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ANGELUS

A JOURNAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

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ST. KATHARINE DREXEL

Persecution of the Modern Church



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The ANGELUS

A JOURNAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

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—Pope St. Pius X

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Letter from the Editor

At the beginning of the 1970s, there was an Archbishop who, in the eyes of many of his fellow bishops, seemed unable to overcome his inclination towards a form of the Catholic religion which was considered old-fashioned and outdated.

The traditional Latin Mass has since become a hallmark for the continuation of Catholicism. The strangest thing of all is that the majority of the bishops are skeptical or opposed (some of them most decidedly opposed) to Tradition. They seem to hate their own roots, forgetting that they thus make themselves sooner or later superfluous. “No man ever hated his own flesh,” we read in the Bible. Catholic bishops seem to be an exception.

When Pope Benedict XVI—who is not himself a “traditionalist”—wanted to do something “to open the doors for the Society of St. Pius X,” it became evident that those most opposed to his intentions were the bishops; at least, most of them. There is good reason to think that some of them were responsible for the “Williamson affair,” blowing up a non-representative personal opinion for political reasons so that traditional Catholics would be marginalized. This also made things difficult for the pope; the bishops were thereby damaging the reputation of those they should have interest in reconciling.

It is no exaggeration so say that some bishops fear nothing more than a reversal of the “post-conciliar reforms.” The new (and only) dogma in the Catholic Church since Vatican II, repeated often, is that the new orientation of Vatican II is a blessing for the Church and that it is impossible to overturn this development. This, in spite of the breakdown of religious life, the lack of vocations, the deviations in doctrine, and the exodus of the faithful from regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

It is true that many have reduced “Tradition” to a liturgical movement, essentially a movement to restore the dignity of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. At this time, however, when “doctrinal discussions” with Rome are being announced, it is essential to realize that Tradition is not confined to the liturgy, even if it is an important part.

The Archbishop who is mentioned at the beginning of this letter—Archbishop Lefebvre, of course—became the common enemy of “modern-minded” Catholics and clerics not only—perhaps not even mainly—because of the traditional Latin Mass, but more because of his support for the Catholic doctrine on the Kingship of Christ.

The Kingship of Christ is not compatible with Catholics accepting laws which are opposed to Natural or Divine Law. The Church, for instance, does not generally care about tax laws, but a Catholic cannot in good conscience accept legislation that violates the natural right to live. Abortion is a crime. Catholics who pretend that the Faith and abortion are compatible are not worthy

of their name. Another example: a Catholic cannot vote for Communists. This would not only mean to profess atheism, but it would include supporting consequences that are directly or indirectly against the Faith.

As long as traditional Catholics are exclusively concerned with the liturgy, they do not present a serious problem for the enemies of the Church. But when they start to believe that the principles of the Faith should influence the Constitution, legislation, and the decisions of politicians (in short, on public life in general)—then they start to be a problem! A liberal will always be very liberal as long as he is trying to convince you to depart from the Faith. But as soon as you expect him to accept any essentials of that Faith—you will find him outspokenly doctrinal and anti-liberal.

Many Catholics nowadays call themselves “liberal” and act as if the commandments depend on circumstances such as time and place. They think that the commandments of God can be adapted according to circumstance. They say: “When Moses received the Commandments on Mount Sinai, the needs of the Israelites then were different from our needs today. Certain things need to be modified.” In other words: the Law of God is not absolute, but subject to modification.

We need to realize how much this liberal understanding of the Law of God goes against the purpose of the Law itself. God gave the Commandments to let men know what it was that he asked from them. That the Commandments were never easy for human nature is evident. The Israelites were not in a fundamentally different situation than we are today. But, in opposition to today, they had the humility to admit their sins, whereas the modern liberal declares them to be virtues.

It appears as though important people with responsibility in the Catholic Church—primarily the bishops—are buying popularity by selling their faith. That laymen, politicians, and people on the outside are following them or otherwise feel encouraged is not astonishing. In the days of Pope Leo XIII, the whole world—including the Protestants—read the social encyclicals of the pope, especially *Rerum Novarum*. They set a standard and were implemented in varying degrees around the world, including America.

It is different today. If the Pope is frank on certain subjects and tells people what the Catholic Church expects from them, a witch-hunt orchestrated by the mass media will be the consequence. Many bishops and priests will not expose themselves to this danger and continue to present the teaching of the Church in a modified and watered-down form which hurts nobody and gives the impression that Christ was a liberal. This is not the way that the Catholic Church will recover from its’ crisis. All those with responsibility should reflect on the words of the Gospel: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works.” (Mt 16:27)

Instaurare Omnia in Christo,
FR. MARKUS HEGGENBERGER



**Letter #75 to Friends and Benefactors from Bishop Bernard Fellay,
Superior General of the Society of Saint Pius X**

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The enthusiastic response to the Rosary Crusade we encounter throughout the world fills us with consolation and prompts us to take up this theme once again with you. If we are petitioning Heaven with this multitude of *Aves*, it is because the hour is indeed grave. We are sure of Our Lady's victory because she herself foretold it, but the events that have been unfolding for nearly a century—since this triumph was announced at Fatima—oblige us to suppose that all kinds of other woes could yet befall mankind before this victory.

Yet the rules given at Fatima by the Mother of God were quite simple: if the world does not convert, it will be punished: "There will be a second war, more terrible than the first." The world did not convert. And God's answer was not long in coming. Since the Second World War, the world still has not converted. And if people think Russia has converted, they will have to explain to us in what it has converted, and to whom—economic liberalism?

Almost 100 years later, we observe that the world has surely not become better; quite the contrary. The war of the unbelievers rages harder than ever, but it has taken an unexpected turn: the demolition of the Church is being carried out especially by subversion, by infiltrating the Church. Our holy Mother the Church is in the process of being transformed into a pile of spiritual ruins while the exterior façade remains more or less intact, thus deceiving the multitude about its real condition. And it has to be admitted that this subversion acquired an unexpected increase of efficacy on the occasion of the Second

Vatican Council. It doesn't take an advanced degree in theology to figure this out; today it is an historical fact.

What part of the responsibility should be attributed to the Council itself? This is a difficult question, but it is clear that this Council was not without effect, and its consequences have been well and truly disastrous. Because of it, the Church fell in step with the world. "We, too, in fact, we more than any others, honor mankind," said Paul VI at the Council's conclusion. And the man-centered orientation of Vatican II was harped on by John Paul II. But this orientation is indeed odd for the Church of God, supernatural in its essence, having received from Our Lord Jesus Christ not only its constitution and means, but first and foremost its end, which is nothing else than the continuation of His own redemptive and salvific mission: "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned." (Mk. 16:15-16).

And now, here is the tragedy: the divine mission of the Church has been replaced by a purely human one. It is a great mystery that leaves one astounded. Salvation now comes second, to say the least.

Few men—very few men, unfortunately—understand that the terrible crisis of the Church since the Second Vatican Council is a chastisement more terrible than any other, for this time the catastrophe is spiritual: what is wounded, what is noiselessly killed in the midst of an indifference worse than death, are souls. The loss of grace in a soul is the most terrible harm that can happen to it because

it makes no noise, it is not felt. And the voice of the watchmen has fallen silent. The call to conversion, to penance, to the flight from sin, temptations and the world has given way, if not to indulgence, then at least to sympathy with the world. There is a real will to make peace with the modern world.

The mission of salvation has given way to a new sort of humanitarian mission; it is a matter of helping men of every condition and religion to live well together on earth.

There is no doubt that everything connected in the message of the Blessed Virgin of Fatima, what is referred to as the Secret of Fatima, has not yet come to an end. Certainly, what we are living is per force part and parcel of the events that will end one day, eventually, with the triumph of Mary. What will happen? How will we recognize it? In any case, it will at least entail the conversion of Russia according to the very words of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In 1917 at Rome, the foes of God were celebrating the 200th anniversary of Freemasonry and the 400th anniversary of Protestantism with parades of special violence against the Holy See. The demonstrators boisterously proclaimed the reign of Satan over the Vatican and the Sovereign Pontiff. Maximilian Kolbe, still a seminarian, witnessed these painful events and said:

This mortal hatred of the Church, of Christ, and of His Vicar on earth is not just an outburst of misguided individuals, but rather a systematic action that proceeds from the principle of Freemasonry: the destruction of all religion, but especially the Catholic religion. [*Pisma Ojca Maksymiliana Marii Kolbego franciszkanina, Niepokalanow, maszynopsis*, 1970; English tr. from *The Immaculata Our Ideal*, by Fr. Karl Stehlin (Warsaw, 2005), p.39]....

Is it possible that our enemies should deploy so much activity so as to attain superiority while we stay idle, or at best apply ourselves to prayer without getting to work? Might we not have more powerful arms—the protection of Heaven and of the Immaculate Virgin? The Immaculata, victorious and triumphant over all heresies, will not yield to the advancing enemy if she finds faithful servants obedient to her command: she will bring off new victories even greater than can be imagined. We have to put ourselves like docile instruments into her hands, employing all lawful means, getting the word out everywhere by the diffusion of the Marian press and the Miraculous Medal, and enhancing our action by prayer



and good example. [Testimony of Fr. Pignalberi reported during the process of canonization].

He founded the Militia of the Immaculata just a few days after the October 13th apparition of Our Lady at Fatima, when the great miracle of the sun took place. It was in fact on October 16, with six fellow seminarians, that he consecrated himself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the purpose of leading the whole world to God by the Immaculata.

One cannot but be struck by the affinity between the message of Fatima and the response of the Polish Franciscan while reading his act of consecration:

O Immaculata, Queen of heaven and earth, Refuge of sinners, our most loving Mother, to whom God deigned to entrust the entire order of mercy, behold I, N., an unworthy sinner, cast myself at Thy feet and humbly ask Thee to deign to accept me completely and utterly as Thy property and possession; and do with me as it pleases Thee: all the faculties of my soul and body, my entire life, my death and my eternity. Dispose of me as Thou wilt, so that what has been said of Thee might be fulfilled: “*She will crush the head of the serpent,*” and also, “*Thou alone hast vanquished all heresies throughout the world.*” Make of me an instrument in Thy immaculate and merciful hands,

which serves Thee, in order to increase reverence for Thee as much as possible in so many fallen-away and lukewarm souls. Thus the benevolent reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will spread more and more. For whatever place Thou enters, Thou shalt implore upon it the grace of conversion and sanctification, for all graces come to us from the Sacred Heart of Jesus only through Thy hands. [*Scritti di Massimiliano Kolbe*, new ed. (Rome: ENMI, 1997), Vol. I; Eng. version, *The Immaculata Our Ideal*]

Very dear faithful, it is in this same spirit that we launched the Rosary Crusade. But prayer is only a part of it: let us not forget the other two very important elements, penance and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. By mortification, we wish to make reparation for the insults given to Mary, and in union with her sorrowful Heart we wish to associate ourselves as closely as possible to the sacrifice of the Cross of our Lord, because by it our salvation is effected. Thus we are at the heart of the message of Fatima: “God wishes to introduce devotion to my Immaculate Heart.” Perhaps not enough emphasis is given to this aspect, which seems to us even more important than the consecration of

Russia and which is the second condition indicated by Mary to the pope for her triumph: consecrate Russia **and** promote devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

In this month of October we are going to enter into a new phase in our relations with the Vatican, that of the doctrinal discussions. What is at stake is very important, and we recommend them to your prayers. Undoubtedly that also is a part of our Crusade, and obviously this intention is included in the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary we all desire. That also completely outstrips all our own powers, and it would be folly pure and simple to undertake such an enterprise were it not sustained by the power of the supernatural means such as prayer and penance.

We do not want to conclude this letter without also thanking you for your generosity, which enables our work to develop throughout the world. There is one thing, though, that slows us down: the harvest is abundant, but workers for the harvest are lacking. Our Lord has already said it and has shown the

remedy: pray for vocations! How we should like to come to the aid of all the faithful who only have the Mass once a month, or only on Sundays, unable to benefit from normal pastoral care.... Yet the good Lord has gratified us this year with 27 new priests, and we expect an even slightly larger number next year. But even that is not enough, so great is the demand worldwide.

You are deeply thanked for all your efforts. May God reward you with the abundant graces and blessings we implore on you all, your families, your children. May Our Lady of the Rosary, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, protect you.

On the Feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, October 11, 2009.



+ Bernard Fellay
Superior General

SSPX THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION MEMBERS NAMED

Bishop Bernard Fellay has named as representatives of the Society of St. Pius X for the theological discussions with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta, rector of Our Lady Corredemptrix Seminary at La Reja (Argentina); Fr. Benoît de Jorna, rector of the International Seminary of St. Pius X at Écône (Switzerland), Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize, professor of Ecclesiology at the Écône seminary, and Fr. Patrick de La Rocque, prior of St. Louis's Priory, Nantes (France).

Bishop de Galarreta has already been president of the Society's internal commission charged with preparing for the discussions since April, 2009.

The sessions will begin in the second half of the month of October and will require the discretion necessary for a calm exchange on the disputed doctrinal questions.

DICI, October 15, 2009

SSPX MASS AT LOURDES

The Society of Pius X is pleased to inform you that at the occasion of its international pilgrimage to Lourdes, Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais will celebrate a Solemn Mass for the Feast of Christ the King in the St. Pius X Basilica on Sunday, October 25, 2009.

We express our gratitude to Mgr. Jacques Perrier, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, and the authorities of the Sanctuary for their hospitality and we assure them of our prayers.

Fr. Régis de Cacqueray
Superior of the District of France
October 17, 2009





Interview with Bishop Fellay

by Fr. Vernoy, Superior of Africa

With the lifting of the decree of excommunication, doctrinal issues now have to be dealt with between Rome and the Society of St. Pius X. What is the goal of these doctrinal discussions?

The goal which we expect to reach with the doctrinal discussion is an important clarification on the level of the teaching of the Church in recent years. Precisely, the Society of St. Pius X, following its founder, Archbishop Lefebvre, has severe objections about the Second Vatican Council. We hope that the discussions will allow the dissipation of errors or severe ambiguities which have been spread since then with full hands in the Catholic Church, as John Paul II said himself.

How long will these doctrinal discussions last? What are the main topics that will be dealt with and how will they be dealt with?

I have simply no idea about the length of the discussions. It certainly will depend also on the expectations of Rome. They may last quite a while.

Because the topics are vast. The main objections we have about the Council, like the Religious liberty, the ecumenism, the collegiality are well known. There are others objects which could be brought in, like the influence of modern philosophy, the liturgical novelties, the spirit of the world and its influence on the modern thinking within the Church.

The two Rosary Crusades have borne fruit. With reference to the Motu Proprio of July 2007, what should our attitude be towards priests who are now saying the Traditional Mass, if not exclusively, because they still offer the New Mass?

Fundamentally, whenever a priest wants to come back to the Mass of all times, we ought to

approach him with a positive attitude, we should welcome this and hope that the Mass by itself will bring forth good fruits. We already now see that this is the case most of the time. Of course, also, some priests will remain indifferent to the old rite. Time will show who is serious about it or no.

What advice can you give to the faithful with reference to these priests? What should the laity's approach be towards them?

The faithful should remain very prudent and not put themselves in very awkward situations. They should consult our priests before approaching priests. There are so many circumstances, each priest is different and until it is clear that the approach of the priest towards the Mass is genuine, the faithful should keep benevolent but prudent attitude.

To your knowledge are there now more priests saying only the Mass of all time?

It is very difficult to give a correct answer because there is no official statement about it and because many who would like to celebrate the old Mass do not dare to. There is in numerous countries a heavy pressure from the local hierarchy to prevent the return of the Mass. Many priests may say the Mass in secret because of this fear. I believe though that the increasing number remains still a modest number.

The Church crisis is one of Faith. For all priests to say exclusively the "old" Mass is going to take a long time. Would it be correct to say that even when, through the doctrinal discussions, Rome returns to the fullness of the Truth, there will still be much opposition concerning the Mass and Vatican II?

We have to be realistic. The return, the restoration of the Church will take time. The crisis which is hitting the Church has touched every aspect of the Christian life. To get out

of this situation will take more than one generation of constant effort in the right direction. Maybe a century. And this means that we have to count with opposition. But let us hope that the worse is behind us and that the signs of healing which appear today are offspring of a reality and not just a dream...

Collegiality is a disaster for the Church. Yet can we say that there is a slight "crack in the wall of collegiality" with Pope Benedict XVI's Motu Proprio and, more recently, the lifting of the decree of excommunication? After all, these decisions were ultimately his alone.

There is a correct way of understanding collegiality, Paul VI has added a "previous note" to the Document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* so that collegiality will be correctly understood. The problem is that this note is like forgotten. The general idea spread around that pretends to limit drastically the powers of the sovereign pontiff is a real danger for the Church and would render the true government impossible. So the various actions of the pope taken "motu proprio" are good signs of a will to personally and not collegially lead the Church.

The Pope's action saw much reaction from the clergy—some for, some against—to the point that he had to write a letter of explanation to the Bishops. Is this a good thing in as much as the Pope found himself with his "back against the wall," so to speak?

It really depends of the point of view. The papal authority was really shaken by the uproar of the beginning of the year. It can only be considered as a good thing because of the opposite effect it should cause in Rome and help realize who loves the Church and works for its edification or not.

For the first time in 40 years we see the Church's supreme authority realizing that there are theological, doctrinal



problems. Does the Pope perhaps realize that the “Conciliar Church” (to quote Cardinal Benelli), and its reforms are doomed and thus a return to Tradition is necessary?

I am not yet so sure that everyone does look at the doctrinal discussion with such a vision. I may say that for the majority of the hierarchy, these discussions are necessary not for the Church but for us to “come back to the Church,” and to adopt the novelties. In fact I have the impression that we are in front of a very mixed situation. The reality of the crisis is recognized, but not the remedies. We say and prove in the facts that the way out of the crisis is in a return to the past. Benedict XVI says something different: insisting in the necessity of not cutting with the past, (the hermeneutic of continuity), he nevertheless insists in keeping the novelties of the council, considering that they are not a rupture with the past. Only those who want to go further than the council would be in error and in rupture with the past. This is a most delicate problem.

The Pope’s stance on ecumenism does not seem to be as enthusiastic as his predecessor. Is this perhaps because he sees ecumenism from a more theological aspect as opposed to an “ut unum sint” at never mind the consequences to the Church’s detriment?

I do not think that the Pope would see in ecumenism a bad element. He dearly wants the Church to go ahead on this path he even said that this path is irreversible...but he seems to make differences between the various confessions and favour those who are closer like the Orthodox rather than the Protestants.

This year we celebrate the 25 years of the Society’s presence in Africa, and more specifically at Our Lady of Sorrows Priory, Johannesburg. What words of advice or encouragement can you give to our parishioners and indeed to all the faithful of the District of Africa.

Let us thank God for the beautiful jubilee. Twenty five years is nowadays, in the present crisis already a great achievement for which we have to thank God. It means also a great faithfulness on the side of the faithful. This title is so glorious. It implies at the same time the conservation of the faith and this steadiness, the perseverance in the fight. So the best wish I can give to them is that they may be- and all of us- more and more faithful.

DICI

Benedict XVI Denounces “Concessions” Born of Secularization of the Church in Brazil

Benedict XVI received a first group of 16 Brazilian bishops on their ad limina visit. The pope pointed out the “secularization” and “the opening to the world,” encouraging them not to neglect “some fundamental truths of the Faith. He especially denounced the “concessions” made by some in the domain of ethics. In this context, he expressed his wish that those in charge of the formation of the new generations of seminarians be “true men of God.”

“[I]n the decades that followed the Second Vatican Council, some have interpreted openness to the world (...) rather as a passage to secularization,” this led to some “concessions.” This interpretation in turn led “certain leading clerics took part in ethical debates in response to the expectations of public opinion, forgetting to speak of some fundamental truths of the Faith.” The consequence was a “self-secularization of many ecclesial communities,” Benedict XVI emphasized in his speech in Portuguese.

Presently, the Holy Father observed, there is “a new genera-

tion into this secularized ecclesial context. Instead of showing openness and consensus, it sees the abyss of differences and opposition to the Magisterium of the Church growing ever wider, especially in the field of ethics.” To respond to the expectations of this “new generation” who feels a deep thirst for transcendence,” the Pope affirmed that teachers are needed who are “real men of God, priests totally dedicated to formation, who witness to the gift of themselves to the Church through celibacy and an austere life, in accordance with the model of Christ the Good Shepherd.”

In October 2005, Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, then Archbishop of São Paulo (Brazil), had described the state of affairs for Catholicism in Brazil and South America during the bishops’ synod. “In Brazil, the number of Catholics dropping out of the Church is about 1% per year, he had acknowledged. In 1991, Catholics made up 83% of the population; nowadays, according to recent studies they might be only 67%. With anguish, we wonder: until when will Brazil be a Catholic country? According to the situation, we already observe that for each Catholic priest, there are two Protestant pastors, mainly at the service of Pentecostal Churches. Everything indicates that the phenomenon is the same in almost all the rest of Latin America. Hence the question: Until when will Latin America be a Catholic continent?”

The ad limina visit of the Brazilian bishops began on September 1, 2009 and will end on September 20, 2010. The bishops of 272 ecclesiastical circumscriptions must thus go to Rome in 13 successive groups to visit with the pope and the leading men of the Roman Curia. Brazil numbers 155 million Catholics.

DICI, No.201 (10/1/09)

OFFICIAL DIALOGUE



The church of Batticola, in Bhubaneshwar (Orissa State), was destroyed by Hindu extremists and replaced with a temple.

AND REAL PERSECUTIONS

The annual 2008 report of the charity ACN (Aid to the Church in Need) was recently presented by Marc Fromager, director of the ACN, at a Press Conference given at the Bishop's Conference Centre in Paris. This 528-page report concerns Christians who have suffered oppression for their faith within the past two years. It was drawn up in seven different languages and published simultaneously in Italy, France, Spain and Germany. It was published just two months before the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN at their General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

Founded by the Dutch priest Fr. Werenfried van Straaten in 1947, the ACN was, by a decree of April 7th, 1984, established as a Universal Public Association of the Catholic Church and subject to the Congregation for the Clergy. The Association's pastoral mission

consists of "fulfilling a precise mandate of the Church in a specific area, *i.e.*, to show charity towards those local Churches most suffering and in need." It thus responds to requests from local persecuted Churches under threat or unprovided for. Requests are made to the charity through the intermediary of bishops or superiors of religious communities. Each year ACN responds to more than 7,000 calls and requests for help, thanks to the support of its benefactors. In France, the ACN is a member of the National Council for Solidarity of the French Bishops.

The study shows how, in the last two years, persecutions against Catholics have intensified in 17 countries. It lists 13 "countries where there are grave legal limitations concerning religious liberty." (China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Turkmenistan, Yemen, Burma, Laos, Maldives, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan



Egypt, Algeria), there are also serious attacks on the freedom to believe.

Bishop George Casmoussa, the Syrian-Catholic Bishop of Mosul (Iraq) and guest of honor at the ACN press conference, was able to speak about the dramatic situation of the Christians in Iraq where one's religion must be noted on one's identity card.

The Precarious Situation of Christians in Iraq

Fifteen years ago there were 1.5 million Christians in Iraq. At the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, there were between 700,000-800,000. Bishop Casmoussa estimates that only half that number still remain there today.

In the north of Iraq, approximately 250 miles from Baghdad, Mosul is the birthplace of Christianity in this country where 96% of the population are Muslim. Bishop Casmoussa reminds us of the reality of this second metropolitan city of Iraq which has 2 million inhabitants, 26 churches, 10 monasteries and convents, 4 Catholic and Orthodox bishoprics and Christian schools...where, since the end of September 2008, persecutions have compelled 2,000 Christian families to flee and seek refuge on the plains of Nineveh. In Iraq,

a law adopted last September [2008] in Baghdad's Parliament has repealed the clause which guaranteed a minimum of religious freedom for Christians.

He describes the situation of Christians in Iraq today as in fact being one of "not being granted the freedom to believe or to practice their faith; some are even denied their right to exist in Iraq." He himself was taken hostage in 2005. Bishop Paulos Faraj Rahho, the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul, was kidnapped on February 29, 2008 as he was leaving the Church of the Holy Ghost at Mosul, and was found dead on March 13. Bishop Francesco Chullikatt, the Papal Nuncio in Iraq and Jordan stated:

The one thing we do know is that when somebody is taken hostage he is subject to violence. I cannot rule out the possibility that even the poor Archbishop was badly treated during his captivity. All of this, added to the precarious conditions of his detention, will have accelerated his tragic death. (See *DICI*, No.172, March 22, 2008).

At the beginning of October 2008, the town of Mosul was exposed to a most violent campaign of terror against Christians. From October 1-8, nearly half the number of Christian families had to flee their homes to escape threats from Muslim fundamentalists and take refuge in neighboring villages. Three Christian homes were destroyed by explosives, 11 Christians were

and Sudan), and 30 countries "where legal restrictions of religious liberty are observed" (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Byelorussia, Bolivia, Egypt, Eritrea, Holy Land and Mexico), and also "countries which have episodic legal repression" (once again China, Cuba and Iran), and finally, but without naming them "countries which experience violent episodes of social intolerance."

The report denounces the aggravation of the situation in India and in Iraq. Pope Benedict XVI mentioned these areas of the persecuted Church in his conclusion to the Bishop's Synod on the subject of the Word of God on October 26, 2008. The Patriarchs of the Oriental Churches made an appeal on October 24, 2008, in favor of "real religious freedom surpassing all form of discrimination."

An appeal "which I make my own," said the Pope,

to attract the attention of the international community, religious leaders and all men and women of good will, to the tragedy taking place in certain Eastern countries where Christians are victims of intolerance and cruel violence, killed or threatened and compelled to abandon their homes and wander whilst seeking refuge. I am thinking most especially about Iraq and India at this present time.

"It is the role of ACN to be on the lookout on the world's behalf and to note all attacks made against freedom to believe, in order to sensitize public opinion and, we hope, make things change" said Marc Fromager when presenting the 2008 Report. "Today," he continued, "the main victims of this lack of religious freedom in the world are Christians." Religious freedom is one of the Human Rights which is the least respected in the world and "this can be explained by globalization which provokes withdrawal and exacerbation of identities. The principal obstacles to religious freedom are the rise in religious extremism (Islam and Hinduism) and the subsistence of Communist political regimes. Asia, from the Middle East to Indonesia, is the region of the world in which the situation is the most worrying for believers. In Africa (Sudan, Nigeria,

killed in daylight during Ramadan and many families received death-threats, in which they were warned to “leave the land of Islam.” The Syrian-Catholic bishop insisted that these attacks were particularly distressful because Mosul was the birthplace and heart of Christianity in Iraq. “Iraqi Christians live in fear” said Bishop Louis Sako, Chaldean Bishop of Kirkuk.

Bishop Casmoussa called on the Iraqi government to re-establish law and order in the country: “We want equal rights for Christians.” The biggest danger is that of “political revisionism” which would mean that Christians were refused the right to exist in Iraq.

If the situation does not change, in 10 years time there will no longer be any Christians left here. At the present time, I dare not believe in the existence of a plan to eliminate Christians from Iraq and the whole of the Middle East, I can’t believe it. We must remain hopeful.

The Bishop of Mosul also refuses the idea of “enclosed confessional territories”:

Everybody must participate in the government of this country. We request citizenship equal to that of others as well as participation in everyday life.

He recognizes that inter-religious dialogue is univocal:

Official dialogue? No. Life-concerning dialogue, yes. A Christian is perceived by Muslims as a trustful, open, and truthful person. It is often Christians who are chosen to settle disputes.

Bishop Casmoussa gives examples of gestures of solidarity such as Muslims going to the market for their Christian neighbors. “I do hope that this kind of conviviality will resume once again.”

Defense and Diffusion of Common Values?

On Thursday, November 6, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI received participants of the first “Catholic-Muslim Forum” founded by the Pontifical Council for inter-religious Dialogue and the 138 Muslim leaders all of whom were signatories of the “Open Letter to Christian Leaders” of October 13, 2007. The aim was to make progress on “the road to a better understanding between Muslims and Christians.”

The theme of the meeting was “Love of God, love of one’s neighbor: The Dignity of Human Life and Mutual Respect,” a theme taken from the *Open Letter*. This latter, said the Pope,

presents the love of God and love for one’s neighbor as the heart of both Islam and Christian faith. This theme underlines even more clearly the theological and spiritual foundation of the central teaching of our respective religions.

The Holy Father went on to liken the teaching of the Gospel (*Deus caritas est* of St. John) with that of the

Koran (the golden rule of the Sunni), and followed up with the Final Declaration of the Catholic-Muslim Forum exposing the faith of both Christians and Muslims, quoting successively from St. John and St. Paul, two hadiths (Bab al-Tawba and Bal al-Iman), as well as several Sourates of the “holy and well-loved prophet Mohammed.”

The Pope then called for a “working together in order to promote authentic respect and dignity for human life and fundamental rights for mankind, even if our anthropological visions and theologies present them in different ways.”

In order to achieve these aims, it is necessary for both religious and political leaders to “allow free exercise of these rights with total respect for freedom of conscience and religious freedom for all” with the aim of “building a more fraternal world.” Indeed, “God’s name can only be a name of peace and fraternity, justice and love.”

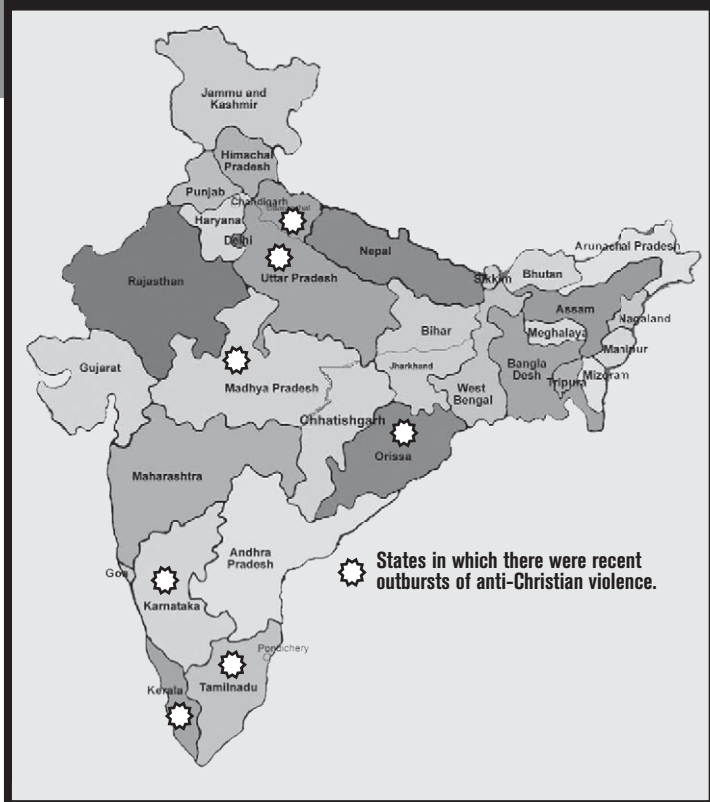
In the “spirit of Assisi,” inaugurated by Pope John Paul II in 1986, Rome intends to promote peace in the world by these inter-religious meetings which rely on the teaching of Vatican II texts, *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* in which we find quotes such as:

The plan for salvation equally embraces those who recognize the Creator, most especially Muslims who profess the faith of Abraham and adore, with us, the unique merciful God, future judge of mankind on the last day (No.16).

General Uprising Against Christians in India

In India, the persecution of Christians is also on the rise. According to a detailed account published in the middle of October 2008, the previous five weeks of violence in the State of Orissa had resulted in 14 districts having been hit, 300 villages destroyed, 4.300 dwellings burnt down, 50,000 people made homeless, 57 deaths, 10 Priests, Pastors and Nuns injured, 2 women raped, 18.000 people injured, 149 religious edifices destroyed, and 13 schools and other centers of learning destroyed. In the State of Karnataka four districts were also under attack, 19 churches had been attacked, and 20 women and nuns injured. In the State of Kerala, three churches were damaged and in the State of Madhya Pradesh four. In the State of Delhi one church was destroyed, and four recorded attacks against other churches. In the State of Tamil Nadu one church was attacked and in the State of Uttar Pradesh there were two deaths, an elderly priest and one of his employees. (See *DICI*, No.183 October 18, 2008)

“Certain zones have been reduced to ashes.” Once they have destroyed houses and inhabitants, “bands then attack domestic animals” denounced Fr. Manoj Digoal, in charge of the rural area at the Social Centre



of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Diocese. Whereas the government claims that the situation “is getting back to normal,” fundamentalist Hindu groups have been seen moving in to try to force Christians to convert to Hinduism.

Christians are frightened to return to their villages because of death threats and are compelled to flee into forests or live in inhuman conditions in camps run by the local government. Camp numbers have reduced by half, not because the faithful have returned to their villages but because they have gone to other States in the hope of finding greater security...

...explained Indian Bishops in a declaration October 20, 2008.

Christians of the Kandhamal District have lost all confidence in the State: their fundamental right to live has been utterly ignored by the constitutionally elected government.

The *Fides* Agency explained that radical Hindu groups take over land where wheat, corn, ginger, and fruit trees have been planted thus dispossessing Christians of their properties and their means of existence. With no hope of being able to live normal lives they leave Orissa State and look for other land in order to survive.

When presenting the ACN report Marc Fromager affirmed that in India “a general uprising against Christians was to be feared.” The population of the Republic of India is composed of a majority of Hindus (81%), followed by Muslims (13%), Christians (2.4%), Buddhists and other religions.

According to some specialists the original cause of the wave of violence declared against Christians by

nationalistic Hindus across the country is due to the fact that they question the caste system. Nearly 70% of Christians in India are outcasts and constitute cheap labor. Untouchables or outcasts represent 25% of the population. Many people believe that behind religious motivation lie political ambitions of the Nationalistic Party led by the Hindu Bharatiya Janata and his close allies, who govern all those States where violence has taken place. Fr. Bernardo Cervellera, Director of Asian News Agency explained on Vatican Radio that due to the fact that elections were soon to be held (May 2009) both local and national Indian authorities remained entirely passive. “They don’t want to lose the Hindu population votes.”

Marc Fromager explained that while the Catholic Church,

...does not threaten Hinduism, it does trouble it because of the considerable admiration it receives especially thanks to its 25,000 educational establishments and by its action in favor of the dignity and respect due to human beings.

Meanwhile, on October 28, 2008, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for inter-religious dialogue, addressed a message to the Hindus for their feast of Diwali, festival of light, equivalent of our New Year. The Prelate urged Hindus and Christians to accept that “non-violence is the only way to build a more compassionate, just and attentive global society, especially in the present day situation.”

Iranian Hospitality

On the cover page of *30 Days*, a magazine directed by Giulio Andreotti, a Christian Democrat (No.6/7 Sept. 2008), an interview with Akbar Hachemi Rafsandjani, former president of the Islamic Republic of Iran was entitled “Possible dialogue.”

In a quiet, good-natured way, the Shiite Ayatollah explains that Islam is not like the Jewish or Christian religions,

...who have been in conflict for the last 2,000 years...We Muslims have no difficulties with the Jews, Christians or Hindus or with the disciples of Confucius in China. We can co-exist perfectly with them. Differences and conflicts have come about for reasons other than those of faith.

Is this above and beyond both truth and history?

Neither the journalist nor his editorial staff manifested the least reserve concerning this kind of soothing talk. Why on earth do Christians of Iraq flee their country, whereas their Iranian neighbor seems so peaceful and welcoming?


Real and False Religious Freedom

Faced with the hate and violence of Muslim or Hindu persecution it would be tempting to believe that there is no other solution other than to claim religious freedom for all, in the hope that it could be applied to those people persecuted for the Holy Name of Jesus.

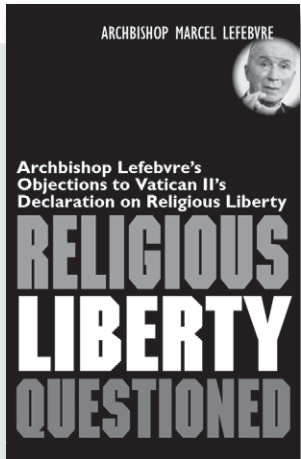
The present dramatic situation, however, is that the ecclesiastical authorities no longer rely on the truth and verity of the Gospels, or on the authority of Christ's Church, but upon the Second Vatican Council in its Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), or on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. (The latter of which is to be celebrated in the joy of its 60th Anniversary).

Religious freedom referred to in this context does not consist of permitting or favoring true freedom, that of God's children, who adore in spirit and truth the only, unique Savior, but rather the freedom of all faiths, whatever they may be, in the name of freedom of individual consciences elevated to universal dogma. It is this legacy of the Enlightenment and real

modern idols which proclaims its virtually sacred and inviolate rights through the freedom of conscience, now regarded as the supreme and absolute norm of the whole moral, political, and religious universe.

It is rather as if, in the parable of the good and bad seed, where Jesus Christ teaches the discernment and patience necessary to tolerate sin, the conclusion was that all devils and fiends had the right to throw handfuls of bad grain, representing error and ways of iniquity. It is also rather as if, once the harvest was done, the Son of God wished to store the bad grain alongside the good in his barn. This is the false, modern freedom condemned by all Sovereign Pontiffs up to Pius XII. To study this question of freedom, besides reading Gregory XVI, Pius IX and Leo XIII, it is helpful to consult the following books of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre listed below. 

Fr. Alain Lorans was ordained for the Society of Saint Pius X in 1980. He served as Rector of the Society's Institut St. Pie X located in Paris from 1980-83, as Rector of the seminary at Ecône from 1983-88, then again Rector of the Institut St. Pie X from 1988-2002. Since then, he has been the editor of the Society's news bureau, *DICI*. Fr. Christian Thouvenot was ordained for the Society of Saint Pius X in 2000. He served as Rector of the Society's Institut St. Pie X and is currently the General Secretary of the Society of St. Pius X.



Religious Liberty Questioned

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

Cardinal Ratzinger invited Archbishop Lefebvre to submit a *dubia* or an official statement concerning his opposition to Vatican II's declaration on religious liberty. This is it. Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Tissier de Mallerais meticulously explore the question of religious liberty and give a crystal-clear picture of what the Church has always taught, what the Second Vatican Council taught, and how they are contradictory. You, too, will be faced with a choice. And choose we must.

178pp. Softcover. STK# 7060* \$11.95

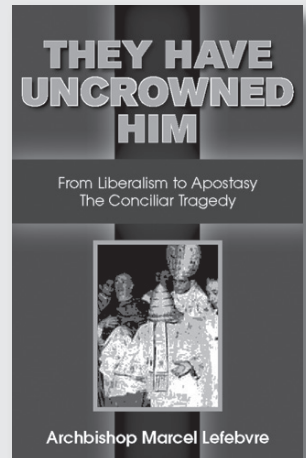
They Have Uncrowned Him

The *Summa* of Archbishop Lefebvre

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

The *Summa* of Archbishop Lefebvre. Covers the origins of liberalism, the subversion of orthodoxy by Vatican II, the decline of the missionary spirit by dialogue, the bad fruits of post-Conciliar reforms, and his vision of restoration. Includes Card. Ottaviani's *On the Relations Between Church and State* and *On Religious Tolerance*, replaced at Vatican II by *Dignitatis Humanae*.

264pp. Softcover. STK# 5240* \$11.95



The Problem of Liberty

Christendom (No. 17 & 18). Reprinted in *The Angelus* (Jan. and Sept., 2009)

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

On May 2, 1965, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, then Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, gave a conference to students in Paris on the problem of liberty. He divides his discourse into two parts; after recalling the principles, he deals with the ways in which liberty is applied, and speaks about religious liberty, which he was to discuss during the Second Vatican Council that coming fall.

MICHAEL J. RAYES

The Role of the Mother in Education



"I owe a debt to my mother. Virtues go easily from mothers into the hearts of their children, who willingly do what they see being done." (Cure of Ars)

Diapers. Lunch. The telephone.

Motherhood sometimes seems marked by the tedium of changing diapers, the exasperation of preparing lunch, and the frustration of not enjoying a phone conversation because the baby began crying. But amid the clamor of domestic life, Catholic mothers can really find peace of soul knowing they are doing God's will bringing up souls for Heaven. Raising children is rewarding and fulfilling work that sanctifies the mother and helps her grow in virtue. Each stage in the development of children calls for a different maternal approach that draws on her strengths.

Early Childhood Development: Birth Through Age Four

The important consideration during these years is the mother must be home for the children. Pope Pius XI wrote that civilized order itself is in danger "if even the mother

of the family, to the great harm of the home, is compelled to go forth and seek a living by her own labor.”¹

Children at this age experience psychological development more from *people* than their external environment. There is also very little adult memory of events from before two years of age--usually no memory at all. This is because the baby’s brain changes dramatically fast. PET scans show so much brain growth from birth to twelve months that a one year old’s brain looks more like an adult’s than a baby’s.² The important thing at this stage of life is for the mother to spend a lot of time with her toddlers and preschoolers.

The critical thing is a large *quantity* of time, not “quality time.” Lethargic as well as hyperactive mothers will do equally well if they are simply available for their little children. The toddler will sometimes come to the mother and spend four or five minutes leaning on her. The child needs this reassurance. Then the child runs off to play again. The mother must be in the house for this to happen. It can be harmful for the child’s development when the mother works outside the home. Stability is a good thing at this age, but even if the family moves every year, the presence and availability of the stay-at-home mother will naturally mitigate the effects of moving.

A recent study confirms what Pius XI taught almost 80 years ago. Researchers investigated the effects of poverty on child development. They discovered that “among the protective factors that made these children more resilient, a secure attachment with their caregivers was most important.”³ In other words, create an emotionally secure and stable family life, and your children will not be affected by shut-off notices and old, used furniture.

Desire to Please the Mother

Children before age seven respond very well to the mother and wish to please her. Use this to your advantage. You can come right out and say you are not happy with their behavior. Make it personal. This works with a five year old; it has almost no effect on a sixteen year old.

This desire to please you as the mother also means that your moods greatly affect them. Their emotional security hinges upon your own joy or sorrow each day. But deeper emotional instability in the mother has an even greater negative impact. While studies show that a few months of post-partum depression has no lasting effect on the child, brain researchers showed that lingering depression directly affects the child’s ability to learn and respond to stimulation. The left frontal area of the brain showed reduced activity in 40% of babies in a study with depressed mothers. This area of the

brain is associated with outward emotion. However, nine out of ten babies with non-depressed mothers showed a high level of left frontal brain activity.⁴

The age at which the baby is at greatest risk of “later behavioral problems and cognitive impairment” from maternal depression is six to eighteen months. Lingering depression should be treated, first in sacramental Confession; then, listening to the counsels of one’s pastor; and finally through professional counseling if the priest advises it.

Mothers are very busy dealing with their small children. God gives them the grace and strength to deal with their families, but they have to ask for these blessings. God wants you as the mother to feed and care for your children, but also be their first teacher.⁵

Children should learn the alphabet from their mother because she is the preschool teacher. Preschoolers also learn how to behave at Mass from their parents. Two year olds are capable of sitting and kneeling still, without turning around or excessive wriggling, from the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar through the Kyrie. Three year olds can almost make it through a Sunday Mass. Four year olds can behave through an entire Sunday sung Mass or a Low Mass with a sermon. But parents have to expect this behavior and consistently reinforce it. Colorful religious books, strategic seating in the pew next to a parent, and corrections of dangling arms or sliding legs should do it. Spankings also reinforce the importance of remaining quiet in church, but use these sparingly, go outside to do them, and only after a warning. I withhold doughnuts after Mass for bad behavior. I keep the doughnut-deprived child in the chapel after Mass to say prayers and practice kneeling upright, instead of letting her bawl while watching her siblings eating doughnuts.

Boundaries

Two and three year olds need to learn boundaries. They are beginning to have strong wills and they cannot control them. The mother must be firm and consistent. “No” means no, regardless of the drama of the child’s temper tantrum. The father’s role is very important in providing this firmness, both by his own firmness and by supporting his wife.

A very critical component of healthy early childhood development is eliminating the television. Numerous studies reveal the negative effects of TV viewing. Both “good” and “bad” television shows contribute to a child’s lack of focus because the scenes change every 30 seconds. In an article I wrote earlier this year for *The Latin Mass* magazine, I mentioned a study demonstrating that “TV decreased play’s intensity and cut by half the

amount of time children focused on a given toy.” This study was done on a TV show *playing in the background*, not a TV program the kids were actually watching.⁶

All through childhood, the mother should unfold the correct attitude toward work. Dr. Rudolf Allers, a pioneering Catholic psychologist, wrote that, “Parents should make the child early acquainted with the nature of work....The quite small child can put away his toys...and can easily be taught that these little duties are his work.” Rather than the child reacting to an overburdening parental expectation of perfection or, at the other end of the spectrum, a feeling of constantly being in the way, the correct training in duty “helps to lessen the distance between the child and adults...he knows himself already to be a fellow-worker, and grows up in a spirit of willing industry.”⁷

Pre-First Holy Communion Years: Kindergarten through Second Grade

When it comes to Kindergarten, there are two healthy options: a traditional Catholic school or homeschooling. It is far healthier for the child at the age of five or six to continue learning from his mother at home than to spend hours each day grouped with neighborhood kids in a public-school setting. A Catholic school, on the other hand, must have the last end of man (eternal salvation) as its main objective, according to Pope Pius XI.⁸

By the first or second grade, the child learns to read. This unfolds a new world for them. The mother’s role transitions from a lot of direct action-based teaching in preschool, to supervised learning from books in elementary school. Catholic children who hardly watch any TV will naturally become voracious readers. They also need board games and fun activities. There should be absolutely no video games. Instead, the child must have an accurate portrayal of reality. An occasional non-violent cartoon with no commercials (like the older Winnie the Pooh cartoons) is better than an interactive video game. They learn more from the game, but this is part of the problem. They crave learning, and this leads to gradually more computer time over the years, which leads to Internet usage, modern thinking, and pornography—in your beautiful Catholic family. Nip it in the bud.

First Holy Communion

The mother should actively prepare her children for First Holy Communion. In my work coordinating catechism and sacramental preparation classes, I’ve run across two types of parents. One type wishes to prepare their children almost from

their fifth birthday. The other type waits until the children are teenagers. Clearly, waiting too long is not good, but preparing a child who is barely five years old is different. Some children are perceptive and precocious (as Pope St. Pius X noted himself); some are not. The best answer is to communicate with your husband and come to a mutual decision. Ask your pastor and First Holy Communion teacher for advice. Most children should enter a First Holy Communion class after their sixth birthday.

The mother should be heavily involved, teaching the child the necessary prayers during the week and talking about Jesus and Mary. When your child’s First Holy Communion is two months away, talk about the Host every week. Ask them questions about Confession and make sure they know the procedure. Talk about the difference between consecrated and unconsecrated hosts a couple weeks before receiving the Sacrament. Your husband should also support you and review material with the child, but the mother is typically more involved in early childhood education.

Elementary Education: Eight to Twelve Years Old

By the time your child reaches third grade, around eight years old, your role as the mother is to direct and supplement what your child learns through books, lessons, and projects.

Most families should use a brick-and-mortar school at this age instead of homeschooling, but homeschooling by the mother will still be effective as long as the mother is consistent. This is especially true of melancholic girls, but children of any temperament can be homeschooled if the environment is consistent. The husband’s support is absolutely necessary. Without his engaging support or at least positive tolerance of the homeschool environment, it will fail.

It is easier to homeschool girls—and it is more effective. Boys, especially as they grow into the junior high age, require male teachers as role models and task-masters. The mother’s role as the primary teacher becomes less effective as the boy grows older. Fr. Thomas Hughes wrote of traditional Jesuit education and the role of the male teacher. In his words,

It is indeed an eventful moment, when a man becomes a teacher of others. They may be boys. But, whether they are boys merely blossoming into life, or youths on the verge of manhood, the teacher of them has to be a teacher of men; and perhaps more so with the boy than with the man, inasmuch as his control of the younger student has to be so much the more complete.⁹

Why is this control of a boy so important? According to Father Hughes, it is to “form a whole human nature, which is still pliable and docile.”

The role of the mother for her 8-12 year old child is to continue helping with reading, writing, math, and other academic subjects, whether she is the primary teacher or the child has another teacher. The mother should be the first person to whom the child turns when help is needed with homework. The mother also continues her active role in catechetical instruction. Religion must be taught every year; it should not be dropped between the First Holy Communion and Confirmation years. It can be taught in question-answer format (as with the Baltimore Catechism), Bible stories, learning about the Mass, and the lives of the saints.

The mother should encourage and exhort her 8 to 12 year old children to participate at Mass. She needs to communicate regularly with her husband regarding modeling behavior at Mass (kneeling properly), using a hand missal, prayers after Mass, other devotions in the home, and, of course, service at the altar for boys. Learning to serve Mass brings them closer to God and the Church while teaching them to be men at the same time.

A stable home environment at this age range is critical. Try not to move from house to house when you have school-age children. They need domestic stability to build a foundation of unchanging metaphysical truths upon which they can depend. They learn more by example and environment than rote learning from books—although book learning is important!

Confirmation

Both mother and father should prepare the child for Confirmation. The mother may have done most of the work preparing for First Holy Communion; now the father should do just as much work as the mother quizzing the child over necessary prayers and material for Confirmation. However, parents should resist the temptation to pick their child’s Confirmation sponsor. Let the child select his own sponsor; this builds confidence and helps the child learn that his Catholic faith is *his*, not simply another grim chore in which he only participates to please his parents. The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that Confirmation should not be delayed until adolescence;¹⁰ if a traditionalist bishop is not available before the child turns 13 or 14, strongly consider driving or flying to another town to get your child Confirmed in the traditional rite.

As the child develops, he gradually perceives the father’s authority as greater than the mother’s. Children are slightly less motivated to make their mothers happy as they reach their pre-teens. Yet the transition to adolescence awakens in the child the desire and duty to master new responsibilities. This

is especially true of the oldest boy or oldest girl. This becomes a balancing act for the mother. You want to encourage this sense of duty, but not discourage the child by putting too much pressure on him. Psychologist and author Kevin Leman wrote that oldest children who were expected to be “perfect” can lead very sloppy, lethargic lives as adults. “Slobs and poor students,” wrote Dr. Leman, “are often discouraged perfectionists who have given up trying because it hurts too much to fail.”¹¹

Early Adolescence: The Junior High Years (Ages 13-15)

The natural passions rage at this stage of development. The mother needs to be consistent and calm in the face of the raging emotions of her young teen. St. Thomas Aquinas outlined these “irascible” passions 800 years ago in the *Summa Theologica*. School administrators may not recognize Thomism but they sure know anger, daring, fear, hope, and despair (St. Thomas’ list of passions) when they deal with junior high students.

A consistent domestic environment remains just as important at this stage as when the child was in elementary school. Even if you move, the parental approach should be the same and disciplinary boundaries need to be in place. (And try not to enroll them in Secular Valley Godless Public Middle School.)

Mastery of Self

Two important considerations should be mentioned. The young teen should work on *something* and become good at it: A game of sports, a musical instrument, or even a culinary pursuit should be undertaken. The child *needs* to struggle in some area for years and progressively become better until he or she masters it. Football, the trumpet, baseball, the clarinet, ice skating, and preparing a five-course meal all have things in common for the young adolescent: They require consistent practice, training from an experienced adult, and they teach the adolescent confidence to take on adult duties. If this confidence is not learned, the young adult may become emotionally unbalanced.

The second consideration is that homeschooling at this age is not very effective. The mother cannot teach a 14 year old by sitting with him, going over an assignment, and then leaving him alone for 20 minutes, as she did with her 7 year old. The young teen no longer automatically does what his mother says. He questions her wisdom with his undisciplined intelligence and revolts against her authority with his uncontrolled passions.

The young adolescent male needs male teachers along with the mother, either in a brick-and-

mortar school, or by outside tutoring along with the father taking a very active role as the primary teacher. Most fathers can follow up on homework assignments and spend time each night backing up the mother.

The young adolescent female needs both male and female teachers as role models in her life, in addition to her parents, so she learns that ladylike behavior and virtue are important concepts in themselves--not simply because Mom said so.

Teens rebel. They question. The goal is to channel this questioning instead of suppressing it. These days, they could question the scope of government, the conciliar Church, road design, American macroeconomics, and other unquestioned aspects of modern life. But they should learn from other adult role models that the Catholic religion is the one and only true Faith given us by Christ Himself. The Faith is not simply an idiosyncratic preference of the child's parents that must be cast aside if the child is to express his own individuality. This, sadly, is too often the reason why young adults stop attending the Traditional Latin Mass.

Charity in Raising Children

St. John Bosco once said that charity must animate all one's work with children. His method was to persuade children to *want* to be good on their own. When your 13 to 15 year old children see that discipline is for their own benefit and that it is actually fair, they will respond much better. But this requires a lot of patience on the part of the teacher and the parent. Pray to your children's guardian angels to intercede for you.

Don Bosco also noted that "if a disciplinarian is charitable, he can be as firm as he wants." He spoke of the respect that teachers must have for their students as baptized Catholics. This approach was markedly different than other schoolmasters at the time. He demanded obedience and constantly encouraged the children to behave, but he put up with their natural boisterousness. Visitors noticed his personal rigor and attention to a strict schedule, but also a lot of yelling and running outside the classroom.

Later Adolescence: Ages 16-19

When your children reach 16-19 years old, your motherly role is somewhat diminished. You give advice when the teen needs to make a decision, but you should not wash your teen's laundry. He should have learned to do that already. Mothers with more than one teen should almost never have to wash a dish. Her job is to follow up in the kitchen and do the minute details the teens usually miss (or remind the teens to do them), such as wiping down counters and polishing the silverware.

Household management

Your role is now to direct the household. You are more of a manager than a worker. Teens and pre-teens are capable of work and it's good for them. A half hour to 45 minutes of household chores per day is not unreasonable, even if they have homework or sports practice. Your maternal function is to remind the teens of their duties, thank and praise them for jobs completed, and to warn them of consequential lost privileges if they shirk their duties. This punishment should usually come from the father.

Absolute boundaries still exist. There are moral and behavioral norms in your family that must be followed no matter the age of the child. The child should fully understand by age 14 that moral boundaries come from God, not his parents. By age 16 the child needs to comprehend that he is a member of his community, his parish, and the Church Militant, as well as his own family. I do not recommend homeschooling teenagers unless there is a very good reason for it.

Teenage boys, no matter how virtuous, should absolutely never have an opportunity to be alone with a younger sister, cousin, or niece. Never have a teenage boy baby sit anyone unless he is part of a group of baby sitters.

Role of the father

Teens need and respond to the father. By age 16 they have much less respect for the mother's authority and are not motivated to please her. The relationship with the mother changes; teens will eventually develop more respect for her as they grow into adulthood. In the meantime the teen should build a strong relationship with his or her father by participating in activities with him (such as learning how to drive). The father must also back up the mother and not tolerate any disrespect toward his wife. His positive comments about the mother of the family will help maintain a strong bond between the teenage children and their mother.

Teen duties

By the time a child is 18 or 19 years old, he or she should know how to run and operate all the systems in a modern household: the dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer, vacuum, stove top and oven, unclogging a toilet, changing air-conditioning filters, general cleaning, driving a car, checking the oil, mowing the lawn, and so forth. These should be part of a gradual progression of duties from, for example, folding the towels when the child was 6 years old, to vacuuming the carpet as a 10 year old, to running the dishwasher at age 13, and so on. A few broken dishes over the years is well worth your maternal angst, as you realize the dishes (and newly pink undershirts from washing colors with

Importance of Parental Functions

Age of child	Mother providing hands-on care (laundry, food prep, etc.)	Role of father in lives of children	Mother administering corporal punishment	Father administering corporal punishment	Mother teaching core academic subjects	Need for environmental stability (not moving from house to house)	Mother's time spent with children	Importance of moral and behavioral boundaries
Up to age 4	Critical	Med-High	High	Medium	High	Low	Very high	Critical
4 to 7	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Very high	Critical
8 to 12	Medium	Critical	Very low	Low	Low	Very high	High	Critical
13 to 15	Very Low	Critical	Almost none	Almost none	None	Very high	Medium	Critical
16 to 19	Almost none	Critical	None	None	None	High	Med-Low	Critical

Scale:

None: Not important / not needed

Low: Low importance for parent to fulfill this function

Medium: Moderate importance

High: High importance; child may be maladjusted without it

Critical: Without it, the child may develop behavioral or emotional issues as a young adult

whites) were sacrificed in your quest to raise self-reliant, mature ladies and gentlemen. Your true goal is to return the souls back to God, who temporarily entrusted them to your motherly care.

Conclusion

To form well-adjusted children to know, love and serve God, the mother must:


Provide a loving, nurturing, *stable* environment.

Ensure boundaries are consistent and aligned with Church teaching.

Recognize that children have different needs as they grow. Many mothers are too permissive with young children, and too restrictive with teens.

The most important thing a mother can do for her children is to love her husband. All the care and nurturing in the world will be shattered the day you announce your divorce to your children.

Manhood can be summarized in one word: *sacrifice*. Womanhood is summed up in another word: *submission*.¹² When men sacrifice for their families and women submit to their husbands,

harmony ensues and the children thus have the stable environment they crave. 

Michael J. Rayes is a lifelong Catholic, a husband, and father of seven. His new book on making children behave at Mass will be published by Rafka Press.

¹ Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, Dec. 31, 1930, no.120.

² Rima Shore, *Rethinking the Brain* (New York: Families and Work Institute, 2003) p.21.

³ Shore, *Rethinking the Brain*, p.46.

⁴ Shore, *Rethinking the Brain*, p.39.

⁵ Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 31, 1929, no.32.

⁶ Greg Toppo, "Even backgroundTV can impact kids'attention" (*USA Today online*: July 15, 2008) §.3.

⁷ Rudolph Allers, MD, *Understanding Children and Preparing Them for Life* (Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books) p.11.

⁸ Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 31, 1929, no.18.

⁹ Rev. Thomas Hughes, S.J., *Loyola and the Educational System of the Jesuits* (Ridgefield, C : Roger A. McCaffrey Publishing) pp.175-176.

¹⁰ McHugh & Callan, trans. *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1982, orig. publ. 1923) pp.207-208.

¹¹ Dr. Kevin Leman, *The Birth Order Book* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1985) p.217.

¹² Cf. Ephesians 5:24-25 & 33; also Rev. v. George A. Kelly, *The Catholic Marriage Manual* (New York: Random House, 1958) pp.21-25.

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Let your speech be “Yes, yes: no, no”; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • November 2009

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PART 1

ON THE LIVING MAGISTERIUM AND LIVING TRADITION:

Towards a “Thomistic Reception” of Vatican II

A theological Congress, organized in May 2009 in Toulouse, tried to prove that it is possible to understand council Vatican II in a thomistic way.

From May 16-17, 2009, at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, a colloquium organized by the Revue Thomiste was held under the direction of Fr. Serge Thomas Bonino, O.P. The colloquium’s theme was “Vatican II: Rupture or Continuity—the Hermeneutics [that is, interpretations] Face to Face.” Around 100 people, mainly clerics, were in attendance. Fr. Bonino’s invitation already sufficiently explains the thrust of this initiative: “Our colloquium will focus on the ways in which Thomistic theology can contribute to a reception of Vatican II that honors the Council as an act of living Tradition.”

The method for reaching this goal is indicated:

It is a matter of laying stress on both the “memorial” aspect and the “novel” aspect of this major teaching of the Magisterium of the 20th century at one and the same time. This is the exigency Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in his address to the Roman Curia of December 22, 2005 when he proposed the distinction between the “hermeneutic of continuity” and the “hermeneutic of rupture.”

Starting with the fact that Pope Benedict XVI’s December 2005 address affirms the continuity of the teachings of Vatican II with the living Tradition of the Church, the colloquium’s organizers intended to consider the way in which Thomistic theology could prove this continuity in the framework of the hermeneutic proposed by Benedict XVI. Moreover, in the Pope’s intentions, this hermeneutic should prevail over the progressive extrapolations based on a hermeneutic of rupture, which the Address to the Curia forthrightly denounces. That is why, to return to Fr. Bonino’s proposal, living continuity ought to be defined as the synthesis of these two aspects: the memorial and the novel; or, to employ Benedict XVI’s expressions, far from any rupture, it should correspond to a synthesis of fidelity and dynamism. Theology’s task would be to elaborate the speculative elements of this synthesis, and the colloquium of Toulouse was meant to establish the outline of a Thomistic contribution to the Council’s hermeneutic.

Can such a proposition be warranted? To answer this question, we shall first examine whether Vatican II can be presented as “a major teaching of the Magisterium of the 20th century.” To do so, we shall scrutinize the magisterial worth of this Council (*Part 1*). Then we shall examine the precise meaning of the December 22, 2005 address. Therein we shall determine how Pope Benedict XVI conceives of the hermeneutic of the Council (*Part 2*). This will afford us an opportunity to come back to the definition of Tradition, which is the fundamental point upon which depends the solution of the grave difficulties raised on the occasion of the last Council.

PART 1:

The Magisterial Value of Vatican II

A. Some Elementary Distinctions

In the etymological sense of the word, magisterium is a function, the purpose of which

is teaching.¹ A distinction has to be made in using the word as it presents two analogous meanings: “scientific magisterium” and “ecclesiastical magisterium,” which is a particular instance of the attestative magisterium. In the case of ecclesiastical magisterium, one is dealing with the proposition of the object of faith, which is essentially obscure. In the case of scientific magisterium, one is dealing with a scientific demonstration, which results in the possession of knowledge or facts. The ecclesiastical magisterium is not a scientific magisterium because it does not *cause* knowledge. The ecclesiastical magisterium *bears witness*, and so doing it contributes to bringing about faith.

This ecclesiastical magisterium is “the activity of the pope and the bishops who, in virtue of the mission received from Jesus Christ, authoritatively propose the supernatural mysteries of the Faith and the natural truths revealed by Christ in the name of Jesus Christ in order to conserve the unity of faith in the Church and, so doing, to lead the faithful to eternal salvation.” In this definition, we can distinguish four distinct elements. *First*, the material cause, or the subject exercising the magisterium: The magisterium is the activity of the pope and the bishops. *Second*, the efficient cause, or the agent who institutes the magisterium: The magisterium is an activity that the pope and the bishops exercise in virtue of the mission received from Jesus Christ. *Third*, the formal cause, or the very nature of the magisterium: The magisterium is the act by which the pope and the bishops act as the authorized witnesses of the truths revealed by Jesus Christ and compellingly propose them to the belief of the faithful with the very authority of Jesus Christ. *Fourth*, the final cause: The Magisterium is an activity that the pope and the bishops must exercise in order to conserve the unity of faith in the Church and, so doing, to lead the faithful to eternal salvation.

Distinctions are necessary when using the word “magisterium.” It is of particular interest to us to note that this word can be understood in three senses: *First*, it can designate *the subject* who exercises the magisterium (that is, the pope and the bishops); *second*, it can designate *the act* of the magisterium properly so called (that is, the preaching carried on by word or in writing); *third*, it can designate *the object* of the magisterium (that is, the revealed truth taught during preaching).

B. The Magisterium Understood in the Second Sense: The Act or Exercise of the Power of Magisterium

The act of magisterium consists in making use of Christ’s divine authority to conserve, explain,

or impose on the assent of the faithful the truths divinely revealed by Christ. To accomplish this act it is necessary and sufficient to be in possession of the divine authority of Christ and to intend to use it within the limits granted to it, namely, to propose for belief divinely revealed truths. The first condition (to be in possession of the divine authority of Christ) is fulfilled by the pope, the successor of St. Peter, and by the bishops, successors of the apostles, as well as by all the ministers (priests or deacons) to whom the pope and the bishops can delegate their authority. The second condition (to have the required intention) deserves further explanation.

A fundamental distinction must be made between *two types of intention*. There is, on the one hand, the intention to fulfill an office, or intention pure and simple; on the other hand, there is the intention to fulfill the same office for a praiseworthy or upright motive. The first intention corresponds to what the theologians call the “*finis operis*,” and it is required for the existence pure and simple or for the validity of the act: it is the *objective* intention. The second intention corresponds to the “*finis operantis*,” and it is required for the act to be meritorious: it is *subjective* and *accidental* to the act, even if it can sometimes change the nature of the act. For example, the intention to do what the Church does is required for the validity of a sacrament, while the intention to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls (and not to earn money or men’s esteem) is required for the merit of the minister giving the sacrament.

For validity, some external acts require *the objective intention of the agent understood in the first sense*. This is the case for the sacraments. A sacrament is valid if and only if the minister confecting it (for all the sacraments) or the person receiving it (except for the Eucharist) has the objective intention of doing or of receiving the benefit of the sacrament, the exterior act willed as such by the Church.² The exercise of authority is valid and legitimate if and only if the person exercising it has the objective intention of accomplishing the act required for the common good of society.³ Ordinarily, this intention is presumed. But it can no longer be presumed when proof to the contrary is at hand in the party’s declaration of a different intention.⁴

It is not difficult to understand why this is so. Man always acts as such, that is, as a rational and free agent. He has to perform all his actions with full knowledge of the facts, and willingly. He must therefore have knowledge of the nature of the action and wish to perform it as he conceives it. To say that human authority or a human minister is an intermediary between God and men does not mean that God utilizes this intermediary like a machine, which would always function according to

the same sedate mechanism, regardless of the man called to exercise the authority or the ministry. The instrument God employs is not an inanimate one; on the contrary, it is intelligent and free. Even in the case of mediation *ex opere operato* proper to the exercise of the sacraments, the intention of man is still absolutely required. This is even more so in the case of mediation *ex opere operantis*, proper to the exercise of authority.

If a holder of authority manifests in one way or another that he does not have the intention required for the exercise of authority, the actions he performs pursuant to this habitual intention will not be acts of legitimate authority so long as the required intention has not been clearly manifested. How much more would this be true were the holder of authority to adopt an intention contrary to and incompatible with the required intention⁵; for the exercise of authority to be valid, this contrary intention would have to be retracted. For example, a professor who would indicate his intention to teach a course in modern philosophy based on the principles of the Enlightenment would by the very fact exclude the intention of teaching Thomistic philosophy, since Enlightenment thought and St. Thomas’s are incompatible. None of the professors’ students would be gullible.

In these conditions, it is easy to understand the intention required for the exercise of the magisterium: it is quite simply the intention to make use of the divine authority of Christ to conserve, explain, and propose to the assent of the faithful the truths divinely revealed by Christ.

C. The Magisterium Understood in the Third Sense: The Proper Object of Ecclesiastical Preaching

The proper object of the magisterium is the Revelation transmitted by the apostles, that is, the deposit of faith to be sacredly guarded and faithfully explained. The First Vatican Council taught us this on two occasions: first, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* on the Church:

...the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by His revelation they might disclose new doctrine, but that by His help they might guard sacredly the revelation transmitted through the apostles and the deposit of faith, and might faithfully set it forth⁶;

and second, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius* on the Catholic Faith:

...the doctrine of faith which God revealed has not been handed down as a philosophic invention to the human mind

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to be perfected, but has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted.⁷

To designate the proper object of the act of magisterium, Vatican Council I uses two expressions: “the Revelation transmitted through the apostles,” and “the deposit of faith.”

The Revelation transmitted through the apostles is the totality of truths necessary for salvation which were revealed to the apostles by Christ until His Ascension and by the Holy Ghost from Pentecost to the death of the last of the apostles. Revelation was definitively closed with the apostles.⁸ Thus, the role of the magisterium is to guard and transmit it, and not to receive new revelations.

The expression “deposit of faith” is used by St. Paul on four occasions: twice using the same terms and twice in reference to the same idea: in I Tim. 6:20 (“Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called”) and in II Tim. 1:13-14 (“Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me: in faith and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us”). The idea is expressed in II Tim 2:2 (“And the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also”) and in II Tim. 3:14 (“But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and which have been committed to thee. Knowing of whom thou hast learned them”). This expression must be understood metaphorically. A thing received in deposit is another’s property in one’s own keeping that must be returned to its owner substantially intact.

Likewise, the totality of objective Revelation is God’s truth, which has been placed in the magisterium’s keeping and which must be transmitted in its essential integrity. In the two passages in which the expression is used, St. Paul also emphasizes the words (*vocum* and *verborum*) which are the expression required for the substantial

integrity of truth. Neither the sense of the words nor the words themselves should be changed. Dogma being to objective Revelation what words are to truth, the integral transmission of the deposit is equivalent to the transmission of dogma, that is, to the transmission of immutable expressions used to designate truth.

D. One Consequence: Ecclesiastical Magisterium Is a Traditional Magisterium

Ecclesiastical magisterium is by definition a traditional and constant magisterium. In effect, it is a very particular function of teaching, because it has as its object guarding and transmitting without any substantial change⁹ the unalterable deposit of truths revealed by Jesus Christ. This traditional magisterium is distinct from the scientific magisterium, which proceeds by means of experiment, and whose object is the discovery of new truths. The ecclesiastical magisterium does not have as its object the discovery of new truths; it must transmit the definitively revealed truth without any substantial change being possible.

Of this we are absolutely sure. First, because Christ Himself affirmed it in the Gospel. Wishing to guarantee the perpetuity and the diffusion in every place of the Revelation He had come to give to the world, He spoke to the apostles, whom He had established as His vicars on earth to accomplish His work, and told them:

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations....Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Mt. 28:18-20).

It is in this passage that the divine institution of the ecclesiastical magisterium is to be found; and we can see that this magisterium is established by Christ for the faithful transmission of Revelation. Second, the teaching of Vatican Council I explicitly affirms the traditional nature of the Church’s magisterium.



In the Constitution *Dei Filius* on the Catholic Faith, the Council convoked by the authority of Pope Pius IX affirmed:

Understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church *has once declared*; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding [can. 3]. “Therefore...let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding [St. Vincent of Lerins].”¹⁰

Pius IX also declared during the same Council in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (this time on the Church):

[O]ur predecessors always gave tireless attention that the saving doctrine of Christ be spread among all the peoples of the earth, and with equal care they watched that, wherever it was received, it was preserved sound and pure.¹¹

E. The Magisterium of Vatican II: In What Sense?

To apply these distinctions to Vatican II, it may be said that the Council is in any case a work of the magisterium *in the first sense*; that is to say, it represents the hierarchical subject (the pope and bishops) in possession of the divine authority of Christ and capable of making an act of the magisterium should the occasion arise since it was a legitimately convoked council. It may then be said that Vatican II was not wholly and entirely a work of the magisterium *in the third sense*. In effect, the documents of this council are full of ambiguities and equivocations, language that is a far cry from the clear and precise expression of dogma and of truth. They abound in a vague, indeterminate loquacity of expressions purportedly adapted to the modern world. This imprecise language permits every interpretation and allows free rein to error and moral laxity. The very foundations of the Church and of Revelation are seriously shaken. On the other hand, on some points, this Council even proposed

expressions that explicitly contradict the teaching of the previous magisterium (as, for example, No.2 of *Dignitatis Humanae*, which contradicts the teachings of Pius IX in *Quanta Cura*).¹²

Lastly, it may be said that Vatican II was not wholly and entirely a work of the magisterium *in the second sense*, for the same reason, since an act of the ecclesiastical magisterium must be defined in relation to its proper object: without the object there is no corresponding act. One might even say that Vatican II was not a work of the magisterium at all in the second sense since the intention clearly manifested at the Council was not to use the authority of Christ to propose for assent truths revealed by Christ; it was rather to present revealed truth in terms of the categories of modern thought for the sake of being able to carry on a dialogue with the world.¹³ This Council can be considered still less the legitimate source of magisterial Tradition. Those who declare their loyalty to the Council, Pope Benedict XVI prominently among them, conceive this Tradition in a way which would be quite difficult to reconcile with the definition of ecclesiastical magisterium, that is to say, in an evolutionist and relativist sense of a living Tradition.

In short, Vatican II was a Council that did not pass into act. The exercise of its magisterium was paralyzed by prelates already won over to the cause of modernism and by theologians who, like Yves Congar, profited from the circumstance to revise the official schemas prepared under Cardinal Ottaviani’s direction and to substitute their own ideas (already condemned by Pius XII in the Encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950).¹⁴ We have, then, rather serious reasons for challenging the magisterial worth of Vatican II if we consider the acts properly so called, taking the word *magisterium* in the second sense.

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ecclesiology] by clarifying the authentic meaning of some ecclesiological expressions used by the magisterium which are open to misunderstanding in the theological debate.”²²

On the second point, Pope Benedict XVI’s preaching, which aims to be in perfect continuity with that of his immediate predecessor, also reasserts, with an equally remarkable constancy, the principle of religious freedom as it was proposed by Vatican II in the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*. For three years, Benedict XVI has expressed himself nearly 80 times on the new social doctrine of the Church as it should be understood since Vatican II. If you go through all 75 issues of the *Documentation Catholique* stretching from April 2005 to November 2008, Nos. 2337 to 2411, one comes up with 87 excerpts that bear on this subject, that is to say, on the place of the Church in the modern world, with the double principle of religious freedom and State secularism.²³

A contradictory explanation

If one considers that the teachings of Vatican II are part of the magisterium properly so-called, even if non-infallible and simply authentic, it seems very difficult to question them. As we have shown, relying on the teaching of popes and the common doctrine of theologians, the non-infallible magisterium is a magisterium properly so-called, perfectly complete in line with the magisterium. In order to be able to consider the simply authentic magisterium as an incomplete or improperly so-called magisterium, it would be necessary to begin by implicitly presupposing that the only genuine magisterium complete and worthy of the name would be the infallible magisterium.²⁴ But this goes against the constant teaching of the Sovereign Pontiffs from Pius IX to Pius XII.²⁵ On the other hand, we can see that the post-conciliar teaching absolutely does not come across as incomplete. The official reminders of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith we referenced above on the new ecclesiology and ecumenism, the ordinary preaching of the Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI on religious freedom and the new social doctrine of the Conciliar Church leave nothing to be desired: we have in them the full and complete expression which purports to be in perfect continuity with the conciliar teachings, on the points which are most patently contrary to Catholic Tradition. If one grants the hypothesis that Vatican II represents the exercise of the “ordinary and manifestly authentic” magisterium,²⁶ it is not clear how it would be possible to rectify or critique the teachings relative to ecumenism, religious liberty, or the status of the non-Christian religions. Far from having to do with the rectification of an unfinished teaching, we have before our eyes, on the contrary,

F. The Advantages of These Distinctions: A Critique Based on Serious Doctrinal Grounds

If we distinguish between the three different senses of the word *magisterium*, we are in a position to make a profound, serious critique that gets to the crux of the problem posed by the last Council. It is not enough simply to say that Vatican II was not an infallible Council or that this Council, which was meant to be “pastoral,” did not proceed according to the solemn manner of a dogmatic magisterium compelling assent to proclaimed dogmas, and that it remained at the simple level of the authentic magisterium. After all, the non-infallible and simply authentic act of the magisterium also obliges in the internal forum; it is compelling. Certainly it does not demand an act of obedience (the famous “internal religious assent”) under pain of grave fault. Pope Pius IX even goes so far as to say that one cannot refuse adherence to the teachings of the simply authentic magisterium “under pain of sin and loss of the Catholic profession.”¹⁵ The theologians¹⁶ are unanimous in saying that these non-infallible teachings of an act of the simply authentic magisterium oblige in conscience and cannot be made the object of positive critique without great reserve.¹⁷

The constancy of conciliar teachings

In point of fact, we see that the teachings of Vatican II, non-infallible as they are, have been imposed in the framework of a new constant tradition that corresponds to the preaching of the post-conciliar magisterium. Two examples bear witness to this, and the value of these two indications is all the more important in that they correspond to the two teachings of the Council most evidently in opposition to the entire Tradition of the Church: the new ecclesiology and ecumenism on the one hand, and the new social doctrine and religious freedom on the other.

On the first point, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has never ceased reaffirming for the last 40 years—with great clarity and remarkable constancy—the meaning of the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* on the Church (No.8) and of the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* on Ecumenism (No.3). On four occasions, in 1973,¹⁸ 1985,¹⁹ 2000,²⁰ and 2007,²¹ the organ of the Holy See intervened in official documents to recall the doctrine that should be accepted in the Church. The last document, dated 2007, even states that “the Congregation wishes to respond to these questions [concerning diverse aspects of

the most faithful echo of the fully expressed conciliar teaching.

The critique's real point of departure

The critique of the teachings of the Council is then possible if and only if it is established that with Vatican II we are not dealing with the exercise of a genuine magisterium (infallible or not). An act of the magisterium is defined by its object, and, as we have explained above, this object is Revelation transmitted through the apostles, that is to say, the deposit of faith to be sacredly guarded and faithfully explained. That is why the ecclesiastical magisterium is traditional and constant. If, as did Vatican II, truths are proposed that are in manifest opposition to truths already taught as revealed by the Church, this proposition cannot be the *exercise* of a magisterium worthy of the name. Undoubtedly we find a magisterium in the first sense of the word at the Council (the subject of the magisterium: the pope and bishops); however, this hierarchy was as if paralyzed by the warped intention that animated it and that led it to wish to set forth the doctrine of

the Church “following the research methods and literary forms of modern thought, adapting them to the needs of a magisterium of an especially pastoral character.”²⁷ The same reasons that render the conciliar magisterium incapable of engaging its infallibility also render it incapable of speaking authoritatively in the *exercise* of an act of the magisterium (in the second sense).

Because they are not the expression of a true act of the magisterium, the teachings of Vatican II may be judged in light of the magisterium of all time, in light of the Church's immutable Tradition. This is, moreover, how Archbishop Lefebvre conceived of the critique of the Council.

To say that we judge the documents of the Council in the light of Tradition means, obviously, that we reject those teachings that are contrary to Tradition, that we interpret ambiguous teachings according to Tradition, and that we accept those that are in conformity with Tradition.²⁸

Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize

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¹ Joachim Slavery, S.J., *De Ecclesia*, thesis 12, no.503, in *Sacra Theologiae Summa*, tome I: *Theologia Fundamental*, Library of Christian Authors (Madrid, 1962), pp.654-5.

² For example: 1917 *CJC*, canon 742, §1; canon 752, §3; DS 1017; DS 1262; DS 1312; DS 1315; DS 1352; DS 1611; DS 1617; DS 1685; DS 1998; DS 2328; DS 2382; DS 2536; DS 2835; DS 2838; DS 3100; DS 3104; DS 3126; DS 3318; DS 3874; DS 3928.

³ For example: DS 1309; DS 1406; DS 1407; DS 1434; DS 1519; DS 2399; DS 2509; DS 2729; DS 2750; DS 2885; DS 3007; DS 3120; DS 3202; DS 3400; DS 3428; DS 3440; DS 3448; DS 3518; DS 3793.

⁴ *CJC*, canon 830; canon 1086.

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.104, Art.5.

⁶ Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Chapter 4 in DS 3070 (Dz. 1836).

⁷ Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filii*, Chapter 4 in DS 3020 (Dz. 1800).

⁸ Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Franzelin, *La Tradition (Courier de Rome)*, 2008), Thesis 23, Appendix, No.499, pp.350-1.

⁹ We shall explain in Part 3, §c) to what degree it remains possible for there to be a certain accidental change, an *extrinsic* progress, to the degree that the magisterium expresses the same truth in more explicit terms in order to enable the minds of the faithful to grasp it with greater penetration.

¹⁰ Constitution *Dei Filius*, Chapter 4 in DS 3020.

¹¹ Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3069 (Dz. 1836).

¹² On this subject, the reader may refer to *Si Si No No* [Italian], July-August 2008.

¹³ John XXIII, Opening Speech, October 11, 1962, and allocution to the Sacred College, December 23, 1962.

¹⁴ Testimony to this is given in the speech Cardinal Ottaviani, president of the Commission *de doctrina fidei et morum*, made during Vatican II on the occasion of the 31st general congregation of December 1, 1962, submitting the schema on the Church to the assembly's examination: “Those who have finalized this schema were careful to impart to it as pastoral and as Biblical a turn as possible, and to make it accessible to the simple faithful by avoiding the use of Scholastic expressions and instead employing a language readily understood by all in our time. I am saying this because I expect to hear the usual jeremiads from the Conciliar Fathers: This isn't ecumenical, it's scholastic! It isn't pastoral, it's negative; and so on. What's more, I have something to confide to you. I think that I and the other reporters will be speaking in vain, for the issue has already been decided. In effect, those who are always telling us, “Withdraw this schema, withdraw it!” are ready for battle. Here is a little revelation: even before the schema was distributed—listen well, listen well—before it was distributed, they were already in the process of drafting another schema to replace it. [*Vobis revelationem quamdam facio: antequam schema istud distribueretur—audite! audite!—antequam distribueretur, jam conficiebatur*

schema substituendum.] That is why, even before having been scrutinized, our text was already judged. There is nothing left to me than to be quiet, since, as Sacred Scripture says, “If someone will not listen to you, don't bother opening your mouth: I have spoken.” (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, vol. I, pars 4 [Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1971], p.121.)

¹⁵ In the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* (December 8, 1864), Pius IX says precisely this: “Neither can We pass over in silence the audacity of those who, not enduring sound doctrine, assert that ‘the judgments and decrees of the Holy See, the object of which is declared to concern the general welfare of the Church, its rights, and its discipline, do not claim acquiescence and obedience, under pain of sin and loss of the Catholic profession, if they do not treat of the dogmas of faith and of morals. How contrary is this doctrine to the Catholic dogma, of the plenary power divinely conferred on the sovereign Pontiff by Our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide, to supervise and to govern the Universal Church, no one can fail to see and understand, clearly and evidently.’” In the Letter *Tuas Libenter* (December 21, 1863) the same Sovereign Pontiff had already expressed the same idea: “But, since it is a matter of that subjection by which in conscience all those Catholics are bound who work in the speculative sciences, in order that they may bring new advantages to the Church by their writings, on that account, then, the men of that same convention should recognize that it is not sufficient for learned Catholics to accept and receive the aforesaid dogmas of the Church, but that it is also necessary to subject themselves to the decisions pertaining to doctrine which are issued by the Pontifical Congregations, and also to those forms of doctrine which are held by the common and constant consent of Catholics as theological truths and conclusions, so certain that opinions opposed to these same forms of doctrine, although they cannot be called heretical, nevertheless deserve some theological censure.” [Dz. 1684] In the *Motu Proprio Praeestantia Scripturae* (November 18, 1911), St. Pius X said: “Therefore, we see that it must be declared and ordered as follows: We do now declare and expressly order, that all are bound by the duty of conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Pontifical Commission, both those which have thus far been published and those which will hereafter be proclaimed, just as to the decrees of the Sacred Congregations which pertain to doctrine and have been approved by the Pontiff; and that all who impugn such decisions as these by word or in writing cannot avoid the charge of disobedience, or on this account be free of grave sin; and this besides the scandal by which the y offend, and the other matters for which the y can be responsible before God,

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especially because of other pronouncements in these matters made rashly and erroneously.” [Dz. 2113]

¹⁶ Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Franzelin, *La Tradition*, No.254-5, pp.166-8; Fr. Dublanchy in *DTC*, s.v. “*Infailibilité du pape*”; Fr. Straub, *De Ecclesia*, No.968ff.; Fr. Reginald-Marie Schultes, *De Ecclesia Catholica (Lethielleux, 1925)* pp.620-2; Lucien Choupin, S.J., *Valeur des décisions doctrinales et disciplinaires du Saint-Siège* (Beauchesne, 1928), p.91.

¹⁷ For example, in the article cited in *DTC*, Fr. Dublanchy makes the following remarks: “Against the moral certitude with which the [simply authentic] pontifical teaching presents itself to the intellect, normally there can only be groundless or imprudent doubts or suspicions, which must be rejected either with the aid of motives of an intellectual nature on which the moral certitude of the teaching rests, or by the influence of the will, which must, out of deference to authority, incline the intellect towards an assent judged practically to be very prudent. If in a particular case doubts which seem well founded arrest the mind and prevent its assent to the proposed teaching, one should, in order to bring an end to this mental state, submit one’s doubts to capable guides to enlighten the mind, or submit them to the authority itself.”

¹⁸ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [hereafter, CDF], the Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, of 24 June 1973, in *Defense of the Catholic Doctrine of the Church Against Certain Errors of the Present Day* (English translation available online at www.saint-mike.org/library/Curia/Congregations/Faith/Mysterium_Ecclesiae.html.)

¹⁹ CDF, Notification on the *Book Church: Charism and Power—An Essay on Militant Ecclesiology* by Father Leonardo Boff, O.F.M. (Issued March 11, 1985).

²⁰ CDF, the Declaration *Dominus Jesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church (October 1, 2000).

²¹ CDF, Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church (June 29, 2007).

²² CDF *ibid.* (English version online at www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents).

²³ One can see, for example, that during his trip to the United States, the Pope positively encouraged religious pluralism in the schools: “Today, in classrooms throughout the country, young Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and indeed children of all religions sit side-by-side, learning with one another and from one another. This diversity gives rise to new challenges that spark a deeper reflection on the core principles of a democratic society....I therefore invite all religious people to view dialogue not only as a means of enhancing mutual understanding, but also as a way of serving society at large....A concrete example of the contribution religious communities make to civil society is faith-based schools. These institutions enrich children both intellectually and spiritually. Led by their teachers to discover the divinely bestowed dignity of each human being, young people learn to respect the beliefs and practices of others, thus enhancing a nation’s civic life.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Representatives of Other Religions, “Rotunda” Hall of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center of Washington, D.C., Thursday, 17 April 2008.)

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²⁴ In his treatise on Tradition, Cardinal Franzelin proves in detail the existence of the non-infallible magisterium, by explaining the actual thinking of Pope Pius IX and the theologians (Suarez, Gotti, Benedict XIV, Cappellari, the future Gregory XVI, Zaccaria), so as to defend it against the deformations inflicted on it by the Jansenists of Utrecht. They could only conceive of the exercise of the magisterium as infallible. Cf. Franzelin, *La Tradition*, Thesis 12, 3rd corollary to the 7th principle, No. 254-72, pp.166-83.

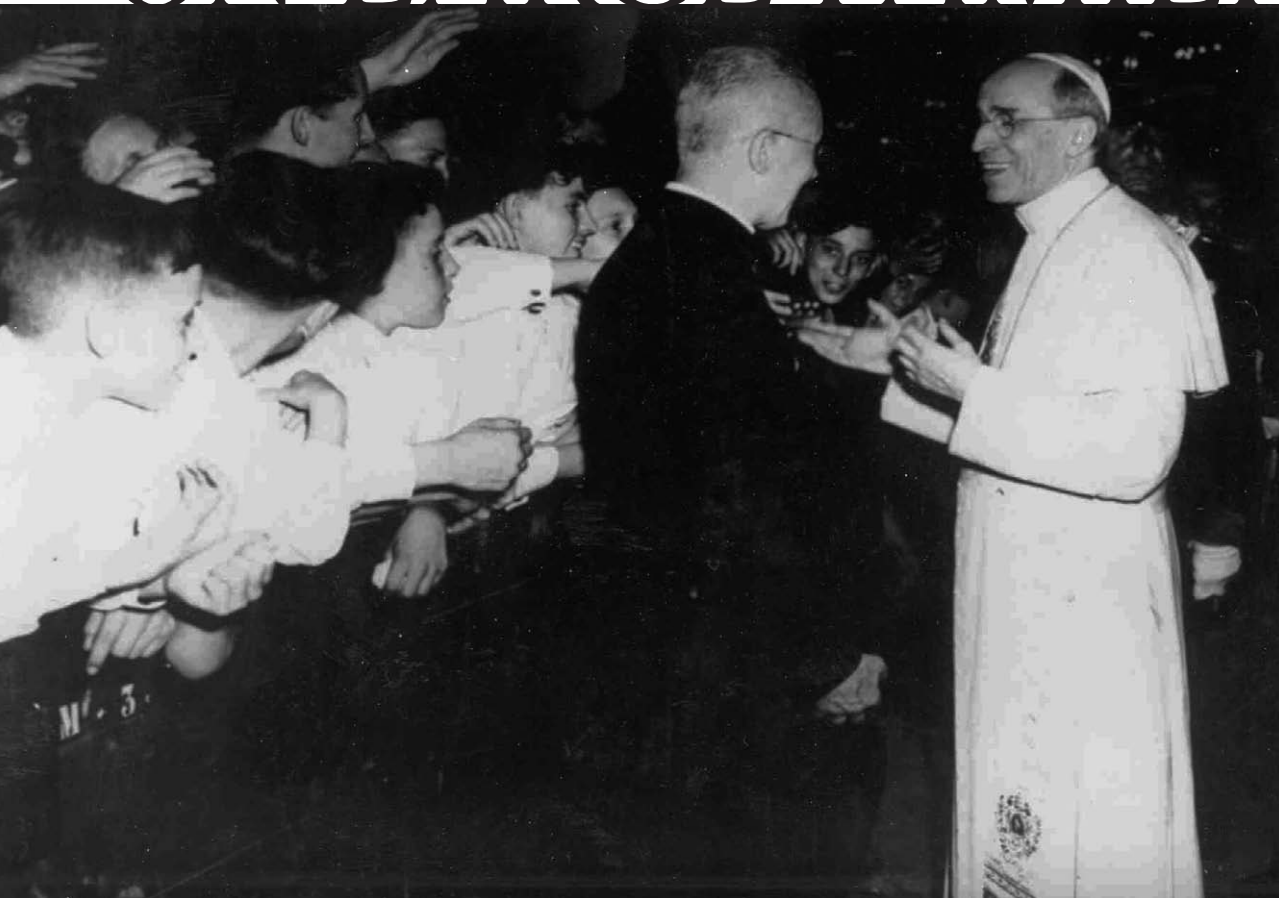
²⁵ In the Encyclical *Humani Generis* (August 12, 1950), Pius XII said in effect: “And although this sacred Office of Teacher in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded and interpreted, still the duty that is incumbent on the faithful to flee also those errors which more or less approach heresy, and accordingly “to keep also the constitutions and decrees by which such evil opinions are proscribed and forbidden by the Holy See.” [CJC, canon 1324] is sometimes as little known as if it did not exist.”

²⁶ Paul VI, Audience of January 12, 1966, in *D.C.*, No.1466 (March 6, 1966), col.418-20.

²⁷ John XXIII, Speech to the Sacred College, December 23, 1962, in *DC*, No.1391 (January 6, 1963), col.101.

²⁸ Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Conference at Ecône, December 2, 1982, in *Vu de Haut*, No.13 (Fall 2006), p.57.

POPE PIUS XII ON LARGE FAMILIES



Address of Pope Pius XII to the Directors of the Associations for Large Families of Rome and of Italy (Jan. 20, 1958)

You are well aware of the lively interest We have in family life, of how We never miss an opportunity to point out its many-sided dignity, to reassert its rights and defend them, to inculcate the duties it involves. In a word, We make it a key point of Our pastoral teaching.

The Pope in the midst of a family! Isn't that right where he belongs? Isn't he (in the loftiest spiritual sense of the word) the Father of the whole human family that has been reborn in Christ and in the Church? Is it

not through him, the Vicar of Christ on earth, that the wonderful plan of creative Wisdom is put into effect—a plan that has conferred on all human fatherhood the destiny of preparing a chosen family for heaven, where the love of the One and Triune God will enfold them in a single eternal embrace and give them Himself as the inheritance that will make them perfectly happy?

But you do not represent just any families at all; you are and represent large families, those most blessed by God and specially loved and prized by the Church as its most precious treasures. For these families

offer particularly clear testimony to three things that serve to assure the world of the truth of the Church's doctrine and the soundness of its practice, and that redound, through good example, to the great benefit of all other families and of civil society itself.

Wherever you find large families in great numbers, they point to: the physical and moral health of a Christian people; a living faith in God and trust in His Providence; the fruitful and joyful holiness of Catholic marriage.

We would like to say a few words about each of these points.

Surely, one of the most harmful aberrations that has appeared in modern society with its pagan tendencies is the opinion of those who are eager to classify fruitfulness in marriage as a "social malady," and who maintain that any nation that finds itself thus afflicted must exert every effort and use every means to cure the disease. This is the basis for the propaganda that goes under the name of "planned parenthood"; at times it is promoted by persons and organizations who command respect because of their positions in other fields, but who, unfortunately, have taken a stand in this matter which must be condemned.

Sad as it is to realize how widespread doctrines and practices of this kind have become, even among the traditionally healthy classes, it is comforting to see indications and proofs of a healthy reaction in your country, both in the legal and in the medical fields. As you know, article 31 of the current Constitution of the Italian Republic, to cite just one source, pays "special attention to large families," and the prevailing teaching among Italian doctors is along a line of opposition ever more strongly against birth control practices.

This does not mean that the danger has passed and that we have destroyed the prejudices which tend to make marriage and its wise norms submit to the aims of reprehensible pride and selfishness on the part of society or of individuals. We particularly deplore that section of the press that every so often takes up the question once again with the obvious intention of confusing good people and drawing them into error with misleading evidence, questionable polls, and even falsified statements from some cleric or other.

On the part of Catholics, We must urge the wide dissemination of the principle, firmly founded on truth, that the only way to protect the physical and moral health of the family and of society is through wholehearted obedience to the laws of nature, or rather of the Creator, and most of all by fostering a sacred, heartfelt respect for them.

In this matter, everything depends on the intention. You can multiply laws and make the penalties heavier; you can give irrefutable proofs of the stupidity of birth control theories and of the harm that comes from putting them into practice; but as long as there is no sincere determination to let the Creator carry on His work as He chooses, then human selfishness will always find new sophistries and excuses

to still the voice of conscience (to the extent it can), and to carry on abuses.

Now the value of the testimony offered by the parents of large families lies not only in their unequivocal and forceful rejection of any deliberate compromise between the law of God and human selfishness, but also in their readiness to accept joyfully and gratefully these priceless gifts of God their children—in whatever number it may please Him to send them.

This kind of attitude frees married couples from oppressive anxieties and remorse, and, in the opinion of outstanding doctors, creates the ideal psychological conditions for the healthy development of children born of the marriage. For, right at the beginning of these new lives, it eliminates all those worries and disturbances that can so easily leave physical or psychological scars on the mother or child.

Apart from exceptional cases—and We have had occasion to speak of these before—nature's law is basically one of harmony, and it leads to discord and contradictions only in cases where its normal operation is upset by particular circumstances which are for the most part abnormal, or by deliberate opposition from a human will. There is no eugenics that can improve upon nature: it is good as a science only so long as it aims at gaining a profound knowledge of nature's laws and respects these laws—although in some cases it may be wise to dissuade people who suffer from serious defects from getting married (cf. *Casti Connubii*, Dec. 31, 1930: A.A.S. 22 (1930) p.565).

Again, good common sense has always and everywhere looked upon large families as a sign, a proof, and a source of physical health, and history makes no mistake when it points to violation and abuse of the laws governing marriage and procreation as the primary cause of the decay of peoples.

Far from being a "social malady," large families are a guarantee of the moral and physical health of a people. Virtues flourish spontaneously in homes where a baby's cries always echo from the crib, and vice is put to flight, as if it has been chased away by the childhood that is renewed there like the fresh and invigorating breath of spring.

So let the weak and selfish take their example from you; let the nation continue to be loving and grateful toward you for all the sacrifices you have taken upon yourselves to raise and educate its citizens; just as the Church is pleased with you for enabling her to offer, along with you, ever healthier and larger groups of souls to the sanctifying activity of the divine Spirit.

In the modern civil world a large family is usually, with good reason, looked upon as evidence of the fact that the Christian faith is being lived up to, for the selfishness that We just pointed out as the principal obstacle to an increase in the size of a family group cannot be successfully overcome without recourse to ethical and religious principles.

In recent times we have seen how so-called “demographic politics” have failed to achieve any noteworthy results; it is easy to see why, for the individual interest will almost always win out over the collective pride and selfishness which this idea so often expresses, and the aims and methods of this policy debase the dignity of the family and the person by placing them on the same level as lower species.

Only the divine and eternal light of Christianity gives full life and meaning to the family and this is so true that right from the beginning and through the whole course of its history, large families have often been considered as synonymous with Christian families.

Respect for divine laws has made them abound with life; faith in God gives parents the strength and vigor they need to face the sacrifice and self-denial demanded for the raising of their children; Christian principles guide them and help them in the hard work of education; the Christian spirit of love watches over their peace and good order, and seems to draw forth from nature and bestow the deepest family joys that belong to parents, to children, to brothers and sisters.

Even externally, a large, well-ordered family is a kind of visible shrine: the sacrament of Baptism is not an exceptional event for them but something constantly renewing the joy and grace of the Lord. The series of happy pilgrimages to the Baptismal font is not yet finished when a new one to Confirmation and first Communion begins, aglow with the same innocence. The youngest of the children will scarcely have put away his little white suit among the dearest memories of life, when the first wedding veil appears to bring parents, children, and new relatives together at the foot of the altar. More marriages, more Baptisms, more first Communions follow each other like ever-new springtimes that, in a sense, make the visits of God and of His grace to the home unending.

But God also visits large families with His Providence, and parents, especially those who are poor, give clear testimony to this by resting all their trust in Him when human efforts are not enough. A trust that has a solid foundation and is not in vain! Providence—to put it in human words and ideas—is not a sum total of exceptional acts of divine pity; it is the ordinary result of harmonious activity on the part of the infinite wisdom, goodness and omnipotence of the Creator. God will never refuse a means of living to those He calls into being.

The Divine Master has explicitly taught that “life is worth more than food, and the body more than clothing” (cf. Mt. 6:25). If single incidents, whether small or great, seem to contradict this, it is a sign that man has placed some obstacle in the way of divine order, or else, in exceptional cases, that God has higher plans for good; but Providence is something real, something necessary since God is the Creator.

The so-called problem of overpopulation of the earth is partly real and partly unreasonably feared

as an imminent catastrophe for modern society; but undoubtedly the rise of this problem and the continued failure to arrive at a solution of it is not due to some mixup or inertia on the part of divine Providence, but rather to disorder on man’s part—especially to his selfishness and avarice.

With the progress that has been made in technology, with the ease of transportation, and with the new sources of energy that are just beginning to be tapped, the earth can promise prosperity to all those who will dwell on it for a long time to come.

As for the future, who can foresee what new and unsuspected resources may be found on our planet, and what surprises may be uncovered outside of it by the wonderful scientific achievements that have just barely begun? And who can be sure that the natural rhythm of procreation will be the same in the future as it is now? Is it not possible that some law that will moderate the rhythm of expansion from within may come into play? Providence has reserved the future destiny of the world to itself.

It is strange to find that the fears of some individuals are able to change well-founded hopes for prosperity into catastrophic specter at the very moment when science is changing what used to be considered the dreams of wild imaginations into useful realities.

Thus, overpopulation is not a valid reason for spreading illicit birth control practices. It is simply a pretext used by those who would justify avarice and selfishness—by those nations, for instance, who fear that the expansion of others will pose a danger to their own political position and cause a lowering of the general standard of living, or by individuals, especially those who are better off, who prefer the greatest possible enjoyment of earthly goods to the praise and merit of bringing new lives into existence. The final result is that they break the fixed and certain laws of the Creator under the pretext of correcting supposed errors on the part of His Providence.

It would be more reasonable and useful if modern society would make a more determined, universal effort to correct its own conduct, by removing the causes of hunger in the overpopulated or “depressed areas,” through a more active use of modern discoveries for peaceful aims, a more open political policy of collaboration and exchange, a more farseeing and less nationalistic economy; above all, by reacting to all suggestions of selfishness with charity, and to those of avarice with a more concrete application of justice.

God is not going to ask men for an accounting of the general destiny of mankind; that is His business. He will, however, demand an accounting of the single acts that they have deliberately performed in accordance with or against the dictates of conscience.

As for you, parents and children of large families, keep on giving a serene and firm testimony of your trust in divine Providence, and be assured that He

will not fail to repay you with the testimony of His daily help and, whenever necessary, with those extraordinary helps that many of you have been happy to experience already.

And now a few words on your third testimony—words that may give new strength to those who are fearful and bring you a little comfort.

Large families are the most splendid flower-beds in the garden of the Church. Happiness flowers in them and sanctity ripens in favorable soil. Every family group, even the smallest, was meant by God to be an oasis of spiritual peace. But there is a tremendous difference: where the number of children is not much more than one, that serene intimacy that gives value to life has a touch of melancholy or of pallor about it. It does not last as long, it may be more uncertain, and it is often clouded by secret fears and remorse.

It is very different from the serenity of spirit to be found in parents who are surrounded by a rich abundance of young lives. The joy that comes from the plentiful blessings of God breaks out in a thousand different ways and there is no fear that it will end. The brows of these fathers and mothers may be burdened with cares, but there is never a trace of that inner shadow that betrays anxiety of conscience or fear of an irreparable return to loneliness. Their youth never seems to fade away as long as the sweet fragrance of a crib remains in the home, as long as the walls of the house echo to the silvery voices of children and grandchildren.

Their heavy labors multiplied many times over, their redoubled sacrifices and their renunciation of costly amusements are generously rewarded even here below by the inexhaustible treasury of affection and tender hopes that dwell in their hearts without ever tiring them or bothering them.

And the hopes soon become a reality when the eldest daughter begins to help her mother to take care of the baby and on the day the oldest son comes home with his face beaming with the first salary he has earned himself. That day will be a particularly happy one for parents, for it will make the specter of an old age spent in misery disappear, and they will feel assured of a reward for their sacrifices.

When there are many children, the youngsters are spared the boredom of loneliness and the discomfort of having to live in the midst of adults all the time. It is true that they may sometimes become so lively as to get on your nerves, and their disagreements may seem like small riots; but even their arguments play an effective role in the formation of character, as long as they are brief and superficial. Children in large families learn almost automatically to be careful of what they do and to assume responsibility for it, to have a respect for each other and help each other, to be openhearted and generous. For them, the family is a little proving ground before they move into the world outside, which will be harder on them and more demanding.


All of these precious benefits will be more solid and permanent, more intense and more fruitful if the large family takes the supernatural spirit of the Gospel, which spiritualizes everything and makes it eternal, as its own particular guiding rule and basis. Experience shows that in these cases, God often goes beyond the ordinary gifts of Providence, such as joy and peace, to bestow on it a special call—a vocation to the priesthood, to the religious life, to the highest sanctity.

With good reason, it has often been pointed out that large families have been in the forefront as the cradles of saints. We might cite, among others, the family of St. Louis, the King of France, made up of ten children, that of St. Catherine of Siena who came from a family of twenty-five, St. Robert Bellarmine from a family of twelve, and St. Pius X from a family of ten.

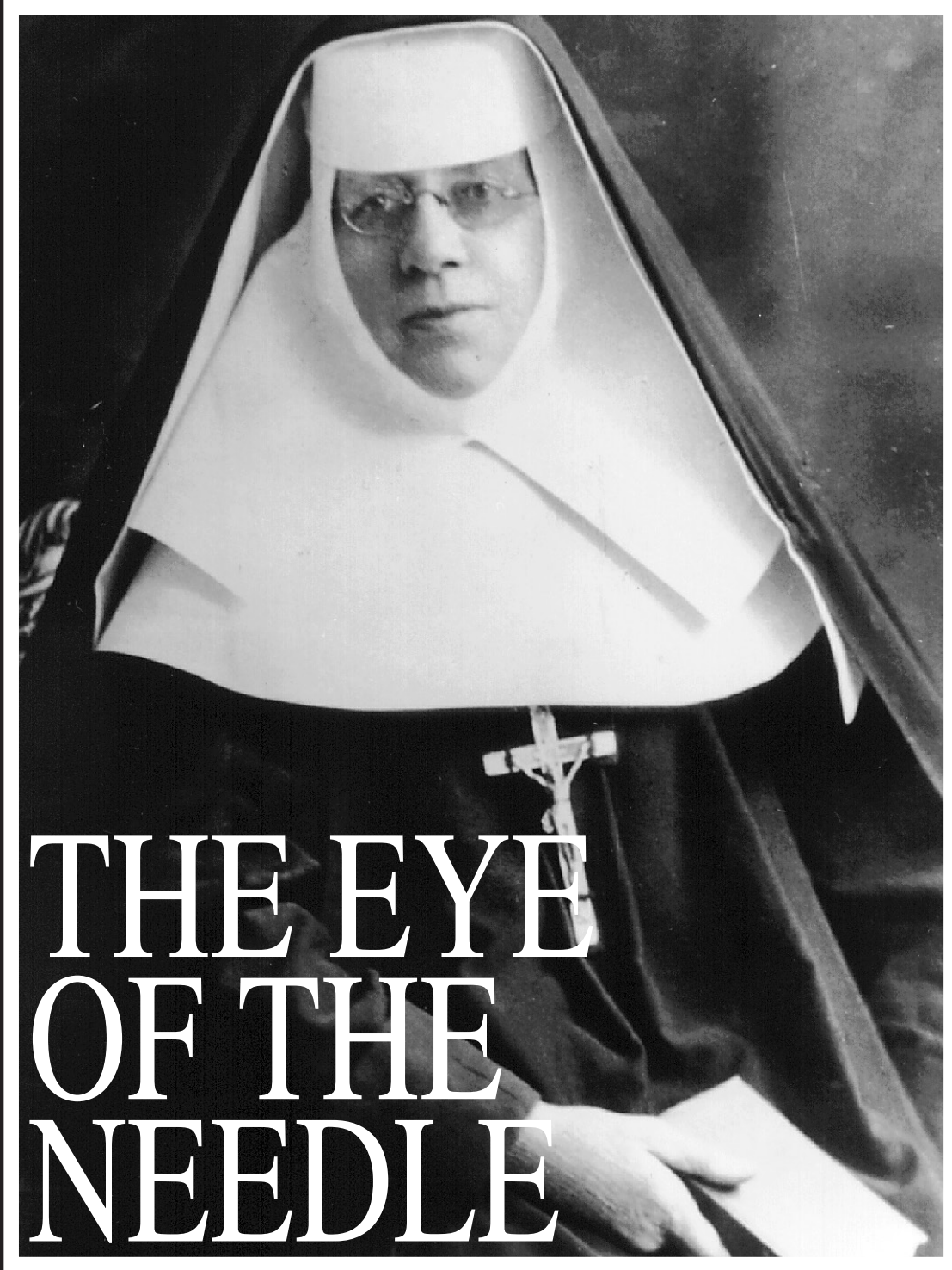
Every vocation is a secret of Providence; but these cases prove that a large number of children does not prevent parents from giving them an outstanding and perfect upbringing. They show that the number does not work out to the disadvantage of their quality, with regard to either physical or spiritual values.

One last word to you...Be careful to imprint the seal of an ever more vigilant and fruitful dynamism on the action that you intend to carry out in behalf of the dignity of large families and for their economic protection.

With regard to the first of these aims, keep in line with the directives of the Church. With regard to the second, you have to shake out of its lethargy that part of society that is not yet aware of its social responsibilities. Providence is a divine truth and reality, but it chooses to make use of human cooperators. Ordinarily it moves into action and comes to our aid when it has been summoned and practically led by the hand by man; it loves to lie hidden behind human activity. While it is only right to acknowledge that Italian legislation can legitimately boast of being most advanced in this area of affording protection to families and especially to large families, We should not close our eyes to the fact that there are still a considerable number of them who are tossed back and forth between discomfort and real privation, through no fault of their own. Your action must aim at bringing these people the protection of the laws, and in more urgent cases the help of charity. Every positive achievement in this field is like a solid stone set into the structure of the nation and of the church; it is the very best thing you can do as Catholics and as citizens.

Calling down the divine protection upon your families and those of all Italy, placing them once again under the heavenly protection of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, We impart to you with all Our heart Our paternal Apostolic Blessing. 

EDWIN FAUST



Katharine Mary Drexel dedicated her life and inheritance to the needs of Native Americans and Blacks in the West and Southwest United States and established a religious order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. She financed more than 60 missions and schools around the United States. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II and is the second American-born saint.

My mother put on her white gloves and her blue hat with the large brim and the artificial pink rose pinned to the side. I was attired in my good plaid jacket and bow tie and, to my embarrassment, the Alpine hat that marked this as a dress-up occasion. We were going to John Wanamaker's Department Store to buy my Easter outfit, and in 1955 no respectable person who lived in the working-class warrens of South Philadelphia would venture into Center City in less than his Sunday best.

I always felt a stranger in a strange land when we went to Center City. Its tall buildings and ceaseless bustle and the air of being on important business that emanated from the men who walked briskly along the sidewalks with briefcases and fedoras and straight-ahead incurious looks all struck me as foreign. I was used to the look of men in overalls and work clothes stepping off the trolley and walking slowly, somewhat wearily, either toward their houses or the consolations of Rafferty's Bar. And the only building that raised its head above the modest level of the two-story row homes was the parish church.

Center City to me meant rich people, and rich people were not my people. They were not Catholic. But as I rode beside my mother on the Broad Street bus that late winter's day, there was someone the newspapers were fond of describing as "the richest nun in the world" living out the final hours of a remarkable life that would eventually cause her to be raised to the altar. Catherine Drexel, then Mother Katharine of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, was 97 years old and being cared for by her daughters in religion at the convent she had founded in Cornwell Heights, a suburb of Philadelphia now known as Bensalem. That day, our purchases took us past 15th and Walnut streets, the site of the former home of Francis Anthony Drexel, where Catherine had passed much of her childhood.

Philadelphians knew about the Drexels. Their family name was attached to many buildings and places, from the Drexel Institute of Technology to Drexel Hill. And we knew, in a vague way, that one of the Drexel daughters had become a nun and used her vast fortune to help educate American Indian and black children. But even the bonds of religion and the esteem for sanctity could not overcome that sense of separation that exists between rich and poor. Catherine had been rich. And so we revered her, not as one of us, but as belonging to another class who lived in a way that we could barely imagine. She was from Center City.

Wealth and sanctity, almost natural opposites, share one quality: most of us tend to see both from the outside looking in. We know a little about wealth, because we have all had a bit of extra money from time to time, and we know something of sanctity, for we have had moments of grace when we were aware

of a greater power working in us. But as habitual possessions, wealth and sanctity are uncommon. And how improbable that the two should be joined in one person. But so it happened with Mother Katharine.

She died that second week of Lent when I was almost six years old, and the newspapers duly reviewed her life and good works, toted up her family's fortune and her enormous share of it, and gave their approbation to the use she made of her inheritance. She was dubbed a philanthropist, which is as close as the secular world comes to defining sanctity. Poor people marveled at her selflessness in giving away all her money, perhaps with the thought that they would not have done the same; that it would have been sensible and proper to keep some of it. What most struck my young mind was how old she was: 97. It seemed incredible to me that someone born before the Civil War should have lived into my lifetime.

It still impresses me. Born in Philadelphia in 1858, Catherine was the second of Francis Drexel's three daughters. Her mother, Hannah Langstroth, died five weeks after Catherine was born. Two years later, her father remarried. Emma Bouvier was the only mother Catherine knew, and she loved her. Emma soon gave birth to a third daughter, Louise. No distinction was made, no favoritism shown by Emma. All were her daughters. She was a woman of deep faith and great charity. The Drexel house at 1503 Walnut Street was not only known to the financiers who were entertained in its dining room, but to the poor who were fed from its kitchen. Francis Drexel also devoted much of his wealth to helping the less fortunate, as did other members of the family that owned banking houses in Philadelphia, New York, and Paris.

Catherine's family divided its time between Center City and an estate in Torresdale called St. Michel, where Catherine later taught the local children catechism at a Sunday School the Drexels had established. Archbishop Wood, who succeeded St. John Neumann as bishop of Philadelphia, visited St. Michel and said Mass there.

Catherine's early life, from all external evidence, was a happy one, unmarred by want or illness or the large and little tragedies that come to many of us. Of her spiritual life, one can only speculate. She had a great love for St. Francis of Assisi, a fellow child of privilege who was to renounce his inheritance and embrace Lady Poverty. And she was devoted to her patron saint, Catherine of Siena, a merchant's daughter who chose a life of celibacy and good works over one of bourgeois comforts. We know that Catherine dreamed of entering the religious life. Although introduced into society in the grand manner at a Center City ball in 1878, she never showed any interest in the usual occupations of rich young ladies. Fashion, parties, and young men did

not attract her. She was devoted to her parents, her sisters, and her faith.

The Drexels traveled a good deal. They toured Europe and had private audiences with Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII. Once, when in Rome awaiting such an audience, the Drexels made the acquaintance of a missionary priest who worked among the American Indians of the Northwest. His stories of the sufferings of the people he labored among moved Catherine profoundly. She found herself becoming preoccupied with the plight of these forgotten tribes, a preoccupation that eventually led to a trip West to visit the missions.

The Drexels traveled the West in style, not because of any preference on Catherine's part but because Francis Drexel was considering investing in the Great Northern Railroad. Because of this, its president, J.J. Hill, provided his personal car and a locomotive to take the Drexels wherever they wanted to go. Catherine wanted to go see the Indians described by the missionary they had met in Rome.

She was never to forget the scenes of desolation she witnessed in that territory now known as the state of Washington. The poverty of the makeshift villages was extreme. She was overwhelmed by the physical and spiritual needs of people to whom the world seemed to turn a blind eye. Her spiritual director, Father James O'Connor, had been made bishop of Omaha, then a vast territory that also included Indian missions that Catherine visited. She determined to do something to help. She had money at her disposal, but alms giving was not enough for her. She wanted to give herself, not just her money.

But every time she approached Bishop O'Connor on the question of her vocation, he advised her to wait and pray. Catherine first wanted to enter a cloister, but the quiet life of prayer was something she would know only toward the end of her days. She was certain that her life was to be given to God, that she was called to His work in some way, but she patiently trusted in her spiritual advisor and waited for God to show her His will in His own time.

As the years of her youth rolled by, those ties which kept her bound to the Drexel household were loosened. First, her stepmother, Emma Bouvier Drexel, died of cancer in 1881. Catherine nursed her during the final months of her illness. After Emma's death, Catherine became even closer to her father, trying to console him in his loneliness.

Francis Drexel was a man of business, but he was also a man of prayer. It was known in the household that he was not to be disturbed during the first hour after his return from the office. It was assumed he was resting during that time, but a maid later told Catherine that she had inadvertently walked in on him once and found him on his knees, so deep in prayer that he did not notice her intrusion. He also liked to play the organ, and it was the sound of this

instrument that announced to his family that he had emerged from his daily seclusion. But in the years following his wife's death, his characteristic vigor and energy waned.

In 1885, Francis Drexel died. Catherine grieved deeply for her father and her own health took a turn for the worse. The family physician recommended she visit the mineral springs at a resort in Germany. Catherine agreed to the trip to Europe, but for reasons other than her health. She had long wanted to visit Assisi.

A few years earlier, on a trip with her father, she had entered the church of San Marco in Venice to pray before the mural of the Madonna. In what her biographers describe as a vision, Catherine saw the Madonna become animated and heard a voice say to her: "Freely you have received; freely give." This was the motto of the Franciscans, adopted as the principle of their rule by the Little Poor Man who founded the order. Previous attempts to visit Assisi had been thwarted for one reason and another, but now, Catherine was determined.

Her health did improve and she at long last found herself kneeling in the Portiuncula, the place where Francis received his command from God to rebuild His Church. Again the phrase, "Freely you have received; freely give" resonated in Catherine's thoughts, but as yet, without a definite plan of action.

She and her sisters visited Rome in 1887 and applied for an audience with the pope. Leo XIII received the Drexels, and Catherine, to her own and everyone else's amazement, found herself emboldened to address the pope on the need for missionaries to the American Indians. The Holy Father looked at the future saint and said simply, "Why don't you become a missionary?"

Catherine had received her vocation from the Vicar of Christ.

Upon returning to America, Catherine, with Bishop O'Connor's approval, arranged to become a postulant at the convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, with the understanding that she would be given permission to found her own order after her profession of vows. This occurred in 1891 and, with 13 followers, Catherine Drexel became Mother Katharine of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

Her sisters Louise and Elizabeth both married, although Elizabeth was to die in childbirth a short time later. Her death greatly increased the size of Mother Katharine's trust fund, which earned about \$1,000 per day. Mother Katharine herself, vowed to poverty, lived simply, while her inheritance was used to fund the work of her religious order. And that work was considerable.

Initially, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament were devoted to working among the American Indians, many of whom had not yet had the Gospel preached to them. The sisters combined the

spiritual and corporal works of mercy as they established schools and hospitals and houses of religion. But Mother Katharine soon realized that there was another group of neglected and needy people in her native land.

In the decades following the Civil War, blacks had poured into the cities in great numbers, where they lived in great poverty. Those that remained in the rural districts fared no better. Slavery had been abolished, but blacks were still segregated and opportunities for education and advancement either severely limited or non-existent. That is, until Mother Katharine turned her attention to the problem.

Although she now enjoys a certain vogue in this era of victim-class politics in which minorities often receive preferential treatment and the charge of racism can end a public career, it is important to remember that Mother Katharine took it upon herself to found schools for black children at a time when such action was a scandal to many whites. Opposition to her work was more or less constant. She often had to use proxies to purchase property, for if it were learned that a building or piece of land was to be used by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, community pressure might be applied to block the sale.

In one instance, dynamite was planted in the foundation of the motherhouse the order was erecting, but it was discovered in time. Much of her work among blacks was carried on in the South, where Catholics were not much appreciated, and Catholics working to educate blacks were positively demonized. But Mother Katharine and her sisters were undeterred, and one by one, the buildings went up, the schools flourished, converts were made and the order grew.

In the North, the Blessed Sacrament nuns taught in poor urban districts. Once, during my career as a newspaper editor, I noticed a black reporter whose grammar was unusually good. I assumed he was self-taught, for I knew the public high school he had attended in Philadelphia would have afforded him little opportunity to learn much of anything. We got to talking about it once and he told me, "I went to a grade school in West Philly set up by Katharine Drexel. Those sisters had me diagram a lot of sentences."

During her lifetime, Mother Katharine founded more than 60 schools and missions, including Xavier University, established



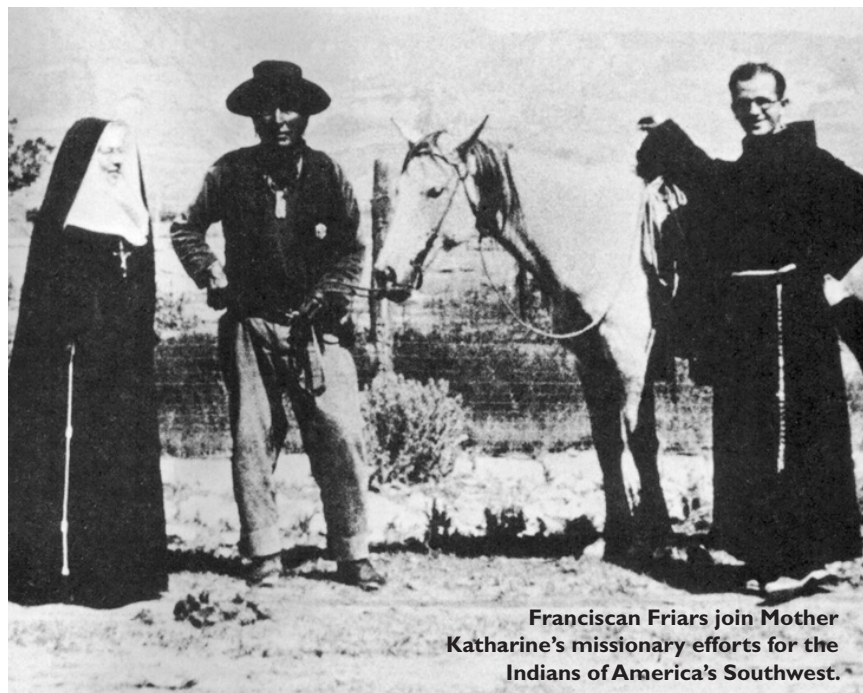
Xavier University,
New Orleans, Louisiana

in New Orleans in 1925. At the time of her death in 1955, her small band of 13 sisters had grown to 501, with 49 houses in 21 states. Yet, very little fanfare accompanied the order's work. "It's best to do things quietly," was a phrase often repeated by Mother Katharine when engaged in a project.

In 1936, Mother Katharine suffered a heart attack. A year later, at the age of 79, she retired as superior of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. She was to live a long time afterward, during which she seemed to be offered the vocation to which she was first drawn: that of a contemplative. She passed her last 18 years in a quiet life of prayer and relative seclusion at the order's motherhouse near Philadelphia. Considered a living saint by many, her cause was not long in being introduced. She was beatified in 1988 and canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II and declared the patron saint of social justice.

Of course, the phrase "social justice" probably wouldn't mean the same thing to Mother Katherine as it did to Pope John Paul II. It certainly was not used as the cant term it has become since Vatican II. It is also difficult to say whether her cause for sainthood was accelerated by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the advent of so-called Liberation Theology with its "preferential option for the poor." That latter phrase would likely have puzzled her as well as offended her sense of proper diction: are not all options a matter of preference?

She understood honesty and justice and charity, but not as divorced from the traditional Catholic Faith. She was, first and foremost, a nun, not a social worker, which is why it is incorrect to call her a philanthropist. Philanthropy is often a hobby of rich women who devote some time to raising money for hospitals and museums through fashionable dinners and wine-tasting parties and other events attended by the most exclusive society. Young Catherine had that option, which might be called the "preferential option of the rich," but she declined it.



Franciscan Friars join Mother Katharine's missionary efforts for the Indians of America's Southwest.

Instead, she chose to become a nun. She renounced philanthropy for charity, that is, *caritas*, in its highest sense: the love of God, and all other things through, with and in God. There is an unfortunate tendency to reverse the order of that reality that defined Mother Katharine's life and to make "social justice" and not God the motive force of her actions. Such a tendency would group Mother Katharine with such secular "saints" as Martin Luther King Jr., noted for his concern for social justice, as well as his penchant for adultery, plagiarism and his position as minister in a heretical sect.

It is Mother Katharine's fate to have been raised to the altar at a time when many prominent Churchmen have succumbed to naturalism. And the altar to which she has been raised is most often a table on which is enacted a ritual that she would not recognize.

It is the fate of every historical figure to be misconstrued by later generations whose changing concerns are often a bar to their proper understanding of who and what preceded them. But the distance in time is less formidable a bar to understanding than is a break in culture. The break between the pre- and post-Vatican II Church is radical. It is as though an earthquake has divided the land of the faith, and members of what is nominally the same Church now stand on either side of a great divide and stare at one another incomprehendingly.

Mother Katharine came of age during the papacy of Pope Pius IX. She looked into the eyes of Leo XIII. She was commended by St. Pius X. Then, almost a half-century after her death and a century and a half after her birth and in the midst of the worst crisis in faith since the Arian heresy, she is declared the patron saint of social justice by John Paul II.

She enjoys the approbation of the post-Vatican II Church because its adherents see her as a precursor of their own "enlightened" faith, with its preoccupation with the categories of political correctness. It is as though her being a nun were incidental to her being a supposed promoter of equality. It is

almost as though she is forgiven for being a nun in light of her actions on behalf of the black community.

This tendency to place Mother Katharine in a time machine, so to speak, and to make her a post-Vatican II progressive not only distorts her true image but makes her saintliness suspect to those very people who still possess the same faith that she lived by.

The most popular of her biographies was written by a black journalist named Ellen Tarry, a 1923 graduate of St. Francis De Sales High School in Rock Castle, Va., a school founded by Mother Katharine which, like many such institutions, has since closed its doors. The book was first published two years after Mother Katharine's death and re-issued in 2000, the year of her canonization. The latter edition contains a preface by the late John Cardinal O'Connor, then archbishop of New York and an important figure in the post-Vatican II Church in America. He says that Mother Katharine was his heroine. Most boys have heroes, rather than heroines, and one suspects that his late Eminence may have been trying to establish his *bona fides* as a lifelong holder of politically correct sympathies. The cardinal goes on to say that reading the book "brought me close to tears."

Tarry's book, however, may be judged by criteria other than its effect on O'Connor. That Tarry had a profound esteem for Mother Katharine cannot be doubted. She received her diploma from Mother Katharine's hands, which makes it something of a relic. But esteem alone does not make a biography what it should be: an insight into the soul of the subject.

Tarry was helped in her research by the sisters at St. Elizabeth's Convent, the motherhouse in Bensalem, who also gave her permission to "create dialogue, and to enrich certain scenes with details." I consider such permission to have been a mistake.

Creating dialogue is an exercise that should be avoided in biography and only done with great circumspection in historical fiction. Character is revealed through dialogue, and to "create dialogue" is very near to creating character. It presumes an intimate knowledge of the subject, down to his probable choice of grammar and diction and tone. I would be hesitant to "create dialogue" for people I have known all my

life, for everyone is capable of acting, and speaking, out of character; which is a way of saying that we can never completely know another's character, nor even our own, for that matter. Others surprise us, and we sometimes surprise ourselves.

And there is this to consider: dialogue can conceal as well as reveal, and poorly written dialogue obscures the personality it is meant to bring into focus. Tarry's dialogue creates an air of unreality. One cannot see people speaking the words she puts into their mouths. Her portrait of Johanna Ryan, the Drexels' Irish housekeeper, verges on caricature. And what's more: Tarry goes beyond creating dialogue and sometimes describes thought processes and emotions. Overall, her approach is far too intrusive and yet fails to give us a true sense of character. The book may have moved John Cardinal O'Connor, and perhaps it moved others, but it left me unsatisfied. I finished reading it and still felt I had yet to meet Catherine Drexel.

How did this wealthy heiress from Center City become a saint? Our Lord said that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Catherine Drexel did that which is nearly impossible: she had passed through the eye of the needle. Who was she?

Then it struck me that of all the names she might have chosen for the congregation she founded, she chose to call it the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Here is a key, perhaps *the* key, to understanding her.

She once said that love does not consist in sweetness of devotion, but in striving to do God's will. As a young woman, she wanted that sweetness of devotion; she wanted to be a contemplative. But she had inherited a fortune and her father's managerial abilities and there was a great missionary work waiting for her, ordained for her. So she bent herself to her God-given task. But her life was an illustration of the truth that contemplation and action go together, the first leading to the second and the second back to the first, until the soul reaches such a unity through love that one becomes the other. Our Lord said that in Him we will find pasture, and go in and out.

All through her life, Catherine was devoted to Eucharistic adoration. The patron saint of social justice loved to be in one place above all others: before the tabernacle. Her failing health during the last decades of her life caused her to withdraw from active management of the order she had so firmly established. She was, it seemed, finally permitted to become the contemplative she had once longed to be. In dialogue that is not created, but recorded in her own words, Mother Katharine said:

My sweetest joy is to be in the presence of Jesus in the holy Sacrament. I beg that when obliged to withdraw in

body, I may leave my heart before the Blessed Sacrament. When after benediction, the priest locks the sacred Host in the tabernacle, I beg Jesus to lock me into the tabernacle until morning.

Now, she is locked there for eternity. Perhaps it might have been more fitting to make her the patron saint of Eucharistic adoration.


Her order, which had more than 500 members when she died in 1955, now has about 150, according the archivist at the motherhouse, where 77 members—more than half the order—reside. No information was available on how many of the sisters are retired and how many remain active, although it is safe to assume that, as in other religious congregations, a good many of the sisters are elderly. There is presently one “candidate,” which is the preferred designation for what used to be known as a novice, and vocations trickle in at the rate of about one per year. The focus of the order has shifted primarily from teaching to “pastoral ministry,” a broad and elastic category, and many of its schools have either closed or been turned over to others. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, like the other religious orders in the post-Vatican II Church, are enjoying the “new springtime” of the conciliar reforms: The order is dying.

All of the structures that are raised in this world are, of course, provisional. Whether for good or evil, every institution has its day of influence and then begins that often slow process of decay until it is interred in the vault of history. The Church endures, but Her religious orders can be creatures of time, subject to waxing and waning, yet they are not to be measured in the same manner as secular organizations, for their purpose is transcendent.

The success of Mother Katharine's work ought not to be gauged by the material improvements it effected in the lives of those served by her missions and schools; nor should the gradual dissolution of her order be seen as an ultimate failure of her purpose.

For her purpose was to save souls.

How well she succeeded is something we cannot know, but we can know this: that anyone who manages to save one soul has done a great thing. Buildings are raised and crumble into dust, governments come and go, and even popes rest but briefly on the throne of Peter. What does endure is the work of salvation.

St. Katharine Drexel, sister of the Blessed Sacrament, mother of enduring goodness, pray for us. 

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This selection concludes the “Catechism of the Crisis.” It is a continuation of last month’s questions concerning the Society of St. Pius X, the episcopal consecrations, and relationships with Rome.

Catechism Of the Crisis In the Church

The Final Chapter

98) Didn't the episcopal consecrations of 1988 cause a schism?

Schism is the rejection in principle of the pope’s authority, and not a simple act of disobedience. But the Society of St. Pius X acknowledges the authority of the pope, and its priests pray for him at every Mass. The episcopal consecrations, which exteriorly constituted an act of disobedience, did not give rise to any schism. Besides, the reasons given above fully justify this apparent disobedience to the pope.

● *Isn't it contradictory to protest one's recognition of the pope's authority while resisting him?*

A man might say to his father “You are not doing right” without telling him “You are no longer my father, I don’t want to have anything more to do with you.” These are two very different attitudes. Schism corresponds only to the second.

● *Doesn't the fact of consecrating bishops without papal mandate automatically produce a schism?*

An episcopal consecration without papal mandate does not of itself produce a schism. Cardinal Castillo Lara, doctor of Canon Law and president of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of Legislative Texts, explained it thus in 1988: “The act of consecrating a bishop without papal mandate is not in itself a schismatic act.”¹

● *Can you cite another authority?*

The Count Neri Capponi, professor emeritus of Canon Law at the University of Florence, also declared that an episcopal consecration against the pope’s will does not constitute a schism in and of itself:

He must do something more. For instance, had he set up a hierarchy of his own, then it would have been a schismatic act. The fact is that Archbishop Lefebvre said “I am creating bishops in order that my priestly order can

continue. They do not take the place of other bishops. I am not creating a parallel church.” Therefore this act was not, *per se*, schismatic.”²

● ***Even if it is not per se schismatic, isn't the consecration of bishops without Rome's permission always a delict, and doesn't it always incur ipso facto the penalty of excommunication?***

In the Latin Church, the pope has reserved for himself the decision to consecrate bishops since roughly the 11th century. To fight against the schism of the Chinese “Patriotic Church” in the 20th century, Pope Pius XII took the decision to impose excommunication on the consecration of bishops without papal mandate. However important these laws may be, these are ecclesiastical laws and not laws of divine institution. They may, therefore, admit exceptions in extraordinary cases of extreme spiritual necessity. For in the Church, the supreme law is the salvation of souls.³

● ***Is it certain that a case of necessity can thus suspend the application of a law?***

The principle by which a case of necessity may suspend the application of a positive law is simple common sense. When a house on a one-way street is burning, the firefighters do not worry too much about the traffic regulation! The end takes precedence over the means. The application of a law is suspended when it would go directly against its end (here: the protection of human life).

● ***Does the principle of state of necessity also apply for religious laws?***

The natural law can never admit of exception (it forbids things bad *by nature*, which can therefore never become good); positive laws—even religious—can, on the contrary, admit of exceptions as Holy Scripture shows.

● ***Are there cases of necessity dispensing from the fulfillment of the law in Holy Scripture?***

The principle of case of necessity appears several times in Holy Scripture. Compelled by need, the Machabees decided to use their swords on the Sabbath day rather than allow themselves to be killed without fighting back (I Mac. 2:23-41). The Lord also invokes this principle against the princes of the priests seeking to catch him in a fault; he even cites it as proof (Lk. 14:5; Mac. 2:24-27): “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit and will not immediately draw him out, on the Sabbath day?”

● ***Is the principle of case of necessity affirmed by theologians?***

The principle of case of necessity is notably set forth by St. Thomas Aquinas, who cites the traditional adage: “Necessity has no law.”⁴

● ***Did the crisis currently affecting the Church really necessitate the consecration of bishops without the pope's authorization?***

Every member of the Church has the right to receive from it the doctrine and the sacraments necessary for salvation. If the normal hierarchy (pastor, bishop, *etc.*) do not fulfill their duty, the faithful find themselves in a state of necessity that allows them to have recourse to any Catholic priest (because of the necessity, this priest then receives from the Church what is called jurisdiction of suppliance, or supplied jurisdiction, in order to minister to the faithful). In the current crisis, supplied jurisdiction empowers traditional priests to baptize, hear the confessions of, marry, *etc.*, Catholics who otherwise would not depend on them. But since the crisis was continuing unabated, and since bishops are necessary for confecting the sacraments of holy orders and confirmation, Archbishop Lefebvre found himself in the necessity of consecrating Catholic bishops to respond to the needs of souls.

● ***Did Archbishop Lefebvre avoid the penalty of excommunication even though he consecrated bishops?***

Canon 1323, §4, of the 1983 Code of Canon Law (which substantially incorporates Canon 2205, §2, of the traditional Code), foresees that “[they] are not subject to a penalty when they have violated a law or precept”: ...“a person who acted coerced by grave fear, even if only relatively grave, or due to necessity or grave inconvenience...” Obviously, such was the case of Archbishop Lefebvre.

● ***If Archbishop Lefebvre were mistaken in his judgment that a state of necessity existed, would his excommunication be valid?***

The 1983 Code of Canon Law exempts from the penalty of excommunication not only one who actually finds himself in a real state of necessity, but also one who thinks he is in such a state without this conviction being the result of a fault on his part (Canon 1323, §7). Consequently, even should one refuse to acknowledge the real existence of the necessity, it would still be indisputable that Archbishop Lefebvre *thought* he was in such a state, and that, according to the new Code (in force at the time of the consecrations), he would not incur any penalty.⁵

● ***Did the official authorities accept this argument of necessity developed by Archbishop Lefebvre?***

The current authorities have evidently never publicly recognized the soundness of Archbishop Lefebvre's argumentation because they claimed to have excommunicated him. But in fact, they often seemed not to believe in the reality of this excommunication—or at least to be divided on the subject.

99) Does the Society of St. Pius X have a false notion of Tradition?

Today the SSPX is often reproached with having a too static concept of Tradition. Conciliar Rome holds up the “living Tradition,”⁶—the adjective *living* intended to suggest that Tradition can move, like every living thing. But this is precisely the modernist error of historicism: doctrinal truth can never be reached definitively, but is perceived and expressed differently over the course of several centuries. This error was condemned by Popes St. Pius X and Pius XII.

● *Is the error of historicism really and truly present at Rome today?*

Archbishop Lefebvre often reported that when he would be speaking with Cardinal Ratzinger or other Roman personalities and would quote some condemnation issued by Pius IX or some dogmatic definition of the Council of Trent, he would hear his interlocutor reply: “But Monsignor, we are no longer living at the time of Pius IX; we are not in the era of the Council of Trent...”

● *Isn't it normal for traditions to evolve over time?*

Tradition (with a capital “T”) ought to be distinguished from traditions. The first is immutable, while the latter can undergo a certain change.

● *What is Tradition?*

Tradition (with a capital “T”), is the Apostolic Tradition, that is to say, the deposit of faith confided once and for all to the Apostles and which the Magisterium [the Church’s Teaching Authority] must transmit and protect till the end of the world.⁷

● *Is Tradition absolutely immutable?*

The deposit revealed by God and transmitted by Tradition is absolutely immutable since Revelation closed with the death of the last Apostle.⁸ But this immutable deposit is expressed more and more precisely by the Magisterium, which inventories and classifies it at the same time that it transmits and defends it.

● *Then the Church's teaching does evolve?*

Rather than speaking of *evolution* (a very ambiguous word), one should speak of *development*. Also, it should be understood that this development is *homogeneous*, that is, without mutation: it is simply the unfolding of what was included from the beginning, which a kind of compression prevented from being fully visible.⁹

● *Might one not then correctly say that Tradition is living?*

Tradition is living in the sense that the revealed deposit left by the Apostles is not only transmitted as a dead letter in writings, but also by *living* persons who have the authority to defend it, to show its

significance, and to make it lived by faith (which is the function of the Magisterium). But it remains nonetheless that this deposit is itself *immutable*; truth does not change, and nothing that has once been defined by the Magisterium can then be modified. The expression “living Tradition,” often understood as a moving, evolving Tradition, is thus today particularly dangerous.

● *What are the Church traditions that co-exist with immutable Tradition?*

All the pious practices, the rules of institutes of religious life, methods of apostolate, liturgical or legal laws and customs that are transmitted in the Church without having been directly instituted by God at the time of the Apostles are ecclesiastical traditions, distinct from Tradition in the strict sense.

● *Can all these ecclesiastical traditions be changed?*

Ecclesiastical traditions are not as immutable as revealed Tradition, and, in fact, they slowly evolved over time. But they are the inheritance of the saints and the expression of the wisdom of the Church (which is guided by the Holy Ghost). It would thus be impious and very imprudent to disturb them without a proportionate reason.

● *But haven't the “traditionalists” got an excessive and too rigid attachment to ecclesiastical traditions which, after all, are human?*

Such a rigid and exaggerated “traditionalism,” which would freeze all exterior forms and refuse any adaptation to contemporary needs, may indeed exist (it can be found among some Eastern schismatics called “Orthodox”). But this was not the attitude of St. Pius X nor of Archbishop Lefebvre, who knew how to intimately unite fidelity to the Church’s past and adaptation to the needs of the day. After all, the antimodernist battle waged by the both of them (and still being waged today by those called “traditionalists”) was not essentially over human traditions by over revealed Tradition, the object of the virtue of faith. The traditionalist resistance is not first and foremost a question of Latin or cassocks or liturgical rubrics; it is well and truly a matter of faith.

● *How did St. Pius X reconcile fidelity to the past with adaptation to present needs?*

Pope St. Pius X, who so severely condemned modernism, was at the same time a great reforming Pope: he reformed the Breviary and Church music; he was the first to prepare a clear and complete Code of Canon Law; and by his two decrees on Communion, he dispelled the final influences of Jansenism. And this is only the list of his major reforms. No pontificate since the Council of Trent had promoted so many reforms as St. Pius X! But these were good reforms, inspired by a truly supernatural zeal, without any contempt for the past, and only aiming at creating the best conditions for

the Church's action in the modern world for the sake of the salvation of souls.

● ***Can Archbishop Lefebvre be compared to St. Pius X on this point?***

Archbishop Lefebvre acted exactly like St. Pius X. He cleaved to Tradition with a capital T (which transmits the deposit of faith to us) and loved the Church's past as much as he knew how to be enterprising and innovative in his pastoral methods. His biography furnishes numerous examples of this.¹⁰

● ***Where does the expression "living Tradition" used against the "traditionalists" nowadays come from?***

The expression "living Tradition" comes from a document of Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* 12) and it mentions evolving tradition. From the modernist viewpoint, the role of the magisterium is not to safeguard the deposit of Revelation, but to ensure ecclesial "communion" (in space and time). Fidelity to Tradition does not mean first of all fidelity to a deposit handed down from the Apostles, but rather docility to what the pope, guarantor of unity, says today.

● ***Is this new notion of "living Tradition" to be found in the teaching of Benedict XVI?***

The notion of "living Tradition" is omnipresent in Pope Benedict XVI's teaching. In an allocution of April 26, 2006, for example, he defines the nature of Tradition:

The Church's apostolic Tradition consists in this transmission of the goods of salvation which, through the power of the Spirit makes the Christian community the permanent actualization of the original communion.

He explains:

Tradition is the communion of the faithful around their legitimate Pastors down through history, a communion that the Holy Spirit nurtures, assuring the connection between the experience of the apostolic faith, lived in the original community of the disciples, and the actual experience of Christ in his Church.¹¹

● ***What is notable in this definition of Tradition?***

Under the pretext of emphasizing the *living* character of Tradition ("Tradition is the living river that links us to the origins, the living river in which the origins are ever present," the Pope also says), the essential *content* of this Tradition is left aside: revealed truth, which is immutable.

● ***How should we respond to this new notion of "living Tradition"?***

It suffices to answer with St. Paul:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. (Gal. 1:8)

100) Wouldn't it have been possible to continue to go along with Rome?

Simple common sense shows, and experience confirms, that it is currently impossible to fully live and defend the Catholic Faith while being approved by Conciliar Rome. Following upon the episcopal consecrations of 1988, Rome conceded the celebration of the former liturgy to a few communities, but in return these were obliged to recognize the New Mass as a fully legitimate rite and to refrain from any criticism of Vatican II. In particular, they had to accept (or at least not criticize) religious freedom and ecumenism. Such a silence constitutes *per se* culpable complicity.

● ***Which are the communities that obtained permission to use the traditional liturgy in exchange for their silence about the errors of Vatican II?***

The communities having been authorized the use of the traditional liturgy in exchange for their silence about the errors of Vatican II are in particular the Fraternity of St. Peter (issuing from a split with the Society of St. Pius X in 1988), the Institute of Christ the King (founded by Fr. Wach at Gricigliano, near Florence), the Benedictine abbey of Le Barroux (brought round in 1988), the Fraternity of St. Vincent at Chéméré (which abruptly went from sedevacantism to the conciliar cause while Archbishop Lefebvre was dealing with Rome in 1987), the Institute of Opus Mariae (Fr. Vladimir), the Dominican Teaching nuns of Brignoles (founded by Fr. Berto), and finally, most recently, the Society of St. John Marie Vianney of Campos, Brazil (governed by Msgr. Rifan and brought round in 2002). These communities are generally designated by the general name "*Ecclesia Dei* communities."

● ***Why do all these communities have the common name "Ecclesia Dei community."***

These communities are designated by the generic name "*Ecclesia Dei* communities" because most of them are under the Commission of the same name founded at Rome at the time of the 1988 episcopal consecrations for rallying those who left the Society of St. Pius X.

● ***Where does the name "Ecclesia Dei" come from?***

The words "*Ecclesia Dei*" designate the document by which Archbishop Lefebvre was excommunicated. One might say that all these communities were established as a result of this excommunication and benefit from Archbishop Lefebvre's heroic act of June 30, 1988. If the founder of Ecône had not first announced (May 29, 1987) and then performed (June 30, 1988) these episcopal consecrations, Conciliar Rome would never have granted the traditional liturgy to all these communities.

● ***Why was Conciliar Rome so bothered by these episcopal consecrations?***

Conciliar Rome was bothered by these episcopal consecrations because they assured the survival of Tradition. Until then, it might have been thought that the traditionalist reaction would eventually die out once there were no more traditional bishops to ordain traditional priests. Since Archbishop Lefebvre was quite old, it was only a matter of time, and Conciliar Rome's entire strategy consisted in trying to gain time. The consecrations of 1988 reversed the situation. Even though they left Archbishop Lefebvre, the *Ecclesia Dei* communities benefited from it. Rome in effect granted them the use of the traditional liturgy in order to detach them from Archbishop Lefebvre.

● ***Do the Ecclesia Dei communities acknowledge that their prosperity is due to the consecrations of 1988?***

Since they are tolerated only insofar as they are publicly separated from him, the *Ecclesia Dei* communities generally avoid acknowledging their debt to Archbishop Lefebvre. Some laymen enjoy a greater freedom of speech. In 2006, the editor of the *Remnant*, a newspaper of the *Ecclesia Dei* community in the United States, publicly recognized that the Society of St. Pius X was like the counterweight that enabled the *Ecclesia Dei* communities to exist and to develop. Consequently, and very logically, he declared that he did not wish an agreement between Conciliar Rome and the Society of St. Pius X for the time being, for this displacement of the counterweight might weaken the whole traditionalist movement.

● ***Aren't all these tactical considerations too human?***

It is characteristic of Vatican II to have replaced the courageous profession of the Catholic Faith with tactics, diplomacy, and dialogue (the documents on religious freedom and ecumenism are the clearest manifestation of this). Opposite, Archbishop Lefebvre was always motivated by considerations of faith. He only resorted to the consecrations of 1988 in order to continue transmitting the Catholic faith and sacraments. While keeping the same attitude, it is not out of place to note that the faith of Ecône's founder, who refused to get bogged down in human calculations, ultimately proved to be much more astute than all the maneuvers of the Vatican's diplomats.

● ***Can the episcopal consecrations of 1988 then be considered to be a great victory of Catholic Tradition?***

Yes, the episcopal consecrations of 1988 constitute a great victory for the Church. They saved the traditional Mass. The slow but real progress of the Mass within the Church is an incontestable fruit of the consecrations.

● ***If the victory was won, what prevents the Society from being reconciled with the Roman authorities today?***

The consecrations of 1988 contributed to saving Catholic Tradition not only by assuring the transmission of the sacrament of holy orders, and thus of the traditional Mass and sacraments, but also by protecting a small part of the Church's flock against the conciliar errors. Now, these conciliar errors continue to ravage the Church, and they reign even at Rome. To continue to be protected against them effectively, it is therefore necessary to keep a distance from the Roman authorities. The definitive victory is yet to come.

● ***Wouldn't it be possible to continue resisting the conciliar errors without being outside the normal chain of command of legitimate Church authorities?***

During an epidemic, the most basic prudence imposes the strict separation of the sick from the healthy. A certain communication remains indispensable (for taking care of the sick), but it is limited as much as possible and surrounded with painstaking precautions. The same holds for the situation today: it is impossible to frequent the conciliar authorities on a regular basis without exposing oneself to contracting their errors. The example of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities furnishes the striking proof.

● ***Have the members of the Ecclesia Dei communities really accepted the errors of Vatican II or have they only kept quiet about them?***

Without pretending to judge the internal forum or possible exceptions, it seems that most of the members of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities have ended, unfortunately, by adhering to the conciliar errors. They began by keeping a prudential silence. Then they had to give more and more tokens of unity. Unawares, they were subjected to the psychological pressure of liberalism, all the more effective the less compulsory it seems. They ended by refraining from thinking otherwise than they spoke and acted. ("One must live the way one thinks or end up thinking the way one lives," as Paul Bourget said.) In short, they were completely caught in the machinery into which they imprudently put a finger.

● ***Is acceptance of the conciliar errors common to all the Ecclesia Dei communities?***

There are undoubtedly nuances, but, in general, all the *Ecclesia Dei* communities today accept the conciliar errors. When making its peace with Conciliar Rome in July 1988, Le Barroux publicly imposed a condition: "That no doctrinal or liturgical counterpart be required of us, and that silence not be imposed on our *antimodernist preaching*."¹² But by the following October, one monk had observed "a certain relativizing of the critique of *Dignitatis*

Humanae and Assisi” within the abbey.¹³ In fact, Le Barroux was even to go so far as to try to justify the errors of Vatican II publicly.¹⁴ The Fraternity of St. Peter, which at first claimed to be continuing exactly what the Society of St. Pius X was doing (except for the episcopal consecrations) has similarly slid.

● ***But do the *Ecclesia Dei* communities stand firm as regards the liturgy?***

Far from resisting firmly, the *Ecclesia Dei* communities have all more or less accepted the new liturgy: Dom Gerard (the father abbot of Le Barroux)¹⁵ had to concelebrate the New Mass with the Pope (on April 27, 1995). Fr. Wach (superior of the Institute of Christ the King) had already done as much (on December 21, 1991¹⁶). Bishop Rifan has also concelebrated the New Mass (on September 8, 2004). The Fraternity of St. Peter had to accept the principle of concelebrating the Holy Thursday chrismal Mass with the bishops of the dioceses where it is established (Rocca di Papa meeting, February 8-12, 2000¹⁷). The Fraternity of St. Vincent Ferrer is a little more reserved: they “only” recommend attending the Holy Thursday chrismal Mass in choir and receiving Communion¹⁸ (but even this is a liturgical participation and therefore an acceptance of the New Mass).

● ***Surely the *Ecclesia Dei* communities at least gain a wider field of apostolate in exchange for these compromises?***

The situation varies quite a bit from country to country (and in France, from diocese to diocese),

but most of the bishops restrict the activities of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities. Even those bishops who are not too hostile towards them hesitate to welcome them since they fear the reactions of their clergy or the activist laity. Rome for its part fears the reactions of the bishops. The situation of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities would be precarious in the extreme were it not for the Society of St. Pius X’s counterweight.

● ***Ultimately, what does this situation reveal?***

The situation of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities, which are gradually being constrained to abandon traditional doctrine yet which are only accepted in various dioceses with many restrictions, clearly confirms the existence of “the state of necessity” invoked by Archbishop Lefebvre to justify the consecrations of 1988. Now as then, for those who desire to defend the Catholic Faith to the bitter end, collaboration with Rome is impossible. But this situation will not last indefinitely, as Our Lord promised: “the gates of hell shall not prevail” (Mt. 16:18). ☒

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *Katholischer Katechismus zur kirchlichen Krise* by Fr. Matthias Gaudron, professor at the Herz Jesu Seminary of the Society of St. Pius X in Zaitzkofen, Germany. The original was published in 1997 by Rex Regum Press, with a preface by the District Superior of Germany, Fr. Franz Schmidbeger. This translation is from the second edition (Schloß Jaidhof, Austria: Rex Regum Verlag, 1999) as translated, revised, and edited by the Dominican Fathers of Avrillé in collaboration with the author, with their added subdivisions.

¹ *La Repubblica*, October 7, 1988.

² *Latin Mass Magazine*, May-June 1993.

³ *Suprema lex, salus animarum*. The 1983 Code of Canon Law even cites this adage in its concluding canon (1752).

⁴ *Necessitas legem non habet*. St. Thomas Aquinas, III, Q.80, Art. 8.

⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of this argument, see *Sel de la Terre*, No.24, pp.50-67. On the legitimacy of the episcopal consecrations of 1988, see the study by Fr. Mura in Nos.4, 5, 7, and 8 of *Sel de la Terre* as well as the pamphlet by Fr. François Pivert, *Schism or Not* (1988; Angelus Press, 1995).

⁶ For example, John Paul II in his motu proprio *Ecclesia Dei* of July 2, 1988 (excommunicating Archbishop Lefebvre) denounces “the root” of the traditionalist resistance, which is “an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition. He explains that this notion is *incomplete* “because it does not take sufficiently into account the living character of Tradition, which, as the Second Vatican Council clearly taught, ‘comes from the apostles and progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit’ (DS 4822).” This notion would, moreover, be *contradictory* in that it is opposed to the universal magisterium of the Church (on this last point, see Questions 19 and 31 of the Catechism).

⁷ See above, Question 8.

⁸ See the 21st condemned proposition of St. Pius X’s Decree *Lamentabili*. (DS 3421).

⁹ See above Question 12, as well as Bishop Tissier de Mallerai’s “*La Tradition vivante et combattante*,” *Sel de la Terre*, No.30, pp.16-32.

¹⁰ See Bernard Tissier de Mallerai, *Marcel Lefebvre* (2002; Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2004), in particular pp. 183-86.

¹¹ General Audience, Wednesday, 26 April 2006; English version online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2006.

¹² “Green Light for Le Barroux Monastery: Dom Gerard’s Declaration,” [French] *Présent*, August 18, 1988.

¹³ Letter of Fr. Joseph Vannier (former subprior of Le Barroux) to Dom Gerard, *Fideliter*, January-February 1989, p.14.

¹⁴ From 1993, Le Barroux attempted to justify the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (cf. *Sel de la Terre*, No.9, pp.175-88, on this bad try); Fr. Basil (of the same abbey) set himself to justifying the religious freedom taught by Vatican II in a “monumental” study of 2,960 pages (see *Sel de la Terre*, No.30, pp.202-7). He recognized that other authors who had so far tried to reconcile *Dignitatis Humanae* with Tradition (Fr. Lucien, Fr. Harrison, Fr. Margerie, Fr. de Saint-Laumer, etc.) had not succeeded, but he thought that he had found the solution. For several years, Fr. Basil’s thesis was presented in *Ecclesia Dei* circles as the proof that it is possible to reconcile Vatican II with Tradition. Unfortunately, another monk of Le Barroux, Fr. Jehan, published a dissertation in canon law in 2004 proving that Fr. Basil’s thesis suffered from a “fatal” flaw: it radically falsified the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on “Law” (see *Sel de la Terre*, No.56, pp.180-7). Instead of preaching Christ the King, the “rallied” devote themselves to defending Vatican II in contradictory writings that only add to the general confusion.

¹⁵ He entered eternity February 28, 2008. R.I.P.–Ed.

¹⁶ Photograph in *Sel de la Terre*, No.21, p.182.

¹⁷ On this important meeting at Rocca di Papa, cf. Jonathan White’s account in *Sel de la Terre*, No.41, pp.226-33.

¹⁸ *Sedes Sapientiae*, No.68, pp.3-30. Cf. *Sel de la Terre*, No. 32, pp.217-19.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Must another person be present when a priest celebrates Mass?

The Church's law on this question is quite categorical, and is contained in Canon 813 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

The priest should not celebrate Mass unless he has a server who serves and answers him. The server at Mass should not be a woman, unless no male server can be had, and for a just reason, and under the condition that the woman answer the prayers from a distance, and does not in any way approach the altar.

The 1917 Code did not innovate, nor was this law a new one at the time. In fact, the law requiring that a server be present for Mass goes back to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX in the 13th century. It means two things: firstly, that there is an obligation of having an altar boy for a priest to celebrate Mass; and secondly, that for a just reason (note that a grave reason is not required), he can be substituted by a woman or by the people answering the prayers together outside the sanctuary or away from the altar. In such a case, the woman is permitted to ring the bell, since this can be done from a distance, but not to present the cruets, transfer the book, or help in any way at the altar.

The question that arises, then, is the gravity of the obligation. Does a priest who cannot have an altar boy, and who celebrates Mass in any case, commit a grievous sin? This is the answer given by Woywood, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 1957, vol. I, p.436:

All moralists and canonists are agreed that the obligation is grave in itself. When a boy or man cannot be had, it is permissible for a reasonable, but not necessarily grave, cause to say Mass with a woman answering the priest.

The piety of the priest or of the faithful would be a sufficient reason for this, so that a priest who celebrates Mass with a woman answering, but without an altar boy, out of his or their devotion, commits no sin. However, without having an Apostolic Indult or outside a very special necessity, such as the need to offer Mass to consecrate Holy Viaticum, or as the only way to satisfy the priest's Sunday obligation (*ibid.*), it was always considered gravely sinful for a priest to celebrate without anybody at all present.

This sounds very strange to traditional Catholics, who are perfectly familiar with the teaching of the Council of Trent, according to which the priest alone suffices for the validity of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and for which the presence and participation of the faithful is not strictly required. It is, in fact, a Lutheran and Modernist error that there can be no Mass without the people. The answer is given in the first General Rubric of the Roman Missal (1960 edition):

The Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass...is an act of public worship, offered to God in the name of Christ and the

Church. Hence the term "private Masses" is to be avoided (§ 269).


The presence of the altar boy or of some faithful who respond is consequently a symbolic representation of the fact that every Mass is public, and this by its very nature, and that it is an act of Christ and the Church, and not of an individual priest. It is a reminder to the priest that he is not in some way the owner or possessor of the Mass.

Pope Pius XII in his 1947 encyclical on the Liturgy (*Mediator Dei*) both reiterates this teaching on the necessity of some assistant, and refutes the Modernist error that Masses ought not to be offered without a congregation, showing that there is no contradiction at all:

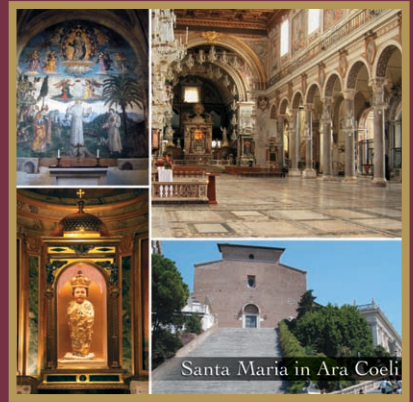
They are mistaken in appealing in this matter to the social character of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, for as often as a priest repeats what the Divine Redeemer did at the Last Supper, the Sacrifice is really completed. Moreover, this Sacrifice, necessarily and of its very nature, has always and everywhere the character of a public and social act.... This is undoubtedly so, whether the faithful are present or are not present....Still, though it is clear from what We have said that the Mass is...not robbed of its social effects though it be celebrated by a priest without a server, nonetheless, on account of the dignity of such an august mystery, it is our earnest desire—as Mother Church has always commanded—that no priest should say Mass unless a server is at hand to answer the prayers, as Canon 813 prescribes (§§96 & 97).

However, it is only a positive law of the Church, and not a divine law, and Apostolic Indults were frequently granted in the past. Consequently, priests who can be from time to time in the absolute impossibility of having any Catholic to assist at Mass, not infrequently use such principles as "Nobody is bound to do the impossible," or "Positive law does not bind in a situation of grave inconvenience" to celebrate Mass without anybody present, rather than not celebrate Mass at all. Nor can anybody blame them, given the divine efficacy and grace of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This flexibility is reflected in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which no longer makes the presence of another Catholic an obligation under pain of sin:

Let the priest not celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice without the participation of at least one of the faithful, unless it be for a just and reasonable cause (Can. 906).

Nevertheless, it is not the mind of the Church for the priest to celebrate without somebody else present, nor should he leave any stone unturned to ensure that such a person is in fact present. 

Fr. Peter Scott was ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988. After assignments as seminary professor, US District Superior, and Rector of Holy Cross Seminary in Goulburn, Australia, he is presently Headmaster of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy in Wilmot, Ontario, Canada. Those wishing answers may please send their questions to Q & A in care of Angelus Press, 2915 Forest Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109.



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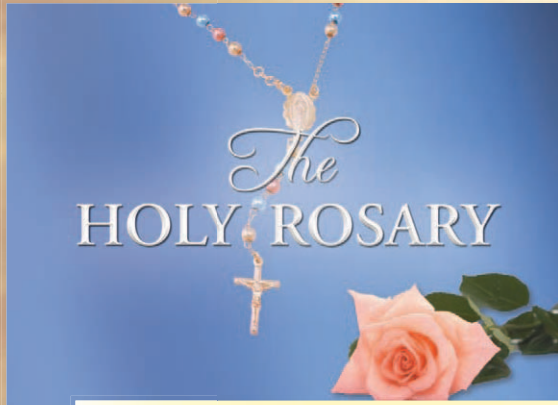
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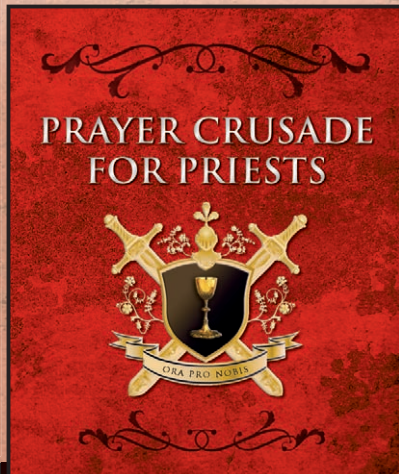
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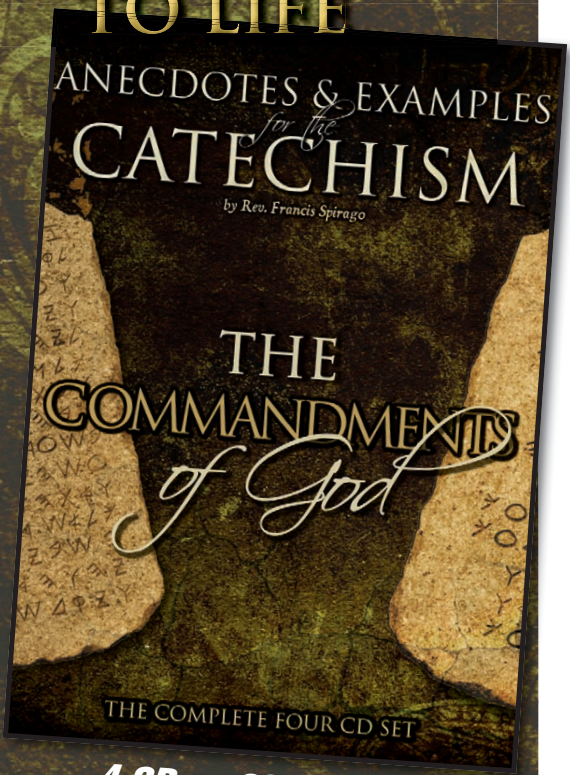
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