of the monk Lazarus, which can legitimately be considered as the natural inheritor of the Virgin's benediction: the miraculous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the name dictated by the Virgin herself in an apparition of which we shall speak below.

The ancient painting of St. Luke, which was venerated first at Jerusalem and then at Constantinople where it was shamefully destroyed, survived in the famous copy which we all know and which is venerated today at Rome in St. Alphonsus

Church, Via Merulana, between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran, as the Blessed Virgin requested.

FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO THE ISLE OF CRETE

According to the tradition, Pope Nicholas I having expressed the desire to possess at Rome a copy of the famous image, St. Lazarus left his monastery in order to fulfill the Pope's wish, but he did not complete his voyage. He was constrained, perhaps by storm or sickness, to stop over at the island of Crete, where he died. The Cretans received with great piety the image, which they venerated for six centuries in a church which they erected for this purpose. Pope Nicholas's wish had not been fulfilled in his life time, but Rome was indeed the destination which heaven had fixed for this image, as subsequent events amply prove.

FROM CRETE TO ROME

A manuscript from 1499, discovered in St. Matthew's Church at Rome where the painting was the object of a very popular devotion recounts very precisely the story of its translation from the isle of Crete to Rome. This document disappeared in 1799 together with the church during the invasion of Rome by the French, but three distinct copies survived the disaster; today they all belong to the Vatican Library. It is the principal source of this study.

THE VOYAGE

Towards 1496, a merchant of Crete, pushed by the spirit of lucre, stole the image from the church where it was displayed for veneration, with the intention of selling the painting to a church in Italy. He embarked, but during the voyage, a storm so fierce assailed the ship that the passengers believed that their last hour was at hand. More dead than alive, they recommended themselves to the holy Virgin, without suspecting—the document explicitly mentions this—the presence on board of the stolen miraculous Virgin.

Did the thief, struck with holy fear and repentance, perhaps suggest, without further explanation, that they invoke her whose image he had stolen? Nothing indicates it. Finally, the ship reached an unnamed Italian port safe and sound, thanks to Mary, who was there "clandestinely."

Then, though not all his steps can be retraced, it is known that our man arrived at Rome, still in possession of his treasure which he intended to sell to a church. But sickness overtook him in the city, and he had to take to bed at a friend's house. Contrite, he summoned his faithful friend and begged him to do him one last favor. At his acquiescence, he disclosed his sacrilegious theft and asked him to offer the painting to the church of his choice, the one which would seem to him the most suitable.

The friend agreed, and the Cretan merchant, undoubtedly well disposed by Our Lady of Perpetual Help, rendered his soul to God. The adventure was supposed to stop there, but that was not to be.

KEPT IN SECRET

Unpacking the effects of the deceased, our Roman friend easily found the magnificent painting and planned to execute his promise without delay. Unfortunately, it happened that his wife, captivated by the beauty and the value of the image, opposed her husband's will. "A miraculous painting in our hands?" she told him, "Why, it is a gift from heaven! I will never consent to part with it."

"This painting does not belong to us," her husband replied, "we must allow other Christians to venerate it." But his wife was not short of reasons: "If we offer it to a Roman parish, the others will be jealous! Let's keep it here and we shall pray every day to the Virgin for all Romans..."

Finally, instead of taking it to a church, the treasure was hung in the bedroom where, for nine months, it was kept secret without incident. But, one day, the Blessed Virgin appeared to the Roman and enjoined him to execute the last will of his deceased friend and the sacred promise he himself had made at the bedside of the dying man. This injunction did not succeed in convincing the man. A second warning remained equally ineffective. Mary intervened yet a third time with the rebel, this time concluding her visit with a threat: "If you do not obey my instructions, you will shortly die." He was finally going to obey, but, once more, he felt powerless before his wife's urging.



VIRGIN OF THE PASSION

That was the final straw! One last time, the Virgin appeared to the Roman, not to threaten him again, but to announce the impending chastisement: "I warned you," she said severely to the weak-willed spouse. "You would not obey willingly, so you will leave here first... Then it will be my turn to leave this house, and I shall choose for myself a worthier dwelling!" Indeed, not long after, our man left the house...in a coffin.

The Blessed Virgin, who could not entrust herself to the guilty wife, first appeared to the six-year-old daughter, and gave her an important message—the most important, because it revealed to us the Madonna's name: "Tell your mother and grandfather," she said, "that Holy Mary of Perpetual Help wants to be exposed to the veneration of the faithful in a Roman church."

DELIVERANCE

In the last warning of the Blessed Virgin, the grandfather was named, probably because he had seconded the opposition of the wife, his daughter. Be that as it may, by experience, the widow had learned that the Madonna did not make empty threats. Besides this mysterious message which, coupled with a vision that she had seen personally, and frightened by the perspective of a like punishment, she prepared to part with the precious painting and offer it to a church according to the will of her whom it portrayed.

Unable to carry out her plan in silence, she spoke to a neighbor. Weeping, she revealed her husband's resistance, and accused herself bitterly of having been the cause of her husband's death because of her own insubordination, and confided in her neighbor her resolve to place the precious image in a church as soon as possible.

The neighbor could not believe this providential intervention, and reassured the poor woman. "You are letting yourself be deceived; the Virgin Mary is in heaven, she is not interested at all in our painted images. If you were to cast her portrait in the fire, it would burn like any other, believe me. And if you are too afraid, give it to me: I'll take care of it." But a sudden illness overcame her! By day's end the neighbor was seriously ill. But this blow from heaven revived her faith, she understood her fault, asked forgiveness, and even made a vow to the holy image which delivered her instantaneously from her sickness.

At last, the painting was going to be restored to public veneration. But in which church should it be deposited? The Virgin herself returned to manifest her intention, and revealed it to the daughter in a new apparition, the seventh and last of this tale: "Tell your mother that she must deposit the image between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran, in a church dedicated to St. Matthew." The designated church belonged to the Augustinian Fathers.

In the first century of the Church, on the Esquiline hill, in the present enclosure of the Redemptorists' property, there stood the paternal house of St. Cletus, third Roman Pontiff, who received the gospel truths from the mouth of the Prince of the Apostles. Having become Pope, he consecrated his dwelling to public worship and made it into a church, which became one of the first sanctuaries of Christendom. It was given the title of St. Matthew. It was restored in the 12th century and was consecrated at that time by Paschal II.

PUBLIC CULTUS

Informed of events so favorable to them, one can surmise the promptness with which the Augustinians presented themselves as the new custodians of the heavenly treasure. They organized a solemn procession; and on March 27, 1499, during the pontificate of Alexander VI, the Wednesday of Holy Week, they carried the miraculous painting to their church.

The Blessed Virgin did not intend to ascend her throne without placing her signature to the contract signed with her children. Scarcely had the painting crossed the threshold of the new sanctuary, when a cripple, whose arm and right side were paralyzed, dragged himself to the altar to implore his cure, begging God and the Virgin to restore his limbs. Suddenly, his blood began to circulate, and the paralytic was healed.

This miracle, the first of a multitude, marked the inauguration of a glorious cultus in favor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. For three centuries, in the Church of St. Matthew, crowds of the faithful and numerous noteworthy visitors, like St. Alphonsus Liguori, came to pay homage to the holy image dominating the main altar under the marble baldachin.

A century later and constantly thereafter, the chroniclers who wrote about the city of Rome could not silence the glory of the Madonna. Panciroli, in 1600, and Herrera, in 1644, mention the painting, calling it "miraculous"; Totti, in 1638, qualified it as "absolutely (*valde*) miraculous"; Lupardus, in 1618, and Martineli, in 1653, declare it "illustrious by its miracles"; Cancelotti, in 1661: "famous for its prodigies"; Brutius, circa 1670: "very miraculous"; and Cardinal Nerli, in 1687: "resplendent far and wide by the glory of its miracles." These testimonies, among others, are culled from the remarkable work of Fr. Henze.

FROM ST. MATTHEW'S TO ST. EUSEBIUS'

In February 1798, French troops under the command of Berthier invaded Rome. Massena, succeeding Berthier, destroyed some thirty churches, among which was St. Matthew's, which was razed

on June 3, as we learn from a bull of Pius VII dated December 23, 1801.

The Augustinians of the monastery, Irish for the most part, almost all returned to their land of origin. A few of them sought refuge in the neighboring church dedicated to St. Eusebius and at the time completely abandoned because of the extinction of its former occupants, the Celestine Fathers.

In their flight, one can well imagine, the Augustinians carefully transported from St. Matthew's to St. Eusebius' the much venerated painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Where did they depose it: in the church itself or in the monastery? That is unknown. All that can be affirmed is that it was kept there until 1819, about 21 years. At that date, the Jesuits, re-established by Pius VII, received the Church of St. Eusebius as their own, and the Augustinians were once again transferred, this time to the little church of St. Mary's in Posterulana. Obviously, the painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Help accompanied them in this new migration.

Nevertheless, it was not placed in the church, already dedicated to the Virgin under another title, Our Lady of Grace, but placed in a secret little oratory within the cloister. And there, little by little, it fell into complete oblivion, or almost, for the people no longer had access to it, and on the other hand, few of the monks could remember the solemnities of St. Matthew's.

One very old Italian Brother coadjutor, Augustine Orsetti, remained deeply attached to this Madonna, for alone he enjoyed first-hand information about the cultus formerly offered to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Church of St. Matthew. It was there, it turns out, that while still an adolescent, he had donned the holy religious habit and had spent more than ten years of his religious life. Having become an old man, he frequently repeated, quite emphatically, to a young man in his service for more than twelve years, one Michael Marchi: "My dear Michael, this painting is that of St. Mary of Perpetual Help, venerated for a long time at St. Matthew's. It is a miraculous painting, don't forget; the fact is absolutely certain." Moreover, the young man had already heard certain relations of miraculous events attributed to the Madonna of Perpetual Help.

The old Brother passed away at the advanced age of 86 and the young man left the monastery where he had served. Without quite forgetting the old Brother's statements about the miraculous portrait, he no longer had the opportunity to revive his remembrance, nor to speak frequently about the subject. The poor painting was buried in forgetfulness and dust for almost 70 years (1798-1866). Later, Michael Marchi would relate that, in his childhood, he had often contemplated the painting in the little oratory of the convent at St. Mary's in Posterulana. While serving Mass, he observed that the picture received no special marks of veneration: not a single candle was lit, not

the least bit of ornamentation adorned its place; it was covered with dust. Though quite young, his admiration for the painting never waned. His mission was not over yet!

Once again, Our Lady was enveloped in mystery and silence: three quarters of a century passed. Undoubtedly, individuals must have possessed little images of the Virgin and had recourse privately to Mary's perpetual help, but the processions and grandiose ceremonies were over, or so it seemed...

IN REDEMPTORIST HANDS

In 1855, in order to obey the insistent invitations of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer founded by St. Alphonsus de Liguori moved to Rome. The purchase of a property and monastery was not without complications: so many negotiations came to naught. Finally, though not without new difficulties, they settled on the Esquiline hill, and, note well, on the very site of the former St. Matthew's. But by this date, no one suspected anything. Moreover, by an odd coincidence, this very year, Michael Marchi, former servant and young confidant of the old Brother Augustine Orsetti, entered in religion...with the Redemptorists!

That is not all. A little later, the monastery archivist informed the community of a most interesting find: In an old book, he had discovered a revealing document: a church dedicated to St. Matthew had once stood on the community's property, in the present-day garden, and there they venerated a miraculous painting of the Virgin.

Fr. Marchi, on this occasion, reminisced about St. Mary of Perpetual Help, of which, at one time or other, he had already spoken to his confreres. All, you can imagine, were keenly interested in the affair.

But one day, they received one more piece of information. It was in 1863. A Jesuit, Fr. Francis Blosi, was preaching at the Gesù at Rome on the different Madonnas venerated in the Eternal City. One evening, he prefaced his sermon with this remark: "I would like to speak to you today about an image once very famous because of the prodigies that it worked. For 70 years, it has not been spoken of, no doubt because it is hidden in some private house." Then the preacher, taking his inspiration from a sermon that had been preached in the same church in 1715 and printed as a leaflet in 1729, described the features of our glorious painting. He concluded his allocution with this ardent appeal: "If, in this vast audience, someone knows the whereabouts of this famous image, I adjure him to reveal it and to restore it to public veneration in the very place chosen by the Blessed Virgin: between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran."

The echo of this historic discourse, this providential speech, came to the Redemptorists' ears. They learned from it a supremely important detail of which they had not the slightest inkling: The

Virgin of Crete herself had chosen the spot where she wants to receive our homage, in the church situated between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. Now, the church which actually fit the description was the Redemptorists' church dedicated to the Holy Redeemer and to St. Alphonsus.

One can easily guess what desire and what hope of possessing this painting were kindled in the hearts of the sons of St. Alphonsus. Did they not possess, moreover, in their own ranks a witness of the highest worth?

Fr. Mauron, Superior General, asked Fr. Marchi to draft in good and due form a document on the hidden painting, about which his heart had faithfully kept the secret. Armed with this writing, signed on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the superior general of the Redemptorists obtained an audience with Pius IX on December 11, 1865. He recounted to him the facts, clarified the desired information, furnished the required documents, and, then and there, the Sovereign Pontiff affixed his signature to an official act by which he enjoined "the microscopic institute of the Augustinians of St. Mary in Posterulana" to cede the miraculous image to the Redemptorists, in order to assure to the Madonna a solemn public cultus.

The following January 19th, the image was handed over to the Redemptorists. They immediately undertook the restoration of the somewhat deteriorated painting, then reinaugurated the devotion by a procession through the streets of Rome on the Thursday evening of April 26, 1866, Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel. It was also the feast of St. Cletus!

"The sons of St. Alphonsus de Liguori (1696-1787)," the Benedictines of Paris observed, "had formed from the outset a congregation specially devoted to the Blessed Virgin. It had adopted as emblem of this devotion the image of Our Lady of Good Counsel. But she was also in a place of special honor among the hermits of St. Augustine. In 1866, the Virgin confided to the Redemptorists the treasure of one of her miraculous images: Our Lady of Perpetual Help."

The Augustinians, constrained to cede the miraculous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, recovered in some way the undivided proprietorship of Our Lady of Good Counsel: is not this what was signified by the providential inauguration of Our Lady of Perpetual Help on the feast day of Our Lady of Good Counsel?

Miracles took place just as they had during the previous enthronement four centuries before in the Church of St. Matthew. Let us note one or two of our Lady's extraordinary interventions.


A child of four, burning with fever and tortured by unbearable headaches which threw it into convulsions typical of meningitis, seemed to be on the brink of death. As the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was passing by, the mother grabbed

the child, opened the window and presented it to the Virgin with this confident prayer: "O good Mother, heal my boy, or take him with you to Paradise!" The mother's confidence was not in vain. The child immediately enjoyed a humanly inexplicable improvement, and a few days later was found to be in perfect health.

A few houses down, another mother held in her arms her little eight-year-old girl who had lost the use of her legs a few years before. The heart of Mary heard her pleas as well, but the child, though she lost the stiffness, still could not remain standing. A few days later, the mother, encouraged by the unexpected amelioration of her daughter's condition, took her to the Church of St. Alphonsus and set her down in front of the painting, saying, "O Mary, finish what you have begun!" At that instant, the girl arose and began to walk.

Ever since that day, the miraculous image has been exposed to the veneration of the faithful at St. Alphonsus Church, Via Merulana, between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran, where she does not cease to lavish her favors on the crowds she draws: "My favor will always accompany this image."

Pope Pius IX was not long in coming in person. On May 5, 1866, he prostrated himself before the miraculous image: "I have learned that this Virgin grants marvelous graces. She should use her power in favor of the poor pope," he said, and he commanded the Redemptorists to "make her known to the whole world."

As St. Alphonsus, their founder, wrote, "Mary will never fail to help us, if we do not fail to invoke her help." 

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press by Miss Anne Stinnett. This story first appeared in *Le Donjon*, the chapel bulletin of the Society of St. Pius X for the Basque region, No. 50, 2000, and then was republished in the *Sel de la Terre*, Summer 2002. Fr. Nicolas Pinaud was ordained for the Society of St. Pius X in 1993. He is currently headmaster of the Society's school at Domezain, France, École Saint Michel Garicoïts.

¹ St. Bernard, *Sermons in Praise of the Mother of God*, on the *Missus est* (2nd Sermon, §17).

² Epistle of the Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, June 27, taken from the Book of Ecclesiasticus 24:23-31.

³ Dr. Clement M. Henze, C.S.S.R., in *Ausführliche Geschichte des Muttergottesbildes von der Immerwährenden Hilfe* (1939), cites in favor of the tradition which attributes to St. Luke the painted image of the Blessed Virgin: 1) the testimony of Theodorus Lector, lecturer at St. Sophia of Constantinople circa 520; 2) a Greek sermon given in the 10th century at Constantinople and published in 1899 by Dobschutz; 3) a writing of the Synod of Jerusalem of 836 to the Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast signed by three patriarchs, 185 bishops, 17 superiors of monasteries, and 1153 monks. These 1358 signatures reflect the common belief of the Orient. Historical criticism has no decisive proof to overturn this well-established tradition.—Ed.

⁴ His *Histoire de Notre-Dame de Lourdes*, I, 109.

⁵ *Le Perpétuel Secours*, April 1956.

⁶ The iconoclast Emperor Theophilus decided to make all work impossible for the artist's hands: he ordered the holy monk's hands to be burned on red-hot plates. Lazarus prayed to the Virgin for whom he had been thus tortured in his flesh, and the Madonna healed him: he set himself to painting Madonnas with even more love; the Virgin triumphed over the iconoclasts. (See Joseph Boon, C.S.S.R., *Notre Dame du Perpétuel Secours* [Louvain, 1947].—Ed.)



I dedicated much thought to the subject of this little talk, and I would like to speak about the present importance of Pius XI's encyclical on education: *Divini Illius Magistri*.¹ We are not going to look at all the aspects of this magisterial encyclical, which essentially gives the outlines and directives of what a Catholic school should be. We will emphasize certain points which with time have become even more and more important.

This encyclical gives first the definition of education, which, of course, gives the understanding, the reason, and the meaning of the Catholic school. The Pope says that it is necessary to have a clear and definite idea of Christian education, its essential aspects. So what is education?

Since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below [that is, on earth], in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence, since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, Who alone is "the way, the truth, and the life," there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education [that is, which does not or would not lead us to Christ]. [p.8]

THE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS DAY MAGISTRAL LESSON

Given by
H.E. Bishop
Bernard
Fellay at
St. Mary's
College and
Academy,
St. Mary's
Kansas
(March 7,
2005)



When we say this and when we look at the way the common man here on earth in the world understands education, we see that we are already in two worlds with almost an infinite abyss between them, because modern man has forgotten his end. They don't believe. The modern man does not want to accept that there is a God, a Creator, and starting there he cannot accept that he is made for God. He cannot accept that God is his end; that God is the supreme good; that the first law which governs all our actions—and whatever we do here on earth—is to be finally united with God.

You know that our Lord gave one law which is the summary of all laws. There is one commandment which is the sum of all the commandments. And it is this commandment which obliges us to love God with all our strength, with all our soul, all our spirit, and all our heart; that is, whatever capacity of action we have, we have to direct and use this to love God, to seek to be more deeply united with God. Because at the end, for what have we been created? To be with God. And that's why, very simply said, every morning when you rise you are advised to make this morning prayer where you offer to God your whole day, all your actions, because in such a way you are going to direct all your deeds, all your thoughts, all your aspirations, desires, to God, even if—and it is perfectly understandable that during the day you will not think every minute, every second about God—but having put by your morning offering everything in that direction, so long as you don't commit an act which goes against this intention, whatever you do is done indeed for God.

Once again, look at modern man. Look how these words which I have just given to you look strange; we are in another world. And so if and when we speak of education, we must never forget this very first principle: the end of the human being. Where is the perfection of the human being? It is in God. All education, then, must work for this end.

Pius XI asked himself who is to give this education. He has a very deep and interesting reflection, telling us that education will never be something private; it will always be something social, which means it will involve the whole social community. We will never be able to educate ourselves by ourselves. We need somebody else, we need our parents, we need teachers, and as the matters of education are so broad, there is hardly one family which is able by itself to give this whole education. Even if and when we speak of home schooling, you see very well that the parents who are doing home schooling, if they don't dig in their own knowledge what they will give to the children, they will look in books which have been written by others. They will maybe receive instructions from others. It is a social work. It's a work that involves the whole human society.

The Church Takes Precedence

We have three persons who have to deal with education, and the first is the Church. Why? Because with baptism we are children of the Church; the Church is our mother. The Church has received this mission from God Himself, from our Lord: "Teach ye all nations." This order to teach, of course, involves not only giving knowledge, but giving all education. In the words of Pius XI: "The extent of the Church's mission in the field of education is such as to embrace every nation without exception." We would have the tendency to say fine, we have an understanding that the Catholic Church would request the right to educate Catholic children, and in the various nations where we have Catholics we would understand that the Church would say "Here, I have my rights." Pius XI goes much, much further. I repeat:

The extent of the Church's mission in the field of education is such as to embrace every nation, without exception, according to the commandment of Christ: "Teach ye all nations," and there is no power on earth that may lawfully oppose her or stand in her way. In the first place, it extends over all the faithful, of whom she has anxious care as a tender mother. For these she has throughout the centuries created an immense number of schools and institutions in every branch of learning. [p.16]

Of course, we understand her first care is for the Catholics, but the real care of the Church in the field of education is extended to the whole of mankind, to all nations. Take a Buddhist country, take a Communist country: the Church will say "I have a strict right to teach you because I have been sent by your Creator, God, our Lord."

Education Starts in the Crib

Briefly, in this encyclical, Pius XI describes the titles, rights, and also the work which has been realized by the Church in education. Then he considers the family. Children come into the world, according to God's law and God's disposition, in a family. And in this place they will receive the first elements of education. It is more than prudent, and the Church insists a lot on this point: education does not start when you are seven; it starts in the crib. And the very, very first years determine much in all your life. Thus, parents have a very, very strict and serious duty to take care of this duty of education from the very first days of the children's life. When you are seven years old, your main tendencies are already there, and it will be a life-long struggle to kick out all the deviations which you will have acquired in your very first years. These bad inclinations, the fruit of original sin, will have already sunk their roots in these very first years. What an error in Catholic parents who just think that their little boys and girls, their very little babies, are so kind and nice and sweet. That is a part of it, of course, but there is also original sin.

This right [of the Church over education]: why does the Pope speak of this? Because in the modern world there has been a very important inclination, especially since the [French] Revolution, to emphasize the role of the State. In the modern world, too many things are entrusted to the State, the State which is taking the place of other bodies which have been more or less destroyed. And so we speak of the Welfare State: that means the State is playing the role of God, and the role of Divine Providence. It is true that the State has a certain role to play in education. Because human beings will be part of human society, it is perfectly understandable that the rulers of human society will have something to say about education, but the role will be much more the role of controlling whether this education is happening correctly rather than giving this education by itself. We see, however, that if this has been done, especially since liberalism or, we may say, Masonry—and we see it even more clearly in the socialistic and communistic countries—it's because these ideologies know that if they want to last they must go to the youth, and the best way to control the youth, to instill in fresh hearts their ideologies and their errors, is to take them from the very first years of school. Since then, you have this great danger of a great influence of the State over many levels and domains of education. Once again, it is not denied that the State has a role to play, but it must stay in its place.

After having spoken of who must give the education, we go to the subject of education, and here, we may say, is the most important place where we want to make our comments. The Pope deals with some very dangerous errors in modern education which very seriously and dangerously may have as a result that souls, instead of going to heaven, will go to hell. Education plays a part which happens at the beginning of life. In this beginning of life, education is going to form our soul in such a way that we will receive all that we need in order to lead our life, in order to get to perfection, and finally, as I said, to God. It is like the ramp of a rocket: if, at the very start, the ramp for the rocket is aiming correctly to the end, you have a great chance that the rocket will hit its target. But if you place the ramp completely wrong, pointing way to the side, there is a very great chance that the rocket will miss its target. And it's the same in education. Little errors in the beginning will be very disastrous in the end.

The point I would like to emphasize here is that there are two major errors in the modern world, in modern education, and these errors may be found also in our schools if we don't pay attention to it, because it belongs to human nature that we forget that we come into the world with original sin.

Original Sin Must Be Kept In Mind

Forgetfulness of original sin is the first error. What does original sin mean? It does not only mean that we come into the world in a state that is not a very happy state; we come into the world like somebody who is in debt. We start with a minus. God's plan was such that Adam and Eve, living in the state of grace, would have communicated to their children, not only human life, but also supernatural life. God's first plan was that, coming into the world we would have been immediately in the state of grace, friends of God, having God's life in us. But there was the first trial of our first parents, and they failed. They lost this tremendous good of sanctifying grace, not only for themselves, but rather like parents who lose their fortune for the children. If parents lose by accident or by any kind of happening the goods they have—the house or their fortune—it is very understandable that, if it is lost, it is lost also for the children.

So Adam, as the father of all mankind, and Eve lost the fortune of sanctifying grace for the whole human race in such a way that even if then, in generations, you will have people in the state of grace, their children nevertheless come into the world with the debt of Adam and Eve. That is what we call original sin.

Now, this sin has caused in us a tremendous devastation: four wounds. Even baptism, which gives us back the state of grace, does not heal the wounds. So even with baptism we remain wounded, and this absolute truth, looking at Christian education, is totally forgotten in the modern world, even amongst us at times. We ourselves easily forget that we are wounded.

There are four wounds, each one touching different areas of human activity: the first, we call ignorance, which affects our reason. When we say ignorance, it does not only mean that we don't know things when we start. It means rather that since this original sin, it is hard to get to the truth. We easily fall into error; we have an inclination which pushes us off the tracks of the truth, and consequently we must pay attention. When we want to learn something, we constantly must look at the reality and confront what we say, what we think, with the reality to be certain that we stay in the truth. (And you know, there is one object where we are especially in error: it is when we judge ourselves. Look how easily we are capable, more or less correctly, of judging others. But when it comes to ourselves, we would like to be much better than what we are, and so we cheat ourselves many, many times. So if you want to really know what you are, just listen to what the others say about you. Their judgment is much more accurate than ours.)

There is another aspect which you may have experienced, when you see how these defects, these

wounds, work: it is how easily we learn and keep in our memory the silly things and the stupid things. These we have no problem retaining. But the things which are more important are also more difficult to keep. I remember an experience by a young mother who had to go with her children to another country and another language, and what she saw horrified her, because she saw that the first words her children learned from playing with other children in this other country and other language were bad words. That's the fruit of this wound of ignorance. It is hard; we must make some effort to learn. It does not mean that we cannot learn, no; but it requires some effort.

The second wound touches the will, and we call it *malice*. Malice comes from the Latin *malum*, evil. God has made the will for the good. In itself, our will wants the good, but since original sin, this tendency is no longer directed toward the real good. We once again, many times, cheat ourselves, and we color evil things, labeling them good. You want an example? Look at the little children in the supermarket, two or three years old. They will see some sweets, and with their little hand they will try to grab them: they don't care about justice, about to whom it belongs; they just want it to be theirs. This is a typical example of malice.

And I may say, the advertising industry knows this very, very well. Once again, just go into the supermarket, and you will see that there are tremendous studies done in order to sell better. They will even choose the right music for that. We may say, by experience, they use this wound of the will; they misuse it.

And if you want to know, dear children, modern music does exactly the same. The artists who started rock music knew all these things. They made studies, and they used their knowledge in order to make music with words and habits and tendencies which would demolish the Christian soul. That is what is behind modern music. It is impressive to see and to read what the first artists said about their music. I speak of the Beatles and all the others. They used these wounds, and instead of healing them, they make them worse.

There are two other wounds which touch the sensitive faculties. The first two touch the spiritual faculties: the intelligence and the will; the other two touch the affective element which we call the passions. Life is hard; some goods are hard to get. That means that we must put a lot of energy to get them. We need strength. And this strength of our affections has also been wounded by the wound of weakness. We are lazy; we don't want to make too many efforts; we want to get everything the easy way. This is a consequence of original sin. And for the things easy to get, there we also have a wound, which we call concupiscence, which makes us forget everything else: we just want *that*. Here we have a very interesting expression in human life, which is,

“Love makes you blind.” When you love somebody, you want to forget everything that would go against this love. You will forget every bad aspect; you will, so to say, condone, forgive, all things which in other cases would tell you: “Be prudent!” We see that many times amongst those who want to marry. You see the parents who say, “Watch out, don't do that.” But those who love each other don't want to care, because this affection, this concupiscence, blinds.

The Problem of “Freedom”

Now all these [wounds], which are determining for human life, have been forgotten in modern education, which emphasizes freedom. Man is free, which is true, so let us exercise this freedom without putting any kind of constraint. Man has reason, man can have good initiatives, so let him have initiatives. And all this will be put into practice in modern education to the point where the teacher has almost nothing to say any more, even in what the children will learn! You have schools where you have a committee of the students in the classroom who will tell the professor what they want to learn. This is totally upside down. It demolishes the soul.

The consequences are tremendous: First, once again, when we look at heaven, if we let all these defects in us, if we give them freedom, of course, we are going to kill our soul. We are going to jump into sin, so we are going to miss heaven. But even here on earth, it will not work. Look at this modern world: the modern world is turning into hell on earth, with unbelievable violence, crime, and everybody cheating the others. There's no truth any more; nobody cares for the truth; they lie everywhere in such a way that you almost have to doubt whatever is told you, even the television, even the news. We are living in a whole world of lies, because the fundamental values are just not cared for. And then when you speak of virtue, the consequence is that virtue will only be a façade. That means that, in front of the others, you still must give a certain appearance so that the others will appreciate you, but it is only a make-up; the real man is totally different, so it is total hypocrisy. This modern world in which we live is such a world.

Clearly, modern society ends up in violence and in tyranny. It pretends to be freedom—that's the big word you hear: freedom. Man is free, let him be free. But those who say so forget that freedom, which is the principle of liberalism—total freedom in the world—has caused socialism and communism. All the atrocities in these ideologies have their start in liberalism, in freedom. The highest tyranny you find in these communistic countries, yes, but the root comes from freedom, a wrongly understood human freedom. They have made of freedom the highest good, which it is not.

When we say freedom, you all understand, it is the right to choose, and the capacity to choose, to determine ourselves, to do something. We can choose an end and then choose the means. And the Catholic Church is going to tell us: Watch out! There are things we are not free to choose. God has made us, and He has made us men, girls, boys. We are not free to choose whether we are boy or girl. We are not free to choose on which date we have our birthday; it is above us. And so we do not have the right to choose what is a human being. We have no right to choose what is human perfection. God has put in us this desire to be good. All of you have this desire to become better. It is God's love for us which has put in us this desire to become better.

[When we reach for something that is bad], we know that it is silly because we have a conscience. This conscience tells us, "Listen, what you are doing now is not right." We may just at the moment understand that now I am doing something against God's commandment, but it is very deep, you know. Even those who don't know that Jesus exists, who don't know about the true religion, have this conscience. They know what is good and what is bad, because it is written by God in the heart. God wants everybody to acquire greater perfection through action. So we are not free to choose that.

Freedom must be exercised in the choice of the means towards this end. That is, we have the right to choose how we are going to lead our life to get to that end. We want to go to heaven. Some will reflect and say, "So I want to become a religious to get to heaven." Others will say, "No, I will be a father," "I will be a mother, I will have children." Others will say, "No, I will be a priest." These are different ways, different choices where we have freedom, but not about the end.

Here is another example where we cannot choose: I can choose not to eat. I can make that choice, but it will not last very long, because my body is made in such a way that to go on, I need to put something in it: I need to eat. You see, sometimes the idea which the modern world wants to give about freedom is something like the freedom of the car:

If you have a car, you can move it in such a way that you can drive more or less everywhere. Now, if you say, "I have a free car, and I want to prove that I have a free car so I will drive off the road." But there is a tree there. "Now I am going to prove that I'm free by going straight into the tree." It would be a tremendous demonstration of your freedom, of course. But what about the car? The car will be broken, and you would not drive any farther with that car, and with the freedom of the car.

It is the same thing we do with ourselves: whenever we hit one of God's commandments, we demolish our car. Sometimes we only lose a wheel. But if it is a serious sin, we just break down the car. You see with these simple examples that this modern

understanding of freedom which tells you that you can do whatever you want, is *wrong*. There must be an education of the will, of freedom.

The Reality of Grace

There is another topic which Pius XI in his encyclical speaks about, another great danger, and that is to forget the world of grace. When we say grace, we mean the life of God in us. This life is also called supernatural; it is above nature. Since it is above, we cannot touch it. We cannot feel it, yet we like to be able to touch things, yet we are not able to see, measure, or feel this life of God in us. Sometimes when we go to Communion, we may have some feelings, we may feel good, but sometimes we have no such feelings and we nevertheless receive our Lord. All these things are above nature, and that is the problem. Because it is above, we may forget its reality. In education, the consequence of forgetting this point is very clear: it means to miss the end. An education that forgets that our end is heaven cannot be the true education. It will be a failure.

I would like to end this little talk with a great concern. Looking at the youth, looking year after year at how the youth develop, we see that there is more and more a specific disease which is spreading around, which is a defect of the will. To console you, a cardinal in the 1850's already spoke about this problem, so it is not a *new* problem. But this problem is increasing. We are more and more debilitated in the will. The intelligence, that is, the understanding, is working more or less; that is, we still can learn something without too great difficulty. It is true that when we look at teaching throughout the years, we see that our parents or even our grandparents in fewer years learned much more than we do now. But once again, that is not yet a big problem. The *big* problem is in the will and in the affections. We are weak.

There are two aspects in the will, that is, when we do something, especially the hard things, not the easy things. When something is easily done, like eating sweets, it is not too difficult; you have no problem in eating sweets. When it comes to making an effort, if the effort is short, it still works. We call it in Latin the *aggredi*: that is, when we attack a work, we start a work. We can do that still with great energy. That is not the problem. The problem we see comes when it requires a long-term effort; in Latin: *sustinere*, to support. For example, to endure or to bear a long sickness, or when we have to support or to bear with something we don't like—it can be a defect—or once again, we have to make an effort for a long time. Here, there is absolutely no doubt that the young are weaker and weaker. And when I say so, I say it is not the fault of the young.

It is a very serious and major concern for me. Why? Because there is a law, and I may say a

fundamental law, when we speak about the education of the will. We cannot get anything in life without effort. That is true everywhere. When you need something valuable, when you want to get something valuable, you must make efforts. If you want to learn something, you have to make an effort. If you want to climb a mountain, you have to put forth effort. If you want to be good in any field, be it music, art, learning, or sports, you have to make some efforts. If you don't make these efforts, you will not progress. This is an absolutely genuine law of psychology, because the virtues grow in us when we do more intense acts, and this means effort. And once again, the modern world hates effort. And that's a big problem.

The Solution Is Sacrifice

Now, there is another word for effort which Christians use, and the name is *sacrifice*—the spirit of sacrifice. In fact, that is the answer. If we want our will to be strong, if we want to be able to persevere, we need to practice this spirit of sacrifice. Now, the spirit of sacrifice just means the Christian spirit: our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church represents Him everywhere on the cross. And you remember our Lord said to the apostles, “If somebody wants to be my disciple, let him take up his cross every day.” He renounces himself. If we want to be Christians and disciples of Christ, that's the law. And since we are in a very deep crisis of the Church, one of the deepest keys of the crisis of the Church is that they have dropped that key: the spirit of sacrifice. Instead of it, they have gone to the world.

Our Lord described that. He said that there are two ways: one is broad, very wide, very easy, and many people go therein, and this way leads straight to hell. The way that leads to heaven is a narrow, hard, stony way. Our Lord goes so far as to say, “A few find it.” That means you must look for it, you must make some efforts to go there. And the whole world around us is constantly inviting us to take the easy way. Since it is the easy way, of course it's easier. So the temptation to go this way is enormous and you see the result. Just look at the state of the Church. And there is great danger for you if you go this way.

Once again, reflecting on this, I see only one solution: it is a tremendous effort, starting in the crib, starting with the Christian parents and continuing at school, everywhere, throughout the whole of life, a tremendous effort to bring back what we call this spirit of sacrifice. I speak of this Christian spirit, and we must pay attention here; it cannot be artificial, artificial meaning, “Okay, so let's do it, let's make a sacrifice. One sacrifice a day, that's nice, very kind.” It is not sufficient. It is not enough to make only one act here or there; it is a whole attitude of the soul, which constantly will be in the state of renouncing its own desires in order to choose God. When I say so,

it's my greatest fear that I generate a lot of fear in you because you see the cross as something impossible to bear, a very difficult way. It is not true. Look at our parents, our grandparents or our great grandparents: their lives were much harder than ours, but they took it. Life was fine, and they were happy.

It's a deep choice which we have to make here, and it is very important because we touch here a universal principle. If we don't want to go this way, we will remain constantly in danger of losing heaven. We have to pray to our Lord that He give us this spirit of sacrifice. This does not mean that we are going to renounce any kind of human happiness or human joys. You see, the good Lord gives us contradictions every day; we have things to bear. Sometimes it's the weather: too hot, too cold, too windy, too rainy, everything. We encounter a lot of things which don't please us, and we just accept them because there is no other way. But that's not yet the spirit of sacrifice.

Now if, when it is rainy, instead of complaining and saying “Why is it raining?” or, if it is a little bit too hot, “Why is it so hot? it's too hot,” and so on, just accept it with a very nice glance at our Lord, and say, “Thank You. You know what I need, and I accept it. I may not like it; but I accept it for the love of You.” You can make out of these things which you have to bear anyway a real sacrifice, and you sanctify yourself, and you enter into this spirit which is the Christian spirit. It is not difficult. The difficulty is to make it present everywhere, all the time. But if we want to survive this present, dramatic crisis in the world and in the Church, I do not see any other means than embracing the daily cross that God gives us—not flying away, not escaping, not cheating ourselves. Just accept it with a great heart. You can.

Once again, I think this is a *major* point of education, which has to be treated with great care. It is a definite fight for survival, for Tradition, and for the Catholic Church period. So, on this Feast of St. Thomas, let us once again count on his intercession, on the intercession of all the saints, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that they may revive, or quicken this real Christian spirit. We have to put everything in order again, since we have to fight the disorders of original sin, to bring the soul back to the right order, which happens little by little with grace. We have to do this in all levels of our life. That's our struggle here; and if we accept this struggle, we will obtain the recompense which is promised, which is the end of our life and of education: heaven, for ever and ever. Amen. ☪

Transcribed for Angelus Press by Misses Miriam Werick and Anne Stinnett from an original recording. Photography by David Kleinsmith.

¹ Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (Dec. 31, 1929). Available from Angelus Press. Price: \$4.25. [Page references after quotations refer to this reprint edition.]

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Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)

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On the left side of the altar at the Oct. 31, 1999, service were four primary signers of the Joint Declaration on Justification between Catholics and Lutherans. They are (left to right), Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy; Rev. Christian Krause, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) president and bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick, Germany; Bishop Walter Kasper; General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko.

The "Dogma" of Ecumenism



From November 11-13, 2004, at the "Better World" Center for Congresses and Spirituality in Rocca di Papa a congress was held with the title "Forty Years after the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican Council II: Retrospectives and Lasting Significance—Development and the Current Situation—Future Prospects." The Conference was promoted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Conciliar Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Present at the conference were all the presidents of the ecumenical commissions of episcopal conferences throughout the world, representatives of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the pontifical universities, together with the representatives of various "churches" and communities engaged in dialogue with the Church. None other than His Eminence Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the council in question, was there to give his *imprimatur* to the proceedings.

Kasper's intervention was published in its entirety in *L'Osservatore Romano*¹ and stands for us as a precious document for identifying the theological outlook of the current ecumenical movement and its foundation in the theses of the Second Vatican

the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it.”² The true “dogma” proclaimed by the Council is this new ecumenical path. More precisely, the new ecumenism is the premise that undeniably underlies the teachings proper to Vatican II and the theology of the current pontiff. The key texts of the Council were based on this premise. This is not our assertion: Cardinal Kasper himself demonstrates it with the texts of the Council and the encyclicals of John Paul II in hand. Since the new ecumenical path—the content of which we shall examine in a moment—is supposed irrevocable, it has been found necessary to re-examine and restructure Catholic ecclesiology in a non-Catholic manner. As has been observed:

*This a priori determination, which has no legitimate point of reference, is the heart of the Conciliar text that affirms that the Church of Christ “subsists in” the Catholic Church. This is in fact the only thing that the Council teaches in a clear manner: its ecumenical will. It is not ecumenical as an echo of the constant and universal teaching of the Church, but because it has established as the basis of its theories a clearly ecumenical will that lacks any foundation and that the entire prior Magisterium condemns.*³

The key elements of this *a priori* determination as inserted into the documents of Vatican II are essentially three, in Kasper’s reckoning: the eschatological perspective of the Church understood as the People of God; the well-known “*subsistit in*”; and the ecclesiology of communion.

Techniques of Persuasion

Before considering each of these elements analytically, it seems important to emphasize another point on which the cardinal repeatedly insists in his discourse. One should keep in mind the context in which the cardinal finds himself: it is a lecture, that is to say, an intervention that is meant to be heard before it is read. Therefore, probably aware of criticisms of the ecumenism inaugurated by the Council or, even more likely, in order to counterbalance the manifest contradiction of his ecumenical theses to the perennial Magisterium, Cardinal Kasper takes it upon himself to reassure his listeners. He does this with exhalations of *nolite timere*—have no fear—which represent an attempt at pre-rational persuasion (let us note that at the beginning of the Congress a film was shown, prepared by the Vatican Television Center, showing the “triumphs” of contemporary ecumenism: from the meeting of Pope Paul VI and Athenagoras, to the “restitution” of the icon of the Mother of God of Kazan in Moscow). We present in their order of appearance Kasper’s repeated assurances that the new ecumenism is in continuity with Tradition. Unable to make this point by means of arguments,

Council, as amply developed and applied during the papacy of John Paul II. In this regard one cannot fail to appreciate the great clarity of Cardinal Kasper. What the President of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity fails to do—what is in fact his duty—is to recognize the sometimes irrelevant, at other times contrasting relationship of the positions of the “Conciliar Church” to the universal ordinary Magisterium of the Catholic Church. On the contrary, as we shall see, the cardinal takes it upon himself to conceal this contrast.

The Council’s *A Priori*

Before examining the content of Cardinal Kasper’s intervention it will be helpful to outline its structure. Cardinal Kasper insists repeatedly on certain statements, which he presents as evident and well-founded assumptions when they are not. In fact, at the beginning of his speech we find the following: “The pope has repeatedly confirmed that *the ecumenical path is irreversible* (*Ut Unum Sint*, §3 [hereafter referred to as *UUS*]).” And likewise in closing the cardinal sums up: “The decree [*Unitatis Redintegratio*; hereafter referred to as *UR*] gave the impetus to an *irrevocable and irreversible process, for which no realistic alternative exists*. The Decree on Ecumenism shows the path of the 21st century. It is the will of the Lord [*sic!*] that we undertake this path....” These two peremptory assertions, which open and close the speech, should not be dismissed with too much haste. They constitute the indispensable key to understanding the basis of the current teaching: they are the *alpha* and *omega* that illuminate the current crisis of the Church.

Let us recall the context in which the speech was delivered: the cardinal was addressing the principle “ecumenical agents,” Catholic and not. And what did he tell them? We have read it: the ecumenical path, as inaugurated by the Conciliar decree, is irrevocable; indeed, it is irrevocable and irreversible, which is to say that it cannot be changed in any way, nor can the direction it has taken be altered. In this way the cardinal would strangle at birth any attempted reorientation from a traditional perspective, stigmatizing it as *unrealistic*. The one solution that the popes had uninterruptedly proposed is absolutely banished and discredited: “The goal of ecumenism *cannot be conceived as a simple return* of others to the bosom of the Catholic Church.” Kasper’s affirmation is opposed to the universal magisterium of the Church *as its contradiction*: “There is but one way in which the unity of Christians may be fostered, and that is *by furthering*

Cardinal Kasper is constrained to resort to persuasive techniques:

It would, however, be mistaken to ignore this fundamental continuity and consider the Council as a radical rupture with Tradition and identify it with the advent of a new Church.... Nevertheless, with the Council something new has begun: not a new Church, but a renewed Church....The ecumenical movement did not discard anything that up to now has been precious or important to the Church and its history; it remains faithful to the truth that has been recognized and defined as such throughout history and adds nothing new to it.... As a spiritual movement, ecumenism does not uproot Tradition. On the contrary, it proposes a new and more profound understanding of Tradition....With it is being prepared...not a new Church, but a spiritually renewed and enriched Church. [And finally:] The Council affirms no new doctrine, but motivates a new attitude, it renounces triumphalism....

We now enter into the thick of the issue, in the content of the discourse, in order to verify, this time by rational means, the rupture of today's "ecumenism" with Tradition. It will be shown that it is not the development of "seeds" present within Tradition, but rather a "new doctrine" *sic et simpliciter*.

Dynamic Eschatology of the Church as People of God

Cardinal Kasper's introduction confirms our earlier reflections on ecumenism as the *a priori* foundation of the new ecclesiology of the Council: "The Council took up the ecumenical movement because it understood the Church as a movement, that is to say the People of God on a journey (*Lumen Gentium* [hereafter referred to as *LG*] §§2; end, 8, 9, 48-51; *UR* §2 end, *etc.*)" He elaborates:

In other words, the Council has revalorized the eschatological dimension of the Church, showing that it is not a static but a dynamic reality. It is the People of God on a journey between the "here" and the "not yet." The Council integrated the ecumenical movement in this eschatological dynamic. **Thus understood**, ecumenism is the way of the Church (*UUS* §7). It is not an adjunct, nor an appendix, but an integrating part of the organic life of the Church and its pastoral activity (*UUS* §20).

The Council, therefore, underlining the dynamic component of the



In 1999, the Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko and Cardinal Walter Kasper signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Church, recovered the eschatological dimension of the Church. Eschatology is not here understood in the traditional sense, but as a tension between the "already" or the "here" and the "not yet," as a synonym for the essentially dynamic nature of the Church. Ecumenism is situated, however—here we underline Kasper's "thus understood"—in this dynamic-ecclesiological sense "as an integrating part of the Church." And, to make this concept better understood, Cardinal Kasper makes a parallel between ecumenism and mission:

Mission is an eschatological phenomenon thanks to which the Church assumes the cultural patrimony of peoples, purifies and enriches it, **thus enriching also itself and attaining the fullness of its Catholicity** (*Ad Gentes* §§1, 9, *etc.*). In the same manner, in the ecumenical movement the Church participates in an exchange of gifts with the separated churches (*UUS* §§28, 57), enriches them and **at the same time makes their gifts its own and, in so doing, fully realizes its own catholicity** (*UR* §4).

He concludes with a very illuminating affirmation: "Mission and ecumenism are the two forms of the eschatological path and the eschatological dynamic of the Church."

In what then, does the eschatological dynamic of the Church consist for Kasper? It does not mean that the Church, although human because of the members who make it up, is supernatural in its origin, its means, and its purpose,⁴ and nevertheless will manifest itself in all its fullness only when the Son of Man will return and put an end to history. Nor is its dynamic nature conceived in the sense conveyed by the Gospel parable of the king who sends his servants out to call his subjects to the wedding feast of his son, because those who stay outside are doomed to "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (cf. Luke 14:15-24; this parable unequivocally indicates the necessity of conversion and

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entry into the Catholic Church to escape eternal damnation). Cardinal Kasper does not understand the eschatological dimension of the Church in the sense of a projection towards eternity, nor does he see its dynamic nature as connected to its task of proclaiming and calling all peoples to salvation. The Church, on the contrary, is for Kasper eschatological in the sense that it must activate that which it already is potentially: "It is on a journey," the cardinal affirms, "towards fully and concretely realizing its nature in life." The Church is already Catholic, but not yet fully so. It becomes concretely and fully Catholic only by enriching itself with the cultural patrimony of peoples (mission) and the gifts of the "separated Churches" (ecumenism) and enriching them in turn.

Conversion to the Catholic Church is not in question because, for the ecumenists, all the "churches" and separated communities and all peoples are already in some manner in communion with the Catholic Church. What is lacking is the reciprocal enrichment, more or less profound, that will emerge from dialogue, as the fulfillment of what is already realized in a mysterious way by virtue of the fact that the Church of Christ is already united to every man. Missions and ecumenism have the purpose of revealing "in a visible manner, the hidden but radical unity that the divine Word... has established with the men and women of this world."⁵ The ecumenical journey is thus the process of becoming aware of a unity that already exists; it is, at the same time, a reciprocal enrichment in order to arrive at full unity. The expression "Church, People of God" conveys an identity between the Church and the human race, an identity that needs only to become conscious, in the manner of Hegel's dialectic.

All this was expressed very clearly by Cardinal Wojtyla in his theological study on Vatican II, *At the Sources of Renewal*: "The mission of the divine Persons towards humanity is not only a revelation, but equally the salvific action that **makes of the human race the People of God.**" In the same study Cardinal Wojtyla developed the theme of the relations between the Church as the People of God and the human race:

God does not form his People except by choosing, calling, bringing all men to Himself, each as an individual, in the manner that is proper and unique to him...the reality of the People of God is contained in the project of God and in its realization, the origin of which, it might be said, is common to the vocation of man as a person....Only God knows the link that unites men in the community of his People. Vatican II affirms that such a bond is fuller than that of mere "ecclesial" communities....Thus is it explained,

how the consciousness of the Church as the People of God can be both *ad intra* and *ad extra*. In this Vatican II admits that there is a difference between "belonging to" and "being ranked among" the People of God. Behold that which indicates and determines the degrees of the communion of God with men.⁶

That this was not only the personal opinion of Cardinal Wojtyla is confirmed by the fact that, during his pontificate, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith expressed itself in even stronger terms: "In its invisible reality, [the Church] is the communion of each man with the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and with other men who participate in the divine nature."⁷

We have thus a first sphere of communion, namely that of all men "chosen and called by and conducted to Him," which includes another, composed of all the Christian "churches." This is the "now" which mission and ecumenism take as their point of departure. The "not yet" is, on the contrary, the process of becoming aware of such bonds and of the mutual exchange of gifts, a process that has as its purpose the full communion of everyone, a communion that already exists if only partially. That the aforesaid fundamental unity of all men is the most important foundation that prevails over every division has been openly proclaimed by Pope John Paul II in his discourse to the cardinals and the curia with regard to the interreligious meeting at Assisi:

In the light of this mystery [of the unity of the human race] differences of all kinds, first of all religious differences, to the degree that they limit the plan of God, show themselves as in effect belonging to another order. If the order of unity is that which leads to Creation and Redemption and if this is therefore, in this sense, 'divine,' the differences and the divergences, even the religious ones, have more to do with a 'human element' and ought to be surpassed within the progress towards the realization of the grandiose plan for unity that presides over creation.⁸

To summarize:

- 1) Today's ecumenism is possible only within the context of the ecclesiology of the "People of God."
- 2) The "People of God" coincide with the whole of humanity.
- 3) The Church itself embraces all of humanity, not in the sense that it is sent to humanity to call them to conversion, but in the sense that all men already belong to the People of God, that is, the Church, even if in different degrees and in an incomplete manner.
- 4) Ecumenism consists of two moments: first, the Church enriches the separated "Churches" with the gifts they lack to arrive at full communion; second, the Church is enriched by their gifts, and in this reciprocal exchange realizes the fullness of its own catholicity.
- 5) The same may be said of the missions.



The annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is held from January 18-25. In recent years in Rome it has become a tradition for the Pope to preside at an ecumenical celebration of Vespers on the last day of this week at the ancient Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, built not far from where St. Paul was martyred for his faith and where he is buried. In 2005, Pope John Paul II asked Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to represent him at the service. (Agenzia Fides 19/1/2005—Righe 18; Parole 244)

How far this position is from the traditional teaching of the Church is shown by the following teaching of the Holy Office:

Catholic doctrine ought thus to be proposed and set forth totally and in its entirety: *one ought not to pass over in silence or cover with ambiguous words what Catholic truth teaches* on the true nature and means of justification, on the constitution of the Church, on the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, *on the only true union which is achieved by the return of dissidents to the one true Church of Christ.* It is taught that they, by returning to the Church, do not lose any part of the good that, by the grace of God, has up to now been born in them, but that with their return this good is rather completed and perfected. *There is no need to discuss this subject as though these people should believe that by their return to the Church they should bring it some essential element that they have lacked up to now.*⁹

The Catholic Church has no need of receiving anything that it has not already received from its divine Founder. It is those who unite themselves with or return to the Church who receive that life that they can attain nowhere else.

The “*Subsistit In*”

“The eschatological and pneumatological dynamic had need of conceptual clarification. This clarification was provided by the Council in its Constitution of the Church with the much-discussed formula ‘*subsistit in*’: the Church of Jesus

Christ subsists in the Catholic Church (LG §8)”: here Cardinal Kasper introduces the second pretext for contemporary ecumenism.

This amounts to further confirmation that the “*subsistit in*” is not simply synonymous with “*est*.”¹⁰ The official voice of the Holy See, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, affirmed this clearly in an article of December 5, 1987, by Fr. Giandomenico Mucci, S.J.:

There is no doubt that among the formulations of the reality of the Church offered by the two documents [*Mystici Corporis* of Pius XII and *Lumen Gentium*] there is *a manifest discrepancy*. It is one thing to establish a pacific identity between the Mystical Body of Christ and the Catholic Church and by a necessary corollary affirm that the Roman Catholic Church is the unique Church of Christ; it is something else to say that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church. The original Vatican II schema for *Lumen Gentium* redacted by Msgr. Philips (February, 1963) and then distributed to the Fathers (April-July of the same year) still identified the one Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, in such a way that the use of *est* prevented the application of the concept and nature of the true Church to other Christian churches....*The passage from est to subsistit happened for prevailing ecumenical reasons.... Lumen Gentium* certainly renounced the formal identification of this reality [Church of Christ and Catholic Church] in order to explain the “numerous elements of sanctification

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and of truth” that exist in other Christian Churches, but it also intended to profess that only the Catholic Church fully realizes the Church of Christ, even if not in its totality.¹¹

Cardinal Kasper confirms this orientation of the Council and elaborates:

The Council was able to take a notable step forward thanks to the *subsistit in*. It wanted to do justice [?!] to the fact that, outside the Catholic Church, there are not only individual Christians but also “elements of the Church” and even Churches and ecclesial Communities which, while not in full communion, **belong by right to the one Church and are means of salvation for their members** (LG §§8,15; UR §3; UUS §§10-14)...As a consequence, **the question of the salvation of non-Catholics is no longer relegated to the individual level** starting from the subjective desire of an individual, as indicated in *Mystici Corporis*, **but is put on the institutional level** in an ecclesiological objective way.

Rereading the two texts just cited together with the Conciliar texts LG §8 and UR §3.2-4, certain passages seem anything but defensible.

1) Outside the Church “salvific elements” can be found; they are interior gifts, such as grace and the theological virtues. Such a statement, if it means “outside the *visible* confines of the Church,” agrees with Tradition, which speaks of the possibility of a supernatural desire (explicit or implicit), infused by God, to belong to the Catholic Church, which desire can be sufficient for obtaining salvation.

2) Outside the Catholic Church there are external and visible elements common to the Catholic Church and the schismatic churches (for example, Sacred Scripture.) This is true if it regards simply the material existence of these elements. It is false, however, if by this it is alleged that such elements cause salvation on their own.

3) Outside the Catholic Church—this is the key point—**there are churches and ecclesial communities that possess the means of salvation.** This is false in every sense, because only the Catholic Church possesses such means. He who separates himself from the Church retains only the fact of being separate; even the valid sacraments that remain belong to the Catholic Church:

There is only one Church called Catholic, and it is she who, in those communities separated from her unity, acts in those things which, within these sects, **remain her own property, whatever they may be.**¹²

The distinction between the means of salvation which belong to the Catholic Church and salvific effects which may extend themselves even beyond her visible confines is the patrimony of the traditional teaching of the Church, well expressed

by the letter of the Holy Office to the archbishop of Boston:

Not only did the Savior command that all nations should enter the Church, but He also decreed **the Church to be a means of salvation**, without which no one can enter the kingdom of eternal glory.

In His infinite mercy God has willed that **the effects, necessary for one to be saved**, of those helps to salvation which are directed toward man’s final end, not by intrinsic necessity, but only by divine institution, can also be obtained in certain circumstances [this is the point!] when those helps are used only in *desire* and *longing*.¹³

4) The last point maintained by Kasper: the other Churches and ecclesial communities, since they have the means of salvation—a statement that we have shown to be false—**are themselves means of salvation.** The logical transition here is simply embarrassing: “Does saying that a piece of gold has fallen into the mud authorize one to say that this piece of gold belongs to the mud? Or, even more, that the mud has become gold?”¹⁴ Furthermore, even supposing that schismatic communities possessed the means of salvation, this does not mean that they themselves would be means of salvation.

The expression “*subsistit in*” was inserted in the conciliar text to make possible such readings as these; passages that betray Tradition in serving the cause of ecumenism. In vain does Cardinal Kasper affirm that “the Council does not affirm any new doctrine, but motivates a new attitude, renounces triumphalism and formulates the traditional understanding of its own identity in a realistic, historically concrete, and, one could say, even a humble manner.” In fact the Council and the cardinal of the Rota maintain what the Church has never taught, but what she has emphatically rejected in every way. If it is permitted to say so, Cardinal Kasper hides a patent betrayal of the Magisterium behind a false humility and an assertion of realism that, as we have seen, is itself an *a priori* supposition. And in fact Kasper himself, in note ten of his intervention, is obliged to admit that this new concept of “elements of the Church” outside of the Catholic Church has as its progenitors...Calvin and Congar!

The Ecclesiology of Communion

At this point it should not be difficult to understand the third element of the new conciliar ecclesiology, namely the ecclesiology of “communion.” Let us hear Cardinal Kasper:

The fundamental idea of Vatican II, and in particular of the Decree on Ecumenism, can be summarized in one word: communion. This term is important for correctly understanding the question of the “*elementa Ecclesiae*”.... The Decree on Ecumenism considers the Church and the separate ecclesial Communities **not as entities that have**

conserved a residual of elements, of diverse consistency depending on the case, *but as integral elements* that retain these elements as part of their overall constitution.

Thus it is not simply a matter of noticing elements of the Catholic Church that are also present in schismatic communities (those elements that we have up to now classified as external and visible elements); it is rather a question of re-evaluating these communities as “integral elements,” that is, as bodies enlivened by grace (note that the cardinal is here speaking of entire communities and not of individuals) and therefore capable of becoming instruments of salvation. How so? Because these communities participate

in the goods of salvation, the *sancta*–the sacraments. Fundamental in all this is baptism. This is the sacrament of the faith, through which the baptized belong to the one body of Christ that is the Church. Non-Catholic Christians are therefore not outside the Church but, on the contrary, already belong to it in a fundamental way (LG §§11, 14; UR §22).

Thus communion already exists, if only partially; this is why one should no longer speak of an “ecumenism of return,” as did all the popes up to Vatican II! Those who belong to schism should not return to the Catholic communion, because they are already in it (which invalidates the very word “schism,” which indicates a separation, just as it invalidates the concept of “excommunication,” which asserts the privation of communion):

The Catholic [!] understanding of ecumenism presupposes *that which already exists*, or rather the unity in the Catholic Church and *partial communion with the other churches and ecclesial communities*, in order to achieve, starting from this incomplete communion, a full communion (UUS §14), which includes unity in faith, sacraments, and ecclesiastical ministry (LG §14; UR §2). Thus, [concludes Cardinal Kasper], the contribution of *Unitatis Redintegratio* to the solution of the ecumenical problem is not the “ecclesiology of elements” but *the distinction between full communion and communion that is not yet full* (UR §3).

This, therefore, is the true novelty of the conciliar decree, which serves as a foundation for all the inanities which have followed! But Pius XI has



Photo by Mike Watson, The Lutheran Magazine

Cardinal Walter Kasper (third from left), the Vatican’s senior ecumenical officer, visited the churchwide offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Oct. 1-2, 2004. He preached at a “Solemn Evening Vespers” service Oct. 1 at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Illinois. Kasper visited the ELCA in recognition of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in Augsburg, Germany.

already uprooted any discourse that could lead to an erroneous “communion that is not full”: “Whosoever therefor is not united with the Body *is no member thereof, neither is he in communion* with Christ its Head.”¹⁵ There are no gradations of communion! Communion either exists or it does not.

A further consideration may be added to these reflections on full communion. The cardinal says that,

Unity in the sense of full communion does not mean uniformity, but unity in diversity and diversity in unity....We can also say that the essence of unity conceived as communion is catholicity in its original sense, which is not confessional but qualitative. It signifies the realization of all the gifts that the individual churches and confessions can contribute.

The mark of catholicity thus surpasses confessional unity.... Thus are legitimized not only the diversity of liturgical and spiritual sensibilities, but also doctrinal differences! Cardinal Kasper had already expressed this concept: “Ecumenism is not achieved through renunciation of our own traditions of faith. *No Church* can make such a renunciation.”¹⁶

Here we are at the antipodes of the traditional teaching of the Church, well summarized by Fr. Billot, S.J.:

If indeed the baptismal character is in itself sufficient to incorporate a man into the Catholic Church, nonetheless this effect in an adult depends on a double condition. The first is that *the social bond of unity in the faith be not hindered by heresy*, whether formal or merely material.¹⁷

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The *conditio sine qua non* is precisely confession of the same integral faith excluded by Kasper.

The other condition for adults is that the *bond of communion not be hindered or undermined*, a bond that may be destroyed in two ways. The first...*through schism*.... The second by sentence of the ecclesiastical authority, that is to say *by excommunication*, when there is full and perfect grounds for excommunication.¹⁸

In such cases the bond of communion is destroyed and not merely attenuated! One belongs to the Catholic Church, however, not merely through baptism, but also by confession of the true Faith and recognition of the authority of the Church; otherwise one does not belong to the Church.

The distinction between full communion and less than full communion can claim no Catholic origin. The source of this doctrine is the Dominican Congar:

There is perfect belonging to the Church—and thus to Christ—when it is lived according to all the principles of the new life and of reconciliation with God, the fullness of which Christ has placed in the Church; there is an imperfect belonging to the Church—and thus to Christ—when one lives only according to one or the other principle of new life....¹⁹

The Church has always taught that even non-Catholics can be in communion with her, if animated by the Holy Ghost with an explicit or implicit desire and intention to adhere to the true Faith and to enter into the Catholic communion. But this does not apply to separated communities as such, but only to some members of these communities (known only to God). The teaching of the Council in this regard is a departure from the Magisterium.

It remains to reiterate another point that distinguishes traditional doctrine from conciliar teaching. Those who may belong to the Catholic Church *in voto* and not *in re* are in a state dangerous to their salvation. Thus Pius XII exhorted such people

to correspond to the interior movements of grace, and to seek to withdraw from that state in which they cannot be sure of their salvation. For even though by an unconscious desire and longing they have a certain relationship with the Mystical Body of the Redeemer, they still remain deprived of those many heavenly gifts and helps which can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church.²⁰

Conclusion

As Catholics we have the duty to reject these new teachings, which would see a degree of communion where communion has objectively been broken. The Catholic Church is the Church of Christ, outside of which there is no salvation; any other teaching distances itself fearfully from Catholic

teaching. The warning of Pius XII addresses those who would embark on these new paths: “Some say they are not bound by the doctrine, explained in Our Encyclical Letter [*Mystici Corporis*] of a few years ago, and *based on the sources of revelation*, which teaches that *the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing.*”²¹

Lanterius

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *SiSiNoNo*, January 15, 2005. All emphasis added by the author.

- ¹ Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 12, 2004, pp.8-9.
- ² Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos*, January 6, 1928, §15.
- ³ Fr. de La Rocque, “Le presupposé œcuménique de *Lumen Gentium*” in *Penser Vatican II quarante ans après: Actes du VI Congrès Théologique de si si no no, Rome, January 2004* (Publications Courrier de Rome, 2004), pp.307-08.
- ⁴ Cf. Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, June 29, 1896.
- ⁵ John Paul II, “The Situation of the World and the Spirit of Assisi: Address to the Cardinals and Curia on Dec. 12, 1986,” *Documentation Catholique*, No. 1933, Feb. 1, 1987, p.134, cited in the document of the FSSPX, *From Ecumenism to the Silent Apostasy* (2004).
- ⁶ Karol Wojtyła, *At the Sources of Renewal: Study on the Application of Vatican II*, p. 170, cited by J. Dörmann, “Vatican Council II and the Theology of John Paul II” in *Église et Contre-Église au Concile Vatican II: Actes du II Congrès Théologique de si si no no, Albano Laziale, January 1996* (Publications of Courrier de Rome, 1996), p.178.
- ⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on certain aspects of the Church understood as communion, cited in J. Dörmann, *op. cit.*, p.179.
- ⁸ John Paul II, “The situation of the world and the spirit of Assisi, discourse to the cardinals and the curia of December 22, 1986,” cited in Fr. Pierre-Marie, “L’unité de l’Église,” in *La tentation de l’œcuménisme: Actes du III Congrès Théologique de si si no no, April 1998* (Publications of Courrier de Rome, 1999), p.22.
- ⁹ Pius XII, Instruction of the Holy Office, Dec. 20, 1949.
- ¹⁰ On the Protestant origins of the “*subsistit in*” see *si si no no*, May 15, 2001, p.5.
- ¹¹ Cited in *si si no no*, March 31, 1988, p.1.
- ¹² St. Augustine, *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, I.X.14, cited in Fr. de La Rocque, “Le présupposé œcuménique de *Lumen Gentium*,” in *Penser Vatican II*, p.307.
- ¹³ Pius XII, Letter to the Archbishop of Boston, August 8, 1949.
- ¹⁴ Fr. de La Rocque, *op. cit.*, p.303.
- ¹⁵ Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* Jan. 6, 1928, §15.
- ¹⁶ *Documentation Catholique*, No. 2220, Feb. 20, 2000.
- ¹⁷ L. Billot, S.J., *De Ecclesia Christi* (Rome, 1927), Thesis xi, p.296.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Thesis xii, p.310.
- ¹⁹ Yves Congar, O.P., *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d’un “œcuménisme” catholique, Unam Sanctam* No. 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1937), pp.283-84, cited by Fr. Pierre-Marie, “L’unité de l’Église” in *La tentation de l’œcuménisme*, p.27.
- ²⁰ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943, §103.
- ²¹ Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, August 12, 1950, §27.

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Is it true to say that now there is a “conciliar” Church?

The term “conciliar” is an adjective that has long been used to describe those things that relate to the Second Vatican Council, such as the documents, commissions, or novel teachings such as Religious Liberty and Ecumenism. The question raises the objection as to whether this adjective can be used to describe the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council.

In order to respond to the question a clear distinction has to be made. If by the term “church” is understood the visible, hierarchical structure, founded upon the rock of St. Peter, then clearly there can only be one Church, the Catholic Church. If we were to call the Catholic Church after Vatican II “conciliar” in this sense, then we would claim that it is no longer Catholic at all, but instead a separate visible, hierarchical structure. However, this is manifestly false, both because the adepts of Vatican II have hijacked the visible hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, and because they profess publicly to be Catholics.

However, there is another sense in which the term “conciliar” can rightly be applied to the majority of persons who profess to be Catholic, as well as to their ideas and opinions, profoundly influenced as they are by the Second Vatican Council. In this sense “conciliar” refers to the persons who have embraced and who promote the novelties of Vatican II, as well as to the novelties themselves. There are varying degrees of influence of the modern errors, from liberal Catholicism through rash opposition to Tradition to outright apostasy. The term conciliar or post-conciliar can consequently be applied to the modernist church, not as it is a canonical institution, but inasmuch and to the degree that it promotes the revolutionary errors of Vatican II.

Archbishop Lefebvre understood this reality very clearly, and the grave danger brought about by the infiltration of all these modernist principles within the very bosom of the Catholic Church. He had this to say of Rome in 1974, in his famous declaration of November 21:

We hold fast, with all our heart and with all our soul, to Catholic Rome, Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary to preserve this Faith, to Eternal Rome, Mistress of wisdom and truth.

We refuse, on the other hand, and have always refused to follow the Rome of neo-Modernist and neo-Protestant tendencies which were clearly evident in the Second Vatican Council and, after the Council, in all the reforms which issued from it.

In his book *Spiritual Journey*, Archbishop Lefebvre explained how the end result of this conciliar Church is to separate its members little by little from the true

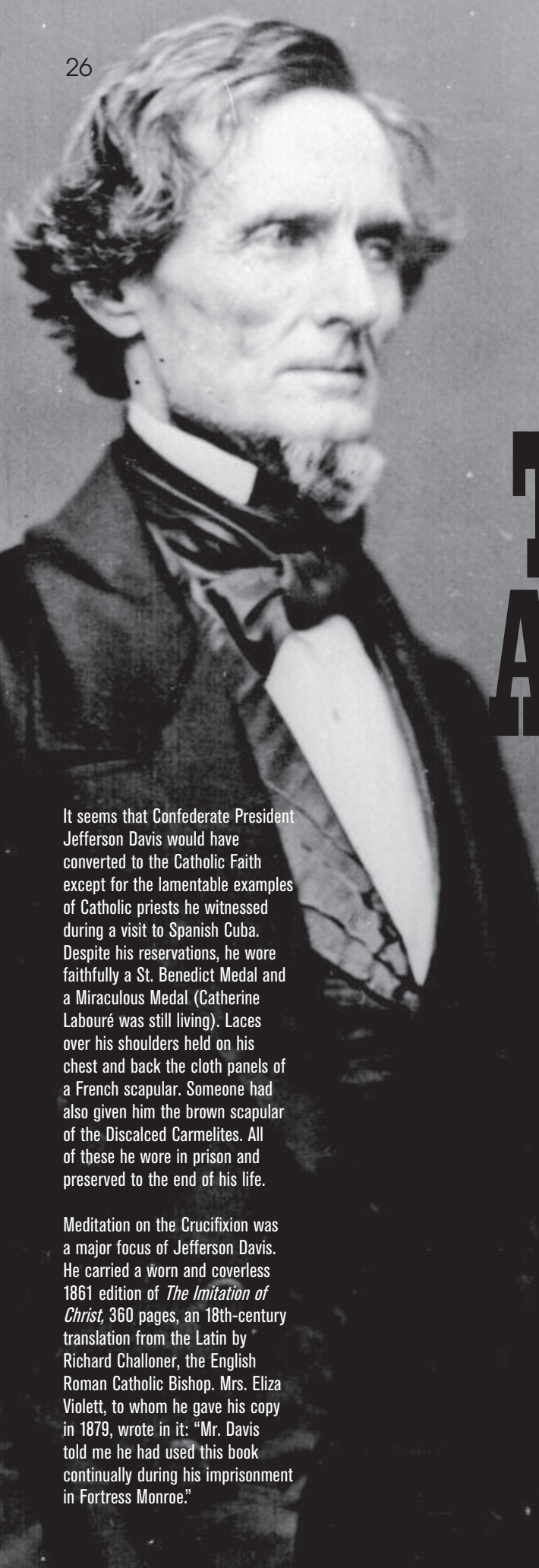
Catholic Church established by Our Lord. By this he means that its revolutionary principles of freedom at all cost separate the clergy and faithful little by little from Tradition and produce indifferentism for all religions, eventually destroying the Catholic faith in the one true Church, and bringing about a generalized apostasy, even of those persons who outwardly appear to still be members of the Catholic Church.

Certainly, the Church itself guards its sanctity and its sources of sanctification, but the control of its institutions by unfaithful popes and apostate bishops ruins the faith of the faithful and the clergy, sterilizes the instruments of grace, and favors the assault of all the powers of Hell which seem to triumph. This apostasy makes its members adulterers, schismatics opposed to all Tradition, separated from the past of the Church, and thus separated from the Church of today, in the measure that it remains faithful to the Church of Our Lord. [p.54]

Must we forgive injuries done to God and to others?

The obligation of forgiveness, even of our enemies, is fundamental to the new law of charity instituted by Our Divine Savior. We all have heard many times of Our Lord’s response to St. Peter’s question: “Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times” (Mt. 18:21-22). We constantly pray in the Our Father that God might forgive us, as we forgive those who trespass against us (Mt. 6:12). We know that regardless of the insults directed against us, we must pray for our persecutors, as Our Lord himself did on the Cross: “Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you” (Mt. 5:44).

However, it is not for us to forgive injuries done against Almighty God or against others. We are not those who have been offended, insulted, attacked, calumniated, and it is not our honor that is in question. It is consequently not for us to forgive, but for God Himself, or for the persons concerned. In such instances, of course, we have the duty to pray for the enemies of God, that they might convert and ask for pardon, that they might understand the gravity of the insults directed against God and His friends, or against the Blessed Virgin or the Church. However, it is not in our power to forgive an injury that is not directed against us. How frequent this situation is with respect to God, and how great a desire of making reparation it enkindles in our hearts! Yet only God, who is offended, can forgive, and then only when pardon is requested of Him. ☩



It seems that Confederate President Jefferson Davis would have converted to the Catholic Faith except for the lamentable examples of Catholic priests he witnessed during a visit to Spanish Cuba. Despite his reservations, he wore faithfully a St. Benedict Medal and a Miraculous Medal (Catherine Labouré was still living). Laces over his shoulders held on his chest and back the cloth panels of a French scapular. Someone had also given him the brown scapular of the Discalced Carmelites. All of these he wore in prison and preserved to the end of his life.

Meditation on the Crucifixion was a major focus of Jefferson Davis. He carried a worn and coverless 1861 edition of *The Imitation of Christ*, 360 pages, an 18th-century translation from the Latin by Richard Challoner, the English Roman Catholic Bishop. Mrs. Eliza Violett, to whom he gave his copy in 1879, wrote in it: "Mr. Davis told me he had used this book continually during his imprisonment in Fortress Monroe."

THE CATHOLIC AND THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

P H I L I P G E R A

Throughout its short history, the Confederate government sought earnestly and repeatedly to gain some kind of foreign support. The closest it ever came was in 1863, when His Holiness Pope Pius IX sent a letter addressed to the "Illustrious and Hon. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, Richmond," and concluded with a hope for a union in "perfect friendship" [see letter on p.29]. Davis interpreted this communication as a form of recognition, even though some measure of his interpretation was subject to false expectations. The letter was reported in Southern newspapers with the implication that Pope Pius IX supported the Confederacy ("Telegraphic. From Richmond," *The Charleston Mercury*, Jan. 23, 1864). The President hoped that this letter would be the first step towards widespread European recognition of the Confederate government, but it proved to be the only such communication, and within two years, the Confederacy would be dead. Still, the letter does raise the question of why the Holy Pontiff would express public friendship to the Confederacy and risk being associated with a slavery-supporting government.



CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CONFEDERATE AMERICA

R D JOHNSON

When the War Between the States erupted in America, pitting the opponents of slavery in the North against the slave-dependent agrarian society of the Confederacy, social, political, and even religious organizations were forced to take sides. Two of the country's major churches, the Baptists and the Methodists, divided over the issue of slavery—the Baptists remaining separated to this day. The Catholic Church, however, did not break in half, though its unity was severely strained. Instead of dividing, episcopal alliances were virtually along geographical lines. The reason for this was that the Pope, Pius IX, saw the same kinds of threatening tendencies in the American North that had driven him from his papal throne in Italy in 1848. These tendencies in both Italy and America came in the form of progressivism towards a more centralized democracy, economic reform, and opposition to aristocracy. They were considered to be liberal in both Catholic and Southern society, and were viewed as dangerous to the spread of Catholicism. Furthermore, the Church's own political weakness in America severely hindered her



ability to attempt to change anything about slavery other than the hearts of those who condoned it. The Catholic Church considered the tendencies of the North to be more dangerous than slavery, and considered the conservative Southern society to be more suitable to the spread of Catholicism than the North.

Pope Pius IX ascended to the papacy in 1846. After the death of Pope Gregory XVI, the College of Cardinals faced a difficult decision in electing the next pope. Many Cardinals in the conclave supported Cardinal Lambruschini, whose extreme opposition to liberalism would have kept Gregory XVI's conservative and prudent Church policies alive. Others sought to elect a liberal and conciliatory pope in order to counter Pope Gregory XVI's confrontational policies with the government. The conclave chose the latter, and elected Cardinal Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, who chose the name Pius IX. Cardinal Mastai-Ferretti had been well-liked by Pope Gregory XVI despite the Cardinal's ideas in terms of Church reform and relations with the secular Italian government.

Pope Pius IX appeared to live up to his reputation immediately following his election to the Chair of St. Peter. The Papal States were dangerously close to revolution due to Italian nationalism, and he promised reforms and changes in order to restore stability.¹ He was responsible for the introduction of railroads into Rome and the reformulation of tariff laws in order to improve trade. He installed gas-powered street lighting in Rome, apportioned a share of the papal charities for the Jews, and abolished the law which required Jews to attend weekly Catholic sermons. He coupled this program of economic and social reform with political reforms of the same magnitude. The Pope incorporated democracy into the governance of the Papal States by appointing laymen to the government of the Church. He allowed exiled revolutionaries to return to the Papal States, and even approved a new constitution that gave an elected body of laymen the power to veto the pope. Protestant leaders from all over Europe congratulated Pius IX, and Italian nationalists dubbed the Pope "the most important man in Italy."² The Pope seemed to be conceding to the wishes of Italian nationalists who cried in thanksgiving for his reforms: "*Viva Italia! Viva Pio Nono!*"³ Liberal Italians expected these policies to continue so that the secular government could gain more power and ultimately become completely separated from the Church. However, Pope Pius IX considered these changes to be the completion of his reforms. When the Pope rejected further demands,

his popularity waned. He had excited the Italian nationalists with his promises of reform, but he was not prepared to fulfill all of their expectations.⁴ The consequence was disappointment and bitterness.⁵

In 1848, revolutions erupted throughout Europe. The Italians went to war in order to expel Austria from Italy, but the Italians treated the war more like a crusade than a political war. When the Italians called for the Pope to lead their "crusade," he gave an address in which he explained papal policy in relation to Italy. His new policies took a sharp turn and began to resemble those of his conservative predecessor, Pope Gregory XVI, causing the Italian people to feel betrayed. In his address to the College of Cardinals, Pius IX stated that he would have no part in this war and that he would send no troops to Austria:

When there was revolution over Europe, I sent troops to guard the frontiers. But when some demanded that these troops join with other [Italian] states to war against Austria, I must say solemnly, that I abhor the idea. I am the Vicar of Christ, the author of peace and lover of charity, and my office is to bestow an equal affection on all nations.⁶

According to one authority, this statement to the College of Cardinals "was a douche of icy water on the overheated enthusiasm which had surrounded his first two years as pope."⁷

Pius IX went from being one of the most loved men in Italy to one of the most hated, and this public resentment eventually led to exile. He lost all control over Rome, and Pellegrino Rossi, his Prime Minister, was murdered in November of 1848. The Pope sensed grave danger and, disguised as an ordinary priest, fled to Gaeta in the Neapolitan territory. As revolution continued in Rome and an anti-clerical regime took control, Pius IX called for the Catholic powers of the world to reclaim Rome on his behalf and to restore the power of his office. In July of 1849, French troops re-conquered Rome for the Pope, and he once again took power in April of 1850.⁸

On his return to Rome, Pius IX blamed tendencies such as liberalism and centralized democracy⁹ for the Italian revolution and for his exile. As a result, he believed for the rest of his life that conceding in good faith to the political ideals of democracy only paved the way for revolution.¹⁰ The revolution of 1848 caused the Pope to turn against constitutionalism, and he also condemned many of his past reforms which the Italian nationalists had praised.¹¹ By the time he had returned to power, his "honeymoon was over."¹²

Pope Pius IX subsequently issued the *Syllabus of Errors* [available from Angelus Press. Price: \$3.45] in which he listed the modernist errors of his time,

¹ Frank J. Coppa, "Papal Rome in 1848: From Reform to Revolution," in the *Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe: 1750-1850*, Session 2 (Athens: [n.p.] 1979), p.93.

² Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p.222

³ *Ibid.*, p.222.

⁴ Coppa, "Papal Rome in 1848: From Reform to Revolution," p.95.

⁵ Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p.222.

⁶ Pope Pius IX quoted in Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes 1830-1914* (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 1998), p.77.

⁷ Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p.223.

⁸ Coppa, "Papal Rome in 1848: From Reform to Revolution," p.99.

⁹ In 1848, Pope Pius IX urged Italians to stay loyal to their local princes and condemned the notion of a centralized Italian government. For more see Chadwick, *A History of the Popes 1830-1914*, p.77.

¹⁰ Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p.224.

¹¹ Coppa, "Papal Rome in 1848: From Reform to Revolution," p.99.

Illustrious and honorable sir, greeting:

We have lately received with all kindness, as was meet, the gentlemen sent by your Excellency to present to us your letter dated on the 23d of last September. We have received certainly no small pleasure in learning both from these gentlemen and from your letter the feelings of gratification and of very warm appreciation with which you, illustrious and honorable sir, were moved when you first had knowledge written in October of the preceding year to the venerable brethren, John [Hughes], archbishop of New York, and John [Odin], archbishop of New Orleans, in which we again and again urged and exhorted those venerable brethren that because of their exemplary piety and episcopal zeal they should employ their most earnest efforts, in our name also, in order that the fatal civil war which had arisen in the States should end, and that the people of America might again enjoy mutual peace and concord, and love each other with mutual charity. And it has been very gratifying to us to recognize illustrious and honorable sir, that you and your people are animated by the same desire for peace and tranquillity, which we had so earnestly inculcated in our aforesaid letters to the venerable brethren above named. May it please God at the same time to make the other peoples of America and their rulers, considering seriously how cruel and how deplorable is this internecine war, would receive and embrace the counsels of peace and tranquillity. We indeed shall not cease with most fervent prayer to beseech God, the best and highest, and to implore Him to pour out the spirit of Christian love and peace upon all the people of America, and to rescue them from the great calamities with which they are afflicted. We, at the same time, beseech the God of pity to shed abroad upon you the light of His grace, and attach you to us by a perfect friendship.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's on the 3d December, 1863, in the eighteenth year of our pontificate.

P. IX.

*Illustrious and Hon. Jefferson Davis
President of the Confederate States of America, Richmond.*

including the separation of Church and State. He also condemned the notion that “the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.”¹³ In addition to condemning these errors, he tightened his reins on the government of the Church with the definition of the dogma of papal infallibility in the First Vatican Council. No longer would he embrace the modernist and liberal tendencies in the world, but he would condemn and oppose them wherever they existed.

A decade after Pope Pius IX’s denunciation of liberalism, the United States was being torn apart by a similar clash of ideals. Industrialization and technology widened the gap between the progressive North and agrarian South to the point where the two seemed incompatible. To some, and especially to Pope Pius IX, the clash between these two cultures resembled the revolution which had taken place a decade earlier in Italy, where those who favored democracy vied for control of one of the oldest and most conservative institutions in Europe: the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, there were direct political ties between post-revolution Italy and antebellum America in that Pope Pius IX’s reforms were welcomed by progressives in the United States.

Sympathy and support for Pope Pius IX’s reforms in the early years of his papacy were main factors for America’s recognition of the Papal States.¹⁴ Additionally, the increased Italian support of the concepts of democracy, liberalism, and a free Church in a free state excited secular Americans and aligned many of them with the agenda of the Italian nationalists.¹⁵ In a Philadelphia public meeting addressed to Pope Pius IX, Robert Tyler, a vice president of the meeting, offered the following resolution concerning the changes that were taking place in Italy:

The liberal movement now in progress in Italy under the example and auspices of the Papal Sovereign, awakens in the breasts of the American People, the deepest interest, sympathy, and respect.¹⁶

In a letter addressed to this public meeting, the Hon. Lewis Cass stated that if Pope Pius IX were to continue with his spirit, “he will become the man of his age.”¹⁷ Similar to the North’s approval of the Italian reforms, the Italian nationalists also

sympathized with many Northern ideals. With the exception of the Catholic clergy, nearly all of Italy rallied behind the Union and their ideals during the Civil War.¹⁸

Though the North often celebrated what the Catholic Church considered to be liberalism, many Southerners feared these tendencies. As a Charleston newspaper of the time explained, the South believed that a centralized, liberal democracy would destroy their agrarian culture and way of life through rampant industrialization and the abolition of slavery:

There can be no doubt in any sound mind that the North and the South require a different government. The conservative elements of Southern society would be in too small a minority to control the aggressiveness of the wild and wanton democracy, which is found ever and anon to seize the reins of government at the North, under the most propitious circumstances.¹⁹

The South believed that Northern society was radical and in direct opposition to their conservative and orderly society. Southerners realized that to remain a part of the Union might mean the destruction of the Southern way of life and a concession to a Northern-controlled centralized democracy: “Under the existing Union, the theory and institutions of Southern society, or that of Northern society, will eventually give way. For both to exist, continue and work out their own ends, they must be separated.”²⁰ And separate they did.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States, even though he did not appear on any Southern ballots and thus received no votes from any state in the South. Although the presidency was in Republican hands, the US Congress was controlled by Democrats. This stand-off of power was very much responsible for arrogance on both sides. Many Southerners realized at that moment that the North controlled the Southern society and that the South no longer had any effective voice in the Union. As a result of Lincoln’s election, South Carolina formally withdrew from the Union, followed immediately by six other states.²¹

Although slavery played an important role for many Americans in deciding which side to support, Catholics in America had to reconcile Church teachings with their own sectional philosophies, which often proved to be a difficult task.²² The issue

¹² Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p.224.

¹³ Pope Pius IX, “The Syllabus of Errors Condemned by Pius IX,” <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>, 26 Apr., 2005.

¹⁴ David J. Alvarez, “American Recognition of the Papal States: A Reconsideration,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, 1980), pp.49-50.

¹⁵ Samuel J. Thomas, “The American Press Response to the Death of Pope Pius IX and the Election of Pope Leo XIII,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (1975), Vol.86, p.43.

¹⁶ Robert Tyler, Esq. quoted in Raymond H. Schmandt, “A Philadelphia Reaction to Pope Pius IX in 1848,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (1977), Vol.88, p.72.

¹⁷ Lewis Cass quoted in *ibid.*, p.76.

¹⁸ Luca Codignola, “The Civil War: The View From Italy,” *Reviews in American History*, Vol.3, No.4 (Dec., 1975), p.458.

¹⁹ “Reconstruction and Subjugation One and the Same,” *The Charleston Mercury*, Oct. 1, 1864. <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/text/civilwar/00000103/00010360.htm>.

²⁰ “Union With the Northern States Necessarily Destructive of Southern Liberty,” *The Charleston Mercury*, Jan. 18, 1861. <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/text/civilwar/00000001/00000181.htm>.

²¹ Four other states withdrew from the Union after hostilities began.

²² Chattel slavery did not become widespread in the world until the 15th century, and the first formal papal condemnation of it is seen around the same time. In 1404, Spanish explorers discovered the Canary Islands and enslaved its native peoples in the process of colonization. In response, Pope Eugene IV issued his bull *Sicut Dudum*, in which he condemned their enslavement and ordered all slaves to be freed. Those who chose to keep their slaves incurred *ipso facto* excommunication. One hundred years later, Pope Paul III encountered similar struggles with slavery in the world and issued the bull *Sublimis Deus* in which he describes enslavers as friends of the devil. Popes Urban VIII and Benedict XIV both condemned the slave trade, as did Pope Pius IX’s conservative predecessor, Pope Gregory XVI, in his 1839 bull *In Supremo Apostolatus*. For more, see Mark Brumley, “Let My People Go: The Catholic Church and Slavery,” *This Rock*, Jul.-Aug. 1999, pp.18-20.

of slavery did not divide the Catholic Church in half, but it did pose a grave threat to the Church's unity in America.²³ While many Americans were able to remain ambivalent to slavery, the Catholic Church had to take a stand on the issue while also attempting to avoid the same sectional disputes within the Church that caused most Protestant denominations to divide. Because of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, as opposed to the lack of central authority in most Protestant denominations, obedience to her teachings and to the pope was enough to maintain Church unity. However, the issue of slavery, as well as the division of the country, complicated this task.

Catholics in the South found themselves in a situation very similar to the early Christians in terms of political influence. Both constituted a minority group with practically no political power in a society that advocated slavery. Although the Catholic Church avoided permanent division in the United States, American bishops differed in their opinions about where the loyalty of Catholics should lie. Northern bishops tended to support the Union, whereas Southern bishops generally aligned themselves with the cause of the Confederacy.²⁴ However, while Southern bishops supported the South with little or no reservation, Northern bishops often had trouble justifying the Northern position because Church teaching often clashed with the North's policies. Bishops on both sides generally supported the section in which they lived, which strained the Church and often pitted bishop against bishop.

Archbishop William Henry Elder of Natchez was one of the most prominent Church leaders in the South. He was a rare native Southerner among his fellow bishops and was the leader of all Catholics in the state of Mississippi. In a letter to the Bishop of Chicago in 1861, Bishop Elder made it very clear that Catholics in the South were to give their allegiance to the Confederate government:

I hold it is the duty of all Catholics in the seceding states to adhere to the actual government without reference to the rights or the wisdom of making the separation—or the grounds for it—our state government [and] our new Confederation are *de facto* our *only existing* government here and it seems to me as good citizens we are bound not only to acquiesce in it but to support it [and] contribute means [and] arms [and] above all to avoid weakening it by division of counsel without necessity.²⁵

Although Bishop Elder did give recognition to the Confederate government, he was careful not to align the entire Catholic Church with the secession movement; to do so could cause too much division in the Catholic Church in America. He did make

it very clear, however, that one could personally support the Confederate secession and still remain in good standing with the Church. He explained his position in a letter to the Archbishop of Baltimore: "...if [Catholics] were satisfied, dispassionately, that secession was the only practical remedy...their religion [does] not forbid them to advocate it."²⁶ Bishop Elder also stated to a priest-friend that Catholics could support the secession movement because Confederate secession itself was in accordance with Catholic morality:

Some say the Union was a kind of free association which any state had a right to forsake whenever she judged it to be conducive to her interests: the right of secession. Others say...we were released by the right of self-preservation—because it was impossible for us to live in the Union [and] we had a right to provide for our safety outside of it...Now any of these positions is perfectly consistent with Catholic morality—with the highest patriotism.²⁷

Bishop Elder was very skeptical of the Southern cause at first, but he later changed his views. In an 1863 letter to a friend in Rome, the bishop voiced his fears that the South's actions were too rash and that they should have relied on "Constitutional Remedies."²⁸ However, he later viewed the South's actions as necessary:

The scornful treatment of all attempts at compromise in Congress seemed to confirm the sagacity of their views [and] I must confess that the progress of events in the North has persuaded me the constitution would have afforded little or no protection.²⁹

The bishop saw Northern troops use brutal tactics in his homeland of Mississippi and stated it "shows how little reliance [could] be placed on the power of constitutions or even of the universal laws of Christian nations, to protect us against fanaticism."³⁰ Bishop Elder was very sympathetic to the Southern cause and believed that the South had no other choice than to secede.

Bishop Elder taught that Catholics in the South owed their allegiance to both the Confederacy as well as to their individual state governments. He recognized these governments as the *de facto* governments, but was careful not to officially support secession in order to maintain Church unity. Although he attempted to stay neutral, his actions and words caused him many troubles with Northern authorities who considered him to be disloyal to the Union government. During the Northern occupation of Mississippi in 1863 and 1864, Union authorities attempted to force Bishop Elder to direct all priests under his jurisdiction to pray publicly for President Lincoln at every Mass. Refusal to do so would have constituted disloyalty and would have been punished.

²³ Willard E. Wight, ed., "Letters of the Bishop of Savannah." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol.42, No.1 (1958), p.93.

²⁴ Willard E. Wight, "Bishop Elder and the Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol.4, No.3 (1958), 290.

²⁵ Letter of Bishop Elder to the Bishop of Chicago, quoted in Wight, "Bishop Elder and the Civil War," p.290.

²⁶ Letter of Bishop Elder to the Archbishop of Baltimore, *ibid.*, p.293.

²⁷ Letter of Bishop Elder to Father Napoleon J. Perché, *ibid.*, p.292.

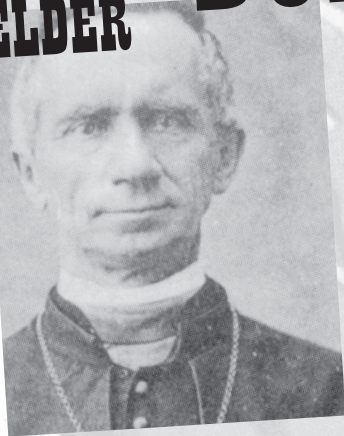
²⁸ Letter of Bishop Elder to William G. McGloskey, *ibid.*, p.294.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.295.

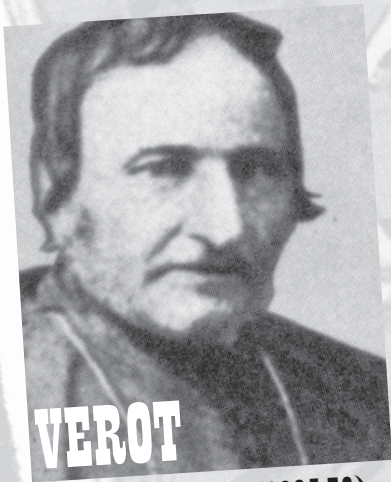
SOUTHERN BISHOPS DURING THE WAR

ELDER



Bishop William Henry Elder (1819-1904)
Bishop of Natchez, Mississippi (1857-80)

A native of Baltimore, he was consecrated bishop of Natchez, Mississippi in 1857. He was made famous in 1864 when he "refused to obey the order of the Federal troops at Natchez and to have certain prayers for the President of the United States recited publicly in the churches of his diocese. He was arrested, tried, and convicted; but the decision of the military court was reversed at Washington" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).

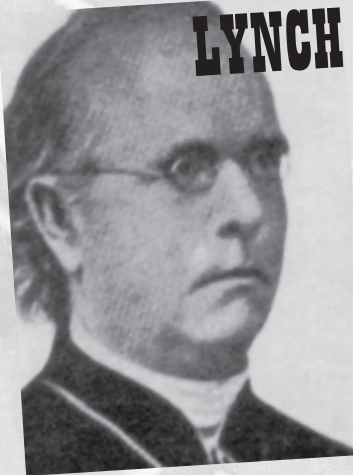


VEROT

Bishop Augustin Verot (1805-76)
Bishop of Savannah, Georgia (1861-70)

Born in Le Puy, France, he was appointed to the See of Savannah in 1861 by Pope Pius IX. He simultaneously defended the rights of the Confederacy while seeking to improve the conditions of slaves in the South in order to eventually free them and bring them into the Church.

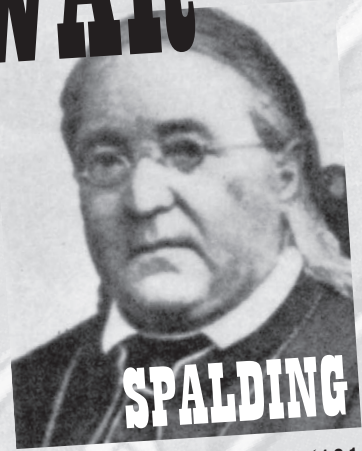
LYNCH



Bishop Patrick Lynch (1817-82)
Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina (1858-82)

Bishop Lynch was born in Ireland and consecrated bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, a post which he held until his death in 1882. "One of the most learned members of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States; his numerous lectures, essays and treatises exhibit the versatility and accuracy of his knowledge...towards the end of the war Bishop Lynch went to Rome as the accredited representative of the Confederacy on a confidential mission" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).

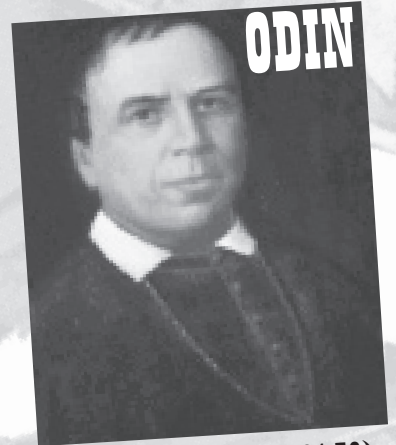
SPALDING



Bishop Martin John Spalding (1810-72)
Bishop of Louisville, Kentucky (1850-64)

An American who was consecrated bishop of Louisville, Kentucky in 1848. Becoming Archbishop of Baltimore in 1864, he presided over the deliberations of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866. He was also widely known as a strong defender of papal infallibility at the time of the First Vatican Council. His "Dissertation on the American Civil War" inspired the Vatican's intellectual sympathies for the South.

ODIN



Archbishop John Odin (1801-70)
Archbishop of New Orleans (1861-70)

Born in Ambierle, France, he was the Archbishop of New Orleans during the time of the War of Southern Independence. "His influence was extraordinary among the Catholic soldiers. Pope Pius IX wrote to him in the South, as to Archbishop Hughes in the North, to use their influence for peace. His Apostolic labors were interrupted only by journeys to Europe in the interest of his archdiocese" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).

Bishop Elder refused to comply and as a result, was ordered to remain inside Federal military lines, which included Mississippi at that time. The Union took control of his cathedral, as well as every other church that refused to offer prayers for President Lincoln. Lincoln eventually ordered Bishop Elder's release, but these experiences gave the Southern bishop even more reason to support the Confederate cause.³¹

Other Catholic bishops across the South held positions similar to those of Bishop Elder. John Mary Odin, the Archbishop of New Orleans, was extremely loyal and devoted to the cause of the South.³² In Savannah, Bishop Verot joined Archbishop Odin as an outspoken advocate of the Confederacy. In 1861, Verot preached a sermon which caused many in the North to label him as a rebel bishop and a supporter of slavery. He condemned the slave trade, but laid out a code of rights for the treatment of slaves.³³ A Frenchman by birth, Bishop Verot believed that intervention from the French Emperor was the best way for the South to be victorious:

It appears to me that a solemn embassy to the emperor of the French imploring him to interfere in the name of humanity, civilization, [and] liberty, [and] another to Maximilian offering him an alliance offensive [and] defensive with the Confederacy would do more good.³⁴

Bishop Verot was confident in his positions and assured Southern Catholics that "the justice of our cause is clear; clear enough to admit of no doubts in our mind."³⁵ In addition to being a staunch supporter of the Confederacy, he did not understand how the Northern bishops could oppose the South: "I often hear that Bishop Hughes [of New York]...speaks against the South. I do not believe what I hear. Still I would like to hear his arguments against the justice of the Southern cause."³⁶

Although a supporter of the Confederate cause, Verot was not an apologist for slavery. Indeed, the abolition of slavery was one of his wishes and goals. Religious education was the Church's primary concern with slavery in America, and Bishop Verot believed that the spiritual needs of the slaves were not being met.³⁷ He was certain that abolition would eventually come by spreading the teachings of Catholicism, even with a Confederate victory. Therefore, he was able to support the Confederate cause in good conscience and counsel Southern Catholics to do the same.³⁸

In the North, the response of Catholic Church leaders to secession and slavery was not as clear as in the South. Archbishop John Hughes of New York was an Irish immigrant, a staunch nationalist, and

one of the most well-known and important Northern bishops during the War Between the States. He held a high position in the American Catholic Church and was also respected in Rome, so his opinions were held in high regard by all Catholics who had difficulties responding to the war. The teachings of the Catholic Church did not mesh well with many popular Northern opinions, especially the violence of abolitionism, so Archbishop Hughes had trouble taking a stance on many sectional issues. Southern secession saddened the Archbishop, but his views on slavery were ambiguous—a recurring position on slavery among Northern Church leaders.³⁹ This is seen very clearly in an 1854 sermon which he gave in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral:

While we all know that this condition of slavery is evil, yet it is not an absolute and unmitigated evil; and even if it were anything more than what it is—a comparative evil—there is one thing, that it is infinitely better than the condition in which this people would have been, had they not been seized to gratify the avarice and cupidity of the white man.⁴⁰

This opinion that Negroes were better off as slaves than they would be had they remained in Africa was one of the South's primary justifications for slavery, causing Archbishop Hughes to be accused of being a supporter of the institution in America. However, his positions seem to more closely resemble those of a man who struggled with the issue himself and attempted to justify it in order to avoid having to condemn it.

Though he constantly believed in his heart that something was very wrong with slavery, he condemned the acts and beliefs of abolitionists and stated that it was an error to think that slavery could end immediately. Instead, he taught that the slave owner had an obligation to be kind to his slave and provide for all of the slave's physical and spiritual needs. He maintained that with the spread of Catholicism, slavery would eventually be unthinkable in society and that emancipation would come not from the government, but from the charity of the slaveholder, following the Scriptural example of St. Paul.⁴¹ In his Epistle to Philemon, St. Paul sent an escaped slave back to his owner, but urged the slaveowner to have a change of heart and to accept him back not as a slave, but as a brother in Christ.⁴² Similarly, Bishop Elder believed that only through the spread of Catholicism and Christian charity, not through laws or violence, could slavery be truly abolished and the distinction between master and slave be truly removed.⁴³

³¹ Wight, "Bishop Elder and the Civil War," pp.304-306.

³² Willard E. Wight, ed., "A Letter From the Archbishop of New Orleans, 1862," *Louisiana History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1962), p.130.

³³ Wight, "Letters of the Bishop of Savannah," pp.94-95.

³⁴ Wight, "Letters of the Bishop of Savannah," p.105.

³⁵ Wight, "Bishop Verot and the Civil War," p.156.

³⁶ Wight, "Letters of the Bishop of Savannah," p.99.

³⁷ After the war, Bishop Verot considered the abolition of slavery to be a blessing from God sent to bring peace to the country, and a cause for "joy and congratulations." For more see Wight, "Bishop Verot and the Civil War," p.99.

³⁸ Wight, "Bishop Verot and the Civil War," p.162.

³⁹ Walter G. Sharrow, "John Hughes and a Catholic Response to Slavery in Antebellum America," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Jul. 1972), pp.254-256.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.255-256.

⁴¹ Sharrow, "John Hughes and a Catholic Response to Slavery in Antebellum America," 259-266.

⁴² Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon.

⁴³ Sharrow, "John Hughes and a Catholic Response to Slavery in Antebellum America," 259-266.

The most important Catholic opinion on the American War Between the States was that of the Bishop of Rome, Pope Pius IX. As noted, after surviving the Italian Revolution over a decade earlier, the Pope rethought his past tendencies and adopted conservative policies that reinforced the constant tradition and teachings of the Catholic Church. For the Pope, the situation in America was all too familiar. Liberalism was thriving in the North and progress towards a centralized liberal democracy threatened to remove traditional values from American society. In the South, the Pope saw a society that clung to traditional religious and family values and he believed to be more conducive to Catholic principles, despite its support of slavery.⁴⁴

Until he became President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis attended Baptist churches. After becoming President, he was baptized into the High Anglican Church. He developed a great respect for the Catholic Church,⁴⁵ however, probably due to his attendance at a Dominican Catholic high school in Kentucky for two years. (He was withdrawn not because of poor grades or unruly behavior, but most likely because his help was needed on the family plantation.) He kept this respect throughout his life and developed a personal, although distant, relationship with Pope Pius IX during the war. In Roman Catholics he saw friends in whom he could trust and who would not turn their backs on the “oppressed.”⁴⁶ In 1863, Jefferson Davis penned a letter to Pope Pius IX in which he acknowledged the concern that the Holy Father had shown for America in the letters the Pope had written to the bishops of New York and New Orleans. In these letters, the Pope conveyed his sadness over the Civil War, and voiced his desires to see it end quickly. Davis assured the Pope that the Confederacy wanted the war to end as soon as possible and that they were merely fighting so that they could live in peace under their own government.⁴⁷

That Pope Pius IX referred to Jefferson Davis as the “Illustrious and Hon. President”⁴⁸ could have been merely formal and respectful language, but behind the Pope’s words in the letter seemed to lie for the Confederacy a hope of implied recognition of its government, or at least a *desire* to recognize it. Curiously, Cardinal Antonelli, the Papal Secretary of State during Pius IX’s pontificate, claimed that the Pope had not yet recognized the sovereign independence of the Confederate States, but had in fact recognized their belligerency—the first step

towards formal recognition.⁴⁹ (Effectively, this meant that the Vatican recognized that the war was being fought, as France and Great Britain had already done.) In his letter, Pope Pius IX showed his gratitude that the Confederacy was eager for an end to violence, while acknowledging that the North did, in fact, have separate rulers and a separate government and that Southerners were not merely rebels: “May it please God at the same time to make the other peoples of America and their rulers...receive and embrace the counsels of peace and tranquillity.”⁵⁰ Pius IX concluded the letter with a subtle hint that he saw a bright future for relations between the Vatican and Confederacy, were it to become a sovereign nation: “We, at the same time, beseech the God of pity to shed abroad upon you the light of His grace, and attach you to us by a perfect friendship.”⁵¹ What the Pope meant by “perfect friendship” is unknown, but it indicates that the Pope saw something attractive in the Confederacy—so attractive that he was willing to stand alone as the only European leader willing to formally associate himself with its government.

Pius IX’s correspondence with Jefferson Davis implies that he favored the South during the war and recognized values in the South that were uncommon in the progressive world. The South’s respect for religion, rejection of industrialization, emphasis on family, and opposition to strong centralized secular government were very similar to traditional Catholic principles, so the Pope easily could have considered the South the fertile place in America to spread the Catholic Faith. He may have also seen the South as a sovereign nation which would perhaps one day faithfully follow the Church’s teachings.

What is for sure is that by 1863, the Vatican understood that the Lincoln administration seemed less interested in returning the South to the Union than in punishing it into complete submission. When the Emancipation Proclamation reached Rome in the Fall of 1862, Vatican reaction was negative. *L’Osservatore Romano* condemned it as a desperate and hypocritical war measure which freed no slaves but encouraged rebellion in the South. The Jesuit journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, portrayed the war as a hopeless and unjust struggle of the North to punish the South.

During President Davis’s imprisonment following the defeat of the Confederacy, Pope Pius IX sent a picture of himself to him with the handwritten inscription: “Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”⁵² Along with this picture, the Pope sent a miniature crown of

⁴⁴ Although written after the Civil War, Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* confirmed the Church’s constant teachings on what constitutes a Catholic society. In the encyclical, the Pope stated that developments in industry and strong centralized government cause a decline in morals by eliminating traditional values and focusing man’s mind on things other than God. For more see Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_lxiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

⁴⁵ Davis, *Jefferson Davis: Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir By His Wife Varina Davis*, II, p.445.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Letter of Jefferson Davis to Pope Pius IX in Davis, *Jefferson Davis: Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir By His Wife Varina Davis*, II, p.446.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Arnold Blumberg, “George Bancroft, France, and the Vatican: Some Aspects of American, French, and Vatican Diplomacy: 1866-70,” *The Catholic Historical Review* (1965), p.484.


⁵⁰ Letter of Pope Pius IX to Jefferson Davis from Davis, *Jefferson Davis: Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir By His Wife Varina Davis*, II, p.447.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.448.

⁵² *Ibid.*

thorns which the Sovereign Pontiff had woven with his own hands (see title page).⁵³ Such a gift, said a great niece, was “never before conferred on any but crowned heads.” Robert E. Lee, pointing to his own portrait of Pius IX, told a visitor that he was “the only sovereign...in Europe who recognized our poor Confederacy.”

The War Between the States proved to be one of the most trying times for the Catholic Church in America, and the involvement of Pope Pius IX shows that the war had many international effects. Because of the affinity between Catholic and Southern moral and social principles, one could argue that Pope Pius IX believed that the Southern culture provided a more suitable atmosphere for the spread of Catholicism, despite the issue of slavery. Spreading the Catholic Faith was the primary mission, and the American bishops believed that the necessary abolition of slavery would eventually follow. The report of Bishop Martin Spalding to Pope Pius IX in 1863 (serialized in *L'Ossevatore Romano*) warned that the immediate emancipation of the slaves would not only force them into an inferior class, but would also make it more difficult to bring them into the Church. He noted that in heavily Catholic New Orleans, almost half of the slaves had been freed by 1860 through a change in their masters' hearts, and had become some of the most devout

Catholics that he had ever seen.⁵⁴ As late as August, 1864 (eight months before General Lee's surrender at Appomattox), Rufus King, a Federal liaison to Rome, was admitting that papal officials remained unenthusiastic about the Union cause and Cardinal Antonelli was still concerned over the dangers of untimely emancipation. Pope Pius IX himself had recently confessed to a British diplomat that his real sympathies were with the Confederacy.⁵⁵ The Pope and Cardinal, however, suppressed their feelings in the face of rising Federal fortunes on the battlefield and the promise of a quicker end to the bloodshed. But the evidence exists to believe it plausible that Pope Pius IX would have liked to have given official recognition to the Confederacy in its beginning, and mourned its defeat in its demise. 

Phil Johnson is a senior at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, currently in France on naval assignment. He is studying History, French, and Engineering to become a nuclear submarine officer. He was born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina, and when at home assists at the Latin Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Mt. Holly, North Carolina. This article was edited and added by Fr. Kenneth Novak.

The crown of thorns made by Pope Pius IX and sent to CSA President Jefferson Davis is used courtesy of Memorial Hall Foundation, Confederate Civil War Museum, 929 Cage St., New Orleans, LA 70130.

For the reader interested in more on this topic, the editor suggests “The Papacy in the Diplomacy on the American Civil War” by David J. Alvarez appearing in *The Historical Catholic Review* (April 1983).

⁵³ “Confederate Museum to Keep Its Home of 112 Years,” *The Lafayette Advertiser*, Dec. 28, 2003. <http://www.acadiananow.com/news/html/1C0E0D37-7F28-46CB-BD18-280950A8A444.shtml>, Dec. 1, 2004.

⁵⁴ David Spalding, “Martin John Spalding's ‘Dissertation on the American Civil War,’” *The Catholic Historical Review*, (1966), pp.76-77.

⁵⁵ King to Seward, Aug. 22, 1864, *United States Ministers*, p.315-316; O.Russell to J. Russell, Jul. 30, 1864, *The Roman Question*, p.288.

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REV. FR. ALVARO CALDERÓN

CANONIZATION IN TODAY'S PAPAL M

The Church has always rendered a public cult to her saints, first to the martyrs and later, from the fourth century onwards, to the confessors. Although only the pope has authority to judge whether the universal Church may honor a servant of God as a saint, during the first ten centuries they were canonized by the piety of the Catholic people, more or less directed by the bishops and with the implicit consent of the Roman pontiffs. But as there were abuses and negligences, the popes progressively exercised a greater control over these processes, and ended by reserving for themselves the faculty of canonizing saints. The first document to mention this is a decretal of Pope Alexander III, in 1170.

The exemplary life of the saints is one of the notes that distinguish the Church from false religions, and to counter those who deny it, the procedure by which the popes canonize saints has been always extremely rigorous. Until 1588, canonizations came under the Roman Rota, performed in the manner of a judicial process between a “postulator” defending it, and a “promoter of the faith” opposing. In 1588, Pope Sixtus V established the Sacred Congregation of Rites (SCR), which had exclusive control over these processes and unified and perfected the procedures to be followed. Pope Urban VIII, in 1625, forbade any kind of cult to anyone who has not been beatified or canonized by the Holy See, except in the proven cases of immemorial cult. The procedure, enriched by the experience of

centuries, is described in its essentials in the *1917 Code of Canon Law*. Later, in 1930, Pope Pius XI established the Historical Section for ancient causes, promulgating in 1939 the norms to follow in these cases, and Pope Pius XII established a commission of medical experts.

Until that date, the procedure was in two stages: **1)** that which ended with the *beatification*, itself divided into two stages, the ordinary process and the apostolic process; **2)** that which ended with the *canonization*.

The ordinary process, so called because it was realized under the authority of the diocesan bishop, was directed to present the cause before the SCR. It consisted in three steps: **1)** the careful search for all the writings of the Servant of God; **2)** the informative process, which attempted to establish the reputation of sanctity; **3)** the process of absence of cult, according to the decree of Urban VIII. Before going ahead with the informative process, the writings had to be sent to the SCR to be rigorously examined.

To bring to an end definitively a cause of canonization, it is not necessary that the writings of the Servant of God contain formal errors against dogmas or morals; it is sufficient if in them are found suspicious novelties, frivolous questions, or some singular opinion opposed to the teachings of the Fathers and the common opinion of the faithful.¹

The apostolic process, realized under the authority of the pope by the SCR, had two series of procedures: instruction and recognition. The *instruction* was performed in the diocese, by command of the SCR,



The talk about canonizing Pope John Paul II raises the question about how this used to be done and is done now.

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and comprised two steps: first, the process of reputation of sanctity was repeated, and afterwards the virtues (or martyrdom) and the miracles were examined in particular. The *recognition* was performed in Rome, and it included four steps: **1)** on the heroism of virtues; **2)** on the martyrdom and its cause; **3)** on the miracles; and **4)** the last session, called “*de tuto*” because in it was decreed that the canonization could proceed “with certainty.”

For the *canonization* there were no new processes or revision of the previous proceedings. Only two conditions were necessary: the beatification and the approval of two new miracles. The postulator had to present the proofs of the new miracles and ask for the resumption of the cause. If the SCR approved them, a new decree “*de tuto*” determined that the canonization could go ahead. There was still a triple consistory in which the pope met with the cardinals and bishops. Finally, if that was his will, the Roman pontiff dictated the bull of canonization, dating it on the day of the solemn liturgical ceremony in the basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI reorganized the Roman Curia by his apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, which affected also the SCR, but without any significant modification of its procedures. The first important modification was made by the motu proprio *Sanctitas Clarior*, on March 19, 1969. By it, the pope delegated to the bishops and episcopal conferences the necessary authority to introduce the causes and perform the processes of instruction, which had been until then reserved to the



Response of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the Examination of the Cause for Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God John Paul II

At the request of His Most Eminent and Reverend Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Vicar General of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome, the Supreme Pontiff **BENEDICT XVI**, taking into consideration the exceptional circumstances put forward during the Audience granted to the same Cardinal Vicar General on April 28, 2005, has dispensed the five-year waiting period following the death of the Servant of God John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła), Supreme Pontiff, so that the cause of Beatification and Canonization of the same Servant of God can begin immediately. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the See of this Congregation for the Causes of Saints, May 9, 2005.

Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, C.M.F.
Prefect

Archbishop Edward Nowak,
Titular Archbishop of Luni
Secretary





Roman Congregation. The processes were reduced to three: **1)** on the writings of the Servant of God; **2)** on the life and virtues, or on the martyrdom; **3)** on the miracles. Until then, the processes of instruction were performed by representatives with dimissorial letters from the SCR. Now, if the bishop can establish a diocesan tribunal with specialized officials, he can instruct there the processes; if not, he must have recourse to the tribunals established *ad hoc* by the Episcopal Conference. Msgr. Antonelli, secretary of the SCR, said that these innovations “undoubtedly opened a new era in the history of the causes of beatification and canonization.”² Two months later, by the apostolic constitution *Sacra Rituum Congregatio*, May 8, 1969, Pope Paul VI divided the SCR into two congregations, one “for the Divine Worship” and the other “for the Causes of Saints,” giving to the latter an organization attuned to the new procedures.

The second important modification of the processes came with the apostolic constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*, of Pope John Paul II, published on January 25, 1983, together with the apostolic constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, by which the 1983 Code of Canon Law was promulgated. This new legislation, completed with a decree of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints (Feb. 7, 1983), replaced totally the previous laws, as the 1983 Code does not legislate on these matters—Canon 1403 §1 says that “the causes of canonization of saints are regulated by a particular pontifical law.” Following the line established by Pope Paul VI, a double objective was intended. The first was practical:

After the recent experience, it has appeared to Us opportune to revise further the process of instruction and reorganize this Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in order to respond to the demands of the wise and to the desires of our brothers in the episcopate, who many times have required the easing of the procedures, although keeping always the soundness of the investigation in such an important matter.

The second was doctrinal:

We think also, in the light of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council on collegiality, that it is convenient to

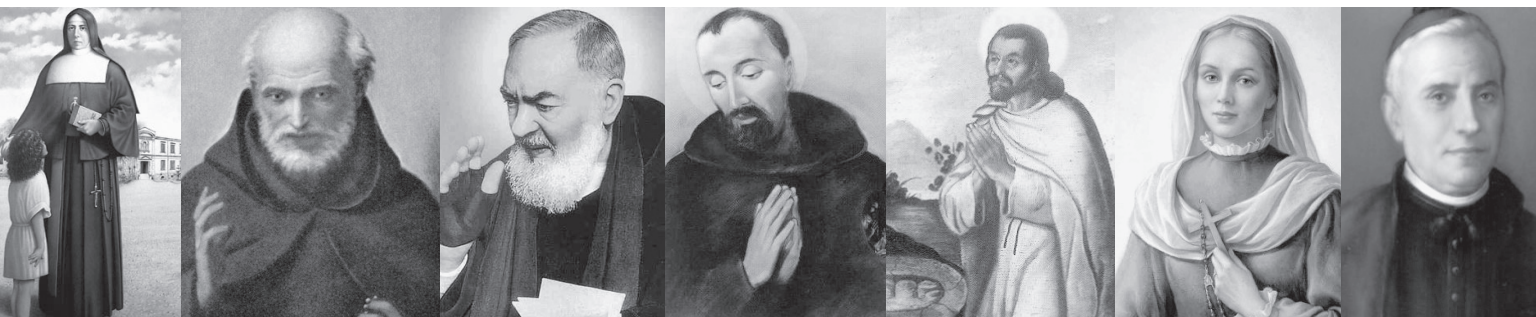
involve the bishops more with the Apostolic See in the study of the causes of saints

Now the pope grants to the bishops the right to introduce the causes of canonization and instruct the processes, without the authorization from the Roman Congregation that was still required under Paul VI. It is no longer necessary to submit all the writings to a theological examination, but only those that have been published; the theological censors are appointed by the bishop; the manner of deposition of the witnesses has been simplified; the ancient process of “no cult” has been reduced to a simple visual inspection, by the bishop, of the places where such undue cult might have been rendered. Once the process of instruction is finished, its acts are sent to Rome. The Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints studies them “in depth”: it verifies that everything has been done according to the rules; it prepares a report or “*positio*” on the virtues or martyrdom, and another on the miracles, to be examined by theological consultants and experts, who, in turn, will present their conclusions in reports to be discussed in the meetings of cardinals and bishops. Finally, the whole is submitted to the judgment of the Roman Pontiff.

It has to be noted that the new legislation does not mention beatification as an intermediate stage. According to the canonists, it would leave open—in order to promote collegiality—the possibility of giving back to the bishops the authority to beatify that they had in the first centuries.³

If we make a sweeping comparison between what canonizations were in the papal magisterium of the past, and what they are supposed to be according to the new legislation, we may summarize the differences by saying that today they are no more an “extraordinary” event in the activity of the Roman Pontiff.

They are not “extraordinary,” firstly, because the simplification of the procedures has increased the frequency of canonizations in such a manner





that they are no longer anything uncommon in the life of the Pope. According to the *Index ac Status Causarum*, published by the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints in December 2000, from Pope Clement VIII (1594) up to Pope Pius XII inclusive (1958), the SCR canonized 215 saints, approximately one every two years. Pope Pius XII canonized 33 saints in his 19 years of pontificate. Pope Paul VI made 3 canonizations before the first simplification of the process (in the first ceremony, he canonized the 22 Martyrs of Uganda), and 18 in the following years (among them the 40 English Martyrs), a total of 81 canonized saints. With Pope John Paul II the frequency increased noticeably. In his first ten years of pontificate, he canonized 254 blessed (among them, the 103 martyrs of Korea), and beatified 300 servants of God, a majority of them martyrs (60 from the 20th century). In 1999 those canonized by the present pontiff were already 295, and the beatified 934. Since 1999, the pace of canonizations has accelerated. Padre Pio was the 462nd saint canonized (June 16, 2002) by Pope John Paul II. On June 13, 1994, he explained:

Sometimes it is said that today there are too many canonizations. This not only reflects the reality that, thanks be to God, is as it is, but it also corresponds to the desire manifested by the Second Vatican Council. The Gospel has spread so much out into the world, and so deeply rooted is its message, that precisely the great number of beatifications vividly reflects the action of the Holy Ghost and the vitality that springs forth from Him in that field which is more essential for the Church, holiness.

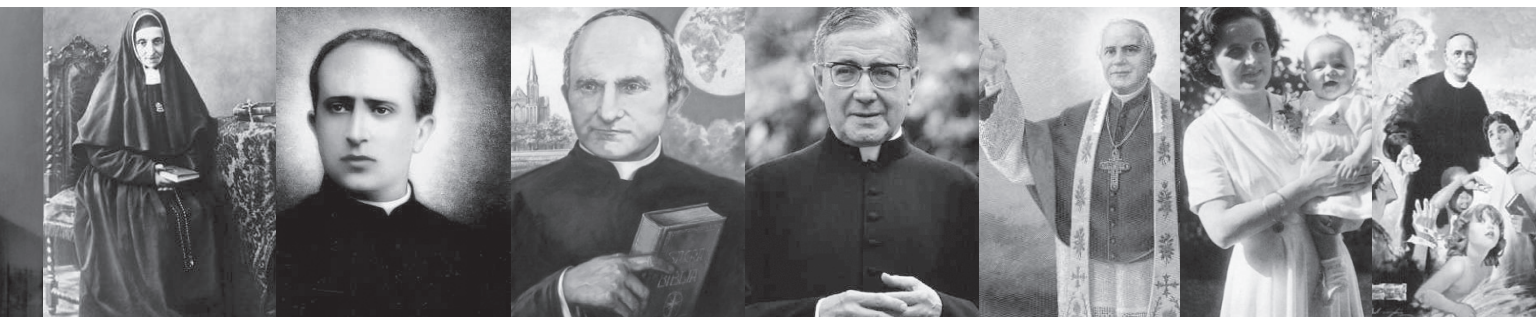
But if the canonizations have ceased to be “extraordinary” events because of their frequency, this must mean something regarding their theological nature. Theologians call “extraordinary” magisterium of the pope, firstly and principally, the *ex cathedra* definitions of matters regarding faith and morals. His other activities, either regarding *doctrine*, such as the teachings given in discourses and encyclicals, or regarding *concrete facts*, such as the disciplinary decisions, constitute the ordinary papal magisterium. In questions of *doctrine*, the pope is infallible in his extraordinary magisterium, that is, when he gives definitive sentence *ex cathedra*. The other

teachings, given in an ordinary manner, are not by themselves infallible, although they may become so if they acquire an equivalent weight by their frequent repetition or because they end by imposing themselves on the whole Church. In questions regarding *concrete facts*, the pope is not infallible. St. Thomas Aquinas says that “in sentences relative to particular facts, that is, regarding possessions, crimes and similar things, there is the possibility of error in the judgment of the Church, on account of false witnesses.”⁴ Although the canonizations have as object a *concrete fact* (that is, that such Christian man or woman attained holiness and is in heaven), nevertheless, given the manner in which the saints have been proposed to the people’s veneration by the magisterium, theologians in the past have considered canonizations as something intermediate between doctrinal sentences and those regarding concrete facts, and they are of the opinion that those canonizations are also infallible. In the text we have quoted above, St. Thomas Aquinas continues:

The canonization of saints is something intermediate between these two [kinds of sentences]. As the honor we render to the saints is a profession of faith by which we believe in the glory of the saints, it has to be piously held that in this the judgment of the Church cannot err.

Do we still have to consider them so today, in spite of their having become an “ordinary” occurrence, as acts belonging to the “extraordinary” papal magisterium?

To discern whether an act belongs to the ordinary or to the extraordinary papal magisterium, we have to apply the following theological criterion. The gift of infallibility does not depend on the efforts the pope uses to ascertain the truth of his acts, but only on the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to Whom the pope has recourse out of his own free will. Nevertheless, in each case, to avoid tempting God, the pope acts as any other human teacher, *humano more*. This means that, when the Pope teaches in an ordinary manner, without any very special diligence or solemnity, he does not intend to be infallible; but when he is to give a definitive sentence, he inquires, demands advice, and acts as if he were to avoid any possibility of error by his own forces.⁵ These endeavors, proceeding in



the usual human manner, are a clear indication of the degree of authority that the pope gives to each one of his acts.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the popes took away definitively from the bishops the faculty to judge in questions of sanctity and kept the causes of canonization for themselves, establishing a complex procedure to determine personally, by means of the officials and organs of the Roman Curia (directly under their supervision), the reality of the facts adduced. Then the theologians were able to see in those acts the full engagement of the pontifical authority, judging that those acts were so near an *ex cathedra* definition that they should also be included among the solemn acts of the extraordinary magisterium.

Today, the Holy See has given back to the diocesan bishops the responsibility of judging the truth of the facts, either by themselves or by the organs established by them. Considering in accordance with the rules of human judgments, *humano more*, the pope cannot now give a personal testimony to the truth of the facts, he cannot say: "I myself give testimony that this person led an exemplary Christian life, because I have sent people I trust in to find out the facts, and I have had the facts studied by theologians chosen by me." Now his testimony is no more immediate, but mediated through the bishops: "According to the documents given to me and trusting the prudence and honesty of the diocesan procedures, I give testimony that this person is a saint." The value of a sentence given in these conditions is certainly much less, because the scientific authority of a diocesan tribunal is less than that of a Roman Congregation, which chooses its experts from the best in the whole world. Moreover, the diocesan bishop is necessarily much more interested in having canonized saints from his diocese, and is therefore a less impartial judge than the Roman Pontiff. Finally, and principally, because whereas in the case of a sentence about doctrine it is irrelevant from whom it has been learnt insofar as it is the truth, a sentence about concrete facts depends completely upon the correct observation by the witness.

The return to a situation similar to that of the first centuries of the Church—when the pope did not judge immediately, by himself, but simply confirmed the judgment of the bishops—has been purposely willed to promote collegiality. Consequently, as the "human manner" in which the pope proceeds indicates the degree in which he engages his authority as Vicar of Christ, the theological judgment about the degree of

authority of the canonizations will have to change: the canonizations in today's papal magisterium should not be considered as acts belonging to the extraordinary magisterium of the Roman pontiff, but rather as acts proper to his ordinary magisterium.

We do not have knowledge of any theological works on this matter, and while what we affirm may surprise some Catholics who have had some theological training in the past, it must be understood in the context of the new pedagogy of the magisterium since Vatican II. The *ex cathedra* definitions of the extraordinary magisterium constitute the most absolute exercise of any authority upon earth, and contemporary man, under the influence of the democratic spirit, feels an instinctive horror for anything imposed on him without his previous consent. The last popes have, for that reason, judged convenient not to resort to the Pythagorean "*magister dixit*" (i.e., "The master says"), but rather to the Socratic "dialogue," exercising the magisterium only in its ordinary manner, trusting in each case on the assistance of the Holy Ghost to impose the truth progressively. Even in the act that Pope John Paul II had endowed with greatest authority, the declaration on the impossibility of the priestly ordination of women, he did not decide it by an *ex cathedra* papal definition, but pointed out that already "it had been previously proposed by the ordinary and universal magisterium."⁶ It must not, therefore, surprise us if, as being more convenient for the sensibility of modern man, the canonizations are today made in the collegial manner of the ordinary magisterium. ◻

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¹ *DTC*, art. "Canonisation dans l'Église romaine," col.1647. Cf. Benedict XIV, *De Servorum Dei Beatific.* bk.II, ch.25-35, 52.

² *L'Osservatore Romano* (Apr. 12, 1969). Cf. *La Documentation Catholique*, 1969, n. 1539, p.409.

³ Cf. J. Bonet Alcón, *Causas de canonización. Introducción y comentarios al proceso ordinario en la nueva legislación canónica* (Ed. Universidad Católica Argentina, 1993), pp.41-42.

⁴ *Quodlib.* IX, last article.

⁵ John of St. Thomas, *De auctoritate S. Pontificis*, Disp.III, Art.2, n.13: "in the definition of matters of faith, it is required to proceed '*humano modo*' to a diligent investigation, which by itself does not offer sufficient foundation for an infallible definition, but which under the direction of the Holy Ghost does so."

⁶ *Responsum* of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (Nov. 24, 1995), on the authority of the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* of Pope John Paul II.



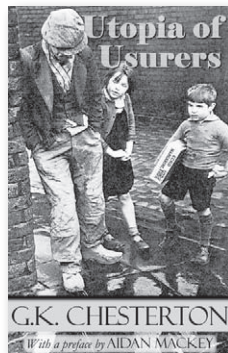
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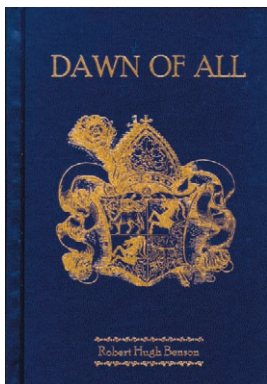
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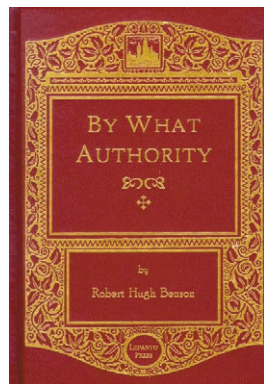
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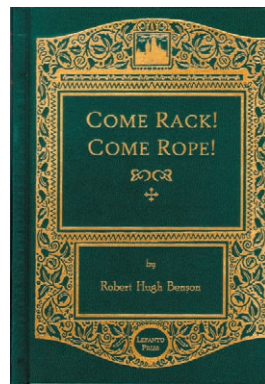
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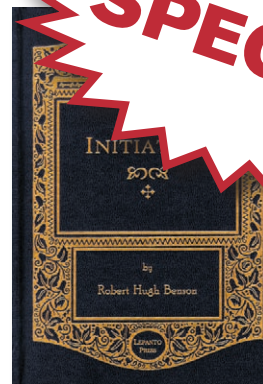
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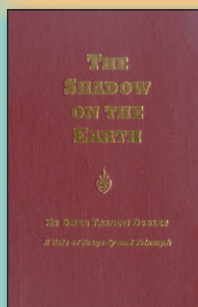
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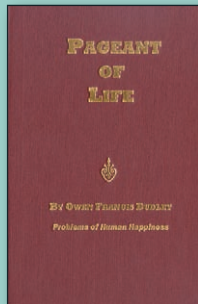
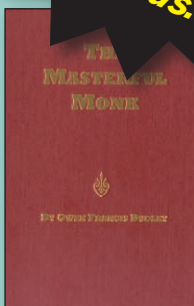
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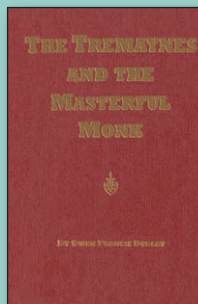
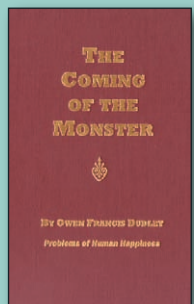
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