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# The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

## What Is Islam?

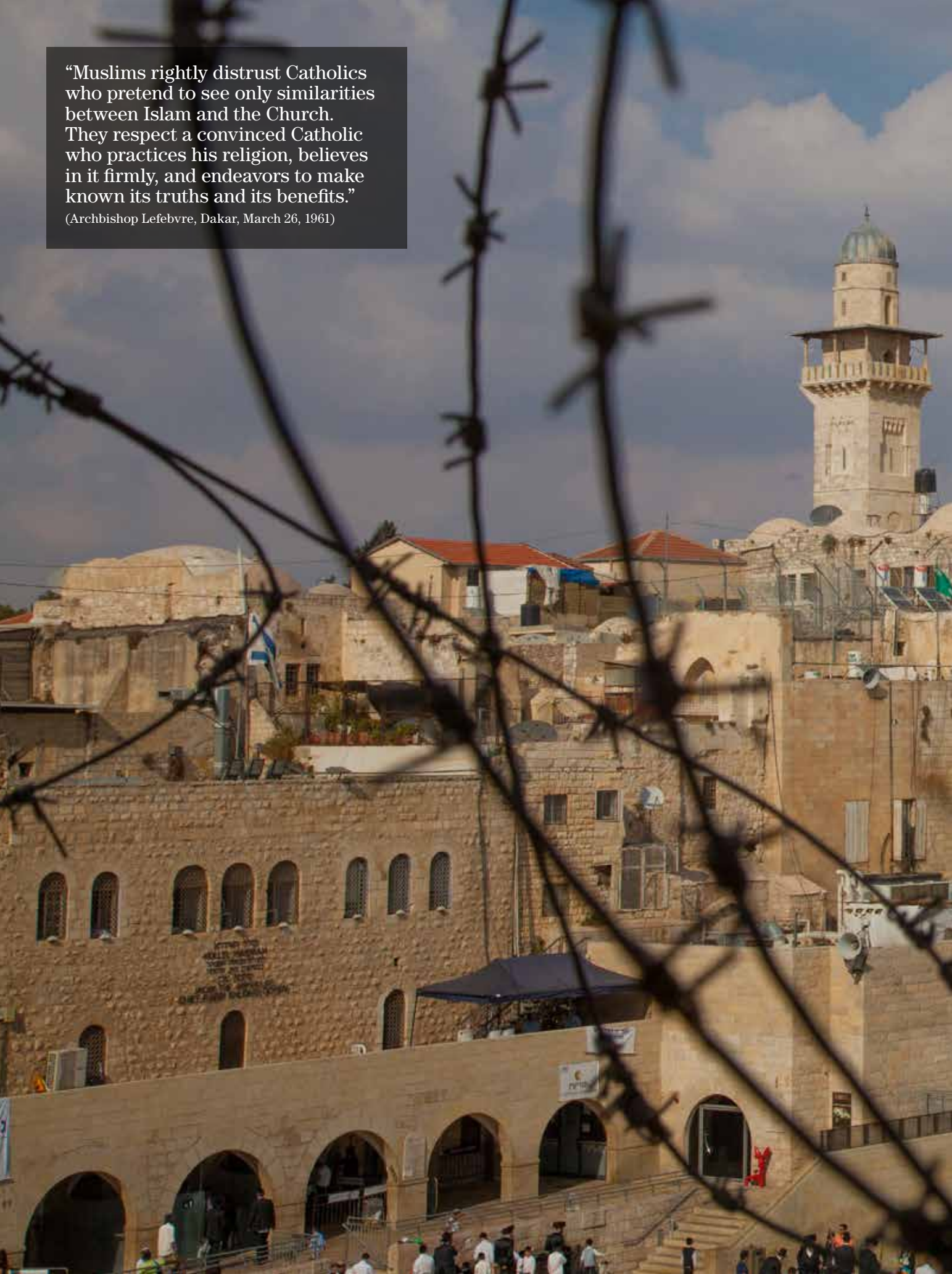
The Christian East Under Islam

A Reminder from Belloc

Evangelization of Muslims

“Muslims rightly distrust Catholics who pretend to see only similarities between Islam and the Church. They respect a convinced Catholic who practices his religion, believes in it firmly, and endeavors to make known its truths and its benefits.”

(Archbishop Lefebvre, Dakar, March 26, 1961)





# Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

“Massacres perpetrated by ISIS in Egypt or Iraq”; “Islamist war expansion in central Africa”; “Terrorist acts in France”. In the past six months, we have seen a crescendo of cruelty and warlike atmosphere in the name of Allah. Close to half a million people have deserted their homes and found refuge in survival camps fleeing Allah’s wrath. Books have been written describing the attacks targeting Christians on a world scale.

These phenomena, which have escalated to an unheard of degree, deserve that we get to the root of the question. Is the jihad, which these warriors invoke, essential to the Muslim religion or is it a ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘extremist’ view? What is the faith professed in the Quran? And what turned Muhammad and Islam into a powerful force?

These and many other issues are pressing hard on the mind of those who wish to get to the core of the Islamic question. Much of the problem is that we grab one Sura or another, and misread it completely because we ignore much of its historical Islamic context. If the Crescent religion is a book religion, it is much more than that. It is a historical empire to contend with, a most hermetic culture, a political force, and a rather shallow religion.

If this is so, we may candidly wonder whether a Westerner and a Christian understand properly Islam. Only those who have long lived in this ‘civilization’ can give us a real appreciation of the Islamic movement. And they soberly estimate that, against the rise of Islam, the decadent Christian nations are no match. Hence, the first duty of fervent Catholics is to know about this rising enemy, which is the purpose of this publication, and oppose to it the charity of truth and the true charity.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner  
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“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

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# What Is Islam?

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by James Vogel

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Any history or description of Islam that is limited to a short article is bound to speak in generalities and over-simplify. That being said, I hope to provide a brief introduction to the nature of Islam and its internal differences. We often speak of Islam as a single, monolithic entity, whereas the reality is much more complex, both in history and today.

## What Is Islam?

To say that Islam is simply a religion, albeit false, tells only part of the story. It is simultaneously a set of religious doctrines, a political worldview, a complex series of financial and legal rules, and cultural standards. As Serge Trifkovic put it in *The Sword of the Prophet*:

“There is ‘Christianity’ and there used to be ‘Christendom,’ but in Islam such a distinction is impossible. To whatever political entity a Muslim believer may belong...he is first and foremost the citizen of Islam, and belongs morally, spiritually, and intellectually, and in principle totally, to the world of belief of which Muhammad is the Prophet, and Mecca is the capital.”

As a religion—or even a Christian heresy, as Belloc claimed—the dogmatic principles are relatively few and straightforward. The entire Muslim creed is said to be summarized in the oft-repeated sentence: “There is no God but God and Muhammad is His prophet.” The “five pillars of Islam” include this prayer, other daily prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and the pilgrimage to Mecca once in one’s life.

Islam appears to be a mix of various tribal



pagan religions, bits of Jewish and Christian traditions (the latter seemingly through heretical sects), and Zoroastrianism. Muslims believe in a single God, though they reject the Trinity. As for our Lord, Jesus is a mere prophet who paved the way for Muhammad; his divinity is rejected in no uncertain terms. There is a complex and rich system of angels and demons which is rather different from that of Christianity.

Predestination plays a crucial and central role in Islamic theology. In Islam, God pre-ordained the salvation or damnation of all men from eternity, and nothing an individual man can do is able change His will. Although free will is admitted in theory, it is practically useless. Descriptions of everlasting punishment are brutal and graphic, while the glories of everlasting life are sensual and worldly.

In Islamic morality, some of the gravest sins are apostasy, adultery (though multiple wives are allowed!), idolatry, usury, and false witness against fellow Muslims. Divorce is easy for husbands and almost impossible for wives. Slavery, blood revenge, and subjugation of non-believers are all allowed or promoted.

The notion of jihad, or war for the sake of Allah, is one of the three most important things a man can do according to Muhammad. Far from being a theory relegated to the Quran, the history of the past 1,500 years bears witness to this reality. This is an intrinsic part of the Muslim religion, not an optional or debated issue.

## The History of Islam

From a relatively humble beginning in the early seventh century, Muhammad and his followers spread their new religion with a rapidity that is staggering. In the first century of its existence, from the death of Muhammad in 632 to the decisive Battle of Tours in 732, Islam swept across much of the civilized world. In chronological order, the territories conquered included Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Egypt, North Africa, Cyprus, and Spain. Were it not for Charles Martel in France, the Muslims might well have attained their goal of taking Rome.

In a single century, almost all of the Christian

East was lost to Islam. It is difficult to calculate the impact of this reality in history. The Catholic Faith, for long over a millennium, has primarily been, and been seen as, something Western. Yes, the Eastern Rites exist, but they are dwarfed in size and influence by the Latin Rite. The question is to what extent this dichotomy was caused by the destruction of the East by Islam. As Trifkovic notes:

“Christians numbered 30 million by A.D. 311, in spite of imperial persecution that often entailed martyrdom. Most of them lived not in Europe but in Asia Minor and Africa, the home of many famous Christian fathers and martyrs, such as Paul of Tarsus, Augustine of Hippo, Polycarp of Smyrna, Tertullian of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom of Antioch, and Cyprian of Carthage. The Seven Churches of Revelation were all in Asia Minor.”

Though the European expansion of Islam was halted in 732, Spain would spend much of the next seven centuries in almost constant civil war before finally expelling them in 1492. Meanwhile, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the new religion continued to expand in Asia and Africa: Persia and part of India were conquered, in addition to Cyprus and Sicily. When all was said and done, Islam controlled almost two-thirds of what had previously been the Christian world and the Roman Empire.

## The Crusades

The history of Islam would be incomplete without a mention of the Crusades, though it is once again a topic that is complex and worthy of longer studies. Although Muslims controlled the Holy Land, they initially allowed the Christian holy sites to remain open, collecting taxes from the steady stream of pilgrims from Europe. In the eleventh century, however, Muslim sentiment took a dimmer view of Jerusalem, and even called for the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher.

Jerusalem was captured by the Turks in 1070. Shortly thereafter, though the schism between Rome and Constantinople was fresh in everyone's minds, plans were made to re-take the Holy Land. Pope Urban II formally called the First Crusade >

# Theme Islam

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in 1095. In 1099, Jerusalem was re-taken by the Christians, but the victory would be (relatively) short-lived. Several other crusades aimed to recover previously Christian lands, but Jerusalem was taken again by the Muslims under Saladin in 1187. Succeeding crusades were more or less unsuccessful.

Islam continued to expand and took Constantinople, once the greatest city in the world, in 1453. The Balkans were next, as well as Hungary. In 1529, the Turks were at the gates of Vienna as Europe was being rent asunder by the Protestant revolt. After several centuries of consolidation and internal disputes, Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798. The Ottoman Empire would later crumble after World War I. Islam today has no caliphate and is instead distinguished more by religious, ethnic, and regional differences.

## The Lack of Unity

Throughout its history, the civil wars, theological and ethnic, between Muslims have kept Islam from expanding its reach even further than it did. While space prohibits a discussion of the dynastic disputes throughout history, a closer look at the major “denominations” of Islam is revealing. These divisions continue to impact the growth of Islam today.

Many are aware of the main schism between the Sunnis and Shia, which are easily the two largest, though not exclusive, branches of Islam. Sunni Muslims make up to 90 percent (by some estimates) of worldwide Islam; they believe that after the first four caliphs, any righteous Muslim could be made caliph. (The Shia believe, on the contrary, that only certain descendants of Muhammad could fill such a position of authority.)

Although the caliphate no longer exists, the difference between the two schools goes far beyond details in prayers and ablutions. It affects in particular their visions of jihad; Sunni Islam, the “orthodox” interpretation we are most familiar with from history and in most Muslim countries today, openly allows and promotes violence in the cause of Allah. Shia Muslims have

a bit of a nuanced approach.

The Shia believe in an imam being mystically hidden by Allah in preparation for the end times. This imam will lead Muslims to a final victory over the entire earth. This apocalyptic eschatological vision can sometimes lead to a double perspective: on the one hand, a certain hesitation to engage the non-Muslim world until said imam appears; on the other hand, a willingness to “speed up” events in the hopes that the end comes soon. (It should be noted that the Sunnis also believe in this figure, but that he is to come, not already here.)

At any rate, as interesting as the internal divisions are, they have played a pivotal role in keeping Islam from presenting a united front to the world. These camps continue to play a pivotal role in Middle East unrest today. The famous El Cid was a master at playing the various Muslim sects against one another in Spain.

## A Final Word

The difficulty in converting Muslims to the Faith is an historical fact. Reasons include, but are not limited to, the punishments inflicted on “apostates” in Islam, the striking differences in religions, and the intentional lack of serious self-reflection and criticism inherent to Islam. The centrality of love to Christianity, the life of self-denial and penance, and a non-sensual paradise are immense stumbling blocks. That being said, especially considering the mysterious nature of grace, we may have more opportunities to evangelize in our age than in any before. In that case, the first step is to know something about Islam.



**James Vogel** is Editor-in-Chief of Angelus Press. He has an M.A. in philosophy from Holy Apostles College & Seminary. He has written and lectured on a variety of topics related to history and Catholic culture.





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# The Christian East Under Islam

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by Anonymous

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For well over a millennium the Mohammedans have conquered, persecuted, and, at times, attempted to wipe out the Christians of the East. Catholic, Orthodox, and Oriental (i.e., those who only accept the first three Ecumenical Councils) Christians have had their identities shaped under Islamic rule, typically with negative, if not disastrous, results. While the rise and cancerous spread of Islam in the Middle East and on across North Africa into Spain is often seen as the subject of history books, Muslim dominance in the region is hardly a thing of the past. With radical Islamists today carrying out terrorist strikes among the last remnants of Western Christendom while more organized and brutal efforts are underway to eliminate the last Christian populations in the Arab world, events which began in the seventh century

under the auspices of a false prophet reverberate today, not just at the socio-political level, but the ecclesiastical as well. Roman Catholics, understandably disturbed by the seemingly daily reports of Muslim violence in their own backyards, may recall with understandable nostalgia the days of organized Latin resistance against the Islamic horde, whether at Lepanto or the gates of Vienna. But they would do well to remember the oftentimes tragic experience of their Eastern brethren and their heroic attempts to keep the Light of Christ shining in the lands where the Apostles themselves first began to spread the Gospel.

Although a full accounting of the emergence of Islam is far beyond the scope of this article, it is important to recognize that within a half-century of the death of Muhammad in 632, >

Muslim invaders had managed to seize control of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem—three ancient patriarchates of the then-unified Church—while threatening the crown jewel of Eastern Christendom, the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. Byzantine victory over the Muslims, both in the seventh and eighth centuries, was attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, called *Theotokos* (God-bearer) in the East, leading to a special commemorating hymn known as the Akathist celebrated on the fifth Saturday of Lent in the Byzantine Rite to this day. While certain populations of Eastern Christians enjoyed periods of toleration following Muslim invasion, they often lived ghetto existences, cut off from the rest of the Church and prohibited from proselytizing. At other times, however, Christians under Islam suffered terribly with many enduring martyrdom and others finding it easier to convert than continue on as second-class human beings.

This unhappy reality held true following the fall of Constantinople eight centuries after the sons of Islam had first tried to take the city. Despite the break in communion between East and West occasioned by the Great Schism in 1054 and its cementation in 1439 when the Orthodox East repudiated the reunion proposal made by Rome at the Council of Florence, Pope Nicholas V dispatched troops to help defend the city from the armies of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II. Unfortunately, political strife and material shortfalls in the West prevented the Pope from offering the degree of assistance necessary to save the city. Concelebrations with Latin and Greek Christians took place in the great Byzantine cathedral of Hagia Sophia beginning in December 1452, but on Tuesday, May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell and its emperor, Constantine XI, perished defending the city his saintly namesake had founded 1,123 years earlier. As John Julius Norwich observes at the close of his magisterial history of Byzantium, there is a reason why Tuesday is still considered the unluckiest day of the week.

With the Byzantine Empire lost, relations between East and West were finally strained to the breaking point. In order to help ensure that there would be no rescue of Constantinople

by the Latins, Mehmed II placed George Scholarios (Gennadius II), a learned philosopher and theologian, but anti-Roman bigot, on the patriarchal throne, thus ensuring that the repudiation of Florence would stick among the city's Greek Orthodox population. Up until the 20th century, Ottoman rulers openly interfered in the governance of the Greek Orthodox Church, at times offering the patriarchate to the highest bidder while, at others, murdering those who did not meet with their approval. The patriarchs of Constantinople themselves quickly took on a dual role, serving as both spiritual leader of the Greek Church and the political head of the Ottoman Empire's Christian population. While Greek Christians sometimes enjoyed the same basic protections as Arab Christians whose territory had fallen under Muslim control, the grossly disparate treatment Orthodox Christians received as compared to their Muslim neighbors prompted many to abandon the apostolic faith.

The adverse effect Constantinople's fall had on the Eastern Orthodox world cannot be understated. First, it was not long before the political situation of the Ottoman Empire's Greek Orthodox population degenerated into the identification of Orthodoxy with nationality. To be Greek was to be Orthodox and vice versa, a mentality which still manifests itself today in spite of efforts by certain Greek Orthodox theologians and bishops to remind followers that the Gospel is universal. With respect to relations with the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek nationalist mentality has created numerous complications over the centuries, including the erroneous belief that Catholicism is merely a "brand" of Christianity for certain ethnic populations living in the West. Regrettably, the identification of nationality with Orthodoxy has spread beyond Greek borders, infecting large swathes of the Eastern Christian world.

Second, the loss of autonomy among the Eastern Orthodox also meant the loss, or at least the obscuring, of their authentic spiritual and theological patrimony. Desperate to elevate their learning beyond what the Ottomans would allow, some Greek clergy sought education in the West from Catholic institutions, an anomaly which has sadly been derided by modern Orthodox



scholars as a period of “Latin captivity” in Eastern Christianity. Instead of serving as a bridge between East and West, the importation of Western Catholic thought into the East is now seen as a disease, mostly for chauvinistic reasons. While the reclamation of the Christian East’s authentic heritage deserves applause, the contempt toward the West which has frequently accompanied this recovery is hardly a cause for celebration.

Last, Muslim rule over the Patriarch of Constantinople, along with the ancient patriarchal sees in the Arab world, means that the Patriarch of Moscow has become the center of the Orthodox world. The Russian Orthodox Church, a Christian body that has produced members who died heroically in the name of Christ during periods of savage persecution by militant atheists, has been long beholden to secular authorities, largely since the reforms of Tsar Peter the Great and certainly today during the political dominance of Vladimir Putin. Instead of seeking unity with the Catholic Church, Russian Orthodoxy has violently opposed any and all efforts for those within its territorial sphere to rejoin Rome. For instance, the 1596 Union of Brest, which established the Ukrainian and Belarussian Greek Catholic Churches, remains a source of deep animosity among the Russian Orthodox—so deep that the Russian Church continues to use it as an excuse to pressure other particular Orthodox churches from making positive overtures toward Rome.

As already noted, other Eastern Christian confessions have undergone great trials following the rise of Islam. The year 2015 marks the centenary of the genocide carried out by the Turks against the Armenians—Oriental and Catholic—and few will forget the bloody death of 21 Coptic Christians suffered at the hands of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) in February on a beach in Libya. *Sui iuris* Catholic churches in the Middle East, such as the Maronites, Melkites, and Chaldeans, continue to be victimized by an increasingly radicalized Muslim population that wishes to drive Christianity from the region once and for all. With the contemporary, secular West seemingly indifferent to their plight, it is probable, perhaps even likely, that no ancient

Christian community will remain in most of the Middle East by the close of this century.

Catholics, particularly Roman Catholics, who are apt to recall the glory days when their forebears bravely defended Christendom from the Muslims should not forget the great price paid for centuries to keep Eastern Christendom free, such as the great sacrifice paid by the Serbian Orthodox at the oft-forgotten Battle of Kosovo. For it was there, in 1389, that Tsar Lazar and thousands of his subjects met their end demonstrating bravery that would have made Don John of Austria and King Jan III Sobieski nod in admiration. And, as tradition holds, it was there that the tsar uttered this arresting curse:

Whoever is a Serb and of Serb birth,  
And of Serb blood and heritage,  
And comes not to fight at Kosovo,  
May he never have progeny born from love,  
Neither son nor daughter!  
May nothing grow that his hand sows,  
Neither red wine nor white wheat!  
And may he be dying in filth as long as his  
children are alive!

Separated though he was from full communion with Holy Mother Church, Tsar Lazar’s words may still perhaps serve as an unsettling but needful reminder that we cannot be complacent in the face of a dark force that would see all those who profess to follow Christ put to the sword. In this day and age where fortitude and true Christian strength are sorely lacking, there remains light emanating from the East to remind us what those virtues are and, just as importantly, what they are for.

The Battle of Lepanto took place on October 7, 1571, when a fleet of the Holy League, a coalition of southern European Catholic maritime states, led by Spain decisively defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Empire on the northern edge of the Gulf of Corinth, off western Greece.

Painting of the Battle of Lepanto by an unknown painter in Saint Paul's Church (Paulskerk), Antwerp, Belgium





# On Islam

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by Hilaire Belloc

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There remains, apart from the old Paganism of Asia and Africa, another indirect supporter of Neo-Paganism: a supporter which indeed hates all Paganism but hates the Catholic Church much more: a factor of whose now increasing importance the masses of Europe are not yet aware: I mean Islam. Islam presents a totally different problem from that attached to any other religious body opposed to Catholicism. To understand it we must appreciate its origin, character and recent fate. Only then can we further appreciate its possible or probable future relations with enemies of the Catholic effort throughout the world.

How did Islam arise? It was not, as our popular historical textbooks would have it, a “new religion”. It was a direct derivative from the Catholic Church. It was essentially, in its origin, a heresy: like

Arianism or Albigensianism.

When the man who produced it—and it is more the creation of one man than any other false religion we know—was young, the whole of the world which he knew, the world speaking Greek in the eastern half and Latin in the western—the only civilised world with which he and his people had come in contact—was Catholic. It was still, though in process of transformation, the Christian Roman Empire, stretching from the English Channel to the borders of his own desert.

The Arabs of whom he came and among whom he lived were Pagan; but such higher religious influence as could touch them, and as they came in contact with through commerce and raiding, was Catholic—with a certain admixture of Jewish



communities. Catholicism had thus distinctly affected these few pagans living upon the fringes of the Empire.

Now what Mahomet did was this. He took over the principal doctrines of the Catholic Church—one personal God, Creator of all things; the immortality of the soul; an eternity of misery or blessedness—and no small part of Christian morals as well. All that was the atmosphere of the only civilisation which had influence upon him or his followers. But at the same time he attempted an extreme simplification.

Many another heresiarch has done this, throwing overboard such and such too profound doctrines, and appealing to the less intelligent by getting rid of mysteries through a crude denial of them. But Mahomet simplified much more than did, say, Pelagius or even Arius. He turned Our Lord into a mere prophet, though the greatest of the prophets; Our Lady—whom he greatly revered, and whom his followers still revere—he turned into no more than the mother of so great a prophet; he cut out the Eucharist altogether, and what was most difficult to follow in the matter of the Resurrection. He abolished all idea of priesthood: most important of all, he declared for social equality among all those who should be ‘true believers’ after his fashion.

With the energy of his personality behind that highly simplified, burning enthusiasm he first inflamed his own few desert folk, and they in turn proceeded to impose their new enthusiasm very rapidly over vast areas of what had been until then a Catholic civilisation; and their chief allies in this sweeping revolution were politically the doctrine of equality, and spiritually the doctrine of simplicity. Everybody troubled by the mysteries of Catholicism tended to join them; so did every slave or debtor who was oppressed by the complexity of a higher civilisation.

The new enthusiasm charged under arms over about half of the Catholic world. There was a moment after it had started out on its conquest when it looked as though it was going to transform and degrade all our Christian culture. But our civilisation was saved at last, though half the Mediterranean was lost.

For centuries the struggle between Islam and the Catholic Church continued. It had varying

fortunes, but for something like a thousand years the issue still remained doubtful. It was not till nearly the year 1700 that Christian culture seemed—for a time—to be definitely the master.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Mahommedan world fell under a kind of palsy. It could not catch up with our rapidly advancing physical science. Its shipping and armament and all means of communication and administration went backwards while ours advanced.

At last, by the end of the nineteenth century, more than nine-tenths of the Mahommedan population of the world, from India and the Pacific to the Atlantic, had fallen under the government of nominally Christian nations, especially England and France.

We no longer regarded Islam as a rival to our own culture. We thought of its religion as a sort of fossilised thing about which we need not trouble. That was almost certainly a mistake. We shall almost certainly have to reckon with Islam in the near future. Perhaps if we lose our Faith it will rise.

For after this subjugation of the Islamic culture by the nominally Christian had already been achieved, the political conquerors of that culture began to notice two disquieting features about it. The first was that its spiritual foundation proved immovable; the second, that its area of occupation did not recede, but on the contrary slowly expanded.

## Few Conversions

Islam would not look at any Christian missionary effort. The so-called Christian governments, in contact with it, it spiritually despised. The ardent and sincere Christian missionaries were received usually with courtesy, sometimes with fierce attack, but were never allowed to affect Islam. I think it true to say that Islam is the only spiritual force on earth which Catholicism has found an impregnable fortress. Its votaries are the one religious body conversions from which are insignificant.

This granite permanence is a most striking thing, and worthy of serious consideration by all those who meditate on the spiritual, and, >

consequently, the social, future of the world.

And what is true of the spiritual side of Islam is true of the geographical. Mahomedan rulers have had to give up Christian provinces formerly under their control: especially in the Balkans. But the area of Mahomedan practice has not shrunk.

All that wide belt from the islands of the Pacific to Morocco, and from Central Asia to the Sahara desert and south of it—not only remains intact but slightly expands. Islam is appreciably spreading its influence further and further into tropical Africa.

Now that state of affairs creates a very important subject of study for those who interest themselves in the future of religious influence upon mankind. The political control of Islam by Europe cannot continue indefinitely: it is already shaken. Meanwhile the spiritual independence of Islam—upon which everything depends—is as strong as, or stronger than ever.

What affinities or support does this threat of Islam promise to the new enemies of Catholic tradition? It will sound even more fantastic to suggest that Islam should have effect here than to suggest that Asiatic paganism should. Even those who are directly in contact with the great Mahomedan civilisation and who are impressed, as all such must be, by its strength and apparently invincible resistance to conversion, do not yet conceive of its having any direct effect upon Christendom. There are a few indeed who have envisaged something of the kind...

I will maintain that this very powerful, distorted simplification of Catholic doctrine—for that is what Mahomedanism is—may be of high effect in the near future upon Christendom; and that, acting as a competitive religion, it is not to be despised.

## Anti-Catholic Forces

No considerable number of conversions to Islam from Christianity is probable. I do not say that such a movement would not be possible, for anything is possible in the near future, seeing the welter into which Christian civilisation has fallen. But I think it improbable, and even highly improbable, because Islam advances in herd or mob fashion. It does not proceed, as the Catholic religion does, by individual conversions, but by colonisation and

group movement. But there are other effects which a great anti-Catholic force and the culture based upon it can have upon anti-Catholic forces within our own boundaries.

In the first place it can act by example. To every man attempting to defend the old Christian culture by prophesying disaster if its main tenets be abandoned, Islam can be presented as a practical answer.

“You say that monogamy is necessary to happy human life, and that the practice of polygamy, or of divorce—which is but a modified form of polygamy—is fatal to the state? You are proved wrong by the example of Islam.”

Or again “You say that without priests and without sacraments and without all the apparatus of your religion, down to the use of visible images, religion may not survive? Islam is there to give you the lie. Its religion is intense, its spiritual life permanent. Yet it has constantly repudiated all these things. It is violently antisacramental; it has no priesthood; it wages fierce war on all symbols in the use of worship.”

This example may, in the near future, be of great effect. Remember that our Christian civilisation is in peril of complete breakdown. An enemy would say that it was living upon its past; and certainly those who steadfastly hold its ancient Catholic doctrines stand today on guard as it were, in a state of siege. They are a minority both in power and in numbers. Upon such a state of affairs a steadfast, permanent, convinced simple philosophy and rule of life, intensely adhered to, and close at hand, may, now that the various sections of the world are so much interpenetrating one and the other, be of effect...

There is no reason why its recent inferiority in mechanical construction, whether military or civilian, should continue indefinitely. Even a slight accession of material power would make the further control of Islam by an alien culture difficult. A little more and there will cease that which our time has taken for granted, the physical domination of Islam by the disintegrated Christendom we know.

Excerpted from *Survivals and New Arrivals*.





The *Historia Compostelana* says St. James (Sant'Iago in Spanish) was buried at Santiago de Compostela. He appeared to fight for Christians against the Moors at the Battle of Clavijo, 844, gaining the title Matamoros (Moor-slayer). "Santiago y cierra España" ("St. James and strike for Spain") is the battle cry of Spaniards: "St. James the Moor-slayer, one of the most valiant saints and knights... has been given by God to Spain for its patron and protection." (Cervantes, *Don Quixote*).

# The Lepanto Lectures

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Bring history alive with these fascinating talks by Christopher Check

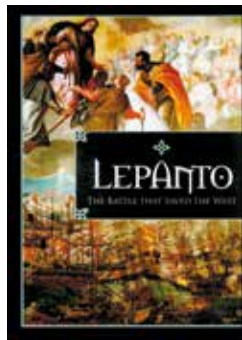
## The Knights Templar

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Who are the Knights Templar? Who were the men who inspired St. Bernard and stirred the hearts of all Europe, but met an infamous end at the hands of the King of France, accompanied by a papal suppression of this knightly order? This talk presents the true story of this military religious order, born in the heroic age of the Crusades, and which was only brought down as victim to the greed and treachery of others.



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## Lepanto—The Battle That Saved the West

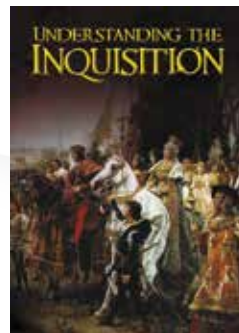
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On October 7, 1571, the Battle of Lepanto decided the future of Europe, yet few Europeans, and even fewer European Americans, know the story, much less how close Western Europe came to suffering an Islamic conquest. Christopher Check tells the exhilarating story of Lepanto, first in his own words and then through the poem of G. K. Chesterton.

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# The Evangelization of Europe's Muslims

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by Fr. Patrick Laroche, SSPX

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<sup>1</sup> J.-M. Gaudeul, *Appelés par le Christ, ils viennent de l'Islam* (Paris: Cerf, 1991).

Extracts from a conference given at Paris by Fr. Laroche, a professor at the Zaitzkofen Seminary and author of a doctoral thesis on the evangelization of the Muslims in France (Strasbourg, 2001).

## Catechumens Coming from Islam

The variety of persons and situations makes it difficult to classify different kinds of conversion. Fr. Jean-Marie Gaudeul, the new Secretary of the SRI (Secretariat for Relations with Islam), a few years ago wrote a book on catechumens of Muslim origin: *Called by Christ: They Come from Islam*.<sup>1</sup> The roads which lead from Islam to Christianity are numerous, he says, but they can be classified in five categories in which God calls these Muslims who wish to become Christians. Without wishing to give too much importance to classifications, we can mention: (1) those who are fascinated by the personality of Jesus, to whom they begin to pray, experimenting with His power and goodness, and who finish by recognizing Him as the Son of God; (2) those who seek a community according to God, a community >

<sup>2</sup> Service National du Catéchuménat, *Catéchumènes venant de l'Islam* (1999).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

they find in the Church; (3) those who, after realizing that they are sinners, seek the experience of gratuitous forgiveness—which is interpreted in various ways by Muslims; (4) those who seek first of all a message coherent in itself and with regard to life and who need intellectual certainty; trained in polemics, they have discovered the Bible, and the coherence of the Gospel attracts them; (5) those who most of all want to encounter God, to pray to Him heart to heart—which is not the case in Islam, where prayer is an ensemble of rites.

In addition to these motivations, two other causes ought to be mentioned. The first is that of meeting Christians who live the Gospel: “More and more frequent relations between Christians and Muslims can lead certain Muslims to put the question of God differently, and to seek out what inspires Christians. The desire to live a life of faith in the context of French society can lead these Muslims to follow the path of their Christian friends.” They appreciate their “spirit of welcome, their open minds, their sharing, their freedom, and their seriousness.”<sup>2</sup>

On other occasions, the road is that of a dream—a fact which can seem disorienting to the Western mentality. This is most often the case for Muslims who seek a personal relationship with God and a life of prayer not found in Islam; dreams and visions very often punctuate the itinerary of those who seek God. This road is often the only one that makes it possible for profound hopes to emerge in spite of the psychological conditioning which is violently hostile to any kind of “apostasy.” God can in this way take the itinerary of conversion in hand and supply by these means extra spiritual fortitude in order to continue to the very end. “Whatever the explanation we may give to these phenomena, it is important to take into account the words of the candidate for baptism, without contesting this kind of experience. It is indeed by the seriousness and the generosity of the catechumen that we can judge his action.”<sup>3</sup>

Once churchmen at long last realize that they have been seriously remiss in fulfilling their mission by putting off proselytizing the Muslims, the means with which to do so must be selected. Three means among others seem indispensable: They must return to traditional Catholic theology, promote scientific studies on the origins of the Muslim religion, and remind the public authorities that, although they may not be Christian, they have a duty to promote the common good.

## Truly Missionary Ecclesiology and Theology

Weary of fighting its enemies, the prelates of the Catholic Church, in a kind of euphoria, opened up to the world during the Second Vatican Council. One might have thought that the Church had no more enemies. With the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and its declarations on religious liberty and non-Christian religions, the Council tried to put the Church in tune with the modern world, with which it was entering into dialogue; it adopted the strategy, if not the principles, of the liberal Catholicism it had up to then condemned, for example in the Syllabus.

Islamic-Christian dialogue as it is practiced in Europe has grave



<sup>4</sup> S.-P. Kerboua, op. cit., [sic—no previous ref.], p. 272.

<sup>5</sup> Cited by V. Serverat, *Utrum culpa sit in christianis ex ignorantia infidelium*, in *RSTP*, 73 (1989), pp. 369-396.

deficiencies. It brings out the weakness of contemporary Catholic theology, which seeks to approach the mystery of salvation through modern individualistic philosophy much more than through Revelation. Only what Pope John Paul II called the “dialogue of life” is truly useful because it can be an effective means of integration. These contacts break down barriers, help Muslims have conversations with Christians, and thus integrate the country they have come to. But a Christian cannot stop there. A converted Muslim tells us:

“There is no dialogue, and there will be none. It’s an illusion, because Muslims, when they are together, begin with the principle that they possess the truth. Christianity doesn’t interest them, and so they’re not ready to discuss religion. In doing so, they would have the impression of doubting themselves. In addition, their arguments are puerile, feeble, unconvincing. But even if they don’t know it, many Muslims are waiting for the truth, and it is at the level of personal relationships that the priests have a role to play. If they love the truth, they must share it, at any price; that should be the natural act of any Christian. And this is possible when, as in France, Muslims are not subject to the influence of their community. Believe me, more than one Muslim living here is thinking about Christianity. Teaching them to love the true God, that is what the dialogue should be. Alas! Out of lassitude, out of cowardice, the Church has given up.”<sup>4</sup>

Raymond Lully said: “Let the Church cease to be missionary and it will immediately be threatened with internal weakness. The loss of our initial fervor explains the advance of Islam, which has already cut off half of Christianity’s territory and faithful.”<sup>5</sup>

...Since Vatican II, the new principles of evangelization have come down to a dialogue which seeks to discover in non-Christian religions riches which the Holy Ghost may have placed in them. More than a missionary method emphasizing the importance of preparing souls for the preaching of the Gospel through education and charitable acts, this dialogue consists in discovering part of the Word of God in what the other believes and in marveling at this. Not only is this method based upon a false conception of religions which is neither founded upon Holy Scripture nor confirmed by history, but in particular it is helpless before Islam. This theological dialogue practiced with Muslims can only increase their contempt for Christians and confirm them in their errors because they see in it either a trap or a sign of weakness.

Lowering the barrier that separates Muslim from Christian, eliminating prejudices through education and charitable acts—this is what true dialogue should be. It is a long-term undertaking to seek, by all possible means and with clear respect for Muslim individuals, to open them to Christian civilization. In a word, it is a question of showing them true values rather than turning them into atheists or rootless persons who are disgusted with a European civilization that rejects its own roots and embodies the “culture of death.”

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<sup>6</sup> Let's recall that at the European Summit held at Nice in Dec. 2000, under the presidency of France, a charter of fundamental rights was adopted. The project included a preamble the second paragraph of which began: "Conscious of its religious and moral heritage, the Union is founded upon..." The French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, felt compelled to telephone Roman Herzog, former president of Germany and president of the commission charged with drafting the charter, to demand the correction of the preamble, the reason being that for France, a secular republic, reference to religious heritage was "unacceptable." The word *religious* was replaced with *spiritual*. But spirituality designates an attitude or a disposition; it expresses no content.

## Seeking the Common Good

If the "dialogue of life" is not enough, if modern theological dialogue is impossible, indeed harmful, if our secular world is repulsive to the Muslims and Islamization fanaticizes them, what solution can be found for the conversion of Muslims? Cardinal Lavigerie gave the response, and others have repeated it after him: a policy which moves from the secular world to Islamization is doomed to failure, and this has been amply proven by history. The solution, which would have been the means of assimilating North African populations, and which will be the key to the integration of Muslims present in France and Europe, is to restore a society that renounces neither its roots nor its Christian culture. We are obviously a long way from that,<sup>6</sup> mainly because the men of the Church are no longer principally inspired by the data of Revelation and of the Faith, and because politicians are no longer guided by the search for the common good. They are all guided by an ideology: that of the rights of man, supposedly theologically justified by a new concept of the Faith and of the relationship of man to God.

Thus, while present conditions are ripe for a fruitful apostolate (the possibility of missionary dialogue exists, as does that of acquiring preliminary knowledge to facilitate it), religious indifference on the part of the government and of the Church hierarchy is such that what could have been a marvelous missionary opportunity has already become a serious danger.

It was a grave error to export secularity to Muslim countries. The Muslim is an essentially religious being, sensitive to all forms of piety. What disgusts him profoundly is the absence of faith. In the eyes of a Muslim, a man who does not pray is a *kelb*, a dog. In light of this the complaints of the missionaries in North Africa in the 19th century concerning France's strategy of preaching secularization for the French and Islamization for the Berbers are entirely understandable. They echo in the comments of the Archbishop of Algiers in a letter written in 1872 setting forth the lessons to be drawn from the Kabylia insurrection:

"The remarkable thing is that it isn't the Arabs, that is to say, the original Muslims, that are declaring holy war against us; this time it's the Berbers. Six hundred years ago the Berbers were Christians like us, descended like us from the ancient indigenous race and Roman conquerors; during our conquest, the Berbers showed no fanaticism and their practice of Mohammedanism was limited to reciting the Prophet's prayer. But since they have come under our control, it seems that we have nothing dearer at heart than to fanaticize them... In Kabylia, with money from France, we have founded Muslim schools; they have forbidden our priests to preach the gospel; our sisters, to exercise any charitable works. Well, we see the fanaticism that's been protected and fomented by us now erupting in the burning of our villages and the massacring of our people. Will this spectacle at last open some eyes? Will they understand that what France has been doing for the last forty years is as odious as it is absurd? Will they understand that we shouldn't isolate the Arabs and park them in the Quran, but rather assimilate them, inundate them, if I dare say, in the pacific invasion of truly Christian colonists, not in order to create an 'Arab kingdom'?



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<sup>7</sup> *La XIIe Croisade*, p. 177.

<sup>8</sup> Cardinal Giacomo Biffi, *Note pastorale* (Sept. 12, 2000).

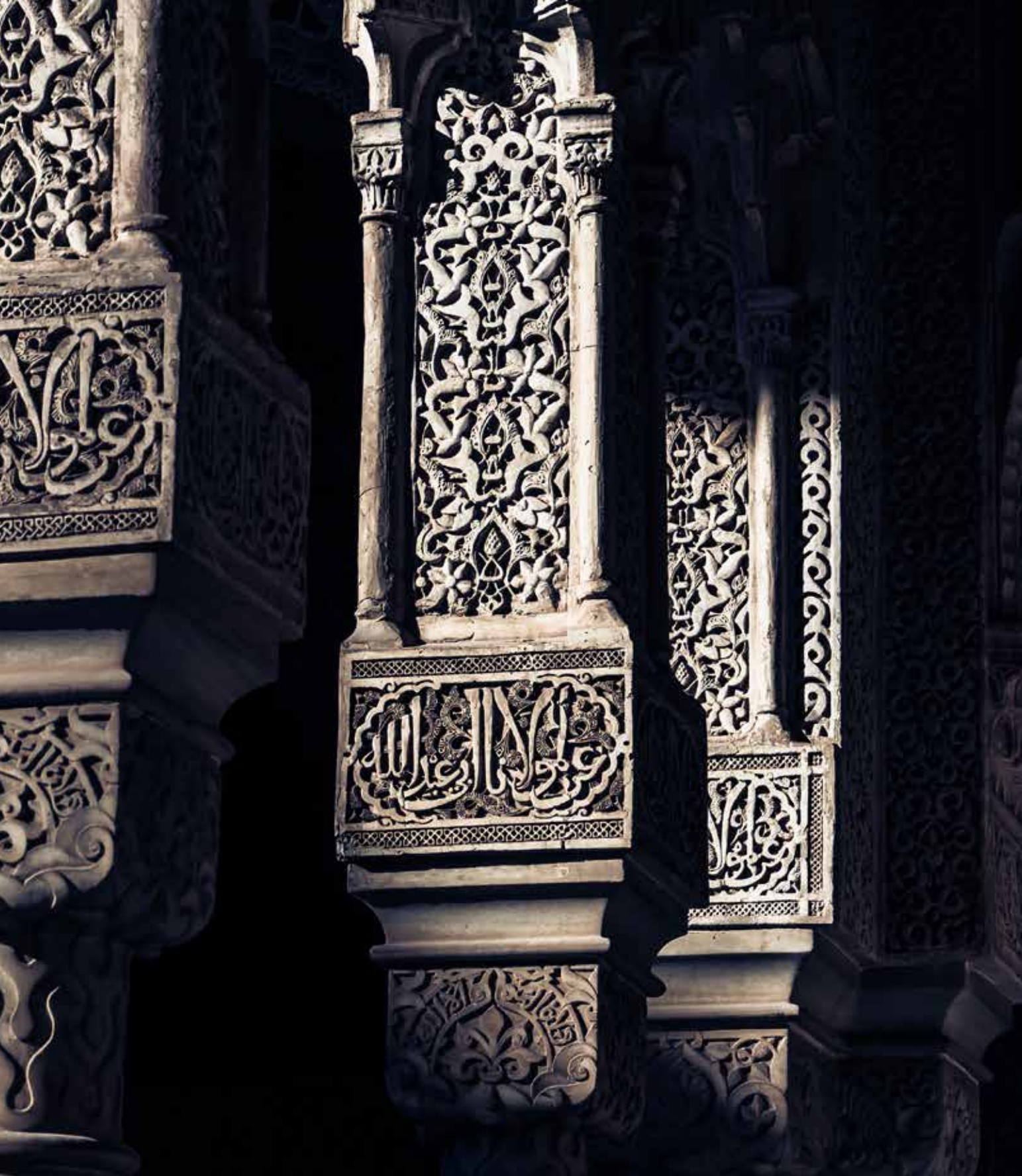
at last, but a French Catholic colony?”

As Father Charles de Foucauld wrote to René Bazin on July 1, 1916: “If we have not learned how to make Frenchmen out of these peoples, they will chase us out. The only way they can become French is if they become Catholic. Otherwise, in less than fifty years we will be driven out of North Africa.” These words, formulated by a connoisseur of Islam and of Muslims, proved tragically prophetic. Let us hope that the following words, equally prophetic, may also come to pass: “Learn by heart that it’s only by Christianizing the Muslims that you will make them civilized, and it is only by making them civilized that you will be able to integrate them into your society, and it is by thus integrating them that you will add other Cyprians and Augustines to your Vincent de Pauls and your Curés of Ars.”<sup>7</sup>

Let us conclude with Cardinal Biffi: “I think that Europe will either become Christian again, or it will become Muslim. What seems to me to have no future is ‘the culture of nothing,’ of liberty without limits and without content, which seems to be the dominant attitude among European peoples; it will not be able to withstand the ideological assault from Islam which is sure to occur: only the rediscovery of the ‘Christian event’ as man’s only means of salvation—and therefore only the determination to revive the ancient soul of Europe—will be able to offer a different outcome to this inevitable confrontation.”<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, I shall summarize: Muslim doctrine, confirmed by experience in Muslim countries, makes conversion of a Muslim almost impossible under Sharia: whoever preaches the doctrine of Christ, like the one who converts, is subject to severe penalties, including death. Even when the Church benefits from some liberty in a few Muslim countries (Morocco, Tunisia), Christian doctrine can be preached only to Christians. On the other hand, where Christianity dominated, Muslims were free to convert if they wished. This was the case in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. It is the case today in Europe, but neither the secular government with its laicism, nor the Church with its inter-religious dialogue and its New Theology, desires this.

And so we understand better why St. Paul invited Timothy to pray for those in authority, that a calm and peaceful social life might be established in piety. Indeed, God wants all men to be saved and to know the truth—which is very difficult to achieve when the government is opposed to the Catholic religion. In a word: missionary activity must make known the social doctrine of the Church without cutting it off from its foundation, which is the doctrine of Christ the King.



Islamic art developed from many sources: Roman, Early Christian art, and Byzantine styles were taken over in early Islamic art and architecture; the influence of the Sassanian art of pre-Islamic Persia was of paramount significance; Central Asian styles were brought in with various nomadic incursions; and Chinese influences had a formative effect on Islamic painting, pottery, and textiles.





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# Insights into the Quran

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by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

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At the heart of the Islamic religion is the Quran, which translates “recitation.” For the Muslim, the Quran is the Book of Allah himself and this is why each verse starts with: “Allah said...”

## Importance

An uncreated and divine book, it contends that it contains all knowledge to the extent that all other things are insignificant, including scientifically proved miracles which “smell the devil.” The apostate Renan concluded from this: “The liberals who defend Islam do not know it. Islam is the indistinguishable union of the spiritual and temporal realm; it is the reign of dogma; it is the heaviest chain which humanity has ever borne.”

The Quran, so it is said, was entrusted by the Archangel Gabriel to Muhammad on the “night of the revelation” in the grotto of Mount Hira. Afterwards, not unlike Moses, Muhammad came down to the valley and gave the revelation to his auditors, who wrote it down gradually from his teaching.

The Quran is written in Arabic and, although it pretends to be clear and exhaustive, the intellectual leaders very quickly interpreted it and produced commentaries, namely, the Sunna (sentences drawn from the life and teaching of Muhammad) and the Sharia (Islamic legislation).

It would be difficult to exaggerate how much the Quran has influenced the formation of the Muslim mind. It has given birth to many historical and linguistic studies. It has turned Arabic into a world language, the lingua franca >

of all Muslim peoples, not unlike what Latin had been in the Middle Ages for Christianity. By presenting the Islamic community as the divinely chosen people, the Quran has flattered and unified the “believers.” The Islamic world view has been molded by the Quran, and this alone explains the uniformity of its lifestyle despite the innumerable ethnic backgrounds.

## The Front Page

The book is written in a sententious style and invites the reader to reflection. It concentrates the attention on God’s power and His unceasing intervention in the government of the world, where nothing happens beyond His command.

The Quran is divided into 114 chapters called Suras. These Suras are divided into verses totaling more than 6,000 verses of unequal length. Strangely enough, the Suras are classified in decreasing order of length. This means that the text is without logical order and any given teaching is found in various places, and the same Sura carries a variety of disconnected themes. A specialist, Father Bertuel, explains that, prior to any study, we need to reconstruct the chronology of the Suras: 90 primitive Suras are from the Meccan era and the 24 others from the later period of Medina. The absence of chronology proves a real challenge to getting a grasp of both the history and meaning of the text.

## The Content

The ritual and liturgical prescriptions, dealing with prayers and the pilgrimage, as well as the social and penal laws are described in the Medinan period. By contrast, it is in the earlier Suras of the Meccan that we find a description of the Quranic dogmas.

The Quran presents itself as the definitive revelation which has corrected and supplanted the other “religions of the Book,” that is to say, Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad is called “the last of the prophets,” meaning that he is the only one admitted by Islam and none will appear after him. But even the term “prophet” needs to be nuanced, since Muhammad, a mere messenger

of God, confesses his ignorance of future events and made no pretence of defending the revelation against early contradictors.

When delving into the content of the Quran, we see that Muhammad started his mission with a clearly monotheist dogma, to which he associated eschatological views: the last Judgment, but also the cataclysm which would befall on the unbelievers. Allah is the only and unequalled Master of all things. He alone created out of nothing the world in six days and “breathed the spirit into man.” Yet Allah the Creator has little to do with the Christian God, who is a merciful Father to man, and Muhammad openly rejected the mystery of the Holy Trinity of one God in three Persons, and he calls the Christians polytheists.

The Quranic Christology is characteristic and has been largely influenced by the apocryphal Christian literature. Christ—Isa—is called “son of Mary,” Mary being confused with the sister of Moses. He was born of a virgin and has worked many miracles from the cradle—a surprising affirmation when Muhammad confesses that he made none. Christ is the “Messiah, the Word, and the Spirit of Allah.” Yet Muhammad rejects Christ’s divinity and never conceded the mystery of the crucifixion. A simple mortal man, Christ died, but the death on the cross is an “illusion,” a Jewish legend, and the Christians too are wrong for giving the Messiah the title of “son of God.”

In this system, man’s acts are so dependent on God’s almighty power that human freedom and responsibility is reduced to nothing. Therefore, God has predetermined man’s eternal destiny for good or evil.

The eschatology is the work of the Meccan Suras. One finds the affirmation of a future life, of the resurrection and the general judgment, of an eternal heaven but of a temporary hell, a teaching drawn from the Talmud.

The soul is immortal but the meaning of soul—*nafs*—is unclear. It seems to mean the principle of life and of blood rather than a spiritual principle. This is an important point which can account for the overly material paradise which Muhammad’s revelation offers to these “souls.” Indeed, here the early Suras of Mecca speak of paradise, similar to the Talmudic vision of Eden,



in very sensuous terms. In accordance with the sensual taste of the Meccan population, it mentions the eternal virgins and adolescents, to the great embarrassment of the Quranologues. Unlike the Christian creed, nowhere do we find a belief in the beatific vision of Allah. Finally, if the resurrection of the dead is omnipresent, Islamists have not solved the enigma around the lot of the souls of the dead prior to the resurrection of the bodies.

Another thing which arrests the Western mind is the treatment of woman. About a seventh of the Quran deals with punctilious prescriptions related to her. She is relegated, as in the Talmudic tradition, to a category beneath man, who may marry several wives and repudiate them for the least motive. However, this inferiority of woman deserves to be nuanced, since converts from Islamism have explained that the culture of Islam is a covert matriarchate. The wife and daughter is nothing indeed, but the mother of a boy is supreme! Besides the role of woman in society, there are other Jewish practices still essential to Islam, like circumcision and the ablutions.

From what we have seen of the practices and the Quranic creed, we see a great resemblance with the position of Judeo-Christianism, and of Manichaeism particularly, in light of the denial of Christ's divinity and crucifixion. Moreover, the personality of Muhammad greatly resembles that of Mani, the third-century Gnostic whose works were translated in Arabic in the eighth century.

## A Largely Enigmatic Book

Despite its pretense to be written in a clear Arabic language, the Quran remains today in large part a book closed to Islamologues. A recent study explained that much of the obscurities are due to the fact that the Quran rests on a Syro-Aramaic basis, which language was unknown to the early interpreters, who often stumbled across words unknown in Arabic. This, coupled with defective punctuation and historical losses, accounts for the misinterpretations of earlier writers. This is why, to this day, despite the multiple researchers who have dedicated their life to it, at least one quarter of the Quran remains to be properly understood and

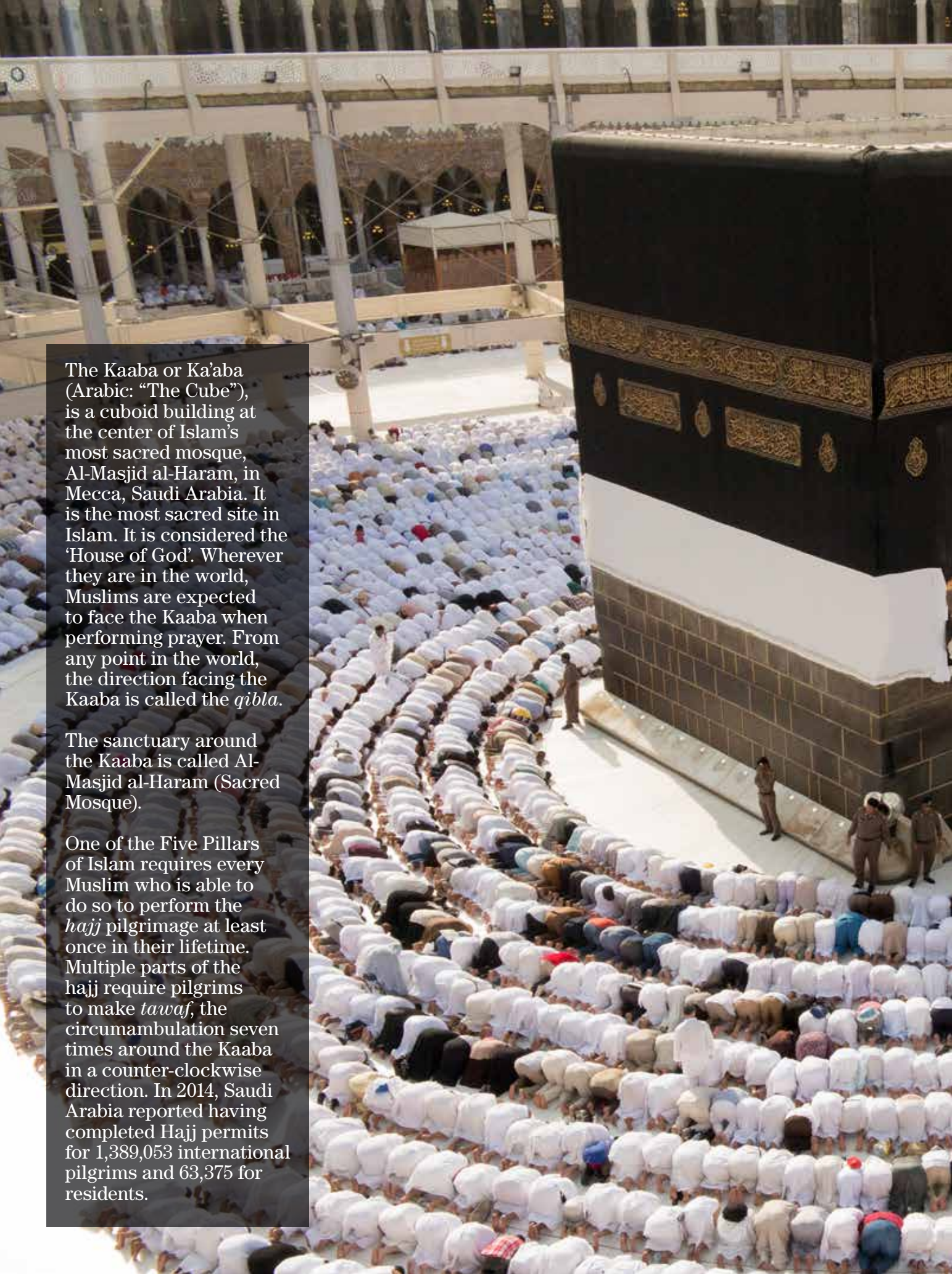
deciphered.

Another issue is that the Quran is not available in translation, which is seen as a betrayal of the "sacred text." A mere translation will not be considered authentic to the average Iman. This explains also why most "believers" are ignorant of everything about their own book. Said Mondher Sfar (*Le Coran est-il authentique*, Sfar éditions, 2000): "The modern Muslim today is ignorant of everything about the Quran, as he is ignorant of everything about Muhammad, if you except the mythical clichés which he takes in as historical data. The sacredness which surrounds the Quranic text is a quasi physical obstacle to understanding and discovering that it contains senses which are not those recognized by the orthodoxy and that it has a story which the early Muslims have arranged in their own way to prevent us from better understanding it today."

Since it is necessary, in order to speak with Muslims, to be familiar with their objections to true Christianity, a missionary among Muslims must study their doctrine. But if there are today numerous Christians well versed in Islamic studies, there are very few whose thinking is not preconditioned by the indifference to religion inculcated by the last Council (*Nostra Aetate*, §3). This new teaching has killed the missionary spirit. It has also led many Catholic specialists to approach the Quran as if it were a book revealed by God, or to explain it with the Muslim tradition, the *hadith*, written to clarify the Quran.

It is urgent to apply to the study of the Quran a healthy critical method, which has successfully been applied to the Bible. This would allow the formulation of intellectually rational hypotheses about the creation of the sacred book of the Muslims, and therefore of the entire Islamic culture. Helping Muslims free themselves from their arbitrary or unfounded convictions could indeed be the result of Quran studies, but only if they themselves are free of Islamic prejudices.

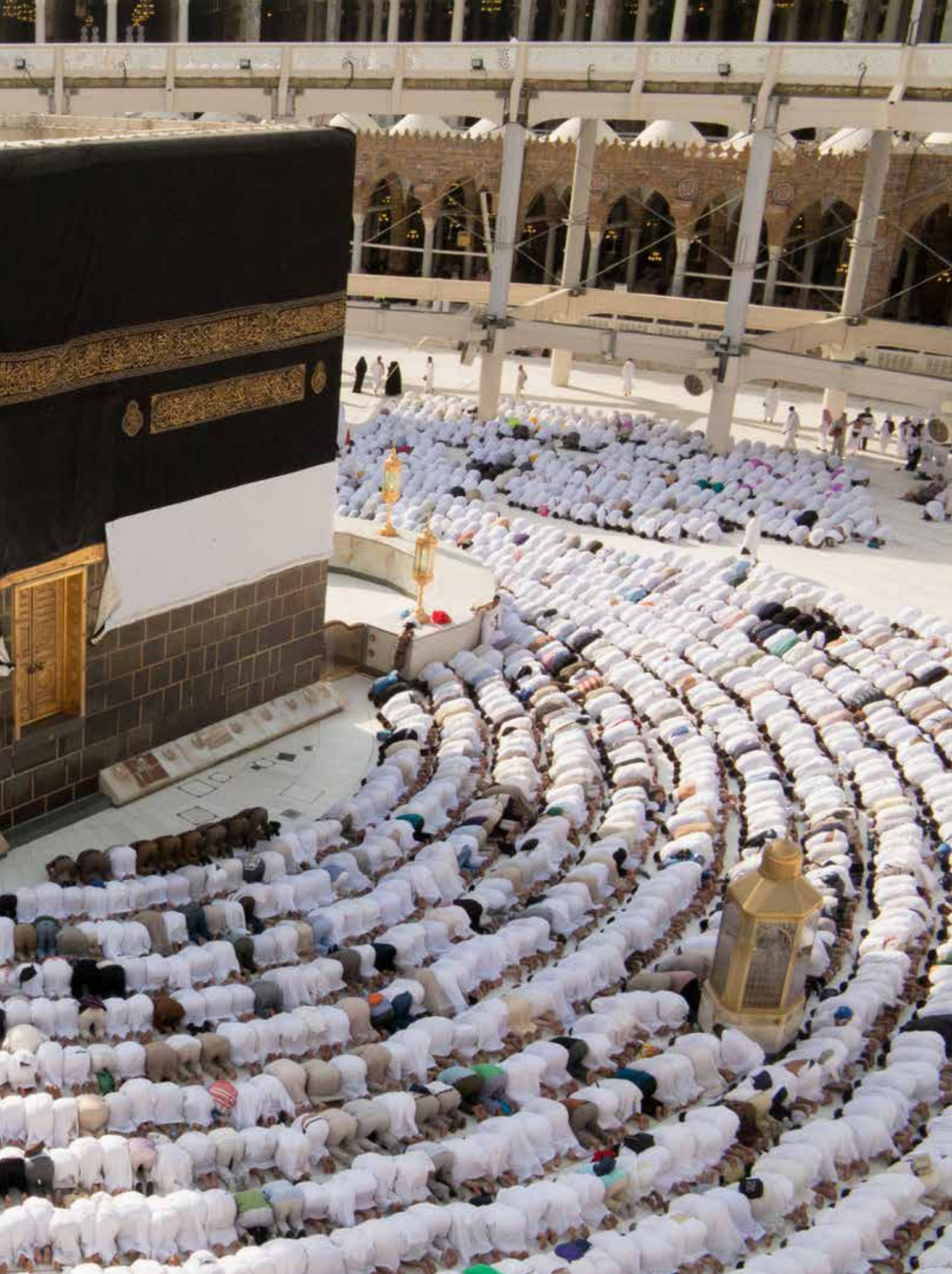
**Fr. Dominique Bourmaud** has spent the past 26 years teaching at the Society seminaries in America, Argentina, and Australia. He is presently stationed at St. Vincent's Priory, Kansas City, where he is in charge of the priests' training program.



The Kaaba or Ka'aba (Arabic: "The Cube"), is a cuboid building at the center of Islam's most sacred mosque, Al-Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is the most sacred site in Islam. It is considered the 'House of God'. Wherever they are in the world, Muslims are expected to face the Kaaba when performing prayer. From any point in the world, the direction facing the Kaaba is called the *qibla*.

The sanctuary around the Kaaba is called Al-Masjid al-Haram (Sacred Mosque).

One of the Five Pillars of Islam requires every Muslim who is able to do so to perform the *hajj* pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. Multiple parts of the *hajj* require pilgrims to make *tawaf*, the circumambulation seven times around the Kaaba in a counter-clockwise direction. In 2014, Saudi Arabia reported having completed Hajj permits for 1,389,053 international pilgrims and 63,375 for residents.





# Catholics in the Middle East

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by Fr. Christopher Danel

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The Catholics of the Middle East profess the same Catholic faith and participate in the same sacraments as all other Catholics, according to the liturgy of their ancient Rites. There are twelve Rites in the Catholic Church, organized into three liturgical families. The most widely known are the Roman Rite and the Byzantine Rite, but that leaves ten more, and the Catholics of the Middle East belong to at least seven of these.

The three liturgical families are those based on the ancient Patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem was the liturgical ancestor of all of these, but did not retain a Rite of its own. Rome is the ultimate source of the three extant Western Rites: Roman, Ambrosian, and Mozarabic. From Alexandria come the Coptic and Ethiopian Rites used in Egypt and Abyssinia. From Antioch come the Armenian,

Syriac, Maronite, and Chaldean Rites used in the Middle East, as well as the Syro-Malankara and Syro-Malabar Rites of India. Constantinople (formerly Byzantium) developed the liturgy of Antioch into the form now known as the Byzantine Rite, which is thus included in the Antiochene family. Constantinople was elevated to the status of Patriarchate in 381 and since then its Rite has spread widely, with a prominent Middle Eastern Catholic community adhering to this Rite. Each of the current Catholic Patriarchs descending from these ancient Sees governs the faithful of his Rite within his Patriarchal territory in submission to the Primacy of the Apostolic See of Rome.

In addition to the Catholics of the Middle East, there are also sizeable communities of Orthodox adhering to the same liturgical traditions, and this has a significant impact on Catholic life in the



region. The Christological controversies of the fifth century form the background of that history. At that time, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, advanced the teaching that there are two Persons in Christ, not just one. On the other hand, the proper doctrine of Christ was defended by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who taught clearly that Christ is both God and man in one Person, which means that Our Lady is the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. At the Council of Ephesus (431), the Alexandrine theology of St. Cyril was upheld, while Nestorianism was condemned. Subsequent efforts to define the relationship of the human and the divine in Christ led to the heresy of Monophysitism (“one nature”), which taught that Christ’s human nature was completely absorbed by His divine nature, such that only the divine nature remained. This teaching was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon (451), because Christ indeed has two complete natures, human and divine, in one divine Person. After Ephesus and Chalcedon, large portions of the East rejected the Church’s dogmatic Tradition and went into schism. While many persist in heresy and schism, many others have returned to the Catholic Church, and it is of their descendants living in the Middle East that we treat.

## The Chaldean Catholics

Catholics of the Chaldean Rite are descended from the ancient people of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates, and are largely based in modern Iraq, principally in Baghdad and Mosul. They received the Faith due to a miracle. Christ instructed St. Thomas to send two disciples to cure the King of Edessa, so the Apostle sent the disciples Addai and Mari with a cloth bearing a miraculous image of Christ. They cured the king with it, and he embraced the Faith for his kingdom. Edessa became an important theological and monastic center, producing St. Ephrem. In the early fourth century, the governance of the church was established near Baghdad. By 424, the church had repudiated its ties to Rome, and in 486 adopted the heresy of Nestorius, *contra* Ephesus. Missionary efforts of the Dominicans and Franciscans led to the return

of the first Chaldeans in 1445, and after a long period of contention, the Patriarch of Babylon was recognized by Rome in 1830, as he and his followers rejected Nestorianism and purged all references to him and his heresy from their liturgical books. There are about 420,000 Chaldean Catholics in the Middle East and beyond, with 240,000 of them living in Iraq.

## The Syriac Catholics

Catholics who belong to the Syriac Rite come from the Patriarchate of Antioch, the first See held by St. Peter. After Chalcedon, their Greek-speaking urbanites accepted the council’s decrees, while the rural population followed a certain priest named Fr. Jacob Baradai, who was supported by the Empress Theodora and consolidated the Monophysite faction into what would be called the Jacobite Church (Syriac Orthodox) after its founder. Contacts with the Crusaders began some movement toward reunion with the Church, and in the seventeenth century Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries converted many. In 1782, when the bishop of Aleppo was elected as Patriarch, he declared himself a Catholic and took refuge at the monastery of Our Lady of Sharfeh in Lebanon. His successors, based in Beirut and recognized by Rome, have continued the Catholic lineage and have shepherded the Syriac Catholics ever since. There are about 132,000 adherents in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and abroad.

## The Maronite Catholics

The Maronite Rite uses Syriac as its official language, which is very close to Aramaic, Our Lord’s own language. In the late fourth century, St. Maron and his disciples founded an important monastery located between Antioch and Aleppo. They vigorously supported the Catholic doctrine of Chalcedon, and did not break communion with Rome. In consequence, Monophysites killed 350 monks at Beit Maron soon after, and the Emperor Justinian rebuilt the monastery for them. The Maronites moved to the mountains of Lebanon three hundred years later, and have been headed ever since by their own Patriarch, who resides >

# Faith and Morals

at Bkerke, near Beirut. The Maronites enjoyed a peaceful seclusion until the nineteenth century, when fanatics of an Islamic sect massacred thousands of them. Afterwards, the French took measures to protect them, and ever since Lebanon gained its independence in 1943, the national constitution has required that the president be a Maronite Catholic. About one third of the population of Lebanon is Maronite. There are 3.3 million Maronites, including 1.7 million in the Middle East, and thriving communities in America and Australia.

## The Melkite Catholics

After the Maronites, this is the most prosperous and influential community. The term Melkite comes from the Syrian word *malok*, or *king*. After the submission of the Byzantine Emperor to the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites began to refer to the Catholics who defended his orthodoxy as Melkites. After the seventh century Arab invasion, these Catholics

in Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem all came under the influence of Constantinople, and by the thirteenth century had adopted its Rite. In the succeeding centuries, contact with Rome was sporadic, and some of the Melkite prelates lapsed into schism, while others were faithful, as evidenced by periodic contacts and professions of fidelity to the Holy See by some of the Patriarchs of Antioch. When a dispute about the Patriarchal election erupted in 1724 between pro-Catholic and pro-Orthodox factions, the Pope officially recognized the legitimate Patriarch of Antioch, whose successors have governed the Catholic faithful of that Rite throughout the Middle East ever since. There are 1.3 million Melkites in the Middle East and abroad.

## The Armenian Catholics

The Catholic Faith was first taken to Armenia by the Apostles St. Bartholomew and St. Jude Thaddeus. The Faith definitively took hold in A.D. 301 when St. Gregory the Illuminator baptized the Armenian king, who declared Armenia as the first

Interior of the Coptic church in Sharm-el-Sheik, Sinai, Egypt







Catholic nation. In the sixth century, however, the Armenians broke with both Rome and Constantinople and adopted Monophysitism. Later contacts with Crusaders helped to nurture union with the Church, and in 1742 the Pope confirmed the Patriarchate of Cilicia of the Armenians, which has led the Armenian Catholics since that time, with the Patriarch currently residing in Lebanon. The Armenian Christians suffered an enormous genocide at the hands of the Islamic Turks during and after the First World War. By 1923 as many as 1.5 million were slaughtered, including thousands of bishops, priests, and religious. There are as many as 400,000 Catholics in the historic homeland, with a few thousand more throughout the Middle East and in other regions of the world.

## The Coptic Catholics

These are the Egyptians who received the Faith from St. Mark the Evangelist, who was then martyred in Alexandria in A.D. 67. Their liturgy uses the ancient Coptic (Egyptian) language. They developed a renowned system of monastic life, and from them came many saints, including St. Athanasius. Alexandria became one of the most important Patriarchates of the Church, but after Chalcedon, it unfortunately became the stronghold of Monophysitism. The conversion of many Copts back to Catholicism is the result of the Capuchin Friars and Jesuits who established missions in Cairo in the 1600's and there preached the Faith tirelessly. In 1829, the Holy See erected the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate of Alexandria, which remains the center of Coptic Catholicity, which numbers 162,000 members. The Coptic Orthodox Church (Monophysite) is much larger, numbering approximately 8 million members.

## The Ethiopian Catholics

The adherents of the Ethiopian Rite are the Semitic peoples of Abyssinia. Their rite uses the ancient Ge'ez language for its ritual. The conversion of the court treasurer of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, is told in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Ethiopians furthermore received

the faith from two Christian youths of Tyre, Sts. Frumentius and Aedesius, who served in the royal court; the former was later consecrated a bishop by St. Athanasius himself. After Chalcedon, the Ethiopians adopted Monophysitism, leading to prolonged isolation. Islamic attacks in 1531 compelled the Ethiopian Emperor to turn to the Portuguese for assistance, and with them came the Jesuit priests who laid the groundwork for the reconciliation of the Ethiopians to the Church. In 1623, Rome erected a Patriarchate there, but it lasted only a decade and has not been revived since. The Italian occupation in the 1930's brought additional missionary efforts, and only thirty years later Addis Ababa was erected as an Archdiocese. In early 2015, the Eritreans were given a separate jurisdiction and Asmara was elevated to the same status. The 140,000 Catholic Ethiopians and Eritreans have emigrated to other parts of North Africa and the Middle East, such as Libya.

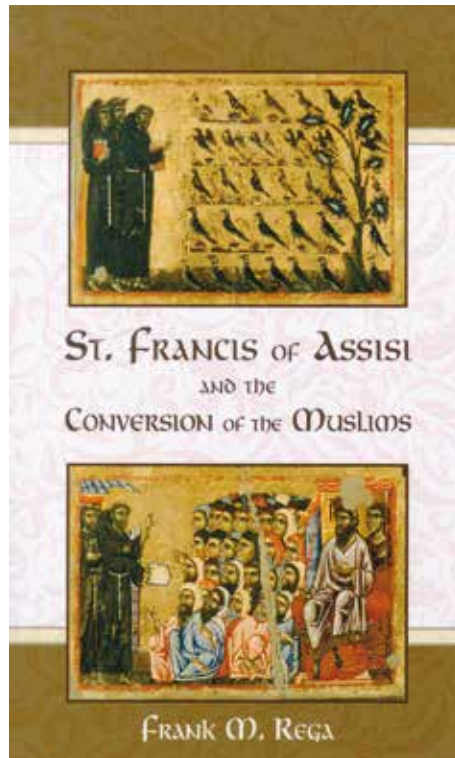
## Roman Catholics in the Middle East

In addition to those of the Eastern Rites described, there is a large community of native Roman Catholic Arabs, or "Latins," in the region and particularly in Palestine, where they number fully one half of the Catholic population. They depend on the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the longstanding vigilance of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Additionally there are significant numbers of Catholic workers from Southern India who belong to the Roman, Malabar, or Malankara rites. There are possibly up to 1.6 million Roman Catholic Filipinos working in the region, especially in and around Dubai.

The Catholic communities in the Middle East are particularly fragile. Massive emigration brings the threat of demographic collapse. Persecution is a fact of life. But a bigger issue now overshadows all: martyrdom. How many of these souls will be required to give their blood and their lives for Christ? *Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints* (Wis. 5: 5).

# Saint Francis of Assisi

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## And the Conversion of the Muslims

Tells the authentic story of St. Francis's trip to the Sultan in Egypt and efforts to convert him to the one true Faith. Also includes a brief biography of St. Francis, including his stigmata; the Franciscans; St. Clare; and St. Francis's view of the Crusades. A book greatly needed in our era of false ecumenism.



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# “I respond point by point”

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by Basilius (*SiSiNoNo*, November 30, 2014)

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On October 14, 1911, St. Pius X wrote a Response Letter (beginning with the words “I respond point by point”) to the Bishop of Cremona, Msgr. Geremia Bonomelli,<sup>1</sup> who on his 80th birthday had sent (with an accompanying letter) as a gift to St. Pius X a booklet he had recently written on three Italian Senators: Thaon di Revel, Tancredi Canonico, and Antonio Fogazzaro, the last one having been condemned of modernism by the very St. Pius X.

In his Response Letter Pope Sarto expresses astonishment and dismay that the Bishop of Cremona presents the life and works of three characters exuding modernism, one of whom having been formally condemned, without giving any judgment on their doctrinal orthodoxy. St. Pius X goes on renewing his condemnation of modernism with very strong words and responds

to Bonomelli’s accusation of being too severe toward modernism and modernists. Finally he deals with the problem of the “Roman question” raised by Bonomelli in his letter. Let us look at the text of the letter of St. Pius X.

First of all, the Pope regrets that in Bonomelli’s writing on the three Senators, known to public opinion and history for their liberal, pro-Risorgimento, and modernist views, “there was no attempt at an evaluation of their writings and works.” The Pope justly observes: “It seems to me that especially a Bishop should say something more.” That is to say, it is a bishop’s duty to make a clear statement on the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of those that he presents to the public, otherwise he leads the faithful into believing that there >

is nothing wrong in their writings and their works, while the Holy See has already made a pronouncement on them (especially Fogazzaro) condemning them for a strong veneer of modernism.

Then St. Pius X responds to Bonomelli, who had the nerve to recommend him “moderation in his decrees against modernism.” The Pontiff distinguishes between “modern as the source of serious studies, and modernism,” that is the cesspool of all heresies (*Pascendi*, September 8, 1907). Pope Sarto continues, saying: “I am shocked that you find excessive the measures taken by the Holy See to hold back the deluge that threatens to spread while the modernist error that people want to disseminate in our days is much more deadly than that of the time of Luther, because it aims directly at the destruction not only of the Church (as in the case of Luther), but of Christianity.”

It is worthwhile noting the verb “hold back” used by St. Pius X: it is the same used by St. Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians (II Thess. 2:3-4) to indicate the obstacle, the one who restrains, the *katechon*, the force that opposes the final Antichrist from reigning over the whole world: “Let no man deceive you by any means, for unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God.”

St. Augustine says that the apostasy is the separation from Rome of the people that were at first all subject to her, and St. Thomas Aquinas (*Commentary on the Second Letter to the Thessalonians*, 2:3-4, Chapter 2, lesson 1, numbers 34-35) clarifies that, as Pope Leo says in his sermon “De Apostolis,” “the Roman Empire has not disappeared but has transformed from temporal to spiritual. Thus, the apostasy from the Roman Empire must be understood not only from the temporal one but also from the spiritual one, which is the Catholic faith of the Roman Church.” St. Thomas Aquinas (Booklet 68, *De Antichristo*, printed in Parma, 1864) again confirms that “the

obstacle” to the manifestation of the Antichrist is submission to the Roman Church and that “the one who holds him back” is the Papacy.

Furthermore, St. Pius X focuses well on the gravity of the modernist apostasy, which

1. Destroys subjectively the very nature of the Christian religion;
2. Makes Christ into a myth of the early Christians;
3. Considers Christianity an ideology invented by Paul of Tarsus and by the first communities founded by him; and
4. Sees God as a logical entity, that is to say an idea resulting from the need of religious sentiment of man, whereas He is the most perfect Being really and objectively existing outside the human mind.

“Faced with so grave an evil,” continues St. Pius X, “there will never be sufficient precautions that, supplying prevention, put someone on guard without hurting anyone and apply with leniency and compassion the proper penalties.”

In summary, the Holy See advises the faithful not to support certain theories, warns them, puts them on guard, so that in the end only the one who despises the admonitions of the Church is finally condemned: the decrees against modernism *per se* “do not hurt anyone”; only the baptized who join modernism are condemned by their own fault and not for excessive severity of the Church.

Bonomelli had written to Pope Sarto: “With your decrees so severe, you will either make apostates or hypocrites.” St. Pius X replies: “Unfortunately we have some apostates [the modernists, voluntary and, thus, guilty—comment of *SiSiNoNo*] but not made so by the laws against modernism, and we feel sorry for them; we shall have some hypocrites, and too bad for them; but at least we shall not have in the clergy teachers and preachers of the modernist error, who would in a short time take the whole world into apostasy.”

What makes the apostate and the hypocrite, then, is not St. Pius X, but the bad will of the baptized who openly embraces modernism and leaves the ranks or of the one who is interiorly a



modernist but does not reveal it publicly in order to remain within the Church and re-make her into a modernist entity from within. St. Pius X is only concerned with not allowing the clergy to teach the modernist apostasy and, thus, lead astray all the faithful.

Finally the Pope responds to a sibylline question of Bonomelli that saddens St. Pius X. The Bishop of Cremona has asked him to “put an end to the struggle in Italy, to the conflict between State and Church” [after September 20, 1870—Comment of *SiSiNoNo*], adding that “it would take but one word from the Pope to save so many souls.” St. Pius X challenges Msgr. Bonomelli and forces him out into the open, writing: “What is this prodigious word you expect of me?...Let’s be clear: [do you expect] the renunciation of the temporal power of the Church?”

Here he recalls the doctrine of the Church on temporal power, constantly re-affirmed by Pius IX and Leo XIII in numerous encyclicals. The temporal power is a means that Providence wanted to grant the Church in order to keep its spiritual, doctrinal, and moral independence vis-à-vis the human powers that have followed each other in the course of centuries. Just as man needs a home of his own so as not to depend on others, so the Church needs a State of her own to be mistress “in her own house.” Thus, Pius X, like Pius IX, “cannot, must not, and will not” to renounce what God has given “for so many centuries as a bulwark to the liberty of the Church....Because it is not with the temporal power that one wages war but with the spiritual one.” This has constantly been taught by the Pontifical Magisterium to which also Msgr. Bonomelli must consent.

To Bonomelli’s suggestion that he trust the guarantees the Italian Government has promised to the Church, Pius X responds that one cannot trust guarantees “assured by a government slave to the sect [Freemasonry—comment of *SiSiNoNo*] and that changes every month.”

Then the Pope asks Bonomelli an explicit question: “Now I ask you if in the present circumstances, after forty years of evidence, in

which all the Italian Governments that followed each other have treated the Holy See and the Pope much worse than its fiercest enemy, it is possible to pronounce the word you recommend.”

In conclusion, St. Pius X reminds Bonomelli that “no-one more than the Pope really loves Italy, but an Italy that is not slave to the sects, an Italy that responds to the mission assigned to her by Providence to be the first Nation in the world, because she knows how to appreciate properly the privilege of having the Papacy in her bosom.”

The question for St. Pius X is not Italy but the Government of the House of Savoy, which is enslaved to the Masonic sect and pursues the destruction not only of the Papal State but, if it were possible, of the very Church of Christ.

At the end of this reading anyone will be able to verify how correct St. Pius X was when, before dying, he lamented the fact of not having been helped by the Bishops in his fight against modernism. In fact, the Bishops were either modernist or philo-modernist, or some, as Benedict XV confessed about himself, did not realize the gravity of the danger (see *Disquisitio* of the Franciscan Ferdinando Antonello charged by Pius XII with shedding light on the “repressive” activities of which St. Pius X was accused even during his process of beatification and canonization). It is this body of Bishops, modernist or rebellious and reckless, that prepared the triumph of Vatican II.

<sup>1</sup> Born in 1831, died in 1914, Bishop of Cremona. In 1904 he sent to St. Pius X a memorial in which he proposed the rapprochement between science and faith, between the Italian Government and the Church. In 1889 he had written an article titled “Rome and Italy” for the *Rassegna Nazionale* in which he favored the reconciliation of Church and State, with the Church renouncing its claim to all temporal powers. On April 13, 1889, his article was put on the Index of forbidden writings, and Msgr. Bonomelli made an act of submission (but only exteriorly as demonstrated by the letters subsequently sent to St. Pius X).

# Relativism Cannot Stop Islam

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by Roberto de Mattei

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“*Marcher contre la Terreur*” (March against Terror) was the title *Le Monde*, the *Corriere della Sera*, and the major Western newspapers used to present the grand, secularist demonstration of January 11, 2015. Never has there been a slogan more hypocritical than this one, imposed by the mass-media as a reaction to the massacre in Paris on January 7. What sense is there in speaking about Terror without adding the adjective “Islamic”? The attack on the editorial staff at *Charlie Hebdo* was carried out to the yell of “Allah akbar!” vindicating Muhammad, insulted by the caricatures, and behind the terrorists’ kalashnikov there is a precise vision of the world: the Muslim one.

It is only now that Western secret services are beginning to take seriously the threats by Abdu Muhamad al Adnani published in a multi-

lingual communiqué spread widely on September 21, 2014, by the on-line daily *The Long War Journal*. “We will conquer Rome, we will break its crucifixes, we will make slaves of the women, with the permission of Allah, the Exalted One,” the spokesman of “the Islamic State” declared to his followers, and he didn’t simply call for the extermination of the “infidels” wherever they may be, but also indicated the procedures: “Place explosives in their streets. Attack their bases, burst into their homes. Cut off their heads. So that they don’t feel safe anywhere! If you can’t find the explosives or the ammunition, single out the American infidels, the French infidels, or any of their allies: smash their craniums with a rock, kill them with a knife, run them over with your cars, hurl them into mid-air, suffocate them, or poison them.”



We have been deluded into thinking that the war in course is not the one declared by Islam on the West but a war that is being fought inside the Muslim world itself, and that the only way to save ourselves is to help moderate Islam to defeat fundamentalist Islam, as was written in the *Corriere della Sera* on January 11 by Sergio Romano, an observer, who is even considered intelligent as well. The most repeated slogan

weapon of intellectual hegemony. The mosques are the propelling center of that cultural war which Bat Ye'or defines as “soft-jihad,” while with the term “hard-jihad” he defines the military war to terrorize and annihilate the enemy. The choice of the means can be discussed, and certainly it is inside Islam, but there is agreement on the final objective: the extension into the world of the *sharia'a*—the law of the Quran.

“The people of the Enlightenment have saved Europe... Faced with the peril they were running, liberty, equality, and brotherhood have ceased being abstract concepts by becoming incarnate in millions of people.”

Julia Kristeva



in France is to avoid “amalgam,” that is, the identification of moderate Islam with radical Islam. However, the common aim of all of Islam is the conquest of the West and of the world. Those who don't share this objective are not moderates, but simply not good Muslims.

The differences, if any, do not concern the ends, but the means: the Muslims of Al Qaeda and of Isis have embraced the Leninist way of violent action, while the Muslim Brothers use the Gramscian

Islam, in any case, is a noun which can be translated as “submission”—submission in order to avoid “The Terror” and the future European scenario imagined by the novelist Michel Houellebecq in his latest book, precipitously withdrawn from French book-shops. No to Terror for our statesmen means no to the violent submission of the jihadists, yes to a peaceful submission, which is carrying the West sweetly into a condition of dhimmitude. >

# Faith and Morals

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The West says it is disposed to accept Islam “with a human face,” but in reality, what it refuses in Islam is not just the violence, but also its religious absolutism. For the West there is a license to kill in the name of moral relativism, but not in the name of absolute values. Yet abortion is systematically practiced in every Western country and not one of the Heads of State who marched in Paris against “The Terror” has ever condemned it. But what is abortion if it is not the legalization of “The Terror,” the terror of the State promoted, encouraged, and justified? What right do Western leaders have to demonstrate against terror?

In *La Repubblica* of January 13, 2015, while the former leader of Lotta Continua [Lotta Continua (“continuous struggle”) was a far left extra-parliamentary organization in Italy (1969)], Adriano Sofri, is celebrating Europe’s rebirth under the Bastille, the post-modern philosopher Julia Kristeva, so dear to Cardinal Ravasi, affirms that “the people of the Enlightenment have saved Europe” and that “faced with the peril they were running, liberty, equality, and brotherhood have ceased being abstract concepts by becoming incarnate in millions of people.” However, who invented the Terror if not Republican France, which used it to annihilate all opponents of the French Revolution? The ideology and the praxis of terrorism appeared for the first time in history with the French Revolution, for the most part starting on September 5, 1793, when “The Terror” was made an everyday affair by the Convention and became an essential part of the revolutionary system.

The first genocide in history, in the Vendée, was perpetrated in the name of the Republican ideals of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. Communism, which claimed to complete the process of secularization inaugurated by the French Revolution, activated the standardization of Terror at a planetary level, causing, in less than seventy years, more than 200 million deaths. So what is Islamic terrorism if isn’t the contamination of the “philosophy of the Quran” with the Marxist-Enlightenment practices imported by the West?

From its very foundation, *Charlie Hebdo* has

been a newspaper wherein satire was placed at the service of a philosophy of libertarian life, the roots of it being imbedded in the anti-Christian ideas of the Enlightenment. The French satirical newspaper became famous because of its caricature of Muhammad, but its disgusting, blasphemous vignettes to vindicate homosexual unions should not be forgotten. The editors of *Charlie Hebdo* can be considered an extreme but coherent expression of the relativist culture now widespread in the entire West, in the same way as the terrorists who slaughtered them can be considered an extreme but coherent expression of the hate against the West by the entire, vast Islamic world.

Those who claim the existence of Absolute and Objective Truth are put on the same level as the fundamentalist Muslims by the neo-enlightened. We never compare relativism with Islamism, since both are associated with fanaticism. Fanaticism is not the affirmation of truth, but the intellectual and emotional imbalance that is begotten of departing from the truth. Further, there is only one truth wherein the world may find peace, which is the tranquility of order: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in Whom all things must be ordered in heaven and on earth, so that the peace of Christ is achieved through the Reign of Christ indicated as the ideal of every Christian by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quas Primas* of December 11, 1925.

Islam cannot be fought in the name of the Enlightenment and even less so by relativism. The only thing that can oppose it is the natural and Divine law, denied radically by both relativism and Islam. For this reason we are raising the Crucifix, which secularism and Islamism reject, and we are making of it a banner of life and action. St. Paul said: “We preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness” (I Cor. 1:23).

We would like to repeat: “We preach Christ Crucified, a stumbling-block to the Muslims and foolishness to the Secularists.”

*Corrispondenza Romana*, January 14, 2015 (<http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/01/christ-crucified-scandal-to-muslims.html>). A *Rorate* translation by Contributor Francesca Romana.





# The Light of Faith

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by a Silver City Benedictine Monk

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While travelling through a major European city several years ago, I had to stop for fuel a few miles from the scene of a riot. The local government officially identified it as “racial and religious unrest.” A group of Muslims were protesting what they considered to be an injustice against the laws of their religion. There was a long line of vehicles carrying police and Special Forces, with sirens screaming, snaking their way to and from the scene of the conflict. While paying for the gas, the Arabic-looking cashier asked: “As a Catholic priest, what do you think that we, as Muslims, must do to be at peace in this country?” I replied, “Seek to know the absolute truth about Jesus Christ.” Her response seemed to be a mixture of irony and despair as she said something like: “You are probably right, but do you think we really can?”

A few years later I had the joy of baptizing an adult Muslim, and I finally understood the despair with which the gas station attendant asked her question. I was able to observe the development of the gift of faith in a soul leaving the error of Islamism, and it was only then that I realized the total sacrifice that God asks of them. The Muslim religion is so structured that to leave it is a type of social suicide. All ties are broken with their society and often even with their own family. A good Muslim family is encouraged by their religion to murder the family member that has left Islamism. For a Muslim to become a Catholic they are literally risking their lives. God gives all that the soul needs to embrace the faith, but that soul must courageously sacrifice all that God asks of him. For a Muslim, this sacrifice sometimes includes martyrdom. >

# Spirituality



God seems to convert the Muslims by the gift of a great interior light of faith needed to abandon everything to God. On the natural level, light is an extraordinary creature. It is the means by which we see the visible world that surrounds us. An entire mountain can be placed inside of us by means of light. The surprising thing about sight is that the image that arrives on the retina is upside down and is mysteriously turned around by our mind so that we see the objects as they really are, that is to say the sky above the mountain instead of below it.

The light of the faith acts in like manner. If we use the eyes of our soul only to materially satisfy our intellect, the image that we perceive is in a certain way upside down. We would be lacking a supernatural perspective. We therefore need the light of faith to place the object of our intellect in its proper position with respect to God. It is precisely this gift of faith that the Muslims lack. Many government officials, all over the western world, would like us to believe that the Muslim religion is essentially the same as the “Christian religions” with a few exceptions. This is profoundly false. Their perspective of religion is very materialistic, as is their god of war and self-destruction. Their idea of heaven is sensual pleasure. Without the light of faith their supernatural world is really upside down.

The Muslim that I baptized several years ago had an intense desire of God. The first time he came to Mass was a Christmas day. He was seeking to discover, as he said himself, something

spiritual about the feast of Christmas. Although he was not baptized, he stood in the confession line. Once inside, he asked why people looked worried coming in and left apparently relieved! His journey to God took seven years. During this time, two Novus Ordo priests encouraged him to remain Muslim. One priest even asked that he explain the Quran to him.

He was finally convinced to seriously study the Catholic faith by the example of a young and large Catholic family, not by their words, but rather by what they were..., i.e. charitable. He observed charity amongst the members of the family and the mutual love of the spouses. He saw the presence of God in the pure hearts of that young family. Seeing the fatherhood of a good family he wanted to be able to call God his Father. By God’s grace, and the courage to risk his life for God, he was baptized. ...“But as many as received Him, He gave them the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name.”

God decided that this earth would be a battleground of good and evil. On one side is the Church with her children, on the other is the wickedness of Satan and his slaves: the children of light opposed to those dwelling in darkness. God has sent light into the darkness and He helps all who wish to receive it. The Muslim religion is so devised as to block out that light, but there are some “seated in darkness and in the shadow of death” that yearn for this light. It is our duty in charity to pray for them and help them to receive the light of faith.



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# How to Speak to Muslims

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by Joseph Fadelle

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Joseph Fadelle, from Iraq, was born in 1964 into a Muslim family. He was baptized and received into the Catholic Church in the year 2000. Ten years later he published his autobiography, *The Price to Pay*, in which he recounts his conversion to the Catholic religion.

(Interview conducted by Ladislav Anquetin.)

**The Angelus:** How did you look upon the Catholic religion before your conversion?

**Joseph Fadelle:** All I knew about Christians is what the Quran tells us; namely, that Christians are polytheists, ungodly, and impure. That's the only idea I had of Christianity.

**The Angelus:** Did you consider Christians to be your enemies?

**Joseph Fadelle:** I did not consider them so much as enemies as misguided. The Quran tells us that these are people who are far from the

right path, therefore people gone astray: They are unclean, ungodly, and so we don't mingle with them, we don't go near them. In fact, in the Quran there are also verses that say: "Kill the polytheists." But I didn't know any Christians; I had never been around any or approached them or tried to get to know them.

**The Angelus:** At what point in your life did you begin to have doubts about Islam?

**Joseph Fadelle:** It was the first Christian I met who invited me to read and understand the >

Quran. It was beginning with this invitation that I began to ask myself questions.

**The Angelus:** What kind of questions?

**Joseph Fadelle:** When I wanted to understand the Quran, I addressed myself to a specialist in Shia Islam, asking him to explain how I ought to proceed and to help me. He told me the obstacles were knowledge of the language, the grammar, and the context of every verse... He gave me to understand that it would be difficult. Nevertheless, I began to read it verse by verse, and I went and consulted him so that he could explain it to me.

**The Angelus:** Then what happened?

**Joseph Fadelle:** Quite a few of the verses really struck me, those calling for violence, murder; those humiliating to women; those calling for the violation and abuse of children. I reached the conviction that these verses and the Quran are not the word of God.

**The Angelus:** Was it hard for you to come to that conclusion?

**Joseph Fadelle:** My research on the Quran lasted five months, so it did not come about in a day. It was not just one verse that struck me. There are numerous examples. In addition to delving into the Quran, I studied the life of Mohammed. I consulted all the authoritative references in Islam, and I discovered that Mohammed killed, stole, committed adultery, said one thing and did the opposite. There is no wrong that he did not commit during the course of his existence.

**The Angelus:** Despite these conclusions, you could have had a tranquil Muslim life because you had a privileged place in Iraqi society. Why didn't you just settle for that?

**Joseph Fadelle:** At first, when I reached the conclusion that the Quran is not the word of God and that Mohammed is not a prophet, that's what I did. I remained to all appearances a Muslim. I continued to live without deepening my practice, and I continued, in effect, to profit from all the privileges of my family position. Without, however, losing faith in God.

But the second stage in my life was my encounter with Christ. Once you encounter Christ, you don't play around anymore with truth. You don't turn away from the light. From that moment, you leave everything for Christ.

**The Angelus:** How did this encounter happen?

**Joseph Fadelle:** I had asked this same Christian who invited me to read the Quran and understand it to bring me a copy of the Gospel. He had answered me: Read the Quran first, understand it, and then I'll bring you the Gospel afterward. And so, after my study of the Quran, a few months later, the Christian remembered his promise and brought me a New Testament.

I should tell you that before this Christian brought me the Gospels, I had a dream. I was standing at the edge of a stream about a yard wide, and on the other side was a man. I was attracted by his presence, and I had but one desire—to be on the same side, to join him. I began to step across the stream, which was not that wide, and there I found myself suspended mid air, unable to land on the other side nor go back! Hanging in the air, unable to touch the ground! The man notices me, he sees that I am lost and unsteady; he reaches his hand out to me and brings me near him, and he tells me: "Before coming to me, you have to eat the bread of life."

**The Angelus:** Did you understand this sentence?

**Joseph Fadelle:** No, not at all! The expression meant absolutely nothing to me; it was entirely new, alien to my culture. No one in my entourage had ever used it. I did not understand the meaning and I didn't try to understand it, but the memory was engraved in my heart. It was that very morning that the Christian brought me the Gospels. I took it, I opened it at random, and I fell at once on the Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 6, and I read: "I am the bread of life."

**The Angelus:** How do you interpret this?

**Joseph Fadelle:** It was a personal invitation to read the Gospel. I was going to read it, and it was through the reading of the Gospel that I came to meet and to know Christ.



**The Angelus:** Was this dream decisive for you?

**Joseph Fadelle:** Yes and no. The dream is not the foundation and basis of my faith. I met Christ in the Gospel. The dream was only the invitation to enter the Christian religion and to know Christ Jesus.

**The Angelus:** Subsequently you were shot at, chased, imprisoned... You had to flee from your

**The Angelus:** Even your family and friends are supposed to kill you?

**Joseph Fadelle:** What is important for them and what comes first, even before bonds of blood or friendship, is pleasing God, satisfying him, doing his will. So it is the commandment of their God to kill anyone who leaves Islam that takes precedence. Obviously, they are going to obey. That may seem surprising, but even the family

As for the Church, her principal mission is evangelization, she ought to be preoccupied with evangelizing the whole human race, and, therefore, Muslims too.



family, who threatened you, your country, your friends. Why is it so difficult to leave Islam?

**Joseph Fadelle:** In the Quran, which is considered to be the word of God, it is written: “Kill anyone who leaves Islam.” Besides that, there is a “hadith” of Mohammed—and whatever Mohammed says is very important for Muslims—that says: “Whoever among you should leave Islam, kill him.” That is the reason why it is so difficult to leave Islam.

is going to kill in order to accomplish the will of God.

**The Angelus:** Have you ever had a chance to explain yourself to Muslims or to your family? In other words, how can one proselytize Muslims?

**Joseph Fadelle:** I am in touch with many Muslims in France, but also through the Internet with Muslims in Arab countries. The basis of the contact and of the discussion with them is to >



invite them first of all to reflect on the Quran, to seek the truth about the Quran. That's the first step.

I draw their attention to the verses which cannot logically be adhered to. I make them reflect by asking questions: Do you think the content of this or that verse is good? They are not familiar with these verses; they are surprised, shocked. These verses are going to revolt them, and I am going to ask them via the Internet to seek to understand these verses.

**The Angelus:** You dialogue with Muslims. The hierarchy of the Church does too, but one sometimes has the feeling that they do not really want to convert the Muslims. Is this also your impression?

**Joseph Fadelle:** First of all, I want to say that I am totally in favor of dialogue. It is truly worthy of humanity to dialogue when there's conflict. As for the Church, her principal mission is evangelization, she ought to be preoccupied with evangelizing the whole human race, and, therefore, Muslims too. The problem today is the choice of individuals who are responsible for dialogue with Islam: These people are not competent. They do not give themselves over wholeheartedly to the mission of evangelization. It seems to me that the goal of these people is simply to calm things down, to arrange things so that people get along and can live together... That is not dialogue in depth and in truth.

**The Angelus:** Do you have a feeling that converts from Islam bother a certain part of the Church's hierarchy?

**Joseph Fadelle:** Yes. Instead of considering us as an encouragement for true dialogue, as a proof that it is possible to reflect and that Muslims can make their way to the true God, they see us only as an obstacle. One begins to wonder what the purpose of their dialogue is. If they are uncomfortable asking Muslims *What do you think of this or that verse?* or if they have an insufficient knowledge of the Quran, we can do it, for we have already carried out this in-depth reflection. We can ask for an answer to this or that verse, an explanation of this or that incoherence in the Quran. We can be first in line

for this kind of dialogue. We have the competence and the legitimacy.

**The Angelus:** So this is not being done now? No one is asking for your participation?

**Joseph Fadelle:** Not only do they not invite us to speak—for they see very well what we say and proclaim—but, what's more, they try to discourage others from inviting us.

**The Angelus:** How do you explain the conversion of Europeans of Christian culture to Islam?

**Joseph Fadelle:** Everyone of this sort that I've met has never read the Quran and does not understand what's in the Quran. They don't know the life of Mohammed; no spiritual conviction attracts them. They often convert to marry a Muslim. It is often for quite other reasons than having read and reflected upon the Quran.

**The Angelus:** It has been nearly fifteen years since you became a Catholic. Do you feel fulfilled?

**Joseph Fadelle:** We converts that have made their way from Islam toward the light are transformed. Our whole life is changed. When one recognizes the light, one is happy, and nothing can turn us away from this light and this happiness.

**The Angelus:** What relationship do you have with Christ?

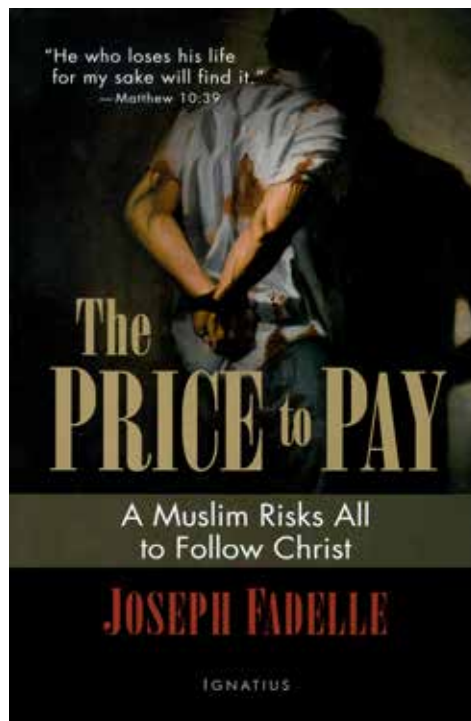
**Joseph Fadelle:** Christ is not a stranger to me. He is in me; He lives in me; He is all. I cannot find words to describe the bond of love I have with Him. He is my whole life. He is everything for me.

Translated by A. M. Stinnett from *Nouvelles de Chrétienté*, No. 151, pp. 9-11.

# The Price to Pay

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A Muslim Risks All to Follow Christ



*The Price to Pay* is the powerful story of Joseph Fabelle's conversion to Catholicism. He risks everything—family, friends, his inheritance and home, and even his life—in order to follow Christ. In a dramatic and personal narrative style, Fabelle reveals the horrible persecution endured by Christians living in a violent and hostile Muslim world.

# The Hermit of the Sahara on Muslims

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by Mme Danièle Masson

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Charles de Foucauld was a former military officer in Algeria. Later on, after a sudden conversion at the feet of Father Huvelin in Paris, he was ordained priest at the turn of the 20th century. His mind was set on evangelizing those regions he had visited earlier, and he became a hermit dwelling in Western Algeria near Morocco.

## An Urgent Need

He committed to paper his intention: “To do the most good that can be done at present for the Muslim populations, so numerous and so abandoned, by bringing into their midst Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, just as the most Blessed Virgin sanctified John the Baptist by bringing Jesus near to him.”

In 1905 he wrote to Raymond de Blic about the need to convert the Muslims: “The work I’m doing is preparatory. It may be that a few souls of good-will come before the others: all these souls are made for truth, for the true religion, heaven; they all must and consequently can secure their salvation and sanctify themselves. But outside the Catholic religion, especially outside the Christian religion, few souls are not in a habitual state of mortal sin. The three concupiscences—sensuality, pride, avarice—reign as queens in most souls. The outsides of the Muslim world are seductive, as persons with heavy make-up and tawdry finery seem from afar: when you see them up close, they are horrid.”

The same haunting thought comes as a refrain in his writings. In a letter to Father Huvelin, dated 1907, he reproaches the million European





inhabitants of Algeria for living utterly separated, and outlines their duties: "...To see in these peoples backward brothers whose education we should undertake and whose mind and character we ought to uplift as high as possible; in short, fulfill toward them our duty as good brothers..."

## The Obstacles

He was soon confronted with the drama of slavery. He wrote to a powerful friend, Henri de Castries: "It is woefully shameful that boys who were kidnapped four or five years ago from their families in the Sudan are being kept here by force by their masters while French authorities make themselves complicit in these abductions and rivet the shackles on these unfortunates by allowing it to go on."

Father de Foucauld himself redeemed slaves, one of whom was a black youth he named Joseph of the Sacred Heart. But he clashed with the government, which in its work of pacifying southern Algeria relied on the support of the Muslim holy men, the *marabouts*, and the chiefs of the nomadic tribes, who considered the ownership of slaves a right and an asset. Father Foucauld was reduced to silence but let his thoughts be known to his friend again:

"The natives know that we reprove slavery, that we do not allow it in our country, and that we forbid it in Algeria: that is why, seeing that we tolerate it among them, they say: 'They don't dare, they are afraid of us,' and they despise us. And they are right; it is just to despise those who act against their conscience... No human power has the right to rivet the shackles on these unfortunates whom God has created as free as us..."

## The Strategy

Despite the multiple obstacles on the road to the Christian faith of the population, not least of which was the French government itself, he mapped out clearly his strategy for conversion. When at the Hoggar in 1904, he wrote to Father Huvelin: "I try with all my might to demonstrate

and to prove to these poor wayward brethren that our religion is all love and brotherhood, and that its emblem is a heart."

He dreams of the evangelization of Morocco. He defines the means: "Alms, hospitality, the redemption and liberation of slaves, and, even more, the offering of the Divine Victim, will conciliate hearts and pave the way to preaching openly. The time for preaching openly will be hastened by the fervor and number of this silent avant-garde."

He sees in the Tuaregs of South Algeria lukewarm Muslims and a society divided into five distinct castes: nobles, bourgeois (whites), laborers, artisans, and slaves (blacks and mulattoes). Having become the friend of the *amenokal* Moussa ag Amastane, he outlined for him advice aiming at gently leading him from Islam to Catholicism, among other things.

"Surround yourself with good people. Don't keep any rotters in your entourage... A man's first duty is to love God with his whole heart and above all things; the second, to love all men as himself. From this love of neighbor as oneself follows the triple law of brotherhood, equality (*imrad*), and liberty (slaves). When Adam was hoeing and Eve spinning, where were the nobles? where were the peers? where were the slaves?"

The priestly work must be pioneered by the laymen living among the indigenous tribes: "It is not only by means of material gifts that we should work for the conversion of infidels, but by encouraging the establishment among them of excellent Christians of every rank and station in their capacity as farmers, colonists, merchants, artisans, proprietors, etc., destined to be the precious support of the missionaries, and to attract the infidels to the faith by their example, goodness, and personal contacts, and to constitute the center around which the infidels can regroup one by one as they convert."

And again, he outlines clearly his agenda to Abbé Caron: "In dealing with the Muslims, who are semi-barbarians, the path is not the same as with idolaters and fetishists, people who are complete savages with a totally inferior religion, or as with the civilized... It seems that with the Muslims, the way to proceed is to civilize them first, to instruct them first, and to make them >

## Spirituality

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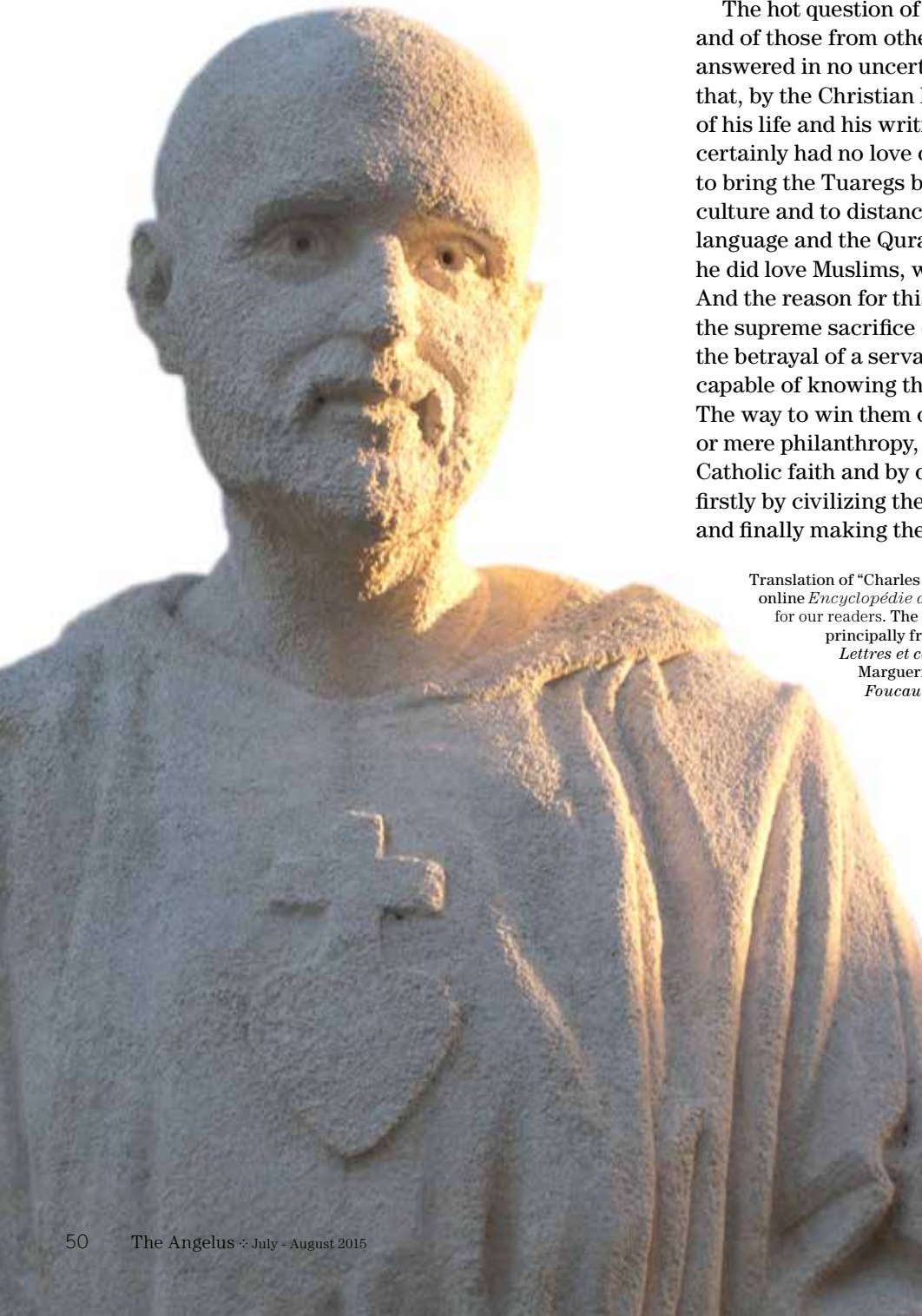
into people like ourselves; this having been achieved, their conversion will soon follow almost of itself. For Islamism does not stand up to instruction...”

“Whatever the Muslims may be, they are not more difficult to convert than the Romans

and the barbarians of the first centuries of Christianity; however much against the Church the government of their country may be, it is not more so than Nero’s and his successors!” A few months before his death in 1916, he wrote: “If we have not known how to make Frenchmen of these peoples, they will chase us out. The only way they can become French is if they become Catholics.”

The hot question of integration of the races and of those from other civilizations was answered in no uncertain term, and prophetic at that, by the Christian hero. From the evidence of his life and his writings, Charles de Foucauld certainly had no love of Islam itself. His efforts to bring the Tuaregs back to their own Berber culture and to distance them from the Arabic language and the Quran bear witness to this. But he did love Muslims, which is not the same thing. And the reason for this attachment which led to the supreme sacrifice of his life (killed through the betrayal of a servant) is that their souls were capable of knowing the truth in all its plenitude. The way to win them over was not by dialogue or mere philanthropy, but by a profound, lived Catholic faith and by drawing them in gradually, firstly by civilizing them, then instructing them, and finally making them like their instructors.

Translation of “Charles de Foucauld et l’Islam,” from the online *Encyclopédie de l’honnête homme*, slightly edited for our readers. The references cited in the article come principally from two works: Charles de Foucauld, *Lettres et carnets* (Ed. du Seuil, 1966); and Marguerite Castillon du Perron, *Charles de Foucauld* (Ed. Grasset, 1982).





# La Sainte-Chapelle

and the Crusades

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by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

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The Sainte-Chapelle, located within the Palais de Justice complex on the Ile de la Cité is a diminutive yet perfect example of the Rayonnant Style of Gothic Architecture. It was erected by Louis IX, king of France, to house the Crown of Thorns and a fragment of the True Cross, precious relics of the Passion. Louis had purchased them in 1239 from the Byzantine Emperor Beaudoin II for the exorbitant sum of 135,000 livres (the chapel only cost 40,000 livres to build). Two years later, more relics were brought. Louis commissioned the Sainte-Chapelle to serve as a reliquary casket enlarged to an architectural scale. In the flamboyant thinking of the 13th century, the idea was to elevate the Kingdom of France to be the leader of Western Christianity. The original plan of the Chapel dates from 1241. After breaking ground in

January 1246, the Sainte-Chapelle was rapidly constructed, and completed April 25, 1248. The structure is 118 ft. long, 56 ft. wide and 139 ft. in height.

Fronted by a two-story porch, the Sainte-Chapelle has the emphatically vertical proportions of Gothic architecture which had been perfected during the 12th century. The architectural model is that of a building with a single nave culminating in a chevet with seven panels. Outside the design concentrates on the essentials—a sober base and heavy buttresses contrasting with the lightness of the upper parts. The slate roof is dominated by a spire made of cedar, 108 feet high, a masterpiece of finesse, made in the 19th century, but the exact replica of the 15th-century piece.

The lower chapel is dedicated to the Virgin >

## Christian Culture

Mary. Low vaulted ceilings rest on fine columns. The walls are decorated with trifold arcades and 12 medallions representing the Apostles. Fleurs de lys are on an azure background. The towers are an homage to Blanche de Castile, St. Louis's mother. The vaulted ceiling is painted to resemble star-filled heavens. The floor contains tombstones of important reverends. The lower chapel used to be reserved for palace staff.

The upper chapel is resplendent in its Gothic architecture—light, color, and space blend to inspire a sense of harmony between art and religious faith. This part of the building was reserved for the King, his close friends and family, as well as for displaying the religious relics. Supported by slender piers, the vaulted ceilings seems to float over magnificent stained

are the dominant colors, in contrast with 15th-century western rose windows. In these panes the full biblical story of humanity is recounted, from the Creation to Redemption through Christ.

Over the centuries, the Sainte-Chapelle suffered the vicissitudes of time. It was damaged by fire in 1630 and again in 1776. The stained-glass windows of the lower chapel were removed following a flood when then Seine overflowed in 1690. Perceived as a symbol of both religion and royalty, the Sainte-Chapelle suffered considerable damages during the French Revolution. Its furniture and rood screen disappeared. The organ was transported to Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. The spire was knocked down, the tympanums damaged, the holy relics scattered. Most of the statues were saved.



glass windows. Most significant of the sculpted decorations are the statues of the 12 Apostles, which lean on the columns marking the bays. Their finely featured faces impart a sense of serenity in all who contemplate them.

The Sainte-Chapelle is renowned for its richly hued stained-glass windows comprising 6,456 square feet in area. Two-thirds of the pieces are original works representing the finest examples of 12th-century craftsmanship. Reds and blues

Following a period of disaffection, in 1803 the stained-glass windows were stored in a two-meter space in order to use the building as a repository for the state's archives. Starting in 1837, significant restoration was undertaken and by 1868 the Sainte-Chapelle was returned to its previous splendor. The stained-glass windows were removed during World War II in anticipation of the German invasion of Paris. Following the war every piece was meticulously replaced. While



some of the relics were never to be found again, others are today kept in the treasure of the Notre Dame Cathedral and at the National Library.

Louis IX, king of France, better known as Saint-Louis since his canonization by Pope Boniface VIII in 1297, twenty-seven years after his death, is best known for his immense piety, his sense of justice, and his kindness. The sixth Crusade led by Frederic II, an excommunicated emperor, had been a huge success. Without shedding any blood, the emperor had negotiated by treaty in 1229 the restitution of Jerusalem. The treaty remained in force until 1244. Afterwards, any pilgrim wanting to pray at Our Lord's grave was risking his life. Because of his love for Our Lord, because he could not stand the idea that pilgrims were being massacred, Louis decided to take action.

Through Louis's meticulous planning, the seventh Crusade was the most carefully prepared of all the Crusades to the East when he embarked at Aigues-Mortes on August 25, 1248. Louis had decided to attack Egypt rather than going on a campaign in the Holy Land itself. It made sense: it was in accordance with a general change of strategy since the third Crusade, because of the wealth and importance of Egypt within the Ayyubid Empire established by Saladin. If Egypt could be taken, then the Latin East could be restored much more easily.

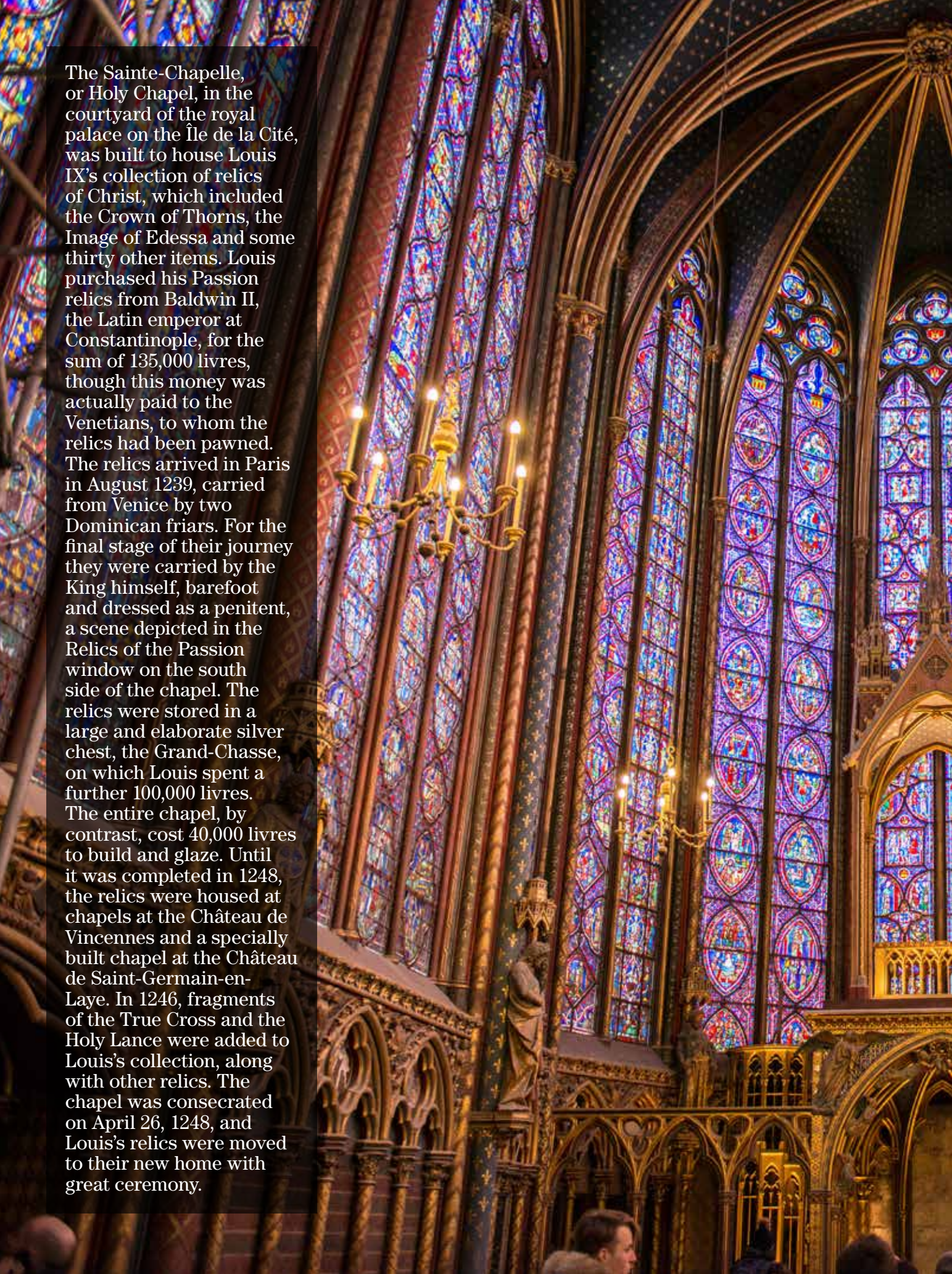
Louis landed in Cyprus on September 17, and his army gradually became ready. The Sultan of Egypt had gone with most of his troops to Syria, attacking the ruler of Aleppo. But Louis was aware of the fact that the forces available to him were limited in numbers, 15,000 according to some sources, including 2500 Knights Templar. Because of political turmoil in Germany and in Italy, very few men from those two countries had joined. If Louis were to take Egypt, he would need every man available. He decided to wait until the end of May 1249 before sailing for Damietta.

On June 6, 1249, Damietta was captured with minimal losses. When entering Damietta, the king sang the Te Deum. He also forbade the killing of any infidel taken prisoner and arranged to have classes available to any of them showing an interest in the True Religion. The Egyptians

were in disarray while crusader morale was high. Perhaps Louis should have pushed on to Cairo, but the Nile flood, which had contributed to the destruction of the fifth Crusade, was imminent. Louis also was expecting reinforcements from France. He advanced toward Cairo on November 20, 1249. He and his army proceeded slowly down the Damietta branch of the Nile until they were forced to halt opposite Mansur, where most of the Egyptian forces were, and the Crusaders were unable to bridge the waterway. After weeks of waiting, an unguarded ford downstream was discovered and on February 8, 1250, some of the Crusaders led by Louis's brother crossed the river.

Louis had instructed that once across, his brother Robert d'Artois should wait until the rest of the army could join him, but Robert, against everybody's advice, decided not to wait and led himself and his men to their destruction in the streets of Mansur. Louis arrived with the main army and scored a victory, but a costly one. It was his last success and a critical turning point. Louis had lost too many men to try to advance. The sultan of Egypt was back in Cairo and temporarily dominated the dissident factions. Supply ships from Damietta were intercepted, and before long the crusaders were suffering from disease and famine. Louis perhaps delayed too long ordering a retreat. For eight weeks the army held out while disease took its toll. On April 5, the retreat began. Refusing the pleas of others to protect himself by fleeing, Louis remained to lead his soldiers and was captured with many others as the Muslim forces closed in. Half way to Damietta, Louis surrendered. The king and nobles were held for ransoms while many non-noble captives were killed. During his captivity, the king recited the Divine Office every day with two chaplains and had the prayers of the Mass read to him. His great Crusade had failed totally. And Cairo might have fallen if it had not been for Robert's behavior. The queen managed with great courage to secure sufficient food and to persuade the Italians not to evacuate Damietta until it could be ceded formally by treaty and the king's ransom arranged.

Louis showed his remarkable commitment following his release from captivity on May 6, >

The image shows the interior of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. The most striking feature is the series of tall, narrow stained glass windows that fill the upper portion of the space. These windows are filled with intricate, colorful scenes, likely depicting the Passion of Christ. The architecture is characterized by its soaring height, pointed arches, and ribbed vaulting. The lighting is dramatic, with the warm glow of the stained glass contrasting with the darker, shadowed areas of the stone structure. In the foreground, the lower part of the chapel is visible, showing the base of the columns and the lower levels of the vaulting. A few people can be seen in the lower right corner, providing a sense of scale to the massive structure.

The Sainte-Chapelle, or Holy Chapel, in the courtyard of the royal palace on the Île de la Cité, was built to house Louis IX's collection of relics of Christ, which included the Crown of Thorns, the Image of Edessa and some thirty other items. Louis purchased his Passion relics from Baldwin II, the Latin emperor at Constantinople, for the sum of 135,000 livres, though this money was actually paid to the Venetians, to whom the relics had been pawned. The relics arrived in Paris in August 1239, carried from Venice by two Dominican friars. For the final stage of their journey they were carried by the King himself, barefoot and dressed as a penitent, a scene depicted in the Relics of the Passion window on the south side of the chapel. The relics were stored in a large and elaborate silver chest, the Grand-Chasse, on which Louis spent a further 100,000 livres. The entire chapel, by contrast, cost 40,000 livres to build and glaze. Until it was completed in 1248, the relics were housed at chapels at the Château de Vincennes and a specially built chapel at the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. In 1246, fragments of the True Cross and the Holy Lance were added to Louis's collection, along with other relics. The chapel was consecrated on April 26, 1248, and Louis's relics were moved to their new home with great ceremony.



## Christian Culture

1250, on payment of half his enormous ransom, and the surrender of Damietta. He sailed to Acre and remained in the East for another four years acting to strengthen the security of the Latin kingdom. He negotiated a treaty with Egypt in 1252 and a truce with Damascus and Aleppo in 1254. He also worked on the liberation of those Christians still held captive. He embarked on a massive program to improve the Kingdom's defenses. He rebuilt the fortifications of Acre, Caesarea, Sidon and Jaffa. His mother, Blanche de Castille, whom he had appointed regent during his absence, had died on November 21, 1252. The kingdom was in stable condition and could very well continue without king nor regent, but it was time for Louis to return. He finally sailed for home on April, 24, 1254, when he felt he could do no more. He left behind a force of one hundred knights to reinforce the garrison of Acre, the start of a French Royal Regiment in the Holy Land, which remained until 1286. It was plain that Louis had every intention of returning in person to try again to liberate the holy places.

Louis kept very much in touch with the fate of the Latin East and continued to wear the Cross on his shoulder to show his intention of going back to succor the Eastern Christians. In 1260, after murdering his predecessor, Baybars became sultan of Egypt. Though this "famous" Mameluke sultan did not live to see the fall of the Latin States, he had reduced them to a few coastal outposts. Baybars was ruthless. Most of his conquests were followed by a general massacre of the inhabitants, including, of course, the native Christians. In 1265 he took Caesarea, Haifa and Arsulf. The following year he conquered Galilee and devastated Cilician Armenia. In 1268 Antioch was taken and all the inhabitants slaughtered. The great hospitaler fortress of the Krak des Chevaliers fell three years later. These disasters again brought pleas for aid from the West. King Louis once again took up the Cross.

Louis informed Pope Clement IV of his intention in late 1266, then gathered the French nobles on March 24, 1267. The response was not enthusiastic. He finally gathered 12,000 men. Louis, once more, planned very carefully, insuring that he would receive tax money, getting Genoa and Marseille to supply thirty-nine

vessels. He left Aigues-Mortes on July 2, 1270, for a rendezvous at Cagliari, Sardinia, where he announced that Tunis was his target. Soon after though, on August 25, 1270, at a fort constructed on the site of ancient Carthage, Louis IX died, victim of the dysentery or typhus that had



been sweeping through the army in the intense summer heat. He had received Extreme Unction and had himself laid out on a bed of ashes. It is said that his last words, after commending his spirit to God, were: "O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem." It emphasizes the fact that no man was more devoted than he to the liberating of the Holy Land. O Jerusalem! How he must have regretted never being able to enter the city where Christ was entombed.





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# Let's Read!

Learning to Love Reading

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by SSPX Sisters

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“If my children liked to read, they’d get a solid formation, they wouldn’t go stir crazy on rainy days, they wouldn’t be easy targets for media propaganda.” So then, how does one awaken in children such a desirable attribute?

The number of qualities a child acquires by imitating those around him is incalculable. If you yourself read regularly with visible pleasure and interest, if family conversations pleasantly revolve around books read by members of the family, then a large part of the work has already been done.

Before learning to read, a child gets familiar with books on mother’s lap. Quite often, a little one left to himself will have “read” a picture book in 30 seconds; he will have seen everything and looked at nothing. With mother, one takes the time to examine every drawing: Where is the

cock? What color is the cat? So doing, the child develops an ability to concentrate while acquiring a rich and precise vocabulary.

When books are a part of the family’s universe, at about five or six, a child will ask to learn to read. He wants to do as the grown-ups do; he is tired of having to have help to read a story; he wants to understand the allusions he hears in the conversations of the older children. Offer him a alphabet book, and until it’s time to go to school, teach him to recognize the sounds of his language. Home instruction may go further if mother has some training or a teacher’s advice.

The apprenticeship of reading is paramount. Reading must become easy enough so that the child’s attention is no longer on the act of reading but on the content of the book. Relentlessly banish books that employ the global or semi- >

global method; they only produce a catastrophic percentage of illiterates or mediocre readers. Only the phonics method conforms to the analytical processes of the intellect as exercised by the brain.

As soon as the child begins to know how to read, provide him books adapted to his still limited capacity (simple vocabulary, big letters, short stories or longer ones divided in short chapters) and do not hesitate to read with him, taking turns in order to help him and to spark his interest. What should be done if his reading is still not fluent by the end of first grade. Not all children progress at the same pace. If mother is unable to help a child catch up over summer vacation, or if the gap is too great, it might be better to have him repeat first grade, with the teacher's agreement, in order to assure a solid foundation rather than advancing to the next grade where he may have trouble keeping up and run the risk of becoming discouraged.

An enjoyable book may become the basis of other activities which in turn may call for further complementary reading: a novel about the Crusades might inspire the child to construct in cardboard his own knightly accoutrements, but for this to be more exact, he'll have to research it further in books. And what did fortresses look like? What about the life of King St. Louis?

For truly reluctant readers, one might devise a big game-contest that will occupy the family during vacation and send the children back to their Mother Goose or Brothers Grimm or Middle Earth for clues and answers.

Reading needs a few favorable conditions: a bit of solitude and silence. The noisy games of the little ones and compact quarters may constitute real obstacles for some children, who need to be helped. During summer vacation, the warm hours early in the afternoon offer a propitious time for reading. While the little ones lie down for their nap, the older ones take to their books and the household enjoys a moment of quiet.

It is understood that only good books find entrance into the house. For a book to be declared good, its hero need not be a saint, but a wholesome, upright background in which the action unfolds is indispensable. Much is gained by talking with the children about their reading,

asking them what they liked and why, and what they might have found to criticize and why.

Can the reading of comic books contribute to developing a taste for reading in children who don't have it? Without entering into the debate on the advantages and shortcomings of comics, let's be realistic: experience shows that a child who already likes to read and often reads real books will be able to relax with a comic book without detriment; but that the exclusive reader of comic books rarely develops into a genuine reader since his laziness is satisfied with merely "reading" the drawings.

Where can families find good reading on a reasonable budget? Public libraries offer too many frankly bad books for it to be prudent to let children explore them alone. Parents will be able to find in bookstores the classics of children's literature at modest prices. Lending books between families, while affording the opportunity to teach children to be careful with books and respectful of other people's property, is also a solution. Traditional Catholic publishers make an effort to offer high-quality books for children, and grandmothers and godparents will find many gift ideas there.

So, good reading to you!

Translated, with slight adaptation for English readers, from *Fideliter*, No. 190, July-August 2009. For reading suggestions for the whole of childhood, you might like to consult Dr. John Senior's "What Everyone Should Read: The Thousand Good Books," *The Angelus*, May 1997.



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# The Sacrifices of Motherhood

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by Michael J. Rayes

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“How big is he?”

Karisa Bugal had barely enough strength left to whisper her question. She struggled to look up at the doctors who delivered her baby while medical staff wheeled her to intensive care.

Mrs. Bugal knew she was sacrificing her own life to save her baby on that cold November day in 2014. Her doctors made this very clear during labor and presented grim options to the young mother and her husband. Mrs. Bugal chose to have an emergency delivery to save her son. Her baby boy was delivered, but the mother died soon after, leaving behind a husband, a toddler, and a healthy newborn baby.

Motherhood involves the formation and management of your children. But this requires sacrifice; sometimes, incomprehensibly deep sacrifice. How do we make sense of the call for

sacrifice—ultimately, surrender to God’s will when we would rather have things go our way?

## The Depth of Sacrifice

We parents may sometimes be deluded by the wonders of modern medicine and technology. We do a good job of subduing the earth and ruling over it (Gen. 1:28). But our own strong wills may be mixed up with this dominion. We oftentimes struggle when we must resign ourselves to circumstances because we don’t want to let go of control. This dichotomy of control and resignation brings the sacrifices of motherhood to mind.

There are many mundane sacrifices, or daily hardships, of living as a Catholic wife and >

mother. These can be hard enough to bear. But there is another type that could require the very life of the mother, as in the case of Karisa Bugal. Can't modern medicine do something? Do first-world women really still die in childbirth? Haven't we gotten past this with our post-modern technology and medicine?

Yet, examples abound. Modern medicine could not save Mrs. Bugal. Another instance occurred last year in Italy, where a woman chose to let her baby live even though she knew that to do so would kill her. A British woman also made headlines when she died in childbirth from an infection. And early this year in the southwestern United States, a woman with high blood pressure died giving birth.

The horror of such situations is realized because they seem so wrong. Babies are not supposed to die. Young mothers are not supposed to die. We desperately want to hold onto life, at least life that we can measure in terms of "quality" and "productivity." Yet Original Sin is what it is. We feel its effects all around us. Roses have thorns. People get sick. Death happens, even during the miracle of conception and human development.

We may talk about resignation to God's will, but sometimes it takes extreme examples to make a point. A mother's love is sacrificial in so many ways. When her own life is asked, she is practicing "no greater love" for another (John 15:13). When women bear children and give them life on this earth, we men give nothing in return, comparatively speaking. We stand by helplessly while holding our breath, waiting for our wives to give completely of themselves for the sake of bringing our babies into this world. As Dr. Andrew Childs marveled in a conference given in Phoenix, Arizona, on February 7th of this year, "Women give us people. We men give our women toasters."

Maternal sacrifice during childbirth shows the rightness and the resignation which souls must have in following the natural law. It is never morally permissible to directly commit an evil act against innocent life to obtain a good outcome. Rather, Catholic parents who follow God's will may have confidence that they are doing the right thing. "In proportion as you draw

near to Truth by prayer, you inevitably increase your own conformity to the true pattern of yourself as it exists in the mind of God. And this means that, whatever it feels like, your life is going right" (Van Zeller, *Holiness for Housewives*, p. 62).

There is no easy answer to the sacrifices mothers must sometimes make. The vale of tears is sometimes a valley so vast we cannot see out of it. Yet, when it comes to hardship and sacrifice and what seem to be unbearable extremes, even death, we must remember that joy and peace come from doing the will of God. There is joy in the extreme sacrifice of motherhood, even though there is suffering.

## Making Sense of Suffering

This is not to deny the very real pain caused by hardship, especially the death of the mother or the death or suffering of a child. These are the times when our Catholic catechetical formation matters the most. Who made you? Why? What is Original Sin? What must we do to gain the happiness of heaven? Those without solid Catholic catechesis will stumble when confronted with the pain of severe loss and injustice.

Catholic parents can rest their hearts in the absolute confidence that God is not the author of death and suffering. These things are a result of the first sin which shook the whole universe. God created us out of love, and this love bears our free will and the terrifying chain of events that result from the choices men make. God endures this so that He may delight in receiving love freely from us. If love is a real human choice, we must necessarily have the power to choose not to love. The fallen natural order of things demonstrates this: death, suffering, selfishness, crime, all sorts of vice, diseases, sickness, and so on.

God never promised us happiness in this life. We are to persevere through the vale of tears, the vale of sorrow and joy and pleasure and growth and anguish and tedium—the vale of the whole experience of humanity pining for God. The alternative to following God is not a good sign, as



St. Alphonsus de Liguori points out:

“Oh! What a chastisement is it when God abandons the sinner into the hands of his sins, and appears not to demand any further account of them!...Miserable the sinner that prospers in this life! His prosperity is a sign that God waits to make him a victim of His justice for eternity” (*Preparation for Death*, p. 177).

Mothers and fathers may take solace and encouragement in the knowledge that if they follow God and the natural law, and their motivation is love of God, He waits for them in heaven. The fruit of this is peace. The fruit of resignation to the hand of God is a tranquility even as we may experience sorrow in our circumstances. God sees your suffering and He wants you to offer it up to Him.

In some ways, it may seem easier to give entirely of self in one overwhelming sacrifice and be done with it. But no, you instead must go to the grocery store with your children and bear curious onlookers. Or you may have worldly relatives, asking in exasperated tones if you are done having children yet. These are sacrifices—temptations to compromise—little sacrifices that simply must be borne for the love of God. Yet, they all add up. It is a spiritual martyrdom, one day at a time. As Ven. Fulton Sheen wrote in 1957:

“It is well known that women are capable of far more sustained sacrifice than men; a man may be a hero in a crisis, and then slip back to mediocrity. He lacks the moral endurance which enables a woman to be heroic through the years, months, days and even seconds of her life, when the very repetitive monotony of her tasks wears down the spirit....Not only her mind, but her body must share in the Calvary of motherhood” (*Way to Happiness*, pp. 79-80).

She did not trust God and certainly did not trust her husband; rather, she manipulated him into taking the fruit. Adam bears full responsibility for his action but he did not act alone.

Mary, on the other hand, practiced unconditional trustful surrender to God at all times, always choosing the greater good. She ignored the more reasonable voices of those around her, whether they were relatives, high priests, or anyone else. Redemption is beyond human reason. Mary turned to her Son, who waited for her prompting to begin His public ministry at Cana. Our Blessed Lord used His own divine power to effect Redemption, but He did so with Mary acting as co-redemptrix. As He is the new Adam, she is the new Eve.

Mothers today are confronted with a dynamic choice of following their own devices or surrendering to God and their husbands. This choice must ever be renewed daily, sometimes moment by moment, and thus it is a purposeful choice. We are not angels with instant thinking skills, who were given one shot at heaven or hell. We are human creatures, slowed by our physical bodies and thus we need many, many opportunities to continue practicing our love.

This human practice of love is shown by your daily surrender to your husband, your God, and even, to an extent, your circumstances. Your consolation is a joyful heart and the peace of knowing that you are doing all you can to sanctify your own soul and get your family to heaven.

**Michael Rayes** writes from Arizona, where he lives with his wife of 29 years and their seven children. He is a counselor, catechism director, and author. Rayes holds a B.A. in education, an MBA, and a Master's in professional counseling.

## Two Archetypal Women

Remember the juxtaposition of the two women who are leaders of humanity: Eve and Mary. Eve let her curiosity and feminine pride get the best of her. She looked at the fruit, walked closer to the fruit, toyed with the idea of eating the fruit, and then decided for herself that she should have this knowledge and power from the forbidden fruit.



# The Lord's Vineyard

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by Fr. Ferrelli, SSPX

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**The Angelus:** Father Ferrelli, could you introduce yourself?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** I was ordained in June of last year. And my first assignment has been Argentina and now Chile.

**The Angelus:** Were you surprised when they told you that you had been assigned to South America?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** Usually most priests remain in their native country at first, or somewhere using their own language. So I was about as surprised as anyone with Italian ancestry and a certain inclination towards studying languages could be. My first thoughts were, "This isn't going to go over very well with the family, Mom in particular." After some sweet-talking and a bit of time, however, we all got used to the idea that it

wasn't all that bad.

**The Angelus:** How did you prepare for such a change in language and culture?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** I did what anyone would have done; try not to think about it too much: final exams were just around the corner. My superiors advised me wisely to immerse myself in Mexico undergoing intensive Spanish. Prior to that time I didn't really know too much Spanish, so it was pretty necessary. One of my best memories during the preparation for the big leap was to commit myself to trying the various wines from Mendoza which one can find in the States. There is no better way to assimilate oneself into another culture than by the assimilation of the various foods and drink it has to offer!

**The Angelus:** Where were you stationed first?



**Fr. Ferrelli:** I was originally stationed in Mendoza, Argentina. Like any good product of modern public schooling, I had no idea whatsoever as to where Mendoza was located in Argentina. If I knew where Argentina was it was probably due only to the presence of a certain seminary professor in Winona. Accepting the reality of my situation was made much easier by news that Argentina was famous for its renowned grilled beef, or *asado* and that Mendoza was famous for its Malbec wine of international fame.

**The Angelus:** What is Argentina like?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** I simply passed through places like La Reja, Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and San Luis, the vast majority of my time being spent in Mendoza. So whatever I say about Argentina in general should be regarded as suspect.

The country is very large and very beautiful. To the east lies the Atlantic Ocean while to the west and south it is bordered by Chile. Heading north one encounters a smattering of countries, the largest of which is the enormous, Portuguese-speaking Brazil.

The culture is Spanish in its roots. During the years of Italian immigration, however, many came to settle in Argentina, bringing with them their culture, accent, character, and food. As a result, modern Argentina is distinctively Italian, at least in comparison with its fellow Latin-American countries.

You can't be too generalistic when it comes to Argentina. Within the various provinces and cities there are striking differences in the manner of speaking, acting, and thinking—the very culture of each has its own particular flavor. The popular conception of the Argentinian is the *porteño*, the people who live in Buenos Aires who are loud, chummy, pronounce their *ll*'s and *y*'s with a not-too-quiet “shhh”, and on the whole very amiable. The truth is otherwise, as any Argentinian who isn't a *porteño* will tell you.

Of late, despite the charm of our fellow Americans in the real Deep South, the country has fallen prey to a government with strong communistic tendencies that is at present devastating this great country. This, combined with the disaster of the Conciliar Church and the typical state of modern Catholics, has gone to

bring low this once great Catholic nation. That's Argentina in a nutshell—a very small nutshell.

**The Angelus:** And Mendoza?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** Mendoza lies to the west at the foot of the Andes Mountains, just over the border from Santiago, Chile. The climate is desert-like, but due to human industry there is a good deal of plant life in the area, using the water which flows from the mountains.

Wine is a huge part of life in Mendoza. Seriously, you can't have a parish function or sit down with the local men to discuss Church doctrine if there isn't a bottle of wine or three at hand. I recall one time after having very interesting discussions concerning the social reign of Christ with about 15-20 Mendocinans being unable to count on two hands the number of empty bottles of wine.

A number of people told me upon arriving that the Mendocinan was a bit colder than other Argentinians, cliquish even. I never experienced any such thing. What did strike me was their un-



Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Santiago, Chile

Anglo-Saxon forwardness. They don't mince words usually, nor are they given to “beating around the bush.” It's a refreshing frankness, you could say.

One of the first families I went to visit with my fellow priests demonstrated this perfectly. They were preparing a scrumptious *asado* served with delicious Malbec wine. Having grasped at the opportunity to speak a bit of English with someone at the table, the conversation turned >

# Christian Culture

towards languages in general. One person, who was partial to French (for legitimate reasons of family ancestry), began to speak of its qualities. I, playing the role of pacific foreigner, said, *Sí, sí; pero inglés*, etc. It wasn't very long before this person—a wonderful person whom I came to esteem very quickly—exclaimed (to be dramatic)

help in order to live the Catholic life in this perverse world.

There are various well-attended organizations in place by which the faithful seek to live more fully the Catholic life, help with the liturgy, or study the Church's doctrinal and moral teachings. I won't say that I was the busiest of the priests



Our Lady of Solitude, Mendoza, Argentina



something along the lines of “English is an ugly and brutish language!” I was shocked. If something like that happened in America when a foreign priest arrived at the parish, there would be no shortage of red faces and down-cast eyes, followed by something along the lines of, “What I meant to say was..., etc.” But no; everything carried on quite naturally. It was a first culture-shock I am grateful to God to have experienced. There is nothing that opens the mind and helps one to develop character like being immersed in a different culture, especially when upon your understanding of them and their manner of living depends to some extent the salvation of souls.

**The Angelus:** What about the apostolate?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** Beautiful. There is constant life and activity in the parish and school attached thereto. The large number of children, young adults, new and large families are a source of joy for any priest. One witnesses numerous baptisms, marriages, many preparing for marriage, full catechism classes, and plenty of souls seeking

in the priory, far from it, but even so, I had the wonderful experience of never lacking priestly work.

As I must have mentioned by now, Argentinians seem to be generally more intimate, open, and familiar. I don't think I would be exaggerating if I were to say that the apostolate in Mendoza, as far as I experienced it, was like the work of a father in his family. True, I was only a vicar, and every parish is a spiritual family, but there's something different here, I think. It is not easy for Americans, it seems to me, to arrive at the balance between overly familiar and a distant, wary respect. I wouldn't say things are perfect—they never are, but one really gets a sense of profound trust and deference...even while the faithful are joking with their priests, joking with you about you, and even though the men don't hesitate to give you a slap on the back or *un gran abrazo* more or less publicly.

**The Angelus:** Now, you were only in Mendoza for six months and then moved to Santiago, Chile.





How is Chile different from Mendoza?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** That's not an easy question to answer, mostly because there is a bit of rivalry between the two. As I don't want to get involved in that, let's say that they're...different.

What is more, I've only been in Chile for four months now, so my opinions aren't terribly

the East Coast, plenty of mountains, volcanos in the South, and damper regions like in Washington State.

**The Angelus:** Do you having any closing remarks?

**Fr. Ferrelli:** It really is amazing how God



well developed. Chileans don't have the Italian influence of which Argentina boasts (I use this word for reasons of ancestry, not really to pass judgment). In fact, there was a marked immigration of Germans, and Chile has always had good relations with the British. So even though the people are certainly Latin-Americans, you could say that they are not as "chummy." I don't necessarily mean that as a negative comment, and there are plenty of exceptions. On the whole, the Chilean is very respectful and better organized.

What was particularly interesting to me was the appreciation for the U.S. which seems to mark Chile. They are very well disposed towards *estadunienses* and even their economy and modern architecture are very similar. Arriving in Chile gave me the sense of arriving home. Chile also has many diverse climates and beautiful locations, even though it is so narrow, because it spans a huge distance along the Western coast of South America. It has beautiful coastal climates like San Diego, pine forests like you might find in

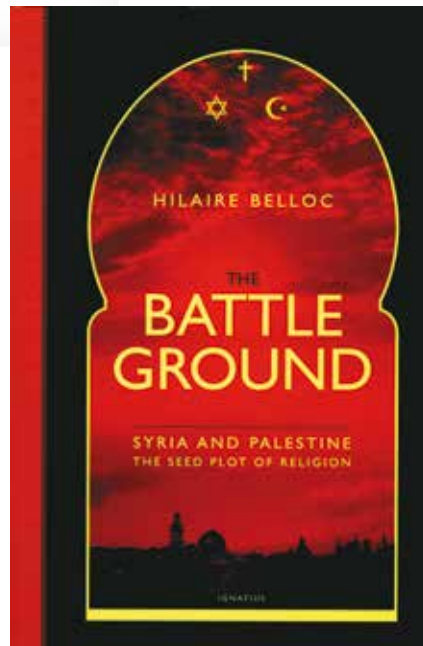
has created men with such diversity of culture, vision, and behavior, and yet they are all united under His single Catholic Church. One who has lived in his home country, surrounded by material prosperity all along, might find himself unable to adapt to other ways of life. If we are called to the imitation of God, Who is able embrace the whole of the human race and make them His saints and friends, how is it that we so easily anathematize this or that man who thinks differently than we do? To an American, the openness and frankness of a Mendocinan might be a lack of delicacy and necessary Christian reserve, while the Mendocinan will see in the distance and reserve of the American ostentation or a puritanical façade.

To see the two as legitimate ways of acting, to be able to go outside of ourselves and think instead of this person in front of me, would go a long way towards union in understanding and charity between Catholics, especially those of us who follow Tradition against the modern current.

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# Q & A

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by SSPX priests

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## Can a Catholic use Google, Amazon, and similar corporations?

On the website of the Society of St. Pius X, there is a fund-raising appeal that entails using Amazon, using Google Inc. What is the duty of a Catholic regarding the use of a corporation one knows to have a reprehensible agenda and to use its profits to foment evil purposes?

The case mentioned here seems to be one of

necessity. As long as one is going to do online shopping through Amazon—which has become the rule—some tax money will necessarily go to some tax-exempt company which has a good or an evil purpose. If it profits the SSPX, it will be used for a good purpose and that is a good effect.

This case also is a perfect illustration of what the moralists call the principle of “double effect or indirect voluntary.” One action, in itself good or indifferent, has two effects, the first good and the other evil. Can I morally perform this action? As long as I intend the good effect and >

as long as there is a reason for doing the action proportionate to the unintended evil effect, it is lawful to do it. One may have a warm shower although it could give him strange sensations; one may walk down the street although he might come across improperly dressed people; a salesman may then sell wine although he foresees that some customers will abuse alcohol. When I do these acts, I do not intend the evil which could ensue but only the good purpose, yet, I allow the evil which might ensue. This is because life is not lived in a sterile bubble and not everything is black and white.

It is difficult for anyone to shy away from all companies which use their profits for an evil purpose, such as Starbucks and the like. This is because we have to use all types of materials and items and buy foods which somehow or other are connected with such companies. Are we to feed ourselves only with the carrots and spinach from our veggy patch? Are we to not buy anything “made in China”? So, in this particular case, we are only applying the principle used by St. Paul: “not to keep company with fornicators. I mean not with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or the extortioners, or the servers of idols; otherwise you must needs go out of this world” (I Cor. 5:9-10).



## May Catholics read the Quran?

From the very beginning of the censures placed by Church authorities on the reading of materials, the Quran was put in the Index of Forbidden Books, which, obviously, oblige under pain of mortal sin.

This is one particular application of the Church’s Magisterium, whose office, given by Christ, is to teach all nations in God’s name and to safeguard souls from error. Hence, within the part on Church teaching in the 1917 Code of Canon Law, there is a section on “The previous

censure of books and their prohibition” (c. 1384-1405). For until the mid sixties during the reign of Pope Paul VI, all books having to do with faith or morals had to receive the Nihil Obstat and Episcopal Imprimatur in order to be released and read by Catholics. As we can see, the reason for forbidding books is the preservation of the faith of Catholics, and, as in matters liturgical, the Church has always condemned the mixing of prayers and teachings with non-Catholics. Faith is a delicate virtue and can be lost in contact with heresy for those unwarned or poorly prepared. And in this, the Church’s law only codifies the natural law which commands us to avoid anything which endangers the faith (can. 1405).

The Index was the list of the forbidden books which, as such, could not be edited, read, conserved, sold, translated, or communicated. There was grave sin on the part of one who would read that section of the book which caused the prohibition even if it were only one paragraph. Canon 1399 gave the various motives for including books in the Index, particularly those which defend heresy or schism or attack the foundations of religion, those which attack good customs, and those written by non-Catholics which speak specifically of religious matters, even if they mention nothing against the Catholic Faith.

This being said, bishops and major religious superiors may give to some chosen subjects the license to read certain forbidden books as long as there is a just and reasonable cause (can. 1402). Hence, students in sacred Scripture may use a Bible version from heretics as long as their teacher is with them and guides them through the text and errors of the said forbidden book. Likewise, a university professor or priest may know what the Quran teaches in order to write an article or a book explaining the tenets of Islam so as to better refute it. But the exception only confirms the rule, and the rule is that most Catholics are not sufficiently instructed or trained to be able to handle books of heretics written to defend heresy or paganism.



## Centenary of the Armenian Genocide

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the forced death marches of some 1.5 million Armenian Christians at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Though there were a variety of motives involved, much of the violence inflicted was justified as being part of the jihad against infidels called by the Sultan. There is little doubt that the Armenians were slaughtered not just because of their ethnic identity but particularly because of their Christian faith.

Pope Francis, in a Mass celebrated in St. Peter's Square on Low Sunday ("Divine Mercy" Sunday in the Novus Ordo calendar), clearly stated that this action of the Turks was an act of genocide. In categorizing it as a genocide, the Pope unleashed a storm of protest from Turkish officials, who continue to deny the facts of the event. At the Mass, attended by many Armenians, the Holy Father stated:

"In the past century our human family has lived through three massive and unprecedented tragedies. The first, which is widely considered 'the first genocide of the twentieth century,' struck your own Armenian people, the first Christian nation, as well as Catholic and Orthodox Syrians,

Assyrians, Chaldeans and Greeks. Bishops and priests, religious, women and men, the elderly and even defenseless children and the infirm were murdered...

"Dear Armenian Christians, today, with hearts filled with pain but at the same time with great hope in the risen Lord, we recall the centenary of that tragic event, that immense and senseless slaughter whose cruelty your forebears had to endure. It is necessary, and indeed a duty, to honor their memory, for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!"

Although the Pope's words were clear and strong in condemning the tragedy and calling it what it genuinely was (a genocide), he neglected to state that the motivation of those who slaughtered the Christians was rooted in the "religion" of Islam. This should come as no surprise since Pope Francis has referred to Islam as a "religion of peace" numerous times, despite so much evidence to the contrary.

## Cause for the Beatification of Helder Camara Begun

Earlier this year, the cause for the beatification of Archbishop Helder Camara was officially opened in Rome. In 1946 Camara's name was proposed by the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to become an auxiliary of the archdiocese; he was rejected at that time because of his pro Nazi activities during the previous years. This notwithstanding, Camara was named an auxiliary bishop in 1952 and then the archbishop of Olinda e Recife, Brazil, in 1964. Attending the second Vatican Council, Archbishop Camara became a leading voice amongst the "progressive" Council Fathers. Following Vatican II, Helder Camara was, without question, one of the leading voices encouraging Liberation Theology and

Communism in general. He also was a very loud voice in opposing Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Camara retired as archbishop in 1985 and died in 1999.

It would appear that the push for his beatification has to do with his "love for the poor and marginalized" which so clearly echoes the message of Pope Francis. Sadly, we are once again faced with the prospect of the beatification of someone who openly rejected much of the traditional teachings of the Church. Simply put, the process for beatifications and canonizations has been reduced to a political process rather than a religious one.

## Archbishop Cordileone Under Attack

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, the archbishop of San Francisco, was faced with a full-page ad in the April 16th edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* asking Pope Francis to remove him as archbishop. The ad was placed by a group of “catholics” who said, among other things, that the archbishop “fostered an atmosphere of division and intolerance [and that] Instead of your [Pope Francis’s] famous words ‘Who Am I to Judge,’ Archbishop Cordileone repeatedly labels the behavior of our fellow brothers and sisters (and their children) as ‘gravely evil’... The City of Saint Francis deserves an Archbishop true to our values and to your teachings.”

This ad was in response to Archbishop Cordileone inserting a “morals clause” in the contracts of teachers in the archdiocesan schools, which, among other things, states that teachers cannot support homosexual unions and other immoral behavior.

While this sort of public “request” by a small but wealthy group of disgruntled “faithful” would normally have been effectively ignored in the Vatican, over the past six months Pope Francis has removed three bishops from their sees for being “divisive” and “intolerant,” so there is every reason to believe Archbishop Cordileone may face a similar treatment. It should certainly be noted that the three bishops who were removed are very sympathetic to Tradition and have offered

the Traditional Latin Mass often, which can also be said of Archbishop Cordileone. All should certainly keep His Excellency in their prayers.



The case of one of the three conservative bishops is interesting because of its similarity with the San Francisco bishop. Bishop Finn of the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph “resigned” on 21 April at the request of the Pope. For the past 18 months, the National Catholic Reporter, whose headquarters is located within Bishop Finn’s former diocese, has continually called for the bishop’s removal. It should be noted that Bishop Finn had, a number of years ago, informed the NCR that they could no longer call themselves Catholic because of their continued denial of many points of Catholic doctrine and morals.

## Nepal Earthquake Miracle

As we must sadly recall, on 25 April of this year, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck Nepal. The damage caused was almost financially incalculable, but worse still were the over 10,000 residents who lost their lives. But in the small village of Okhahunga, located in eastern Nepal, there were no casualties, though many homes and buildings were destroyed. The reason for this miraculous preservation of the inhabitants of this town was because almost all were attending an ordination to the Sacred

Priesthood of two local men being held out-of-doors and thus away from any collapsing structures.

Although fewer than one percent of the population of this land-locked country between India and China are Roman Catholic, the lives of the residents of Okhahunga were preserved because they were witnessing to their faith, a faith preached to the region by countless missionary priests and religious over the years.



## Chimpanzees Are People Too

So say a group who have presented a case in a New York City court. Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Barbara Jaffe has granted a hearing to decide whether two chimpanzees living at the State University at Stony Brook (Long Island) are “persons” who deserve to be released.

The case was brought in the name of the two chimps (named Leo and Hercules) by the Nonhuman Rights Project. The Project wants the court to find that Leo and Hercules have been “unlawfully detained”—and to order the university to release them to an animal sanctuary.

The animals qualify as persons, the group says, because they show highly complex cognitive functions including empathy, the ability to engage in mental time travel, and the

capacity to suffer the pain of imprisonment.

Although this attempt may seem utterly absurd to most logically thinking human beings, there is a grave danger of the Court’s finding that the chimpanzees do qualify as persons. This is simply because “personhood” has been reduced to what a person does (their actions) as opposed to what a person is (their being). This rationale was part of what was used by the Supreme Court to justify its “legalizing” abortion in the *Roe vs. Wade* decision in 1973. If, indeed, Leo and Hercules are found to be “persons” based upon their actions or abilities rather than their “being,” we have indeed entered a new phase in the degradation of the human person.

## Persecution of Christians by Muslims Continues

On Sunday, 19 April, ISIS released another video, showing the shootings and beheadings of two groups of Ethiopian Christians in Libya. Twelve of the victims were shot to death in the desert and sixteen others were executed by beheading on a beach. This video was released almost two months after another which showed the beheading of twenty-one Egyptian Christians by the same Islamic State. In the video, the masked murderers said the following:

“You will not have safety even in your dreams until you accept Islam... Our battle is a battle between faith and blasphemy, between truth and falsehood... The Islamic State has offered the Christian community this [converting to Islam or paying a tax] many times and set a deadline for this, but the Christians never cooperated.”

While many in the media and in government continue to say that these acts are carried out by Islamic extremists and that Islam does not condone violence, there is another report that a 14-year-old boy in Pakistan was beaten and then set ablaze after saying he was a Christian. The boy was working as a tailor’s apprentice when he was

approached by two young Muslims after leaving his job. They asked the boy what his religion was and when he said he was a Christian, they began beating him and poured kerosene over him and set it alight when he tried to flee. The youngster was hospitalized with burns covering more than half of his body. This act was not carried out by representatives of ISIS, but by Muslim neighbors of the boy. Once again we are reminded that these murderers and persecutors are acting in the name of Islam and following the dictates of the Quran; pretending otherwise is foolhardy.





“As the most glorious Mother of Christ, our Savior and God and the giver of life and immortality, has been endowed with life by him, she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has taken her up to himself in a way known only to him.”

The Encomium in *Dormitionem Sanctissimae Dominae Nostrae Deiparae Semperque Virginis Mariae*, attributed to St. Modestus of Jerusalem, n. 14.







# The 1974 Declaration Forty Years Later

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by Fr. Jean-Michel Gleize, SSPX

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1. Titular Archbishop Guido Pozzo, secretary of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, recently gave an interview about the relations between Rome and the SSPX.<sup>1</sup> No-one can put himself above the supreme teaching authority of the Church [magisterium], he said; and since the teachings of the Second Vatican Council must be considered as those of the genuine Catholic supreme teaching authority, the Roman authorities cannot require less of the SSPX than does the 1989 Profession of Faith. The Profession of Faith, in effect, enounces submission in principle to the teachings of Vatican II according to the different degrees of assent indicated. Msgr. Pozzo is very clear: at the very most the Holy See is ready to grant to the SSPX that “the teachings of Vatican II have an extremely variable degree of authority and binding character, depending on the texts.” For example, “the declarations on religious liberty, non-Christian religions, and the decree on ecumenism, have a different and inferior degree of authority and binding character” than

the Constitutions *Lumen Gentium* on the Church and *Dei Verbum* on Divine Revelation, which “have the character of a doctrinal declaration, even if they include no dogmatic definitions.” The nuances notwithstanding, it remains that the two types of documents are both authoritative and binding. The only concession made is the recognition of a mere difference in the degree of authority and of requisite assent. What conclusion may be drawn, if not that the Society ought to recognize, in varying degrees, the authority and binding character of all the specified documents. Now, this is precisely what is not acceptable. For it is precisely in the documents named that the Rome of neo-modernist tendencies is clearly manifest, the Rome that “we refuse and have always refused to follow,” whatever may be the degree of authority ascribed in vain to these texts.

2. In the eyes of Msgr. Pozzo, the fundamental reason for which the authority and binding character of these teachings cannot not be called in question



is that the present authority intends to impose them as being those of a real and proper magisterium. The very possibility of a breach between Vatican II and Tradition would be obviated because today's authority asserts in principle the continuity between the teachings of Vatican II and Tradition. Ultimately, the argument at the basis of Msgr. Pozzo's interview is taken from that of Benedict XVI, an argument according to which only the present authority may declare what is revealed and impose it as such. The magisterium of the past also depends on this authorization because it must be understood in light of what the present authority has to say about it: the latter has authority to preserve, guard, and interpret the former. That is why one may not contest the declarations of the present authority by relying upon those of the past. The presupposition of this approach is that only the living magisterium, magisterium in the true and proper sense of the term, is the one exercised by the current authorities.

3. The nature of the living magisterium, however, was clearly defined by Pope Pius XII: "...God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority [magisterium] to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church" [magisterium]. This is why "this sacred Office of Teacher [magisterium] in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded, and interpreted."<sup>2</sup> Therein lies a principle. A principle is an indemonstrable truth containing within itself its own justification. In this instance it amounts to saying that the nature of the ecclesiastical magisterium is such that its teaching must be taken as a whole or left. No-one can invent it or refashion it according to his own will, for it is God who has set its limits by His definitive Revelation. The role of the magisterium, or supreme teaching office of the Church, is limited to preserving, guarding, and interpreting the deposit of faith, that is to say, the ensemble of divinely revealed truths that have been consigned in the sources of Revelation which are Sacred

Scripture and divine Tradition. It is said to be "living" by reason of the threefold activity it exercises in the service of the deposit of faith.

4. "Living" is in contradistinction to "dead." The magisterium is said to be living in relation to Revelation which is said to be dead, just as an on-going activity is in comparison with one that has definitively ceased. In effect, Revelation came to a close with the death of the last of the Apostles, and these did not have successors in the prophetic office which was theirs in order to proclaim for the first time all the truths revealed by God. On the other hand, the Apostles must have successors in their teaching office, or magisterium, till the end of the world. The purpose of this function is to preserve, guard, and interpret the truths revealed by God. It merges with Tradition understood in the active sense of the term. It must be exercised as such, that is to say, as a continually living magisterium until the end of the world and at all times. The fact of being past or present is thus accidental to the living magisterium from the very fact that the temporal aspect is accidental to preserving, guarding, and interpreting Revelation. Past magisterium is no less living than present magisterium, for both give the authentic meaning of the truths of faith.

5. Consequently, the living magisterium is unique. Indeed, its unicity is not that of its subject, to wit, the one who exercises the supreme teaching office. From the standpoint of the subject, we should rather say that there have been, that there are, and that there will be in the Church as many 'magisteria' as popes and bishops in the Catholic Church from St. Peter and the Apostles until the end of the world. But this plurality is accidental to the magisterium, whereas its essential oneness flows from another standpoint, that of the object of its act. Whoever may be the subjects that exercise the magisterial office over the course of time, this function is always exercised to preserve, guard, and interpret the ensemble of the truths revealed by God precisely as having been revealed. One may certainly speak of unity and plurality in different senses. Numerically there are multiple subjects that successively exercise the magisterium, and for the same subject there are several successive acts of the magisterium. Numerically, there are multiple >

revealed truths proposed successively as revealed. This plurality is measured by time, in which case present magisterium can be distinguished from past magisterium, the one succeeding the other. But this standpoint of numerical plurality remains accidental to the magisterium, and it is essentially (or specifically) one and unique like its object: the object is the truth already revealed by God, and the magisterium has to preserve, guard, and interpret it always in the same meaning. From this viewpoint, there is no distinction between past and present magisterium because the former is as alive as the latter. There are not two magisteriums, one past and another present. There is only one magisterium, which is the magisterium of always.

6. The error contrary to the principle indicated by Pius XII would be to say that the magisterium, by definition unique, is the one taught today. The error consists in taking into account only the numerical oneness of the present holder of the supreme teaching office. Now, the magisterium is not defined in terms of its subject, and that is why it is not as such today's, nor yesterday's, nor tomorrow's. It is that which is always, for it is defined in terms of its object, and its unicity is independent of the subject who speaks in the course of time.<sup>3</sup> The error lying at the outset of what today's churchmen for the last forty years have been holding forth consists in identifying the living magisterium [object], with the present magisterium [subject].<sup>4</sup>

7. This is precisely the error underlying Msgr. Pozzo's interview. What shall we answer him, if not (for the umpteenth time over the last five years when the famous "doctrinal discussions" were inaugurated) to remind him of the principle clearly enounced by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*. We cannot subscribe to the teachings contained in *Lumen Gentium* (the "subsistit in" and collegiality), *Dignitatis Humanae* (religious liberty), and *Unitatis Redintegratio* (ecumenism) because these teachings contradict the sense of revealed truths already declared by the living magisterium of the Church. It is not because these teachings have come up today that they should outweigh those of yesterday. Nor is it because they benefit from the assurance of the authorities of the present hour that they should be considered to be in continuity with Tradition and

that Catholics ought to refuse to see the rift perpetually inscribed between them. It is precisely because the magisterium is "the authentic tribunal that judges interpretations of Scripture and Tradition whencesoever they emanate" that we refuse to subscribe to the 1989 Profession of Faith. For this Profession of Faith has already been judged by the living magisterium of the Church, and it is obvious that it includes several interpretations of Scripture and Tradition that are incompatible with that which is given by the magisterium of always.

8. It is, therefore, because "we hold firmly with all our heart and with all our mind to Catholic Rome, Guardian of the Catholic Faith and of the traditions necessary to the maintenance of this faith to the eternal Rome, mistress of wisdom and truth" that "we refuse on the other hand, and have always refused, to follow the Rome of Neo-Modernist and Neo-Protestant tendencies, which became clearly manifest during the Second Vatican Council, and after the Council, in all the reforms which issued from it." The defense of the Catholic faith is still the top priority. We do suffer from being separated for all practical purposes from the one who still is Mother and Mistress of all the churches. But our Mother and our Mistress is contagious. So long as the epidemic of which she is the source continues, we cannot take the risk of drinking from the same cup as she and of letting ourselves be contaminated by the germs that have more or less infected all the churches of "Catholicity."

9. Msgr. Pozzo concludes his interview by saying that he cannot give "a precise idea yet of the time needed to reach the end of this path" of full reconciliation of the Holy See and the FSSPX, "with the clear goal of promoting unity in the charity of the universal Church guided by the successor of Peter." For our part, we know quite well that this reconciliation cannot happen without there first being unity in the faith, the Catholic Faith to which the men who are currently leading the Church must return, having renounced spreading the errors of the Second Vatican Council. "It is because of our obedience to the Church that we are considered disobedient, since it is the others who have taken a new course in the Church, and who have instigated a new tendency in the Church, a liberal tendency....I deem that we



are in the Church, and that we are those that are in the Church, and that we are the true sons of the Church, and that the others are not. They are not because liberalism does not belong to the Church. Liberalism is against the Church; liberalism is the destruction of the Church; in this sense, they cannot call themselves sons of the Church. We can call ourselves sons of the Church because we continue the doctrine of the Church, we maintain the whole truth of the Church integrally as the Church has always taught it.”<sup>5</sup>

10. The Declaration of November 21, 1974, hence is still relevant.

## The Conciliar Impasse Forty Years Later

1. The discourse addressed by Rome to the FSSPX has remained substantially unchanged for forty years. Nonetheless it must be said that over time, the Holy See has seen itself more seriously obliged to respond to the arguments advanced by those who carry on the work of Archbishop Lefebvre. In this regard, Benedict XVI’s speech of December 22, 2005, was a milestone. The current considerations of Msgr. Pozzo are its perfect, and symptomatic, echo.

2. Until the end of his pontificate, Pope Paul VI was content to answer the objections of Archbishop Lefebvre by simply dismissing them on his own authority, even going so far as to present Vatican II as having “no less authority,” and as being “in certain respects...even more important than that of Nicaea.”<sup>6</sup> Today this simplistic tautology prompts a wry smile, and, remarkably, even the current authorities scarcely take note of it. In fact, it was cruelly disavowed by the second successor of Paul VI, and this disavowal was all the more cutting in that it was undoubtedly less conscious. For soon after the episcopal consecrations of 1988, a surprising reflection started within the Roman Curia itself. In a conference held before the Chilean Episcopal Conference in 1988, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger expressed himself about the Second Vatican Council, its nature and its reception in these terms: “Although it proclaimed no dogma and intended to present itself

more modestly as a pastoral council, some hold up Vatican II as if it were, so to speak, a super-dogma that makes all the rest irrelevant.”<sup>7</sup> If he does not repeat the literal expression “super-dogma,” the key discourse made by Benedict XVI eight months after his election reaffirmed the same observation and denounced what he called the “hermeneutic of rupture,” a “will to make the Council into a kind of constituent assembly that eliminates an old constitution and creates a new one.”<sup>8</sup>

3. In the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* of July 2, 1988, in which he excommunicated Archbishop Lefebvre, John Paul II denounced without further explanation “an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition, incomplete, because it does not take sufficiently into account the living character of Tradition....”<sup>9</sup> The response is still not an answer, because it is content to utter words whose definition in the mind of the one using them is hard to grasp. To say that such language does not have much consistency would be to resort to *litotes*. Here again, the successor of John Paul II will be obliged to acknowledge, albeit implicitly, that such an explanation is inadequate. It is moreover remarkable that the expression of John Paul II is not employed in the Christmas 2005 Address and Benedict XVI does not even attempt to explain in what precisely the living character of Tradition consists. For he even admits, “Indeed, a discontinuity had been revealed.” And if he asserts that “a continuity of principles proved not to have been abandoned,” he also concedes: “It is easy to miss this fact at a glance.” In order to realize this continuity of principles, it was necessary to make “the various distinctions between concrete historical situations and their requirements.” We shall see later on what this entails; but let us note the fact that interests us here; for the first time since the Council closed, a pope felt obliged to answer the objections of Archbishop Lefebvre other than by arguments of authority and without resorting to stereotyped verbiage. One should also recognize that Benedict has the merit of authorizing for the first time a lucid and fair theological exchange between the representatives of the Society and of the Holy See. At the end of this exchange, the Vatican is obliged seriously to take into account what is clearly a serious reason.

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4. This was already contained in the Declaration of November 21, 1974. The new fact is that it now has gotten the attention of an official representative of the Sovereign Pontiff and is the basis for the fundamental issues addressed in his speech.

5. Developing the presuppositions of the 2005 speech,<sup>10</sup> Msgr. Pozzo distinguishes between what he calls maximalist and minimalist positions. The distinction is readily grasped: of those subscribing to a “hermeneutic of discontinuity,” the first group designates those who tend to make of Vatican II a “pastoral super-dogma” according to which pastoral practice would be the principle by reason of which it would be legitimate to relativize Traditional Catholic doctrine and dogma. The second term designates the attitude of the FSSPX, which separates the past magisterium, held to be doctrinal, from the present magisterium, held to be pastoral, thereby in fact introducing a division in the magisterium itself. Above these two excessive positions, the hermeneutic of renewal in continuity would represent the true solution, which moreover would fit in with the exact interpretation of the pastoral nature of the Council. To believe Msgr. Pozzo, who is only developing the thought of Benedict XVI, the doctrinal principles remain unchanged (albeit with the clarifications and the greater understanding owing to the homogeneous development of Catholic doctrine), but the pastoral applications are contingent because the historical situation in which the Christian message is embodied is itself contingent. The minimalist position claims that the principles have changed, while it is only their application in the pastoral context that has introduced the novelty. Therefore Vatican II could not be contested on the basis of this novelty. That is why, after the doctrinal discussions of 2009-2011, Benedict XVI had clearly announced his intention, which was to make the FSSPX accept all the acts of the magisterium after 1962: “...the problems now to be addressed are essentially doctrinal in nature and concern primarily the acceptance of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar magisterium of the Popes....The Church’s teaching authority cannot be frozen in the year 1962—this must be quite clear to the Society.”<sup>11</sup>

6. Obviously, the Society has no desire to “freeze” the authority of the Church’s magisterium

to one period of Church history, as do the Orthodox schismatics, who accept only the first seven ecumenical councils. They accept the entire magisterium as such. But the fact is that, on at least a certain number of points, which are clearly presented as principles, the teachings of Vatican II cannot be interpreted in conformity with other teachings already contained in earlier documents of the ecclesiastical magisterium. To be sure, pastoral applications are contingent. Prudence takes circumstances into account. Pastoral practice can and ought to find a renewed application of the same principles. It is not over this point that we contest Msgr. Pozzo’s response. It is rather when he tells us that in Vatican II, principles remain unchanged, or, if change is observable, it consists in expressing in more explicit terms the same meaning of the same truth. A reasonably attentive examination of the texts proves that, to the contrary, the social doctrine of the Church has undergone a veritable Copernican revolution and that, far from being a case of homogeneous development of doctrine, the perplexed Catholic is the spectator of a profound alteration and an unprecedented obscuration of the principal truths of the Faith as well as the introduction of liberal principles in the Church.

The response of the 2005 Christmas speech consists in saying that the application of the same principles has changed because the context has changed. In reality, it is the principles themselves that have been changed. The dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, the decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and the declaration *Nostra Aetate* give to the relation between the Catholic religion and other religions a different definition from that taught by the Syllabus of Errors, *Satis Cognitum*, and *Mortalium Animos*. Instead of condemning the principle that the non-Catholic religions have a certain value for eternal salvation as did previous popes, Vatican II adopts it.<sup>12</sup> The declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* and the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* give to the relation between the Church and the modern State a different definition from the one taught by *Quanta Cura* and *Quas Primas*. Instead of condemning the principle of religious liberty and the indifferentism of the State as did Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius XI, Vatican II adopts it.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, even if Vatican II deviates from Tradition only on certain points, the other points



on which it remains in conformity with it do not suffice to make this Council acceptable. *Malum ex quocumque defectu*: a few bad passages suffice to make the Council bad, for the mere presence of good passages does not make the bad ones acceptable. Indeed the presence of traditional teaching side by side with novelties contrary to tradition would prove moreover that there are contradictions in the Council: which is a supplemental motive not to accept it. In any case, most of the conciliar reforms, if not all, are not based on the good texts of the Council, but on those that cause a problem from the fact that they deviate from Tradition.

7. The foregoing has been explained over and over. The point we'd like to focus on is the following: Msgr. Pozzo objects that our attitude, which he describes as minimalist, leaves unanswered the question of the authority that can decide whether the current teaching of the Church's supreme teaching authority [magisterium] is coherent with its past teaching. In other words: what authority is to judge decisively the continuity of the (present) living magisterium with the past magisterium, not only from the point of view of the subject, but also from the point of view of the object, namely, the *res de fide et moribus*? According to the secretary of the Pontifical Commission "Ecclesia Dei," the answer of the doctrine of the Church on this subject has always been the same: it is up to the magisterium and to it alone to judge the authentic interpretation (that is, exercised with the authority of Christ) of the word of God written or transmitted.

8. This is the decisive point, for the issue it introduces is radically skewed. The way the question is framed already dictates the way to answer it. Msgr. Pozzo starts from the principle that it is a question of establishing coherence between the current teaching of the magisterium and its previous teaching, or between the living magisterium, which is the present magisterium, and past magisterium. In his mind, there is then a single living magisterium, which is the present magisterium. Only this [teaching authority] is in a position to establish the coherence of its own teachings with past teachings. And so only this present magisterium would be authorized to give the authentic interpretation of the word of God written or relayed, that is, revealed truth. Here we find the

initial error, already brought to light. It does not introduce duality into the magisterium. It maintains that the living magisterium is unique, but that it involves only the present magisterium.

9. As Pius XII taught in *Humani Generis*, the supreme teaching authority [magisterium] is exercised in order "to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly," and not for the clarification of its own teachings. Pius XII carefully distinguishes between the teaching of the magisterium and the deposit of faith: "This sacred Office of Teacher [magisterium] in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded, and interpreted....God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church."<sup>14</sup> As such, the Teaching Authority [magisterium] interprets and clarifies divinely revealed truths; the fact of being present or past is accidental to the fact of the interpretation or clarification of these truths. Whether it is past or present, the Teaching Authority [magisterium] is defined by its acts as the permanently authorized teaching of the same revealed truths. It always remains "living."

10. The living magisterium has as its object to interpret and to clarify certain revealed truths, and not all, depending on whether it is past or present. For the Teaching Authority [magisterium] as present only has for its object the interpretation and clarification of those revealed truths not yet addressed by the past Teaching Authority. For example, the teachings of the First Council of Nicaea bore upon the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Second Council of Nicaea addressed a different point of Trinitarian doctrine not addressed by the first, relative to the Third Divine Person. In such wise, the activity of the Teaching Authority progressively clarifies and interprets the deposit of revelation by successively bringing its attention to bear on each >

of the revealed truths, one after the other, but each of its clarifications is definitive and does not call for a subsequently new interpretation. It remains forever an act of the living magisterium, which is timeless. A posterior act of the magisterium cites an earlier act of the magisterium in order to support its statements precisely because it is an act of the living Teaching Authority [magisterium], and in order to draw the attention of the faithful to a truth that has been clearly and adequately proposed but upon which it is necessary to insist once again because of circumstances. For example, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome has been the object of several successive propositions by the living Teaching Authority: the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 870, the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, the Council of Florence in 1439, and the First Vatican Council in 1870. When the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* cites the Councils of Constantinople, Lyons, and Florence, it simply involves noting the constant and unanimous Tradition of the living magisterium and not the establishment of an apparently problematic coherence between the two.

11. To escape the error introduced by Msgr. Pozzo, it suffices to reject the false principle in which it is rooted. The question is not and cannot be how to establish coherence or continuity between present and past teachings of the Teaching Authority and to choose who has the authority to make this judgment. The unique living magisterium is the rule that makes us know revealed truth at all times. When the present Teaching Authority [magisterium] clarifies a truth heretofore obscure, it goes without saying. But when a present teaching obviously contradicts an interpretation already made by the Teaching Authority [magisterium], or if it obscures a clarification made by the same [Teaching Authority], then this teaching, while it may be present, cannot lay claim to the authority of the living magisterium, even if it emanated from an ecumenical council.

12. If, as is obvious, Vatican II contradicts the magisterium, Vatican II does not belong to the magisterium. Now, it contradicts the magisterium in Art. 2 of *Dignitatis Humanae*, Art. 3 of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and Arts. 8 and 22 of *Lumen Gentium*. And if on other points Vatican II is not clear, it is useless to take Vatican II as a criterion, since the

teachings of the earlier magisterium, which are already clarifying and thus clear by themselves, cannot be clarified by relying upon equivocal teachings. "The impreciseness of the Council," it has been justly remarked, "is admitted even by theologians most faithful to the Holy See, who go to great lengths to exculpate the Council. Now, it is clear that a felt need to defend the univocal character of Council teaching is already an indication of its lack thereof."<sup>15</sup> For example, the question of religious freedom was clearly and definitively propounded by the pontifical magisterium, from Gregory XVI to Pious XII: all these popes condemned the civil right not to be restrained from the public profession and practice of an objectively false religion, specifying that their condemnation bears upon the right as such, whether limited or not. *Dignitatis Humanae* affirms this right "within due limits" without specifying the nature of these limits. Not only does Vatican II contradict on this point the teachings of the earlier magisterium, but it also maintains a deliberate equivocation and clarifies nothing. Another good example of obscurity is to be found in Art. 10 of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*. This passage evokes the existence of a "priesthood" proper to the baptized as such, distinct from the priesthood proper to ministers endowed with the sacramental character of order. And it gives the explanation: "Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated. Each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ." Pius XII had already spoken (only once, it is true) of the "common priesthood," but in terms otherwise clear and precise than those of Vatican II. If one may speak of a certain "priesthood" of the faithful, this expression amounts to a merely honorific title, and there is an essential difference between the reality of this interior, hidden (spiritual) priesthood on the one hand and the priesthood truly and properly so-called.<sup>16</sup> This last precision has completely disappeared from *Lumen Gentium* 10: the common priesthood is presented as essentially different from ministerial priesthood, but the difference is no longer designated as that which exists between a spiritual priesthood and a priesthood "truly and properly so-called." This omission goes against the teaching of Pius XII insofar as it





authorizes the definition of the common priesthood of the faithful as a priesthood in the proper sense of the term. The speech of Pius XII had explained and clarified the point, while *Lumen Gentium* renders it obscure and ambiguous.

13. This example alone (and it is not unique) suffices to belie Msgr. Pozzo's explication. No, it is not true that in the texts of Vatican II "the doctrinal principles remain unchanged, although with the clarifications and insight due to the homogeneous development of Catholic doctrine." Article 10 of *Lumen Gentium* represents neither an explication nor development. This text quite simply makes the teaching of Pius XII disappear and introduces an ambiguity fatal to Catholic doctrine, where the "living magisterium" of the previous pope had taken every precaution to obviate the risk of error. In reality it should be said that this passage of *Lumen Gentium* represents a veritable regression, and that it is not faithful to the teaching of the magisterium. As much could be said about the other problematic passages already mentioned. Regardless of what Msgr. Pozzo says, it must be admitted that till now, no explanation has succeeded in establishing convincingly the conformity of Vatican II with the living magisterium of the Church. The Christmas Speech of 2005 in this domain represents another failure. The prose of the secretary of the "Ecclesia Dei" Commission only aggravates it.

14. This is why Archbishop Lefebvre's Declaration of November 21, 1974, retains its importance. It finds its confirmation in another, more recent declaration by which the successors of Archbishop Lefebvre intended to reaffirm the principles that are the foundation of their attitude:

"The Society continues to uphold the declarations and the teachings of the constant Magisterium of the Church in regard to all the novelties of the Second Vatican Council which remain tainted with errors, and also in regard to the reforms issued from it. We find our sure guide in this uninterrupted Magisterium which, by its teaching authority, transmits the revealed Deposit of Faith in perfect harmony with the truths that the entire Church has professed, always and everywhere. The Society finds its guide as well in the constant Tradition of the Church, which transmits and will transmit until the end of time the teachings required to preserve the

Faith and the salvation of souls, while waiting for the day when an open and serious debate will be possible which may allow the return to Tradition of the ecclesiastical authorities."<sup>17</sup>

Translation of "40 ans plus tard" and "40 ans passés autour du concile," *Courrier de Rome*, December 2015, pp. 3-7.

- <sup>1</sup> Jean Dumont, interview with Msgr. Guido Pozzo, *Famille Chrétienne*, October 20, 2014 [English version: [sspx.org/en/news-events/news/no-capitulation-what-unity-pozzo-interview-5434](http://sspx.org/en/news-events/news/no-capitulation-what-unity-pozzo-interview-5434)].
- <sup>2</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, "Some False Opinions that Threaten to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine," August 12, 1950, Dz. 2314 [English version: [vatican.va](http://vatican.va); cf. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 640-1].
- <sup>3</sup> Archbishop Lefebvre, Conference of April 10, 1982, in *Vu du Haut*, No. 13, Ch. 18, pp. 55-6.
- <sup>4</sup> For further elucidation of this point, cf. *Courrier de Rome*, October 2014, Nos. 3-6.
- <sup>5</sup> Archbishop Lefebvre, Spiritual Conference at Ecône, December 21, 1984 (Cospec 112).
- <sup>6</sup> Letter of Paul VI to Archbishop Lefebvre, June 29, 1975, quoted by Michael Davis in *Apologia pro Marcel Lefebvre*, Vol. I, Ch. 7.
- <sup>7</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, "Unità nella Tradizione della fede," Allocution to the Bishops of Chile, *Cuaderno Humanitas* (Santiago), No. 20, December 2008, p. 38.
- <sup>8</sup> Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005.
- <sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, No. 4.
- <sup>10</sup> We are referencing the lecture given on Friday, April 4, 2014, to the Institute of the Good Shepherd and published on the Web site *Catholicae Disputationes*.
- <sup>11</sup> Benedict XVI, Letter to the Bishops on the Lifting of the Excommunications of the Four SSPX Bishops, March 10, 2009.
- <sup>12</sup> Cf. the *Courrier de Rome* issues of September and December 2010 and December 2012.
- <sup>13</sup> Despite what Msgr. Pozzo asserts in the first part of his lecture. Cf. the July-August 2008, June 2011, December 2012, and March and October 2014 issues of *Courrier de Rome*.
- <sup>14</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, "Some False Opinions that Threaten to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine," August 12, 1950, Dz. 2314 [English version: [vatican.va](http://vatican.va); cf. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 640-1].
- <sup>16</sup> Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum* (Nouvelles Editions Latine, 1987), p. 91.
- <sup>16</sup> Pius XII, Speech of November 2, 1954, in *AAS*, 1954, p. 669: "Quaecumque est hujus honorifici tituli et rei vera plenaque significatio, firmiter tenendum est commune hoc omnium christifidelium, altum utique et arcanum, sacerdotium, non gradu tantum sed etiam essentia differre a sacerdotio proprie vereque dicto quod positum est in potestate perpetrandi, cum persona Summi Sacerdotis Christi geratur, ipsius Christi sacrificium."
- <sup>17</sup> Statement of the General Chapter of the FSSPX, July 14, 2012, online at [DICI.org](http://DICI.org).



Dear Angelus Press,

During your last trip, you asked us to tell you what we really think. For many years, you have been trying to explain to our friends in France how the very existence of the oldest Christian community in the Near East is threatened. But will you dare tell them today the terrible truth about the danger our souls are in? For it is not so much the Christians they are killing in Syria, but their faith. Contrary to public opinion, we think the Sunni Muslims who behead our brothers and eat their hearts constitute a lesser danger to our Christendom than a Church that has stopped giving us the faith. The dramatic truth is...that the proportion of practicing Catholics has declined to 20 to 30 percent.

Our clergy is dying out. I don't want to talk about priests who've abandoned their flock for safety in America or Europe, but the actual number of vocations, which are becoming rarer and rarer. Can we find an excuse for those who stay among us while deploring the fact that they have not benefitted from any serious formation in doctrine, theology, or even morals? Add to this that, under the pretext that the faithful would have more confidence in a married rather than celibate clergy (it is not too hard, alas! to guess the reasons), it scarcely takes a few months generally to ordain married men priests.

Since the 1970s in the Near East, the secular clergy has scarcely been receiving a better formation. Not to mention the "monks" who are monks in name only, attached to opulent convents in which the servants are more numerous than the religious, who are free to come and go without any check. The plain truth is that today the Christians have no more confidence in their priests than the priests have in the hierarchy. The result is dramatic: faced with the indescribable sufferings they've been enduring since the outbreak of war, more and more Christians in Syria are declaring: "God does not exist!"

While the war has been going on for three years with its train of sufferings, deaths daily, booby-trapped cars in the street or shells falling from the sky into your yard, the fear everyone experiences at every instant could be relieved by the comfort of prayer. But no one any longer teaches us how to pray—except for the army's success and the end of the war.

Do you know, my dear friend, that there is an impressive number of Muslims (Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze) who would ardently like to be baptized—even, as is allowed in certain circumstances, secretly—and they cannot find a priest willing to grant their request and to take the time to instruct them? Not so much from fear of family reprisals against the neophyte, but because they are afraid for themselves should the fact get out.



Four hundred years of occupation by the Ottoman Turks has so affected our spirit that we've acquired a habit of refraining from evangelizing. It's deplorable.

With dollars, the free distribution of bad Bibles, and effective indoctrination, the Protestant sects are experiencing a clear success among the numerous families of refugees who are not being helped by their Church. But our Catholic priests never warn us against them; the important thing for them is not to be proud or to belong to one Church rather than another, but to feel like a "Christian" among Christians.

At Damascus extraordinary things are happening, like the Sunni grand mufti of the Mosque of the Omayyads, Sheik Khani, and other important Muslim dignitaries going to Soufanieh to pray to the Virgin Mary on the anniversary of her miraculous apparition there. No one is making them recite the Our Father and wear a rosary around their neck, displaying a courage that could be the envy of many a priest and religious.

Under the pretext that the Orthodox do not—with exceptions—practice individual confession, the Catholics have given it up. Even for our children, the teaching of the truths of faith has vanished. Formerly we were taught that to receive Communion without being in a state of grace was a sin, but they no longer speak to us about confession except to say that it is an outmoded "occidental" custom. I was dismayed to learn that among the Latins, they receive the most holy Body of the Lord in the hand, which is not authorized in the Orient.

When we saw newscasts showing President Assad turn his back on the Israeli ambassador during the funeral of Pope John Paul II we were proud of him, but when we saw the photo of Pope Francis kissing the hand of the grand rabbi of Jerusalem, our heart ached.

All of this to explain to you, my dear friend, that, despite the brave face we put on over our daily fears, the moral despair and the spiritual abandonment experienced by the Arab Christians of Syria is even more poignant than their material distress. So when you get back home, please tell our fellow Christians that we have need of no other arms than the Truth. Very truly yours,

Milad K., Retired Schoolteacher

Translated from the November 2014 issue of the Bulletin of the Association of St. Peter of Antioch and the Orient (JASPA, La Malaunière, 61400 St Langis-lès-Mortagne, France).

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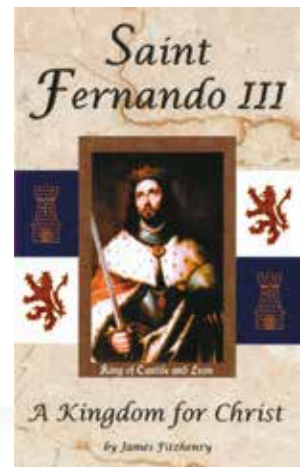
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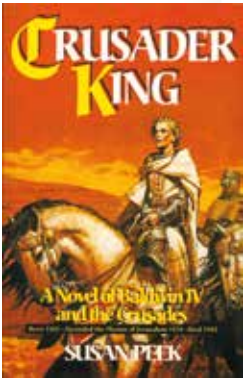
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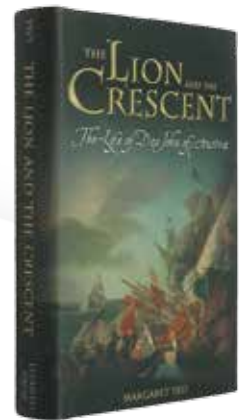
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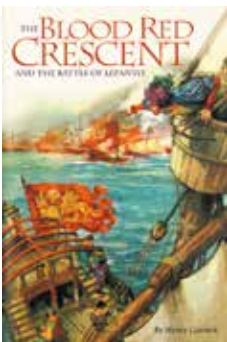
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It was fall 1570, and rumors of an invasion by the Turks were spreading throughout Venice. Down by the docks, Guido Callata listened to the sailors as they discussed past battles and speculated about more fighting in the future. From the altar of St. Mark's, a message from His Holiness Pope Pius V had been read, calling for crusade to repel Turkish advances. A fleet of Venetian and Spanish vessels would be assembled, and Guido's father, like other wealthy Venetians, had agreed to build and equip a galley for the Christian fleet... How Guido finally manages to join the fleet and help to defeat the Turks in the memorable Battle of Lepanto is a colorful tale of danger, suspense, and adventure in 16th-century Italy. (First published in 1960.)

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# The Last Word

Dear Readers,

“To him that will overcome, I will give...”

The mysterious book of the Apocalypse—of which every word contains thousands of mysteries (St. Jerome)—can be summarized in these words which are heard as a chorus at the end of the letters to the seven churches, in chapters two and three.

Chapter after chapter, under prophetic language and images, St. John announced the history of the Church until the end of the world, a history of battles, of beasts and Angels, of temporary victories and losses, until the final victory.

Twenty centuries later, we see that Divine Justice has indeed used all kinds of means to purify men and the members of His Church, just as It had done in the Old Testament with His people. Then, He used the Egyptians, the Philistines, or the Assyrians to bring His people to their knees, to sanctify them, to lead many to heroism. In the New Testament, Divine Providence has not changed its strategy, for “all things work out for good to them that love God.” The scourges used by Divine Justice to chastise the world for its sins, and at the same time to purify the elect “as gold is purified in the fire,” can be tagged “Diocletian”, “Attila”, “Robespierre”, “Mao Tse-tung”. Whichever God will use for us in the near future, let us always live by faith and never forget God is always in command, as He was in the boat, sleeping, in the middle of the storm.

The last book of the Bible is a book of hope: the Lamb of God will always have the last say. “I have overcome the world.” He alone is the Almighty. He can even use the “dragon” and the various “beasts” to make him “that is just, be justified still: and him that is holy, be sanctified still.”

“Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.”

Fr. Daniel Couture

Society of Saint Pius X



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