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The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Baptism: Door of the Church

The Son of Tears

Interview with a Recent Convert

The Baptismal Vows

Baptism

Baptism changes man from a slave of Satan to a child of God. It completely transforms his existence. From the very moment of baptism he is supposed to live out the grace he received in order to reach the supernatural goal God has given to him.

May this issue of *The Angelus* help to comprehend how much this sacrament should guide our Christian lives.





Milan - Baptism of Christ - relief from San Agostino

Letter from the Publisher

Baptism may be one of the most under-appreciated of all the sacraments. Perhaps it is because it is so common; perhaps because few of us have a memory of our own baptism. It is fitting then to ask whether we should have a greater understanding of that sacrament which is the initiation into the Church and the kingdom of God?

With this issue, we have provided some perspectives that will hopefully aid in reflecting on this great gift from God. From an interview with an adult convert, to some doctrinal considerations of the Easter Vigil and the baptismal promises, let us thank God for the grace to be “born again of water and the Holy Ghost” (John 3:5).

As the Catechism of the Council of Trent states: “Whoever reads the Apostle carefully will unhesitatingly conclude that a perfect knowledge of baptism is particularly necessary to the faithful. For not only frequently, but also in language the most energetic, in language full of the Spirit of God, he renews the recollection of this mystery, declares its divine character, and in it places before us the death, burial and Resurrection of our Lord as objects both of our contemplation and imitation.”

Let us then strive to live out our baptismal promises. Further, let the knowledge and recollection of baptism be an encouragement to us to frequent the other sacraments, which we have a right to since we have been baptized. If our Lord has given us this grace, He will not hesitate to give us others if we ask and live our duties of state.

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The Angelus

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The Son of Tears

by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX



“In her dream she saw herself standing on a sort of wooden rule, and saw a bright youth approaching her, joyous and smiling at her, while she was grieving and bowed down with sorrow. But when she explained that it was my soul’s doom she was lamenting, he bade her rest content and told her to look and see that where she was there I was also. And when she looked she saw me standing near her on the same rule.”

By that time, Monica had converted her pagan husband Patricius. Her humble and devoted example, refusing to join in the town gossips about her husband’s shortcomings, was the admiration of all the town. She had two other children of whom little is known, a son Navigius and one daughter who later in life became a nun and founded a monastery next to her brother’s Episcopal palace of Hippo. The *Confessions*, this unsurpassed masterpiece of classical Latin, of psychological depth and pathos, uncovers for us the long itinerary which finally led Monica’s son to the Milan baptistery and gave the Church the greatest convert after St. Paul (the only other conversion celebrated in Church liturgy).

Augustine had received from his religious mother the milk of Christian devotion and the rudiments of the faith, to such an extent that he was enlisted as a catechumen, was marked with the sign of the cross and received the sacramental of the salt, the preparatory steps for formal baptism. Soon after, his health being gravely compromised, the child himself asked for baptism.

“What agitation and with what faith I solicited from the piety of my mother and from thy Church (which is the mother of us all) the baptism of thy Christ, my Lord and my God. The mother of my flesh was much perplexed, for, with a heart pure in thy faith, she was always in deep travail for my eternal salvation.”

But the crisis passed and, with it, the occasion of receiving the sacrament. It may be strange to us that the son of such a mother would have delayed the reception of baptism to a later date, but this was a persistent custom despite the protests of the Church hierarchy. Since baptism was washing all sins and could be received only once, the faithful were inclined to purify the stains of youth. Augustine will explain and excuse thus his mother’s frame of mind:

“How much better, then, would it have been for me to have been cured at once! This would have been far better, in truth. But how many and great the waves of temptation which appeared to hang over me as I grew out of childhood! These were foreseen by my mother, and she preferred that the unformed clay should be risked to them rather than the clay molded after Christ’s image.”

Student of Carthage and Milan

Our hero had gladly left the family estate to turn a student in the big city of Carthage, which laid ready snares for such youths. The theaters displaying human love, the casual meetings of the young students did not help matters. Augustine was one of these predestined souls with infinite desires, who are persecuted by the “severe mercy” of God preventing them from resting in creatures.

“I was looking for something to love, for I was in love with loving, and I hated security and a smooth way, free from snares. And I did fall precipitately into the love I was longing for. My God, my mercy, with how much bitterness didst thou, out of thy infinite goodness, flavor that sweetness for me! For I was not only beloved but also I secretly reached the climax of enjoyment; and yet I was joyfully bound with troublesome tics, so that I could be scourged with the burning iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger, and strife.”

These divagations did not suit his shy and pacific temperament. Before long, he put on himself the chain which his parents feared for him. He lived with the one who gave him a son, Adeodatus, “the son of my sin.” Other snares were laid for him in the city and he soon became an avid listener of the Manicheans who were making inroads in the area.

Before too long the gifted student was promoted a rhetorician and started selling his speaking skills and words. But things were still troublesome for such an occupation. He decided to move to Rome, which had protective laws for such employments, and so doing, he would rid himself of his mother who would not depart from her prodigal son. Yet Rome was hardly a >

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better place for someone as refined and delicate of sentiments as the young teacher. Thankfully, an occasion was soon offered him to find work in the imperial court at Milan. A post for teacher of eloquence was offered, and Augustine won the first place despite that African accent which was the laughingstock of Italians.

Eyes Gradually Opened

At the time, Milan was prey to religious factions: the Empress Justina, won over to the Arian cause, was trying to offset the spiritual impact made by the Catholics in the imperial city, and used force to oust Bishop Ambrose from his cathedral. The bishop, determined to die with his people rather than to surrender the church to heretics, spent whole nights in church. To maintain the fervor of his flock during the long vigils, he had them sing alternately the sacred hymns he had composed for the occasion. Monica was certainly among the laity besieged within the walls of the Duomo. Miracles were witnessed, certainly not ignored by Augustine. More skeptical than curious, he decided to attend the preaching of the saintly bishop. Soon enough, he enlisted among the catechumens preparing themselves for baptism in the religion of his childhood. Not only was he cured of the Manichean venom, but his eyes were gradually opened to see the falsity of the accusations made against the Church.

“With great eagerness, then, I fastened upon the venerable writings of thy Spirit and principally upon the apostle Paul. I had thought that he sometimes contradicted himself and that the text of his teaching did not agree with the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets; but now all these doubts vanished away. And I saw that those pure words had but one face, and I learned to rejoice with trembling.”

Hymn of Liberation

This predestined soul, long captive in darkness, was now singing the hymn of liberation. After so many errors he finally saw

shining the dawn of truth. But his joy was yet incomplete. “I had found the precious pearl; I still had to sell my goods to gain it, and I was hesitant.” Ambrose was in admiration of his mother, ignorant as she was of the inner struggle which was tormenting the catechumen, virtually despairing of finding the way of life. St. Ambrose worked like four in instructing the ignorant. He would be the one to teach and baptize the famous orator. But for all his zeal, he did not offer Augustine the warmth and intimacy which he was so much in need of. The bishop received him as a father and rather *episcopaliter*—bishop-like—but certainly not as a friend. Ambrose, a born administrator and a man of action, swamped by ceaseless business, lacked the condescendence and empathy needed to understand this intellectual and sentimental professor, timid to a fault and perhaps embittered by his past disappointments.

Verba movent, exempla trahunt: actions speak louder than words, and from the *Confessions*, we see clearly that the reluctant soul was finally won over by contagious example. And firstly by that of his own mother who, against her African custom, submitted to her bishop without complaint, to the great surprise of her son. But other stories were offered him of men who suddenly left a brilliant literary or military career to embrace the Church. He was struck by the “We are going to the church and recite the Creed” of Victorianus with whose writings he was familiar. He was in admiration of the “We have resolved to serve God” of two noblemen who unhesitatingly joined the monastery of Treveris beyond the Rhine. The duel was reaching its climax; it was between the old habit hard to die and chastity gently calling him.

“My old mistresses, trifles of trifles and vanities of vanities, still enthralled me. They tugged at my fleshly garments and softly whispered: ‘Are you going to part with us? And from that moment will we never be with you any more?’ ‘Do you think you can live without us?’ And [chastity] smiled on me with a challenging smile as if to say: ‘Can you not do what these young men and maidens can? Or can any of them do it of themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God? The Lord their God gave me to them.’”



This is when, amidst bitter tears of repentance and prayers for peace of mind, he heard the voice of a child chanting: “*Tolle, lege*—Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it.” Augustine reached for the Scripture texts and read:

“Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.’ I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away. Then we went in to my mother, and told her what happened, to her great joy. She saw that thou hadst granted her far more than she had ever asked for in all her pitiful and doleful lamentations. For thou didst so convert me to thee that I sought neither a wife nor any other of this world’s hopes, but set my feet on that rule of faith which so many years before thou hadst showed her in her dream about me.”

Catechumen

At the start of Lent 387, Augustine and his friends left the country villa of sweet Cassiciacum for the Milan capital and enlisted in the number of those to be baptized on Easter Vigil.

This list, like for marriage banns, was offered to the scrutiny of the faithful to sort out the unworthy candidates. These catechumens, called “competent” or “elect” met frequently in the basilica to prepare the great ceremony. Not only did they receive the exorcisms and the imposition of hands, but mostly an in-depth catechesis, to initiate them into the beliefs, practices and rites of thorough Christian living. The Gospel manuscripts were explained by a priest as well as detailed commentaries on the Pater Noster.

The elect were to learn by rote the Creed which they would soon pronounce before the entire congregation. Among the Milanese candidates, the son of Monica was certainly the most notable, and none so well prepared for the profession of faith.

Baptism

The baptismal ceremonies took place within the solemn Easter Vigil, on April 24 that year. With the lengthy readings the neophyte—new plant—saw passing before his mind, avid of the Scriptures, the most striking scriptural passages: the Creation, the Deluge, the trial of Abraham, the passage of the Red Sea, the vision of Ezechiel, Jonas and Nabuchodonosor.

He, so sensitive to great singing, must have wept over the suggestive hymns and psalms which resounded under the vaults of the basilica, especially as he heard the final psalm which inaugurates the baptismal ceremony: “*Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes...*’ As the hart panteth after the springs of water, thus doth my soul cry after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth after the strong and living God. When shall I go and present myself before the face of the Lord?”

The hour had come. The bishop and the whole clergy accompanied the elect to the baptistry, an octagonal building located outside the basilica. There, with his face turned towards the west, Augustine spat on the devil according to the Milanese ritual, and thrice renounced the devil and his work, the world and its pomps. Then, descending into the pool and facing the orient, he confessed the faith of Christ, responding three times “Credo” to the three questions. This being done, the water fell on his head, on his shoulders and his chest while Ambrose was pronouncing the sacramental words: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Then, as the water washed the skin, divine grace was washing the soul. Coming out of the pool, his godfather helped him put on the white vestments and the bishop prayed over him: “Receive the white vestment and carry it without blemish before the tribunal of Christ.” Confirmation followed immediately the rite of baptism, and the ceremony ended with the imposition of hands and the invocation of the sevenfold Holy Ghost.

This being done, the procession returned to the basilica and the neophytes, dressed in white and with lit candles, processed as they heard the words of the psalmist: “I shall approach the altar of God, of God who rejoices my youth.” The *Gloria in Excelsis* was intoned and the >

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newly baptized for the first time were allowed to attend the sacred mysteries. At the Offertory, the parents came to offer the oblations for the sacrifice. It was not without emotion that the friendly crowd witnessed the holy widow Monica bring her offering to the altar. On this very day, her son was going to receive his first communion which was to seal the union of the Christians with their Lord and with their new Christian family. The newly baptized were to vest the white vestments for the entire octave, and were to attend daily the meetings which completed their initiation. That was the chosen time to explain to them the Eucharistic mysteries which they had only recently witnessed. The neophyte was to live through it as a spiritual honeymoon.

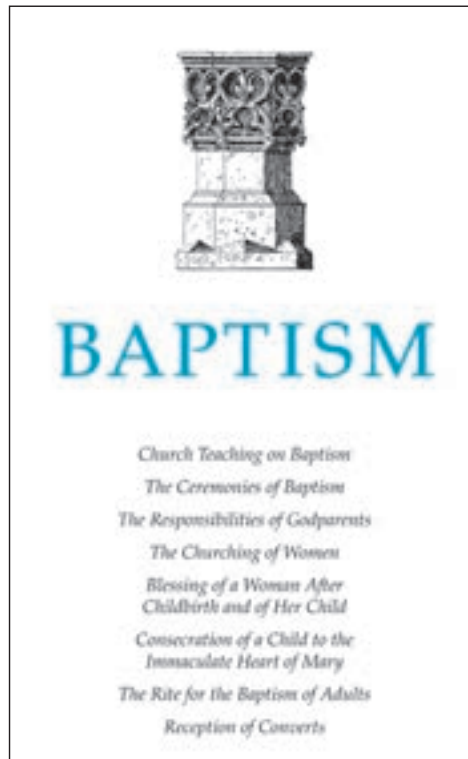
“Nor did I ever have enough in those days of the wondrous sweetness of meditating on the depth of thy counsels concerning the salvation of the human race. How freely did I weep in thy hymns and canticles; how deeply was I moved by the voices of thy sweet-speaking Church! The

voices flowed into my ears; and the truth was poured forth into my heart, where the tide of my devotion overflowed, and my tears ran down, and I was happy in all these things.”

This feast had its perfect epilogue in the house of Monica. The son of tears had become the son of joy; once more joy had flowed forth from the depth of bitterness in a human soul. Perhaps her other son, Navigius, felt miffed. She would have answered with the father of the parable: “It was just to hold a banquet and rejoice, for this your brother had died and he arose from death; he was lost and behold he has been found.” Before too long, these two souls, now perfectly attuned, were to sing God’s praises through the ecstatic colloquies of Ostia where the mother of tears would pass to better life.

Fr. Dominique Bourmaud has spent the past 26 years teaching at the Society seminaries in America, Argentina, and Australia. He is presently stationed at St. Vincent’s Priory, Kansas City, where he is in charge of the priests’ training program.

Baptism



Here is the complete Rite of Baptism in English and Latin (which can also be found in our *1962 Roman Catholic Daily Missal*). Every church and chapel should have these available to the faithful. Includes: Church Teaching about Baptism, the Serious Obligations of Godparents, the Rite of the Churching of Women, Blessing of a Woman after Childbirth and of Her Child, Consecration of a Child to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Rite of Baptism for Infants and Adults, the Reception of Converts.



A Home-Coming

Interview with a Recent Convert

The Angelus: How would you describe your family at the moment you joined the Church?

Convert: We were devout Protestants who took our faith very seriously, reading the Bible and praying regularly, enjoying a good family life with no deep-seated problems.

The Angelus: What types of religious affiliation did you embrace?

Convert: The first few churches I attended as a child and a young man were Southern Baptist. As I had my Protestant experience of “conversion”, I began attending a Pentecostal church associated with a small denomination. I met my wife as a result of this association. I even studied to become a pastor at a Bible College, and did study in Ministry. I left school to get married. We then became affiliated with a

Charismatic group that was part of “The Word of Faith” (health and wealth) movement, and that was the beginning of the end for us. We had a rude awakening as we got to know the leaders involved, the hypocrisy and the greed that was all part of that. We recoiled from that, and that is when we started to search for something more mainstream and we attended again Baptist churches and then Reformed Baptist Churches. If I were to nail my theology down, I would say that I believed the tenets of the Reformed Baptist Church. I was Calvinistic in matters pertaining to salvation, and very Baptist in matters regarding faith.

The Angelus: You spoke of a “conversion experience” which led to a Pentecostal church. What do you mean by that?



Convert: At the time I would have defined it as “getting saved”. Now I would define it as coming to a place where I realized I had some degree of responsibility regarding faith and beginning to try to live accord to my understanding of the faith. Prior to that, I had not made such a commitment. I was very irreligious; I attended church sporadically, on social events or when invited by someone. As far as making religion an integral part of my life, that was not until I was 16 years of age.

The Angelus: How different or similar are the various Protestant groups?

Convert: By and large, they are very diverse. Of course there are some similarities. All Protestants would agree on small, core things: the Virgin birth, the infallibility of Sacred Scripture and other such basic things. But the diversity is much more pronounced. I personally attended churches where “Speaking in Tongues” is seen as immediate and current acts of the Holy Spirit, and others where they would frown on it. Some would hold that smoking tobacco or drinking alcohol is perfectly permissible, others would hold that it is a damnable sin. Even something as basic as the Holy Trinity—they all should believe in it, but that does not mean that they do. There are certain Pentecostal groups that deny the Trinity and would still consider themselves Christians. And unfortunately, many Trinitarian people would consider them to be Christians too, so shallow is their understanding of what it means to be Christian. Belief in the Trinity or not is not so important: everything goes as long as you believe in Jesus.

The Angelus: What was satisfying about them? What was unsatisfactory?

Convert: Some of these churches were very satisfying. There were people who genuinely loved the Lord and loved each other; there was good, open, honest fellowship. It is very rewarding to be around such people.

But also, at times, it was very frustrating whenever a disagreement would arise. Disagreement is the very core of Protestantism since it encourages everyone to privately interpret the Scriptures. And so when you have a meeting of

ten Protestants, you have at least ten different opinions as to what Sacred Scripture means. And such people are really indifferent and really never raise a doubt. Their thinking is: “I understand that you believe this or that, and so, since that’s what you believe, then that would work very well for you.” And they would just agree to disagree. Now, I am not one of those people. I believe that if something is true, it is true in every time and in every place. And so I would often find myself at odds with many Protestants with whom I would disagree on biblical interpretation because I simply could not agree to disagree. We needed to figure out what is true and wrestle the thing to the ground to find out what is going on. The group leaders would discard the question. For them disagreement on, say, speaking in tongues is not important as long as we love Jesus, so everything is fine.

The Angelus: Do you mean to say that the agreement is on the sentiment, the experience of Jesus, but not on doctrine?

Convert: Exactly! But I could not understand how we could agree about Jesus if we could not agree about what Jesus taught. How do you define that experience? Much of it depends on what Jesus taught and wants me to live by. And so, at times, it was very disheartening and upsetting because of the constant dissension which was essential to being a part of a Protestant church. If you meet a Baptist or a Methodist, it does not mean that you know what they believe. One thing that stood out for us was the oneness of the Catholic doctrine. With Catholics, I know what they are supposed to believe because there is a standard, a dogma. There is a singular teaching of the Catholic Church which all Catholics are obliged to believe.

The Angelus: If there is doctrinal dissension, should there not arise some strange practices and “moral” behaviors in Protestant circles that are alien to Catholic morality?

Convert: Indeed, since each Protestant is free to interpret Sacred Scripture as he (or she) wishes, given human sinful nature, many will have no problem watching lascivious movies and others would object to this, and yet would go >

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for something clearly blasphemous. Coming into the Catholic Church, the focus was laid on faith and morality together: if you believe a way, you behave a certain way. To see that in practice in the Catholic Church was a very compelling argument for me. As a Protestant, issues would come up. My children would come to me and ask: "Dad, what do we believe about this, and how do we know that what we believe is true since other people believe something different?" And there would be all these inconsistencies. Whereas now, when issues come up, I answer: "What does the Catholic Church say about this? Because it does not matter what Bobby or Joe says; what matters is the final teaching of the Church on this. Let us find out what the Church teaches and let us obey it."

The Angelus: What tells you that the universal Catholic Church is right and not wrong?

Convert: The authority of Catholic Church rests on the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has commanded me to hear the Catholic Church on pain of damnation, and if the Catholic Church can teach error, then Jesus Christ has commanded men to hear error and that is ridiculous. He said that He would be with the Catholic Church till the consummation of the world.

The Angelus: What were you looking for that you had never found until you knocked at the door of the Catholic Church?

Convert: It is the consistency of the message, the consistency of the practice together with the doctrine, the authority and irrefragable nature of the teaching. Yes, the real thing was the consistency going back 2,000 years, and to look back at the writing of the early Church Fathers and see them talking about the same doctrine, the same practice, and the same structure that I can see in the Catholic Church today. Nothing has changed in over 2,000 years; it was the same from the very foundation. Whereas Protestants can go only back so far, and they have already changed what they were doing five centuries ago. One text made me realize the need of belonging to the Church. It was from St. Cyprian (died 258) speaking of the dissident group which refused to allow the return of apostates to the faith,

(they did not change the faith, the doctrine, the structure; they simply refused to recognize the authority of their Bishop), St. Cyprian said, "He no longer has *God* for his *Father*, who *has not the Church* for his *mother*."

The Angelus: Did you have any friends who were instrumental in drawing you to the faith?

Convert: I had experiences with three men in my life to whom I will forever be grateful, that were solid Catholics very well versed in defending the Faith and answering my questions. It was a working weekend that I spent with two of them on the East Coast which led to my conversion. I got to ask them questions, and I realized how reasonable, how scriptural, how historic their answers were. So I came home and started to read the Catholic materials and began to examine the teaching of the catechism.

The Angelus: How long did it take you to visit an SSPX church after the meeting with the two men?

Convert: It took only three weeks. I needed to understand what Catholics believe. Within three weeks, I was thoroughly convinced that I absolutely had to be one. During that time, I did a lot of praying. I described it as a "crisis of faith" because I had spent 24 years knowing what I believed and why I believed it, and I thought I was prepared to defend any of these Protestant issues. And here I am a veteran Protestant confronted with one thing after another and finding that I am wrong and the Catholic Church is right. And I remember very clearly the night sitting on my couch when I realized that I had to become a Catholic. I had just been studying the Eucharist, and I came to realize that Jesus was being literal when He said: "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in you." And I had done some study to find out whether, besides the Catholic Church, other churches possessed the real Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and none of them would teach that the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ at the Consecration. And so, I suddenly realized that, no matter what else, if I were to save my soul, I absolutely had to be a Catholic. And I remember clearly that



moment. It was about two o'clock in the morning because I had been staying up very late reading. And the next thought was: "But what if I cannot convince Lisa and the kids; what if they won't come with me." Then I thought: "Well, I will go alone because I have to save my soul." Thank God they came with me!

The Angelus: That was going to be my next question: You are speaking of your own conversion, but what about your wife and kids?

that verse, which explained that the Scriptures were useful, but they never said that it was all that was necessary. From time to time, she said to me that there is no denying that this Catholic position or that Catholic position is true. After a while it started to add up. She was confronted by what she had believed and what she was not aware of being the truth which was what the Catholic Church had said all along. Over a period of a couple of weeks, I said that I had made an appointment with a priest and asked her whether she would go with me,



Convert: I was visited by a grace which I did not deserve. As I was studying and leaning towards the Catholic Faith, I really did not expect such a warm welcome. She expressed her concern, but said she knew how seriously I took my faith and the Scriptures. Then if I would be drawn into that direction, she owed me at least the courtesy of hearing what I had to say and studying it with me to see whether it were true.

The Angelus: What did she say after that?

Convert: It did not take her very long. I proposed questions to her like: "Where in Scripture do we read that we need to believe in 'Scripture alone'?" And she began to bring up this verse and

and she said that she would. I wanted to seek out some type of traditional church. I knew that some churches were traditional and others were not. So I did a Google search for a traditional Catholic Church near my home and the SSPX mission name came up.

The Angelus: Did you not feel alien attending the Mass in Latin?

Convert: No, I never felt any kind of hesitancy, resistance, or being out of place. I had done enough reading before attending my first Mass: I understood why the Mass was in Latin. I understood its singleness, its oneness. I recognized that this is a common language >

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spoken all over the world. If you look up the names of plants in scientific journals, the names are always in Latin and nobody thinks it is weird. I thought it was beautiful and untouched and part of something that stretched back a lot further than anything I had been a part of before. If there was any discomfort with my children, it probably did not last more than a couple of weeks. They understood the purpose behind it and were ready to embrace it. Interestingly enough, both my daughters were taking classical Latin, and it was neat for them to recognize some of the words and phrases.

The Angelus: What about your friends, your social life and job?

Convert: Coincidentally or providentially, my boss was one of those two men who were instrumental in my conversion. He was very pleasantly surprised when I told him that we were going to Mass. But in my social life, it was a lot more rocky! For instance, there are people who pretty much dropped us off from their list as we talked about conversion, who had been very close to us for many years. But, looking back, we knew which friends it would be who would shut us out. We had kind of prepared ourselves for it. We did realize the cost, but we realized that the cost did not count. It did not matter; we knew that what we were doing was to save our souls. And, by the same token, two whole families have converted as a result of hearing our testimony and conversion story and arguing for the Faith. That is very rewarding.

The Angelus: What did preparing for baptism mean to you?

Convert: When many Protestants use the term “born again” they are referring to that moment of conversion when they think that they were “saved” by a profession of faith. At the moment when he gives himself to Jesus with all his heart, Jesus forgives all of his sins, he is “born again” and “saved”. As I was reading that “challenge” by *fish eaters.com*, I was struck by John, Chapter 3, when Jesus speaks of “being born again”. He speaks very clearly of being born of water and of the Spirit. And so, when I realized that the Catholic Church teaches that water

baptism is the act of being born again by having original sin and actual sins washed away by the water of baptism, I was blown away. I thought, “Wow! Being baptized is being ‘born again!’”

Then I simply came to see that after receiving that water, all these sins are taken away and gone: a person is a brand new creature that was not there before, free from original sin and from actual sin. I began asking the question: Was my baptism valid? Have I ever had my sins washed away? Am I sitting here with all of my sins still against me? Then if baptism washes away all of your sins, there has to be a method in place for getting rid of sin after you have been baptized because people continue to sin. They have to be forgiven and washed clean of that sin, which led me to the study of confession and penance.

The Angelus: This must have been a very humbling awakening.

Convert: Indeed, I realized that I was in a lot of trouble whether my baptism was valid or not. Even if I had been validly baptized and rid of original sin, I still was carrying all the sins I had committed afterward because I had never made a confession and had never been absolved of my sins. And the likelihood that I could claim anything like perfect contrition would be zero in my estimation... because I know myself. It was very humbling to realize I am cloaked in sin and there is nothing I can do about it. I cannot get rid of it and I cannot come clean of it, and if I die in the state I am in, I cannot go to heaven. So, when we joined the Church at the Easter Vigil, it was such a profound experience to make our first confession, to be baptized and to be able to receive the Lord’s Body, and know—not wonder, not hope, not think—but absolutely know that my sins were washed away, that I was in the truth, in the faith and had a real hope of salvation.

The Angelus: What did the preparation for baptism consist of?

Convert: We were working through one or two chapters of *My Catholic Faith* every evening and praying the Rosary, and so there was that real sense of taking what we were learning and practicing it at the same time. As we were working through each of these doctrines in the



catechism, we would go to the Internet to look for other examples of other teachings correlative to those dogmas. It was a sort of a crash course, and we jumped in feet first.

The Angelus: Did it change your life style at home much, with the children, on the natural level as well as a certain understanding of Christian virtues?

Convert: It really did. It has taught me to realize many things I was handling wrongly as a parent and a husband. I realized that these things were out of shape. We began to seek out an understanding of the Church on intimacy between the spouses and the role of parents towards the children, disciplining children and all of this. With my Protestant background, man in the home is king of the family, the boss in a stern and unquestionable sense. The family exists to reflect the glory of the father. These are Puritanical and Calvinistic views. Now, within Catholicism, the strong role of the father figure is taking a different aspect: he is not so much the tyrant, but one who uses influence rather than force. As for the children, they are children and far from perfect. Yet I see a tendency toward things Catholic and toward wanting to know the faith. When at Christmas time we asked for what they request, it was very touching to hear one of them say: "I would like a statue of St. Rita."

The Angelus: Would you describe the ceremony and circumstances of your baptism?

Convert: The Easter liturgy is a very solemn ceremony. Baptism fits in like a glove. Easter celebrates the Resurrection of Christ coming out of the grave. Likewise, baptism makes the soul rise from the dead spiritually, and somewhat echoes the Easter resurrection.

For my family and myself, the Easter Vigil was like a home-coming and being at peace with God. It was finally knowing that I was where God wanted me. The parishioners were truly wonderful because people often think they should believe certain things and they say that they do, but when they actually react in real life, you realize how they actually believe. And so, to see the way the parishioners from all local chapels responded to our Baptism, the

seriousness and awe with which they reacted to it, all this spoke a great deal of what they really believe about it. It was very touching, it was like becoming a part of the family.

The Angelus: Were there many changes in your Christian life after a whole year as converts?

Convert: We have just begun to associate with people who attend church where we relocated for my work. The other night, we were at a parishioner's home, had a blast, dinner, stayed up late, good discussion, good time, discussing matters of faith, home and job. Recently we wanted to organize a party, spoke to the pastor of the church, and invited some kids of the church. There is more a sense of that parochial parish life, and we plug into that, and of course attending Mass as frequently as we can, going to adoration when available. The kids need that support of friends.

The Angelus: Any last comment?

Convert: I was probably the most unlikely Catholic anybody would have known, and it is amazing to think that He would convert me and use me to convert my family, and through it, my extended family and friends. I think of St. Paul (I Corinthians, ch. 1) saying that God has not chosen the glorious things of the world, but the weak and foolish things, because I was as anti-Catholic as anyone could be. Bishop Sheen said that there were not one hundred persons in America who hated the Catholic Church, but there were millions who hated what they mistakenly thought the Church to be. I was one of those millions. I had a very clear picture of what I thought the Catholic Church was, and I truly hated it. But things changed when I came to realize that not only is it not what I thought it was, but I began to realize the beauty of the Catholic Church.

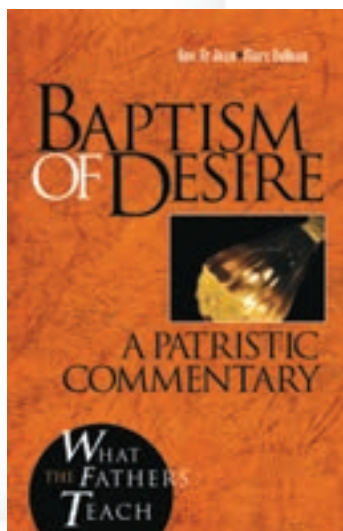


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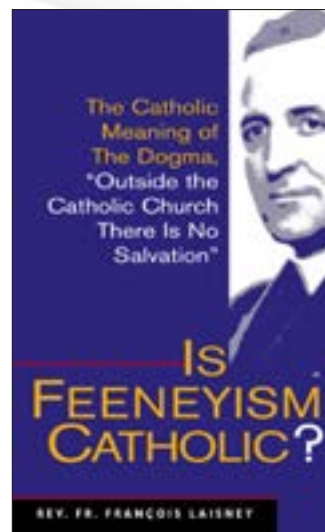
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The Baptismal Vows

And Slavery to Jesus in Mary

by Fr. Paul Robinson, SSPX

Sin Is Slavery

¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *The City of God*, on Adam's sin (Bk. 13, Ch. 13): "The fact is that the soul, which had taken perverse delight in its own liberty and disdained the service of God, was now deprived of its original mastery over the body; because it had deliberately deserted the Lord who was over it, it no longer bent to its will the servant below it, being unable to hold the flesh completely in subjection as would always have been the case, if only the soul had remained subject to God."

It is the glory of our modern world, we are told, to provide us with freedom. The past was a time of tyrants and their oppressive laws, which restricted the exercise of man's free will. But the present has delivered us—as far as is possible—from external impositions on liberty of choice. Now you can think as you want, act as you want, live as you want. Nothing stands in your way, neither God, nor moral code, nor natural law. And so you are perfectly free.

Behind this epitome of liberal thought, however, lies a grave sophism. To be subject to nothing is to be subject to whim. Any man who gives free rein to his will is a slave, indentured to his lower nature, which mercilessly carries him to his own destruction. When the intellect is not subject to truth and the will to good, then destructive passions arise to rule the both of them.¹

In a heated argument with the Pharisees, Our Lord tells them that His truth will set them free. They protest that they have never been slaves to anyone, but He replies that "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (Jn. 8:33-34). Sin, in fact, is the ultimate tragedy for a man, for its service so

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enfeebles his will that he can no longer choose what is best for him; he can only choose what is destructive. He becomes a slave of death.

Thus, by defining true freedom to be a total lack of constraint, liberals “promise liberty, while they themselves are slaves of corruption” (II Pet. 2:15).

Freedom from Sin’s Slavery

In this light, the terrible drama facing every man coming into this world is that he is born a slave. The presence of Original Sin in the soul of an infant places him under the dominion of sin and in bondage to the devil. His life is out of control and headed for destruction unless he be set free. But this freedom is not gained easily, for no chains are heavier than those of sin.

By the infinite mercy of God, of course, we are provided with a Savior, someone who can save us from this slavery. But how does He do this? By taking the form of a slave, says St. Paul (Phil. 2:7). To rescue us from bondage, Our Lord placed Himself in a state of total submission, like unto that of a slave: He constantly professes His total subjection to the will of the Father starting with His first words (cf. Heb. 10:7); He places Himself in a state of total dependence on His Mother for a period of 30 years; and He dies the death of a slave (crucifixion), as if helpless before the violence of His enemies. Sin’s shackles were broken through a life of total subjection.

From the time of Our Lord’s Redemptive Act, men are offered the freedom of Christ (cf. Gal. 4:25), which they accept by receiving the waters of Baptism. In this sacrament, it is not sufficient for sin to be wiped away. That would be only a temporary solution for man’s slavery, and he would quickly be back in a state of bondage. On the contrary, it is necessary for the candidate to “switch sides”, to take on a new life, a new mode of existence. Quite simply, the baptized must be brought into the life of Christ Himself.

St. Paul is at pains in many passages to make Catholics understand that their lives are now assimilated to that of Christ. In the early Church, catechumens walked down steps to be immersed or buried in a pool of water before rising up and walking up the other side. This was a symbol, St. Paul remarks in Rom. 6:3-4, of their death and resurrection, mirroring those of Our Lord. As a result, they can “walk in newness of life”; they now live the life of Christ.

But the life of the baptized must not only take on the features of the end of Our Lord’s life, but of its totality. His life was one of dependence and slavery; so must ours be. It was not a slavery to sin, which is one of unwillingness and violence, but a slavery of total, voluntary, loving submission to God. Such is the life that we are called to live with Christ.

This is the reason for St. Paul’s invitation: “As you yielded your members as slaves of uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members as slaves of justice unto sanctification...[N]ow set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and as your end, life everlasting” (Rom. 6:19-22).

The fact is that the only path that frees us from the slavery to sin is the one of subjection to God; there is no third option for man. Our Lord traveled



² Several of the New Testament authors refer to themselves as the slaves of Jesus Christ: Sts. Peter, Paul, James and Jude.

³ *True Devotion to Mary*, §68.

⁴ End of the treatment of Article 2 of the Creed.

this path most perfectly, as did Our Lady, who calls herself the “slave of God” twice in Scripture (cf. Lk. 1:38, 48).² And it is Baptism that accomplishes this transition from servile slavery to loving slavery, from slave of the devil to slave of Jesus Christ.

“We do not belong to ourselves,” says St. Louis de Montfort, “but are entirely His, as His members and His slaves, whom He has bought at an infinitely dear price, the price of all His Blood. Before Baptism we belonged to the devil, as his slaves; but Baptism has made us true slaves of Jesus Christ, who have no right to live, to work or to die, except to bring forth fruit for that God-Man; to glorify Him in our bodies and to let Him reign in our souls, because we are His conquest, His acquired people and His inheritance.”³

And the Catechism of the Council of Trent says that we Catholics, “above all others, are under the obligation of devoting and consecrating ourselves forever, like faithful slaves, to our Redeemer and our Lord.”⁴

The Ceremony of Baptism

This fuller understanding of Baptism’s role shines a light on the beautiful ceremony which has been witnessed so often by Traditional Catholics, especially those blessed with big families. It is striking to modern sensibilities how unabashedly the Church treats the candidate as being under the dominion of the devil, as belonging to him.

In the simpler and more familiar infant Baptism, the candidate is not allowed into the church building until two exorcisms have been performed. The devil is driven off by the breath of the priest’s mouth and the infant is marked repeatedly with the sign of the cross, which is like a gate barring the demon’s re-entrance.

From the very beginning, the candidate is informed of the requirements for his change of allegiance. The godparents ask faith and eternal life for the *baptizandus*, and the priest immediately speaks of the service that he will have to render to obtain these things: keep the commandments and love God with his entire being.

Once everyone has entered the church and prayed together the Apostles’ Creed and the Our Father on the candidate’s behalf, the priest immediately goes after the devil again, with a third and final exorcism, the only one performed inside the church. That completed, he is confident that the enemy has been definitively repulsed, and he wants to open up the passageways for grace. To do so, the priest repeats a gesture of Our Lord (cf. Mk. 7:34), using his own spittle to anoint the child’s senses, which sin and the devil have up to this time stopped up and so prevented the influx of divine life.

Now comes the time for the candidate to bind himself definitively to the new life, the eternal life that he has requested. Knowing the reality of man’s fallen condition, Mother Church does not hesitate to exact vows from the infant, which will oblige him forever. There are two triple interrogations, one to reject Satan and the other to embrace Christ. Three questions, it seems, are needed for completeness. Satan alone must not be renounced, but also his way of acting and his way of appearing, that is, his spirit. There must >

Theme Baptism

⁵ *True Devotion to Mary*, §126.

be a definitive break with the slavery to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Just as necessary are the questions connected to the new life: one concerns God the Father, one God the Son, and one God the Holy Ghost. By believing in Them and the order that They have established for our salvation, the candidate implicitly binds himself to live according to that order. This is his new and blessed slavery, which he then immediately begins when the water is poured in the name of the Three.

“Every Christian,” says St. Louis de Montfort, “before his Baptism, was the slave of the devil, seeing that he belonged to him. He has in his Baptism, by his own mouth or by his sponsor’s, solemnly renounced Satan, his pomps and his works; and he has taken Jesus Christ for his Master and Sovereign Lord, to depend upon Him in the quality of a slave of love.”⁵

The Baptismal Vows

Do you renounce Satan?
I do renounce him.

And all his works?
I do renounce them.

And all his allurements?
I do renounce them.

Do you believe in God, the
Father almighty, Creator of
heaven and earth?
I do believe.

Do you believe in Jesus
Christ, His only Begotten
Son, our Lord, Who was
born for us and suffered for
us?
I do believe.

Do you believe in the Holy
Ghost, the holy Catholic
Church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of
sins, the resurrection of the
body, and life everlasting?
I do believe.



⁶ Cf. Louis Le Crom, *Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort* (Clovis, 2010), pp. 223-224.

⁷ *True Devotion to Mary*, §120.

⁸ Unfortunately, it seems that even this Scriptural and Catholic slavery is odious to the Conciliar Church. On August 2, 2001, the Congregation of Saints declared that St. Louis de Montfort could not be made a Doctor of the Church. It seems that the primary reasons were his unecumenical Marian devotion and undemocratic language. See *Le Sel de la Terre*, No. 84, pp. 75-86.

A More Perfect Slavery

The same St. Louis, at the beginning of his priesthood, was unsure as to what path God wanted him to take. To know God's will, he traveled to Rome on foot in 1706 and obtained an audience with Pope Clement XI. Though he spoke of his attraction of heading off to the foreign missions, the Pope told him rather that he was to preach missions in France, and specifically that he was to instruct the people and the children in their catechism and have them make solemn renewals of their baptismal vows.⁶

From that point, St. Louis faithfully fulfilled this commission, preaching innumerable missions and having the attendants sign contracts attesting to the solemn renewal of these vows, which, quoting St. Augustine, he called the greatest and most indispensable vows.

But, more than this, St. Louis saw that the most appropriate spirit for such renewal was one of loving slavery to Jesus Christ. Only such a spirit would go with that of the baptismal ceremony itself. To truly enter into this spirit, it was necessary to imitate Our Lord as perfectly as possible. He became a slave for us, subjecting Himself totally to His Mother, surrendering all. And so we, in turn, must place ourselves in total dependence on His Mother and give her everything that we have in the order of nature and grace. Once we have done this willingly and lovingly—and so enslaved ourselves to her—only then are we completely enslaved to Jesus Christ. In this way, Our Lord's own Mother becomes the means for the most perfect renewal of our baptismal vows.

“The most perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing else but a perfect and entire consecration of ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and this is the devotion which I teach; or, in other words, a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy Baptism.”⁷

Conclusion

The word “slave” is rightfully one to which much odium is attached, when considered in its traditional meaning. The lovers of the world today, especially, would hasten to say with the Pharisees that they have never been the slaves of anyone. The Catholic, however, who has been incorporated in Christ by his Baptism, provides a new use for this word: that of a total, voluntary, loving submission to his Savior Jesus Christ.⁸ What more perfect response could be given, in fact, to a world that is so convinced of its dignity and so proud of its independence from God?

And, for those who wish to be the most perfect slaves of Our Lord, it is clear that they can only do so by in turn placing themselves in a total loving dependence on Our Lady. Let all who read this, then, live most faithfully the vows of their baptism by happily bearing the title of “slaves of Jesus in Mary.”

Fr. Paul Robinson was ordained in 2006 by Bishop Bernard Fellay and has been a professor at Holy Cross Seminary in Australia since 2009. He is author of an audio course on St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*, which may be obtained at www.stasaudio.org.

Faith and Morals

Baptism and the Easter Vigil

by Fr. Christopher Danel





Faith and Morals

The baptism of her children and thus their incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ is a matter of prime importance in the life and history of our Holy Mother the Church. We find myriad treatises and expositions of sacred doctrine by the Fathers of the Church on precisely this topic. The liturgical life of the Church is deeply imbued, in text and symbol, by the accompaniment of the catechumens—those preparing to convert to the Faith—to the sacred Font, and of the duty and joy of the Faithful in conserving the grace received in their own Baptism. This is particularly evident during the liturgical seasons of Lent and Eastertide.

While the life of the early centuries of the Church was deeply marked by the conversion of the pagans, and thus the presence of catechumens preparing for and receiving baptism, we are certainly more familiar in our own age with the baptism of the children of Catholic parents. However, it does not take much imagination to see how the impressive and solemn rites of the early centuries are placed right before our eyes during Holy Week, as well as in the baptismal rite of infants.

Throughout the forty days of Lent, the catechumens prepared themselves to receive the light of Faith. That is why the Lenten texts of the Mass are so full of imagery instructive to them (and to us). We find Naaman the Syrian cleansed of leprosy by the sevenfold bath, Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, water gushing from the rock struck by Moses, the Samaritan woman at the well, the bath of Susanna, and so on. On Wednesday of the fourth week of Lent, when the catechumens gathered for the greatest of the three scrutinies, the holy liturgy promises: *Effundam super vos aquam mundam* (I will pour upon you clean water). The two Epistles tell the catechumens, *I will take you from among the Gentiles*, and, *Wash yourselves, be clean*. In the Gospel, the Divine Physician gives sight to the man born blind, who had never seen Light; in fact baptism was also called *photismós*, or illumination. The readings later in the fourth week are all about resurrection from the dead: four accounts are given, one each by Elias and Eliseus, and two by the Lord of Life, for the widow's son and Lazarus. The

final announcement comes on Saturday, when the Introit shouts: *Sitientes, venite ad aquas* (All you that thirst, come to the waters)! Three days before the baptisms are conferred, the Holy Oils which will have such an important role in these ceremonies are blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass of Holy Thursday.

O beata nox! The blessed night leading to the Resurrection of Christ will be the time of death (to sin) and resurrection (to new life) for the catechumens. It all happens at the Easter Vigil. The station church for the Great Vigil is the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the mother church of Christendom, with its baptistery of Constantine. The rites as we have them in our own parishes come in fact from the Papal liturgy celebrated in this ancient church and baptistery, based on the ceremonies of even earlier years.

The Easter Vigil opens with the blessing of the new fire and then of the Paschal Candle, with the singing of the *Exultet*. Afterwards, the immediate preparation of the catechumens begins. The series of prophecies give us but a glimpse of the providential preparation God in His mercy laid out over many centuries for the holy mysteries we are about to witness: the Creation, the Exodus, the Temple, and the Law. Meanwhile, the catechumens are taken to a vestibule area by some of the priests and given the *Catechization*, that is, the initial series of rites preparatory to baptism: signing with the cross, exorcisms, imposition of hands, opening of the senses. Later sacramentaries include the conferral of blessed salt. The catechumens had previously been “conferred” the Creed (*traditio symboli*), by being instructed in it, and were to “return” it by profession (*redditio symboli*). With the prophecies, there are also three ancient Tracts whose Latin composition predates even the Vulgate of St. Jerome.

After the prophecies, the procession is formed whereby the Paschal Candle, like the pillar of fire which led the Israelites through the parted waters of the sea, leads the clergy and catechumens to the baptistery. In this ancient liturgy, the Litany of the Saints was sung thrice. Each invocation was sung seven times, then five times, then three times. The catechumens and godparents arrive before the baptistery. At



this point, we have the ceremony of the blessing of the font, of apostolic origin. The ancient baptisteries were a reservoir of baptismal water. Our baptisteries also serve as the basin where the baptismal water is reserved, and during baptism, water is not poured into an empty font, but is taken from this very pool-basin and poured over the forehead of the baptized. Our fonts are in fact elevated, miniature versions of the ancient baptismal basins.

At the baptistery, the bishop solicits the triple renunciation of Satan, his works, and his pomps from the catechumens. They are anointed on the breast and back with the Oil of Catechumens. They then enter into the baptismal basin and are asked by the bishop three times to profess their faith according to the articles of the Apostle's Creed, thus "returning" the Creed they had been taught (*redditio symboli*). Then they enter the baptismal basin, and with a hand held upon them, they are baptized by the threefold implementation of the baptismal water. Emerging from the basin, they are anointed on the head with Holy Chrism by a priest. They are given a white garment by the bishop and, according to later texts, a candle. Then, having gone to change into the garment, they reassemble in the attached chapel of the baptistery where the bishop confers upon them the Sacrament of Confirmation, once again with Holy Chrism. In connection with all of these ceremonies, we find also the singing of Psalm 41: *As the hart panteth after the fountains of water...* It is, of course, the beautiful *Sicut Cervus*.

Imbued with the Catholic Faith, the newly baptized, called *neophytes*, are led in solemn procession back to the basilica, once again accompanied by the Litanies, which lead into the Mass itself. The neophytes take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—the Mass of the Faithful and no longer just the Mass of the Catechumens—for the first time. There they receive their First Holy Communion, after which three particular and symbolic refreshments are given to them to drink: water, milk sweetened with honey (*lac et mel*), and wine, in the name of the Holy Trinity and as a sign of their entrance into the land of milk and honey which is the Church. The neophytes wear their white

garments during the entire octave, and out of respect for the laver of regeneration, they do not bathe nor go barefoot until Low Sunday.

In our own day, these identical baptismal ceremonies are collected together in the rite for the baptism of infants. In the vestibule of the church the preparatory ceremonies take place: the *exsufflatio*, the tracing of the crosses on the infant/convert, the imposition of hands with two of the prayers, the conferral of blessed salt, and two of the three exorcisms, which harken back to the three scrutinies. Entering the church, the convert or godparents recite the *Credo* and *Pater* while the priest recites them in Latin; we see here the *traditio symboli*. Before the baptistery, the preparation is completed with the third exorcism, the *Ephphatha*, the renunciation of Satan, and the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens. The convert or infant enters the baptistery proper, makes his profession of faith (*redditio symboli*), whether on his own or through his godparents, and is baptized, as the godparents hold him or lay their hands on him. He is anointed on the crown of the head with Holy Chrism by the priest and is given a white garment and a candle.

Whether or not baptisms take place at the Easter Vigil in one's parish, we all have the occasion to participate in the larger complex of ancient ceremonies of the Vigil on the night of Holy Saturday. From the new fire, the Paschal Candle and the *Exultet*, the prophecies and tracts, the *Sicut Cervus*, the blessing of the font, the Litanies and the Mass: the ancient rites are our own. Many of the particular characteristics of the Easter Vigil Mass are glimpses of even more ancient traits of the early Roman Rite, such as the absence of candles for the Gospel, the absence of some of the usual antiphons, and the Litany leading into the Mass. These things illustrate a law of the liturgy: primitive rites are maintained with greater tenacity in the more sacred seasons of the liturgical year.

God Knows

by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

“O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!” (Rom. 11:33)

It is easy enough to speak of the greatness of God and to give a list of His perfections. It is not so easy to pin them down in detail, and perhaps more so when dealing with such an evasive thing as knowledge. It will be useful to situate the different levels of knowledge before we speak of God Himself and of what His knowledge entails.

The Ladder of Knowledge

“Know yourself” was the last word of pagan wisdom. Knowledge is the source of wisdom. It opens avenues to things around us. And since we love as we know, we desire and move to obtain

things in as much as we have cognizance of them. This is enough to show that knowledge is central in the acquisition of perfection for higher beings.

But knowledge varies greatly according to the nature of the knower. Just dangle a piece of thread before Emmy the cat and you will witness one of the most amazing things in the universe, something much greater than all the innumerable galaxies put together: Emmy is reacting to the thread because she knows it! Quasars and super-novas are no doubt spectacular, but you can dangle any number of threads in front of a quasar and it won't budge an inch. Emmy, on the contrary, sees it and plays with it. A light explodes in her somewhere and fills her with the reality of this thread. Behold a profound communion is born: Emmy is informed with the



thread.

If we climb up the ladder of creatures, we pass onto the realm of intelligent beings. Cats sense, but, besides sensing, men think, love, and make decisions. Man is not any animal, he is a *rational* animal. He may be a reed agitated by the wind (as said Jesus Christ) but he is a *thinking* reed (as said Pascal). His superior life is evidenced by his rational acts. When we see a man walking with a dog, we do not wonder which one is on a leash. Nor do we compliment someone by saying that “he leads a dog’s life”.

Above men, angels enjoy an intellectual life which is broader and purer as they live in a higher sphere of existence, devoid of materiality: angels are pure spirits. If humans know only progressively, with much room for error and through the dark veil of matter, angelic knowledge is a brilliant flash of lightning, an intuitive perception of ideas and concepts directly infused by God into their “brain”. Men’s intellection cannot do without sensation: it works like moles groping in a dark tunnel. Compared to this, angelic knowledge resembles the eagle’s eye which, from on high, has the pure and sharp vision of so many more things with fewer glances.

The Mystery of Knowledge

The comparative degrees of knowledge already bring us some interesting data about the mystery of knowledge which will come useful as we discuss God’s own knowledge.

Knowledge offers a vital extension of the individual reaching outside itself into the other world. It is the root of “otherness”, the source of experience. It brings us to a fuller kind of life by expanding our horizons.

Knowledge consists in the communion between two beings: the knower and the thing known, living their different lives and yet united in the act of knowing. To know is to become what one was not. When I gaze at the house across the street, I suddenly get hold of the house within myself, although it still remains where it was, across the street. In creatures, of any level it may be, knowledge is a sign of inner imperfection because it means that I am in want of something

that I have not and, somehow, knowledge makes me possess it.

Knowledge is more perfect as the knowing subject is more immaterial. Angels are superior to men because they are totally immaterial and men surpass mere animals because their immaterial soul renders them partially immaterial, unlike cats and dogs. An eye cannot see colors unless its pupilla is transparent: a man wearing pink glasses cannot see the darker side of things. Transparency—translate “immateriality”—allows the subject to receive more freely colors and bodies.

Knowledge is more perfect as its object, the form received, is more immaterial. There is a lesser degree of “knowability” in smelling a rose than in the concept a man can extract from the term “rose.” Likewise, terms like “horse” and “bulldozer” do not have the same universality and depth as “justice”, “truth” and “being” which are richer concepts for being immaterial in themselves. Even if both are gazing on the same object, say an altar, man’s concept will never equate the angelic idea.

God has Knowledge

There is hardly a page of Sacred Scripture which is not marked by the recognition of the All-knowing God. “The Lord is a God of all knowledge” (1 Kings 2:3). The Psalms (93, 138, 146) tell us how much God is in control of man’s personal life and scrutinizes his every throb and thought. We quoted St. Paul at the beginning of this article: “*O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!*” And this is why Vatican I defined that “God is infinite in His intellect.”

God knows differently from creatures. Creatures have knowledge, God cannot acquire the perfection of knowledge as if He did not have it. His knowledge expresses His being. God does not *have* knowledge because God *is* knowledge! Angels and men know things in order to take hold of them and perfect themselves. “Travel is broadening our horizons; experience and study is enriching”, because the reception by the mind of “information” of “forms” enlarges the circle of >

our realizations. He has no need to learn what He did not previously know. He lives in the eternal “Now”, completely, with infinite understanding and total comprehension, always realized.

All creatures know things because they pre-exist our knowledge. God, on the other hand, knows things and they are made. His knowledge precedes existence. His intellect is not informed by things, He gives them their form and their existence. His is the science of the artist who causes his work: “He spoke, and it was made!”

What Does God Know?

If God has knowledge, there must be an object to this science. What does God know? There is a double object of God’s knowledge: Himself directly and the world He created secondarily.

Firstly, it seems easy enough to say that God does know Himself. He gave His own name to Moses “I am He who is” (Ex. 3”14). In His Revelation He has disclosed something of His nature and attributes, which He could not do if He did not have self-knowledge.

St. Paul again reveals this divine knowledge of God: “The things of God no one knows but the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:11). Our Lord in the Gospel reveals another facet of this self knowledge of God. “No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and him to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him” (Mt. 11:27). There is a mutual and exclusive knowledge of Father and Son, which echoes the universal duality between the knowing subject and the object known. This “duality” of knowledge seems to contradict God’s simplicity. And yet this very obstacle lifts a corner of God’s inner life. In common language, the mental word is the concept which the intellect produces when it finally gets hold of the nature of a thing, as when a child grabs the meaning of “weapon” by looking at the bow and the gun and the tank. St. John’s Prologue plunges us into the mystery of God, of the “Word who was with God (the Father) and who was God.” In God, the first procession is by way of intellection, so that God the Father, as He knows Himself, produces a perfect reflection of Himself, and emits the Word, perfectly

identical, perfectly distinct, and perfectly united to the Father in the act of mental generation. Could we not say then that the mystery of knowledge as communion helps us plunge into the inner life of the Blessed Trinity?

Another interesting aspect of God’s knowledge is His connection with creation. The relation seems most tenuous as creatures are closer to nothingness than they are to God. How can one know things so distant and yet be in “communion” of knowledge with them? How can there be such communion between so different things as God and the world? Could there be union and even identity at all? Here again, the mysterious property of knowledge can lead us into another mystery, that of divine Creation and Providence.

It is because God knows Himself comprehensively. He does not know Himself through a kind of mirror-concept. He knows Himself through Himself directly, “face to face,” in a way no man or angel knows himself perfectly. So doing, God knows also all His Power, His potentiality and His causality. Thus, He knows creatures in Himself and not in themselves. He sees Himself and needs not see the shadow or reflection of Himself in the Creation. He is like the architect who reads the plans of the house inside his mind—*intus legit*, and has no need to look outside the window. Likewise, the Divinity includes all the forms, the plans, the ideas, which the Almighty Artist and Creator had in mind when He made all things out of nothing. And this divine scale and model of existence is the reason itself for the truth of such things: this dog and this house is true because it reflects the divine idea of “dog” and “house” in God’s mind. Hence, the divine Christ can truly say that “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”

And although God knows all things in Himself and not in themselves, yet He knows each single one of them. “Not one hair of your head will fall without God’s permission.” “He has loved me and has offered Himself for me.” God knows our misery and the evil of sin, because He is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. He sees us as we are. Are we such as we should be in God’s all-knowing eyes?



“Illiberal Catholicism”

And Social Order

by Gabriel S. Sanchez

When speaking with faithful Catholics today on politics, it is common to hear the lamentation that neither half of America’s political duopoly—the Democratic and Republican parties—represents Catholic interests as set forth in the Church’s social teaching. An increasing number of Catholics, particularly traditional Catholics, have sought refuge in historically marginal movements such as libertarianism and its more mainstream offshoot, the Tea Party, in order to secure themselves from illicit government intrusion in such sacred spheres as family life. Thanks to libertarian luminary Samuel Gregg’s book by the same name, the term “Tea Party Catholic” has even entered the contemporary political lexicon while, at the same time, Catholic-run think tanks like the Acton Institute pour resources into supporting socio-economic

policies that align with the Tea Party’s platform of limited government and free markets.

Accompanying this promotion of Tea Party politics among Catholics is a vitriolic assault on so-called “illiberal Catholicism,” a loosely designated body of believers who, for diverse reasons, oppose the questionable union of Catholicism with all forms of political liberalism. These “illiberal Catholics” include a significant number who are unwilling to abandon the Church’s traditional theological moorings in Scholasticism and the teachings of the 19th- and early to mid 20th-century popes and counterrevolutionary thinkers. They have embraced the “illiberal Catholic” moniker as nothing other than a symbol of fidelity to the Church’s classic social magisterium—one which takes its bearings from the Social Kingship >

Faith and Morals

of Christ rather than the rogues' gallery of libertarian intellectual heroes: Ayn Rand, Ludwig von Mises, Murray Rothbard, and so forth.

Before delving further into the assault on "illiberal Catholicism" and what it means for traditional Catholics, a few words seem in order concerning those who, with their instincts in the right place, have opted to support libertarian or libertarian-esque movements such as the Tea Party. In this day and age where the federal administrative state runs rampant, "crony capitalism" appears ubiquitous, and the core moral teachings of the Catholic Church are under regular assault from political agencies captured by left-wing ideologues, it makes a great deal of sense that Catholics might assign their allegiance to groups which, among other things, fight for freedom from unjust government intrusion in their private and economic lives. But this "promise," whatever its worth, cuts two ways. For on the one hand, libertarianism offers a zone of freedom for Catholics to raise their families in accordance with the precepts of the Church and hold back their lawful earnings from being applied to immoral political projects such as publicly funded abortion, contraception, and sterilization. On the other, it also guarantees pornographers, prostitutes, and even drug dealers the "free-market space" to ply their respective "trades" without the fear of government coercion. By dialing-down the level of legitimate government power to a *de minimis* level, libertarianism looks to the highest degree of freedom or, more accurately, non-interference for all without regard to moral truth. Every citizen is afforded the fallacious right to construct privately his own idea of "the good life" without necessary recourse to the One who is "the way, the truth, and the life," Christ our God.

Of course, all Catholics living in the United States today must recognize that they are part of a pluralistic landscape that is dominated by the creed of secularism—that anti-Christian *Weltanschauung* routinely and forcefully refuted by such Popes as Pius IX, St. Pius X, and, closer to our own day, Benedict XVI. As such, it is not enough to long romantically for the social reign of Christ; society, on all levels, must be converted first. Part of that conversion process

includes scrutinizing the false presuppositions of otherwise seemingly attractive political movements. As Christopher Ferrara has detailed in his two landmark works, *The Church and the Libertarian* and *Liberty, the God That Failed*, libertarianism is nothing other than a high-octane version of the political liberalism repudiated by the Church for centuries. Even in its populist, Tea Party guise, libertarianism falls into the same error as the late 19th- and early 20th-century French "Sillon" movement by sourcing political authority in "the people" while absolutizing democracy, two views condemned by St. Pius X in his encyclical on the Sillon, *Notre Charge Apostolique*, and reaffirmed by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in his masterful commentary on that document found in his book *Against the Heresies*. Moreover, by promoting an economic *ordo* which places its faith in the "invisible hand" of the free market rather than the requirements of natural justice rooted in a thoroughly Christian anthropology, libertarianism often runs counter to the teachings of Popes Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* and Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* on the dignity of human labor and the fair distribution of goods in society.

Common Socio-Political Cause

Carrying forth this project of calling not just libertarianism, but all forms of liberalism, to the carpet are those aforementioned "illiberal Catholics" who, despite their mixed intellectual pedigrees, have come to reject the false narrative that Catholicism and liberal ideology share a common socio-political cause. Although, as noted, "illiberal Catholicism" does not constitute a uniform or even organized movement, what may be called its "traditionalist wing" has become more vocal in recent years in response to the tendency of some traditional Catholics to turn toward libertarianism in order to find some bulwark against the rising tide of unchecked and unprincipled government power. Despite the hyperbolic accusations of certain critics, the "illiberal Catholic" rejection of libertarianism does not mean a full-on embrace of the Leviathan



State in all domains of human life, nor does it mean a call for public persecution whereby Protestant prayer houses will be put to the torch and non-Catholics compelled to convert at the end of the sword. On the contrary, many “illiberal Catholics” seek a return to authentic community life through subsidiarity, property ownership, and a wide distribution of the means of production. Attending, and in fact superseding, these organizational mechanisms, is an unwavering dedication to the Faith of Jesus Christ and His Holy Church, which is nothing less than “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Some might still object to “illiberal Catholicism” on the grounds that its aims are impracticable, especially given current political realities. While that is certainly true at the macro-level, there is nothing stopping “illiberal Catholics,” or, more properly, *all traditional Catholics* from following the advice given by Fr. Arnaud Rostand in his concluding remarks at the 2011 Angelus Press Conference, *The Kingship of Christ*, namely to form worker and other positive associations, run in local elections, and use the editorial pages of newspapers and other public fora to promote Catholic socio-political ideals. Above all, Catholics must not be afraid to be unpopular by remaining out of step with the *Zeitgeist*. None of this means that Catholics ought to be overly polemical or outright refuse cooperation with non-Catholics on matters of common interest. What it does mean, however, is that Catholics faithful to the teachings of the Church must not compromise those teachings in exchange for dubious, and often fleeting, political relevancy.

however, the Great Commission must take center stage. In addition to the millions of non-Catholics living in America who have yet to hear about the Faith unadulterated by modern sentiments, there are also millions of Catholics who, for disparate reasons, remain improperly catechized on matters ranging from basic doctrine to the beauty and integrity of the Church’s timeless liturgy. The traditionalist iteration of “illiberal Catholicism,” then, is not simply about combating the errors of political liberalism, but is also centered on attacking the pathologies of religious liberalism which often manifest themselves in the form of indifferentism, relativism, and false ecumenism.

While political prognostication is always a perilous exercise, the current evidence seems to indicate that the situation of Catholicism in America will become more difficult in the coming years as special-interest groups attempt to leverage the rule of law against traditional morality and the rights of the Church. Even so, the answer cannot be capitulation, even for supposedly “prudential considerations”; prudence never trumps principle. Now is the time for the faithful to recall their common bond in Christ the King and apply the teachings bequeathed by Sovereign Pontiffs, theologians, philosophers, and orthodox political commentators for the arduous but imperative task of rebuilding a proper social order on the unwavering foundation of Catholic truth. That is the mission of “illiberal Catholicism.” Indeed, it must never cease to be the mission of all Catholics everywhere.

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Prudence Never Trumps Principle

The project does not end there. As laudable as the socio-political elements of “illiberal Catholicism” unquestionably are, they must not be pursued at the expense of, or in isolation from, evangelization. For too long traditional Catholics have contented themselves with an unfortunate but understandable ghetto existence in order to preserve the Catholic Faith; at some point,

Consecration of the Host

Quam pridie quam pateretur. [“Who, the day before He suffered.”] These words were added by Pope Alexander I, the sixth Successor of St. Peter. This he did, in order to recall the Passion, because the Sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same with the Sacrifice of the Cross; for the same Lord, when He first immolated Himself in the Cenacle, on the eve of His Sacrifice, was to be immolated the next day on Calvary. *Accipit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas.* [“He took bread into his holy and venerable hands.”] At these words the priest does the very same, he takes the bread into his hands, *et elevatis oculis in cœlum* [“and having lifted his eyes to heaven”], he too raises his eyes to heaven, imitating what he is saying that Our Lord did. It is not mentioned in the Gospel that Jesus raised His eyes to heaven on this occasion, but tradition tells us so—a tradition so certain that Holy Church makes a point of giving it here her full acceptance. *Ad Te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens.* [“Unto Thee, O God, His Father almighty, giving thanks to Thee.”] This is the Eucharist, or thanksgiving; and Holy Church is careful to call attention to it, for, late as we ever necessarily are in paying our ceaseless debt of gratitude to God for His countless benefits, we should constantly have thanksgiving in our hearts and on our lips. *Benedixit* (at this word the Priest signs the cross upon the host) *fregit deditque discipulis suis. Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes.* [“He blessed, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take, all of ye, and eat this.”]

HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM. [“FOR THIS IS MY BODY.”]



Side altar in Notre Dame Cathedral, Ottawa

Remembering Our Baptism

by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

Excerpt from a spiritual conference given by His Grace in the eighty-second year of his life to the seminarians at Ecône.

The idea of the Church can scarcely be thought of without baptism coming immediately to mind. Baptism is a reality we ought to think about often. We were baptized, for the majority of us, as infants, newborns just a couple of days or a week or two old. We were not aware of what was happening; obviously, we did not realize what was going on. This is a serious matter. It was God's will, that's just the way things are, yet in all of that there is something we shouldn't overlook: the forgetfulness of our baptism simply because we did not consciously participate in it.

Then we were prepared by our good parents, those who brought us up, and especially by the catechism, for our First Communion, for union

with Our Lord. It was the greatest celebration of our childhood, the great event. Then came confirmation, and our solemn communion and profession of faith [customary in some Catholic countries]. And thus our soul grew in its attachment to our Lord, to the Church, and to the sacraments.

Even so, our baptism stayed somewhat of an unknown reality. Yet it is the most important. It is baptism that distinguishes souls that are Christ's and souls that aren't. It is baptism that puts us in direct communication with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and His divine life. It already puts us in heaven; baptism already transports us now to heaven. The water of baptism resuscitates us; the water of baptism gives us Our Lord's grace. The grace and light with which the soul is clothed are symbolized by the white garment given the



Baptismal font, Oudenbosch, Netherlands

newly baptized baby after baptism and the candle placed in its hand. It is already, in a way, in the glory of heaven.

It's a new life that is beginning. We become separated from others by the very fact because we become members of a family, indeed the very members of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Mystical Body which is the Church. We have to think about it often. During confirmations I like to remind the children that confirmation confirms the grace of baptism, and consequently they should know and understand what baptism is.

I find that there is something wonderful in the first words the Church puts on our lips through our godparents when we come to church for the first time. At our first contact with the Church, the priest asked: "*Quid petis ad Ecclesia Dei*—what do you ask of God's Church?" What do you want? what have you come here for? And our godparents answered for us: "We ask for faith—*Fidem*."

We need to think well on it. What the Church puts on our lips at the door of the Church the first time we enter a church is supremely important. She says: Ask for faith. Nothing else. A single word.

The priest continues: "Why do you ask for faith?" What do you get from faith? "Eternal life—*vitam æternam*."

It is magnificent. In these two seemingly insignificant questions, spoken so quickly, is the whole program of our life here below and for eternity. We ask for faith, to live by faith, because it is the way to eternal life. How sublime, I should say, is the sacrament of baptism. And if there is one thing we ought to remind ourselves of today, this is it.

We asked of the Church—and we ask every day of our life—for faith: *Priests, give us the faith. Bishops, give us the faith. Pope, give us the faith. You were the ones who told us to ask for it. Before we could speak, before we knew how to talk, that is the first thing you placed on our lips: Ask for faith. Give it to us, then, since you told us to ask you for it.*

How earnestly, how carefully, ought we to ask of the Church faith, and we must refuse to let anyone diminish it, or cheat us out of it,

or change it. In the very first moments of our existence, at our baptism, that's what we were asking.

This is the essence of our fight.

Men, the world, will attempt to deceive us, to lead us into error, to make us live heedless of God's presence, to attack our faith. The devil prowls round about us, trying to make us lose our faith. And we must strive to keep the faith. This is what the sacrament of confirmation is for. Confirmation imparts the particular power to hold onto our faith in the midst of the difficulties we meet in our spiritual life and throughout the course of our Christian life. How splendid is this institution of our Lord Jesus Christ; how wonderful is the simplicity of the Church, the simplicity of our spiritual life!

The faith gives us the life of grace. That's why the priest repeats these questions just before administering baptism: "Do you believe in God the Father? Do you believe in God the Son? Do you believe in the Holy Ghost? Do you believe in the Catholic Church?"

"Yes, we believe. Yes, we believe. Yes, we believe."

We have to hold on to all of this. They ought not to change the Church on us [but] they are changing the Church; they want to make another Church. We have believed in the Catholic Church, not in a liberal Church, not in a modernist Church; no. So you see, let us strive as much as we can to live these great realities, of capital importance for us. If you have kept the faith till now, if the good Lord has preserved your faith, if you have the signal grace of keeping your faith, well then, give thanks to God and promise to keep it in its perfect, absolute integrity. For the denial of a single article of faith suffices to make you no longer Catholic, to exclude you from the Church, to cut you off from the Church. Just one article of our faith! Hence we must jealously keep this treasure, and jealously keep the treasure of divine life within us.

It is the role of confirmation to give us the Holy Spirit in abundance in order to preserve us, in order to protect the precious life that the good God has placed within us that is a preparation for eternal life. The life of grace is already eternal life, a life of faith, a divine life, a life of charity. It



is very beautiful. These are the true realities that we must live by, and we should help all those to whom we are sent live by them, too. Christians need to appreciate these things and not forget the grace of their baptism. They must not forget that they were chosen by God to be members of the Church, members of Christ's Mystical Body. It is something extraordinary. Our Lord indeed said: "Those who will not be baptized will not have eternal life" [adapted from Mk. 16:16]. Baptism is absolutely necessary by a necessity of means and not only by a necessity of precept, as is confirmation. It is an indispensable means and not only a commandment. Whoever is not baptized, either by water or by desire, will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

That is why all [those who are to go to heaven] do so through the Church, because baptism of desire is precisely the baptism of being attached to the Church and of being able to be a member of the Church so as to live of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has nothing to do with the false religions, in which may be found persons who desire baptism, who desire baptism implicitly, eventually. On the contrary, all the false religions turn them aside from it. How then can they say that the false religions have worth for salvation. Without our Lord Jesus Christ? without baptism... This is no longer the faith, this is no longer the Catholic faith. [Such teaching] depreciates baptism; it depreciates our attachment to our Lord Jesus Christ by baptism.

"Confirmation presents us the Church filled with the power of God and terrible as an army in battle array. The Eucharist initiates us into its intimate life, its spousal joys, its maternal tenderness. Penance and extreme unction make us see at work the powerful means of which the Church disposes for the destruction of sin and the accomplishment of all justice. Holy Orders places before our eyes the variety of her ministers, the power and perpetuity of her hierarchical action. As for marriage, in it the Church shows us how even the succession of human generations is subordinated to the giving birth of the elect. The seven sacraments thus afford us seven viewpoints from which we may consider different aspects of the Church."

Let us have, then, this simple view that our

holy religion gives us so that we ourselves may be deeply convinced of these truths and of these realities, and then let us try to transmit them. Let us have zeal for the sacraments, zeal for a ministry that now has been abandoned by all the progressive priests because they no longer have faith in the grace of Our Lord. They do not believe that the sacraments give divine life; they do not believe that baptism gives divine life. For them, baptism is simply an initiation that attaches us to a family, a community, a communion—that's all. They don't see the grace, the *gratia sanans* and the *gratia elevans*, that is given by baptism, a grace that heals and lifts up. It is a divine reality that happens in the infant's soul, a complete change.

Of that we must be convinced so as to do everything for baptism. The administration of baptism will also be the joy of our priesthood. Obviously, there will be no trouble in baptizing children when they are in the desired conditions, but adults, of course, must be prepared for baptism. But it is a great joy for priests to baptize them because, truly, they resuscitate souls, souls that are under the influence of the devil, that are dead. These souls are restored to life by the grace of baptism.

Navigating the Dangers of Scylla and
Charybdis During the Crisis in Civil Society

Legal Justice

by Brian McCall

Traditional Catholics have been struggling to carry one of the unique crosses of our time of crisis. Catholics responding to one of the deepest and severest crises to rock the bark of Peter must avoid jumping ship and unilaterally declaring the pilot's seat empty at the same time that they must avoid rowing in the direction of so many of their superiors, a direction running straight into the tsunami of Counciliar novelties. Thus, many Traditional Catholics are keenly aware of avoiding both points of excess: the abandonment of authority by the Sedevacantists and the embrace of novelty through irrational obedience by those groups which have compromised with the Modernists.

There is an old saying: As goes the Church so goes the world. Since the Church is the soul of the body politic, or civil society, if the soul is sick or disoriented, the body will be likewise affected. History is replete with examples of the state of the Church, good or bad, being reflected in the state of civil society. It is no surprise then that the devastating crisis of Faith that pervades the Church of recent decades is reflected in a crisis of civil, and particularly political, society. All one need do is read the newspaper to see daily evidence of all aspects of civil life spiraling toward dissolution:



¹ See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 57.

² For a summary of the doctrine of St. Thomas on this matter see Jeremiah Newman, *Foundations of Justice: Historico-critical Study in Thomism* (Cork: Cork University, 1954), pp. 2-3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *ST*, I-II, q. 90, arts. 2 and 4.

⁵ *ST*, I-II, q. 95, art. 2.

⁶ See *ST*, I-II, q. 95, art. 4.

political, economic, legal, cultural, educational and social. Laws against nature are enacted regularly, whether they be to harbor or promote abortion or confer the benefits of marriage on those incapable of entering into this sacred bond. Yet, as Catholics attempting to live up to our obligations we face countervailing dangers when confronting the crisis of civil society. As with our response to the crisis in the Church, our response must be rooted in the proper understanding of Catholic virtue, which avoids both extremes.

To understand our obligations towards civil society we must briefly discuss the virtue which regulates our exterior acts, Justice. Justice is the virtue whereby we possess a constant and perpetual will to render to others their due.¹ As Men can have three different types of relationship and interaction, the virtue can be considered in three contexts or particular forms of Justice. (1) Men can interact directly one with another (as in buying and selling goods), and these types of external acts must be ruled by *commutative* justice, which requires *equity* in such personal exchange transactions. (2) As a social being, Man also interacts with other Men mediated through society. One form of Justice must regulate the relationship of that society to the individual Men comprising it. This particular form of Justice is *distributive*, and it requires that common goods be distributed among the members of a society proportionately according to *merit*. (3) The final type of justice regulates the relationship of the individual towards the society of which he is a part. It is this third type of Justice, *legal*, which must guide our balanced reaction to the crisis in civil society.

St. Thomas speaks about legal justice as having two purposes. It is the virtue which directs us to obey the law and the virtue that ordains the exercise of the other virtues to the common good of society.² By examining both of these aspects we can gain a deeper understanding of our proper response to a society mired in injustice. There is an “essential connection between legal justice and law.”³ One of the key aspects of St. Thomas’s definition of law is that it must be ordained to the common good.⁴ Laws are made to make determinations of Natural Law applicable to particular circumstances in a society. Those vested with legal and political authority bear the burden of making these determinations in the form of laws so as to coordinate all individuals in the pursuit of the common good. Obedience to human laws is the usual method by which we order our individually virtuous action to, and harmonize them with, the common good. Thus, legal justice is the virtue by which we maintain a constant and perpetual will to obey the law. Yet, unlike modern Men who have been drunk on the illusion of Legal Positivism for centuries, St. Thomas, and the Catholic Tradition he embodies, understands the term “law” in a much deeper and broader sense. Although human laws are generally our first point of contact (in the order of knowledge), they do not exhaust the genus of law. Human laws to be binding in conscience must derive their authority from the higher forms of law, the Natural and Divine Law and ultimately the Eternal Law.⁵ A purported human law which is contrary to these higher laws is in fact no law at all but rather a violation of law.⁶ When St. Thomas explains that one aspect of legal justice is that it orients us to obey the law, he means law in its complete sense.⁷ Modern Men who speak of obedience to law speak only to that part of the law composed of human laws which they have amputated from the >

⁷ Newman, *Foundations of Justice*, pp. 10, 12, and 13.

higher law that gives them life. Thus, legal justice is the virtue by which we obey all the laws God has envisioned for us, from Eternal Law all the way down to human. In a good society, doing so will entail no conflict because all of the laws will conform to and in fact be derived from the Natural or the Divine Law. Much as Catholics living in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries could simply follow the advice and statements of the reigning Pontiffs to conform to Catholic truth and praxis, in well-functioning societies they can simply obey the particular human laws on the books. Yet, as in the time of ecclesiastical crisis the latest interview of the Supreme Pontiff may not be a safe guide to Catholic truth, so too in a civil society in crisis the latest enacted laws may not be a sure guide to obeying the law. The virtue of legal justice guides our discernment of what the law, in its fullest sense, requires of us so that we can obey the law. In times of crisis, legal justice demands we refuse to conform to unjust human laws in order to obey the law in the fullest sense of the term.

Yet, as St. Thomas's teaching indicates, mere obedience to the law is only part of the virtue of legal justice. More generally, it orders our individual acts to the common good. All members of a society are obligated to work for the common good. What this obligation entails in practice will vary greatly depending on abilities, talents, resources, and the obligations of our station in life. Yet, at a minimum it requires that we desire the common good of our society, which precludes a complete rejection in principle of life in an ordered society governed by political authority. This obligation involves avoiding the same twofold danger as in the context of the Church.

We cannot simply throw ourselves into the spirit of the secular age and make peace with the enemies of the Kingship of Christ who wield the levers of power. We cannot support or accept the decomposition of society represented by the promotion of abortion, sodomy, contraception, liberal indoctrination called education, and cultural obscenity. We cannot participate in government if such participation constitutes a formal cooperation with evil.

Yet, as with the crisis in the Church, legal justice precludes a rejection of the good of political authority in principle even when legal justice requires we disobey the unjust actions of those currently holding political authority in our society. The crisis in civil society may be so great that all of the candidates standing for a political office would likely accomplish a disproportionate evil to any good they might achieve, which would preclude our voting for any candidates. Yet, such refusal can never be construed in our own mind or in our external behavior as a rejection of participation in the political life of our community on principle. Voting—if a legitimate aspect of our customary form of government—is not intrinsically evil. Political and legal authority is a good established by God to perfect our social nature. God's plan for authority is revealed in the first moments of creation when He establishes Adam as the authority among the first human community. The making of just laws and our participation in that process (to the extent consistent with the particular form of government customary in our particular nation) is oriented to the common good and demands our participation, to the extent consistent with our station in life. If we must absent ourselves from most or all of the aspects of political life due to its



great corruption today, we must not translate this into a rejection of political life in principle. We must be careful to identify ways in which we can work for the common good even if quite limited. It may involve participation in local elections. In towns in which traditional Catholics constitute a substantial percentage of the population the opportunity to work for the common good of the local community is likely more feasible. Traditional Catholics should not absent themselves in this case in the vein of a liberal philosophy (be it libertarian or anarchist). At a minimum we should maintain an appropriate respect for the offices of authority even if those offices are sullied by unfit holders at present, and we should always pray sincerely for those holding any office of civil authority—in particular, we should pray that their minds and wills be moved to work for the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ.

To absent ourselves completely and on principle acts as a practical rejection of the doctrine of the Social Reign of Christ the King. Ironically, Traditional Catholics who reject any obligation to work for the common good of the societies in which they live act no differently from Modernist Catholics who pay mild lip service to the doctrine of the Social Reign of Christ the King but reject the doctrine in practice. This attitude, exemplified by the transferal of the Feast of Christ the King to the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, expresses the understanding that the doctrine is of no importance to us here and now. The Reign of Christ the King is only relevant to some far off time and place, the end of time. Traditional Catholics may display more external piety on the traditional date of the Feast, the last Sunday of October, than their *Novus Ordo* counterparts, but if they act as if working for the establishment of the Reign of Christ the King has no practical claim on their lives throughout the year then they agree in praxis with the Modernists and relegate the doctrine to pious sentiments.

The ultimate restoration of civil society, as with the Church, will only be accomplished by the omnipotent power of Divine Providence. Yet, as with the crisis in the Church, Our Lord wills our participation in this restoration. We must do our part even if that only means the lifting up of our mind and heart to this intention in prayer.

Man's supernatural and natural ends require two perfect communities, the Church and the Civil Society. Our nature demands an ordered authority to govern each. When this ordered authority is in crisis the time is "out of joint," to use Shakespeare's phrase. In both spheres two great dangers present themselves to one navigating to his natural and supernatural ends. One danger represents a blind obedience to corrupt authority, reconciliation with the crisis and its corruptions. The other danger involves a total rejection of God's design. In a desire to guard against giving into the spirit of novelty one simply secedes from the Church or political life, crashing into an atomized individualism contrary to nature. Legal justice points the way through both perilous paths, avoiding imbibing the dangerous spirit of the age while skirting the temptation to reject our social nature.

Note: This article is based on a conference given to the students of St. Mary's College, and, Notre Dame La Salette Boys Academy in September 2013.

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I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep: And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. (John 10:11)





St. Genesius The Comedian

from *Butler's Lives of the Saints*

Father Delehaye classes the story of St. Genesius in the category of imaginative romances. It is possible that Genesius never existed at all, but is a western version of St. Gelasius of Heliopolis, of whom (and of others) a similar tale is told. The legend of Genesius is narrated by Alban Butler as follows.

The Emperor Diocletian coming to Rome, he was received with great rejoicings. Among other entertainments prepared for him, those of the stage were not neglected. In a comedy which was acted in his presence one of the players took it into his head to burlesque the ceremonies of Christian baptism, which could not fail to amuse the people, who held our religion and its mysteries in contempt and derision. This player therefore, whose name was Genesius and who had learned some things concerning Christian

rites from friends who professed that religion, laid himself down on the stage, pretending to be ill, and said, "Ah my friends, there is a great weight upon me, and I would gladly be eased." The others answered, "What shall we do to give you ease? Would you like us to plane you and reduce the weight that way?" "Idiots!" he exclaimed, "I am resolved to die a Christian, that God may receive me on this day of my death as one who seeks His salvation by turning from idolatry and superstition."

Then a priest and exorcist were called, that is to say, two players who impersonated these characters. These, sitting down by his bedside, asked, "Well, my child, why did you send for us?" But here Genesius was suddenly converted by a divine inspiration and replied, not in mockery but seriously, "Because I desire to receive the grace



of Jesus Christ and to be born again, that I may be delivered from my sins.”

The other players then went through the whole ceremony of baptism with him; but he in earnest answered the usual interrogatories, and on being baptized was clothed with a white garment. After this, other players, dressed like soldiers, to carry on the jest, seized him and presented him to the emperor, to be examined as the martyrs were wont to be. Genesius then declared himself openly and seriously, standing upon the stage, “Hear! O emperor, and all you that are present, officers, philosophers, senators and people, hear what I am going to say. I never yet so much as heard the word Christian but I reviled it, and I detested my very relations because they professed that religion.

“I learned its rites and mysteries only that I might the better ridicule it, and inspire you with the utmost contempt for it; but when I was to be washed with the water and examined, I had no sooner answered sincerely that I believed, than I saw a company of angels over my head, who recited out of a book all the sins I had committed from my childhood and having plunged the book into the water which had been poured upon me in your presence, they showed me the book whiter than snow. Wherefore I advise you, O great and mighty emperor, and all people here present who have mocked these mysteries, to believe with me that Jesus Christ is the true Lord; that He is the light and the truth; and that it is through Him you may obtain the forgiveness of your sins.”

(Assuming the story to be true, the “baptism” administered would not be valid, for lack, on the part of the sacrilegious actor, of any intention even “to do what the Church does” when she baptizes. Genesius received the baptism, not of water, but of desire and of blood.)

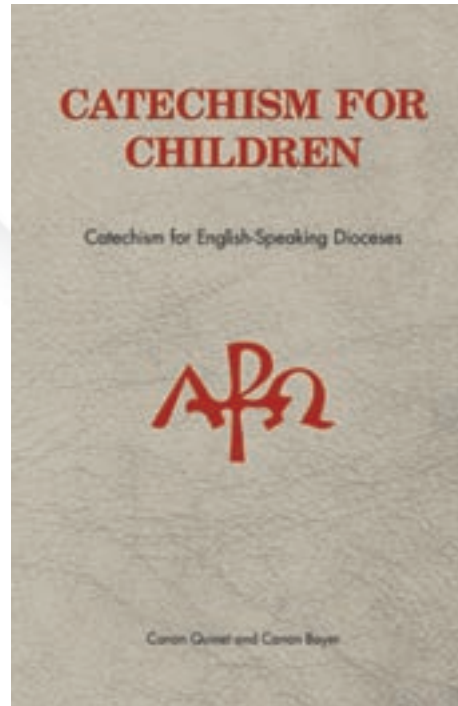
Diocletian, enraged at these words, ordered him to be beaten, and afterward to be put into the hands of Plautian, the prefect of the praetorium, that he might compel him to sacrifice. Plautian put him upon the rack, where he was torn with iron hooks and then burnt with torches; but the martyr persisted in crying out, “There is no other Lord beside Him whom I have seen. Him I worship and serve, and to Him I will cling, though I should suffer a thousand deaths. No torments

shall remove Jesus Christ from my heart and my mouth. Bitterly do I regret that I once detested His holy name, and came so late to His service.” At length his head was struck off.



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Discipline for Life

by Michael J. Rayes

Habits ingrain either vice or virtue. Most adults are a mixed vessel of both. Focusing on the virtuous adult, one can often see their growth in virtue stretching back in time to childhood. Today, Catholic parents can ensure that their children grow in virtue by instilling consistent discipline, not only as a consequence administered for bad behavior, but as an overall discipline of life.

Discipline as a way of life is a consistent regimen of self-restraint combined with occasional consolations, or rewards. It is a balanced, deliberate, and careful way of life. How can Catholic parents raise their children with this balance of discipline without pushing them too hard and thus driving them out of the Church?

Your Motivation

Pause occasionally to reflect on your child's future. You are raising a future Catholic adult. Your child is not your own; this is a child of God, and He has entrusted you with the child's care. You are the one responsible for this child's upbringing, his Catholicity, his innocence, and his virtues. You are the one who needs to instill a consistent prayer life. At the same time, the child's faith must eventually grow to be his own. If an older adolescent only goes to Sunday Mass to fulfill his parents' wishes, by age 21 he will no longer darken the door of a church.

Thus, the motivation for instilling discipline in your family must be love. The theological virtue of charity is your guiding light. This animates everything, from the constant compromising of >

your will to maintain harmony with your spouse, to dragging your exhausted body upstairs to kiss the kids good night, as well as everything else you do in your family life.

Self-Discipline

Discipline is a tiered process that flows in proper order. When any level is wanting, it affects everything below it. The first level is you. How disciplined are you?

There is a link between individual temperance and the ability to instill discipline in others. More temperance makes it easier to discipline others. Less temperance in oneself makes it more difficult to exact discipline in others, and especially in the various areas of your life.

St. Thomas Aquinas discussed temperance as one of the four cardinal virtues. Aquinas taught that prudence is in the intellect and justice in the will, but temperance and fortitude are in the sensory appetites. You need fortitude to temper your sensual appetite (an “appetite” here is your inclination toward pleasure and ease). You need to temper your appetite to be effective in guiding others toward a disciplined, virtuous life. In your own life, fasting, patience, humility, hard work, modesty, and abstinence may all be viewed as daughters of the virtue of temperance. These attributes are how temperance is practiced.

One might think that he may simply commit a mortal sin with impunity, or perhaps succumb to temptations of lesser sins because they are “private” and do not affect anyone else. This is not the case for a parent. Your imperfections, sins, and bad habits directly impact your children in two ways. The first, and more malignant, impact on your family is direct harm. By damaging your own soul, you also thereby cause harm to the souls of your spouse and children.

A material analogy is a parent who goes out and spends grocery money on vice. The children thus go hungry and directly suffer. When a parent commits actual sin, the children go spiritually and morally hungry. Demons thus see a way to get in your household. It may become harder for you to assert your parental authority because you lost, even temporarily, the Holy Ghost’s gifts of

fortitude and piety. Life becomes harder. It seems harder to discipline the children. It seems that God’s angelic shell of protection over your family has cracked. Who cracked it?

The second consideration is what is lost. Sin and virtue are mutually exclusive. When you sin, you are not practicing virtue that will benefit your family. Thus, the secondary impact of sin is lost graces which are not bestowed upon your family.

A Disciplined Marriage

If the first level of discipline is the self, the second level for parents is sacramental matrimony. Marriage is like a business in that it never stays the same. It is always either growing or dying. There is no such thing as “maintenance mode” in matrimony. You either continue to work at it or the relationship begins to grow cold. Again and again. This requires discipline. Fortitude. Diplomacy. Patient communication. It requires true Christian charity for your spouse. Can you expect your children to obey you and grow in Catholic virtue if you no longer express love and respect for your spouse?

This is why it is so important to make time for your spouse. Find ways to build up both your affectionate love and spiritual love for each other. Affectionate love is a natural love that one mind has for another, but spiritual love is a supernatural love that one soul has for another, for the love of the God who created them both. Affectionate and spiritual love are necessary in marriage and require consistent attention each week.

Thus, discipline in the marital relationship can be practiced, among many other examples, by having a consistent date night each week, devotional practices the two of you perform together, mutual leisure activities on a consistent basis, and regular prayers for each other.

Discipline of Children

After self-discipline and a disciplined marriage comes the discipline of your children. This may



be seen on the natural level as a combination of positive motivation (rewards, encouragement) and negative motivation (punishment, fear of offending, fear of punishment).

On a higher level, discipline of children should be regarded as a long-term plan of life and mode of being. What does a disciplined child look like? On the playground, or on a sports team in the heat of play, the difference between the disciplined and undisciplined child may not be apparent. This is because discipline is a balance and not necessarily rigid. Children need a lot of time outdoors to simply be themselves. Put both children in a theater, music hall, medical office lobby, or a church, and the difference is striking.

The parent who does not instill a disciplined life does no favors for the child. The child who grows to adulthood requires a lot of tenacity, fortitude, and sacrifice to conquer oneself and overcome the inflamed passions of young adulthood. These character traits may be seen as gifts from the parent who consistently trained the child for the child's sake and out of love of God, regardless of how tired the parent felt or whatever else the parent wanted to do. When Johnny needs corrected, just do it! Forget whatever you are working on or the conversation in which you are engaged. Your child needs you right now.

Household Discipline

Perhaps the final tier of discipline after that of self, marriage, and children, would be the proper operation of the household. This would include both the unity and microculture of the family, as well as its smooth operation as a domestic entity. Household concerns are a purely natural topic and thus outside the scope of this article. How the nuclear family presents itself, however, follows the lead of the family's head.

It is not a Catholic practice for mom, dad, and each child to come and go as they please, each family member engrossed in his own video game or concern, without having consistent time together as a whole family. Families that operate in this separated manner practice a sort of functional divorce. A truly Catholic family

eats at least one meal together daily, as long as your occupational circumstances allow it. A truly Catholic family performs lengthy, meaningful activities together as a family, even if they are only once or twice a year, such as day trips or deliberate planning of board games.

The more cohesive, united activities you deliberately ingrain into your family's life, the less likely that you and your spouse will divorce. These unified activities also form the child's character for the rest of his life. You want to deliberately, but perhaps subtly, build your child's habits of virtue, guiding their leisure activities as well as their moral and faith formation. You as the Catholic parent will thus give back to God what He lent to you: A beautiful Catholic soul, created to love and be loved.

Applied Virtue

The four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude are critical not only to you as an individual but for your marriage and family life. Discipline for life must begin and end with you. Your spouse and especially your children will reflect and manifest your virtues—or your vices. Consider the fact that sin is essentially choosing the self over God. Virtue is choosing God over self. Which choice ultimately gives your soul more peace?

The disciplined soul is a serene soul and naturally attracts others. St. John Bosco's "preventive method" of education only worked because the saint's virtues were attractive to those rough, undisciplined boys. Eventually the boys wanted to be good, disciplined, and educated on their own. That's the preventive method: To make children want to behave. Applied to your family, your own practice of virtue will similarly be the foundation for your family's disciplined way of life.



Michael J. Rayes holds master's degrees in professional counseling and business administration, and a B.A. in education. He and his wife are lifelong Catholics with seven children. Rayes is the author of *28 Days to Better Behavior* and *Bank Robbery!*, a mystery for both children and adults (published by Rafka Press). His articles have appeared in *Latin Mass Magazine* and others.

Lourdes

The Society of St. Pius X is organizing an international pilgrimage to Lourdes on October 25 and 26, 2014, “for the triumph of Christ the King, for the glory of Mary, and for our sick.” It is also the occasion of the centenary of St. Pius X’s pontificate.





Q & A

by Fr. Peter Scott, SSPX

May one hide a part of the truth when swearing under oath?

An affirmative oath is the calling on God as witness to the truthfulness of one's statement concerning a past event. The purpose of an oath is the confirmation of a certain truth, and as such is based upon the divine attribute of omniscience. God, knowing all things, cannot be deceived. An oath confirms the truth of one's affirmations, for no one can be presumed to be culpable of such impiety and irreverence as to call upon God as

witness to a falsehood, and thus to subject himself to the justice of the Almighty.

It is of Faith that oaths are licit under the right conditions, in particular when there is a proportionate reason, as is the case when witnesses are asked to swear under oath in a court of law. Moreover, such oaths are virtuous, being acts of the virtue of religion. The taking of God as a witness is, indeed, a profession of His indefectible truthfulness and His universal omniscience. However, the converse is also the case. The taking of an oath to a falsehood is not



just a venial sin, as is a lie, but a mortal sin against the virtue of religion. Moreover, there is no light matter in such a sin. Any falsehood stated under oath, even one of lesser importance, is a mortal sin against the virtue of religion.

Theologians state that there are three conditions for an oath to be licit, as explicitly declared by the prophet Jeremias (4:2). These are also explicitly stated in the 1917 (Canon 1316) and 1983 (Canon 1199) Codes of Canon Law. The first condition is the judgment of prudence as to whether there is a sufficient reason to swear an oath, so that it is truly an act of reverence of the divine majesty. Swearing the truth for trivial reasons is a venial sin. Clearly, there is a sufficient reason when a witness swears in a court of law. The common good requires it. The second condition is that it is a just and honest thing to swear, and not something evil (e.g. heresy) or simply the revelation of another's hidden fault, so as to destroy his reputation.

The third and most important condition, which concerns us here, is that of truthfulness. By truthfulness is meant not only that the sworn assertion is in conformity with the external reality, but also that it is in conformity with the mind of the person who swears to the truth. For truthfulness on the part of a witness excludes all lies, that is, speaking against one's own mind or personal conviction, but it does not exclude all error. Consequently, a person who swears to an erroneous statement that he is firmly convinced is true does not commit the sin of perjury, whereas a person who swears to a statement that happens to be true although he believes it to be false does commit the sin of perjury. Moreover, a person can only swear to something as certain when he is truly convinced that it is certain, and not just doubtful or probable. If he thinks that it is only probable or that it is doubtful, then he must state as much, and not mislead others under oath into thinking that it is certain, again under pain of perjury.

The purpose of an oath being to guarantee that the witness's statements are in conformity with his personal conviction as to the objective truth, it is customary in English to administer it with the expression: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

Although not essential to an oath, it emphasizes that the witness in his assertions of answers to questions must tell the entire truth that is on his mind, without suppressing a part of the truth (=the whole truth), nor misleading by suggesting something that is not true (=nothing but the truth). In this way, mental reservations are excluded.

There are two kinds of mental reservation. A mental reservation in the strict sense exists when the witness limits the meaning of the words to a special meaning that is not manifested outwardly and cannot be figured out from the circumstances. It is quite simply a lie and is never permissible. Innocent XI condemned the contrary opinion in 1679, namely the opinion that the person who swears in this way "does not lie and is no perjurer" (Prop. 26, Denzinger, 1176).

A mental reservation in the broad sense exists when the limitation of the meaning of the words to one particular sense can be deduced from the circumstances of things, persons and places, as for example when a physician testifies under oath that he knows nothing, meaning by this that he knows nothing that he is able to reveal, since knowledge in this case is under a professional secret. In such a case, it is not a lie. However, the use of such a mental reservation is not permissible without a proportionately grave reason, and then only provided that there is no intention to deceive and that there is no other honest means of protecting a secret to which one is bound, or some other right due in justice. Furthermore, when an oath is sworn, a major and grave reason is required to use such a mental reservation in the broad sense, on account of the reverence that is due to the holy name of God (Merkelbach, *Th. Mor.*, II, §860).

A witness called to give evidence in a court of law will consequently commit the crime of perjury if he uses a mental reservation that the judge and jurors cannot possibly understand; for example, if he were to say that he met the accused on the day in question, understanding in his own mind a meeting by video-conferencing, but allowing everybody else to understand that he met him in person. This is a mental reservation in the strict sense, which nobody could understand. If he were to use a mental reservation in the broad sense without sufficient reason, he would be likewise >

Questions and Answers

guilty of a sin against the virtue of religion. This is what Father Merkelbach has to say about this case: “He who uses a mental reservation (in the broad sense) without sufficient reason moreover commits a lie because, if there is not sufficient reason, the circumstances do not sufficiently indicate the restriction in the meaning of the words placed in the mind. Hence he who confirms such a statement with an oath, commits perjury strictly speaking” (ibid., §861).

The attempt to hide a portion of the truth or evidence in a sworn testimony by a witness is effectively a mental reservation, allowing the judge and jury to think that he has given all the relevant information when in fact he has not. If he deliberately omits the cause of an accident or an important circumstance in a crime it would usually be with the intention of deceiving the judge and jury. If this evidence pertains in some way to the substance of the case, such as why an accident happened, or what kind of crime was committed, or how the crime was committed, then it is perjury. It will generally be a mental reservation in the strict sense, which is equivalent to a lie. However, there are occasions in which it is a mental reservation in the broad sense, as for example when a criminal pleads “not guilty” to a crime that he committed. This could be understood, and even expected, by anybody. In the case of the criminal who pleads “not guilty,” there is a proportionately grave reason, and everybody understands that nobody is bound to accuse himself in a court of law.

This will not easily be the case for other kinds of broad mental reservations. Firstly, it is very difficult to be sure that they are broad and not strict. If they truly are broad, it is also necessary that there be no deception involved. However, if some information is hidden, then there is in general the intention to deceive or lead astray, at least to some extent. In such a case, even if it is a broad mental reservation, it is illicit, and is effectively the same thing as a lie. The usual motives for such a mental reservation under oath are the safeguarding of property, or obtaining a larger financial settlement. These are not sufficient to justify a broad mental reservation, as is clear from the following statement, also condemned by Pope Innocent XI: “A just reason for using these

ambiguous words exists, as often as it is necessary or useful to guard the well-being of the body, honor, property, or for any other act of virtue, so that the concealing of the truth is then regarded as expedient and zealous” (Prop. 27, Dz. 1177).

In conclusion, therefore, it will not be licit to swear under oath and at the same time to hold back a substantial fact or cause or piece of information or other truth which concerns the case upon which one is a witness, unless it is clear that one has a right to withhold that information, and there is no other way of doing it (such as refusing to testify) and there is a grave reason to do so (e.g. the protection of the professional or confessional secret). A witness under oath must consequently tell everything that is relevant to answering the questions asked or the facts upon which he is making sworn deposition.



Is there such a thing as a God particle?

In July 2012 took place in Melbourne, Australia, an international meeting of 800 physicists, gathered for the announcement of the discovery of a subatomic particle, called the Higgs boson, which discovery was only made possible by multi-national cooperation for the construction of a multi-billion dollar, 17 kilometer long, underground tunnel to act as an accelerator. They called this newly discovered subatomic particle the “God particle,” for it is, they state, the ultimate explanation of the world in which we live.

That there exist such sub-atomic particles, whose existence can be postulated and verified on the basis of experimentation, is not questioned. The question is, rather, whether such particles can be considered as an explanation of reality, and in particular of the physical universe.



The keen observer of nature that Aristotle was, saw that there are four kinds of causes of the things around us. The most obvious cause is the material cause, that out of which something is made. However, the identity of something, or ability or characteristics do not principally depend upon that out of which it is made. An animal is not a deer or a dog because it is made up of various cells that have molecules made up of carbon, hydrogen or oxygen atoms, much less because of sub-atomic particles that might be contained in the atoms. There are other causes that make the animal a deer or a dog, but which cannot be measured as physical weights, electrical charges, magnetic fields, or anything else which is contained in the material make-up. This must be another cause, which unites all the atoms, molecules, cells, organs, tissues together to make it a deer or a dog, and to give it life, characteristics, and ability to act. It is called the *formal cause*, because it gives the form or nature to a physical thing. This is obvious for all living beings, and is particularly so for man, whose form is his soul. However, the same applies to inanimate material things. Water is much more than the simple combination of hydrogen and oxygen atoms. Its vast and necessary range of necessary qualities are the consequence of what it is, its nature, its form. Consequently, the material cause cannot be the ultimate explanation of what a thing is, and it is a denial of the simplest logic to consider that the Higgs boson might be an ultimate explanation or “God-particle.”

But even these two causes do not explain how things come into existence. There must be something that acts in such a way as to unite form to matter, so that the material thing can have the nature which belongs to it. Without such an *efficient cause*, nothing would happen, and there would be no explanation for the obvious observation that changes exist in the physical world around us. To say that Higgs bosons themselves, by a manner of evolution, create matter, is nonsense. It is like saying that the plaster makes a statue, or that the wood makes the house. It is the total lack of explanation of how something comes about. This is one aspect of the physical impossibility of evolution for the creation of the universe. It is the denial of the efficient cause.

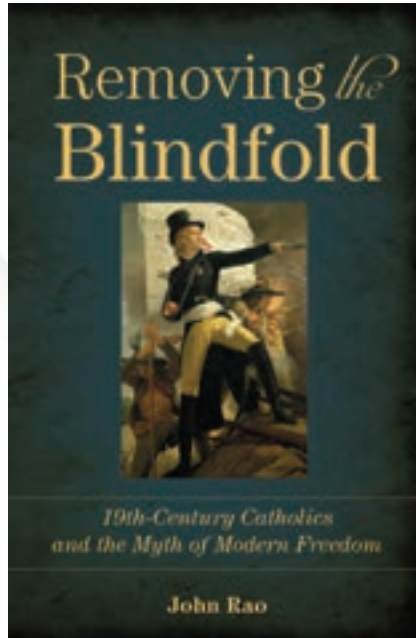
Moreover, the real scientist will note that there is always a further cause, without which nothing would happen, which makes the agent act to bring about any change. It is *the reason why* something happens. It is the ultimate explanation of reality, for without it no efficient cause would act and nothing would happen. In nature a purpose is constantly observed in all the actions of any living thing. It eats to sustain life; it mates to maintain the species; flowers produce pollen for the bees; the bees pollinate the flowers so that they can multiply. Even in the inert material world purpose is clearly present. The clouds produce rain, and evaporation produces the clouds. Likewise for the minerals that constitute the soil. The ultimate explanation of reality is, then, the answer to the question as to why it is that this particular matter has this particular form, that is why it was brought into being, and what purpose it plays in creation. If, then, there is a “God-particle,” an ultimate explanation of reality, it truly is the *final cause* and not the Higgs boson.

It is characteristic of the modern atheistic scientist that he refuses to look at anything beyond the material cause. Why would he fall into such an absurdity as to deny the other three causes of the reality that he studies and measures? Why would he be so lacking in logic as to fail to see that the true richness and beauty of God’s creation exist in the explanations as to what something is, how it comes about and why? There is no other explanation than that of a radical prejudice, a presupposition that underlies all that he studies, namely that there is no God. Consequently, he refuses the perfect order of the universe, with its coordination of purpose, that is of final causality, amongst all of God’s creatures. He refuses the evidence of the senses that God exists, and that is the reason, the only reason and the full reason why he proposes a theory of evolution, evacuating every cause but the material cause, and giving to this material cause the power to give a nature to things, to make things happen, and to make them happen for a reason. The only reason, then, why he proposes that the Higgs boson is a God-particle is that he has substituted the material cause for God; he has made a God of matter; he has fallen into the most radical and insane idolatry imaginable.

Removing the Blindfold

19th-Century Catholics and the Myth of Modern Freedom

Dr. John Rao



Among American Catholics, there is a certain unwillingness to see anything amiss with modern civilization as embodied in the American dream of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Often, this is because the only alternatives to democracy we know are the much more frightening specters of socialism and communism. To many, it seems the only way to have an effective voice in the American political arena is to align ourselves with the so-called conservative “Right.” Yet if we follow the logic of the “Right” today, we may wonder why people who support individual rights and freedom of conscience in the economic and political realm are so vehemently opposed to the supremacy of individual rights and freedom of conscience in the moral realm. Many Catholics give up following the logic at this point and cast their vote in favor of freedom of conscience as the most important principle—because it is the most advantageous to them at this moment.

The Catholic Church, however, has never been concerned primarily with what is the most advantageous political system at a given point in history, but rather with the truth.

In *Removing the Blindfold*, Dr. John Rao explains the conundrum that modern Catholics face in dealing with the current socio-political climate and traces the roots of this problem back to the French Revolution and the principles it espoused. He shows how most modern Catholics have embraced some form of revolutionary thought without even being aware of it, and reveals how revolutionary ideals are incompatible with Church teaching, and always have been.

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“Half the World in 19 Days”

Report of an Asian Tour

by Father Georg Kopf, SSPX

In the last year, the world’s attention has been focused upon the earthquake in the Philippines. Typhoon Haiyan followed, claiming thousands of human lives and causing immense destruction. Millions of people are bewildered, people with whom I became acquainted last year when I visited this beautiful, impoverished land.

This was the origin of my travel journal, which is summarized below. It permits you, dear reader, to become acquainted through my experiences with the Philippines and with our Society’s faithful there.

Between November 9th and 27th, 2012, I humbly accompanied Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, First Assistant of the Society of St. Pius X, on his visitation tour of Asia. After spending 36 hours in airplanes and at airports (Zurich, Amsterdam, China, and Manila), we arrived safely in the Philippines on November 10.

The Philippines

Permit me first to write a general description of this archipelago in Southeast Asia. The Philippines are a group of 7,107 islands in the Pacific Ocean, near China. The two largest islands

are called Luzon (North) and Mindanao (South). The archipelago is about 1,150 miles from north to south and almost 700 miles from east to west. The tallest mountain is Mt. Apo on the island of Mindanao at nearly 10,000 feet. The Philippines also possess 37 volcanoes, of which 18 are >



classified as active.

Ninety-six million people reside in the Philippines, dispersed over 2,000 islands.

The climate of the Philippines is tropical, that is, hot and extremely humid, which we found stifling. A priest assigned there, Fr. Coenraad Daniels, spoke as follows: “In the Philippines, it rains not only from above, but also from below.” In other words, if you are soaked through, it is not only the rain, but your own sweat as well. The average annual temperature runs at 79 degrees Fahrenheit.

The renowned seafarer Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese in Spanish service, landed on one of the small islands to the west of the Philippines on March 16, 1521. Twenty-two years later, in 1543, the Spaniards conquered the island kingdom, which they christened, “The Philippines,” in honor of King Philip II of Spain.

Catholic missionaries arrived in this land with the Spanish. Their achievements have been both beneficial and enduring. Today, 82 percent of the population is Catholic. The churches are well-attended and the Faith is not only alive, but was everywhere around us. An island in the southwest continues to have a Muslim majority.

The SSPX’s Asian District

The Society has been active in the Philippines since 1990. We presently possess two priories: one in the capital city of Manila (400 faithful) and a southern one in Davao (150 faithful).

We also possess seven chapels and four Mass centers where the Holy Sacrifice is offered and the catechism is taught. On Iloilo, there is also a brothers’ novitiate and a convent of sisters.

In this land, there are 12 resident priests, the brothers, the sisters, and many active laity. The District Superior, Father Daniel Couture, is Canadian. His District embraces the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Indonesia, and Singapore.

This is a very large territory and Father Couture is thus often traveling by air. His longest period without flying was four weeks. When asked for the reason, Father Couture answered, “Because my passport was expired and a new one had not arrived.” This comes from a priest who spends more time in the air than on land.

General Santos

Our visitation began in the southern city of General Santos. After being warmly greeted by a banner of welcome, we visited a group of catechists in the poor quarter. There were roughly 80 children assembled and they greeted us with the Latin hymn, “Ave Maria.”

All pressed forward to greet “the Father” by seizing his right hand, placing it on their foreheads, and bowing slightly. Every time they did so, I silently thought, “God bless you.” There was even a young Muslim mother who came to this event with her children.

Every Sunday, enthusiastic women from the Legion of Mary beat drums to assemble together these boys and girls aged four to twelve. Then, they instruct them in the Catholic Faith and in moral philosophy. They are taught the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Morning and Night Offerings.

These male and female catechists are the right hand of Fr. Timothy Pfeiffer, who also travels every weekend to Davao. As I saw and noted, this is a genuinely lay apostolate. They go throughout the neighborhood, speak to both children and to their elders, and invite them all to the classes and to Holy Mass. After the classes, they invariably visit the sick and pray with them.

Afterwards, we assisted the children and their



mothers. They insisted that we “stay for the next Catechism group!”

Soon after, we left this neighborhood in a land-rover. We drove adventurously over the “streets” and then for an hour on tarred roads. We then arrived in a small bush settlement, located off the road. We were received with the same joy and with song. Again we were greeted with the same hand-to-forehead gesture.

This community, numbering around 40 people, more than half of whom are children, have erected a small chapel. It is 13 by 10 feet, built of palm wood beams, and covered with plywood. They have also built an altar.

After the First Assistant for the Society spoke a word of thanks and praise for their loyalty, >

Catechismclass at General Santos



Church and World

we had to depart on a journey to the chapel in Marbel. There, the Holy Mass is available every weekend in what appears to be a garage. In the Philippines, the priest always carries a microphone so that the neighbors and passersby can also follow the events of Holy Mass via an electric loudspeaker.

After two afternoon Masses accompanied by confessions, they served us a supper of roast chicken and rice. This revealed something to us, and not for the last time. Asians love their rice every bit as much as the Swabians adore their Spätzle or the Swiss their chocolate.

The following morning, the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost was commemorated by a sung High Mass and a sermon in English. Around 70 faithful attended. Our driver then brought us to the second chapel, 45 minutes by car, and located

on a heavily-frequented street in the center of General Santos.

During the High Mass, it was stiflingly hot. The face of the celebrant, Father Pfluger, was streaming with sweat. So was mine in the confessional. This was because the ceiling fans didn't want to work properly. We first joined the faithful for another hearty meal and, following it, we journeyed for three hours to the priory in Davao.

Along the way, we again experienced the usual Philippine traffic. We spent nearly the entire route traveling along the shoulder of the road near more huts. One wonders how the building permits were ever obtained.

Meanwhile, it was raining heavily and fog arose—pacing up and down, as we often see in the Swiss Alps.





Davao

Upon our arrival in Davao, Fr. Niklaus Pfluger successfully offered his third Sunday Mass. The chapel and priory there are constructed of bamboo poles and wickerwork. The interior of the chapel shines bright blue—the color of the plastic tarp that serves as a roof. They are presently building a new chapel—with stones.

Most Filipinos live in flimsy bamboo huts. The means of building one is thus: four fat bamboo poles are set up as corner posts, a set of crossbars are erected for the walls and roof, and one meter of earth is used to elevate the floor. The walls are then covered with bamboo wickerwork, the roof is covered with sheet metal, and the house is finished. Few can afford window

frames or panes, as many empty window holes attest. Sanitary arrangements are always found to the rear of the house.

Electricity is carried everywhere. We often saw electric poles with a dozen slender cables attached to a fat conductor. This is so that people, sadly, are not deprived of television.

It must be said, however, that in such a climate both central heating and insulation are both unnecessary. There are also “normal” stone houses, but many people cannot afford them.

When I saw these bamboo huts for the first time, they were so small and primitive that I thought them to be garden sheds. But, no: entire families live within them. In the Philippines, families are not just one or two kids, but often five, six, or seven. Tragically, this will change due to the destructive new abortion law. I was >

Dinner in Davao



Church and World

surprised and astonished, however, by how many millions of people came out in protest against it.

Traffic

Now, a word about the traffic—about which the proverb “other lands, other ways” is especially valid.

All drivers in the Philippines must prevail against heavy traffic. En route, one sees a colorful array of vehicles: cars, Jeepneys, tricycles, bicycles, and, in the countryside, oxcarts.

First of all, I shall describe the Jeepney. Richly varnished with chrome, Jeepneys can transport up to 30 people. They stop wherever anyone wishes to get on or off—which makes them superior to the local army of tricycles.

Homemade from a motorbike and a sidecar, a Jeepney would never pass a security inspection. They are very efficient, however. Once, we counted ten people riding upon a single one. These vehicles are major polluters. Why any pedestrian continues to walk publicly without a face mask remains to be seen.

There are many people in Switzerland who are also reckless drivers. But in the Philippines, all driving practices are legal. When there is not an

opening, as is often the case in the cities, people switch lanes and drive against oncoming traffic. The lanes widen, which creates serious dangers.

When you find an opening, whether to the right or left lanes, the only determining factor is feasibility. At times, very little seems unfeasible.

Shockingly, deviators have the right of way. When they drive against the lane, oncoming traffic merely honk their horns before pulling away and stopping. Lights are never used, except in Manila. In all fairness, I must say that those who use the road drive with their eyes open and surprisingly few accidents take place.

Back to Davao

We shall now return to the priory in Davao. Father Prior Timothy Pfeiffer, an American, and Father Hora, a Filipino, live there.

After supper with our assembled colleagues, we spent another stifling night there. We lay sweating in our beds, slept very little, and endured the night’s accelerating heat. We arose to a very sleepy morning. I hope that our colleagues in Asia endure it better than we. I suppose that, with time, their bodies grow more accustomed to the climate.

The next day had to be one of recuperation

Manila traffic





from our program. In Switzerland, we would have spent such a day in the mountains. In the Philippines, we spent in on the seashore.

We journeyed to a nearby island on a small boat and searched for a deserted section of the beach. With so many beaches, this was not at all difficult. We enjoyed the sun, the turquoise sea, and the coral. I thought to myself, “Let us continue to live like this.”

But such days are a rare exception. Most days for our priests in Asia are very hard and filled with heavy, heavy work in a sweat-inducing climate. On the next day, my fortieth birthday, we again bid farewell to the priory.

Iloilo

At 12:40 a.m. we traveled by airplane to Iloilo. A brother dressed in a white cassock and a black cincture picked us up from the airstrip. In Asia, all of the clergy wear white cassocks due to the tropical climate.

We traveled over an uneven road to the St. Bernard’s Brothers’ Novitiate, located in a relatively idyllic setting between rice paddies. I say, “relatively idyllic,” because the Novitiate was attacked a year ago and one of the brothers was wounded by a shotgun.

In this pastoral setting live Fr. Coenraad Daniels, a South African of Dutch descent, Father Cacho, a Filipino, and Father Devasahayam, >

Cathedral of Iloilo



SSPX church in Iloilo



an East Indian. There are also two brothers and six postulants. They make a very beautiful community.

As we arrived, the Master of Novices was sitting on a tractor and leading the excavation of their new church's foundations. Thus the Master gave us all a very good example. He tells us, "Giving orders? Bruises are a better example!" Currently, the Novitiate's chapel is located in a garage. Now is the time to build a proper church for the Brothers' Novitiate.

Morning classes for the aspiring brothers are far more extensive than what is taught elsewhere. They are not only taught how to cook and how to look after the chapel and sacristy. In the Philippines, the aspiring brothers are taught rice-cultivation, as well as tending to cattle, pigs, and chickens. Coconut palms and banana trees are also growing there. In all, this forms a place well suited to this apostolate.

Ten minutes' drive from the city of Iloilo is a large, Spanish-style cathedral. Inside, like almost everywhere else in the Philippines, there were many people at prayer.

Beside the cathedral, a breathtaking poster had been erected to advertise religious vocations. It read, "Nobody is Born a Priest or a Nun. Pray. Encourage. Support... Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life."

This is very plausible in the Philippines. The Society has only one church in this city, and it is indeed a beautiful one. Adjacent to it, we found the home of the Sisters of the Society.

That night, the whole community sat together to receive us. The high point of the evening was when Father Daniels brought out and played his accordion. What sights have we not seen in the Philippines?

The following morning, they showed us the building site. We saw how the excavators had opened a foundation pit. A troop of workers were bending iron supports for the church and binding them together with cables. In the evening, Father Pfluger spoke to the priests.

Manila

The next day shortly before noon, the brother returned us to the airstrip. There, we again went through baggage and passport control, before waiting for the pilot. Then, we traveled to the capital city of Manila.

Manila is immensely large with more than 11 million people living there. Fathers Morgan and Couture first established the Society here in 1990. Our Manila Priory has around 300 faithful, its own school since 2008, a Legion of Mary chapter, and a large and very beautiful church, which our Superior General, Bishop Fellay, consecrated in 1995.

On the evening of our arrival, a night of reparation was being held because of the proposed bill which would legalize abortion and impose the evil and destructive Enlightenment. That night, I prayed my first rosary in English. I hoped that both Our Lady and my fellow supplicants understood the words I was saying.

The following day began at 6:30 with the morning Divine Office for priests. It was immediately followed by a Low Mass before the Spanish Baroque-style altar. After breakfast, the prior, Father Onoda from Japan, showed us the school-building—or more accurately, the school-buildings. The school is situated inside numerous interlocking structures, as is common in the Philippines.

The headmaster of the school is Father Fortin from the United States. The pupils all come from the surrounding area and a majority of them return home at night. On the weekends, so do the others. There has been a grade-school there since 2008 and a high school since 2010.

On Sundays, the schedule is entirely the same as in the rest of the Catholic world: morning prayers followed by Low Mass and then a sung High Mass. Afterwards, Father Pfluger delivered a lecture inside the church on the subject of "The Society of Saint Pius X and Rome."

During the afternoon, I was permitted to attend a meeting with the Legion of Mary. Again I witnessed the great zeal of the apostolic laity. The following morning, we rose at 4:00. We then departed the megacity of Manila and, after a three and a half hour flight, we arrived in Singapore.



SSPX Church in Manila

Singapore

The country of Singapore is also an island nation. It consists of a little over 440 square miles and has 5.3 million inhabitants. In a very short time, Singapore has changed from an underdeveloped country into an industrial powerhouse. They are now the third richest nation in the world.

One of the reasons is that the Port of Singapore is along the seaway which connects China and Japan with Europe. It is therefore one of the world's most important places for loading and unloading cargo containers.

Singapore also possesses a priory, which also serves as Headquarters for the Society's District

of Asia. The priory is located in a housing row, squeezed between several other residences. Although the office is relatively large, the priory's chapel and rooms are both small, but very beautiful.

Inside the chapel, both the altar and communion rail are carved from genuine marble, not from Italy, but rather from China. The pews are constructed of a reddish colored tropical wood and look very majestic. Although daylight punctually illumines the office and sacristy, it never reaches the chapel interior.

The District Headquarters made a very strong impression upon me. There is no dreaming there, only hard labor, journey preparations, stop-overs and, above all, sweating. Considering that Singapore averages 80% humidity every month, in both summer and winter, I found the climate >

Church and World

there so horrible that it was painful to breathe.

There priests live in the priory when they are not traveling. They include the District Superior, Fr. Daniel Couture, the District Manager, Fr. François Laisney, and Fr. Emerson Salvador, who has authority over the chapel in Sri Lanka.

In the evenings, these priests also look after the chapel in Kuala Lumpur. Rather than drive, they must fly. Kuala Lumpur is, after all, about 220 miles away from Singapore. Around 50 faithful attend the priory in Singapore. About 15 of them were present for the evening Mass and subsequent lecture.

In Singapore, I realized how very well the traditional laity have spread their faith throughout the Asian continent. The results could be seen everywhere: in their frank sincerity, modest attire, and deep piety.

Our evening meal in Singapore was not one which I shall soon forget. It naturally included a dessert called durian—a large and prickly fruit which somewhat resembles a pineapple. I found the durian’s yellow pulp to be barely edible, although many will argue this point. Of all the other foods set before us, the durian’s taste stood out before everything else.

The durian’s odor is so intense that it is illegal to carry it while riding public transportation. This fruit is so well loved, however, that this law is never enforced. We would not be staying in Singapore much longer, but would never desire to bring the durian fruit on our journey!

Sri Lanka

The next day, we traveled once again to the airport with Father Couture. Our destination was Sri Lanka, or Ceylon as it was formerly called—the Pearl of the Indian Ocean.

When we arrived, we were picked up at the airport by Fr. Emerson Salvador in an old Nissan Transporter. After a 20-minute drive, he brought us to the Society “chapel” in Negombe. I typed quotation marks around chapel because the chapel is furnished only with walls, and the sanctuary is barely covered by the roof. As it is always so hot, there are no screens, doors, or windows.

One year before, the Society had a school and a priory here. The school no longer exists and, instead of a priory, there is only a chapel without any resident priests. Father Salvador visits every second weekend. I treasure the zeal of the 30 faithful there. When Father Salvador is absent, one faithful soul looks after both the house and the chapel.

The next morning, we heard a surprise announcement—we were to travel inland and tour a tea plantation. After Holy Mass followed by breakfast and black tea, we traveled on a small bus past many villages and tall mountains. Tea-plants thrive at high elevations, and we found that the plantation is located on Mount Bogowantalwa, almost 4,000 feet up. A welcome change awaited us there from the stifling climate—a comforting coolness for which Brother Donkey gave thanks.

Before our tour of the Mackwoods Tea Plantation, we were served fresh black tea with milk and sugar. It was delightful! We then joined a tour of the production room. We were shown the process of tea production—step by step. It takes six stages and only one day—from the picking of the tea leaves to the packaging of the finished tea for shipping. Altogether, 1,000 employees work on this tea plantation.

The following day, we visited the seminary of the White Fathers in Kandy. Alas, the seminarians were not at home. Only a single robust and venerable missionary was present. After their ordination to the priesthood, these





missionaries must ask themselves, “Heat or cold?” They can express their wishes, either for the Tropics or for the Far North, i.e. Canada or Alaska. The Fathers in Sri Lanka have chosen heat.

We returned to Negombe for evening Mass. As he had done elsewhere, Father Pfluger delivered another lecture to the faithful. The Catholic Faith is not as widespread in Sri Lanka as in the Philippines. I was deeply grieved by the many statues of the Buddha that stand along the roads. I was reminded of the many wayside crosses and shrines in Germany. In Sri Lanka, however, they are depictions of a false god. I often recalled the words of Our Savior: “The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few” (St. Luke 10:2).

Sri Lanka needs many, many missionaries! Let us wholeheartedly pray the post-Rosary prayers for this intention: “O Lord, grant us priests! O Lord, grant us many holy priests! O Lord, grant us many holy religious vocations!”

Malaysia

On a previous morning, Father Couture had flown back to Singapore by himself. We flew on to Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. There, we were picked up by Mr. and Mrs. Ho. Again we encountered active laity. They had already placed an apartment at our disposal. We certainly have a very small chapel in this city, but no priory. Father Laisney looks after this community of 45 faithful from Singapore.

Near Kuala Lumpur lies Malaga. In a local church, which is now in ruins, the Blessed Sacrament is brought once a month. This location is a very popular site for tourists to visit. Therefore, this kind married couple brought us there as well.

In the harbor, we were able to tour an old and historic Spanish ship which has been converted into a museum. It is very large, but is a mere nutshell compared with the ships traversing the ocean today. In those days, it was an adventure to visit Malaysia and far from a safe one.

The following day was a Sunday. Just as in Switzerland, there was a morning High Mass and a sermon. Only the hymns were in English. That

evening, we were shown the “Twin Towers,” two colossal skyscrapers made of glass and steel.

For the last year, a young woman from the chapel in Kuala Lumpur has been attending the high school in Schönenberg, Germany. So small is the world of Catholic Tradition!

Kuala Lumpur was the last stop on our long journey. On November 12, 2012, we returned to Zürich via Amsterdam. After 19 days, I returned to my duties in the Canton of St. Gallen.

For me, this had been a deeply fascinating journey. I had become acquainted with many of my colleagues and scores of heroic traditional faithful.

At this stage, I must not neglect to extend my deepest thanks to Fr. Niklaus Pfluger for this special experience. Over the course of 28,000 miles, I became truly aware of how the Society is spread throughout the earth.

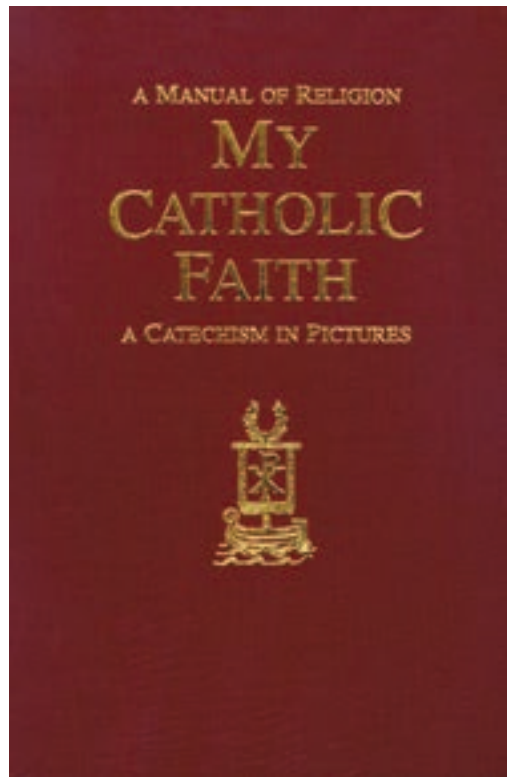
The tree of Tradition, which was planted by our esteemed and just as often reviled founder Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, continues to spread its branches over the entire globe. To witness this gave me new strength. It also revealed the honor due to those who labor on in this noble task.

Translated by Brendan D. King.

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Fiddling While Rome Burns:

Vatican II in Retrospect

by Martin Blackshaw

By way of introduction, I wish to declare with all faithful Catholics who value their eternal salvation my absolute fidelity to the Holy See of Rome and my unceasing prayers for our Holy Father, Francis. I make this declaration so that no one may misconstrue or misrepresent what my duty as a Catholic now obliges me to write in charity and with the greatest respect concerning the reigning Pontiff and his immediate conciliar predecessors.

St. Pius X said at the beginning of the twentieth century that the main cause of the loss of souls was religious ignorance, ignorance of the truths of the faith. Sadly, this ignorance is everywhere in the Church today and it is getting worse as the decline in priests and sound Catechetics continues apace.

One of the principal errors to have arisen from this ignorance in our times is the belief, in thought if not by open declaration, that the pope is not just sometimes infallible but rather at all times impeccable. Therefore, no matter what the pope says or does in the exercise of his ordinary magisterium it is incum-

bent upon all to blindly obey him. A similarly erroneous thought is held with regard to the bishops.

How far this mistaken belief is from the teaching of the Church, however, is exemplified by St. Paul in Galatians 2: 11-13, who recounts how he "withstood Peter to his face because he was to be blamed."

A Right to Resist

Commenting on this Scripture passage, St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "There being an imminent danger to the Faith, prelates must be questioned, even publicly, by their subjects. Thus, St. Paul, who was a subject of St. Peter, questioned him publicly on account of an imminent danger of scandal in a matter of Faith..." (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 33, a. 4).

St. Robert Bellarmine concurs with St. Thomas in this matter and distinguishes for us between legitimate resistance and forbidden judgment. He writes: "Just as it is licit to resist the Pontiff who aggresses the body, it is also licit to resist the one who aggresses the soul or who disturbs civil order, or, above all, >

who attempts to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and preventing his will from being executed; it is not licit, however, to judge, punish or depose him, since these are acts proper to a superior" (*De Romano Pontifice*, lib. 2, chap. 29, in *Opera Omnia* [Paris: Pedone Lauriel, 1871], vol. I, p. 418).

In his Encyclical Letter *Pastor Aeternus*, Pope Pius IX gives a certain rule by which the faithful may gauge the fidelity of popes to the primary duty of their sacred office. He writes: "The Holy Spirit has not been promised to the successors of Peter to permit them to proclaim new doctrine according to His revelations, but to keep strictly and to expound faithfully, with His help, the revelations transmitted by the Apostles, in other words the Deposit of Faith."

Retrospect

I now propose by this rule to present a painful insight into the crisis of faith in the Church today, a crisis which is the result of fifty years of radical conciliar alteration of our Catholic religion.

On the election of John XXIII to the papacy in 1958 the Church was in a very healthy state. Her seminaries and religious houses were full, vocations were booming, city parishes each had at least three priests and three Sunday Masses to meet high attendance numbers, the foreign missions were converting millions to the true religion and Anglican intellectuals were leading an exodus of Church of England affiliates back to Rome.

In addition to this, when the Holy Father spoke the world listened. Such was the respect commanded by the Holy See globally that only a very few non-Catholic men of influence dared to put themselves in public opposition to the Church's moral teaching.

Inside the Church it was unheard of that any Catholic, clerical or lay, questioned the infallible teaching of the Magisterium, much less dissent from it as is so widespread at present, and sound Catechetics were everywhere forming the souls of our Catholic children in faith and virtue.

In every part of the world there was unity among Catholics. They were unified in faith, in doctrine, in morals, in the sacraments and by the same ancient universal liturgy and liturgical language that could be traced in its essentials all the way back to St. Peter himself.

As in other ages of Church history, however, all was not perfect; there were certainly issues within and without the walls of the Church that afflicted her to some degree or another. But the popes were strong in teaching authority, condemning and proscribing by various authoritative Encyclicals and Syllabi the grave errors of the times while re-affirming the divine truths of the Catholic religion and the indispensability of membership of the Church for salvation.

Such was the confidence of the faithful in the reigning popes and bishops to uphold the Deposit of Faith, personally as well as in their official capacities, that very few clergy or laity felt it necessary to acquaint themselves with past magisterial teaching, much less with the wisdom of the great saintly theologians and Doctors of the Church.

"Renewal"

Hence it was that when the Second Vatican Council, the first Pastoral Council in the Church's history, commenced, it was pretty much expected that matters would be settled quickly without serious alteration to the everyday life of Catholics. How wrong this assumption was!

At the very first session of the Council, on October 11, 1962, all the documents prepared by the Preparatory Commissions over a three-year period for consideration by the Fathers were rejected at the behest of a liberal faction of theologians, a faction that was much larger and more organized than anyone had expected.

Although Pope John had made it clear that the Council was intended to be purely pastoral in nature, remaining on a "modest level, not treating of doctrine," it soon became evident that others had an altogether different agenda, a program to open the Church entirely to the spirit of a modern world then on the brink of cultural revolution and rebellion against God.

What resulted from this "Renewal" experiment was later described by Cardinal Suenens as "The French Revolution in the Church."

It is a great tragedy that so many Catholics were ill-prepared for the onslaught that was to follow in the wake of Vatican II. If only more had been familiar, for example, with the prophetic wisdom expressed by Pope Gregory XVI in his 1832 Encyclical *Mirari*



Vos, who wrote: "To use the words of the Fathers of Trent, it is certain that the Church 'was instructed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles and that all truth was daily taught it by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.' Therefore, it is obviously absurd and injurious to propose a certain 'restoration and regeneration' for her as though necessary for her safety and growth, as if she could be considered subject to defect or obscurity or other misfortune. Indeed these authors of novelties consider that a 'foundation may be laid of a new human institution,' and what Cyprian detested may come to pass, that what was a divine thing 'may become a human Church'..."

Contrast these words of Gregory XVI with this astonishing declaration of Pope Paul VI in his closing speech to the Council:

"Profane and secular humanism has shown itself in its own terrible stature and has in a sense defied the Council. The religion of God made Man has come up against the religion of man who makes himself God...You can be grateful to it [the Council] for this merit at least, you modern humanists who deny the transcendence of supreme things, and learn to recognise our new humanism: we too, we more than anyone else, subscribe to the cult of man."

This statement of Paul VI is all the more worrying when considered together with an earlier action of the Pontiff, as I shall now relate.

For more than a thousand years up to Vatican II, newly elected popes underwent a coronation ceremony in which a triple crown was placed upon their heads with the words: "Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns and know that thou art father of princes and kings, ruler of the world, vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever."

The ceremony was of course primarily supernatural—the crown and the words of coronation symbolizing the reality of the universal Kingship of Christ and of the spiritual primacy and authority of the Petrine See instituted by Him.

Imagine the dismay, then, when, at the end of the second session of the Council in 1963, Pope Paul VI descended the steps of the papal throne in St. Peter's Basilica and ascended to the altar, on which he placed and renounced the pontifical tiara as a gesture of papal rejection of worldly power and honour.

It was a significant act of misplaced humility which His Holiness would soon equal in respect to charity when, in 1969, he supplanted the Church's ancient Latin Liturgy with a new Protestant-friendly vernacular Mass to complement conciliar ecumenism.

Suddenly, the pre-Council fear expressed by Pope Pius XII took on prophetic significance: "I am worried by the Blessed Virgin's messages to Lucy of Fatima. This persistence of Mary about the dangers which menace the Church is a divine warning against the suicide of altering the Faith in her liturgy, her theology and her soul....I hear all around me innovators who wish to dismantle the Sacred Chapel, destroy the universal flame of the Church, reject her ornaments and make her feel remorse for her historical past. A day will come when the civilised world will deny its God, when the Church will doubt as Peter doubted. She will be tempted to believe that man has become God" (Msgr. Roche, *Pie XII devant l'histoire*, pp. 52-53).

Discounting bad will on the part of Paul VI, the inference from this Pontiff's ill-judged acts was that his predecessors throughout the ages had indeed been, as the Church's hereditary enemies always claimed, corrupt men attached to earthly power and wealth which expressed itself in the pomp and splendor of meaningless ceremony.

Pope Francis, by similar poor judgment today, speaks of it as a Church "closed within herself," populated with "narcissists," "Neo-Pelagians" and men of "spiritual worldliness." It's almost as if the Holy Spirit is considered to have been absent from the Church until Vatican II.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that while the present Holy Father makes numerous references to Vatican II and its popes in his lengthy Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he omits altogether any reference to pre-Council magisterial teaching.

Also worthy of note is that each of the conciliar popes from John XXIII to John Paul II has had his process of beatification and/or canonization accelerated beyond that of the last of the pre-Council popes, Pius XII, whose cause, the late Bishop Canisius van Lierde assured me during a meeting in the Vatican in 1992, is long proven and ready.

The most questionable of these hurried causes is that of John Paul II which has proceeded from >

zero to imminent canonization in just nine years; and on the basis of a significantly weakened post-Vatican II process stripped of Devil's Advocate and including only a single controversial miracle that has hardly stood the test of time.

Likewise in the case of John XXIII, Pope Francis has dispensed altogether with the required canonization miracle on the grounds that his predecessor's initiation of the Council is proof enough of his great sanctity. Worryingly, the Anglican Communion agrees and has already instituted a feast day for Pope John.

Taken together, these various signs are of great concern to many of the Catholic faithful who look beyond human emotion to a candidate's practice of heroic virtue, particularly his fidelity to the integrity of the faith.

For these troubled faithful such hasty proceedings give the impression that the Church's traditionally cautious and solemn processes have been replaced with something akin to a religious Academy Awards system that scores candidates more on their human popularity than their supernatural qualities.

I emphasise here that I am neither insinuating nor asserting deliberate bad will on the part of the conciliar popes. Rather, I am attempting to demonstrate that there exists a significant rift in mindset between the pre-Council Pontiffs and their post-conciliar successors, the latter representing that Modernist school of thought so ably dissected and refuted by St. Pius X in his Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.

Sorrowful as it is to admit, Cardinal Suenens was correct when he stated that Vatican II renewal was the French Revolution in the Church. Pope Paul VI had already inferred as much in his closing speech to the Council when he spoke of "the cult of man." Tragically, His Holiness later failed to make the connection when, in 1975, he lamented: "Through some fissure in the walls, the smoke of Satan has entered the Church and set her on a path of auto-destruction."

The French Revolution in the Church

This "smoke of Satan," predicted by Our Lady of Fatima as "a diabolical disorientation," consists in the principal liberal tenets of the anti-Catholic

French Revolution—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—being adapted to our holy religion post-Council and promoted as Religious Liberty, Collegial Equality and Ecumenical Fraternity.

Concerning the most damaging of these principles, religious liberty, it is asserted that "the dignity of the human person" is the basis upon which each man is free to hold inwardly and outwardly to whatever religion he chooses.

This is in contrast to the Church's perennial teaching on "Religious Tolerance," which states that the "dignity" of man depends on his fidelity to truth—as Our Lord said "the truth will make you free." There can be no dignity, then, where truth is compromised or absent, particularly in religion, for this would be to accord dignity to error, nullifying both the First Commandment and the infallible dogma "outside the Church no salvation."

The dignity of man was lost with the Original Sin committed by Adam and Eve. It can only be restored by the grace of the Redemption wrought by Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. As St. Paul reminds us in Acts 4:12: "...there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Consequently, to reject Our Lord and the Church founded by Him is to reject the only source of man's true dignity, the dignity of the redeemed "sons of God."

Only those in "invincible ignorance," says the Church, those who through no fault on their part are prevented from explicitly entering the true Church but who nevertheless belong to her implicitly by reason of their seeking to do God's will and keeping the Commandments written in the hearts of all men, will have the great mercy of Our Lord extended to them.

Concerning these souls, the Church allows that they can be saved in their false religions but not by their false religions. What conciliar religious liberty does is turn this teaching on its head so that the exception becomes the general rule.

Hence the seriousness of Pope Paul's renunciation of the papal tiara representing the universal Kingship of Christ in favor of a "new humanism" that recognizes the right of all to hold to their false religions on the basis of the "dignity of the human person."



Truth Sacrificed

We see the consequences of this grave error today in those many statements of senior prelates distancing themselves and the Church from any intention to convert non-Catholics and non-Christians. It was also most notably evident in the unprecedented actions of Pope John Paul II who kissed the Koran, received on his forehead the mark of a Hindu deity, participated in Animist rites in Togo and finally orchestrated those Assisi gatherings of the world's religions, during which the Buddhists worshipped an image of their false god atop a tabernacle while other pagans ritually slaughtered chickens on a Catholic altar.

In light of these very grave actions one wonders why the Christian martyrs chose death rather than burn a grain of incense before the false "gods of the Gentiles," which St. Paul called "demons." To quote one senior Church prelate in relation to this incredible development: "The martyrs sacrificed their lives for the truth. Now they sacrifice the truth."

Modernist Confusion and Contradiction Today

And on the subject of truth, here is a comparison of pre- and post-Vatican II papal quotes demonstrating that the same Modernist confusion and contradiction continues under the present Pontiff.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis, in keeping with conciliar teaching on Religious Liberty, writes: "The Synod Fathers spoke of the importance of respect for religious freedom, viewed as a fundamental human right. This includes 'the freedom to choose the religion which one judges to be true and to manifest one's beliefs in public.'"

However, in his Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of 1864, Pope Pius IX writes: "They do not fear to foster that erroneous opinion, most fatal in its effects on the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by Our predecessor, Gregory XVI, an insanity, viz., that 'liberty of conscience and worship is each man's personal right, which ought to be legally proclaimed in every rightly constituted society'...But, while they rashly affirm this, they do not think and consider that they are preaching liberty of perdition...."

The same contradiction is found in respect to Ecumenical Fraternity. In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis writes: "Commitment to ecumenism re-

sponds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that 'they may all be one' (Jn. 17:21)." Yet, in his 1928 Encyclical *Mortalium Animos*, Pope Pius XI declares:

"When there is question of fostering unity among Christians, it is easy for many to be misled by the apparent excellence of the object to be achieved. Is it not right, they ask, is it not the obvious duty of all who invoke the name of Christ to refrain from mutual reproaches and at last to be united in charity? Dare anyone say that he loves Christ and yet not strive with all his might to accomplish the desire of Him who asked His Father that His disciples might be 'one'? (Jn. 17:21)...If only all Christians were 'one,' it is contended, then they might do so much more to drive out the plague of irreligion which, with its insidious and far-reaching advance, is threatening to sap the strength of the Gospel. In reality, however, these fair and alluring words cloak a most grave error, subversive of the foundations of the Catholic religion..."

We have seen this error with our own eyes these past fifty years since Vatican II in a series of compromises on the part of Catholic ecumenists that have not been reciprocated by their Protestant interlocutors.

From Ecumenism to Silent Apostasy

Hence, we now have a liturgy and liturgical practices that mirror very strongly the Protestant meal service, "subversive of the foundations of the Catholic religion" to the extent that seminaries and religious houses everywhere are closing for want of vocations, millions have abandoned the practice of the faith, reverence for the Blessed Sacrament is greatly diminished, the Sacrament of Confession is largely ignored, as is the Church's moral teaching, and children no longer receive even basic catechetical formation.

Further, in the name of "dialogue" we have seen actual interfaith worship with Protestants take root at every level in the Church, including, sadly, such unprecedented spectacles as Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio a few years ago kneeling before 7,000 witnesses in Argentina to receive the blessing of Protestant pastors, and the recent scandal of Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston "re-affirming" his baptism at the hands of a female Pentecostal minister.

How opposed these actions are to the teaching of Gregory XVI, who wrote in *Mirari Vos*: “With the admonition of the Apostle that there is ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’ (Eph. 4:5), may those fear who contrive the notion that the safe harbor of salvation is open to persons of any religion whatever. They should consider the testimony of Christ Himself who said ‘He that is not with me, is against me’ (Luke 11:23), and that they disperse unhappily who do not gather with Him. Therefore “without a doubt, they will perish forever, unless they hold the Catholic faith whole and entire...”

To use the measure of orthodoxy given us by Pope Benedict XVI, there is, in fact, no “Hermeneutic of Continuity” between pre- and post-conciliar teaching on Religious Liberty and Ecumenism. That’s why no pope or council prior to Vatican II is ever quoted in a post-conciliar document or speech in reference to these innovative doctrines.

From Autocracy to Democracy

Nor is there continuity with the past in respect to Collegiality. In his *Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre explains that Our Lord instructed individuals, not a collectivity, to tend His sheep. The Apostles obeyed Our Lord’s orders, and until the twentieth century it remained thus. The pope alone enjoyed supreme power and jurisdiction over the universal Church, and each bishop, subject to this Petrine authority, enjoyed full power within his diocese.

Then the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* appeared hinting at a new democratic structure of government, according to which the College of Bishops together with the pope exercises supreme power over the Church in habitual and continual manner.

It was a novel idea of double supremacy that ran contrary to the definitions of Vatican Council I and to Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Satis Cognitum*.

Notwithstanding this contradiction, however, and largely dismissive of the footnote of correction attached at the end of the conciliar document in question, the post-conciliar Church has since witnessed a universal transformation of National Bishops’ Conferences from those purely consultative bodies approved by St. Pius X to decision-making entities operating on the principle of the democratic vote and ‘majority rule’; whereby the government of the

pope and that of each bishop in his diocese has frequently been trumped in practice by pressure from the presbyterial college.

Hence the universal imposition and extension against the expressed wishes of the popes of such abuses as Communion in the hand and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the scandal of U.S. marriage annulments that rose from 700 in 1969 to more than 50,000 by 1995, the introduction of doctrinally unsound Catechisms into Holland, Canada and France without corrections ordered by the Holy See having been made, etc.

I could quote many such examples, but perhaps the most revealing proof is the letter of explanation Pope Benedict XVI felt obliged to issue to the various Episcopal Conferences in an attempt to soothe a less than favorable reception of his 2007 Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*.

What this letter highlighted was the pressure the popes have experienced since the advent of Collegiality; reducing them to issuing reassurances, suggestions and advice instead of issuing the orders needed to get the Church back on the right track, condemning when necessary, as the popes have hitherto done as primary guardians of the deposit of faith.

Well did Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani once observe that the only recording in history of Collegiality at work among the Apostles was when they collectively abandoned Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane!

Adding further to the confusion is the teaching of the new Code of Canon Law (1983) that power resides in the “people of God.” This tendency towards what they call bringing the base into sharing the exercise of power can be found all through present structures—synod, episcopal conferences, priests’ councils, pastoral councils, Roman commissions, national commissions, etc.; and there are equivalents in religious orders.

So now pastoral councils instruct the priests; the priests’ councils instruct the bishops; the bishops’ vote in the conferences and the conferences dictate to the pope. In effect, it is authority turned on its head so that what was once a top-down structure of Church government has become a bottom-up structure of so many contradictory opinions and methods that it can truly be stated that collegiality of the magisterium has resulted in paralysis of the magisterium.



This great tragedy was further compounded when Pope Benedict XVI “resigned” his papal office in 2013. Never in the sacred history of the Church has a pope “resigned.” Two have abdicated for very serious reasons, but none has ever resigned.

Resignation is proper to the CEO of a corporate company, not to the one who sits on the divinely instituted Chair of Peter. And so now we have the unprecedented and demeaning spectacle of two living Popes in the Vatican at the same time, one reigning and one emeritus, both “inaugurated,” not crowned, according to the new ceremony introduced by Pope John Paul II to better reflect the Socialist norms of the modern world.

For his part, Pope Francis has taken the innovations even further by recently appointing a Council of eight Cardinals to assist him with the running of the Church. His Holiness makes no secret of his intention to continue down the road of Collegiality even though it ultimately undermines the supreme and unique authority of the Vicar of Christ, as we already see by the Pontiff’s preference to refer to himself constantly by his lesser title of “Bishop of Rome.”

So we may say that in just four steps since Vatican II—i.e., renunciation of the papal tiara, introduction of Collegial Equality, more power to the people and the first ever “resignation” of a pope—the autocratic structure of Petrine authority instituted by Our Lord for His Church has been transformed into a Socialist democracy by which papal teaching accrues in practice to little more than just one amongst many varied opinions. And why not, since the popes themselves no longer preach or write in the clear, concise and authoritative Petrine tone of their pre-conciliar predecessors.

“Turned unto Fables”

On the contrary, Pope Francis’s recent “Who am I to judge?” statement to the press in relation to homosexuals did more to promote the gay lobby than that aggressive lobby could have hoped to achieve itself by decades of campaigning.

Perhaps the faithful will now understand why there was barely a whimper of protest recently from the Church’s hierarchy when secular governments unilaterally moved to impose gay marriage on society.

Wherever we look in the Church today all we see

is this invasion of the secular, rebellious spirit of the world constantly in search of novelty, constantly “renewing,” constantly chipping away at the last remnants of the Traditions handed down unaltered through the generations until Vatican II.

Quite how this “pastoral” Council, declared to be non-doctrinal and non-infallible, came to impose a new ecclesiology, a new liturgy, a new Code of Canon Law, a new Catechism and a new orientation centered on the “dignity of the human person” rather than on baptism in Christ through His Church, is a mystery known only to the Almighty.

God knows, it has been a whirlwind of evolution which for forty years has sown confusion in the true Church of Our Lord. It has eroded authority, suppressed dogmatic teaching, disrupted unity, left many Catholics bewildered, broken many hearts and resulted in mass apostasy from the faith. There simply is no more diplomatic a way to put it.

And now Pope Francis seems to be focussing on even more radical changes that will see greater deterioration take place.

All the talk is about the poor, the hungry and the marginalized, and about pursuing social justice and global peace through greater “dialogue” with other “faith traditions.” At no time in *Evangelii Gaudium* does the Pontiff make reference to the great Social Encyclicals of his pre-Vatican II predecessors, such as Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, or of the fact that the Church has championed the cause of the poor and marginalized for two thousand years through the missions.

It is almost as if His Holiness considers that legacy to be tainted on account of the traditional theology underlying it, a theology which identified the worst poverty of all to be that of the absence of Christ and His grace from souls, and which condemned and proscribed interaction with false religions under the pretext of improving man’s condition on earth.

To be fair to Pope Francis, he does say some very good things in *Evangelii Gaudium* that are perfectly in line with Catholic teaching. But it is this apparent disdain for the old Church Militant in favor of a kind of United Nations of inter-religious social work which is of particular concern.

The Church does not exist on this earth primarily to feed the poor, clothe the hungry and win justice for the downtrodden, noble as these corporal works

of mercy are. Rather, the Church exists principally for the true worship of God and to convert souls to the Catholic religion that they may be saved for all eternity.

Hence, this novel idea of a "poorer Church for the poor," a Church which follows the Puritan model of cutting down the great tree of authoritative Catholic teaching and liturgical majesty for a return to the simplicity of the mustard seed is an illusion that does injustice to Christ the King and great harm to souls.

The examples of Sts. Francis of Assisi and Jean Marie Vianney (the Curé of Ars) should help to demonstrate what I mean by this. Both of these saints were renowned for their personal lives of holy poverty and penitential austerity in imitation of Our Lord, the poor carpenter of Nazareth. Yet, both insisted on the most expensive and exquisite adornments that could be afforded to beautify their respective parish churches, wherein Christ the King resided in the Blessed Sacrament.

What these examples of the saints highlight is that our Catholic religion is first a supernatural religion instituted for the true worship of God and the preaching of divine truth both "in season and out of season," as St. Paul said, for the salvation of souls. Any social program for the betterment of humanity on earth is by far subordinate to this principal mission.

Consequently, this post-Vatican II reorientation of the Church is, with the very greatest respect to those responsible, a madness exceeding that of Nero who fiddled while Rome burned.

Surely forty years of devastation of the Catholic religion together with an exponential increase in global violence, poverty and immorality is evidence enough of the futility of trying to adapt the divine Catholic Faith to the spirit of the world and the "cult of man."

There can be no spiritual renewal, no lasting world peace and no global social justice attained by such a union; much less by a continued promotion of false Religious Liberty and Ecumenism, which doctrines equate to mere human respect denying to our non-Catholic and non-Christian neighbor the greatest act of charity, namely, the truth that they must embrace Christ and His Catholic Church for salvation.

In his Encyclical *Quas Primas*, Pope Pius XI puts

it this way: "As long as individuals and States refuse to submit to the rule of Our Saviour, there can be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations. Men must look for the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ...His Church, the one source of salvation."

How different this fearless teaching is to post-Vatican II Religious Liberty, which has seen our popes address Jewish and Islamic congresses as fellow "children of Abraham," believing in the same one true God as Catholics.

But how can such statements find justification in Our Lord's own testimony, who said: "Abraham saw my day and was glad..." (John 8:56); and: "He who rejects me, rejects the one who sent me" (Luke 10:16)?

Equally at odds with Our Lord's testimony is this new conciliar process of sending Vatican greetings to the representatives of other non-Catholic religions, those of pagan origin such as Buddhism, Shintoism and Hinduism, on their various religious feast days as though they were somehow pleasing to the Holy Spirit and conducive to holiness and salvation.

I have already highlighted this syncretist mentality as it manifested itself in the Assisi gatherings organized by Pope John Paul II.

Again, I ask how any of this is justifiable in light of the First Commandment and the infallible dogma "outside the Church no salvation"? Where are these dangerous novelties condoned anywhere in the bimillennial teaching of the Popes and Councils, or by the teaching of the saints? Did not our Saviour Himself admonish that "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)?

The faithful have the right and a duty to ask these questions of the shepherds entrusted by Our Lord with the care of their souls. Many indeed have asked but, alas, the response is usually silence or an unjust command of obedience to the Council.

Since Vatican II was not a Council bearing the hallmark of the extraordinary magisterium, however, and since none of these modern novelties have been imposed formally by the extraordinary magisterium on the faithful, which would be impossible in light of two thousand years of contrary infallible teaching, then troubled and discerning Catholics, myself included, have chosen to side with Tradition and reject



these destructive innovations.

The Rule of Resistance

Yes, for the love of Our Lord, His Holy Church, our holy Catholic religion and the Petrine See, we follow St. Paul's respectful example and "resist Peter to his face" in these matters of very grave scandal threatening the faith, following as our method of resistance the recommendation of St. Vincent of Lerins.

Having fresh in his memory the devastation wrought in the Church in the fourth century by the Arian heresy, a devastation so great that St. Jerome felt constrained to declare "the whole world awoke and groaned to find itself Arian," this fifth-century saint proposed the following question and answer for future generations who might be faced with similar tragedy:

"But what if some novel contagions try to infect the whole Church, and not merely a tiny part of it? Then he [the Catholic] will take care to cleave to antiquity, which cannot now be led astray by any deceit of novelty" (The Vincentian Canon, in *Commonitorium*, ed. Moxon, Cambridge Patristic Texts, chap. IV, 434).

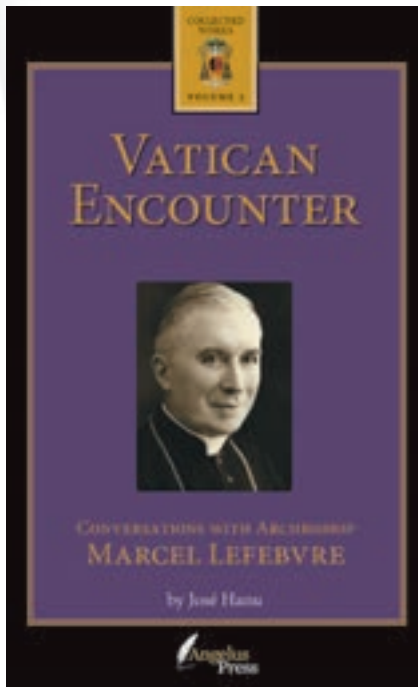
Since divine faith is a higher virtue than obedience, it follows that no man, however exalted, may legitimately command obedience of Catholics in matters that endanger their faith. Hence, there can be no such thing as schism on the part of subordinates who respectfully refuse the dangerous religious innovations of their superiors in favor of the security of antiquity, regardless of hysterical assertions to the contrary.

Sadly, the same cannot be stated with any confidence in respect to those who choose obedience to men above obedience to God. In this regard, Archbishop Lefebvre lamented after Vatican II that "Satan's masterstroke has been to sow disobedience through obedience."

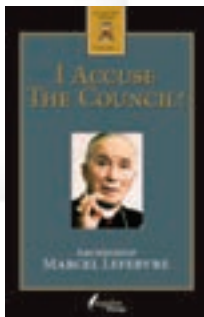
I think it fitting to leave the final word to St. Paul as food for thought: "...Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables..." (2 Timothy 4:2).

Have you read Archbishop Lefebvre's classic works?

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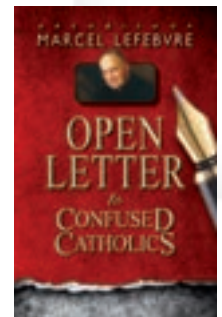
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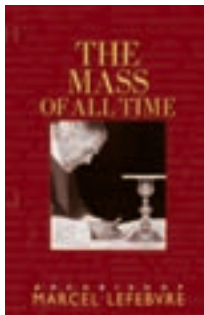
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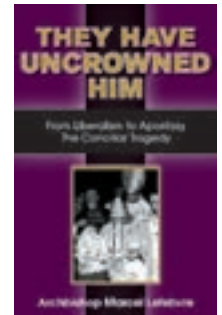
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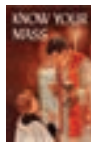


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Letters to the Editor

Dear Angelus Press,

Thank you very much for your recent issue on canonizations. The articles did a great job exposing the unfitness of John Paul II for canonization, but there wasn't much said about John XXIII. What can you say about him that would make him unfit for canonization? (Submitted via e-mail)

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your interest in reading the issue of canonizations. You bring up a very good point about the case of John XXIII which is virtually ignored by the issue. In truth, the media, and Rome firstly, have put all the stress on John Paul II. He was known to all, popular, and reigned for over a quarter of a century. In comparison, Pope John XXIII figures indeed as a shadow, the "next best", hardly known to most except for his convoking the Council. If he started the revolutionary movement in the Church, it is no doubt John Paul II who instituted the Revolution as a permanent fixture, with the merry-go-round ecumaniac mood of Assisi and other sacrilegious events.

Yet, there is much to be said about Good Pope John. We find in him a real contrast between the private devout priest, as testified by his personal diary, and the public man imprudently following the lead of neo-modernist minds. *The Angelus* published, starting in September 2000, a series of three articles on him written by Fr. Simoulin, then superior of the Italian district. Also, in a similar note, Roberto de Mattei explained his view in a recent interview with John Vennari of *Catholic Family News*. Professor de Mattei quotes Fr. Innocenzo, on whom Fr. Simoulin's article relies heavily:

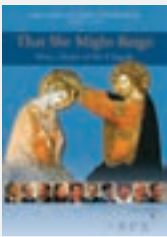
"Having studied the Second Vatican Council, I examined in depth his biography and consulted the acts of his beatification process. When the Church canonizes one of the faithful, it is not that she wants to assure us that the deceased is in the glory of Heaven; rather, she proposes them as a model of heroic virtue. Depending on the case, it is a perfect religious, pastor, father of a family, and so on. In the case of a Pope, to be considered a saint he must have exercised heroic virtue in performing his mission as Pontiff, as was, for example, the case for Saint Pius V or Saint Pius X. Well, as far as John XXIII, I am certain, after careful consideration, that his pontificate was objectively harmful to the Church, and so it is impossible to speak of sanctity for him. Dominican Father Innocenzo Colosio, one who understood sanctity and is



considered one of the greatest historians of spirituality in modern times, affirmed this before I did in a famous article in the *Rivista di Ascetica e Mistica* (Journal of Ascetical and Mystical Theology).”

Signed by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, Member of the Editorial Team

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The Last Word

Dear Readers,

Even though we uphold the dignity of baptism as one of the seven sacraments, we are somewhat oblivious of its real nature and effects. Most of us were baptized a few days after birth. Our parents brought us to the church and our godfather or godmother answered the questions put to us by the priest. Our godparents then pronounced the Creed on our behalf and solemnly promised to forsake Satan and all his pomps. Several years later, when we attained the use of reason, we were (hopefully) instructed in all these matters, but few of us really appreciate how profoundly baptism has forever changed our lives. Over time, the reality of being baptized has, for many of us, become ordinary and mundane.

Guided by St. Paul, let us quickly review the profound truths of baptism. The Apostle to the Gentiles proclaims: "Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). In these few words, St. Paul explains that baptism is the sacrament which joins our lives to the life of Christ. Even more, baptism conforms our lives to Christ; we die with him and with him rise from the dead!

This sacrament is much more than an external ceremony. Its inward effects are much more important than the outward signs. Through baptism we are forever linked to Christ. From the moment when water flows over our foreheads and the formal words are pronounced, we die to our purely natural life, one filled with sin and anxiety, and are resurrected in the supernatural life of Christ. Our existence takes on an entirely new orientation, for we are called to heaven! We may continue living in the same circumstances as before, performing the same daily duties, yet after baptism we are no longer children of the devil, bound for hell, but children of God, called to eternal bliss.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Jürgen Wegner

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

The Society of St. Pius X is an international priestly society of common life without vows, whose purpose is the priesthood and that which pertains to it.

The main goal of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X is to preserve the Catholic faith in its fullness and purity, to teach its truths, and to diffuse its virtues. Authentic spiritual life, the sacraments, and the traditional liturgy are its primary means of bringing this life of grace to souls.

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