



S S P X



# The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

## The Religious Life

The Ceremonies of Religious Profession

The Discernment of Vocations

Teresa the Great



Stained-glass window portraying five Benedictine nuns: Saints Hildegard, Walburga, Scholastica, Mechtild, and Gertrude, located at St. Benedict's Monastery, Bristow, Virginia (Nancy Bauer, shutterstock.com)



“When he founded our Carmel of Sebikotane, the Archbishop was asking himself why the Catholic missions were expanding so much and why the pagans were converting. He felt that the reign of God was coming closer and closer. In answer to these questions, he explained that ‘this is because five Carmelite nuns are praying for the apostolate.’ Really, he puts a lot of trust in us! But again, we tried to live up to this trust.”  
(Mother Superior of the Carmel in Senegal)

# Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

“The world we live in is the best one to run away from!” This quip would have sounded like a witticism decades ago but, today, it has taken a serious tone.

The war is being waged all the way to the very citadel, and God knows how long its walls will hold against the powerful allies of darkness. Confusion sets in and it is hard to discern friend from foe. Yet defend the walls one must with all talent and might before it is too late. Most of us are not called to leave the world and settle things walled up inside the convent sitting up on the hill while troubles and sounds of war reign in the valley.

And yet, these secluded souls, whose office is prayer and penance, have also a major part in the titanic struggle taking place. They are, no doubt, those whose humble prayers pierce the heavens and allow the soldiers to wield their swords without fainting in the thick of action. Among this long standing Army of contemplative souls, there stands out Saint Teresa the Great, whose 500th anniversary of her birth we celebrate this year.

This is the reason why this *Angelus* issue offers an ‘un-convent-ional’ tour—pun intended—of the traditional religious in the U.S. District. This should be an occasion for all of us to thank God for these spiritual powerhouses which sustain the courage and the charity of less contemplative Christians. It gives us another reason for praising the foresight of Archbishop Lefebvre, who encouraged the multiplication of these religious communities wherever he went to keep the religious flame alive in the midst of civil ruins around us.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner  
Publisher

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# The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

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# In, Not of, the World

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by Andrew J. Clarendon

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<sup>1</sup> T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages" in *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, 1943), 200-205.

The monk, like all truly Christian men, is a walking paradox: one who renounces his will to gain freedom, one who leaves the world to save those in it, one who is an ascetic because he is a lover. The hard road of monasticism is the easy road to paradise. In the flow of the hours of the Divine Office, in the cycle of the Liturgical year, in the passage of the seasons and years, the monk contemplates the eternal: for him  
to apprehend  
The point of intersection of the timeless  
With time, is an occupation . . .  
No occupation either, but something given  
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,  
Arduous and selflessness and self-surrender.<sup>1</sup>

Looking back across the centuries, it is also apparent how the founders of various orders, while focused on the eternal, were also a product of their own place and time. St. Benedict and St. Francis of Assisi, for example, were two different men from different times who established two different orders to respond to different problems, problems central to their time but always



<sup>2</sup> Richard Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1950), 51.

<sup>5</sup> John Senior, *The Death of Christian Culture* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1978), 167.

<sup>6</sup> Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery, [http://www.our-ladyofguadalupe-monastery.com/therule\\_final\\_1.html](http://www.our-ladyofguadalupe-monastery.com/therule_final_1.html), accessed June 9, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 52.

present. What reconciles the two and others is precisely the unity of the Church that points to the unity of Heaven: in the Church as in our Father's house there are many mansions in one house. This is also why each saint and each order speaks to all times and all places, but in diverse ways depending upon the needs of the time. For us moderns, living in an age of fragmentation in which nearly the "entire moral orientation [has been] lost"<sup>2</sup> and in an era of "enormous brutality . . . [resulting in] a callousness to suffering which denies the spirit of Christianity,"<sup>3</sup> the Benedictine and Franciscan ideals are needed more than ever.

The rise of the Benedictine order in the sixth century was a response to a period of transition, decay, and fragmentation not unlike our own; many, for example, have seen parallels between the late Roman Empire and the United States of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. However, at the dawn of the Dark Ages the people who filled the vacuum of the collapsing empire were pagans: their culture was not that of the empire, they were not interested in Cicero or Plato—whose works were carefully preserved for future generations—and the rise of a vernacular medieval culture of which the Latin-Christian synthesis was only a part was centuries in the future. In other words, the Dark Ages were not dark because nothing was happening but because too much was happening; in an era of instability and warfare, there was little time for the growth of culture. What converted Western man and in turn created Christendom was the Rule of St. Benedict, which embodies "an ideal of spiritual order and disciplined moral activity which made the monastery an oasis of peace in a world of war."<sup>4</sup> Corresponding to the Benedictine method of *ora et labora*, the monastery is a spiritual powerhouse that nevertheless does not neglect the temporal; in this school of prayer, both sides of man—the spiritual and physical—are educated and perfected. "For the training of the body there is the ascetic life—the habit, the fare, the manual work; and for the soul, the liturgy, the *Opus Dei* as St. Benedict called it, the continuous immersion in a very few texts—the Psalter learned by heart . . . the Old and New Testaments . . . the *Rule* and a few select commentaries."<sup>5</sup> The motto of the Benedictine order sums up the ideal on the individual and international levels: "PAX [as in] *pax Benedicti*, heir to the *pax Romana*, the peace of ancient Rome, the once temporal, political peace of the Roman Empire . . . transformed into the peace of Benedict, the peace of the Divine Order, the supernatural tranquility of order, radiating from the interior city of the monastic cloisters to the cities of Christendom."<sup>6</sup> Not even a hundred years after St. Benedict wrote the Rule, Pope St. Gregory the Great, who reigned from 590 to 604 and was himself a monk, had "realized clearly that the monastic institution had become an essential organ of the Church, and the chief hope for the future of Christian culture."<sup>7</sup> Peace, the continual striving for perfection, and being a channel of grace for the entire world: this is the spirit of monasticism, then and now.

Fifteen hundred years later, the West faces another crisis, although today's barbarism is of a post-Christian sort; that the West is largely mission territory is not so much because souls have not heard of the Word, but that He has been rejected. If, to use John Senior's metaphor, the cultural and spiritual soil of the West has been depleted, it is the *ora et labora* of the monks that will help to revive it. Archbishop Lefebvre, in seeking

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<sup>8</sup> Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery, <http://www.our-ladyofguadalupe monastery.com/benedictinetradition.html>, accessed June 9, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P., *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 41.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>12</sup> Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Volume 3: *Paradise*, trans. Mark Musa (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986), XI, 73-78, 82.

“to restore all things in Christ,” noted that “Without monasteries, without religious consecrated to the continual praise of God, the Church will never be revived from the present crisis.”<sup>8</sup> Even with the current crisis seeming to intensify with Cardinals opposing Cardinals, there is hope in the traditionally-oriented monasteries and orders that are attracting many young vocations.

If modern man lacks the Benedictine peace and “has become a moral idiot,”<sup>9</sup> it follows that modern man is also a poor lover: he has too much love of secondary goods, certainly, but at the root of the modern problem is the most ancient of rebellions, excessive love of self. For this, the Franciscan ideal is a corrective, both in cultivating humility as well as directing man’s love to something higher. While St. Francis was consumed by love, what is fascinating is that the manner in which the Seraphic Father expressed his love was at once universal and very much a product of his time. Twelfth-century Europe faced the challenges of a new civilization that had been developing for hundreds of years. By about 1100, old difficulties had been largely overcome or at least subdued and new achievements united differing peoples: the end of the lay investiture controversy with the attendant simony, the conversion of the Viking menace, and the success of the First Crusade were all major turning points. Added to this was the rise of the new and exotic cultural movement known as “courtly love”: the cult of *amour* in which the poet-knight served and celebrated his lady. This new religion of love—although in itself including a number of positive elements—had such a secular and worldly focus that as a popular movement it was a real danger to the Church. Rather than ignoring it or trying to condemn it, the Church wisely sought to elevate courtly love; this sublimation happened artistically via Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and spiritually via St. Francis, the “Holy Fool” and Troubadour of God.

Best known for his love of nature—especially in our age when environmentalism has become a sort of new religion—what is often quickly passed over is St. Francis’s love of poverty, and what is altogether forgotten is his “ferce orthodoxy.”<sup>10</sup> The man who preached to the birds was not a vegetarian; the man who owned nothing but his rough habit was in favor of golden vessels for the altar<sup>11</sup>; the man who considered himself the lowest and most ignorant traveled to the Muslim sultan not to dialogue but to convert him to the true Faith. All of this makes sense only when one thinks of St. Francis as a man deeply in love as in a high medieval romance. Dante, himself a Franciscan tertiary, understood this, and so sings about the love of St. Francis and Lady Poverty in the terms of courtly love:

Enough of such allusions. In plain words  
take Francis, now, and Poverty to be  
the lovers in the story I have told.  
Their sweet accord, their faces spread with bliss,  
the love, the mystery, their tender looks  
gave rise in others’ hearts to holy thoughts.<sup>12</sup>

Chesterton, in his biography of the saint, calls thinking of St. Francis as a lover the first step in understanding him: “[When St. Francis said] he was





<sup>13</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>15</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 2001), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 274.

<sup>17</sup> *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1971), John 12:25.

a Troubadour of a newer and nobler romance, he was not using a mere metaphor. . . . He was, to the last agonies of asceticism, a Troubadour. He was a lover. He was a lover of God and he was really and truly a lover of men; possibly a much rarer mystical vocation. . . . For the modern reader the clue to the asceticism and all the rest can best be found in the stories of lovers when they seemed to be rather like lunatics. . . . All these riddles would easily be resolved in the simplicity of any noble love; only this was so noble a love that nine men out of ten have hardly even heard of it.”<sup>13</sup>

St. Francis was so in love with God that all things reminded him of Him as “a lover might say at first sight that a lady looked like a flower, and say afterwards that all flowers reminded him of his lady.”<sup>14</sup> Everything shone, and was news of, an expression of God, as in a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem. The Franciscan ideal—*pax et bonum*—is to truly love God and neighbor; it is what it means to be in but not of the world; it is a love that can transform any time, including our own.

In addition to Benedictine practicality and Franciscan romance, it would be a serious omission not to mention the Order of Preachers. The Dominicans’ intellectual force, their quest for *veritas*, as expressed in their motto, is opposed to modern fragmentation, incoherence, and artificiality. In a world in which “things fall apart,” each of the orders has a particular focus that is needed for the restoration, but it is not accidental that once again the thought of one of the greatest sons of St. Dominic—St. Thomas Aquinas—is making an academic and even populist return. As Chesterton notes: “it is the paradox of history that each generation is converted by the saint who contradicts it most. . . . So, as the nineteenth century clutched at the Franciscan romance, precisely because it had neglected romance, so the twentieth century is already clutching at the Thomist rational theology, because it has neglected reason.”<sup>15</sup> It is the spirit of monasticism that produced St. Thomas, St. Dominic, and the rest because it is this spirit that produced the West; in the words of Christopher Dawson, the rise of monasticism from St. Benedict on is so culturally integral that “the internal change [that centuries of monasticism] brought about in the soul of Western man—[is] a change which can never be entirely undone except by the total negation or destruction of Western man himself.”<sup>16</sup> What is more, monasticism brings into sharper focus the paradoxes at the essence of Christianity: that love in this life grows in negation; that the fullness of reality is found in leaving the world; and that to live, one must die, becoming the grain of wheat that “bringeth forth much fruit.”<sup>17</sup>

# A Non- Convent- ional Tour

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Various Authors

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## Carmelite Life

Carmel! This word evokes a mysterious world of grates, veils, high walls, fasting, penances... How could any sane 21st-century girl be attracted to such austere existence?!

Well, quite probably because she had some experience of the Love of God which has awakened in her a thirst for solitude, silence, and separation from the world so as to best enjoy the intimate company of her Beloved in a life of prayer and contemplation.

Also, she is drawn to Carmel because she wants to save souls on a grand scale and pray for priests. "The zeal of a Carmelite embraces the whole world. In the heart of the Church my Mother, I will be love," said St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, the most famous daughter of St. Teresa and universal patron saint of the Missions.

And, finally, to quote St. Theresa again, because "to love is to give all and to give oneself." Hence, the aspirant to Carmel feels drawn to a life where there are no half-measures: "To give all in order to possess all."

St. Teresa wanted her daughters to possess certain aptitudes in order to thrive in Carmel:

- Good health and nervous balance, plenty of common sense and a joyful disposition: "God preserves us from gloomy saints."
- Great desires, a magnanimous heart capable of loving much, a resolute will and lots of courage: "I won't have nuns who are ninnies..."
- A strong faith and confidence in God, assured that despite one's weakness: "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me."
- A tender love for Mary, the Mother, Queen and Beauty of Carmel since Carmel is truly her



Order: “May it please Our Lord, sisters, that we may live as true daughters of the Virgin.”

“All of us who wear this sacred habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation because that was the first principle of our Order and because we are descended from the line of those holy Fathers of ours from Mount Carmel who sought the precious pearl of which we speak, in such solitude and contempt of the world” (*Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansion, Ch. 1).

## Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King

“Francis, go, repair My house, which as you see is falling completely to ruin!” Thus spoke Our Lord Jesus Christ from the Crucifix in the Church

of San Damiano to Saint Francis of Assisi, who took Our Lord’s words quite literally, and with his own hands rebuilt San Damiano and St. Mary of the Angels. But Our Lord was speaking of the worldwide Church....

Our founder, Fr. Eugene N. Heidt, was drawn to the Franciscan heritage by the close link between Franciscan spirituality and “good Catholic sense.” Franciscan simplicity, poverty in imitation of Christ as an expression of charity, love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and deep respect for the priesthood are aspects of the spirituality of St. Francis. Our Lord’s Incarnation, Nativity and Holy Name, His Passion and Death, His Kingship, devotion to Our Lady and her Immaculate Conception, and devotion to St. Joseph—brought by the Franciscans from the Holy Land—all are particular Franciscan devotions and yet are >



simply Catholic. Even devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has a Franciscan connection: Our Lord gave St. Margaret Mary into the care of St. Francis of Assisi because St. Francis was so close to His Sacred Heart.

Father Heidt, working for the Society of St. Pius X, recognized the need for teaching Sisters who would go in groups to help staff SSPX schools. Father Carl Pulvermacher, O.F.M. Cap., recommended Sister Herlinda McCarty, a Franciscan in perpetual vows since 1933. With Fr. Heidt and Fr. Carl encouraging her, she agreed to help the new community. Under the direction of the SSPX district superior, in A.D. 2000, Fr. Heidt founded the Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King, using the 1927 Rule of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis approved by Pope Pius XI.

Our way of life is that of the active-

contemplative. Our prayer life gives us the spiritual strength to sustain the active life. Our prayers include the traditional Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, meditation, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Latin, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and various community prayers in English.

Directly or indirectly, all Sisters have a share in the works of the apostolate. Since our arrival, our presence at St. Vincent de Paul's Academy in Kansas City has increased steadily year by year.

Our Sisters have extended their work of Catholic education to include parish visits with recollection days for first communicants, days of conferences and crafts with girls (and sometimes younger boys), and camps.

Candidates should have a desire to serve God in the religious life, at least average intelligence,



a high school diploma or GED, the high ideals of a committed traditional Catholic, combined with the spirit of co-operation necessary for living the community life. Candidates should be between the ages of 18 and 35 and in reasonably good health.

Those interested should write a detailed letter of introduction to the Mother Superior.

## Teaching Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux

Small voices recite lessons in unison, sing-song and fluttering; other voices, broader and more firm, uncover, discuss and instruct great Truths; still other voices cheer and shout, rippling odes to joy at all occasions; and all the while, the

silent voices of the heart echo the psalmist in jubilant, insistent conversation with God. These melodious ebbs and swells are but the voices of the refrain sung daily by the Congregation of Teaching Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Fanjeaux.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ was asked by the Pharisees to silence his disciples whose voices leapt and soared with Hosannas, he responded, "I tell you that if these keep silence, the stones will cry out!" Indeed, if the happy clamor of children and the voices of the religious of our Dominican convent and school were to be silenced, and if the very stones were to cry out in their stead, what would they say?

*"Cor unum, et anima una!"* they would begin, inspired by the writing of our students, themselves inflamed with a desire to possess >

and safeguard the deposit of faith given to them by their parents, nourished and brought to fruition in the schools of St. Dominic, St. Thomas, and St. Catherine of Sienna: "...all together with the same goal and with the same Faith, with the same gratitude to Him by Whom all things are possible, Jesus Christ...uncompromising with what is not Truth..."

In turn, the stones would next cry out with the words of St. Dominic himself, words which take their shape in every waking step of all Dominicans, "Lord, what will become of poor sinners?"

For if the all-encompassing End of the congregation is to give glory to God in perfect Charity under the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the specific End is the work of teaching and education according to the spirit of the Gospel and the directives of Holy Mother the Church.

Flying movement from chapel to class to cell and then to chapel again might strike the stones momentarily dumb. But the seeming omnipresence of Sisters sheathed with Our Lady's rosary beads would not mute them for long—"Caritas Christi Urget Nos!" they would feel impelled to sing as the white habits whisper along the hallways, paths, aisles.

And then of course, in humble chorus, they would reverberate with the cries, "*Non nobis, Domine, sed nomini tuo da gloriam!*" for, a one-room convent boarding school in 1991 with 35 students and 7 Sisters has, over 25 years, become a large and very active K-12 school (Post Falls, Idaho), with an equally flourishing K-12 sister school (Massena, New York) and a rapidly growing elementary school (Walton, Kentucky) with a total of 425 students and 43 Sisters in the United States (a fraction of the Congregation's 200 Sisters and 1500 students dispersed throughout France, Germany, and the United States.)

To all those who would hear, the stones might conclude with the very words of Scripture, "Go and teach all nations," thereupon calling to this life those maternal hearts with a propensity to children and the generosity to embrace Jesus Christ as Spouse all for the greater glory of God.

## SSPX Sisters

At times, the work of the Sisters of the Society Saint Pius X can be very discreet—sometimes so discreet that it remains unknown to most of us. The Sisters were founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his sister, Mother Mary Gabriel, as helpers who would facilitate and complete the apostolate of the priests of the Society Saint Pius X. There is an almost unlimited number of activities by which the Society Sisters accomplish their apostolate of "parish Sisters." Willingly they devote themselves to all that can help the priests render liturgical worship more dignified, diligently taking care of sacristies and altar linens, arranging altar flowers, making and repairing vestments, preparing liturgical chant and church music.

The priest strives to develop the faith in souls; the Sisters second his work of removing the obstacles to this growth by teaching children their catechism either in the parishes or by way of a Catechism by Correspondence program, directing youth groups and camps, forming young ladies for their future role of Catholic mothers, helping out with various publications and welcoming retreatants. By providing for the needy, and caring for and visiting the sick and elderly, the Sisters help to open a door for the priest's visit. As the holy women who followed Our Lord and took care of the humble needs of the Apostles, so also the SSPX Sisters do not hesitate to assume the more hidden tasks of housecleaning, laundry, mending, and cooking in order to relieve the priests from these worries and permit them to give themselves entirely to their ministry.

In this variety of tasks by which the Society Sisters serve Christ's priests, there is a unity of intention: their first aspiration is to serve Christ the High Priest by offering themselves with Him for the Redemption of souls, following the example of Our Lady of Compassion. This places the Mass at the center of their devotion, and they strive to live constantly in its spirit of offering and love. By an additional hour of adoration during the day, they unite themselves to the Eucharistic Victim's adoration and pray for the whole Church, in particular, for priests and consecrated souls.

This life of oblation results in another characteristic, often expressed by our little students who



present to us one of those spontaneous drawings of their age, saying, "Sister, this is you!" A picture of a widely smiling Sister reminds us of that spirit of joy and simplicity which penetrates the Sisters of the Society.

The Sisters of the Society of Saint Pius X arrived in the U.S. district 34 years ago when a first house was opened in 1981 in St. Marys, Kansas. Since then, many girls and young women have benefitted from the presence of the Sisters in the Academy! Many vocations as well as beautiful families resulted from contact with consecrated souls in the parish, former Children of Mary keep memories of their meetings, others of their

catechism lessons... In 1986, a novitiate was founded in Armada, Michigan, for the English-speaking aspirants, but soon moved to the quiet city of Browerville, Minnesota. So far, of our 174 professed Sisters, 28 are Americans and 37 have made their first steps in the religious life in our American novitiate. After many years, a third house was finally able to be opened in 2010 at Saint Thomas Becket Priory in Veneta, Oregon. Over the past five years many souls have already been prepared for the sacraments by the Sisters' religion classes, and since 2011, a Sister teaches the Kindergarten and first grade classes full time. >





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## The Brothers of the SSPX

Archbishop Lefebvre drew his inspiration for the Brothers of the Society of St. Pius X from his own congregation, the Holy Ghost Fathers. Their Brothers were of inestimable service in the African missions as carpenters, woodworkers, mechanics, architects, and teachers.

Our founder created the Society of St. Pius X to preserve the purity of the Catholic priesthood in our troubling times. He naturally saw the need of a branch for Brothers who would facilitate the priestly apostolate. Like their Holy Ghost counterpart, the SSPX Brothers are not contemplative monks. They relieve the priests of material tasks around the priory (maintenance, cooking, financial and secretarial work, etc.). But they are called also to apostolic activities by directing a choir, teaching catechism, running the sacristy, teaching in primary schools, and other tasks vital to the priestly ministry.

Our SSPX Brothers, who lead an active life, are not to set aside the religious life altogether. All external action is subject to a strong spiritual life of prayer and contemplation tailor-made for them in their rule. Their religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are a constant reminder of their total consecration to God through their rule and superiors. Living their vows gives the priory the spiritual atmosphere needed for the community to maintain its fervor and supernatural touch. Wherever they are sent, not unlike the Sisters, the Brothers bring in a note of silence, of union with God, of fraternal charity, of zeal of God and souls. Or, to use the words of the Archbishop, "May all those whom they approach, and all those in the midst of whom they live, be edified by their behavior, and never disedified. Let them be like the guardian angels of our communities."

The Archbishop was aware of the odds against the brotherly vocations "because they require a spirit of faith which is tending to disappear from a world wholly obsessed with human advancement" (*Marcel Lefebvre*, p. 456). This might well be because we do not really appreciate the beauty and joy of the consecrated life and its urgency for the survival of the Church at large.

So, needless to say, God calls to the religious life strong, virile, responsible men of unshakable





convictions, of balanced feelings, and controlled passions. He is calling men who are willing to forego the founding of a family in order to consecrate themselves to His service.

## Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery—Benedictines

May of 1991 saw the modest beginnings of Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery, located in southwest New Mexico. Today it is the home of a young community of nearly 40 Benedictine monks. The secluded, mountainous site, the silence of the surrounding nature, the austere beauty of the high-desert terrain all join together to bespeak the particular vocation of this monastic foundation: *the primacy of contemplation*, a return to the spirit of the monks of Christian antiquity who, with the blessing of the Church, established a unique way of life lived for the honor and glory of *God alone*.

Our monastic roots link us not only to St. Benedict in the fifth century, but also to the more recent past, to the Christendom of Europe. In the

year 1850, Pope Pius IX exceptionally created a new branch of the Benedictine Order in order to oppose revolution in the Church and society.

Fr. Jean-Baptiste Muard, a French diocesan missionary, whose cause for beatification was opened following his premature death in 1854, was chosen by the Holy Father to lead this work of restoration in the obscurity of the Burgundian forest, later to become the Abbey of Sainte-Marie de la Pierre qui Vire. Fr. Muard saw the need for a Benedictine congregation that would embody the original spirit of the Rule, calling it the *Primitive Observance*. The heroic intervention of Pope Pius IX to save the Benedictine Order from extinction in his overall struggle to restore the Church in the time of unprecedented crisis would become the foundational principle of our present monastery. His principle is well outlined in the masterwork of Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard, *The Soul of the Apostolate*, wherein the primacy of prayer and meditation must come before the taking of action.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre would renew in our eyes the same vision of the urgent need for the restoration of the Church, which would be successful through the prayers of the contemplative orders. His last words spoken >

## Theme The Religious Life

to the founders of this monastery remain forever engraved in their hearts: *“Now is the time to do the impossible, you must do the impossible to establish oases of the faith, where the true spirit of the Church can be found. It is your duty to persevere in the true Faith. The impossible must be done to establish this Monastery.”*

Benedictine life is *Ora et Labora*, prayer and work. Liturgical prayer, which is the public worship of God, is called by Benedictines the Work of God, the *Opus Dei*. This unique prayer is the heart of Benedictine Life. It is expressed in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is sung in Gregorian Chant each day, and in the Divine Office. All eight canonical hours of the Divine Office are chanted integrally according to the monastic rite, unchanged since the fifth century.

The substance of the Divine Office is ancient prayer, drawn mostly from the psalms and inspired writings of the prophets of the Old Testament. Holy Mother Church thus desires her religious to pray and to think with an ancient mind, neither affected by the fluctuations of time and historical circumstance, nor by the shallow concerns of the modern day.

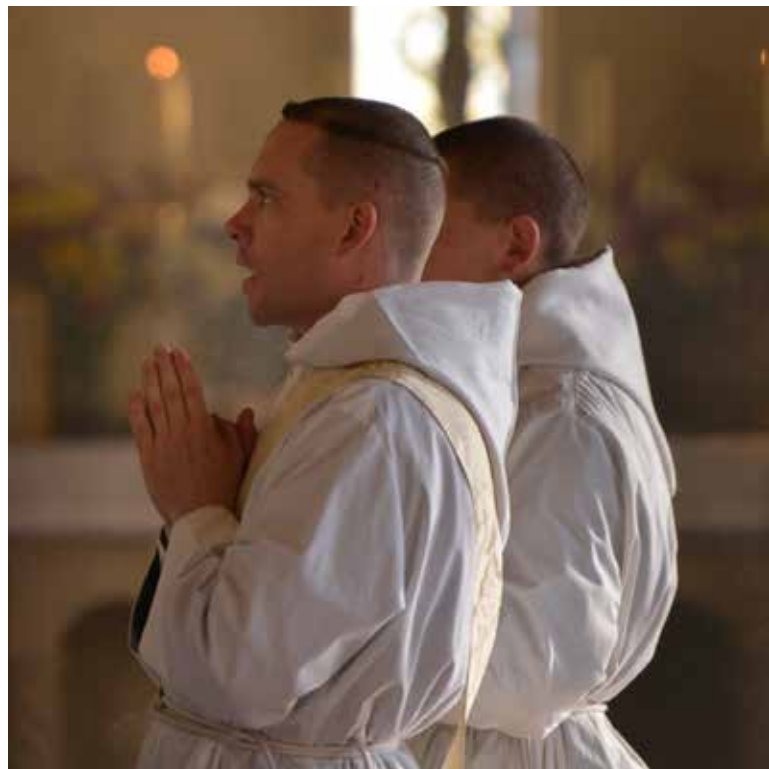
The monk’s labors are both manual and intellectual. With the continued growth of our community, the construction of our monastery is an ongoing task, supernaturally strengthened

by time spent in study and spiritual formation. The monk works more with his soul than with his hands, united to God with the fervent desire and intention to carry out his Divine Will above all other human endeavors.

Monasteries are removed from society but not from the heat of the battle. Monasteries have flourished in times of crisis—today is no different. With the word “PAX” inscribed over the entrance, peace to all who enter herein, they know nevertheless that their life will be a challenge.

The monks have a soldier’s heart, willingly seeing their vocation as a mission to be carried out for the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. Like their forefathers, among whom are 55,000 canonized saints, granting them unfailing assistance from heaven, monks are indeed heirs of “that generation that seeks the face of God” and willing to fight the good fight for Christ the King and for Our Lady, the Queen of heaven and earth. On higher levels, monks wage the spiritual combat with the fortitude and perseverance, self-sacrifice and selfless generosity.

U.I.O.G.D. is the emblem of Benedictines, taken from the many luminous chapters of the Rule of St. Benedict: *“Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus—That in all things God may be glorified.”*





# The Discernment of Vocations

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Interview with Fr. Mark Stafki and Mother Mary Joseph

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**The Angelus:** Mother Mary Joseph, what are your connections with potential vocations?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** As the Mother Superior and acting Novice Mistress of the Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King, one of my duties is to assess the suitability of applicants to the religious life in our Community.

**The Angelus:** What are the ingredients necessary for a religious vocation?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** We begin with the broad requirements of canon law, namely, no canonical impediments, a right intention, and suitability to the way of life. The right intentions—desire to serve God in the best possible way, desire to sanctify oneself in order to give God greater glory—are not always easy to determine. We are creatures of mixed motives; natural and even

base motives can be mixed with the supernatural. We hope that the higher motives predominate, through the grace of God. The right intention must be augmented by knowledge of the practices of religious life, and gaining this knowledge is one of the purposes of the postulancy and novitiate.

As for suitability, some temperaments and personalities find community life too challenging, and some people simply are not meant for it, in spite of their good intentions. The demands of the apostolate also must be taken into consideration. A certain measure of good physical health is needed as well as good mental health and a reasonable level of intelligence.

**The Angelus:** Is there a difference between the various orders?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** The call to the religious



life is not generic. The call to the Franciscan life is not the call to the Carmelite life, for example. A candidate and the superiors must consider the prayer life and spirituality of the community, the common life as practiced in that community, and suitability to the apostolate.

Suitability to the apostolate of the community differs according to the various communities. Someone who does not want to work with children probably will not be considering teaching communities, for example, even if they are drawn by preference to a Franciscan prayer life.

**The Angelus:** What are the personal qualities, traits, and habits that contribute to the stability of a vocation to the religious life?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** A strong prayer life which includes devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the daily Rosary is a foundation for any vocation. Without a strong prayer life, the desire for vocation will eventually run out of steam; there will be nothing to sustain it. On the natural level, there should be a certain balance to the personality, solid common sense and good judgment. The ability to live in community is helped by flexibility on the natural level, and by the virtue of forbearance.

Willingness to learn the virtue of obedience also is essential to the religious life. One cannot live under the vow of obedience without first acquiring the virtue. This can be humbling for some personalities, but without obedience, there is no true religious life. Doubtless, this virtue is essential for the brotherhood and the priesthood as well.

**The Angelus:** No one vocation is the same, yet, there must be some common elements...

**Mother Mary Joseph:** Individuals often are drawn by grace through circumstances to consider the life of the counsels—circumstances such as type of home life, prayer life, spiritual reading, sermons, and advice received. Most candidates have some motives in common—these often include the desire to serve God, desire to save their own souls in the best way possible, and zeal for the souls of others.

**The Angelus:** Fr. Stafki, we turn to you for the more theological meaning of the calling. A

vocation to a higher state of life is one of the many options for a young adult. What are the dispositions required for one before choosing any state in life?

**Fr. Stafki:** Let us remember that, if God calls us to a state of life, be it religious life or marriage, He inspires in us the desire to sacrifice ourselves through that state of life. When one chooses his state of life properly, he simply chooses his manner of crucifixion. That is, he chooses how to best lose sight of self and give his all to God! Directly, through religion, or indirectly, through a spouse and children. In either state, we are no longer our own. We must return love for love. Jesus Christ gave His all for us. Let us do the same for Him, whatever the state of life to which we are called.

**The Angelus:** How would you define the call of God to souls?

**Fr. Stafki:** I think it is a personal invitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to repose in His Sacred Heart in a most intimate way. He offers a share in the treasures of His Heart. This Heart has been pierced and crowned with thorns, and so a vocation is a special call to sacrifice. This Heart is ablaze with the love of the Father and with the love of souls, and so one who is “called” is offered a special love of God and love of souls.

**The Angelus:** Is the call merely of the heart or is there an official call too?

**Fr. Stafki:** Every true vocation consists of a double call: a call that is within the individual (just described above) and a call that is exterior to the individual. The exterior call is the approval of the Catholic Church, i.e. an approval offered (or withheld) by one’s ecclesiastical superiors. Both the interior and exterior call are necessary for a true vocation. If one seems to have the first but not the other, this means that God has not called.

**The Angelus:** Can we give the name of religious to all such calls?

**Fr. Stafki:** Often we speak of someone who receives a vocation as a “religious.” What this expresses, at least in part, is that the virtue of the “one called” is the virtue of religion. This is the virtue that inclines us to offer to God the

## Theme The Religious Life

worship that is due to Him as our Creator—for a religious this offertory is to be made at every moment of every day. The vocation is not a feeling, but rather a God-given determination to burn all of one's life like the sanctuary lamp, ever in the presence of God, rendering Him the supreme honor that He deserves.

**The Angelus:** But many will say that they are not perfect. So, how could they have a vocation?

**Fr. Stafki:** Many think that they are not called because they are not perfect or their charity is not ardent or their prayers are difficult and distracted. On the contrary, pursuing a vocation is a means of perfection. It takes time to develop a deep spiritual life and to “grow into one's vocation.” How does one become “more religious”? By filling one's days with acts of religion. Model religious today were once clumsy beginners like you!

**The Angelus:** What is the exact role and duty of the priest or advisor over young adults regarding a vocation?

**Fr. Stafki:** The priest has an important role to play in helping individuals determine whether God might be calling them. Having heard the call themselves and having been invested with the grace to guide souls, they are able more easily to discern the signs of a vocation. Therefore, young people should be ready and willing to pour out the secrets of their soul to the priest. The priest is never too busy for that!

**The Angelus:** Speaking of the priestly task, what is the difference between discernment and decision?

**Fr. Stafki:** As St. Peter Julian Eymard says, it is the role of the spiritual director to stand at the door of the heart and to help the individual know what to keep and what to rid oneself of... but only God is to enter therein. We must always remember that the voice one hears calling must be the voice of God, not the voice of a priest, a parent or a friend. After all, it is the call of God. Often enough it seems that young people would be happy if the priest would just “decide for them.” We must tell them: “I will listen to you, as you listen to God in the depths of your soul. I will help you discern truth from error, reality from dreams, inspiration

from fantasy, empty fears from real obstacles. I will offer advice and show you your legitimate options, but you must decide. You will have to live the life you choose, not me. You will be judged by God according to how you lived your life. You must decide. Trust in God. He loves you and wants your good and your true happiness. He will inspire you to desire and to choose what is best, as long as you have taken the means at your disposal for finding His Will.”

**The Angelus:** Mother Mary Joseph, is the confessor and spiritual director in a better position if he has access to the internal forum?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** It is true that advice given by the priest in the internal forum can be crucial for the candidate considering a vocation. I ask the candidate if she has spoken to her confessor about the possibility of a vocation and whether or not he has encouraged her to pursue one. If she has not spoken to the priest in the confessional, she is advised to do so. One test of a vocation is the willingness of the candidate to follow such advice. If the priest advises a candidate in the confessional not to pursue a religious vocation, the superior must assume that he has good reason to give such advice. On the other hand, if he advises the candidate to try, this is no guarantee that the young lady has a vocation!

Because most young women want to confide in someone they trust, it is not uncommon for candidates, by their own choice, to be quite open with superiors, which does help the superior to make necessary judgments. If this does not occur, the question of whether or not the priest encourages the vocation becomes a key element in the judgment of the superior.

**The Angelus:** Mother Mary Joseph, how have you personally been able to help youngsters make a decision in life?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** No one really knows all the many influences that go toward a decision of this nature. Certainly, speaking with our visitors over the years, and seeing some of them return to the novitiate and eventually take vows makes one hope that there has been some good accomplished, but after all, they may have joined for any number of reasons. In any case, it is a matter of God's



grace in the end, and He has millions of means of influencing a vocation.

**The Angelus:** Mother Mary Joseph, any interesting anecdotes you wish to mention?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** When our community was just beginning, a former Marine captain came to visit our farmhouse convent in Oregon. She saw a tiny ninety-year-old Sister lying on a couch, dividing her time between praying and instructing a couple of postulants and a novice. She saw an aging priest with a bad back still serving as pastor of two traditional chapels in spite of strokes, cancer, and severe arthritis, giving conferences and guiding our little group. The sight of these two old people carrying the banner for the

Faith inspired her with zeal. The situation looked hopeless; it had to be the work of God. She felt compelled to join. She had already left a career in the Marines in order to take up the life of true Catholic womanhood. She gave up the life of a Catholic laywoman in order to take up the higher calling of a religious.

**The Angelus:** Mother Mary Joseph, any last word?

**Mother Mary Joseph:** God has not stopped calling women to the religious life, but some allow the static of the world to interfere. If they would only stop to listen, girls would find, as I have found, that the happiest peals of laughter come from behind convent walls. It is the laughter of joy.





Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the Name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind. He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God, and further by means of retreats, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments. (*St Ignatius of Loyola*)





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# *Aggiornamento* Comes to The Jesuits

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by Fr. Jonathan Loop

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<sup>1</sup> “The most important work of the General Chapters is the studied accommodation of the rules of their Institute to the changed conditions of the times. This, however, must be done in such a way that the proper nature and discipline of the Institute is kept intact” (Address of May 23, 1964).

Toward the close of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI asked that all religious congregations update their constitutions in accord with modern times. He reiterated this expectation in his decree *Ecclesiae Sanctae* published in 1966, where he asked all major religious orders to call a special chapter to update their constitutions.<sup>1</sup> As the General Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Archbishop Lefebvre oversaw such a meeting in September 1968. At this congregation, Archbishop Lefebvre was saddened to find that a majority of the delegates wished to introduce radical and far-reaching changes to the Constitutions which would be wholly destructive of the order. Seeing that his advice was not wanted and that the delegates were determined to sidestep his authority, he sought counsel from Bishop Antonio Mauro at the Congregation for Religious. After explaining his situation to the Curial official, he received the following response: “I am going to give you some advice that I have just given to another Superior General who came to see me about the same thing. ‘Go on,’ I said to him, ‘take a little trip to the United States. It will do you good.’ As for the chapter and even for the congregation’s present business, leave it to your assistants!” Knowing then that the Congregation would not support his efforts to preserve the >

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Lefebvre loved to preach that Christ was the religious of God *par excellence*.

<sup>3</sup> *Re-Formed Jesuits: A History of Changes in the Jesuit Order During the Decade 1965–1975* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32. Father Sponga was a provincial of the Maryland province during the latter half of the 1960s. In other words, he held a position roughly equivalent to a District Superior. He later left the Society of Jesus and married.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251. As another example of what is meant by “optimistically psychological,” the author notes that a book by Thomas A. Harris that was common in many of the Jesuit novitiates throughout the United States was titled, *I’m OK, You’re OK*.

constitutions of the order, he handed in his resignation to the Pope.

Normally, in considering this episode, we marvel at God’s providence which, in this manner, prepared the way for the foundation of the Society of St. Pius X. However, it is worth considering what our founder would have encountered in the United States had he chosen to follow Bishop Mauro’s advice. What was the state of religious life in America in the mid to late 1960s? Perhaps the easiest way to catch a glimpse of the state of affairs at this time is to observe what was occurring within the Jesuit order, which had taken very much to heart the exhortation of Pope Paul VI, as reported by Fr. Joseph Becker, S.J., in his book *The Re-Formed Jesuits*.

## Re-inventing Religious Life

Indeed, as Fr. Becker shows, the sons of St. Ignatius were in the process of wholly re-inventing the meaning of religious life for the members of their order. In so doing, they would radically depart from the traditional understanding of the religious life—best explained by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*—as a whole-hearted consecration of oneself to the service of God in order to attain perfect charity. In other words, the goal of the religious life has always been to be conformed to Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the model of charity.<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits in the United States—or at least those who exercised the greatest influence in the order—during the 1960s appear to have forgotten this ultimate goal.

Instead of seeking to conform men to Christ through self-renunciation, the prevailing idea of the leading lights among the Jesuits was to encourage personal self-fulfillment. Fr. Becker quotes one Jesuit priest who articulated the view that “modern man is seeking . . . to found his further progress on personal fulfillment scaled out to the size of his expanding understanding of himself and of the world.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, “modern man”—or, more broadly, the world—believed his true excellence depended not on being divinized by the grace of God but rather exercising his personal liberty and taking responsibility for his own actions, and this especially through “dialogue” with his fellow men.

Rather than correct this view, which is starkly opposed to the Christian spirit, he advocated that the Society incorporate this vision so as to be—in the words of another priest, Fr. Edward Sponga<sup>4</sup>—“relevant to the modern world.” Fr. Becker notes that this attitude prevailed throughout much of the Jesuit houses during the 1960s: “A sense of self-worth and a preference for self-direction were to be encouraged steadily through speeches, papers, & books.”<sup>5</sup> He points out that a manifestation of this spirit could be seen in the very décor of the private quarters of many novices of the order, where religious art largely disappeared in favor of “an art which was more optimistically psychological, cheery rather than strong, secular rather than sacral.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, Jesuits were increasingly taught not to focus on their faults and sinful qualities nor to seek guidance from their superiors. Rather, by focusing on developing the positives in their personality and those activities which were “meaningful” for them, they come into contact with God within themselves and their neighbor.



<sup>7</sup> As an example, the author notes that in many novitiates and houses of study, such basic requirements as an hour for rising and for going to bed ceased to exist. At most, there might be some recommendations which few members followed.

<sup>8</sup> The author quotes one rector of a house of philosophy writing to his provincial and saying of his students “that they do what [the rector] wants if he is reasonable, but of course if he isn’t [according to their judgment] they do it anyway” (*Re-Formed Jesuits*, p. 295).

<sup>9</sup> *Re-Formed Jesuits*, p. 294.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

## Collapse of Discipline

As a result of this attitude, the discipline of many Jesuit houses of formation effectively collapsed. The author notes that silence in most houses disappeared, obligatory daily schedules disintegrated<sup>7</sup>, and regular community activities such as common prayer or readings at meal were abandoned. Overall, obedience widely was practiced only to the extent that members believed that their superiors’ commands coincided with their own experiences and judgment.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Fr. Becker observes that the “most general lifestyle change [in many houses] was a revolt against the rules: against rules requiring attendance at class or at daily Mass or at a particular Mass; against rules forbidding talking in certain places or at certain times, or going to movies and plays, or being out of the house at night, or wearing certain clothes.”<sup>9</sup> He explains that the prevailing conviction was that each person should be responsible for himself and his own development. Thus, any external constraints not dependent on his own will became automatically suspect and worthy of being disregarded.

An unsurprising fruit of this belief was that, in many places, attendance at Mass and reception of the sacraments became less frequent. Tied to this disgust with a prescribed rule of life, there were perhaps similar reasons as those described at one house of formation: “Some admit to not attending daily Mass because it does not have any particular meaning for them.”<sup>10</sup> Anything that did not seem meaningful to the young men was freely abandoned.

One can only imagine what became of the status of the religious vows—whose principle goal is to remove various obstacles to the life of charity—in such an environment. Fr. Becker points out that the order’s General Congregation 31, which was held in 1965, already encouraged discussion on how best to “adapt” the vows to modern times.<sup>11</sup> Without formally abandoning them, the Jesuit houses in America considerably loosened their application in many important respects. What has been said heretofore already illustrates the manner in which the vow of obedience was neglected, if not outright abandoned in many communities. While the vow of chastity was not eliminated, many vital safeguards were removed in order to permit young men to “have a mature Christian relationship with the opposite sex.” Furthermore, at an important meeting of American Jesuits held at Santa Clara University in 1967, there was favorable discussion—though no formal approval—of what was called the “Third Way,” a utopian idea in which religious could develop non-marital relations with members of the opposite sex. It comes therefore as no surprise that the 1960s and 1970s saw many young men who entered the order fail to persevere and not a few who had taken vows subsequently leave and be “married.”

As is clear, the most influential American Jesuits—especially those in charge of formation—seem to have forgotten the principal purpose of the religious life: to conform men to Christ. In the place of a whole-hearted consecration to almighty God consummated by the vows—especially that of obedience—the order attempted to give the widest possible scope to the individual initiative and free-will of its subjects so as to permit them to attain a meaningful experience of the divine. Instead of asking subjects to deny >

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> An excellent reference, even if somewhat dated, is Kenneth C. Jones's *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators*.

<sup>14</sup> Even though the Archbishop did not impose two of the vows on the members of the Society, he consistently and emphatically asked them to embrace the spirit of the vows.

themselves and to die to the world, the order encouraged them to foster their personality and to embrace the positive aspects of the world lest it run the danger of becoming “irrelevant” in these modern times. Fr. Becker states in his introduction that the “Jesuit experience was similar to that of other religious orders in the United States.”<sup>12</sup>

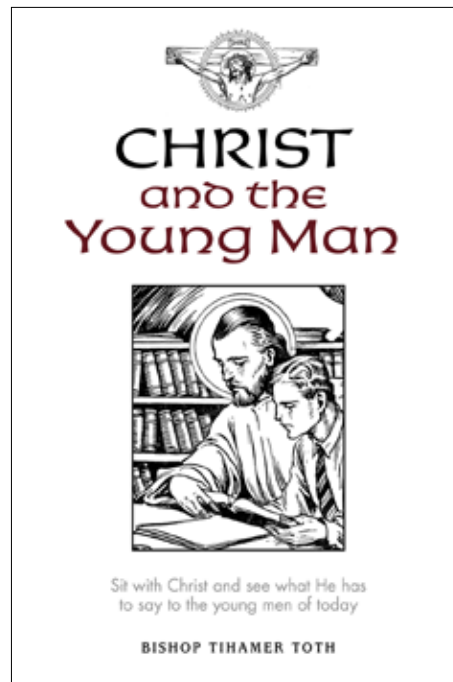
Thus, had the Archbishop followed the counsel of Bishop Mauro, he would have merely witnessed many religious orders committing suicide by abandoning Our Lord. As he would later note in a spiritual conference at Ecône, there was no country in the Catholic world which saw as many priests and religious abandon the consecrated life as in the United States. Even now, most religious orders in the United States have upwards of 90 percent fewer postulants and novices than there were in the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, those which remained in the religious orders lived in a manner which would be wholly unrecognizable to their founders. Fortunately for the Church, the Archbishop refrained from traveling to the United States in order to “learn” and instead later communicated to the Society the true spirit of religious life.<sup>14</sup>



**Fr. Jonathan Loop** was born and raised an Episcopalian. He attended college at the University of Dallas, where he received the grace to convert through the intermediary of several of his fellow students, some of whom later went on to become religious with the Dominicans of Fanjeaux. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in political philosophy, he enrolled in St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, where he was ordained in June 2011.

# Christ and the Young Man

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The Carthusian Order, also called the Order of Saint Bruno, is a Catholic religious order of enclosed monastics. The order was founded by Saint Bruno of Cologne in 1084 and includes both monks and nuns. The order has its own Rule, called the Statutes, rather than the Rule of Saint Benedict, and combines eremitical and cenobitic life.

Monk in Alabaster, Carthusian Monastery, Burgos



# The Best Part

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by a Benedictine Monk

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Interior life, spiritual life, contemplation—these expressions all designate the same reality, and this reality is the very reason for our bulletin. Indeed, *The Echo of Our Lady* was founded to help its readers, and especially priests, develop within themselves a treasure more precious than all the gold in the world. We work according to our God-given gifts, conscious of our limitations while endeavoring to do something useful for the good of souls and of the Church.

## The Inversion of Order

A surely inspired line from Catholic author Georges Bernanos (1888-1948) has come down to us: “Nothing about modern civilization can be understood unless you recognize that it is a

universal conspiracy against any kind of interior life.” Indeed, we see the serious, deleterious consequences of this reality accumulating before our eyes. By the abuse of technology, our consumer society relentlessly pursues its work of destruction all the while defending its essential principle: the primacy of action. Even if it had no other purpose, it would already be more destructive than a bulldozer crushing everything in its way. Religious life and contemplative monasteries no longer have any place and have become incomprehensible, being considered useless and unprofitable. Nowadays evil is spread everywhere, not sparing even good Christian families, in which vocations are scarcely able to emerge.

Everything has been constructed to mold sub-humans. Bernanos wrote that modern civilization





“deliberately encourages everything that moves, everything that budges, but it judges everything that fosters the interior life as a loss to the community.” The best part of man, his soul, made for God and heaven, is thus deliberately excluded.

Two absolutely irreconcilable conceptions of life stand before us. If eternal salvation is not for us an empty word, then clearly the contemplative life ought to be our first priority. But if we limit our aspirations to the enjoyment of terrestrial goods, then contemplative life hardly makes any sense. Our materialist civilization has no fear of freedom of action, but it especially dreads freedom of thought, of true thought. The only kind of interior life the technocrats might allow, Bernanos said, would be that necessary for modest introspection under the control of doctors so as to cultivate optimism by extirpating the least trace of other-worldly desires.

Our civilization of agitation exerts terrible pressure on the multitude of men. Like all tyrannical regimes, materialist democracy strives to shape a type of man in conformity with its system. To do so it disposes of widely varied and considerable means unknown to previous generations. Bernanos concludes his analysis with a prophetic vision:

“This civilization is perfectly arranged to gradually induce its citizens to barter the higher freedoms for a simple guarantee of baser ones, freedom of thought (having become superfluous since it will seem silly not to think like everyone else) for the right to a radio and the movies.” Today we would substitute television and the Internet.

## The Re-establishment of Order

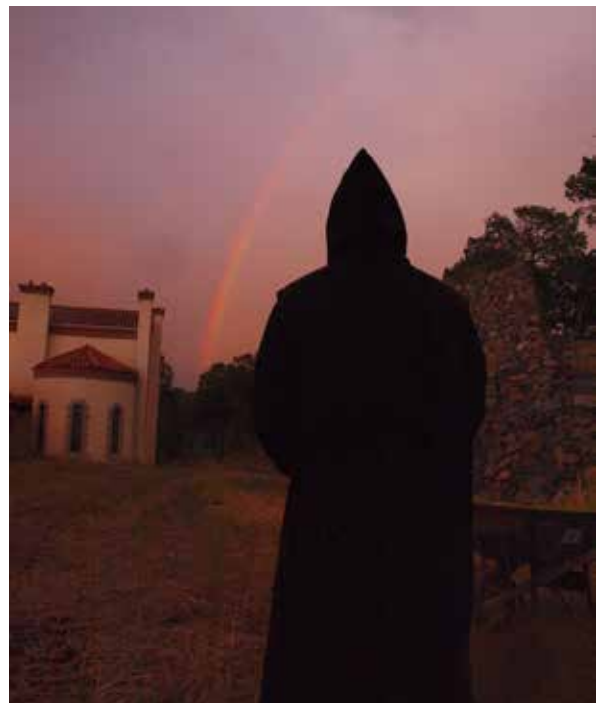
So long as man is alive he always retains a vestige of interior life. For our nature comprises two facets: thought and action. Before any action we necessarily have to think, however rudimentarily, and then deliberate and make up our mind. The two domains work together and form the warp and woof of human life. But the interior life is more important and conditions the success of exterior action.

Our eternal salvation depends on the holiness of our actions, and these upon the depth of our

interior life enlightened by faith and fortified by grace. The happiness of heaven will be essentially interior, since it will consist in the loving contemplation of the infinite good which is our Lord Jesus Christ with the Father and the Holy Ghost. This is why Jesus approved Mary Magdalen as she stayed at His feet listening to His words and contemplating them: “Mary has chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken from her.” Contemplation is the best of our Christian life. What a pity so few understand this, and thus deprive themselves of the sweetness of the rose while keeping only the thorns!

We conclude with a thought from the priest and theologian Romano Guardini (1885-1965):

“We speak, we listen, we work, we strive; there are works and institutions, but the profound meaning of all that lies within. The Christian conscience has always given first place to a peaceful interior life devoted to the striving for truth and charity over the exterior life, however skilful and courageous it might be. It has always put silence before speech, purity of intention before success, generosity of heart before the greatness of the undertaking... Both make up life, but the interior takes precedence.”



The Ceremonies of

# Religious Profession

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by Fr. Christopher Danel

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The ceremonies for religious profession are considered “sacramentals of persons,” under which heading the blessing of abbots and abbesses is also included. To consecrate something means to separate it from the world so that it becomes entirely dedicated to the service of God. It becomes wholly His own. Such is the case of the consecrated religious, and the ceremonies of the Church have been shaped over the centuries to not only express this separation from the world, but also to shroud the individual in the blessed habit and to specifically consecrate him or her to God in conformity with the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

There are various ceremonies of religious profession according to the different religious orders and institutes and which reflect their particular customs. There is some variance

especially between the ceremonies of the monastic orders and those which are non-monastic. Here we present first of all some of the historical aspects of the profession ceremonies, followed by the ceremonies of the Roman Pontifical, then a glimpse at the profession ceremonies used in some of the religious communities of Tradition.

## The Profession of Monks

The ceremonies themselves are the result of the natural development in the religious life over the centuries, primarily in its monastic form. Specific ceremonies for the entrance into the monastic life were developed in tandem with the elaboration of monastic rules for cenobites, such



as those of St. Pachomius and St. Benedict. Texts of these profession ceremonies are extant from Montecassino, Cluny, Farfa, and other important abbeys, and have been called *Ordo ad faciendum monachum* (Ordo for Creating a Monk). The historic parts of the ceremony consist in three parts. Firstly, there is the formal request of the postulant to enter the religious life, this request having two forms, with an oral promise publicly pronounced, and a formal *petitio* written by the postulant's own hand which he ceremonially places upon the altar, and according to the prescription of St. Benedict (*Regula*, ch. 58), he sings the verse of Psalm 118, "*Suscipe me, Domine, ...ut vivam—Receive me, O Lord, ...that I may live,*" with which he expresses the fullness of his mystical oblation. A text of the *petitio* used at Montecassino in AD 790 reads in part,

*"In the name of the Lord. I promise before God and his holy Angels that I will remain now and forever in this monastery all the days of my life in all obedience. This my promise I have written with my own hand and attested to before witnesses."*

Secondly, there is the clothing in the religious habit, which is specifically blessed as a holy garment. Thirdly, there is the *oratio benedictionis*, a blessing conferred upon the new monk so that the Lord, receiving his oblation, will crown him with the necessary virtues for the state of perfection. The new monk exchanges the *Pax* with each member of his monastery and is led by the Abbot and Deacon to the place he will occupy in choir, as the psalm *Ecce quam bonum* is sung. The three principal parts of the rite (*Petitio, Vestitio, Benedictio*) are seen not only in the rite for monks (monastic life), but also for religious brothers (non-monastic).

## The Profession of Nuns

For the profession of nuns in the monastic orders, we turn to the ceremony of the Roman Pontifical. The ceremony has historically been known as the *Velatio Virginum* (Veiling of Virgins), and in the present Pontifical, which was compiled in the twelfth century, the title given

is *De Benedictione et Consecratione Virginum* (For the Blessing and Consecration of Virgins). Here we refer to religious profession *per se*, that is, the profession of vows at the conclusion of the novitiate. The rite is carried out as follows:

The novices are assisted throughout the rite by two professed sisters referred to by the Greek term *paranymphae*. After the presentation of the novices and the postulation, the bishop sings a call to them three times, echoing the Cantic of Canticles ("*Veni, electa mea, etc.*"): *Venite! Venite! Venite!* They in turn sing three responses, each more elaborate than the last, concluding with:

*"And now we follow with our whole heart: we fear Thee, and we wish to see Thy countenance; Lord, confound us not, but do unto us according to Thy gentleness and according to the abundance of Thy mercies."*

This part of the rite entered into the Pontifical in the thirteenth century. The bishop interrogates them about their proposal, and receives their vows as they place their hands into his. After the Litany of the Saints, during which the novices lie prostrate, the bishop intones the *Veni Creator* and blesses their habits. When they return from vesting in the religious habit, they enter singing

*"Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum saeculi contempsi, etc.—I have despised the kingdom of the world and all worldly adornment, etc."*

The bishop pronounces a long consecratory blessing over the novices, which since the tenth century has been sung in the preface tone, as at Ordinations. The blessing was composed by St. Leo the Great (†461), and it concludes with an epilogue added from the Gelasian Sacramentary of the eighth century. Afterwards, the bishop confers upon them the blessed veils, spousal rings, and floral crowns, while interspersed antiphons from the Office of St. Agnes are sung. As each one is veiled, the bishop says,

*"Receive the sacred veil, by which it will be known that you have rejected the world, and have truly and humbly united yourself with your whole heart to Jesus Christ, and will be forever his docile spouse; may He defend you from all evil and lead you to eternal life."*

As the bishop places the ring on each

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novice's finger, he says,

*"I espouse thee to Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High Father, and may He preserve you unscathed. Receive the ring of faith, the sign of the Holy Ghost, so that you may be called the spouse of God, and if you serve Him faithfully, you shall be crowned in eternity."*

As he crowns each one with the floral crown, he says,

*"Receive the crown of virginal distinction, so that, as you are crowned by our hands on earth, so may you merit to be crowned by Christ with glory and honor in heaven."*

Several blessings follow, including one possibly attributed to St. Matthew. Towards the conclusion of the rite, the bishop does something which is rarely seen in the liturgical books: he pronounces a long and detailed *anathema* upon anyone who should attempt to deter the newly-professed sisters from their holy life and anyone who should interfere with the sisters' communal goods. According to the practice of some convents, he also ceremonially confers the Roman Breviary to the new sisters, and then leads them to the cloister entrance and commends them to their abbess.

There are some symbolic aspects of the ceremonies which shine through. One is that of death and rebirth, hence in some communities a black pall is placed over the prostrate religious, for example, and there is baptismal symbolism such as the burning candle and giving of a new name. Another is that of mystical marriage, as seen with spousal ring and the floral crown, which also has its place in ancient wedding rituals. For the Taking of the Habit, in some communities the postulant is presented dressed in the adornments of a bride, as she prepares herself for spiritual union with the Divine Bridegroom.

Thus far the ceremonies of the monastic orders. The ceremonies of the non-monastic orders and religious institutes retain the same basic structure within a less complex context. For religious brothers, the ceremonies of the Brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X are one example, and for religious sisters, two good examples are the ceremonies of the Sisters of the Society Saint Pius X and of the Franciscan

Sisters of Christ the King. For each, there is a ceremony for the Taking of the Habit and one for the Profession of Vows, whether simple or perpetual.

## The Profession of Brothers

For the Brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X, the ceremonies are carried out as follows: firstly, there is the Taking of the Habit, when postulants become novices. Before the Offertory, the *Veni Creator* is sung, then the candle-bearing postulants make their petition, which is followed by a short liturgical interrogation and an instruction. After being clothed in the blessed habit, the postulants pronounce their Oblation and are given their new names in religion. They are then given a crucifix and they receive a blessing. Secondly, there is the ceremony of religious profession, when novices become professed brothers. After the customary *Veni Creator*, the novices make their petition, followed by an interrogation and an admonition; they then make their Profession of Vows before the open tabernacle. After Mass, they are given the Medal of Saint Pius X, and they sign their act of oblation and profession.

## The Profession of Sisters

For the Sisters of the Society Saint Pius X, the ceremonies are as follows: at the Taking of the Habit, the *Veni Creator* is sung before the Offertory, followed by a sermon. The postulants are called forward after the singing of *Iesu Corona Virginum*, the renowned hymn from the Common of Virgins:

*"Jesus, Crown of Virgins, ...Thou walkest among the lilies, surrounded by choirs of Virgins, a Bridegroom beautiful with glory and giving rewards to his brides."*

After the blessing of the habits and veils, each postulant is given the habit, the white veil, and a burning candle, then they all go to vest in the habit. Upon return, they pronounce their Oblation and are given their names in religion. The rite concludes with the blessing of the Rosary and the



Medal of St. Pius X. At Religious Profession, the ceremony begins with the novices' petitions and the interrogation, followed by the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Then there is the blessing of the black veils, the rings, and the crucifixes, followed by the Profession of Vows before the open tabernacle. The newly-professed sisters are each ceremonially given the items that were blessed, with the liturgical form for the veils and rings being almost identical to those given in the Roman Pontifical for the monastic ceremonies, after which the newly-professed sisters receive a special blessing.

symbolizing the crown of eternal life, after which they exchange the *Pax* with each member of the convent, accompanied by the verses of the psalm *Ecce quam bonum*. After the celebrant has chanted a prayer for their perseverance, the *Te Deum* is sung and the newly-professed sisters are blessed.

This is just a brief glimpse at some profession ceremonies used in Tradition. It is a spiritual conquest in which these consecrated souls have a very privileged part. "*Ecce lex sub qua militare vis—Behold the law under which thou desirest to fight*" (Cf. Rule of St. Benedict, ch. 58).

## The Seraphic Customs

For the Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King, the ceremonies of the Taking of the Habit and that of Religious Profession are in close parallel and follow the Franciscan-Seraphic use. After the postulants and novices make their petition, there follow an instruction and interrogation, then a prayer for the Franciscan Order. The postulants arrived in choir wearing bridal veils and floral crowns; these items are now removed and the postulants are tonsured (a shearing of their hair), in imitation of the selfsame ceremony conducted for St. Clare by St. Francis. Each postulant repeats after the Celebrant,

*"The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me."*

They are given the blessed habit, cord, scapular, and white veil, after which they retire to vest. Returning, they are given the Franciscan Crown (Rosary), the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Rule, a burning candle, and a crucifix, and are given their name in religion, followed by a blessing. After receiving the crucifix, each novice proclaims,

*"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."*

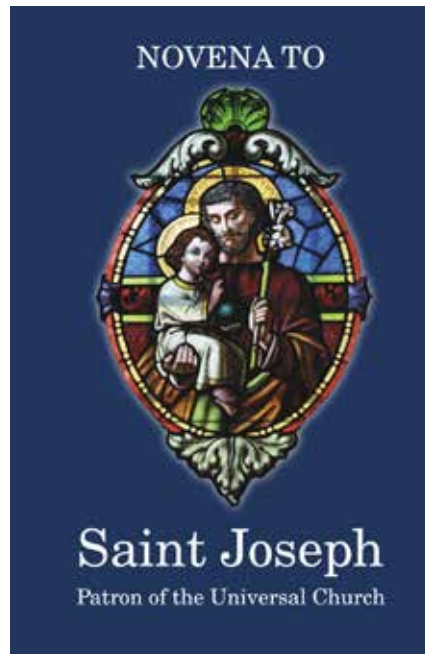
For those professing vows, their entrance is accompanied by the antiphon *Veni, electa mea*. After a special prayer to the Holy Ghost is said, the sisters make their Profession of Vows and are clothed with the black veils and floral crowns,



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# Novena to Saint Joseph

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Saint Joseph is patron of the Universal Church. He therefore has a special interest in the needs of all. In Nazareth, the Son of God was subject to him as His foster father. In heaven St. Joseph's prayers and requests are regarded by Christ as "commands."

This form of novena was originally devised by the celebrated Fr. Louis Lallemand, S.J. (1587-1633). It has proved particularly effective in obtaining favors through the intercession of St. Joseph. This saintly priest and great master of the spiritual life, to whom St. Joseph never refused anything he asked, ensures those that make this novena that they will obtain everything they ask through the intercession of this great saint if, in turn, they will show him special honor and spread devotion to him among others.



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# The Angelic Virtue

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## Extracts from *Sacra Virginitas* of Pius XII

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<sup>52</sup> PL XVI, 202.

<sup>53</sup> Matth. XIII, 46.

<sup>54</sup> S. Thom., *Summa Th.*, II-II, q. 152, a. 5.

29. Virginité fully deserves the name of angelic virtue, which St. Cyprian writing to virgins affirms: “What we are to be, you have already commenced to be. You already possess in this world the glory of the resurrection; you pass through the world without suffering its contagion. In preserving virgin chastity, you are the equals of the angels of God.”<sup>52</sup> To souls, restless for a purer life or inflamed with the desire to possess the kingdom of heaven, virginity offers itself as “a pearl of great price,” for which one “sells all that he has, and buys it.”<sup>53</sup> Married people and even those who are captives of vice, at the contact of virgin souls, often admire the splendor of their transparent purity, and feel themselves moved to rise above the pleasures of sense. When St. Thomas states “that to virginity is awarded the tribute of the highest beauty,”<sup>54</sup> it is because its example is captivating; and, besides, by their perfect chastity do not all these men and women give a striking proof that the mastery of the spirit over the body is the result of a divine assistance and the sign of proven virtue?

30. Worthy of special consideration is the reflection that the most delicate fruit of virginity consists in this, that virgins make tangible, as it were, the perfect virginity of their mother, the Church, and the sanctity of her >

<sup>55</sup> Pontificale Romanum, De benedictione et consecratione virginum.

<sup>56</sup> S. Cypr., *De habitu virginum*, 3; PL IV, 443.

intimate union with Christ. In the ceremony of the consecration of virgins, the consecrating prelate prays God: “that there may exist more noble souls who disdain the marriage which consists in the bodily union of man and woman, but desire the mystery it enshrines, who reject its practice while loving its mystic signification.”<sup>55</sup>

## The Image of God’s Sanctity

31. The greatest glory of virgins is undoubtedly to be the living images of the perfect integrity of the union between the Church and her divine Spouse. For this society founded by Christ it is a profound joy that virgins should be the marvelous sign of its sanctity and fecundity, as St. Cyprian so well expressed it: “They are the flower of the Church, the beauty and ornament of spiritual grace, a subject of joy, a perfect and unsullied homage of praise and honor, the image of God corresponding to the sanctity of the Lord, the most illustrious portion of Christ’s flock. In them the glorious fecundity of our mother, the Church, finds expression and she rejoices; the more the number of virgins increases, the greater is this mother’s joy.”<sup>56</sup>

32. This doctrine of the excellence of virginity and of celibacy and of their superiority over the married state was, as We have already said, revealed by our Divine Redeemer and by the Apostle of the Gentiles; so too, it was solemnly defined as a dogma of divine faith by the holy council of Trent,<sup>57</sup> and explained in the same way by all the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Finally, We and Our Predecessors have often expounded it and earnestly advocated it whenever occasion offered. But recent attacks on this traditional doctrine of the Church, the danger they constitute, and the harm they do to the souls of the faithful lead Us, in fulfillment of the duties of Our charge, to take up the matter once again in this Encyclical Letter, and to reprove these errors which are so often propounded under a specious appearance of truth.

## Is the Married State More Useful to Society?

41. We feel it opportune, moreover, to touch somewhat briefly here on the error of those who, in order to turn boys and girls away from Seminaries and Religious Institutes, strive to impress upon their minds that the Church today has a greater need of the help and of the profession of Christian virtue on the part of those who, united in marriage, lead a life together with others in the world, than of priests and consecrated virgins, who, because of their vow of chastity, are, as it were, withdrawn from human society. No one can fail to see, Venerable Brothers, how utterly false and harmful is such an opinion.

42. Of course, it is not Our intention to deny that Catholic spouses, because of the example of their Christian life, can, wherever they live and whatever be their circumstances, produce rich and salutary fruits as a witness to their virtue. Yet whoever for this reason argues that it is preferable to live in matrimony than to consecrate oneself completely to God, without doubt perverts the right order. Indeed We earnestly wish, Venerable Brothers,





<sup>63</sup> Cf. C.I.C., can. 1013, section 1.

<sup>65</sup> S. Ambros., *De virginitate*, c. 5, n. 26; PL XVI, 272.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Io. X, 14; X, 3.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. AAS, XLIII, 1951, p. 20.

that those who have already contracted marriage, or desire to enter this state, be properly taught their serious obligations not only to educate properly and carefully whatever children they have or will have, but also to help others, within their capacity, by the testimony of their faith and the example of their virtue. And yet, as Our duty demands, We cannot but censure all those who strive to turn young people away from the Seminary or Religious Orders and Institutes, and from the taking of sacred vows, persuading them that they can, if joined in marriage, as fathers and mothers of families pursue a greater spiritual good by an open and public profession of their Christian life. Certainly their conduct would be more proper and correct, if, instead of trying to distract from a life of virginity those young men and women who desire to give themselves to the service of God, too few alas today, they were to exhort with all the zeal at their command the vast numbers of those who live in wedlock to promote apostolic works in the ranks of the laity. On this point, Ambrose fittingly writes: "To sow the seeds of perfect purity and to arouse a desire for virginity has always belonged to the function of the priesthood."<sup>65</sup>

43. We think it necessary, moreover, to warn that it is altogether false to assert that those who are vowed to perfect chastity are practically outside the community of men. Are not consecrated virgins, who dedicate their lives to the service of the poor and the sick, without making any distinction as to race, social rank, or religion, are not these virgins united intimately with their miseries and sorrows, and affectionately drawn to them, as though they were their mothers? And does not the priest likewise, moved by the example of his Divine Master, perform the function of a good shepherd, who knows his flock and calls them by name?<sup>66</sup> Indeed it is from that perfect chastity which they cultivate that priests and religious men and women find the motive for giving themselves to all, and love all men with the love of Christ. And they too, who live the contemplative life, precisely because they not only offer to God prayer and supplication but immolate themselves for the salvation of others, accomplish much for the good of the Church; indeed, when in circumstances like the present they dedicate themselves to works of charity and of the apostolate, according to the norms which We laid down in the Apostolic Letter "Sponsa Christi,"<sup>67</sup> they are very much to be praised; nor can they be said to be separated from contact with men, since they labor for their spiritual progress in this twofold way.

## A Remedy to the Decrease of Vocations

67. In the midst of the grave difficulties with which the Church must contend today, the heart of the Supreme Pastor is greatly comforted, Venerable Brothers, when We see that virginity, which is flourishing throughout the world, is held in great honor and repute in the present as it was in past centuries, even though, as We have said, it is being attacked by errors which, We trust, will soon be dispelled and pass away.

68. Nevertheless We do not deny that this Our joy is overshadowed by a certain sorrow since We learn that in not a few countries the number of vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life is constantly

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<sup>124</sup> S. Ambros., *De virginibus*, lib. I, c. 10, n. 58; PL XVI, 205.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 7, n. 32; PL XVI, 198.

decreasing. We have already given the principal reasons which account for this fact and there is no reason why We should return to them now. Rather do We trust that those educators of youth who have succumbed to errors in this matter, will repudiate them as soon as they are detected, and will consequently seriously resolve both to correct them and to do what they can to provide every help for the youth entrusted to their care who feel themselves called by divine grace to aspire to the priesthood or to embrace the religious life, in order that they may be able to reach so noble a goal. May God grant that new and larger ranks of priests, religious men and women, equal in number and virtue to the current necessities of the Church, may soon go forth to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord.

69. Moreover, as the obligation of Our Apostolic Office demands, We urge fathers and mothers to willingly offer to the service of God those of their children who are called to it. But if this be a source of trouble, sorrow or regret, let them seriously meditate upon the admonition which Ambrose gave to the mothers of Milan. "The majority of the young women whom I knew wanted to be virgins were forbidden to leave by their mothers....If your daughters want to love a man, the laws allow them to choose whom they will. But those who have a right to choose a man, have no right to choose God."<sup>124</sup>

70. Let parents consider what a great honor it is to see their son elevated to the priesthood, or their daughter consecrate her virginity to her Divine Spouse. In regard to consecrated virgins, the Bishop of Milan writes, "You have heard, parents, that a virgin is a gift of God, the oblation of parents, the priesthood of chastity. The virgin is a mother's victim, by whose daily sacrifice divine anger is appeased."<sup>125</sup>



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# Teresa the Great

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by a Carmelite Nun

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“The birth of Saints brings joy to everyone since the benefit of it belongs to all,” says St. Ambrose. This year has been marked by the joyful celebrations surrounding the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Jesus (March 28, 1515–2015). The Holy Mother, as she is often called, has been the object of the veneration and love of generation after generation, not only within the Order of Carmel to which she belongs, but throughout all of Christendom and beyond.

She is known as a great saint and mystic, as the Reformer of the Carmelite Order, and as an invaluable guide on the subject of mystical theology thanks to her writings, which have earned her the praise of many saints and popes over the ages and have caused her to be honored on a par with the doctors of the Church long before Paul VI officially declared her so in 1970.

The Church calls her *Mater Spiritualium*, the Mother of interior souls, recognizing her unique charism to lead them by the way of prayer to perfect union with God at the summit of the Mount of Perfection.

No doubt, her world-wide popularity and renown are due, for a large part, to her enchanting and lovable personality which is kept alive through her books, written in a lively, colloquial style, revealing to us delightful qualities of virile courage and tender love, of holy madness and robust common sense, making her one of the most colorful women of all time.

She was a gift from God, sent at a precise moment in history, to be a powerful antidote against the outbreak of Protestantism in 1517 and all its consequences by giving to the Church an in number praying of fervent souls dedicated >

exclusively to a life of prayer and contemplation, on fire with apostolic zeal for the cause of the “Lord God of Hosts”—*Pro Domino Deo Exercituum!*

## Her Background

Teresa was born on March 28, 1515, in the ancient town of Avila in the very Christian and rugged region of Castile, Spain, which at the time was reaching the apogee of its golden age. Her father, Don Alonso Sanchez y Cepeda, was a deeply pious, noble, and wealthy silk merchant of Jewish and Spanish roots. Her mother was the youthful and delicate Beatriz de Ahumada, who died at the age of 33, bequeathing to her 12-year-old daughter Teresa her tender love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary in a such a way that the sorrowful child turned spontaneously to Mary to ask her to replace her dead mother. All her life she felt assured that her prayer had been answered, especially when “Mary took her child to herself” by calling her to the Order of Carmel.

Teresa had two sisters and nine brothers, eight of whom would embark as *conquistadores* to seek fortune and adventure in the newly discovered American continent. From an early age she was the life and soul of her family and the leader among her siblings. At the age of seven, she persuaded her favorite brother, Redrigo, who was four years her senior, to run away with her to Morocco to gain the crown of martyrdom. They didn't get very far before they were caught by an uncle and brought back to their distraught parents. “I want to see God,” Teresa explained, “and to see God we must die.” She would then resort to trying to live like a hermit in the garden and would love to gaze at a painting picturing Our Lord convening with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well while repeating over and over the words: “Lord, give me of this water.” No doubt she didn't yet understand the full meaning of them, but do these words not express and foreshadow her life-long quest and the happy torment of her soul? Teresa's desires to “see God” and to “drink of this water” would become so great that she would have the heroic courage to satisfy them

and lead her fellow Christians in the same quest.

It is true to say that her good desires waned somewhat when she reached adolescence and became infatuated with the romantic tales of chivalry, in vogue at the time, featuring handsome knights whose deeds were frequently all too human rather than heroic. “So completely,” she later wrote, “was I mastered by this promise that I thought I could never be happy without a new book.” She even wrote one of her own of the same kind, and all this, behind her disapproving father's back.

Being exquisitely pretty and talented, she became aware of the powers of her feminine charm. Looking back in later years, she admitted to one of her confessors: “You know, Father, when I was young I was congratulated for three things in particular: they said I was a saint, that I was witty, and that I was beautiful. I believed two of these things. I thought I was witty and beautiful, which showed enough vanity on my part.” Luckily, her father had the good idea of sending her to the nearby convent of the Augustinian nuns to be educated, and it was there that her prior desires returned to the point that she reached the determined resolve to be a nun, despite her strong natural repulsion towards the religious state. She saw it as the safest option if she were to save her soul. She was then twenty years old.

## A Nun Not by Halves

Once Teresa, noble Christian that she was, had made up her mind, there was no turning back. She left her father's home very early one morning in 1535 without even saying goodbye, and entered the Carmelite convent of the Incarnation (which lies just beyond the city walls of Avila), in such inner distress that she later admitted: “I do not think it will be greater when I die.”

Generous in all her undertakings, she would not be a nun “by halves,” however, and it wasn't long before her “marriage of reason” turned into a “marriage of love” and this came about mainly when she began to lead a serious life of prayer and reflection. “All good came to me through prayer,” she said, and as long as she persevered



in it, she was fervent, whereas when she became slack in prayer, her fervor dwindled.

She thus spent twenty years of her religious life between periods of great piety and periods of relative lukewarmness, accommodating herself to the general ambience of her convent where the spirit of laxity and worldliness had crept in since the rules of the enclosure were no longer strictly

This conversion at the age of 39, impelled her to surrender herself completely to Our Lord, without the least reserve. She gave herself with fresh determination to a serious life of prayer, and it was not long before the good Lord responded by raising her to a state of inspired contemplation and lavishing upon her extraordinary mystical graces. She refers to this



Bl. Anne of Jesus, Saint Teresa of Avila and Bl. Anne of St. Bartholomew

in force. During these years she was shackled with attachments and miserable habits that she felt too weak to break: “I wish I knew how to describe the captivity of my soul at that time,” she later wrote, until the day when she was granted the grace of a profound conversion of heart at the sight of a statue of the “Ecce Homo” covered with wounds. As she fell in tears at her Mother’s feet like another Magdalen, she reached the conviction once and for all that: “All our efforts are unavailing unless we completely give up having confidence in ourselves and fix it all upon God.”

time in her autobiography: “Until now the life I was describing was my own; but the life I have been living since...is the life which God has been living in me.”

Through the power of this Divine Life, Teresa would now embark on a glorious adventure of love and conquest in the service of her Lord and His Blessed Mother Mary “whose habit she wore” by reviving the primitive ideal of her Order of Mount Carmel in the spirit and strength of her St. Elias, whose cry was: “As the Lord liveth in whose sight I stand...With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts.”

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## Aflame with Divine Love

“O strong love of God!...Nothing seems impossible to one who loves.” Born and raised in Avila, Teresa inherited the courage of its women, who were famous for having successfully defended their city during a memorable siege in the absence of their men-folk. Fuelled moreover with Divine Love, there is nothing she would not do for the Lord she loves so much: “The least that anyone who is beginning to serve the Lord truly can offer Him is his life.”

For a state of chronic bad health, plagued with infirmities which would have kept others bedridden, without penny and amid fierce opposition, she founded convent after convent, extending the reform to the Friars as well as to the Sisters, according to the will of God and under obedience to her superiors and confessors. Along the way she was encouraged by several future canonized saints: St. John of the Cross (co-reformer of Carmel), St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Francis Borgia, St. John of Avila, and St. Louis Bertrand.

She envied her “priest-brothers” who unlike her could early satisfy their burning zeal for souls by preaching and going off to the Missions. Not content with formulating unfeasible desires, she would make up for this by doing what lay in her power. Firstly she would strive for greater perfection and sanctity: it was at this time that she made the vow of doing always what seemed the most perfect. Secondly, she would put her outstanding organizational and administrative abilities at the service of her zeal by founding convents.

In these convents, the “little dovecots of the Virgin,” as she called them, she would assemble little groups of fervent nuns within the confines of a strict enclosure, thus ingeniously recreating the solitude of the desert according to the primitive spirit of Carmel, by means of high walls, grates, and veils. Together they would dedicate themselves exclusively to a life of prayer and immolation for the Church, for priests, and for souls—more especially for those priests who were preachers, theologians, and defenders of the Faith. “Oh, my sisters in Christ! Help me to entreat this of the Lord, who has brought you

together for that very purpose. This is your vocation, thus must be your business, these must be your desires, these your tears, these your petitions... Let us strive to be such that our prayers may be of avail to help these servants of God.”

She felt intense anguish over the great evils which beset the Church, the spread of Luther’s heresy, the reports of the missionaries in America of the millions of souls of Indians who are being lost. “Those Indians have cost me no little suffering!...I do not know how we can look on so calmly and see the devil carrying off as many souls as he does daily...To worry about anything else seems ridiculous.”

The more Teresa progressed in Divine intimacy the greater her apostolic desires became. Far from distracting her and her Carmelite daughters from contemplative prayers, the zeal which this prayer enkindles is a spur to ever greater apostolic immolation. United to Our Lord they embrace the whole Christ, i.e. the Church, the Mystical Body. Their love for their Divine Spouse is inextricably linked with their love for this Church and the souls that compose it. The two grow in union, and in St. Teresa, this will be beautifully expressed in her final words spoken on her death bed at Alba de Tormes on October 4, 1582: “I am a daughter of the Church. Oh, my Beloved, the time has come for us to see each other.”

## Holy Madness and Robust Common Sense

The last twenty years of her life, Teresa the mystic was most often seen traveling throughout Spain on mule back or in a covered wagon founding convents. She came to rub shoulders with people of all ranks: muleteers, beggars, bankers, bishops, theologians, saints, miners, dukes and duchesses, princes and princesses, and even kings and queens. Her extensive correspondence, which has happily been passed down to us, shows that no less than a thousand people crossed her path. She became past master in the art of dealing with them all and, thanks to her charm and her gift of persuasive humor, she managed to



win over everyone from the most cantankerous neighbor to the good Lord Himself. “God be praised!” exclaimed Princess Juana of Spain after a meeting with her, “He has granted us to see a saint whom we can all imitate. She talks like us, sleeps and eats as we do, and her conversation is unpretentious!”

Her down-to-earthness would sometimes cause others to overlook the mystic in her who, all the while, was living in profound union with God amidst raptures, locutions, and visions. From 1572 onwards, she was experiencing the most elevated mystical grace of all, that of “spiritual marriage” whereby she had a near continual vision of the Trinity dwelling within her soul. She could have happily spent her time savoring this sublime intimacy with the Three Divine Persons, but no, as she says herself: “The Lord wants deeds, He wants works. This is the reason for prayer, this is true union with His will, the purpose of Spiritual Marriage: the birth of good works.”

She therefore gracefully descended from the lofty heights of her mystical union to suffer and to work in the service of her Lord and His Church until her death, thus becoming a true mother to all through the fecundity of her Spousal love.

## Teresian Teaching

Teresa’s wise and perceptive confessors, who realized the great value of her experience in the ways of prayer, ordered her to write for the benefit, not only of her Carmelite daughters, but for all interior souls. Here are some points which she particularly insists upon:

1) “We are not able to please God, nor is God accustomed to impart this gift to us except through the most holy humanity of Christ in whom He is well pleased.”

2) We best find Jesus in the “Interior Castle” of our souls, in the innermost mansion where he resides with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

3) The gate by which we enter the “Interior Castle” is prayer and recollection, which is “nothing but a friendly intercourse, and frequent solitary converse, with Him who we know loves us.”

4) And since prayer consists “not in thinking much but in loving much,” it will kindle a strong desire within the soul to return love for love and make it understand the necessity of complete detachment from created things and of laying a firm foundation to its prayer life by the practice of the virtues, humility and fraternal charity especially. The soul becomes “a servant of love” embracing the ascetical life for the sake of the mystical life.

5) Asceticism is a labor of love and as “love has the power of making us forget our every satisfaction in order to please our beloved” (far more effective than the most rigorous spirit of penance would!), it demands the surrender of absolutely everything: “To give all in order to possess all.”

6) Thus freed from all attachments to self and to creatures, joyous and ardent, the Teresian soul revels in “the holy freedom of spirit which our souls seek in order to soar to their Master unburdened by the leaden weight of earth.”

## Conclusion

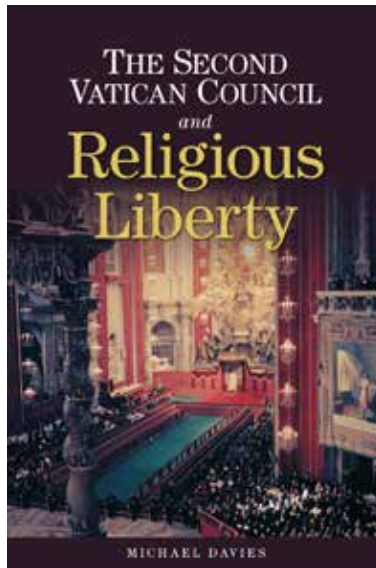
“God gave her a heart as wide as the sand that is on the sea shore” (Introit of the Mass of St. Teresa). Well might we rejoice, then, in celebrating the anniversary of her birth. That great heart, which the good God created for the benefit of us all, longs to embrace all souls to lead them to Divine Intimacy.

“Christians, the Lord’s mercy is so great that He has forbidden none to strive to come and drink of His fountain of life...indeed he calls publicly and in so loud voice to do so...So take my advice and do not tarry on the way, but strive like strong men until you die in the attempt... The Lord never tires of giving, let us never tire of receiving...All things pass away, God alone suffices.”

# The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty

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by Michael Davies



Back in print! Popular historian Michael Davies wrote one of the best studies on the doctrinal battle over the Church's teaching on religious freedom. This time the Modernists did win....This book deals with the right and wrong conceptions of religious freedom. Special emphasis is placed on the weaknesses and confusions of the (non-infallible) Declaration on Religious Freedom of Vatican II, which contains a number of questionable assertions which have greatly added to the confusion of Catholics and others since it was approved by Vatican II in 1965. This makes *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* indispensable for any Catholic who is aware of the recent changes in the Catholic Church.





# The Little Flower

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by Fr. Delmanowski, SSPX

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“‘You really are a saint!’ some one said to her. ‘No, I am not a saint; I have never done the works of the Saints. I am a very, very little soul on whom the good God has outpoured the abundance of His grace. You will see in Heaven that I am telling you the truth.’” Perhaps the most popular saint since her canonization, St. Therese of Lisieux is known for her child-like spirituality. Often referred to as the *Little Way*, this spirituality has been promoted and encouraged by the popes since her death. Providence raises up special souls for each era. If one but read the lives of famous saints, for example, St. Benedict or St. Ignatius of Loyola, one sees that God used them in order to reform the Church, to bring back Christian fervor in a time where charity had begun to grow cold. Yet, in all of them we find nothing more than the re-echoing of the Gospel.

The Carmelite from Lisieux is no different. In his book *A Retreat with St. Therese*, Fr. Liagre, C.S.Sp., points out that “Thérèse is the living commentary of the Gospels, the most beautiful commentary because the most simple.” In her one finds a soul appointed by Divine Providence to show what souls presently require, a holiness aimed at the prevailing lack of interior life and profound narcissism. With the help of Fr. Liagre’s book, a beautiful synopsis of the essential elements of her spiritual life, one sees that her “Little Way” is simply an application of the Gospel.

## Faith in Merciful Love

“And we have believed in the charity which God hath to us” (John 4:6). These words are a >

perfect summary of what was the foundation of her interior life, for St. Therese rested completely upon the belief in God's love for her. Without this principle, we will understand nothing about her. For any real union with God the primary and indispensable condition is faith in God's unfailing love, a reality outside of which St. Therese never seemed to consider God. Due to the death of her mother at a young age she was constantly near her father, a very holy soul. Through him, her earthly father, she formed a conception of who her Heavenly Father was. She realized the great reality of what it meant to be a child of God and to be infinitely loved with a Divine Love. From this faith sprang all her other virtues and, even amidst the dark night of the soul, kept her fixed in her Father's Love for her. It was the key to her sanctity. As the Council of Trent puts it: "faith is the beginning, root, and foundation of all justification."

Towards the end of her life God had allowed Therese to suffer one of the greatest mortifications of an interior soul like hers: the dark night of the soul. In this state the soul is left to feel its own nothingness, feeling no consolation or joy from anything, even in the beautiful and quiet moments of peace it used to find in prayer. Her only source of consolation was to keep her eyes upon the "Sun of Love," as she called Him, knowing that through the clouds of her soul He was there watching over her, but communicating Himself to her now only through the light of faith.

However, St. Therese's faith was not in any love, but in Merciful Love. St. Paul explains that "when we were dead in sin, [God] has quickened us together in Christ" (Eph. 2:4). Despite the wretched state of man after the Fall God still loved him, or rather, He loved him because of that destitution into which he had fallen. It was this Love that led Him to the Cross to be crucified. His glory lies in our believing in this wholly Merciful Love. St. Therese understood this and dared to enter into a filial relationship with God her Father because she believed herself infinitely loved by the Father of Compassion. "What delights God in my soul," she writes in one of her letters, "is to see me loving my littleness and poverty, to see the blind trust I have in His Compassion."

## Victim of Merciful Love

St. Therese strove to make herself a victim to Merciful Love. At a very early age she had a great desire to enter the Carmel and give herself to God. She knew that it was there that Our Lord was waiting for her. She would have to go through much discouragement and many disappointments before she would enter. By the time she had reached the age of fourteen she had set her heart on entering the Carmel by that following Christmas. However, this desire would find her much disappointed, for she would have to wait months before the local bishop would allow one of her young age to enter. This was only after she herself had implored him many times for the dispensation, for which she had even personally petitioned the pope during an audience when on pilgrimage in Rome. As she herself states, the call of God was so urgent that she was ready to pass through fire itself to prove her great desire to be the victim of His love. In her autobiography she expresses this beautifully: "To offer oneself as a Victim to Divine Love is not to offer oneself to sweetness—to consolation; but to every anguish, every bitterness, for Love lives only by sacrifice; and the more a soul wills to be surrendered to Love, the more must she be surrendered to suffering" (*Autobiography*, Ch. XII).

A soul which truly strives to please God will offer itself and its own miseries, after having given everything and still finding an obstacle: its own inability to love. With such a soul God is able to come and delight Himself within it, satisfying His desire to be loved. The more it does this the more it sees its wretchedness and the more it understands that it is a fit subject for the manifestation of Merciful Love. Therese expresses this well when she writes: "try to understand, that to be a victim of Love, the weaker and more wretched we are, the more fit we are for the operations of this consuming and transforming Love. It is sufficient to desire to be a victim, but we must be willing to remain poor and helpless always, and that is what is so difficult." (*Autobiography*, 360).

It is in this line of thought that she intimated to one of her sisters, almost in a pathetic manner, that the committing of a fault was, from this point



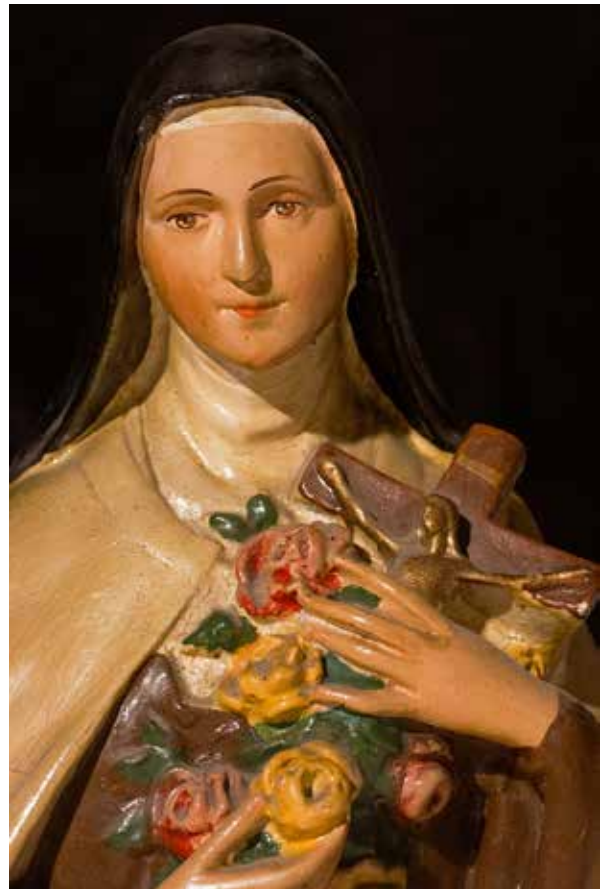
of view, a great joy to her because it gave her another opportunity to express her helplessness to Jesus. And in her childlike manner she added that this profits the soul so much that she would almost look for more ways to be found at fault, not that she would want to offend the good God, but so that she could be ever more plunged into the mercy of God.

## The Desire to Love

St. Therese goes still further. “You want me to tell you a means to become perfect. I know only one, Love” (*Autobiography*, p. 367). The only proper response for love is love itself. Therese, therefore, when she understood herself loved by Merciful Love was aroused with a great desire to love in return. She later wrote: “The cry of the dying Jesus ‘I thirst’ goes on echoing in the depths of my heart, kindling within it new fires of zeal. I would give my Beloved to drink...” (*Autobiography*, p. 88). As St. Augustine writes: “God thirsts to be thirsted for.” The soul, in seeing its own misery and wretchedness, and being loved because of it, will be drawn to love in return and will be filled with a great desire to love.

St. Therese was known to say that her “one desire is to please Jesus” (*Autobiography*, p. 152). This is a beautiful expression of the Gospel because it shows that great desire to love God. Her soul was full of humility because of her wretched state as a sinner and yet still full of confidence because she counted on Merciful Love to implant into her nothingness the love that was lacking. Here we can see the necessity of faith in Merciful Love, for it makes our wretchedness the condition for believing ourselves capable of loving God and opens the soul to God to allow Him to accomplish His work in it.

When a soul thus surrenders itself to Merciful Love God places in it His own desire to be loved. “Our God is a consuming fire” and He consumes it with strengths like His, measureless and infinite. The soul is divinized and made like Him, for “He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit” (I Cor. 6:17). St. Therese’s life is an illustration of this sublime doctrine. As she told one of her sisters on



the night of her death: “There is no more to say... love is the only thing that matters.” In this one word is found the whole summary of the Gospel. She once wrote in a letter to her sister Céline: “In times of aridity when I am incapable of praying, of practicing virtue, I seek little opportunities, mere trifles, to give pleasure to Jesus; for instance a smile, a pleasant word when inclined to be silent and to show weariness. If I find no opportunities, I at least tell Him again and again that I love Him; that is not difficult and it keeps alive the fire in my heart. Even though this fire of love might seem to me extinct I would still throw straws upon the embers and I am certain it would rekindle.”

## The Virtues of St. Therese

Faith in God’s Merciful love for her and

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abandonment to Him by her great desire to love Him in return is the secret to all her virtues. Fr. Liagre comments: "It is strange how when we contemplate St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, each virtue we examine seems to be her secret. And the reason is, I think, because all virtues in her are one and the same perfectly simple thing. They are only different aspects of one single virtue which, in her, more than dominates, even more than fosters all the rest, a virtue which is their very soul and foundation: Love" (*A Retreat*, p. 32).

A soul will be truly humble when it abandons itself as a victim of Merciful Love. It will love to see and acknowledge its misery and littleness before God because that is the very condition which draws that love to itself. One's nothingness is now seen through the eyes of God. Every new manifestation of weakness is another reminder of what Merciful Love does and an opportunity for abandonment of itself into that Love.

St. Therese is a model of confidence because a soul can only be at peace when faced with its nothingness if it is certain that by this very means it places itself in the hands of Merciful Love. This is the confidence of a child knowing that his father is in control. Here is the key to her little way, for she abandon's herself into the arms of her Father, leaving all to him and accomplishing all in the hands of His all-powerful love. "One day, seeing one of the sisters distressed at the sight of her sufferings, she said: 'Oh, don't worry! If I suffocate, God will give me strength. I love Him. Never will He forsake me'" (*Novissima Verba*, p. 89).

A little soul like St. Therese is filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost as she is habitually led by His promptings, having placed all her confidence in Him. St. Paul exhorted that "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). This is definitely true of St. Therese.

Prompted by the love of God, to love for St. Therese was to renounce and sacrifice self. "As I never seek myself, I lead the happiest life in the world" (*Autobiography*, p. 305). This gave birth to the virtue of patience, which is love in action. Suffering is indispensable for fallen human nature, a necessary remedy from a loving Father for man's egoism. St. Therese understood that it was through suffering that one is forced to go

outside of oneself and fly to Merciful Love. She had the intelligence to know why God allowed suffering: "Time is but a dream; God sees us already in glory. Oh, how much good I derive from this thought. Now I understand why He lets us suffer" (*Autobiography*, p. 338).

Filled with this great desire to love, prayer was something very simple for St. Therese, which for her, was nothing other than a loving communion between the creature's wretchedness and the Creator's loving compassion. Often she would look to the Gospels to meditate upon, letting what they said about Christ's actions and words be imprinted on her soul. She looked for Love and was able to penetrate beyond the words into the spirit of life which animated them. She learned from Jesus, or rather saw in Him, how to love God as her heavenly Father. Her great desire to love is a summary of her prayer life.

Being filled with the love of God, fraternal charity came spontaneously to St. Therese. She wrote: "The more united I am to Jesus, the more I love my Sisters" (*Autobiography*, p. 163). "It was by loving Him that He made me understand to the full the great duty of charity" (*Autobiography*, p. 162). To love God is to love our neighbor, and to love our neighbor is to love God.

## Conclusion

In St. Therese we find a simple soul, devoid of any artificiality and completely focused on God. In short, we find in her true peace, that tranquility of order of which St. Augustine speaks. From where does this tranquility come? Her unwavering faith in Merciful Love, confidence, and her desire to love. Fr. Liagre sums up his commentary on St. Therese with these simple words: "Let us establish ourselves in that peace. What is asked of us? A firm faith in God's Love for our wretchedness; humility; confidence; the desire to love. That is the whole of her 'Little Way': but, once more, it is also the whole of the Gospels" (*A Retreat*, p. 125).



## The Inside Story of Vatican II

By Rev. Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D.

When it comes to Vatican II, we need not indulge on the mystifying 'spirit' of the Council, nor even thumb through Sheed's *Is it the Same Church?* To get the record straight there is nothing like the good old *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*, in its new edition called *The Inside Story of Vatican II*. A professional historian, journalist and eye-witness, Fr. Ralph M. Wiltgen presents the modern reader with a history of that council which is at once factual, authoritative, impartial, thorough, and totally interesting.

The *Inside Story* describes how each of the 16 conciliar documents was painstakingly hammered out. And it brings to light how the Council's activity was guided constantly by groups rather than by individuals. Yet key individuals were quite pivotal for writing the history of Vatican II. Cardinal Liénart, not five minutes into the first general meeting, asked to give more time to select the candidates for commissions of study, which led to a striking victory of the liberal alliance in re-directing the Council's course.

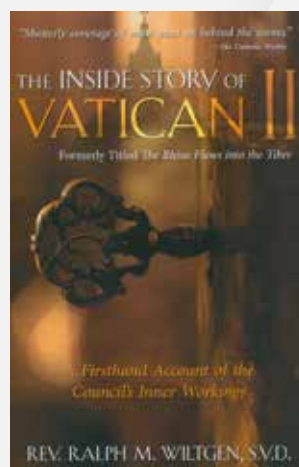
Partisan spirit was gaining ground as things went on, and it appeared as if St. Peter's basilica was turning into an immense pressure cooker. No one knew what stew would result from it except that things would never be the same after. Wiltgen's original title suggests the prevailing of the group from the Rhine River countries. Said Yves Congar: "In short, the Rhine was in reality that broad current of vigorous Catholic theology and pastoral science which had got under way in the early 1950s..." What Congar celebrated indeed was what had been condemned only 15 years earlier by *Humani Generis* of Pius XII as the "new theology"; headed by French and German avant-garde crypto modernists.

Those who revel in mystery novels will enjoy reading this volume, which has the breadth of an open landscape and the sharpness of the finest details on persons and events. One feels like enter-

ing the maze of in-depth theological themes, but having a sense of direction as such doctrines are incarnated in historical and personal lives. One comes across totally extravagant personages, subtle *periti* and veritable armies in battle alignment of conservatives vs. liberals, each vowing to die rather than surrender.

These pages were written by an outsider, simply gleaned information to feed his Council News Service, who could truly say: "What I saw and what I heard, and the facts that I ferreted out, I now pass on to you." For those who still believe with the publisher of TAN Books that "the Holy Spirit mysteriously worked within the Council to bring about what God desired for His Church"; each of the 400 pages of facts will quickly set the record straight.

Fr. Dominique Bourmaud



488 pp. – Softcover – STK# 8464 – \$22.95

The Mission San Carlos Borromeo was the headquarters of the Alta California missions headed by Father Junípero Serra from 1770 until his death in 1784. It was also the seat of the second president, Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen. The mission buildings had fallen into disrepair by the mid-19th century, after the Mexican secularization act of 1833, but were restored beginning in 1884. It remains a parish church today. It is the only one of the California Missions to have its original bell tower dome.





# Insights on *The Angelus*

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Interview with Fr. Kenneth Novak, Editor Emeritus

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**The Angelus:** Fr. Novak, could you re-introduce yourself to our readers?

**Fr. Novak:** I have been a priest in the SSPX for 22 years. I got involved with the apostolate of *The Angelus* in 1992, 17 days after being ordained, and I stayed there for 17 years.

**The Angelus:** Why were you chosen to be the editor?

**Fr. Novak:** That is a good question! I think the word got out that I was involved with the yearbook and worked at a newspaper when I was in high school. Perhaps they thought that I had the gift of gab, and was able to keep people interested in the magazine.

**The Angelus:** What was the state of the Angelus Press and the magazine when you began?

**Fr. Novak:** Angelus Press was in debt but had a reputation for printing books that English-speaking traditional Catholics should read on Archbishop Lefebvre and the crisis. Some of the books published under me were *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican*, *Spiritual Journey*, *The Mystery of Jesus*, *Open Letter to Confused Catholics* (three or four reprints), and *I Accuse the Council*.

**The Angelus:** Do you know what had been printed before you came on the scene?

**Fr. Novak:** There was *The Church's Year* by Goffine. And even earlier, Angelus Press had printed the *Apologia* books of Michael Davies.

**The Angelus:** Which books do you remember printing as you came in?





**Fr. Novak:** We did the Divine Office, which was a big project for us. The idea was to give the priests the ability to teach it to the faithful, who could have the Divine Office in their hands. Good fruits came out of it as it is still quite popular and our Third Order members are using it often. There were some handbooks on Communion in the hand, the liturgy, and children's books. And, of course, the magazine!

**The Angelus:** Speaking of *The Angelus*, could you give us some historical background?

**Fr. Novak:** The magazine had existed since 1978. It contained interesting issues like announcing the opening of Ecône and other Society news. Before me, Fr. Doran was in charge for a short time, and before him, Fr. Cooper and Fr. Pulvermacher. Fr. Terry Marx did it for a time also. When Fr. Scott became the District Superior, he wanted the crisis in the Church to be put on the front burner, so that people would understand why the Society existed, why Archbishop Lefebvre was proven right given the deterioration of the Church. We wanted to justify the charism of the SSPX in preserving the Mass and the priesthood.

**The Angelus:** You are describing the magazine as a vehicle to defend the SSPX with sword uplifted, correct?

**Fr. Novak:** Absolutely! And to shine a bright light on bishops misusing their authority and on the unfortunate behavior of some clerics in the Church. There was a critical desire to show our faithful that they should avoid participating or supporting in any way the Novus Ordo. But also, we wished to show them how to live the traditional Mass and the lifestyle which flows from the Mass.

**The Angelus:** What were practically the types of articles you presented?

**Fr. Novak:** We always tried to keep a little text of Archbishop Lefebvre. We touched a lot on family life, on life as it was meant to be led, politics, economics, medicine, moral issues, embryology, cremation. When computers became popular, we wrote about them too. Social issues became prominent and we pushed them to stay

grounded in reality.

**The Angelus:** You also had some foreign writers, didn't you?

**Fr. Novak:** French Dominican Father de Chivré became very famous in later years. Examples of his articles would be *What a Soul Is* or *Walking with Mary*. He had an attractive style, maybe more conversational and spontaneous. We introduced him to the English-speaking world.

We also translated *SiSiNoNo* of Don Putti, and that was big as well. It was reproduced at least every other month, exposing so much wrongdoing. Then, Fr. Scott wanted more emphasis on the family. Thus, on the alternate months, we would republish articles that were being written in Australia by Fr. de la Tour under the title of *Catholic Family*. Although written in a popular tone, at home, there was too much other material that people could read about Catholic families and therefore we realized it was not our readership.

**The Angelus:** What, then, was the demographic makeup of your readership? At the present moment the average reader of the magazine is of middle age and is eager to share it with family members. What was it before?

**Fr. Novak:** I think that statistics haven't changed much, in fact. You've got people who have read themselves into Tradition. They saved the Mass by bringing it to the local drugstore, 2nd floor, every other Tuesday night! They made it a point to preserve the Mass that matched the lifestyle that they had been raised in, and that Mass is what nourished them. They had to have that Mass! These people were interested in *The Angelus*. We constantly had letters of people thanking us for *The Angelus*, and the readership stayed strong.

Now it may be that the lifestyle has been compromised in the next generation and the Mass is what they haven't had to fight for. It has become easier and more casual, and so the necessity for the laity to read and inform themselves has been compromised.

**The Angelus:** What was the most popular of all the articles? >

**Fr. Novak:** It was always Questions & Answers, especially those written by Fr. Pulvermacher. Archbishop Lefebvre, of course, was always appreciated. Another popular thing was Father Schmidberger's or Bishop Fellay's conferences and their Letter to Friends and Benefactors, always including the latest developments with Rome. They always spoke cogently, simply, with little parables: it was excellent. They were quite lengthy, running for several pages, and I think the readership went outside of Society circles. We always made a flyer out of those so that they could be distributed. People would have them and pass them on to their friends and acquaintances.

**The Angelus:** Do you think that there was a real crusading spirit among these readers, which does not seem to be so visible today?

**Fr. Novak:** Bingo! You have it right here. That was before people could communicate easily with emails and computers. Even things like the *Regina Coeli Report* (which we typeset) was a lifeline for people: they liked to read about a particular mission or parish, which provided a human element to the work of Tradition. Too often today this personal touch has been lost.

**The Angelus:** Did you sense that there was a time when the tone had to change?

**Fr. Novak:** We pretty much kept up the same line. You must keep in mind that there was a time when Angelus Press was treated like a leper, which is why we started Sarto House, with an address in New York City, to print books under a different label. For instance, even other traditionalist publications would not advertise our books because we were schismatics at best and excommunicated at worst. So, we started another publishing house with a secretary hoping we would get these books outside of the regular Angelus Press customers into Catholic circles.

**The Angelus:** Was that successful?

**Fr. Novak:** It worked! *Iota Unum* went out, and other books as well, under the Sarto House imprint. I think Fr. Dörmann's books were a big publishing effort and they will always be a reference to what went wrong with Vatican

II. We published much of the *Integrity* series: *Fatherhood and Family*, *Motherhood and Family*, *My Life with Thomas Aquinas*. The laymen who directed the *Integrity* magazine in the 40's and 50's were already seeing that the Catholic Faith was on the verge of a crash because it was not being lived at the parish level, at the seminary level.

**The Angelus:** What were the great successes of Angelus Press under your leadership?

**Fr. Novak:** The 1962 *Roman Catholic Daily Missal*, even if we had a lot of problems getting it out. Also, the Divine Office. And I will never forget the one addressed to most Novus Ordo priests of this country: *Priest, Where is Thy Mass?*

**The Angelus:** Which other items did you address which you felt were important?

**Fr. Novak:** We would take many issues, like art, virtues, warfare, agriculture, and pull them apart. We had good books too: anything that was available written by Archbishop Lefebvre. Now, we are getting Digest Anthologies, where we have excerpts from everything he said on the *Mass of All Time* or on the *Priesthood* by Fr. Troade, and now the *Spiritual Life*. The Archbishop is like a doctor of the Church; we need to keep him alive, and his writings need to be made available.

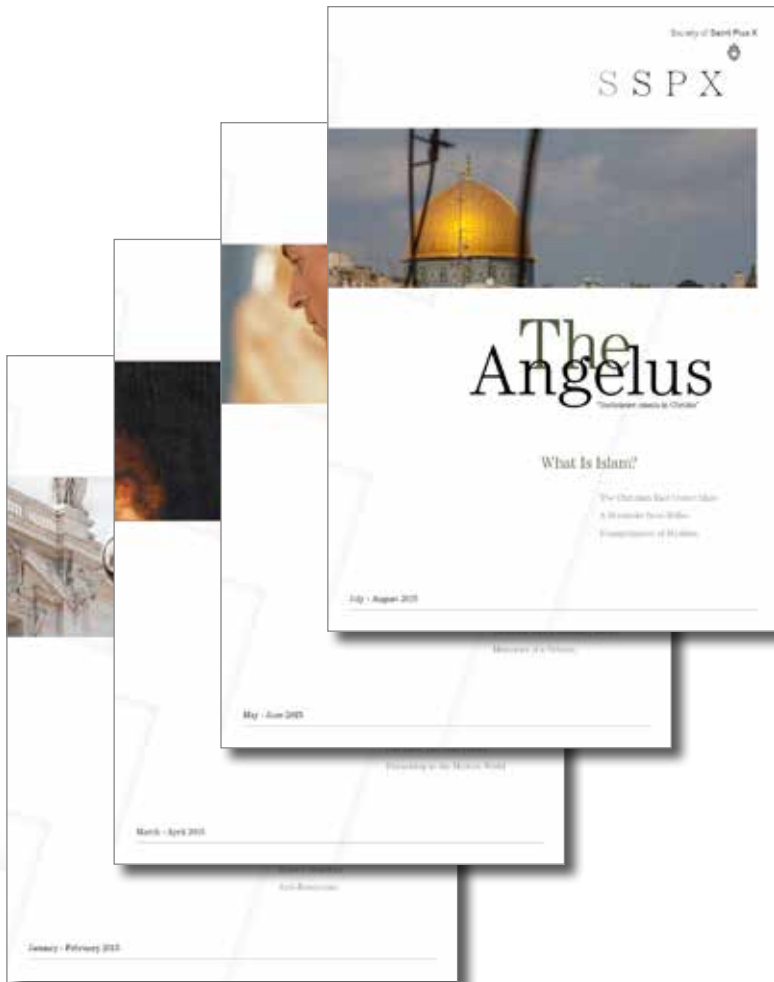
**The Angelus:** Although things are very different from twenty years ago, would you have any advice to give Angelus Press in order to expand its apostolate?

**Fr. Novak:** Junior needs to read! Twenty years ago, people read because that was what everyone did! Now, you can surf the internet and get your three minutes' satisfaction and then go to the next topic. Or you can search around for what you want to read, and if you do not find it, you leave it. But the problem remains: how can you educate a mind to read? The challenge is there: how can you move people today to take up a writing and read—*Tolle, lege*—and let the Holy Ghost speak to them?

# The Angelus

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# Chant: Song of the Sacrifice

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by Fr. Thomas Hufford, SSPX

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*“And so they sang a hymn, and went out to mount Olivet.”*

Sacrifice gives to chant its reason for existence, and not only because it stirs up our devotion and moves us to offer.

We read in Psalm 21, after the narration of the passion of our Lord, that divine praise is a fruit of His sacrifice: “In the midst of the Church will I praise thee.” Derived in part from the joy of glorifying His Father and redeeming souls, this praise gives a perfection to His sacrifice. Likewise when the Church offers sacrifice with our Lord, the divine praises sung in her sacred music lend something to the perfection of that sacrifice.

## Song as Musical Art

St. Thomas’s elevated teachings about song will be clearest if we first examine closely today’s common usage. Some today employ the term “song” as a gauge of value, and they reveal a wide discrepancy in their appraisals. One figure of speech found in dictionaries belittles songs: “for a song, very cheaply.” To make one only requires a breath and a voice and a school-boy’s training, if that much. Thus the expression, “I got it for a song,” which indicates that it cost me almost nothing.

The contrary estimation recognizes something in the song that is beyond price. An example appears in *Our Mutual Friend*, by Charles Dickens, where a cabinet maker ingenuously charms a dolls’ dressmaker: “I’ve heerd tell that



you can sing most beautiful; and I should be better paid with a song than with any money, for I always loved the likes of that.” Perhaps this second evaluation stems from a greater appreciation for things of the spirit.

A musician makes of the mind an interior studio. There, he fashions and orders the sounds into a spiritual composition within the soul. The concert artist Pablo Casals was asked how he would set out to learn a new piece. He explained that he would take the music and study it at his desk; then he would put the music down and go to his cello and play it. A violin student asked Peter Salaff, violinist of the Cleveland Quartet, “So when you perform quartets, you are constantly pre-conceptualizing the pitch and the sound quality and the expression?” That teacher replied,

“Well, if I don’t, I’m soon reminded that I should!” Students of music know that music is not just an exterior work, because their directors and teachers declare time and again that they should “hear it in the head” before they sing or play.

The song in this way already precedes the breath and the voice. As a word is first inside the intellect before it passes through the voice into something sensible, so the song is complete, in a way, inside the higher part of the soul before it becomes an external work. This power to reproduce the song in the mind is a virtue called art. So when St. Thomas had occasion to define song, he could have referred to the art somewhere in the definition by calling it a work of musical art or “a musical composition for singing,” as we find it defined in one of our own

Orchestra of the Blessed in Heaven, Döbling Carmelite Church, Vienna, Austria. (Renata Sedmakova - www.shutterstock.com)



dictionaries.

But St. Thomas's definition has a surprise...

## The Thomistic Definition of Song

According to the prince of theologians, song is an "exultation of the mind," a joy in the higher part of the soul. If song proceeds from a sorrow of the mind it is "improperly so called." Concerning the canticle of the beloved's vineyard in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, St. Thomas writes: "Properly, a song is a thing of exultation, whence here the song is improperly so called, since it's one of sadness, like the lamentation that David made for Saul and Jonathan."

Exultation is not a hidden joy, but rather a joy that must get out. It can express itself in numerous ways, for example through a smile, through a dance, or through the gesture of throwing down the football in the end-zone. "Exultation of the mind" has many possible specific differences. Song is an exultation "bursting forth into vocal sound."

The author of this definition could have toned down his description of the passing of joy from the quiet interior of the soul to the exterior world of things apparent. But without any apology, he chose a word that we could apply to a torrent, suggesting a wild uncontrollable energy, "*prorumpens in vocem*," "bursting forth into vocal sound."

According to its full notion, a song requires one more specific difference, but here a word of caution is in order. By a way of thinking that is too "black and white," we might infer falsely that travel songs, sea shanties, harvest songs, etc., are not songs at all, and that would be a false conclusion. St. Thomas does indeed call secular songs by the same name, for example when exposing the literal sense of the harlot's song in Isaiah 23. Hers is a song, but not according to the complete sense.

For St. Thomas, the full notion of song is present if it is a spiritual joy that is possessed, not from things temporal or worldly, but from things eternal, "*de aeternis habita*." Something of eternity moves the mind to rejoice, and the

man who has it inside him has to put it out, and the result is a song.

Thus the three parts of the full definition: "*exultatio mentis de aeternis habita, prorumpens in vocem*." Song according to St. Thomas is an exultation of the mind dwelling on eternal things, an exultation bursting forth into vocal sound.

## The Reason for Distinct Definitions of Song

Now compare this definition with the dictionary definition: "A musical composition for singing." Not quite the same thing, is it? Notice that the two definitions are not completely different; common to both is at least something of the "*prorumpens in vocem*" idea.

One consequence of this difference has already appeared in the kind of division that his definition generates. What is the salient source of distinction among songs? In the music classroom, songs usually divide according to differences of function or form, because we regard the song chiefly to be a kind of art. But because St. Thomas instead grounds the very nature of song in its fullest meaning in the disposition of the mind, his division of songs follows more from their greater or lesser share in that complete meaning. It's as if to say that songs are in no way equal, but that there is a paradigm of song, and all others are songs in the measure that they bear a likeness to the paradigm.

The difference in the two definitions also carries implications for our notion of sacred vocal music. Is chant a species of musical art that is regularly joyful, or is it rather a species of spiritual joy that passes into vocal sound? Perhaps the difference is not so important if we regard sacred music only as something that adds beauty to the ceremonies. If, however, we regard sacred music according to its purpose of giving honor to God, the difference becomes very important, because the chief way in which we honor God is through the act of religion called sacrifice. Now to St. Thomas's notion of sacrifice, art is not necessary, but joy is.



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## Joy Belongs to the Perfection of Sacrifice

A sacrifice is a work of love, and the sure mark of a loving sacrifice is the quality of cheer, which gives to the sacrifice a certain splendor and perfection. Our Lord provides this example of praise that is derived in part from the joy of His Father's glory and our redemption. Jesus "having joy set before Him, endured the cross," says St. Paul.

It is because joy is necessary for any who would approach the heavenly altar that priests begin Holy Mass with the recitation of Ps. 42 with its reference to approaching "the altar of God, the God who gives joy to my youth." St. Thomas goes so far as to say that through grief a man becomes unfit to offer sacrifice, citing the example of Aaron. While he was mourning the loss of his two sons, Aaron would not finish the food that was sacrificed: "...how could I eat it, or please the Lord in the ceremonies, having a sorrowful heart."

There are martyrs who sang on their way to their death; did not their songs manifest an undisguised exultation that made the splendor of their sacrifice more evident? Maximilian Kolbe and companions, upon being locked into the starvation bunker, astonished the guards by their singing. The Sisters of the Compiègne Carmel sang for more than an hour, all the way to the square where the guillotine stood waiting. Among the songs chanted on their way were the "Salve Regina" and the "Te Deum." At the foot of the scaffold they sang the "Veni Creator."

The generous offering of tribulations should also be cheerful, and its joy can be a song. In the Roman Missal, the Church represents to us this ideal through the example of the young men of the Book of Daniel who were cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to adore a golden statue. Their song is called "the hymn of the three young men, which the Saints were singing in the furnace of fire." It is a kind reminder to the priest: "You are a sacrifice in a fiery furnace that forges saints. Your sacrifice has a song: 'All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord. O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord. O ye heavens, bless the Lord...' Keep singing."

## Chant Is the Song of the Sacrifice

Much of what this conclusion asserts could be claimed for other forms of sacred music, but it is hoped that we would enter into the higher reason of the chant, the paradigm of all sacred music. To clarify our common use of the term *chant*, we could, dictionary-like, define it as a liturgical text set to a melody and adopted by the Church for the solemn celebration of her liturgy. But such a definition falls short of the reality.

For St. Thomas, chant is an exultation of the mind no different from the joy that accompanies the sacrifice and makes our own part in it more perfect. The song by itself may cost us nothing, but if it is rendered with true devotion then it is a sign of an invisible sacrifice that costs us dear. Whenever we chant the sacrifice of praise, we cheerfully offer everything that we are and everything that we have.

Moreover, since the sacrifice of praise is a prayer by which the Word Himself honors the Father, the chant in its proper context is a participation in the prayer straight from the heart of the King, exulting exceedingly in His power and rejoicing in the salvation of God. Our poor voices are brought up into this most noble work; our poor voices unite to represent the song of the Word and our union with Him. This song of the Church is a great swell of holy laughter, a confident torrent of felicity exulting in the folly of the cross. For centuries the Church has continued to pour forth this song of the sacrifice of Christ from the rising of the sun to its setting, because of the great glory that sacrifice gives to God, because of the many benefits we have received and hope to receive through its power, and because through it we are brought into the work of the greatest Love; and the effect of love is joy, which sometimes is a song.

# Education of the Will

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by the Sisters of the SSPX Translated from *Fideliter*, March-April 2015.

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The two chief faculties of the soul are intellect and will, splendid powers of the human soul created in the image of God but in which original sin has left deep wounds: ignorance in the intellect and malice in the will. The education of the will is of crucial importance for a child's entire life. This is what will make of him or her an adult and a Christian. Dear mothers, the education of a child's will is a noble and arduous mission that is the keystone of its entire education. Indeed, before God and men, your child will be worth what its will is worth. If it is good and strong, your child, with the help of God's grace, will inherit heaven; if it is weak and craven, your child is headed for the worst downfalls.

The education of the will consists in cultivating in the child the love and pursuit of the good despite the obstacles. To do this, we must strive to teach

the love of what is good, to provide worthy models, and to stimulate daily the training of the will by means of the most ordinary actions.

Let's teach our children first of all to love what is good. We ought to know how to encourage them, and to acknowledge their good deeds. We should be interested in what they love and what they seek, so as to be able tactfully to guide—or correct—their choices, form their tastes, and guide them in their choice of friends.

Children need to be stimulated by examples, so let's give them models: in the life of our Lord, in the lives of saints and Christian heroes, let's teach them to love and to admire virtue and valiance. Love calls for and leads to imitation. Let's also point out to the children the example of the simple, hidden virtues in those around us. The mother ought to speak to them about the courage of their





father, who sets out daily, despite weariness or bad weather, to work for the family's livelihood. The father ought to point out to them all their mother does tirelessly: cooking, housekeeping, countless thoughtful acts of devotedness to her family, and so on. The example of those around them in their daily life ought to be a stimulant to the children to do good too. We should often remind our children that we are made for heaven, and that this life is only a pilgrimage, more or less long, and that we must be heading for our goal: God, God whom we must love above all things in and through the least actions of daily life. "To please Jesus" should become a child's genuine desire.

It is the daily repetition of little efforts sustained by grace that gradually forges the will: the children will become habituated to do what they ought to do before doing what they like. For example, at the end of a short break, necessary after school, the children will do their homework before going out to play; they will tidy up their room and make their bed in the morning (once they're able to) before running off to other occupations. The children should be trained to eat whatever they are served and not to snack between meals, to obey promptly and willingly, not to procrastinate, not to whine over trifles... How many little occasions there are in daily life in which the children, prompted by an adult, can

little by little form and fortify their will! What an inestimable treasure for the future!

The child must learn to will, but also to will with perseverance in spite of the obstacles encountered on the way. Only those who persevere reach the goal. Let's encourage our children to keep on going till the end: to start over a badly written homework assignment, not to tolerate sloppily done homework. Let's teach them to finish what they begin, to remount if thrown from a horse, not to turn back if it starts to rain during a walk. The children must learn to ardently and wholeheartedly desire a greater good. It's raining and the weather's bad? Well, let's sing as we walk. A child is sulking, he doesn't like these vegetables? then let's have a big smile to please Jesus! Doing a chore takes a lot? Then yes, I'll do my best for the salvation of souls. When a child takes up an activity (learning a musical instrument, a sport, or even a game), in the beginning he discovers the attraction of the novelty, which quickly wears away when it comes to daily practice. That is when the child should be encouraged to persevere by showing him the desired goal. Except for obvious lack of aptitude, do not let the child give up an activity when he "doesn't feel like it anymore," but help him to will it.

Dear mothers, the good seed will spring up for eternal life!







Senanque Abbey was founded in 1148 under the patronage of Alfant, Bishop of Cavaillon, and Ramon Berenguer II, Count of Barcelona, Count of Provence, by Cistercian monks who came from Mazan Abbey in the Ardèche. Temporary huts housed the first community of impoverished monks.

The abbey church is in the form of a tau cross with an apse projecting beyond the abbey's outer walls. Somewhat unusually, its liturgical east end faces north, as the narrow and secluded valley offered no space for the conventional arrangement.

# Kenyan Safari

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Interview with Fr. Matthew Stafki

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**The Angelus:** Father, would you kindly introduce yourself and explain the reasons for your first appointment?

**Father Stafki:** My family is from the Twin Cities area and I was ordained last year. But I sincerely do not know why I was sent right away to Africa. I suspect that my exposure to other cultures might have something to do with it since I lived in Quebec and France.

**The Angelus:** Did you settle immediately in Nairobi, Kenya?

**Father Stafki:** It was not quite as simple as that. I had to get to South Africa while things were getting settled in Kenya. I stayed at the priory of Johannesburg, and helped around the school and the missions. Later on, I went to Kenya but stayed as a guest at the Missionary

Sisters of Karen near Nairobi. So it was not until December that I was able and relieved to unpack my bags in my own room at the Holy Cross Priory in the capital city.

**The Angelus:** What was your first impression of Kenya?

**Father Stafki:** I was expecting a Third World country. I was surprised to see a country half Westernized. I was shocked at the amount of people everywhere. They are out of the house all the time, and they walk everywhere. Kenyans by and large are no lazy bones. When you drive on the left side as all English former colonies, you are always on the watch because the road belongs to the pedestrians!

Another interesting thing is that, although Kenya is predominantly Protestant, the Catholic



Church is well implanted. If you wear the cassock, everybody knows who you are, and just being out taking a walk is a preaching by itself. The people, even the Muslims of Mombasa, are cordial and respectful to us as priests.



**Father Stafki:** They live close by, and when needed, you enjoy the silence of the area, but also because they have a wonderful spirit, always joyful, full of energy. They are lovely and a real blessing. In the long run, subject to the generosity of benefactors, the plan is to buy the property



**The Angelus:** Besides these pleasant things, did you get less attractive impressions?

**Father Stafki:** What struck me getting into the city was the stench, burning plastic and trash everywhere, and big trucks burning diesel like crazy. Then, one of the most unpalatable things I have come across is to be approached by a beggar at every street corner. If you are a priest, and a *mzungu* at that—a white man—you are bound to have shillings in your pocket and to give alms away in favor of these fake poor!

**The Angelus:** Did you mention that your first lodging was at the convent?

**Father Stafki:** Yes, I stayed at the convent of the Missionary Sisters of Jesus and Mary. They were established in 2010 and they took over the former priory of Karen, a peaceful suburb of Nairobi. At present, there are about twenty such Sisters at the convent, under the direction of four Oblate Sisters of the SSPX to help them establish themselves until they have enough professed Sisters. They are doing very well, slowly growing. Some are from Europe, some from Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria.

**The Angelus:** How would you describe the presence of the missionary convent in the shadow of the priory?

behind the priory and set up a convent. They will be teaching and helping around the mission complex. This is their main apostolate along with the care for the sick, and the older nuns are already busy and working.

**The Angelus:** How is the relation with the Kenyan government?

**Father Stafki:** It could not be better. The “Marcel Lefebvre Society” is a Catholic organization officially recognized by the Kenyan government: compliments of former Archbishop Ndingi, friendly to Tradition, who resigned his position a few months after giving us the green light.

**The Angelus:** Tell us about your new home, which the Society had acquired just before I left Kenya in 2009.

**Father Stafki:** When I finally settled in the priory, my first impression was something oppressive, dark, dingy, not very home-like. The new prior, Fr. Bély, felt the same way. Whenever someone was visiting, they would go straight to the sisters. That told me that there was something off-putting about the priory. So, right away, we started cleaning the place, repainting the inside, redecorating, getting new furniture. The place needed fresh blood to come in to >

# Christian Culture

invigorate it. We have worked on the exterior as well: the old parking lot has been cleaned up and earth brought in, new gravel, new border stones, the garden areas turned pretty, the messy backyard has been removed, and we are getting a gazebo. The priory needs to have the good



atmosphere of home and privacy, inviting you to rest.

**The Angelus:** Besides the Church and the rectory, what do you have in the mission complex?

**Father Stafki:** We are building a new school. The school started in 2012, and was recognized by the government only in 2014. Kenyans start school very young. We have three years of pre-school and then four years of primary school at the moment. When all is completed, the new school will receive as many as 250 children although the City Council would allow us to raise the number to 400, stacked like sardines! When it is complete, we should have three preschool levels and all primary to the equivalent of U.S. eighth grade. The school goes for three terms of three months and one month each time in between.

**The Angelus:** Are you involved with the school?

**Father Stafki:** I am helping only occasionally, when the prior is absent, for the early morning prayers and few words of encouragement... and when I walk the dog, because the kids just jump all around him!

Besides, every Saturday, I am busy with non-school children and particular those from the slum next door. They receive tuition and extra teaching classes. I am in charge of the catechism, teaching the catechists and setting up the program. We feed them and offer them altar boy practices while the girls follow the Sisters,



who provide them with slide shows, cooking, and games. Saturday is a good day for them!

**The Angelus:** How does an American priest fare in the company of two Frenchmen at the priory?

**Father Stafki:** We are always poking at each other on national issues, but it is all in good fun. Fr. Bély, the prior, is Parisian and has lived ever since his ordination in 2003 in all priories of Africa (Gabon, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and District Bursar at Johannesburg). He is bringing a vast experience which is a Godsend to Kenya. He is very good with administrative tasks. He has put the finances in order, and this is critical since we have to deal with governmental approval. Then, we have another Frenchman, Brother Rémy, a hard worker but very reserved, and so he feels better around older people. All things considered, we work very well together and are able to discuss things in an atmosphere of mutual trust. But also, I was forgetting, we have nearby the presence of Fr. Becker, the Sisters' chaplain, and we visit each other frequently.

**The Angelus:** Do you feel isolated from the other confreres?

**Father Stafki:** Africa is a continent much



larger than the United States, and Nairobi is 2,000 miles away from the next priory, which does not make things easy. Fr. Loïc Duverger, the District Superior, comes about twice a year, but we also get regular visits from the two Menzingen Assistants, who watch over the Sisters regularly. Also, for the first time this year, we've had a



District priests' meeting and it was a unique chance for most priests to get to know each other.

**The Angelus:** How indebted are you to the pioneers who sowed the seeds before you?

**Father Stafki:** The work accomplished since 2003 is simply amazing. Today, we have so much: the convent, Holy Cross church and priory, and the missions as well. All this is the fruit of these pioneers who went in search of faithful throughout the country. Fr. Étienne especially, now the new District bursar, did a marvelous work in Mombasa and Nyeri, uniting and encouraging the faithful.

**The Angelus:** If my memory serves me, the priory of Nairobi used to service also other missions outside Kenya?

**Father Stafki:** Indeed, we used to have 'foreign' missions, but we have dropped them, mostly for practical reasons. Dar el Salam of Tanzania, to name but one of them, is being taken care of by Fr. Étienne from South Africa because they speak only Swahili.

**The Angelus:** You spoke of Mombasa and Nyeri. Can you explain what these names mean to you?

**Father Stafki:** I visit monthly Mombasa, the Kenyan sea port, which is 10 hours away by bus. And, whereas Nairobi on the Equator enjoys a very pleasant 70 degrees all year long due to its altitude, Mombasa by contrast is hot and humid. At least I have the joy of using the white cassock but, to my sorrow, my superiors have



forbidden me to grow a beard! We have a little group of twenty faithful, still reduced because we are still renting a private house for Mass. Lately, we bought some property and we intend to build. Swahili is the lingua franca there, and I am working on mastering the language but it is a slow process.

**The Angelus:** You were speaking of another mission.

**Father Stafki:** Nyeri is another week-end mission run, about three hours away from Nairobi. I make a couple of stops before getting there, one at the house of Fr. James Ngaruro, who was ordained a couple of years ago, and the next is Carico. We have our larger group of about thirty persons mostly from one family, and I have to manage a rather primitive high Mass there! And, finally, I arrive at Nyeri for Sunday with Mass at the hotel. We have our eyes on a property on which to build a church which would gather these different groups into one. We want to avoid the clans and oblige the faithful to make the great sacrifices of a day's travel to have a more normal parish life.

**The Angelus:** What would you say are the main difficulties of your apostolate?

# Christian Culture

**Father Stafki:** Besides mastering the Swahili language, which would open many doors, I have had to deal with a very different culture. You have to get to know the people before you understand the way they think, how they view life in general. They often say what you want to hear and not



the truth. They are rather reserved and wait for you to make the first step, call them by their first name before you may gain their trust. Then you can work with their souls.

**The Angelus:** Is it difficult to size them up? How can you judge their attachment to the Society?

**Father Stafki:** It is like everywhere. There is a minority which understands the why of the crisis and the liturgical combat, but most are simply attracted by the Mass. In Kenya, the changes have not had a major change. The dancing with the singing goes along with their folk customs and for the most part, the hierarchy remained conservative, and the churches are full. I saw that firsthand when the local parish had a Palm Sunday procession followed by a huge crowd. In order to provide a solid formation, we have to start with the basics, like whether hell is eternal. And then, start organizing special catechism classes and conferences for adults.

**The Angelus:** What is the main job at hand?

**Father Stafki:** First and foremost, we need to finish the project of the school at Holy Cross. Kenyans prize very much a good education which allows them to get ahead and have a decent job and perhaps rise to middle class. For a trimester

the tuition is modest sum of \$70, but many families struggle to get there.

**The Angelus:** Any last word or wish?

**Father Stafki:** I have been visiting my own parish, and they love the slide show as it comes



very close to home. It was good to see how they have received me and enjoyed hearing of my apostolate in these foreign lands. We rely on their support and their prayers. And, like in many other mission countries, we depend greatly on foreign countries.

P.S. To make donations from the US to the missions, send checks to the US district payable to Society of St. Pius X Foreign Mission Trust-Africa. Mail to: 11485 N. Farley Rd, Platte City MO 64079 (with the memo: Kenya Priory).





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# Q & A

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by SSPX priests

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## Is *Catholic Trivia* faithful to Catholic teaching?

I recently purchased the traditional version of *Catholic Trivia*. The first question was: “Anger is considered a sin against which commandment?” The answer given was: “The fifth,” and the fifth commandment tells simply: “Thou shalt not kill.” Now here is my first question. Is *Catholic Trivia* faithful to Catholic teaching? And if yes, how do you explain that anger applies to the fifth commandment?

Thank you for your email and your inquisitive eye which is obliging us to check some of the questions and answers of *Catholic Trivia*. Without a doubt, it is absolutely faithful to Church teaching, and you may certainly use it without scruples or worries as a tool and illustration of the Catechism. As regards the fact that abusive anger is an act against the fifth commandment, this is not quite as subjective as we might think at first sight. Killing the innocent is a violent act committed against one’s neighbor and is usually the final blow which comes out of a person in a fit of anger or, on the contrary, with

cold calculation. Our Lord, naturally enough, connects “Thou shalt not kill” with the use of harsh words like “Racca” which would be said in anger (Mt. 5).

This is what the Baltimore Catechism does as it connects anger with the fifth commandment, listing with the grievous sins the venial sins, and especially those which children are prone to commit. It is conveniently tied up with one of the commandments as it fixes the mind of the little ones with some clarification even if the connection is not altogether perfect.



## How do we explain the anger which Jesus displayed in the Temple?

Now, here is another less clear question. The Baltimore Catechism states that anger is a “strong feeling of displeasure often resulting in a loss of temper, one of the capital sins.” Then how do we explain the anger which Jesus displayed in the Temple?

I do think that you are right regarding anger as being in itself not sinful, in the same way as theologians define it as a passion, which can be used for good or bad, depending on circumstances. For example, Our Lord showed anger to the sellers of the Temple. Truly enough, the average Catholic connects anger with abuse. So, perhaps it would have been best for *Catholic Trivia* to express the question in this way: “When we sin against anger, against which Commandment do we sin?” which is more proper.



## What is the gravity of the sin of anger?

Does that make this capital sin of anger less sinful? But, if this is the case, would not this involve a contradiction to say it would be capital and yet less sinful?

Here, I think that you are partially right in as much as the seven capital sins are the mothers of all other vices and each of them causes many others as a mother brings forth various children. You are less clear when you seem to indicate that they are not necessarily sinful of themselves. If they are capital sins, that means that they are sins, and not necessarily deadly because this depends on the circumstances and the gravity or parvity of matter. Sloth and gluttony are capital sins, but they certainly do not always cause a mortal sin. As a rule, anger is tagged as a mortal sin by moral theologians only in extreme cases of hurting the body or soul of another or damaging his property.



## “We are at the end. Europe is dying!”

Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, the archbishop of Bologna, Italy, in a recent interview stated the following concerning societies that embrace and glorify homosexuality:

*We are at the end. Europe is dying. And perhaps, it doesn't even want to live, because no civilization has ever survived the glorification of homosexuality.*

*I am not speaking of the practice of homosexuality. I am speaking of the glorification of homosexuality. For various ancient peoples, homosexuality was a sacred act. The word used in Leviticus to condemn this glorification of homosexuality clothed with a sacred character in the temples and pagan rites was “abominable.”*

*The only two civilizations which have resisted homosexuality for thousands of years are the same that have opposed homosexuality: the Jews and Christians. Where are today's Assyrians? Where are today's Babylonians? And yet the Jews were merely a tribe, a “nobody” in comparison to the other political-religious societies. But the laws concerning sexual acts as we find within the book of Leviticus became the highest form of civilization [Christianity]. Hence my first thought: we are at the end... My second reflection is purely of Faith. Before such facts as these, I always ask myself: how is it possible that the mind of man be so blind to such fundamental evidence [that glorifying homosexuality leads to the destruction of society]? And I came to the conclusion: all this is literally a diabolical work. This is the last defiance which the Devil is throwing at God the Creator.*

Although speaking of Europe, there can be no doubt that His Eminence's words can certainly be applied to American society as well.

In another interview, Cardinal Caffarra spoke about a letter which he received from Sr. Lucia dos Santos of Fatima while he was charged with beginning the Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. When asked about a prophecy by Sister Lucia which concerns “the final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan” his Eminence responded: *At the*

*start of this work entrusted to me by... John Paul II, I wrote to Sister Lucia of Fatima through her Bishop as I couldn't do so directly. Unexplainably however, since I didn't expect an answer, seeing that I had only asked for prayers, I received a very long letter with her signature—now in the Institute's archives. In it we find written: “The final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Don't be afraid,” she added, “because anyone who works for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be fought and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue.” And then she concluded: “However, Our Lady has already crushed its head.”*

It seems fair to say that these two interviews should be read in conjunction with one another: his Eminence sees the clear hand of Satan in the pushing of the homosexual agenda and that



the attack on marriage and the family is tied to Fatima. This should remind all of us of the importance of fulfilling in our families the desires of Our Lady as she proclaimed to the three children at Fatima in 1917, particularly the daily Rosary and the five First Saturdays.

<sup>1</sup> [rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/06/cardinal-what-sister-lucia-told-me.html#more](http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/06/cardinal-what-sister-lucia-told-me.html#more).

### The Illogic of the Worldly Mind

For a number of weeks this past summer, all media outlets were abuzz with the “transformation” of former Olympic athlete Bruce Jenner into a “woman” who now wishes to be called Caitlin. Needless to say, all these worldly thinkers were praising Bruce for the courage it took to make his “transformation” a public spectacle and immediately began to call him Caitlin and use the feminine pronoun “she” when referring to him. As we well know, no amount of surgical or hormonal treatments can ever change the fact that Bruce Jenner is a male genetically and therefore can never be a female. We should also note that these “treatments” are sinful in that they are contrary to the Fifth Commandment in that they mutilate an otherwise healthy body.

While praise was being heaped upon Jenner and supporting his “choice” to live and dress as a woman even though he remains genetically a man, another news story broke concerning Rachel Dolezal, who was head of a local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in Washington. It turns

out that Dolezal is actually a Caucasian woman who made the “choice” to be black even though she is genetically white, as testified to by her parents. For a week or so, the media chose to berate this woman for masquerading as something she is not, and she was even forced to resign as head of the NAACP chapter and from some other boards of directors.

The irony and illogic of the reactions of the world to these two events is obvious to anyone using their God-given intellect. While Jenner is praised for living out his desire to live as a woman although he is genetically a male, Dolezal is ridiculed and criticized for her desire to live as a black woman although genetically a white woman. Why is Jenner praised and Dolezal maligned for effectively doing much the same thing? Simply because our society has bought whole and entire into the homosexual propaganda that seeks to destroy marriage and family life as God intended it to be and as humanity has understood it since creation.

### Legalized Euthanasia in Belgium

Although Belgium had legalized euthanasia for the terminally ill a number of years ago, the European country has now widened the definition of those able to end their lives to include those who have persistent suicidal thoughts.

A 24-year-old Belgian woman who suffers from depression and has had a “death wish” since childhood has been granted the right to die—even though she’s not terminally ill.

Doctors gave approval for the woman, identified only as Laura, to be euthanized by lethal injection after she spent her life battling suicidal thoughts and has been in a psychiatric institution for the past three years. “Life, that’s not for me,” she said.

In charity, we can only hope and pray that Laura will not take the step of ending her life but this new-found “right” and that Belgium will not sink ever deeper into its godlessness whereby man himself becomes the sole arbiter of right and wrong.





## Frightening Days for Ireland and the United States

On May 23, Ireland became the first country to approve homosexual “marriage” by a national referendum. The vote to amend the Irish Constitution was 62 percent in favor of the measure nationwide, while in Dublin, the nation’s capital, the favorable vote was even higher. In 1937, the Irish Constitution was adopted and contained the following preamble:

*individual may be assured, true social order attained, the unity of our country restored, and concord established with other nations,*

*Do hereby adopt, enact, and give to ourselves this Constitution...*

It is hard to imagine that a nation founded in the name of the Holy Trinity and acknowledging its obligations towards our Lord Jesus Christ



*In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred,*

*We, the people of Ireland, humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, Who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial,*

*Gratefully remembering their heroic and unremitting struggle to regain the rightful independence of our Nation,*

*And seeking to promote the common good, with due observance of Prudence, Justice and Charity, so that the dignity and freedom of the*

only 80 years ago, could so easily abandon the Faith defended through so many hardships during English persecution. There is no doubt that the abandonment of the social kingship of Jesus Christ in the years following Vatican II played a major role in bringing about this event as did the milquetoast public pronouncements of the bishops of Ireland in the weeks preceding the referendum. There was not one bishop to be found who spoke in clear terms that a vote in favor of this amendment would be sinful and that the duty of Catholics was to defeat it.

As difficult as it was to see Ireland falling into such chaos regarding true marriage and family life,

## News from Tradition

the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court on June 26 stating that homosexuals had a constitutional right to be “married” was even more jarring. The 5-4 majority decision was authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, who regards himself as Catholic.

Justice Antonin Scalia and Chief Justice John Roberts both wrote dissenting opinions which pointed out the dangers of this ruling for “individuals of faith.” Both of the justices pointed out that since there is now a constitutional right to “marriage” for people of the same sex, those opposing this right could face legal action for their opposition, and churches who oppose it face losing their tax-exempt status. One can easily

foresee the day when Catholic priests will face lawsuits and possibly fines and/or imprisonments if they refuse to witness the unions of homosexuals. All of us should also realize that this will not just affect clergy; many lay folk will face the same possible penalties or the loss of their employment if they refuse to go along with this clearly immoral ruling.

Unfortunately, here in the United States just as in Ireland, the bishops who issued statements were feeble in condemning this decision. Most protested the fact that this ruling would impinge upon Religious Freedom (and therefore could well hit the bishops in their pocketbooks), rather than upon the immorality encouraged by it.

### *Instrumentum Laboris* for 2015 Synod Published!

At the end of June, the Vatican released the *Instrumentum Laboris* (i.e., working document) for the 2015 Synod. This document contains all the proposals that are to be discussed and voted upon at the Synod this October as well as summations of various ideas put forward at the Extraordinary Synod on Marriage and the Family which took place in October of 2014.

Not surprisingly, the proposal of Cardinal Kasper that the divorced and civilly remarried should be admitted to Holy Communion after some sort of penitential period is presented at length. The document also contains much of the same ambiguity of meaning found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Simply put, although a number of the bishops in attendance at last October’s synod made it clear that this proposal is clearly contrary to the teaching of our Lord and the perennial Tradition of the Church, this October will bring another attempt to make Kasper’s proposal a “pastoral solution” for the divorced and civilly remarried. We must also recall that Raymond Cardinal Burke, who was one of the strongest critics of this so-called “pastoral solution,” will not be present at the synod this October since he was removed from his post as Prefect of the

Apostolic Signatura by Pope Francis at the end of 2014.

The document does pay “lip service” to the Traditional understanding of marriage, but at the same time goes on to propose pastoral practices which are directly contrary to the dogma presented. Although Cardinal Kasper’s “solution” did not pass with the required two-thirds majority during last October’s Extraordinary Synod there is every reason to think that it may well do so this October.





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# The Priest

A Apostle Consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

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by Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta

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*“O bone Jesu, fac cor nostrum secundum Cor tuum!” “Oportet illum regnare”* (I Cor. 15:25). These two sentences sum up, as it were, the intimate link that exists between the priesthood and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: firstly, that we have a heart like unto the Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then that we consecrate our life to bring about the reign of the Heart of Jesus. These intimate links might be summarized by saying that the priest must consecrate himself to the Heart of Jesus, he must consecrate himself to reparation, and he must be an apostle of the Heart of our Lord.

St. Thomas Aquinas says that man is a debtor in relation to God for two reasons. Firstly, because of the benefits he has received; for example, the whole of creation, the Incarnation, the Redemption, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But he is also a debtor in relation to God because of his sins,

and therefore his need to make reparation, expiation, and satisfaction for sin, which offends God. To consecrate oneself means to give to our Lord, to His Heart, our person and our goods—our exterior and interior goods, goods of a material, corporal, and spiritual nature, goods both natural and supernatural. Consecration then involves renouncement of ownership of these goods, and at the same time donation of all.

Consecration is a donation that is by definition entire and for always. At the same time, one dedicates one's life to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the priest is the man of God, the religious of God. He is consecrated and dedicated to God. His entire life is offered and devoted to God. That is why we, more than anyone else, must fulfill the duty of charity, of love, which fulfills and perfects the essential act of the virtue of religion. >

At the same time, this life totally consecrated to our Lord and to His Sacred Heart achieves and establishes the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Pope Leo XIII has shown. In his Encyclical *Annum Sacrum*<sup>1</sup> the pope attaches the consecration particularly to the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has a right by nature and by conquest to this consecration and this service. He has real dominion over us, over everything, but desires that, from love and in order to requite His love, truly and spontaneously we should consecrate ourselves to His service and by that very means proclaim His kingship. In other words, devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart are the best ways to establish the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts, in the hearts of the faithful, and in society. For this devotion defines better than any other the very nature of our Lord's kingship, which is a kingship of love; this love arises from the love of our Lord—it is established by the charity of our Lord—and of the love that we give Him in return. But the essential characteristic of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is, at the request of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, reparation, the obligation to offer satisfaction, reparation, and expiation for sins—our own, the sins of the faithful, and for the sins of all men. For our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was pre-eminently one who makes reparation, and His love is essentially redemptive and reparative.

## Reparative Love

Reparation is a kind of compensation offered freely to God, to our Lord, to uncreated love; compensation for the omissions, the indifference, the offenses, outrages, and insults. According to Pope Pius XI, we must offer reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for two reasons: for justice' sake, but also and especially for the sake of love. That is why, by the spirit of reparation, as you know, we can offer satisfaction for our own sins and for the sins of others. We can offer satisfaction for others; we can make reparation for others. This is what is explicitly demanded in this devotion.

It is especially during the holy sacrifice of the Mass that we can accomplish this and, as Archbishop Lefebvre taught us, we unite ourselves with the reparative spirit of our Lord principally by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, by conforming ourselves to the dispositions of our Lord on the cross. If consecration establishes us firmly in a union of love with our Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of reparation, says Pope Pius XI, establishes us in the same way as the consecration.

This loving union with our Lord is established first when we purify ourselves from sin; then, by making us compassionate the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the motive, arising specifically from love, that makes us embrace the spirit of reparation which is that of compassionating our Lord Jesus Christ patiently suffering and dying on the cross. It also means repairing and compassionating the sufferings of holy Church, which is His mystical body.

Christ continues to suffer in His body which is the Church—we ought to complete in our flesh what is lacking in the Passion of Christ for the Church, which is His body.<sup>2</sup> It means making reparation for the offenses committed against our Lord Jesus Christ in His Body which is the holy Church. The passion the Church is undergoing ought to move us to embrace the spirit of reparation and of consolation of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

One consoles someone who is suffering, someone sad. Well, it is we priests of our Lord who ought to make reparation and console. And finally, says Pope Pius XI, the spirit of reparation establishes union with Christ in us, making us offer ourselves as holy, pure, immaculate oblations; by making us like Christ, to immolate ourselves, to sacrifice ourselves for souls and for their salvation.

## Apostolic Devotion

Something else is also needed, which appears clearly in the revelations of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary. We must also be apostles of the Heart of Jesus and of devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is precisely the vocation of the priest, to make known and loved the Heart of Jesus, to make it honored and to render it public worship, for it is a devotion of social and public significance. Hence we must apply ourselves to discovering the treasures within the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, treasures of truth and grace, as we have just heard in this beautiful epistle of St. Paul—I desire that we increase in the interior man, by the Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in us by faith so that, being rooted and grounded in charity, we may know, we may taste, we may discover and aid souls to discover the eminent knowledge of the love of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the super-eminent science that we must preach and that we must teach souls! It is the knowledge of charity and of the love of Christ, as well as all the treasures of truth and grace, of charity, of virtue and holiness that are enclosed within the Heart of our





Lord. If He is not loved more, it is surely because He is not known, or is not known well enough, or deeply enough, or supernaturally enough. Well then, there's our mission! We must be apostles of the Heart of Jesus.

The popes who've spoken about this devotion have shown that it is an extraordinarily powerful means of apostolate and conversion. Our Lord Himself said as much to St. Margaret Mary: the priest who is truly a disciple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and conducts his ministry according to this Heart will be particularly effective in his ministry, and he will know the art of converting even the hardest hearts. The popes have insistently asked of all the faithful, of all Christian people, but particularly priests, to practice, to study, and to live this union with the Heart of Jesus and to practice devotion to the Sacred Heart in the face of the evils worsening day by day, piling up in front of us. Now, it is obvious that this reason is even more valid today.

It is even more valid, for we see on all sides, whether in civil society or in the Church, the situation getting worse. Things keep going from bad to worse. We have to open our eyes. If we look at the world and the political or social situation, we see how the world becomes more and more hardened [in its rejection of Christ]: "We will not have this man to reign over us" [Luke 19:14]—we do not want Jesus Christ to rule over us. And so society slides into the very hatred of our Lord Jesus Christ and of God.

This is what we are faced with, what's right in front of us. St. Thomas Aquinas asks how it is that man can hate God when God is the sovereign good, perfect, and the source of every good thing for us all, for each one of us. He explains that it is the depraved will of man that does not want to renounce the world, his sins, and that hates God firstly as legislator: He hates God because he does not want to keep God's laws. Secondly, he hates God as rewarder, as judge. Now, it is indeed our Lord Jesus Christ who is the supreme legislator and who will come to judge the living and the dead. It is for this reason that today we see in society a clear tendency to reject our Lord Jesus Christ, His law, and His judgment. Being legislator and judge is the attribute of a king, and consequently "We will not have this man to reign over us."

### **Present Apostasy**

Ultimately, that would be irrelevant but for an

infinitely greater, more serious problem: immanent apostasy; and we could even say, to borrow a somewhat modern order of ideas, that this apostasy, from immanent, is becoming transcendent. It consists in the folly of Churchmen bent on being reconciled with the world, the enemy of God and of His Christ, of His Church and of His doctrine. That is the Utopia, the chimera, the madness of these men of the Church who want to be acceptable to God but at the same time to be on good terms with the world, which is moving toward hatred and rejection of Christ and of God! This is what we are living through. God is not a legislator; God does not demand anything of us; God forgives everything! Is that right? Obviously this is a way to evade hatred of God by misrepresenting what God is in Himself, as well as the Catholic Faith as it has been handed on to us by the apostles, by Tradition, and revealed by our Lord.

You see, I think that in order to remain above personalities and to keep a rather general, supernatural outlook, one might say that we have reached the stage of consequences, the maturing of the events which are as it were the most representative fruits of fifty years of the conciliar spirit, that is to say, of a liberal and modernist spirit. For fifty years, the authorities have done nothing but apply—more or less intensely but in every case in the same direction—and gradually establish in holy Church this spirit, this outlook which is profoundly liberal and modernist.

So what is happening? What's happening is what the popes of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century predicted: firstly, dogmatic relativism—doubt and uncertainty are now alright. Truth is what agrees with life, evolves with life and thus with man; it must adapt to modern man. Principles are left untouched but traditional doctrine is not adequate to respond to today's pastoral needs. Doctrinal relativism, and therefore relativism of belief, necessarily results over time in what we are actually experiencing in a particular way, somewhat new, in any case more serious. For there has been, all the same, a substantial change. Now we have relativism in the moral order, the calling in question of the moral order itself—in the first instance the revealed moral law, but also the morality inscribed in nature.

"Who am I to judge?" In other words, my function is to help everyone follow his conscience—a postulate and principle of the autonomy of conscience that has no objective relationship with an external law, be >

it natural, revealed, supernatural, or divine, and certainly not with God. This is what religious indifferentism leads to necessarily. Everything is reduced to the level of opinion, and all the religions are opinions, they are all valid. There may be some that are better, some less good, but in any case they all lead to salvation, and more than that—all these religions can obtain for us natural and supernatural goods, including peace, brotherhood, and concord among men.

This is where we are. This is taken for granted, this is normal, this is what is practiced without any qualms or scruples or concern. According to a great pope, all this results in a kind of naturalism, a humanist naturalism. Everyone stays on the natural level, with natural values, with a humanist, humanitarian veneer.

We reach the starting point of this evolution, religious sentiment. For modernists, religion is a sentiment, a feeling of God, of the sacred, and especially a humanist, brotherly, humanitarian feeling that stands in admiration of the dignity of man, of the greatness of man. We've heard it said recently: I believe in man, I believe in what is in man's heart, I believe in the dignity of man. It's the echo of what Pope Paul VI said: "We more than anyone else have the cult of man."<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, systematic demolition is going on; it's the melting away of authority—magisterial authority, moral authority, authority in relation to worship and governance. It's the demolition of the institution, of the hierarchy, of principles, for of course they want to control the situation, they want to steer the ship, after all, while at the same time destroying the notion and the very nature of Catholic authority and of the institution as such: the papacy, the Holy See. Such things have never been seen before.

## Do Not Dissolve Jesus

St. Hilary commented on the text where St. John says, "You have heard it said that the Antichrist is going to come." Now, St. John says that there are already many antichrists (1 Jn. 2:18). St. Hilary says that the fact that the Antichrist will be at the end of time—someone, a person, an individual—does not prevent there being over the course of the development of the mystery of iniquity which is already among us, as St. Paul says,<sup>5</sup> antichrists, who will abound; they will be numerous and will succeed one another in preparing the advent of the son of perdition.

St. John explains what it means to be an antichrist. An antichrist is one who denies the divinity of our

Lord Jesus Christ, or one who denies His humanity. An antichrist is one who consequently denies what follows upon the divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; that's why he adds: whoever dissolves Jesus Christ,<sup>6</sup> that is to say, whoever dissolves the mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ and all the consequences of His being true God and true man. An antichrist, St. John also says, denies the doctrine of Christ. St. Hilary comments: One who denies Christ as He has been preached and taught by the apostles and hence handed on by Tradition, such a one is an antichrist, for, he says, properly speaking antichrist signifies someone who is against Christ.

There you have the drama and the passion of the Church; for it is the very authorities of the Church that are against Christ. It's the starting point of the world that hates God: "We do not want this man to reign over us." And they began by demolishing the kingship of Christ.

So, as you can see, it is all the more urgent and necessary that we truly be genuine servants of the Heart of Jesus, true repairers and consolers. Faced with all that, we must reaffirm our faith, as we have learned from our founder Archbishop Lefebvre, who centered everything on Christ and on the mystery of Christ and the sacrifice of our Lord wherein the Heart of Jesus is especially revealed.

We must, therefore, first and foremost profess and preach our Lord Jesus Christ, His divinity, His humanity, and all that flows from that reality. We must defend the honor of our Lord, the rights of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is what separates us, that is what opposes us, that is the point of contradiction—there is no other. It is our Lord, it is our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, who is the Life and the Way. It is in Him that are all the treasures of knowledge, of wisdom, of truth. He is the author and keeper of our faith and its principal object. It is our Lord Jesus Christ who has the fullness of grace and all holiness and every virtue. But our Lord is also the way as High Priest, and the way as King.

And so, confronted by this surge of antichristic anti-Christianity, we must more than ever preach and reassert in season and out of season that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator, the only pontiff, the only saviour; that our Lord is the only redeemer, the only repairer, and the only restorer. It is only in Him that we can renew all things.<sup>7</sup> He is the only door through which one can go to the Father, and by which



one can enter heaven. There is no other foundation on which one can build anything whatsoever in the supernatural order, there is no other name under heaven give us whereby we may be saved. That is our faith, and that is what puts us in opposition to official Rome—or modernist or conciliar Rome, or whatever you prefer to call it.

### **Apostles of Jesus and Mary**

It is always interesting to reread the Book of the Apocalypse, especially to find out what are the particular dispositions that God, the Holy Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ, expect us to have during the time when the mystery of iniquity will be growing and will reach its apogee to climax, as we know, in the advent and reign of the Antichrist. Of course, it is essentially a revelation of hope and victory: of hope, because our Lord Jesus Christ Himself has said: “Have confidence; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33), “And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt. 28:20); of victory, for it concerns the definitive, final and eternal victory of our Lord Jesus Christ and of holy Church. But in this revelation we can see what are the particular dispositions needed in the last times. Our Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the truthful witness, faithful and true. Throughout the Apocalypse, St. John stresses that this testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ is faithful and true. He tells us that it is by the blood of the Lamb and by the confession of the word that the Christians of the last times will persevere.

So it is indeed by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, by the blood of the Lamb and the profession of the Catholic faith that we will persevere. In the Apocalypse we are shown that what causes God to intervene and our Lord Jesus Christ to come are the prayers of the saints that ascend on the golden altar that is before God, before the Divine Majesty. These prayers accumulate on the altar of God—Christians’ prayers of distress under persecution, the patience of the saints in suffering and persecution. It is the long-suffering patience that we have to have in all adversity and in every trial, those which are already past and those that are doubtless at the door. Patience and meekness and gentleness before what Providence sends us, and, I would even say, love, true love of the cross, for we well know that it is by the cross that redemption is effected and that we priests carry on the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apocalypse also shows us that during these last times the rampart and refuge of Christians will be the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the refuge of the Church, our Lady, the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We know that the shortest, quickest, safest, most perfect way to reach our Lord is through our Lady. We well know that the shortest, quickest, safest, and most perfect way to go to the Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary.

So, my dear faithful, my dear confreres, let us be more than ever apostles of Jesus and Mary,<sup>8</sup> let us be more than ever apostles of the Heart of Jesus and of the Heart of Mary. Amen.

Translated from *Nouvelles de Chrétienté*, No. 148, July-August 2014, pp. 12-17. The oratorical style of the homily has been kept. The title, headings, and footnotes have been added by the editor. Translated by A. M. Stinnett.

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical letter on the consecration of the human race to the Sacred Heart, May 25, 1899. According to Leo XIII’s declaration, this letter constitutes his spiritual testament.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Col. 1:24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Eph. 3: 16-19.

<sup>4</sup> Paul VI, Closing Speech of the II Vatican Council, December 7, 1965: “The Church of the Council [Vatican II] ...was also much attached with man as he really is today, with living man, with man totally taken up with himself, with man who not only makes himself the centre of his own interests, but who dares to claim that he is the principle and final cause of all reality...Secular, profane, humanism finally revealed itself in all its terrible stature and, in a certain sense, challenged the Council. The religion of God made man has come up against the religion—for there is such a one—of man who makes himself God. And what happened? A clash, a battle, an anathema? That might have taken place, but it did not. It was the old story of the Samaritan that formed the model for the spirituality of the Council. It [the Council] was filled only with an endless sympathy. The discovery of human needs—and these are so much greater now that the son of the earth has made himself greater—absorbed the attention of the Synod. Recognize at least this our merit, you modern humanists who have no place for the transcendence of things supreme, and come to know our new humanism: we also, We, more than anyone else, have the CULT OF MAN.”

<sup>5</sup> Cf. II Thessalonians 2:7.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. I John 4:3.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Eph. 1:10. It’s the program of the pontificate of St. Pius X.

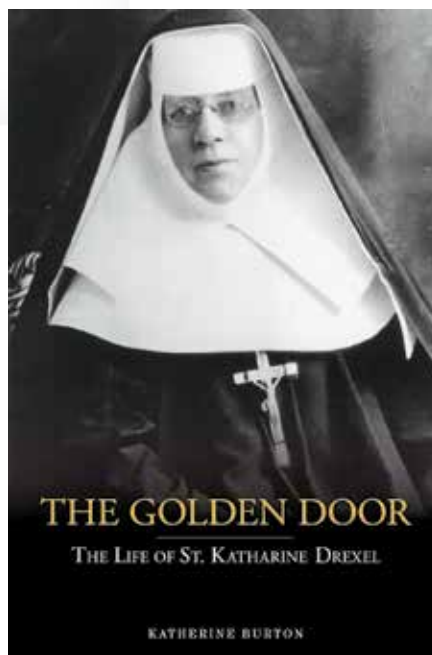
<sup>8</sup> As the statutes of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X, drafted by Archbishop Lefebvre, show, its actual name is the Brotherhood of the Apostles of Jesus and Marie.

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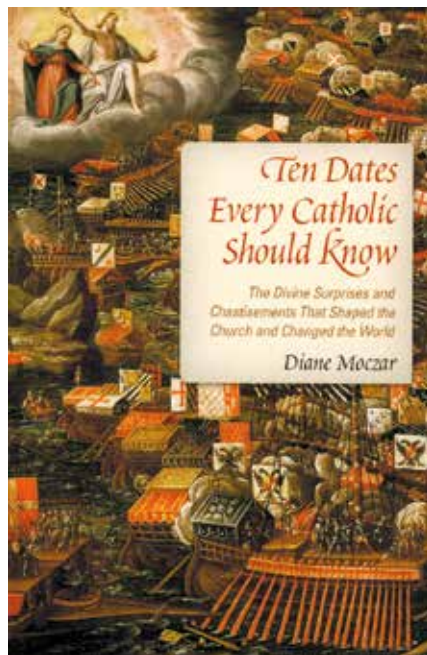


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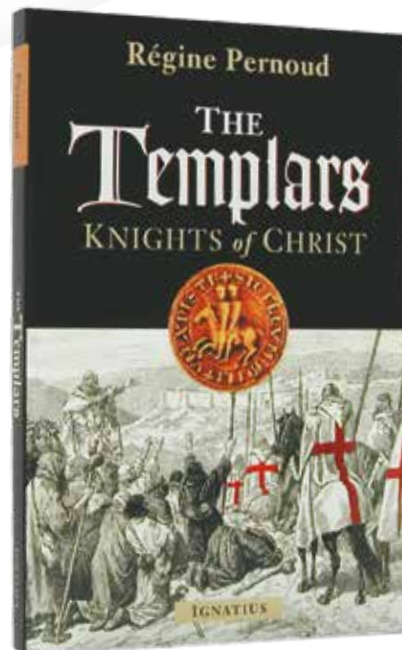
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# The Last Word

Dear Readers,

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”

There is still out there, in the midst of a crazy world, a generous youth aspiring to purity of heart and nobility of soul, seeking “a higher chivalry.”

Some time ago, when the war against the Holy Mass led to the destruction of religious life seen as something impossible to live, a saint gave some wise rules, a sort of ‘Catholic spirit check-list.’ It included these two:

- “To praise much Religious Orders, virginity and continence, and not so much marriage as any of these.
- “To praise vows of Religion, of obedience, of poverty, of chastity and of other perfections of supererogation” (St. Ignatius).

The very existence of souls striving to live up to the evangelical counsels is an apologetic proof of the one true and holy Church; it draws souls. Archbishop Lefebvre observed that to see some modern-day youth living in such an impure world and nevertheless wanting to be “eunuchs for the kingdom of God” is a proof that God is still with His Church.

Nothing is new under the sun. There has always been and will always be youth taking up the challenge of the Beatitudes.

Remember a young Anthony filling the deserts with monasteries, or the disquieted and about-to-be-conquered Augustine hearing Lady Continence “honestly alluring me to come and doubt nothing, and extending her holy hands, full of a multiplicity of good examples, to receive and embrace me; there were there so many young men and maidens, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and ancient virgins...” (*Confessions*). *Tolle! Lege!*

Every century has had its legions of generous hearts. Some just know how to tap these “fountains of living waters.” The good mothers of the Italian village of Lu did so with their weekly holy hour for vocations. In about 50 years, 323 vocations (priests and religious) came out of a tiny village of 3,000 souls! Their motherly prayer was perfect:

*O God, grant that one of my sons may become a priest! I myself want to live as a good Christian and want to guide my children always to do what is right, so that I may receive the grace, O God, to be allowed to give you a holy priest! Amen.*

Go and do likewise!

Fr. Daniel Couture

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

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

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

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