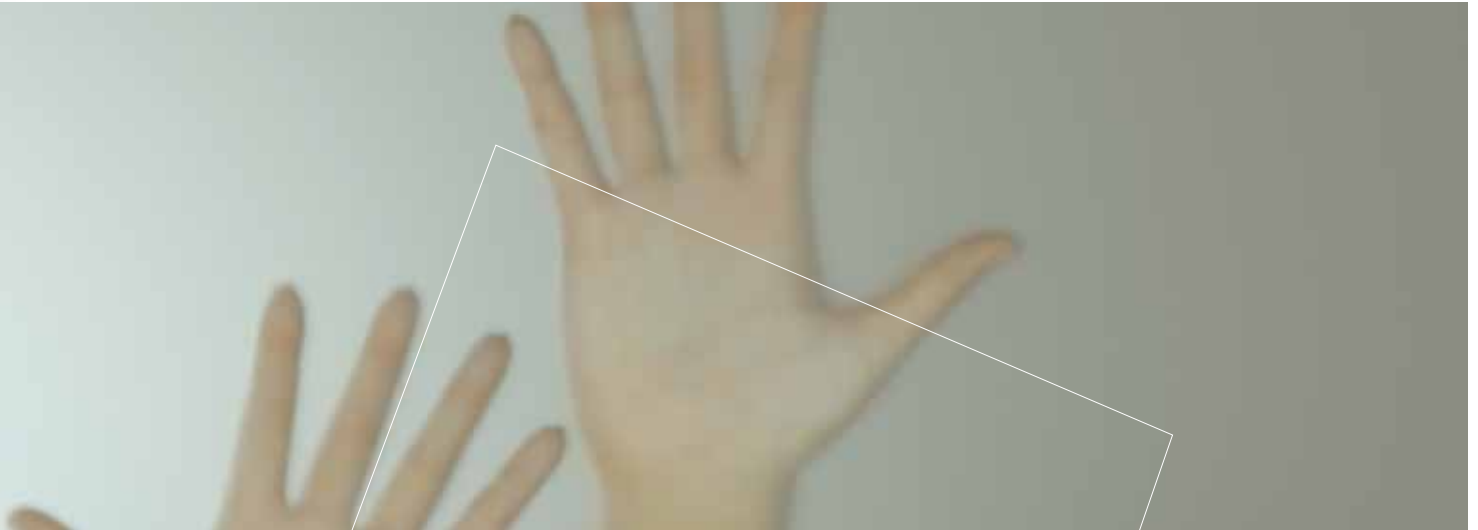




S S P X



The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Addictions

An Interview on Catholicism
and Alcoholism

Giving Words Their Meaning

Drug Addiction, Abuse,
and Dependency



When the insolence of man stubbornly rejected God, God finally told him: "Your will be done," and the last plague is dropped... It is not famine, it is not the plague, it is not even death: it is man! When man is delivered to man, then it can be said that he knows the wrath of God.—Louis Veillot



Letter from the Publisher

Dear Reader,

Our modern lifestyle aggressively promotes all types of dependencies. All of us have known of cases of erratic behaviors due to excess in drinking, smoking and the like. The variety and extent of the toxic dependencies are surpassing what we would have never dreamt 50 years ago.

The word addiction is a new term which is not clearly defined. People are commonly said to be "addicted" to anything: coffee, tobacco, sex, but also football or hard rock. It will be good to put some order and limits to this nebulous magma.

Modern society has seen the resurgence and multiplication of psychologists and therapists who are submerged by the demands. However, society is suffering from the very excess which it has encouraged. There is a huge drive for getting rich quickly, forevermore having and consuming. All this feeds an ever-unsatisfied monster in us. With it, the most simple and pure joys and true happiness has vanished from daily life. And so, the door is open to all types of excess. Unfortunately, he finds easily the way to the pit but, once there, he is trapped, and few make it back to a life worthy of humans.

Ever since the hippy revolution of the 60's, the natural order has been thrown out systematically. The plain notions of family, of duty and country are emptied out of meaning. Some zombified creatures are barely alive, in a day to day existence, without a past and no future.

This question of addiction does not seem at home in a religious magazine. It is a medical issue, to be treated by competent physicians and psychiatrists. Yet, the question is symptomatic of larger and deeper issues which threaten the very essence of humanity. To the point where we may ask ourselves whether man will still exist in a few decades or whether he will be supplanted by some less-than-human soulless monster.

Our duty is not to bury our head in the sand, but to open our eyes to the issue at stake and take what disposition we still control in order to protect those under our care as well as rescue the victims of this modern epidemic.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
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It's "Catholic to Drink":

An Interview on Catholicism and Alcoholism

By Anonymous

Oftentimes it can be difficult to understand the trial of addiction and how it can affect families since many do not have first-hand experience of such afflictions. As a result, Angelus Press decided to reach out to a traditional Catholic who struggles with alcohol addiction and find out first-hand about his experiences. We posed some common questions about alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to him, as he has gone through AA, has maintained sobriety for some years, and is a practicing traditional Catholic husband and father. For understandable reasons, he will remain anonymous.

First, let's discuss addiction as a whole. What would you say to someone who says that drinking is not an addiction?

Sure, that's the basic one. "Drinking" is not an addiction. Compulsive consumption of alcohol, or drinking out of a physical—or mental need—is absolutely an addiction. That's alcoholism.

So before I go any further with this answer or the whole interview, I'll be clear, I'm not a doctor, and I'm not qualified to speak on the

physiological or psychological effects, other than how it affected me. Nor am I a therapist or a priest. But I can speak about my experiences, and the experiences of the many recovering men and women I have come to know.

In the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous, alcohol is described as "cunning, baffling, powerful." I agree with that characterization. And addiction is a tricky thing to discuss, because it has only been in the last few decades that



medical professionals as a whole have started to refer to it as a disease. I also want to be very clear: addiction is something that is not fully understood. Scientists and doctors cannot explain why addiction is such an unstoppable force in the brain. Obviously, it's not the same as a disease that is contagious, but once someone has become dependent on alcohol, it has the same affects as any other disease. It changes a person physically and psychologically. It's a vicious cycle that is oftentimes impossible to escape without help from another. Speaking personally, I would not have stopped drinking if I hadn't been, literally and figuratively, stopped by another person.

And I could not have maintained my sobriety without assistance from therapists in the form of cognitive behavioral therapy.

The allure of alcohol is indescribable to someone who is not in the throes of it, but a close, if somewhat crude, analogy would be the need to relieve oneself. Once you are at that point of desperation at finding a restroom, you will be singularly focused until that need is met. And if need be, won't you enter into a restroom that ordinarily would be totally distasteful? That's the bargain you would make in that situation.

Getting a drink is the same way for an alcoholic. The brain is screaming, drowning out all other common sense, and making it seem, to the alcoholic, that this is the best option. Actually, that it's the only option. And because your brain chemistry is altered, you listen to some pretty crazy suggestions. Add this cognitive drive to an already-primed pump of social interactions that are telling the alcoholic that it's ok, and the acceptance that alcohol consumption is part of being Catholic just stacks the deck. To go back to the previous analogy, the social norms of our culture for the alcoholic is like the trickling stream in the background.

“It's Catholic to drink?” Really? I think some will find that view unfair.

I don't mean it that way. Just that our traditional Catholic culture—broadly speaking of course—puts a stronger emphasis on drinking than many others. For one, drinking is not in and of itself sinful. So it's seen as an acceptable “vice”

for us, a way that we can have some enjoyment without sinning. And I don't disagree with that. What gets me nervous, and what I fell into was the idea that any social gathering or celebration went hand-in-hand with alcohol. Now, I'm not blaming Catholic culture! Just that it's a more slippery slope.

Explain what you mean by a slippery slope?

See, I was primed at the pump. I have a family history of alcoholism, I have a mental predisposition to drink—or to alter my consciousness in *some* way—in order to put aside distasteful thoughts or emotions, and third, I have a natural affinity for the effects of it. But I also made quite a few terrible choices, the chief of which, was being very imprudent in my treatment of alcohol. Listen, I'm not saying I'm a poor victim, not at all. I knew that I had at least the first and third condition that I listed above. (I wouldn't learn that second part until later.)

So, I knew even if I wouldn't admit it to myself, that I was playing with fire. I gave in to that peer pressure, and I drank anyway. The culture is a part—a small part, but still a part—of the equation for me, as well as for other traditional Catholics I've met.

Then, at some point it was less and less of a choice, the culture became less of an encouragement, and more of an *excuse*. Later, the drinking itself was an absolute compulsion, and finally a full-on physical addiction.

You say peer pressure like you're on the playground. You were a grown man with children when you were a drinker. Couldn't you have just stopped drinking?

Once I had reached that point of dependency, no. Not alone. At some point, I could have turned down another path. But in regard to the peer pressure, I know, it sounds like I'm blaming others. That's not my intent here at all. What I am carefully trying to do is to shine a light on the large role that alcohol plays in our Catholic culture, and why those of us Catholics who are predisposed to alcoholism should be cautious. For instance, there is the blessing of wine on St. Stephen's Day, the monastic traditions of >

Theme Addictions

brewing, the countless quotes and lauding of wine and spirits by the great Catholic authors, and even the integral part of our Faith—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I am not trying to say this culture is bad, not at all! Just that if you have other factors that could contribute to alcoholism, you should be “fearless and courageous from the start”—another quote from Alcoholics Anonymous—and be willing to live very carefully around alcohol lest you allow yourself to fall into that spiral. Again, most people are perfectly fine around alcohol. But some can become addicts very quickly if they are not willing to be honest with themselves from the very beginning about their tendencies and genetics.

Additionally, I’ve heard of cases where alcoholics within our Traditional circles are told, “you can overcome this through prayer and willpower.” I was told the same. But I

was spiritually sick, as well as physically and emotionally. The alcoholic’s soul (I am making a generalization here) is suffering from addiction, the warped decision-making I mentioned above, and the sin of drunkenness for so long, that to ask him to jump directly into prayer is a nearly impossible request. It takes time, and it takes help from someone who is versed in addiction. This would be like asking someone who has just torn his ACL to start physical therapy without the required repair first on his knee. One Catholic doctor said, “Addiction then displaces and supplants God’s love as the source and object of our deepest true desire. It is, as one has called it, a ‘counterfeit of religious presence.’”

That’s why the advice that I “just need to pray more” did nothing. I understand that this seems like a strong claim for a layman to make, but Fr. Peter Scott, a priest of the Society of Saint Pius





X, in this publication some 16 years ago wrote, “A purely spiritual solution does not work, for these people have a severe personality disorder that requires natural and psychological help.”

I found a very interesting quote from Fr. Ralph Pfau, a priest of the Indianapolis Diocese, who dedicated the first 11 years of his priestly life to studying alcoholism and alcoholics:

“Unfortunately, too many priests have been unable to help alcoholics, in or out of the confessional, because they don’t realize that there is such a thing as compulsive drinking. A penitent may confess to habitual drunkenness, and say: ‘Father, I just can’t help it, I just can’t stop drinking, and believe me, I have tried, and I’m ashamed of my failure.’ So what does many a well-meaning priest do? He tells the fellow he must stop, that he is making life a horror for himself, his family and his friends, and will wind

up going insane, losing his soul, or both. So what does the true alcoholic do? He hurries to the first bar and buys a bottle to cushion the horror of the present and soften the coming of doom.

“Had the priest caught him before the drinking became compulsive, he could have impressed him with his sinfulness. Of course, sin is involved, past sin, when the drinking was willful. But now a compulsion neurosis has developed, and the man is suffering from a disease of the will. The element of free will is never wholly absent, and the sin is at the root of the disease, but in some obscure and complex way.”

You’ve quoted Alcoholics Anonymous twice. Isn’t AA non-Christian? How do you reconcile that with your Catholic Faith?

It is fully agnostic, to be sure. But I have not found anything in the core of the program >



Theme Addictions

which is antithetical to Christianity or even Catholicism. The guidelines, or 12 Steps as they are known, are imbued with reliance on divine Providence, and a push to get alcoholics to realize they are powerless without grace and God's help. True, that in many cases, the literature and traditions of the program refer to "Your Higher Power" instead of God, and does not of course recommend the spiritually vital steps of confession or a retreat. This was done on purpose in order to help as many suffering alcoholics as possible, and to not turn away those who would see it as a purely religious program.

Interestingly, though, the foundations of Alcoholics Anonymous can be traced to the Ignatian Retreats. It was a Catholic nun, Sr. Mary Ignatia, who worked with a recovering alcoholic and a medical doctor to develop the steps and the program. There are correlations between Catholicism and AA literature that are impossible to ignore for those of us who know our catechism. As an example of the Catholic roots: when a newly-sober person was released from treatment, Sr. Ignatia gave this alcoholic a badge of the Sacred Heart. She asked the person to promise to return it to her if they ever felt the urge to drink again—forming the basis of the chips or tokens that alcoholics still carry today.

On the flip side, yes there is a danger in AA of valuing generic spirituality over sound doctrinal belief. Any Catholic who enters the program should have eyes wide open, and work with a spiritual director to help him through this potential minefield. Again, Fr. Scott:

"[Alcoholics Anonymous] openly encourages all to believe in their god or 'power,' as they understand it. As such, it is a danger to the Faith of the weak. ... AA's purpose is not to promote anti-Catholic philosophies, but to help alcoholics, albeit by purely naturalistic means. I always feel uncomfortable recommending our faithful to attend AA, but sometimes there is no other choice."

I fully understand Fr. Scott's reservations. I needed the additional help. I spoke with a priest within the first few days of my sobriety, he recommended AA, and once I had been attending meetings for a few months, I began a more deliberate practice of my Faith for the first time

in many years. So I am not trying to contradict Fr. Scott, but to give you my own experience which shows that as long as a Catholic is cautious, does not replace his Faith with the wishy-washy "theology" of AA, but instead takes its principles as starting points to then dive in deeper with a confessor, it can absolutely work.

Aren't the 12 steps of AA affecting or even destroying man's personality?

Destroying, as in turning someone into a zombie? No. But it certainly did affect my personality. Because of the program, and working with a licensed addiction professional, I was able to be introspective for the first time in my life and to change my entire way of thinking—in terms of my relationships with others, my emotions, anger, and my narcissistic behavior. It was my skewed thinking that contributed to my decisions about using alcohol as a solution.

This is the whole point behind cognitive behavior therapy, or CBT, as I've mentioned above. This process is like teaching someone to shoot a basketball properly if they've never been taught the correct hand position before. It's re-learning how to react (Behavior) in various scenarios, whether they are emotions, interactions, or events in a more introspective, thoughtful and less reactive way (Cognitive). After a bad day at work, I had never matured to the point of dealing with those problems—so I drank. After a good day at work, I know this sounds insane, but I didn't feel like I deserved that good day—I didn't know how to be happy! So I drank. Many alcoholics have, at their root, some sort of similar dysfunction (or as Fr. Scott said above, "severe personality disorder") that can be greatly assisted by this sort of discussion and therapy.

Isn't AA often ineffective?

I wouldn't say that exactly. The numbers of those who have stayed sober versus those who have relapsed vary wildly based on what sort of data one looks at. For instance, how does one categorize someone who has relapsed once, then stayed sober? And gathering this data is challenging both due to the anonymous factor, as well as the reluctance for people to admit



they have relapsed. Finally, there is no formal “check-in” at AA meetings. Many alcoholics attend meetings almost daily in their first year, and gradually taper off. So getting numbers of people who follow AA principles is very difficult. I’ve seen publications saying that the success rate is 5%. I find that immensely hard to believe, just from my own experience—seeing the same faces in meetings often, who are all seeing success in one form or another.

Three studies done recently by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the *Journal of Addictive Diseases* all reached a similar, if broad, conclusion: Those who follow the principles of AA are *twice as likely* to remain sober than those who “white knuckle” through it on their own. These are factors of 25% vs. 50% in one study, 36% vs. 70% in another, *etc.*

Isn’t there a time you can claim “Mission Accomplished”?

No.

Continue...

Haha, I’m being sort of tongue in cheek, but that is really the answer. There is no medical or psychological cure. Only a desire to stay sober, and the tools gained through conferences with priests and therapists—in my own experience. One of the things that has kept me sober every day so far is my unwillingness to forget the desperate corner I had drunk myself into. Almost lost my family, professional life in shambles, friends who didn’t trust me anymore... I don’t dwell on it, *per se*. But I remember it. And that is a heck of a motivator.

Yes, there are some drugs that have been tested, and are now available which take away the compulsion to have more than one drink—which is the hallmark of an addict. I would presumably be willing to leave a cocktail or a beer half-finished on the table if I took this. But I am not convinced that becoming reliant on another substance is a good decision for me. See, I’m an addict. My addiction is not necessarily alcohol—though that was how it manifested. My addiction is “I want more.” As Catholics, we know that drunkenness is gluttony. And gluttony

is never being satisfied, always wanting excess. Thankfully, I am learning more every day on how to put my intellect over my passions.

At the end of the day, no, there is no cure. But being a Catholic is very good training on how to be a successful recovering alcoholic. And vice-versa!

How so?

Isn’t it at Compline where the verse is read about how we are to be sober and watchful, since our adversary is like a roaring lion? Same principle. We are watchful as Catholics against sin and corruption. As a recovering alcoholic, I am watchful against the complacency that could lead to relapse.

It is impossible to avoid the occasion of sin? Or to turn down a drink gracefully?

Thankfully, turning down a drink was never a huge stumbling block once I quit drinking, but I know it is challenging for others. “No, thank you” is pretty powerful. If they press, I’ll sometimes say a little more deliberately, with definite eye contact, “I’m not having any tonight, but thank you,” or sometimes I’ll inject humor by saying, “No, thanks, I don’t drink; alcohol and I don’t get along.” If it is a very tricky situation, like a toast of a family member at a wedding, and I am pushed, then I’ll go nuclear and say I’m a recovering alcoholic. I’ve never had it not work—though it’s a bit of a blow to the pride.

And, I think it’s very possible to avoid the occasion of sin. Habits may need to change, such as not frequenting the happy hour watering hole. I personally have never stepped back into my favorite bar. And perhaps your house will need to become “dry.” What I found to be the most helpful in avoiding the occasion was being honest with my family and close friends about my addiction, and conveying to them the seriousness and importance I placed on being sober. It’s just like the concept of Catholic friendship in general—our love for each other should be in the form of helping each other get to Heaven.

Addiction:

Giving Words Their Meaning

By Godeleine Lafargue

Dependency, addiction, *habitus*...there are many terms for dependent behavior developed to an unreasonable extent by some object such as drugs, computers, music, chocolate, tobacco, *etc.*

Habitus is the term used in moral philosophy. It is taken from scholastic Latin and should not be confused with the word habit, which applies to a behavior made up of mechanical forces. A *habitus* is the activity of a faculty, whereas in the case of a habit, the subject remains passive. A habit is a physical automatism, whereas a *habitus* requires an act of the human will.

In philosophical terms, a *habitus* is defined as a quality that modifies a subject in a stable way. In simpler terms, a man's behavior is durably modified by a *habitus*; for example, he becomes generous or learned. This modification cannot be changed easily so long as it is anchored in

a man. For this reason, it is difficult for a just person who has acquired the *habitus* of justice to accomplish an unjust act. It should be noted that the use of the word "quality" in philosophy is not to be taken in the ordinary sense of the word used when we say that someone has many qualities. It is a qualification, an attribute added to a person, as when we say, for example, that someone is white or sick. But let us take this analysis further.

Man possesses multiple faculties and each of his faculties can be perfected or deteriorated by the acts he poses with his will. We ordinarily call these virtues or vices. A man uses his faculties in an ordered or disordered way, thus begetting virtue or vice through the repetition of his acts. When his sensitivity is regularly ordered according to right reason, a person becomes



virtuous. Conversely, a man who frequently acts against all reason, following his passions inordinately, forms vices. The question that interests us here is whether addiction can be considered a *habitus* in the moral sense of the word.

Addiction: A Habitus?

Addiction is a recent concept and it applies to cases of dependencies that are harmful and therefore negative for man. We can therefore consider *habitus* as a synonym for addiction but only in the negative sense of the word, that is, as a vice. Addiction, in philosophical terms, is therefore a stable quality that disposes the subject in a way out of keeping with his nature. It is essential to know this nature in order to know whether the subject is well disposed or ill disposed. Doctors and psychologists use a new term for a condition that has for decades been known as “vice.” However, if they invented this term, it was surely for a reason. It seems to express a denial of freedom and of the will, in other words, a complete disregard for nature. Present-day psychology tends to be materialistic and no longer considers man as a being possessed of a will, but rather as a being subject to his impulses and dependencies, seeking to balance them with derivatives such as the psychoanalyst’s couch, sports, or art.

The words “will” and “nature” are absent from their vocabulary, since these words remind us that while man is made of flesh, he is also a spiritual being possessed of a very specific nature distinct from that of other animals. Like animals, he does have impulses more correctly known as passions, but in principle, they are supposed to be ordained to his reason. No man is subject to his impulses except voluntarily. And by repeatedly posing acts contrary to the order of human nature, that is to say, that dispose him in a way out of keeping with his nature, a man eventually develops an addiction, as psychologists call it. This dependency is not a physical automatism, it is a behavior chosen at the outset and daily repeated until it became a vice. By repeatedly opening his computer first thing in the

morning and returning to it constantly and at any given moment, a man creates a disorder and his computer, that in itself is morally neutral, becomes an object used unreasonably, inordinately, and to the detriment of his family or his duty of state.

An addiction, therefore, is not an exclusively automatic behavior; it is an act of the will. And the more these acts are repeated, the deeper the vice will take root and the harder it will be to correct it, so much so that rehab may become necessary, as for example in the case of drugs or alcohol. Soon we will be seeing specialized institutions for a detox from technology, which, once again, is not evil in itself, but only when used inordinately. Young people today, but also those who are not so young, use their phones constantly, with complete disregard for politeness, courtesy, family relations, *etc.* And let no one believe that there is nothing to be done because it is an addiction. The will is the means given to our nature to perfect ourselves and therefore correct ourselves. Unfortunately, virtue is not a very popular term nowadays, for it has uncomfortable connotations and implies a definition of the nature of man that is so adamantly attacked by our modern society (think of the ideology hiding behind the “Gender theory”).

Let the Body Obey the Will and the Intelligence

Let us take a few moments to consider some basic concepts that are essential for the understanding of addiction and the ways to fight it.

Man possesses a nature that animals, too, possess; he is a living being with passions that tend towards goods of the senses and he is capable of knowing the world around him on the level of the senses. But he is distinct from other animals in that he possesses an intellectual soul capable of desiring not only goods of the senses, but also abstract goods such as justice or goodness. A child will bring his father the newspaper to please him and to do a good deed, whereas a dog will not seek to be good, but >

will do the same thing for a treat or caress from its master, and that is how it is trained.

Man is also capable of knowing abstract things and conceptualizing. When it comes down to it, intelligence and will are what characterize the nature of man. No natural being possesses these faculties except man. And this makes him the most perfect created being in the natural world. And all the other faculties must be ordained to the intelligence and will because of their perfection. Indeed, it is more perfect to love the goodness of a man than to appreciate a good chocolate cake. St. Thomas explains quite simply that it is natural for the inferior to be subject to the more perfect superior. A working hand is not an engineer; the engineer's knowledge is more perfect than that of the working hand and in this respect the working hand is inferior to the engineer. This does not in any way imply that the working hand's task is worthless, but only that order and inequality are natural. Our body is therefore inferior to our spiritual faculties, and it is only right for the body to obey the intelligence and will in order to give the entire human person his proper balance.

Man possesses a nature, and by reason of this nature, he has an end to achieve that will bring him happiness. One of two things, therefore, is inevitable; either a man is well-disposed towards this end, and this condition is known as virtue, or he is ill-disposed towards this end, and this condition is known as vice. It is important to remember that virtue and vice are not immediate. Time and repeated acts transform our personality and make us good or bad men.

Addiction is therefore a vice, that is to say, a negative condition with regards to man's good. It comes from a regularly repeated behavior that profoundly changes our person, even going so far as to transform it...into an animal. These words are no exaggeration when looking at all those people with their phones, reacting only to the *stimuli* of their ringtones or games.

Healing an Addiction?

It would be of no use here to develop the notion of vice further. However, healing an addiction

is an important aspect of the issue at hand. Aside from the fact that certain very serious addictions can require medical or psychological help, it is important to know that man has a very precious tool: his will. If, in the case of vice, repeating evil acts can change a person, it is also true that repeating good acts can develop virtue. It is enough to want it. And the most competent medical science in the world can do nothing on that level. While a medical treatment for alcoholism can be provided, there comes a point where the person's good will is essential; all doctors agree on this. And the mistake of our modern world is that it softens our wills. As time goes on, less and less effort is required from children and adults. Everything is done to make things easier and the older generation no longer teach the younger ones the sense of these things. Who still speaks of virtue today? The texts of ancient Greek writers, for example, on virtue, grandeur, and honor are no longer published or even known.

In conclusion, addiction is not, therefore, a simple habit or a simple automatism. It is a denial of the will and of man's nature. Man is made, says Aristotle, "to live as man," in other words, to live in conformity with that which is good and true. Modern scholars speak of addiction as an acquired automatism as if we were simple machines. If we look a little deeper, we see that there is a whole underlying philosophy: materialistic existentialism and psychoanalysis among other things.

Existentialism refuses the concept of nature. Man has no nature at birth, he chooses it freely. He creates his nature by means of his freedom. Psychoanalysis considers man as a machine made up of impulses that need to be balanced out by derivatives such as art for example. For Freud, art is nothing more than a sublimation of our *libido*. But these philosophies have forgotten that man is a spiritual being, that he possesses spiritual faculties. The human capacity to love and think is a proof of this, but so is medical science's inability to heal addictions or certain psychological illnesses. If we were nothing but matter, why would a simple medicine not be able to heal us in the way a mechanic repairs a car? And if we were nothing but freedom? What



good would boundless freedom be to us? We desperately need to return to solid truths, the truths of reality and common sense. To become a man, one must act as a man. Addictive behavior is simply bestial behavior on the part of a man who has forgotten his nature. And our technology does nothing to promote our humanity. Living in a virtual world brings men to forget reality and common sense. Psychologists may very well point out real problems, and addiction is indeed one

of them, but they do not offer true solutions, for they have forgotten the essential, our humanity. And when we know that this humanity has been redeemed, this profoundly changes the situation, for man is no longer alone. Grace is there to make us live not only “as men,” but also as children of God. Healing an addiction by means of the confessional instead of a couch just might be an idea worth considering.



St. Raphael is one of the seven archangels who stand before the throne of the Lord, and one of the only three mentioned by name in the Bible. He appears, by name, only in the book of Tobias. Raphael's name means "God heals."

Disguised as a human in the Book of Tobias, Raphael travels alongside Tobit's son, Tobias. Once Raphael returns from his journey with Tobias, he declares to Tobit that he was sent by the Lord to heal his blindness and deliver Sarah, Tobias's future wife, from the demon Asmodeus. It is then that his true healing powers are revealed, and he makes himself known as "the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord" (Tobias 12:15).

St. Raphael is the patron saint of travelers, the blind, bodily ills, happy meetings, nurses, physicians, and medical workers.



Drug Addiction, Abuse, and

Dependency

By Ross Keiser, M.D.

Any discussion of these issues should start with two disclaimers. First, the research and laws are rapidly changing, often politically and emotionally charged, and frequently contradicting each other. Second, the terminology and definitions vary considerably. In this article the attempt is made to provide a general overview, with the full understanding that many readers may disagree with part or all of the statements therein.

Terms and Definitions

There are a variety of definitions for drugs or substances, drug addiction, abuse, and dependency in professional literature, depending on the source, and these have changed over time.

Clinically, the most commonly used definitions of these are provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM5), all subsumed under the heading of substance-related disorders.

For regulatory use, the most common terminology and classifications are provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In legal matters, federal, state and local statutes are used. In many instances, the definitions in laws are in contradiction to the DSM5 and/or the FDA. Among users, a wide variety of terms are used, varying by time and location, and often are rather inaccurate. For example, the term narcotics refers to sedatives, but many statutes list stimulants and hallucinogens as narcotics.

The FDA uses the term “drugs” and the DSM5 uses the term “substances.” These terms



are virtually identical in terms of abusable or addicting chemicals. However, drugs can include medications which are not abused or cause addictions.

Why People Use Drugs

One of the few laws in psychology is the Law of Affect. This states that actions which are experienced as pleasurable tend to be repeated. Many people find the effects of taking various substances to be pleasurable. Therefore, they tend to repeat using them.

There are a variety of chemicals which affect the central nervous system, and some people find some of them to induce effects they like. In general, we can lump them into the categories of stimulants (uppers), depressants (downers), hallucinogens, and others. Not all people like all drugs. For example, some people like the feeling of taking uppers, others feel discomfort and edginess. Many people dislike the feelings they get when they try marijuana, but many others enjoy using marijuana.

People start using drugs for a variety of reasons. Some want to experiment with feeling different. Some feel the need to relax or unwind. Some start using due to peer pressure, or wanting to fit in, or be “cool.” Many people end up addicted to drugs because they were prescribed for pain control, weight loss, anxiety, and other medical and/or quasi-medical reasons.

Dependency/Addiction

In general, addiction and dependency are similar, if not the same, and will be used interchangeably in this article. However, dependency is more often used when describing substances such as drugs or alcohol, while addiction is used for substances as well as lifestyle or behavioral “psychological addiction” issues. Substance abuse can occur with or without addiction or dependency. As an example, a person who is not an alcoholic, and rarely drinks, may drive while intoxicated, which is illegal and dangerous, which is clearly abuse.

Dependency or addiction is a physiological, or physical condition in which the body of a person has adapted to a substance, *i.e.* chemical, so that the presence in the body has become the normal state for an individual. Some chemicals, including ethanol (drinking alcohol), nicotine (tobacco), and opioids (heroin, morphine) are considered “addictive” in that the body does conform to them in such a way. Other chemicals, such as LSD, may not be physically addicting, despite being very dangerous, and capable of being “psychologically addicting.” In a number of cases, there is disagreement whether or not a drug or substance is physically addicting.

People start using drugs for a variety of reasons. Some want to experiment with feeling different. Some feel the need to relax or unwind. Some start using due to peer pressure, or wanting to fit in, or be “cool.” Many people end up addicted to drugs because they were prescribed for pain control, weight loss, or anxiety.

How Addiction Occurs

Physiological dependency is a physical >

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addiction. As noted above, our bodies have an ability to integrate some chemicals into what is called the homeostasis. That is a fancy term for balance or equilibrium. Our bodies like, and need, to keep things the same. For example, our bodies want to keep a certain temperature, normally about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. When our body temperature goes higher, we perspire and pant, and our skin gets red as the blood vessels dilate to cool us. When we get colder, our metabolism raises and we shiver to get warmer, and get “goose bumps” as the blood

As part of addiction, there is a need for an ever-increasing amount of the substance to produce the desired effect. This is called tolerance. This leads to higher rate of consumption to avoid the discomfort associated with withdrawal.

vessels constrict to reduce heat loss. All this is involuntary, our body does these things without our control or permission.

Similarly, our bodies want a certain level of blood sugar, and a certain degree of water in our systems. As we burn energy, our blood sugar drops, we get hungry, want food to replace what has been used, and bring our blood sugar back to

normal. When our level of hydration decreases, we become thirsty. People who are lacking food or water for an extended time develop intense cravings, and become preoccupied with food and/or water, and will forego almost any other activity in order to obtain those.

Addicting substances/drugs can become part of our homeostasis, or normal state. It is unclear why some substances can, and some cannot. Regardless, when a person uses enough of a potentially addicting substance on a regular enough basis for a long enough time, their body adapts so that having that substance as part of their body chemistry becomes their “normal” condition. This is called *tolerance*. When that has occurred, if the substance is not present in the accustomed quantity, the body will crave it, just as it craves water or food when hungry or thirsty. The longer the body is without the substance, the more intense the craving.

Although this will be covered in another article, a similar process is hypothesized for addictions such as gambling, sex, exercise (“runner’s high”), and so forth. The reason for this is that certain activities cause changes and/or increased levels of naturally occurring chemicals in the brain, such as endorphins and serotonin, which people find to be pleasurable, and without which people who are used to those increased levels become quite uncomfortable.

Tolerance and Withdrawal

As part of addiction, there is a need for an ever-increasing amount of the substance to produce the desired effect. This is called tolerance. This leads to higher rate of consumption to avoid the discomfort associated with withdrawal, which is when the substance is not present in a sufficient dose, the body reacts just as it reacts to a lack of food or water. Many long term addicts require such large doses on a regular basis that would be fatal to non-addicts.

This lack of enough substance is not only psychologically distressing, but also is physically stressful. In some instances it can be fatal.

At first blush this seems surprising, as we are talking about psychoactive substances. That



is, substances which affect the brain. However, anything which affects the brain also affects the rest of the body. Opiates, such as morphine or heroin, are depressants, and slow brain function and inhibit pain sensation. They also slow other bodily functions, especially digestion. When a person takes these, the digestive tract slows. The body reacts in what is known as the *opponent process mechanism*, and speeds the digestion, otherwise the bowels would quit moving and become impacted. As the person takes more and more opiates, the body reacts more and more strongly. When the opiates are stopped abruptly it takes a while for the body to readjust, leading to stomach cramps and acute diarrhea for a time, as well as other physical and psychological distress.

The benzodiazepines can be quite deadly in withdrawal. They slow heart rate and lower blood pressure. Withdrawal can lead to stroke without careful medical management.

Types of Substances/Drugs

The DSM5 and FDA classify drugs somewhat differently, and street drugs can be almost anything. Generally, drugs are stimulants (uppers), depressants (downers), hallucinogens, and others. Stimulants increase mental and physical activity, depressants lower those, and some find them soothing, the hallucinogens alter perceptions, and the other drugs usually yield a combination of effects.

Negative Effects of Drugs

The negative consequences of using these are divided in substance-use disorders and substance-induced disorders. In the DSM5, substance use disorders span a wide variety of problems arising from substance use and cover 11 different criteria. However, in general, these can be distilled into one idea, using when it would be wiser not to do so. This includes spending time and money inappropriately, law-breaking, and being damaging to one's physical and mental health, and family, social, vocational, health, and educational duties.

How to Avoid Addiction/Dependence

“Just say no.” If you don't use addicting substances, you won't get addicted. Recreational use of drugs involves many perils, not the least of which are legal, as well as moral. An old gentleman I knew referred to himself as “an old booze fighter.” By that he meant that he felt that he had the potential to become an alcoholic (alcohol dependent). His method of avoidance of problems was simple: “When you feel like you need a drink, it's time to lay off for a while.” Good advice. If one does use an addicting substance, stopping when the first signs of needing it is a good tactic.

One will not become an addict if one simply avoids taking very much of a drug for very long. The time varies by drug and from person to person. Also, the lower the dose, the lower the chance of addiction, and a very short term dependence is not so difficult to overcome. However, in general, addictive substance such as many pain killers and anti-anxiety agents can probably be safely taken for a few days, perhaps up to a week. Beyond that, the possibility of problems increases.

Unavoidable or Acceptable Addiction/Dependence

Certainly, many people are dependent on medications. For example, persons with intractable pain may need to be on continuous doses of addicting medications. As long as those do not interfere with meeting the obligations of duties of state, and are carefully monitored medically, this is a necessary, although an unfortunate circumstance.

Other addicting substances may also be permissible. Many people, myself included, are addicted to caffeine. I have a tolerance to it, as I do not get a “buzz” from a couple of cups of coffee, which persons not used to drinking it do experience. If I do not get some coffee in the morning, I get a headache, feel bad, and those around me suffer even more. If I thought it was a very bad thing to drink coffee daily, I would >

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not. However, some religious groups do prohibit the use of caffeine due to its effects.

The Catholic perspective is that the use of any substance which harms the body is sinful, as the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Similarly, the use of a substance which leads to sinful behaviors, or to not adequately performing the duties of one's station of life, is certainly not permitted. Questions about this should be raised with one's spiritual advisor.

Quitting

As noted above, abrupt cessation (going "cold turkey") of use of some substances can be dangerous, and even lethal. It would be wise to consult a physician before attempting to stop using a drug.

In general, there are several ways of quitting. One is to just stop on your own, often with the support and encouragement of friends and/or family.

Self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) can be aids to stopping. They provide advice, mentoring (through "sponsors"), and a step by step (12-Step) program. These often are successful and are free of cost. Unfortunately, there are some theological underpinnings which can be quite problematic. Discussion with your spiritual advisor is highly recommended.

Professional treatment programs can be in the form of individual or group counseling on an outpatient basis. Psychologists, substance abuse counselors, and other counselors provide this treatment. Therapists should be carefully vetted, as many have rather questionable moral values. In my experience, many Christian counselors can be quite good, and some Protestant churches have counselors on staff, at very reasonable rates. Of course, there are some theological differences, but these usually will not present a problem, and the counselors are not likely to suggest grossly immoral acts.

More intensive treatments also are available for persons who have not experienced success with other methods. A day treatment model, in which the patients spend their nights at

home, but days and/or evenings in a more intensive treatment setting, full-time residential programs, or hospital-based, under close medical management. These programs can last from 3-30 days, or longer. They tend to be expensive, but some insurance programs may defray the costs.

Relapse

For many people, quitting using drugs is not so much a problem as maintaining that status. Detoxification is stopping use long enough for the body to readjust to not having the substance. The length of time necessary for this varies by substance, but always is surprisingly short. Alcohol detox is only three days. Opioids, such as morphine and heroine take about seven days. People who complete treatment programs, or even the first part of a program, are no longer physically addicted. However, the majority start using again. It is not uncommon for people to quit several times before they finally stop for good, and some never do.

It seems there are two main reasons for this. One is that the reason the person started using the drug has not been resolved. They continue to be lonely or bored, feel empty or anxious, continue to be subject to negative peer pressure, suffer from chronic pain, and so forth. As long as the underlying cause of using is not resolved, the substance abuse is likely to continue after an interruption.

The other reason is habit. As St. Thomas Aquinas noted, it takes about 22 days to make or break a habit. People are in the habit of lighting up, stopping by a tavern after work, getting high to go to activities, or to stay home. Habits generally do not disappear into a void. To remain "clean and sober" requires not only breaking the habits which were involved with substance abuse, but also to develop new alternative habits. As well, coping strategies, such as learning relaxation techniques, regular exercise, and social interaction with positive people are most helpful. Of course, regular prayer and spiritual exercises are vital.



Give Me My Error or Give Me Death

By John Rao, D.Phil. Oxon.

Obstacles to the cure of an addiction are legion, but the most basic is the refusal of the addict to admit that he has a problem. Such a denial allows the addiction to fester, untreated, thereby often engendering further and perhaps even more dangerous allied dependencies. Although we are well aware of this fundamental impediment to liberation on the part of those denying their physical bondage to such external stimulants as alcohol and drugs, we are generally much less conscious of its existence and significance in the lives of all-too-many other people refusing to admit and to treat a dependency of a different kind: an internal spiritual and intellectual addiction to what one might label a personal pet error, whose erroneous character is either totally inconceivable to the individual cultivating it, or angrily denied by

him should a critic point out that it logically contradicts everything else the addict seems to hold dear. Unacknowledged and untreated, dependency on such a contradictory error wreaks havoc with the fundamental truths to which the addict openly, but illogically, may still wish to cling, bringing not just fatal spiritual and intellectual damage, but also susceptibility to the more familiar physically destructive types of bondage noted above.

An Addiction to Error

An unacknowledged, addictive commitment to a pet error can, of course, be explained as simply one of the many tragic consequences of an individual's possession of a fallen >

human nature. Nevertheless, that personal sinful dependency is much more difficult to bring out into the open and cure when external “traffickers” with a history of subtle and highly-effective strategies for maintaining a blindfold firmly fixed over the eyes of their victims are involved in “pushing” such errors. Still, gaining someone’s admission of his dangerously erroneous dependency becomes most arduous when the peddlers of falsehood succeed in stripping believers of the natural, rational weapon forged by Socratic philosophy and deployed by the Church in subordination to and in union with the Faith, to help them think their way out of their delusion.

All of us readily admit that Catholic believers are just as subject as everyone else to the consequences of Original Sin, and, sadly, there are many historical examples of their addictive commitment to a myriad of pet errors blatantly contradicting the teachings of the Faith. But students of Church History know that professional traffickers in error have initiated and exacerbated such addictions, tightening the dependency by organizing and “pushing” commitment to falsehoods presented as Catholic truths, generally stimulated by political motivations in doing so.

Warping Catholic Teaching

I have described in past articles the efforts of politically ambitious counselors of emperors, kings, and even lesser social authorities to peddle the belief that the Catholic Faith requires the bending of Church teaching, administration, and pastoral strategies to the demands of their secular masters. Admittedly, in times of ecclesiastical chaos, such lay guidance has sometimes proven to be beneficial, as, for example, in the work of the Holy Roman Emperors of the 10th and 11th centuries. Nevertheless, traffickers in error from the time of Constantine onwards have turned this accidental benefit into a theologically-unjustified dogma that has been used to justify political protection for a wide variety of heresies, immoral practices, corrupt ecclesiastical administrative practices,

and a pastoral hamstringing of the Mystical Body of Christ. Peddlers of such “royal rights” presented as an article of Faith, have often managed to addict populations to their message for centuries at a time. At times, this pseudo-dogma became so “customary” that true Catholic reformers seeking to liberate believers from their erroneous dependency upon it found their efforts treated as heretical novelties rather than the unvarnished Gospel Truth.

Once again, however, getting someone to admit and treat his addiction to an error is most difficult when the traffickers in falsehood manage to trick away from him his crucial rational tools for thinking, and doing so in union with the fullness of his Faith. It is this most blinding form of commitment to pet delusions which protects the two errors most common to contemporary believing Catholics, at least in the United States: unquestioning faith in papal dogmatic omnipotence and the value of American liberty. Although these two falsehoods, especially under the current pontificate, might seem to be mutually exclusive, they are historically cemented together in their trafficking of the drug of an arbitrary, individual willfulness, and in their removal of an escape route from the self-destruction that it wreaks.

The Attack on Reason

An attack on Reason through mockery of the “losers” experiencing the difficulties and failures inevitable in the arduous task of seeking the truth has been one of the most powerful tools in the hands of Sophists and their myriad of heirs from the time of Socrates down to the present. Such mockery was packaged in a pseudo-Christian wrapping through the medieval school of philosophy called Nominalism. Nominalists claimed that the Christian Socratic and scholastic effort jointly to use Reason and the information handed down by the Faith through the fullness of Tradition to elaborate systematic teachings giving solid guidance to daily life, was a blasphemous pretention on the part of fallen men; a usurpation of the rights of God. All that arrogant philosophers and scholastic theologians



actually could accomplish was to give a “name” (a *nomen*, and, hence, Nominalism) to the topics they approached. But the supposedly substantive “meaning” that they gave to exalted subjects such as the nature of justice were just words, easily rendered pointless if God “willed” them to signify something different, which, in His omnipotence, He was always capable of doing. Human Reason, in the Nominalist system, was something that could only know disconnected, individual bits of data. An unexamined Faith alone could address great issues of meaning and morality, conclusions regarding which were rooted in the ultimately incomprehensible and arbitrary “will” of God.

In dismissing the effort to use Reason systematically to discuss the content and consequences of the Faith, the Nominalists actually left the final decision regarding what God’s “will,” expressed in Faith, supposedly was in the hands of whomever most successfully claimed that he was the obvious channel for proclaiming it. Several radical Nominalists tied the “will of God” to the “will of emperors,” with their more moderate colleagues of the 15th and early 16th century translating it into the “will of the popes,” who, they claimed, could, at least in theory, abolish Tradition itself. Such nonsense was fought off vigorously by the Spanish neo-scholastics at the Council of Trent, but the Nominalist spirit behind the assertion never fully disappeared. Rather, it gained new energy through the trafficking of a false interpretation of the meaning of the decree on papal infallibility of First Vatican Council, the exaggerated confidence in the Papacy engendered by a long line of solid 19th and 20th century successors of St. Peter, and then the willful designs of the dominant forces in the Church since the 1960’s seeking practically to abolish Tradition and recreate Catholic Truth from scratch with Roman help.

Traffickers in Falsehood

Traffickers in falsehood from a different Nominalist gang with an intellectual “blood relation” to their philosophical colleagues encouraging papal willfulness were responsible for brewing blind addiction to the error enshrined



John Locke FRS (29 August 1632 – 28 October 1704) was an English philosopher and physician, widely regarded as one of the most influential of the Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the “Father of Liberalism.”

in the American vision of liberty. Luther was the first of two middlemen shipping this second form of addictive, erroneous, and highly-willful arguments from the Late Middle Ages down to those peddling it to contemporary victims. Luther’s rejection of the Church for her failure to accept his doctrine of the total depravity of man and nature after Original Sin, reduced Christianity to an anti-social collection of individual believers, each of whom could claim to express God’s will, and none of whom was hindered in doing so by any rational scruples already dismissed by the Nominalist founder of Protestantism as blasphemous. A potential “war of all against all” for the prize of usurpation of the “will of God” was thereby unleashed, with the victory in the conflict inevitably going to the strongest. Sometimes this Triumph of the Will was blatant, with Protestant political supporters openly demanding and obtaining a share in >

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unifying “God’s will” with their own material self-interest and foisting this upon the believing population in a tyrannical fashion. But it also manifested itself subtly and indirectly by playing on and developing the individualism of the Protestant argument and its insistence that it had “freed the Christian man.”

Here, the second middleman-trafficker mounts the stage: John Locke (1632-1704), the founder of Liberalism. Claiming to be a defender of “God’s will” and Christian “freedom” in its Protestant form, Locke’s political philosophy proceeds to make individuals the sole autonomous and knowable building blocks of existence. He does so with a Nominalist fury, allowing for no supernatural or natural Revelation or Reason to shape knowledge of the human person, but, rather, only guidance from the distinct, non-intellectual, data bytes of physical experience that stimulate individuals from birth onwards. In other words, his defense of the order and freedom “willed by God” gives each and every one of us the right to create his own personality and do what he “wills,” based upon whatever he physically “feels” has formed him. Fears of illegitimate, sinful physical influences on the individual disappear. His only limitation on what “God” would “will” the individual to be “free” to do is what the society we live in contractually agrees is safely within bounds; “God’s will” becomes a “conventional” agreement backed up by a “conventional morality”—not one written into the very nature of things; and a “conventional morality” not even determined by all individuals democratically but only those who “historically” really can be trusted to know what “the people” truly “will”; *i.e.*, the liberals who share the trafficker-middleman Locke’s own vision.

The United States is a John Locke Liberal Foundation. It claims that its Founding Fathers are liberty friendly. More moderately liberal conservatives and more logically liberal followers of Locke may debate what the “will” of the Founders and the democratic “will” of the individual voters who agree with the “will” of the Founders as they understand it might mean, how God-fearing or how secular it should be, but they all beat the same fundamental *willful* Nominalist

drum. None of them can logically escape from Justice Anthony Kennedy’s conclusion regarding where this all leads: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.” Liberalism can justify anything—from capitalist economic injustice to Communism, from American exceptionalism to sexual and transgender exceptionalism, from abortion to euthanasia to destruction of the entire non-Lockean world—and it is for this reason that Liberalism indeed is a sin. Alas, despite the dislike of many conservatives of the specific acts of willfulness of the current pontiff and his justification of them, his mode of papal government is more in union with the spirit of American liberty than ever before in the history of the Church. If his will is the only thing that counts, then it, too, can justify anything as Catholic dogma.

That many believing American Catholics are addicted to the errors of papolatry and American liberty, convinced that they somehow reflect the actual will of God, is a tragic fact of life that I ask everyone reading these pages to test on his own by questioning their friends and relatives. Reduced by their addiction to a pseudo-Tradition equated with the “will” of the pope, and a pseudo-liberty whose extent and limitations are based on whatever group of individuals is capable of foisting its interpretation of the “will” of the Founding Fathers upon people deprived of the fullness of their real Tradition and their Reason informed by Faith, they cannot even imagine that they have a problem dependency, much less escape it. Like the Roman judge, faced with Christians thinking totally out of his narrow box, who stopped up his ears and said that he could not even bring himself to contemplate a critique of the existing system (Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*), those who suffer from such an addiction cannot conceive what in the world I am lamenting here. “Give me my error or give me death!” That is their unfortunate motto. But there is really no need for them to choose. In the not too distant future they will soon have both.

“When it comes
to life the critical
thing is whether
you take things
for granted or
take things
with gratitude.”

—G.K. Chesterton



We as Catholics have
an obligation to grow.
Grow in our knowledge
of the Faith and grow in
our love of our Faith.



W. M. G. 1859



Peter and John Healing the Cripple at the Gates of the Temple, Rembrandt van Rijn, 1659



May I Help You?

By Fr. Dominique Bourmaud

When in good health, we humans, being a gregarious species, tend to congregate and mix readily. However, when in trouble, we tend to shy away from people. And, when in deep trouble, the need of getting out of our miseries, the urge to bring normality in our life, force us to confide in a trustworthy friend. This someone we know may not be able to have all answers, but at least, he will offer a word of good counsel along with going out of his way to get us back on track.

In no rare instance, the issue of addiction applies to parishioners already used to unburdening themselves to their pastor. They may end up unburdening not only their sins but also their psychological and physical woes, onto a familiar authority figure, the priest. Even equipped with medical training or applied psychology, the priest may not give the

impression that he is a professional therapist or psychologist. His spiritual authority may never be confused with whatever medical knowledge he might possess otherwise. Such a *faux pas* could endanger his spiritual authority. These limits having been set, what is the role of a priest confronted with a difficult case? In what ways can he prove helpful to a parishioner going through turmoil?

The Confessor

Each priest is entitled to absolve our sins, however grave these may be. In this, the Pastor has the gift of bringing back God's friendship to the soul. It is a gift of divine grace, a power superior to creating new worlds. On the human



level, the priest is doing to souls the work of waste management companies in cities. He helps keep souls in decent order and a healthy degree of self-esteem which is quite necessary to navigate their emotional and social life.

And when it comes to addicts, few can truly say that they have no need of a good confessor. Addiction is a compulsory disorder and it degrades man. It falls under the category of habit, with this distinction that it is so enticing or so pleasurable as to affect deeply one's personality, one's emotions and mind. And habits have a bearing on our moral acts. To utter blasphemies out of unchecked habit, even though presently unaware of its gravity, is gravely sinful. The ease and automatism do not take away the sin which was deliberated in its inception. This applies to addicts who fell into a trap of their own accord as they genuinely admit. They knew well enough that they were playing with fire and that it could damage their future, although they might not have measured all the consequences.

This, the priest knows full well. So does the addict whose unbalanced self-hatred has already revealed. Is it not then, the time to apply the verdict of justice rather than the balm of mercy? Does this mean that the confessor is duty bound to always refuse the sacraments with little encouragement besides "shape up or ship out"? Thanks be to God, things are not all black and white; various shades of grey exist in the addict's moral state. And so, circumstances will allow the skillful priest to use the oil or the scalpel, in order to gently coach his patient along the painful but necessary path of gradual abnegation.

The Physician

In his own realm, the priest is the soul's physician and is totally in his right to prescribe the penances, actions, and prayer life which are in tune with the soul's needs. Although he does not directly handle professional tools which are known to successfully conquer the addictions, he may have a major influence in turning the tables. All psychologists and all ex-addicts will tell you that one thing is the first step out of degrading spiral: the recognition of the addiction

and the will to leave it. Sometimes, the patient has to reach rock bottom before he realizes how urgent it is to stop. Here, the priest and trusted friend may influence the will to take the decisive step. His vast knowledge of souls allows him to distinguish where there is vice and where there is addiction. Also, the fact that he is a man of prayer, that he has sacrificed himself for his flock, can only add force to the priest's plea that his parishioner quit his addictive behavior for good.

The priest's common sense may help clear the way. He will say in no uncertain terms that Catholics can still be genuinely Catholic and yet, become anxious, depressed, alcoholic, and suicidal just like everyone else. "Your Catholicity is no vaccine against addiction or psychological issues." He will dispel the phony ideas that often creep into one's mind when unchecked. Their name is legion: "my behavior is an obsession of the devil because of my past...it is in my genes and I can do nothing about it...my mood is caused by my boss who gets on my nerves." Here again, the authoritative voice of prudence may calm the patient and tell him which ways he needs to avoid and focus on the one necessary thing.

The Mediator

Many Catholics, out of instinct shun the established medical world and, more especially, the psychological wards because they are afraid that they are all Freudian or will turn their minds into robots or atheists. Depending on the case, addicts will invariably have to seek someone else's help, and oftener than not, professional advice. And, here again, they will need the push from a trusted friend, and if the voice of the priest is added to it, so much the better because it will readily calm the scruples or qualms.

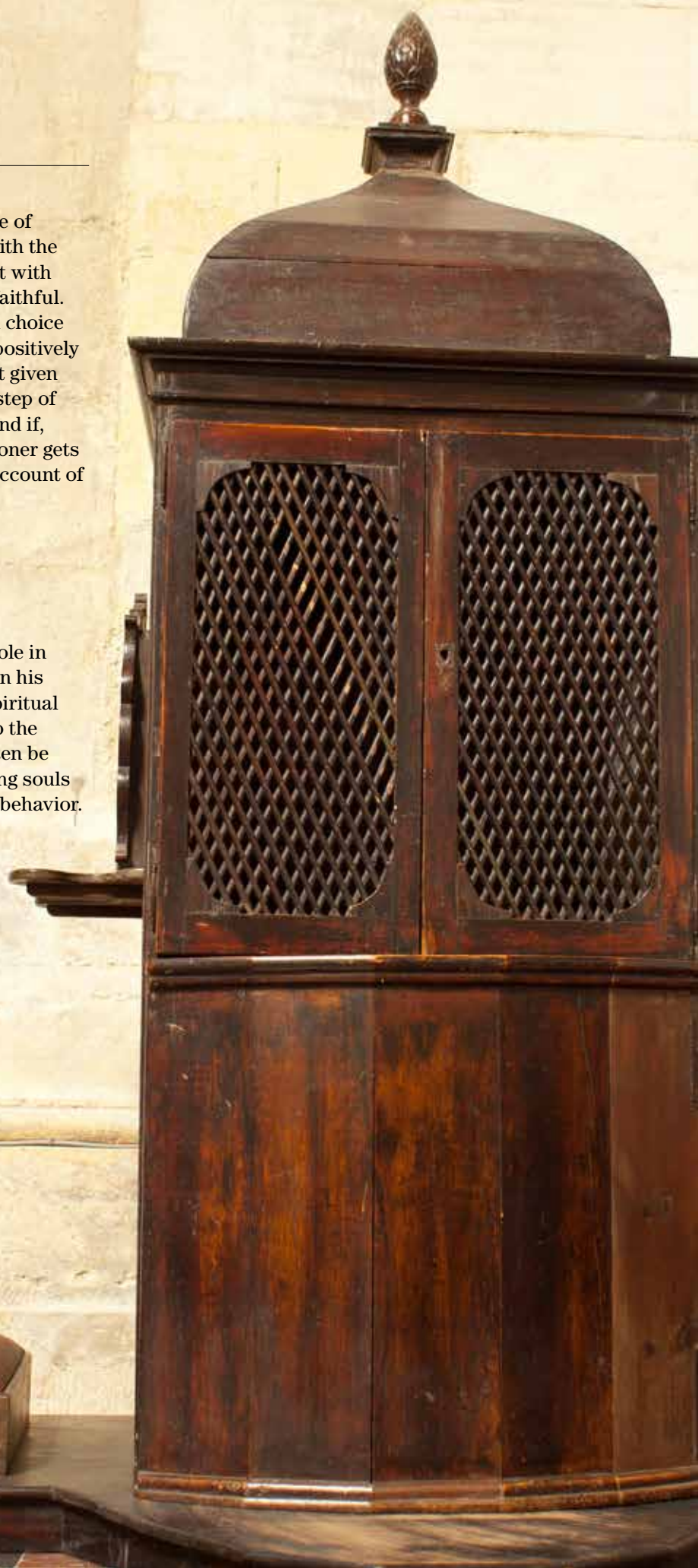
Mediator between God and man, the priest can also be the middleman between the addict and some group or some qualified personnel who can help. He will advise prudently but firmly his struggling faithful to go and seek help. In doing so, he will let him know that he has an addiction and that this demands a strict control from a competent and trustworthy person. >

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The priest normally has a fair knowledge of the medical world which he frequents with the regular sick calls, and he has his contact with some medical professionals among his faithful. He will have the means to advise a good choice of helpful professionals. Now, advising positively that he seek professional help from a list given by his pastor facilitate greatly the hard step of getting through the first appointment. And if, after a promising beginning, the parishioner gets sidetracked, the pastor can request an account of events and get things back on track.

In Conclusion

So, all in all, although the priest is no psychologist or medical counselor, his role in the treatment of addicts can be crucial in his capacity as an enlightened confessor, spiritual advisor, and mediator. This may seem to the world of little importance, but it may often be decisive in righting the wrong and helping souls and bodies recover human and humane behavior.





The Value of Silence

By Jane Carver

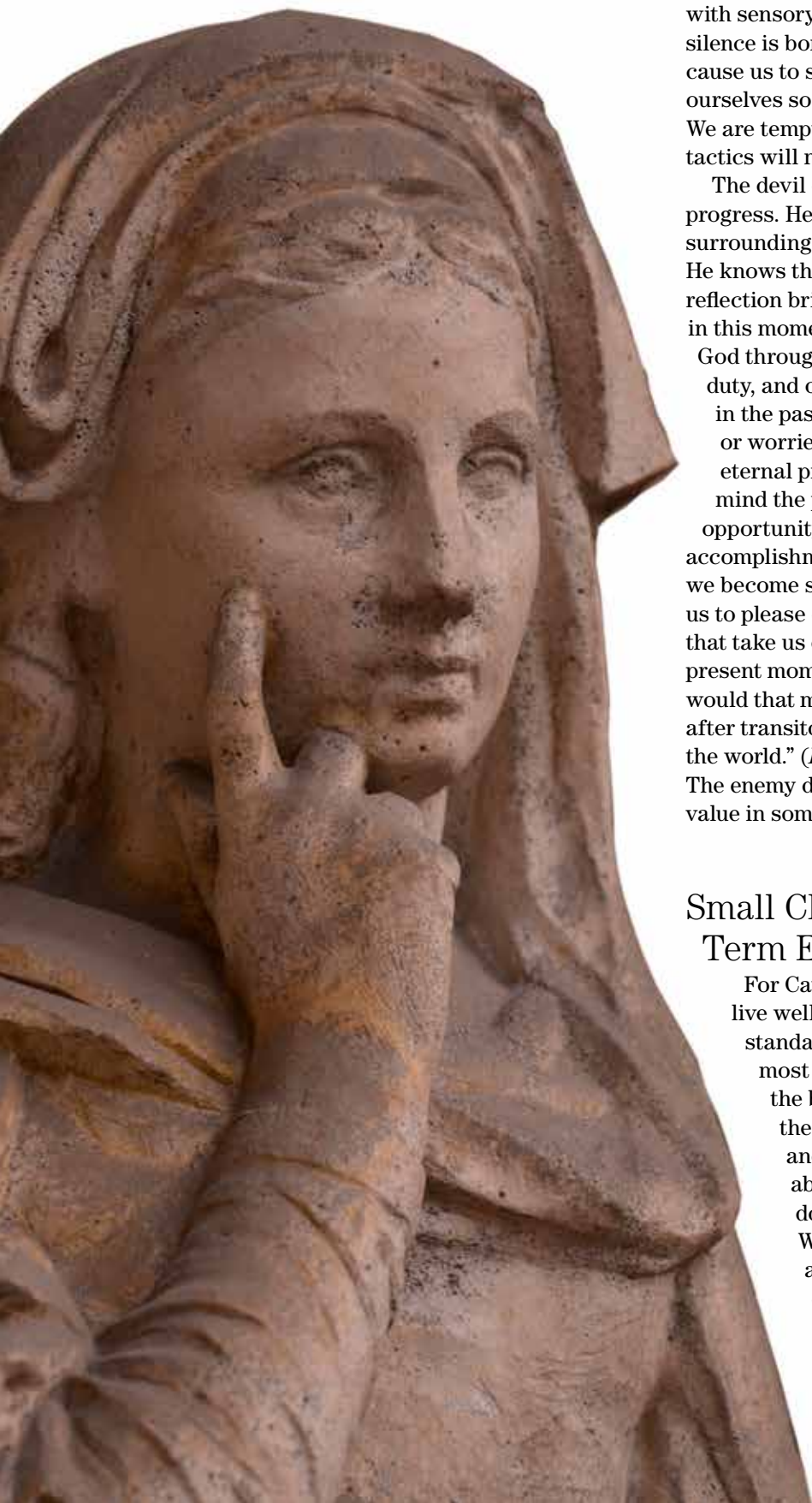
“In the solitude and silence of the wilderness... for their labor in the contest, God gives His athletes the reward they desire: a peace that the world does not know and joy in the Holy Ghost.”— St. Bruno

When we think about silence, we often imagine “the absence of talking or noise.” Do we consider that other elements in our life are departures from silence not only in our ears, but in our minds and bodies? In a certain sense, in today’s world, we are “addicted” to sensory stimulation. The world sees silence as a painful vacuum of emptiness that must be filled—silence doesn’t make money or get us ahead! Therefore, it must be rejected as worthless and a waste of time. When we have a moment of free time, do we instinctively pull out our phones or in some other way, fill the silence? Our bodies seek luxury and

comfort. Our eyes seek the latest updates on social media, news, sports, or celebrity gossip. We expose ourselves to a plethora of information that can rob us of our peace. Our eyes and ears are addicted to looking outwards at the world ever-seeking to satisfy our curiosity with music and other forms of entertainment. Can we call this silence?

When we do have a moment of silence, on a retreat for example or a walk through nature, our mind is more easily uplifted to the things of God or into self-reflection. Surely, upon introspection, we want to see order and thus live peacefully. Sometimes, rather, we find that we do not match up to our ideal—the ideal we have for ourselves in life and how we measure up to the spiritual ideal of God. Sometimes this gaze upon ourselves is displeasing enough for us to want >

Theme Addictions



to reject moments of true silence and fill them with sensory distractions. The world tells us that silence is boring, uncomfortable, and can even cause us to suffer. Therefore, we should distract ourselves so that we do not suffer the silence. We are tempted to believe that these avoidance tactics will make us happy and fulfill us.

The devil does not want us to make spiritual progress. He, being the father of lies, can use our surroundings to persuade us to avoid silence. He knows that a moment of silence and uplifting reflection brings us into the present moment. It is in this moment that we can practice virtue, love God through the accomplishment of our daily duty, and only truly suffer—since suffering in the past or in the future are memories or worries about suffering. God is in an eternal present. When we are able to call to mind the present moment, we can seize that opportunity for union with God by the loving accomplishment of our daily duty. Is this not how we become saints? Noise and stimulation beckon us to please our mind and body with distractions that take us out of the reality and truth of the present moment. “Oh how good a conscience would that man preserve, who would never seek after transitory joy, nor ever busy himself with the world.” (*Imitation of Christ*, Bk. 1 Ch. 20) The enemy does not want us to see the infinite value in something so small.

Small Choices, Long-Term Effects

For Catholics who are doing their best to live well and raise their children under the standard of Christ, the enemy will be the most insidious. Perhaps it will start with the buying of yet another screen, but will the watching time for husband, wife, and children slowly increase? What about the things we are supposed to be doing with that precious gift of time? What is gained by these distractions as compared with the losses? Let us consider some of the consequences. In the world today, suffering is the greatest evil. It's true that



suffering is unpleasant so it is, in a way, a natural reaction to try to avoid suffering and remove it from those we love, especially our children... but God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to *suffer* and die for us. Of course we do not seek suffering for its own sake, but the notion that suffering is inevitable on our earthly pilgrimage and is a means of sanctification has been muffled by our society, and the world provides ample means for us to reject it or to at least numb it with noise in its various forms.

This noise that we create in our lives leads us to exactly the opposite of what we seek—unhappiness. We aren't happy when we avoid reality because by seeking short-term gratification through stimuli, we believe the lie that we are content, but it will only last a moment. Our immortal soul is made for the infinite, for God. No matter how much we try to distract our mind and fill ourselves with noise, we won't be able to fill our yearning for the infinite good and we are left dissatisfied.

Living in Reality

We only have the present moment to sanctify and this moment is found in reality, in silence. Our addiction to noise and stimulation is a constant invitation to step into a virtual reality where we are not able to focus on what is important because we don't possess the silence to see clearly. The past is behind us and we do not have the grace for the future yet. We have the grace for *now*. Right now is reality. We have the grace to do exactly what we are supposed to be doing in this moment. We have the grace to do it well and with much love. No matter how simple our task is, if we accept the grace to do it, to do it as well as we can and with love, we will acquire virtue and become saints. This becomes a great struggle when we are in the habit of rejecting silence. These habits can become addictions over time and by indulging in our addictions, whatever they may be, we throw away a precious and fleeting opportunity for union with God, which is available to us every moment of every day.

Silence Enables Gratitude

If we have a sense of entitlement to noise stimuli in its various forms outside of the dark realm of silence, it is more difficult for us to be grateful. If we are seeking out some kind of amusement (because we "deserve it"), we are not choosing to be satisfied with what we have in the present. If we feel the urge to avoid silence, we sometimes choose thereby to avoid our responsibilities to perhaps peek at what "the beautiful people" have and we don't...or at someone else's life that we would prefer to our own. Did I notice reality or did I always choose to be somewhere else today? Did I truly look into the eyes of those with whom I was speaking? Did I feel the wind in my face as I walked to and from my car? Did I hear my children laugh and seek their company? Did I have enough silence to help me live my life as I am meant to? A certain amount of conscious silence can bring us back to reality and help us be grateful for the gift of our life with both its blessings and its trials.

The Beauty of Silence

Silence is where we find God, where we can love Him and those around us because it enables us to live in reality. Silence is not empty, but rather full of light and truth and enables us to be grateful. We cannot pretend to be ignorant of the example of the saints and Christ Himself, who sought out silence and consciously rejected avenues of distraction, however small, in their lives. Noise is not a true need and we miss nothing when we don't give into its superficiality. Silence is only seen as a suffering for those who embrace the world. We are not created for this world and each voluntary noise "fix," in whatever form, tethers us to this transient life and perpetuates a cycle of short term gratification. Next time we reach for our phone, want to turn on the television or radio, we can slowly break these "addictions" to distract ourselves. Little by little we can start to notice the details of life around us: the people and the precious passage of time. Silence enables us to truly live our lives in our humble place in the world, to see ourselves for who we are, and to live in the present moment in union with God and His will for us daily.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

The Credo

by Fr. Christopher Danel

On certain days and feasts, the announcement of the good tidings of salvation is followed by the solemn profession of faith. When the Credo occurs, it forms the answer and the echo to the voice of God, who has spoken to us by His prophets and apostles, yea, by His own Son.—Monsignor Gihl

Introduction

In this article we examine the *Credo*, presenting the work of Monsignor Nicholas Gihl in his fundamental liturgical commentary *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically, and Ascetically Explained*. Monsignor Gihl was a priest of Freiburg in Breisgau whose work of liturgical research took place during the time frame spanning the

pontificates of Popes Pius IX to Pius XI, including that of Pope St. Pius X. The early years of his work were contemporaneous with the last years in the work of Dom Prosper Guéranger. (The English translation of his study appeared in 1902; the original is: Gihl, Nikolaus. *Messopfer dogmatisch, liturgisch und aszetisch erklärt*. Herder: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1877.)

Various Creeds

There are a great number of ecclesiastical professions of faith or creeds. In Latin, a profession of faith is commonly called a *credo* or, more technically, a *symbolum fidei*. A *symbolum* is a mark, characteristic, or true sign by which a person may be recognized or be identified. By the



profession of faith, the faithful are distinguished from heretics and unbelievers. The creeds briefly contain the principal points of all dogmas and hence they serve for the profession of the communion of faith with the Church.

The first in origin and the simplest is the Apostles' Creed, which most probably is of strictly apostolic origin, and forms the basis of the others, as all later creeds are only a greater or less development and extension thereof. Next to the Apostles' Creed (*Symbolum Apostolorum*), the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (*Symbolum Patrum*), often called simply the Nicene Creed, holds the most prominent place. This Creed is called Nicene, because the definition of the first General Council of Nicea (325) regarding the divinity of the Son is therein almost literally recorded; it is called Constantinopolitan because, although not first arranged in this order by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381), it was, however, there received and confirmed as Catholic.

Incorporation into the Mass

The Nicene Creed is particularly suited for the solemn profession of the true Faith at divine worship due to the fact that not only the divinity of the Father, but also the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost are so expressly and emphatically emphasized therein; this is mainly in opposition to the Arian and the Macedonian heresies, which chiefly occasioned its admission into the sacrificial liturgy of the East in the beginning of the 6th century. Toward the end of the 8th century, the same Creed was incorporated in the constituent portions of the Mass in France and Germany. Far more difficult is it to state the period when the Roman Church began to recite or to sing the *Credo* during Mass. According to the lucid and reliable information of the Abbot Berno of Reichenau (+1048), the general admission of the *Credo* into the Roman Mass seems to have taken place only at the commencement of the 11th century, and that, indeed, by Pope Benedict VIII at the instigation and request of the Emperor Henry II.

On the 14th of February, 1014, which fell that



year on Sunday, Henry II was anointed and crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in St. Peter's Basilica. During the High Mass at his coronation, the devout Emperor noticed that the *Credo* had not been sung, as was customary throughout Christendom; inquiring the cause, he was informed that the Roman Church, which had never departed from the Catholic Faith and had never been corrupted by heresy, had no necessity for such a profession of Faith. But the Emperor requested as a coronation gift to him and for the edification of the faithful, who from all parts of the world flocked to Rome, that the pope would prescribe the insertion of the profession of faith into the solemn High Mass, and the pope deemed it advisable to introduce into Rome a custom which henceforth for all times would be a testimony of the lively Faith of the holy Emperor and which, in consequence, would enkindle this ardor of Faith in thousands of hearts. >

Manner of Recitation

The *Credo* is chanted in a Sung Mass, while in the Low Mass it is recited in a loud voice (in contrast to *sotto voce* and *secreto*) so that all present may unite in heart and mind with the priest. At the first words, the hands of the priest are raised and extended; then, during its recitation, the hands remain joined before the breast: this devout attitude corresponds with the humble homage and the confiding abandonment of oneself to the absolute truth and veracity of God. The three different inclinations of the head at the words *Deum*, *Jesum Christum*, and *simul adoratur*, that is, at the confession of Faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, express due reverence to the three divine Persons. The words: *Et incarnatus est...* are accompanied by a genuflection in order appropriately to revere and glorify the Incarnation, this mystery of God's inconceivable condescension and self-emptying. At the last words (*et vitam venturi saeculi*), the priest makes the Sign of the Cross. It is evident how appropriate it is to conclude and seal the *Credo* with the Sign of the Cross, because the latter is not only a brief profession of our Faith, but also our shield and buckler against all the adversaries and dangers to our Faith.

Placement in the Mass

While in the Greek the Symbol of Faith is placed after the Offertory, the Roman liturgy orders its recitation after the Gospel, and whereas in the East the Creed is a permanent, constituent part of every Mass celebrated, it occurs in the Roman liturgy only on certain days as a mark of special distinction. The *Credo* has assuredly the most suitable position in the make-up of the Roman liturgy for Mass. It makes no difference whether it be regarded as the end of the first or as the beginning of the second principal division of the Mass; it is in any case the most proper medium and connecting link between the two parts. As the blossom and fruit of the preceding scriptural readings it forms, on the one hand, the conclusion of the general divine service; but on the other hand, it is also the foundation-stone and

the basis for the special sacrificial celebration about to begin, which is called in a special manner the "mystery of Faith" (*mysterium fidei*). Since, therefore, only certain Masses are distinguished and privileged above others by the solemn profession of Faith, the question remains to be answered, which were the reasons for admitting the Symbol into the sacrificial rite. As a rule, liturgists classify under three heads the principal reasons for the recitation of the Symbol, and these they designate by the words *Mysterium*, *Doctrina*, and *Solemnitas*.

Mysterium

The first principal reason lies in the mystery celebrated. The *Credo* is recited, namely, on certain days and feasts whose historical foundation or dogmatic subject is contained in the Symbol, that is, one of the mysteries expressly mentioned therein or at least acknowledged as therein included. Since the celebration of divine worship on such days is consecrated to the commemoration and to the honor of a special mystery of Faith, it is proper to confess this mystery by the solemn singing or the recitation aloud of the *Credo*. Among such days, we find, for example:

All Sundays. Sunday is sanctified by reason of many mysteries recited in the Symbol and is devoted to their commemoration. The celebration of Sunday is pre-eminently ordained to honor the triune God; this veneration is rendered to the Adorable Trinity not merely because of the infinite majesty and glory of the divine Persons, but also on account of the great works of their power and love for the salvation of men, not the least of which is the resurrection of the Lord. (2) The feasts of the Most Holy Trinity and Whitsunday, as well as the principal feasts of Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother Mary. In the *Credo* we proclaim the name and glory of the three divine Persons, who are therein expressly mentioned and confessed. In these mystical joys, sorrows and glories, the Blessed Mary, Virgin Mother of God, is inseparably connected and united with her Son; therefore, some special days are feasts of Mary as well as of Jesus. The Blessed Virgin is also praised



by the Church as the Queen of Apostles and of Apostolic Doctors, as she who has destroyed all heresies. (3) The feasts of the holy angels. The reason is found in the mention made of them in the words “the invisible world” (*invisibilibium*), by which the angels are understood. (4) The feast of all saints. The *Credo* on this day has for its reason the article of faith of “the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church,” whose triumphant, glorious members are the blessed in Heaven. (5) The celebration of the Dedication of a Church and its anniversary. This day also may be brought into relation with the above-mentioned article of the Symbol; for the material house of God is a figure of the Church Militant and Triumphant, of the kingdom of Christ on earth and in Heaven.

Doctrina

The second principal reason for the recitation of the Symbol is designated by the word doctrine. For this reason the honor of the Creed is bestowed upon the feasts of the apostles and evangelists. The *Credo* contains the doctrine taught by the apostles, and it mentions expressly as one of the four marks of the true Church that she is apostolic. The apostles introduced into the world the Church instituted by Christ and they spread it over the whole earth. They were the organs of the Holy Ghost and the infallible bearers of revelation; they announced all that Christ did and suffered for our salvation. By the hands of Evangelists the Holy Ghost Himself wrote down the history of redemption, the tidings of salvation of the kingdom of Christ, the doctrines and facts, the mysteries and means of grace of our Faith; these writings of the holy Gospels were handed over and entrusted to the Church as a precious treasure. To these feasts we also add the feast of St. Barnabas, the apostolic cooperator of St. Paul, and that of the Chair of St. Peter. In former times, the feasts of the Doctors of the Church were included, as well as that of St. Mary Magdalen, since the Magdalen, after the Mother of God, first beheld the Risen Savior and, as an eye-witness of His resurrection, she was sent by Him to the apostles as the first promulgator of the mystery of His resurrection.

Solemnitas

The third reason for inserting the *Credo* in the ritual of the Mass is some special solemnity, that is, the profession of Faith is often sung or recited publicly to enhance the exterior splendor of the feast or Mass. According to this rule, the following feasts or Masses are entitled to the Creed: (1) The Patronal feasts, that is, the feast of the principal Patron of the church and of the place. The patron of a church, or titular, is that saint under whose invocation and in whose honor the church has been erected and dedicated. By the patron of the place, on the other hand, we understand that saint who is chosen as the special intercessor or protector of a parish, a diocese, a province or a kingdom and who is invoked, honored and celebrated as such. (2) The Mass of the feast of a saint in that church in which the body or at least a notable relic is preserved. As notable relics are considered, for example, the head, an arm or leg of a saint. (3) The solemn Votive Masses which, on general and important occasions, are celebrated by order or with permission of the bishop; only those which are sung on ordinary weekdays in purple vestments have no *Credo*. Thus, the Church has, according to well established principles, prescribed the *Credo*, as a special distinction of the feasts and days, only in such Masses whose character has a most intimate and close relation to the profession of Faith.

Conclusion

The profession of Faith, proclaimed so loudly and solemnly at the Holy Sacrifice, should always emanate from hearts replete with faith. And with what enthusiasm does the apostle describe the combats and victories of men of faith! In the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews he extolls how by faith they became heroes in the conflict; by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire. Persecuted, oppressed, maltreated, they wandered in deserts, in mountains, in the caves and dens of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy; but, strong in faith, their spirit did not succumb.

But when I remember the tears that I shed on hearing the songs of the Church in the early days, soon after I had recovered my Faith, and when I realize that nowadays it is not the singing that moves me but the meaning of the words when they are sung in a clear voice to the most appropriate tune, I again acknowledge the great value of this practice. So I waver between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which, as I know from experience, can accrue from singing.

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10, Fresco, Cathedral of Florence, Italy





Letter to a Young Man on Purity

By Fr. Vincent Gélineau

Dear Augustine,

Having just arrived at law school, you discover a moral void that distresses you. Your fellow-students in the lecture hall are much more interested in the famous Thursday night parties than by the subtleties of the Civil Code. You know very little about these parties, but what they say is enough to dissuade you: girls, alcohol, drugs, “music” that’s more than doubtful...this frivolity sickens your Catholic soul. You remember these terrible orders of the 19th Century Italian Free-Masons: “It has been decided in our councils that we don’t want any more Christians, let us not make martyrs, but let us popularize vice amongst the multitudes—that they breathe it through all five senses, that they drink it, that they are saturated by it. Make vicious hearts, and

you will no longer have Catholics...In order to demolish Catholicism, it is necessary to begin by suppressing women. The word is true, but since we cannot eliminate the woman, let us corrupt her along with the Church.”

You feel it: this revolutionary propaganda, which aims at moral decadence, can be reduced to the promotion of the sin of impurity, this sin so attractive which drives so many souls to hell. You also, you fear to be carried away by this current, because the temptations are violent and you are lucid about your weakness.

In order to encourage you, remember those models who enthused your adolescent heart. Remember the freshness of the life of St. Dominic Savio, and at the same time his firmness on this subject. Remember Pier Giorgio Frassati, that young Italian student, radiant with joy, with piety



and purity, who died suddenly at 24 years old, in 1925. How many young people, young women, were edified and consoled by the simple reading of his life.

The pure soul imposes respect, quite simply because it governs itself. It controls all its passions; it knows how to master itself. I know that you are well aware of the quality of education that your dear parents gave you. You do not wish to disappoint them. Like them, you are proud to be Catholic. You desire to be an example and a leader for classmates who have not received the same education. In speaking with them, you realize the damage of an education without God, where the practice of virtue is non-existent, and where egoism is king. Nothing in them sets a barrier to impure temptations. They do not even consider the thought of fighting against them because they do not understand their malice. Nothing like what you knew living with your family, where you practiced all sorts of virtues following the good examples of your parents. Without telling you, they have prepared you for these combats that you are undergoing. They have armed you for victoriously resisting temptations and not losing sight of this ideal of your younger years.

You do not yet know what you will do later in life, but remember well these energetic words of Luce Quenette: “Virginity prepares for everything, as well for marriage as for a religious vocation. It

is essentially the same apprenticeship: to reserve oneself for one alone.” He who does not know how to preserve himself does not know how to give himself.

“A beautiful ideal,” you tell me, “but so easily forgotten at the hour of temptation.” Do not believe too easily that it will be impossible. The grace of God is all-powerful. It is for us to remain faithful to Him. Keep your good habits of piety: prayer, regular confession, and communion. Reject firmly dangerous occasions: these doubtful parties which your fellow students love, these unhealthy movies which nourish what remains of their imagination. Monitor your smartphone, which wishes to control everything; do not let it play nasty tricks on you.

And above all, do not regret having mortified the pleasures of the world and its spirit in order to keep your soul pure. The demon of impurity wishes to seduce us, by proposing to us easy pleasure. See further ahead. What do these lamentable pleasures give? There is of course an eternal hell, but already on this earth the consequences are dramatic: divorce, contraception, abortion...

Therefore, dear Augustine, do not be discouraged. Your purity will be the strength and the honor of your future family. Do not lose this treasure along the way. May the Most Pure Virgin protect you.

When Bishops Meet

By Gabriel S. Sanchez, J.D.

Fr. John W. O'Malley, an eminent historian who has penned monographs on the early Jesuits, the Council of Trent, the First Vatican Council, and Vatican II, has now come forth with a "synthesis" of sorts on his conciliar writings, *When Bishops Meet*. Styled as an elongated essay, this work pulls together O'Malley's insights on Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II. As such, it is less of an academic analysis and more a reflection on the three councils which have shaped post-Reformation Catholicism, for better or worse. Although O'Malley presents scholarly disinterest throughout, it is difficult not to read him as a sympathizer with Vatican II, a council which he recognizes as a break from both Trent and Vatican I, not to mention every other ecumenical council which preceded it.

With that in mind, a traditional Catholic may

take pause. Why read such a book? Why digest another in a long line of books which both seek to vindicate Vatican II and explain away its obvious "problem areas"? Moreover, given the near-to-heart place Trent and Vatican I hold in the hearts of many traditionalists, why trust O'Malley's commentary? Will he not castigate these historic gatherings as retrograde, outmoded, and obsolete? Certainly it is hard to escape the sense that O'Malley may, with qualifications, cast all three aspersions upon these crucial events of 16th and 19th-century Catholicism. Yet any fair-minded reader of *When Bishops Meet* must concede that O'Malley handles his subject matter with remarkable skill, all the while demonstrating a depth of learning that could not allow even the most partisan churchman from intentionally distorting the history of the Church



he professes publicly to serve.

New Modes and Orders

O'Malley is remarkably blunt: Vatican II represents a break with its conciliar predecessors. In fact, it is fair to say, based on O'Malley's testimony alone, that Vatican II constitutes a radical break with its predecessors. How this is so has been chronicled by many a Catholic, traditional and non-traditional alike. Instead of tackling a concrete doctrinal issue (or issues), Vatican II sought to rethink—or in the mind of its defenders “refresh”—the whole of Church teaching, not for the express purpose of modifying or “developing” doctrine, but placing it in a self-consciously modern context. Vatican II had no anathemas to hand out, only positive declarations of how the Church and the modern world can come together. But to what end? O'Malley is never clear on that point, though neither are many of Vatican II's defenders.

But Vatican II was about more than reconciling the Church with modernity. It was, perhaps at its most controversial, about reconciling Catholicism with non-Catholic Christians and non-Christian religions. There is nothing intrinsically modern about either Judaism or Islam, and yet Vatican II articulated “common ground” between Catholicism and these two religious traditions, just as it articulated “common ground” between Catholicism and other Christian communions. As to the latter endeavor, some see this as an innovation no less heart-stopping than the positive overtures made outside of Christianity. But as O'Malley highlights, this is not precisely the case.

For instance, one of the aims of Trent—at least initially—was to bring wayward Christians, that is, Protestants, back into the Catholic fold. To accomplish this lofty task, it was thought that Protestants should have some role at that council, though the exact contours were never shaped. While Trent did experience a brief appearance by Lutheran representatives, it did nothing to bring Lutherans back to the Catholic Church nor address in a satisfactory way their lopsided grievances with the Church of Rome.

Similarly, as the idea for calling Vatican I took form, overtures were made to the non-Catholic apostolic communions, specifically the Eastern Orthodox churches. While the situation of Orthodoxy at the time made it impossible for its hierarchy to participate, O'Malley points to the glimmer of the spark of a hope that the East might have its say at this gathering, presumably in the service of reconciliation.

Vatican II, as most are aware, featured widespread, though indirect, participation from non-Catholics. It was, in O'Malley's estimation, another example of where Vatican II broke from its predecessors in sustenance, even if it had thin antecedents. While this council did not go so far as to give non-Catholics explicit rights of participation such as staging interventions or voting, O'Malley notes the influence these non-Catholics had on the thinking of certain factions within the Church at the time, particularly those who thought Vatican II represented an “opening” to those who had historically castigated the Catholic Church.

A Future Council

Intended or not, a question that lurks throughout O'Malley's book is, “Will the Church ever have another council?” Again, it is hard to shake the sense that O'Malley favors a “conciliar church,” that is, one less caught up with explicitly papal prerogatives and more in tune with the sense of the worldwide hierarchy. Interrogated further, it even appears at points that O'Malley favors, without saying so explicitly, a “synodal church,” not unlike what recent pontiffs have paid lip service to. The contemporary Church has unprecedented size and geographic scope; its cultural influences are shifting from the “north” (Europe) to the “south” (Africa and, perhaps, Latin America and East Asia). At the same time, a new, and arguably distorted, wave of “ultramontanism” has hit the Church, leaving some today with the same impression many held after Vatican I: Why call an ecumenical council when the pope can decide everything?

But, truth be told, the post-Vatican II popes have not wanted to “decide” in the sense

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of invoking their extraordinary authority to pronounce infallibly on matters which are *de fide*. Instead, they have preferred to steer “popular opinion” within the Church toward accepting doctrinal (or quasi-doctrinal) formulations that are “pastoral,” that is, calibrated to “the times.” The “synodal model,” where only a handful of hierarchs steer ecclesiastical policy under the pope’s direct or indirect guidance, has shown itself opportune for doing an end run around teachings that earlier generations of Catholics thought sacrosanct. Such selective gatherings, the sort which O’Malley only mentions rather than assessing, appear to be the way of things in the current Church, at least for the time being.

Should there be another ecumenical council, O’Malley discusses at the end of his book that it would represent a logistical nightmare. If Vatican II’s criteria for participation eligibility were applied today, a new council would boast double the number of bishops gathering than what was seen in 1962. This all but rules out St. Peter’s Basilica as the site for a future council. O’Malley also suggests that given the demographic shifts in global Catholicism, perhaps Rome is no longer the obvious site for such an event. (The Council of Trent, it goes without saying, was not held in Rome.)

And should another council come together, what would be the purpose? If Vatican II represents the “new way” of doing things in the Church rather than a grotesque aberration, then it stands to reason that the next council would be called for similar purposes, namely to “open up” the Church to the modern world. Of course, the “modern world” as witnessed today is a different creature than the “modern world” imagined in 1962. Today’s world is not “merely” unmoored from its Christian roots; it is hostile toward them. In fact, it has almost lost all memory of where it came from. Amnesia has yielded animosity, and nothing will soothe the ill feelings of “the times” toward the Church of Christ, no matter how frequently its bishops capitulate.

A Final Note

And that is where O’Malley leaves things. It would be wrong to read *When Bishops Meet* as a vindication of Vatican II, but for readers of a certain prejudice, it will likely come across that way. Traditional Catholics approaching the book are more likely than not already aware of the prejudices they will encounter. That is good. It would also be good, as noted in passing, if traditionalists read O’Malley’s essay with clear eyes, pulling from it the comparative lessons the author teaches while refusing to follow him toward his muted conclusions. The fact that O’Malley is remarkably open concerning the degree to which Vatican II deviates from its predecessors only reinforces what traditional Catholics have been saying for decades. Perhaps the time has arrived when Vatican II’s defenders will drop all pretenses of being aligned with tradition and admit that the years 1962 through 1965 housed a violent revolution within the Universal Church, one which it has yet to recover from.

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Idleness is the Enemy of the Soul

By a Benedictine Monk

Our spiritual life is composed of God's grace and our reception of His grace. Everything is a gift from God, but we must do all in our power to dispose our soul to receive Him into our hearts without any obstacles. The major obstacle that opposes God's free action in our souls is a bad attitude, a disposition that turns our hearts away from God and His will. St. Benedict in his Rule for Monks defines this attitude as idleness. Idleness is an enemy to our soul because it is the first step to forming bad habits.

Idleness or sloth is a type of willful negligence with regard to our duty of state. The soul becomes sluggish to accomplish God's will because of a growing repugnance of obstacles that are difficult to overcome. When the soul flees from effort, it seeks to replace God's plan with an easier option, rewarded by an immediate

satisfaction. All types of disorder and sin creep into the life of the slothful man. The family life becomes a terrible burden; everyone seems to be an obstacle to his newfound "freedom." A type of general disgust invades his life and all that was before considered sacred by him, is now like a millstone weighing him down. A troubled kind of anxiety slowly overtakes his personality and those that love him the most become his worst enemies. He begins to feel that they accuse him by the light of their good example. His life of darkness cannot bear the light of their virtues.

This poor soul can fall into two opposite extremes that stem from the same disorder of sloth. The first is simply giving up whenever any effort is asked of him. One result is to seek consolation through continual sleeping. In a parable of the Gospel, Our Lord says that the



cockle was sown in the field while men slept. The cockle of vice enters into the soul when he flees the necessary effort to correct himself, seeking the deep sleep of slothful negligence. The other extreme that flees from God's will is to fall into excessive activity. One flees from the struggle to do God's will to embrace an exaggerated activism. Instead of doing his duty of state, considered to be too laborious, he seeks another activity to replace it. He spends much time and effort accomplishing something, which is nonessential. This activity may be in itself good, but it is an escape from his duty of state. The following examples are often observed. One may be tempted to flee the family under the pretext of charity for others and leave the children without the necessary care. A mother that does not prepare the meals for her children because she wants to improve her spiritual life is shirking her duty. The father who spends all of his free time at the bar or the gym is refusing his paternal duty.

These means of escape slowly become habitual. This habitual disorder of sin is known as vice in the spiritual life and leads to real addictions. Many of today's youth find themselves becoming slowly attached to technology, video games, pornography, alcohol, and drugs because they are disgusted with their duty of state. The reason that they find themselves in this position is often from too little love from their parents or from the vice of sloth that takes control of their soul. Many parents spoil the child fearing the effort that it would take to correct him.

They permit the growth of passion and vice that will destroy the child's life. The child imitating the example of sloth given by the parents will habitually shirk his basic duties as a Catholic.

Addictions come from a spiritual disorder and the true remedy is a spiritual re-ordering. When we choose dependence upon a creature to satisfy our desire of goodness, that God alone can satisfy, we find ourselves slaves to that creature, whether it be the bottle or the internet. The soul that tries to replace God with a consoling creature will be disillusioned. The true remedy is to patiently return to God. Spiritual reading, prayer, and the practice of virtue are necessary to overcome addiction to sin, but they must be put into act in a very prompt and eager manner.

St. Ambrose, speaking of the Paschal lamb of the Old Testament, explains how the meal had to be taken in haste: "It is not enough to do good, we must do it with eagerness. The Law ordained to eat the Paschal lamb with haste because the fruits are much more abundant when our devotion is prompt." The book of *Ecclesiasticus* gives similar advice: "In all thy works be quick, and no infirmity shall come to thee." If we desire to conquer the infirmity of addictions to vice, we must promptly change our bad attitude and put into practice our good resolutions. With God's grace we will persevere, running in the way that leads to the kingdom of Heaven. We should eagerly take to heart the words of St. Benedict: "Idleness is the enemy of the soul."



Guilt and the Suffering Servant

By Anonymous

“We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way;
But the Lord laid upon Him the guilt of us all” (Is. 53:6).

According to Sigmund Freud, guilt is “the most powerful of all obstacles to recovery.” Though Freud himself labored under many illusions, nevertheless, he saw correctly the debilitating impact that guilt has upon the soul and body. Unfortunately, in modern psychology, guilt is usually considered to be merely a feeling—and a negative feeling at that. Nevertheless, guilt is widely recognized among psychotherapists as a terribly destructive force. William Shakespeare (considered by one psychologist as the most brilliant of all psychotherapists who never once treated a patient), knew well guilt’s devastating

power and described it in his play, *Macbeth*, as “life’s fitful fever.” This “fever” can be so debilitating that among other things, it can seriously undermine relationships and derail a person’s entire life. It also often results in mental illnesses such as anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and bipolar disorders. Guilt then indeed, is a most powerful obstacle to the health of body and soul.

Guilt is Detrimental

St. Thomas Aquinas agrees that guilt is detrimental. In his *Summa*, he says that neither sorrow nor pain is man’s greatest evil, rather, “guilt is a greater evil than punishment.” Guilt is so evil, that according to the Angelic Doctor, it can even prevent a man from entering into



Paradise. It is no wonder then, that God who wills the salvation of all men, has provided a sure remedy for this great evil of guilt.

To understand how and why God delivers us from guilt we must first establish the link between the suffering servant and Our Lord. We learn in Is. 52:13-53:12 that it is the suffering servant, who atones for our sin and guilt. When St. Matthew relates the healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law by Our Lord, he quotes Is. 53:4 "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases'" (Mt. 8:17). Later in the same Gospel, Our Lord quotes Is. 53:10-11 and refers it to Himself when He said: "For the Son of Man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many" (Mt. 20:28). Finally, from the very beginning, the Church has always held to this identification of the suffering servant with Our Lord. In the book of Acts, when the Ethiopian Eunuch asked Philip who the "sheep led to the slaughter," was in Is. 53, Philip identified him as Jesus. Therefore, as is clear from Sacred Scripture, when we speak of the suffering servant, we are speaking about Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Church teaches that the prophecy of the suffering servant foretells of a sinless One, who in our place, and for our sins, would suffer and die like an innocent sacrificial lamb. Essentially,

the prophecy is about the Catholic dogma of vicarious atonement because it shows that through His sacrificial act, the Lamb obtains for us peace and justification. Both of these results occur with the eradication of guilt. The truth that Our Lord offered satisfaction for us to God the Father by His Passion and Death on the Cross, was taught by the Council of Trent and would have been raised to a dogma at Vatican I, had the Council not been brought to a premature conclusion.

One verse in particular, in the prophecy of Isaiah, shows clearly how this sacrifice effaces guilt and its effects. Referring to the suffering servant, the Prophet Isaiah writes: "We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way; But the Lord laid upon Him the guilt of us all" (Is. 53:6).

Guilt is More Than a False Feeling

For the Prophet Isaiah and for the Church, the guilt here mentioned is not a mere feeling. Though the affective dimension of guilt is not to be denied, the Church understands guilt primarily as a real consequence or effect of a sinful act. Guilt occurs simultaneously with sin. What guilt adds to the notion of sin is in the concept of imputability or responsibility. >

An English Dictionary defines guilt as “culpability,” “responsibility,” “answerability,” “blameworthiness,” and “fault.” Guilt, then, presupposes and is the effect of an agent who possesses and yet, misuses, free will. One cannot be truly guilty, nor can sin be imputed to an agent, who was not in possession of a free will. Hence, guilt is not only a feeling, but it is also a real state of a soul which is the result of an irresponsible use of its free will.

The Hebrew text of the prophesy of Isaiah, which is quoted above, verifies this understanding of guilt. God is said to have laid upon the suffering servant the “guilt” of us all. “Avon,” the Hebrew word for guilt, means perversity, depravity, iniquity, or guilt. It refers to the consequence of, or the punishment for, iniquity. That consequence of iniquity is what the Church identifies, and the Hebrew scripture defines, as guilt.

The idea that God laid our guilt upon the suffering servant raises an important question: What does it mean for God the Father to lay our guilt upon His suffering servant? If guilt means being responsible, does that mean God takes responsibility for our sins?

Clarifying Responsibility

To be responsible does not necessarily mean to be the one who commits or causes an act. The word “responsible” comes from the Latin meaning to promise, bind, and to pledge one’s self again. When a father pays the bail to release his 15-year-old dependent, income-less, son from jail after he has committed a crime (which the father never sanctioned or counseled), the father is being responsible for his son. The father didn’t commit the crime, but he takes responsibility for his son and once again pledges to care and bind himself to his son with love and mercy. The father in this case is being responsible because he knows that there was never a reasonable expectation that his son, who he brought into the world, would be morally perfect. And so, the father was responsible for his delinquent son having known from the onset, that he would care for his son be he good or bad.

In a similar way, God the Father was responsible for us when He brought us into the world. From the beginning, God knew Adam would sin. From the onset, God knew of the provision that He would supply to remedy or expiate Adam’s sin. God did not hesitate to act responsibly when He pledged Himself to Adam in the promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). God promised Adam, that Satan, the accuser of sinful mankind, would be defeated by the seed of a woman—namely Jesus Christ. This defeat could happen because Our Lord assumed our humanity. God, Himself, assumed our sins as His own as when He cried out, “My iniquities (guilt) have overtaken me” (Ps. 39:13). Our Lord was without sin Himself, yet, as St. Robert Bellarmine comments on this verse, He assumed our sins as His own that they might be borne upon the tree of the Cross.

When Our Lord assumed our sins “as His own,” it was not as if He committed them Himself but, being responsible, He takes their guilt upon Himself. As St. Paul says: “having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us (our guilt), which was contrary to us, He also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the Cross” (Col. 2:14). By bringing our sins to the Cross, Our Lord suffered the punishment that must occur in order for guilt to be expiated. Thus God, being responsible toward us, assumed in Himself our guilt when He suffered the punishment for our sins on the Cross and paid the penalty for our sins, that we could never pay ourselves.

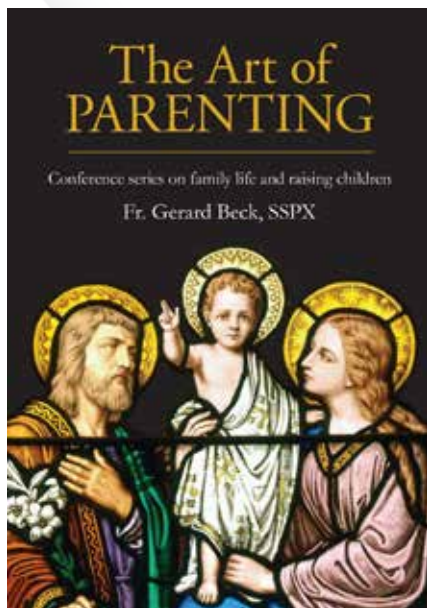
Guilt, indeed, is a most destructive reality in the fallen human condition. This is why it needed to be eliminated by God’s responsible assumption of it on the Cross. Because this truth is so important for the life of the Christian, it is re-enacted at every Holy Mass. And during the Mass, we are continually reminded of our need to have our guilt taken away in the frequent petitions throughout the Mass for forgiveness. That God has taken away our guilt by assuming it Himself, is what we ought to be most grateful for throughout our entire lives and especially at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Having our guilt washed away in the Precious Blood of Christ is a gift beyond compare.

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Blessed Virgin Mary, Stained-Glass Window, Church of the Sablon, Brussels, Belgium.



The Icon of the Nativity of Christ

By Romanus

An “icon” is the painted representation of religious events or personages. Today icons are usually associated with Byzantine tradition, although, in fact, they are part of the common heritage of the Universal Church.

Until the 11th-12th centuries, the Church, both East and West, followed a common path in art, not aiming at a naturalistic representation of persons and events, but having recourse to a symbolic language to express, in line and color, the doctrine of the Church.

Hence, these images were considered from the beginning as an effective means of instruction for the faithful. As the 4th ecumenical Council of Constantinople (870) says: “Just as through the written words which are contained in the Book, we all shall obtain salvation, so through the influence that colors in painting exercise on

the imagination, all, both wise and simple, obtain benefit from what is before them; for as speech teaches and portrays through syllables, so too does painting by means of colors.”

Perhaps icons will appear alien to our artistic sensibilities, formed in the appreciation of the specifically Catholic styles, the Gothic and the Baroque. Nonetheless, as Christmas approaches, it could be profitable to consider the icon of the Nativity of Our Lord. This icon is a means of formulation of the dogma of the Incarnation. Its doctrinal depth may nourish our meditation, in preparation for a worthy celebration of the feast, and its more abstract style of representation may offer an antidote to the maudlin sentimentality of the religious images that engulfs us in this holy season.

The whole scene represented in the icon rests



on the narrative of the Gospels, with references to the Old Testament and to ancient writings, as well as on a long hymn by St. Romanus the Melodist, which is sung in the Christmas liturgy of the Eastern churches: “Today the Virgin gives

birth to Him who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to Him whom no one can approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a little Child, God before the ages...” >

The Scene of the Mystery

The movement of God's love and compassion towards His creation is signified by *rays of light* issuing from a half-circle at the top of the icon. The half-circle in blue represents the Triune God answering the prayer of Isaiah: "O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down" (Is. 64:1). As God's operations outside Himself are common to the three Persons, He descends in one ray to the star of Bethlehem. From the star, the ray of light divides into three branches, as a sign of the participation of the three Persons in the work of our salvation.

The *cave* is not mentioned in the Gospels, but by Tradition. It appears in the writings of St. Justin Martyr, and the Bethlehem cave was already highly venerated by pilgrims, even before the building of the Constantinian basilica upon it.

The joy for the birth of the Child is somehow attenuated by the oppressive *darkness of the cave*—the night of sin. St. Irenaeus of Lyons sees in this cave a prefiguration of the descent of Christ to hell. Thus, the cave of Bethlehem, the cave under the Cross in the icons of the Crucifixion, and the hell of the icons of the Resurrection, all remind us of the same reality, *the valley of the shadow of death* (Ps. 23:4), *i.e.*, sin.

In this dark background is the *Child laid in the manger*. He is illuminated with heavenly light against this darkness: "In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn. 1:4-5).

In the icons of the Crucifixion, often human bones are shown in the cave under Calvary; for an ancient tradition related that the Cross was planted upon Adam's grave. In the icon of the Nativity, the Child occupies the same place as those bones, for He is the New Adam.

There are others allusions to the Passion, thus signifying the relationship between the Incarnation and the Cross. The Child has the proportions of an adult; the swaddling clothes resemble a shroud; the manger is rectangular, resembling a coffin or grave. The newly-born Child is lying in a tomb, for He is born so that by His death, death itself and sin will be overcome.

The *ox* and the *donkey* have received different interpretations. Some see in the ox, which is for Jewish law a clean animal, the figure of Israel, while the donkey, unclean for the Jews, would represent the Gentiles. In Leviticus, it is forbidden to yoke together clean and unclean animals, but as Our Lord has come for Jew and Gentile alike, they are here represented together. Still others see in them an application of the words of Isaiah: "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (Is. 1:3).

In front of the cave, the *Virgin Mother of God*, the *Theotokos*, reclines on a magnificent red cushion, embroidered in gold. The dignity of the Mother of God is stressed by her place in the composition, by her size in relation to the other figures, by the color of her mantle, a reminder of the royal purple, and also by the gold embroideries; but most especially by three stars, on her head and shoulders, which signify her perpetual virginity—before, during and after the birth of Christ.

We would expect her to be occupied with the Child, to look at Him, full of joy, or at least making some gesture of adoration. These gestures are avoided, to stress the mystery implied in the scene. Mary turns away from the Child, serene and recollected, looking far away. Thus is signified how for a creature, confronted with the incomprehensible mysteries of the Creator, the only response possible is silence and contemplation: "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19).

The Heavenly Manifestation

The *angels* approach, they who are always in the presence of God. The light on their vestments and the gold in their colored wings indicates their spiritual beauty. Sometimes, their hands are veiled, an ancient gesture of adoration. In the manger lies the Lord and Creator, who, in His incomprehensible love, has taken up human nature, so greatly inferior to that of pure spirits. The angels adore Him as "God made Man," what Lucifer refused to do from the beginning, and thus the adoration of the angels announces the



victory over darkness.

Near the cave, with their flocks, the *shepherds* look up, to the angels that announce to them the birth of the Messiah (Lk. 2:8-18). These simple men, whose poor vestments contrast with the splendor of the angels, are the first witnesses of the Son of God, and it is precisely the simplicity of their hearts that makes them capable of announcing the good news: “And when they saw it they made known the saying which have been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them” (Lk. 2:17-18).

In a corner we see the *three Magi*, riding their horses, as they arrive to Bethlehem after a long journey. The first one points to the star that has guided them: “When they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Mt. 2:10). Their emotion is shown by their gestures, the mantles floating in the air, the vigorous movement of the horses.

From the very first centuries, these men coming from the Orient (Mt. 2:1) were represented as natives of Persia, with a Phrygian cap, ornate mantles and narrow trousers. Thus is signified that all nations are called to adore the true God who is born among us as a small Child. Another detail points out the universal import of this scene of the Magi: they are of different ages—all men, of whatever nation or age, are called to adore the Son of God.

The Human World

St. Joseph is in a corner, in a pensive attitude, as if absent from everything that is happening. He is represented aside, to stress that he is not the biological father of the Child.

His attitude expresses, as the Gospel relates, the suffering of not understanding what is happening. It represents the incapacity of any man before the incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation. He is, and represents, the quiet believer who, in the obscurity of faith, always obeys without delay the most perplexing calls of God.

Facing *St. Joseph* there is an *enigmatic man*, who looks like an old shepherd, resting

on his staff, seemingly in dialogue with *St. Joseph*. Customary interpretations see this man as the devil, a tempter, although in Byzantine iconography the devil is seldom represented, and if so, always as defeated. In the end, we do not know exactly who this man is, but his presence stresses the solitude on *St. Joseph* in his doubts.

Some ancient traditions refer that *two women* were present as midwives at the birth of Our Lord. Although their ministrations were unnecessary, because His birth was supernatural, with no pain to His Mother, their presence washing the Child stresses the reality of the Incarnation. It shows that the Eternal God has fully assumed the reality of human nature, because, as a newly born infant, He needed the help of others for even the smallest details of life, and voluntarily agreed to follow a human custom, as He will later accept the circumcision and baptism, which He did not need.

Thus, the two bottom scenes show the natures of Christ: the pondering of *St. Joseph* of the miraculous birth (representing His divinity)—and the washing of the newborn Child (representing His humanity).

The Whole of Creation Represented

The cave is in a mountain—ochre-colored, suffused with light. All the scenes and people are represented against this background. Thus, the mountain indicates that all these scenes, different in place and chronological order, constitute only one reality, that of God—a presence of the eternity of God.

There is a multitude of figures against the background of the mountain. Celestial beings enter into this earthly realm—men participate in the events, each one in his role—the animal world is represented by the flocks, sheep and goats; the vegetal world by the trees and fruits. Finally, the earth, which we consider as inert, elevates itself as a mountain, exulting, dancing and irradiating light, as it participates in the advent of the “Sun of Justice.”





Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá was the first Franciscan mission in The Californias, a province of New Spain. Located in present-day San Diego, California, it was founded on July 16, 1769, by Spanish friar Junípero Serra in an area long inhabited by the Kumeyaay people. The mission and the surrounding area were named for the Catholic Didacus of Alcalá, a Spaniard more commonly known as San Diego. The mission was the site of the first Christian burial in Alta California.

California Missions

By Dr. France-Marie Hilgar

There are 20 missions in California and two ways to examine them: geographically and chronologically. The French are big on chronology therefore we will start with the Mission founded on July 16, 1769, the Mission San Diego de Alcalá. Relatively much is known about the native inhabitants in recent centuries thanks in part to the efforts of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo who explored the coast in the service of Spain. He documented his observations of life in the coastal villages that he encountered along the southern California coast in October 1542. Cabrillo was the first European to set foot in what is now the state of California and the first to encounter San Diego Bay. The first Franciscan Mission of the Californias, a province of New Spain, is in present day San Diego. On the evening of September 28, 1542, the ships San Salvador

and Victoria sailed into the harbor, whereupon Cabrillo christened it “San Miguel.” During that expedition a landing party went ashore and briefly interacted with a small group of natives. Some 60 years later, another Spanish explorer made landfall some 10 miles from the present Mission site. Under his command, the San Diego, Santo Tomas and frigate Tres Reyes dropped anchor on November 10, 1602 and the port was named renamed San Diego. It would be another 167 years before the Spanish returned to San Diego.

Establishing Spanish Missions

Ever since the voyages of Christopher Columbus, the Kingdom of Spain sought to



establish missions to convert the pagans to Roman Catholicism in order to save souls and to facilitate colonization of these lands. However, it was not until 1741, the time when the ambitions of Russia became known, that King Philip V felt he needed to do something to save upper California. In 1769, the expedition of Spanish friar Junipero Serra was to establish missions and presidios at San Diego and Monterey, therefore securing Spanish claim to the Pacific Coast harbors recommended earlier and established it in an area inhabited by an obscure Indian tribe. The Mission and the surrounding area were named for the Didacus of Alcalá, a Spaniard more commonly known as San Diego. The Mission was the site of the first Christian cemetery in California. San Diego is also generally regarded as the site of the first public execution in 1778. Fr. Luis Jayme, California's first Christian martyr, is buried under the chancel floor. The current

church, built in the early 19th century, is the fifth to stand on that location. The Mission had five bells. Bells were vitally important to daily life at any Mission. Before people could afford watches and cell phones, the bells were rung at mealtimes to call the Mission residents to work and to religious services; they were rung during births and funerals, to signal the approach of a ship or the return of a missionary, and at other times. The novices were instructed in the intricate rituals associated with ringing the mission bells.

The Mission site is a historical landmark. On August 9, 1834, Governor Figueroa issued his Decree of Confiscation. The missions were offered for sale to citizens who were unable to come up with the price, so all mission property were broken up into ranchos and given to ex-military officers who had fought in the War of Independence against Spain. On June 8, 1846, Mission San Diego was given to >



Christian Culture

Santiago Arguello “for services rendered to the government.” After the United States annexed California, the Mission was used by the military from 1846 to 1862.

The Mission Returned to Catholic Hands

President Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation on May 23, 1862, that restored

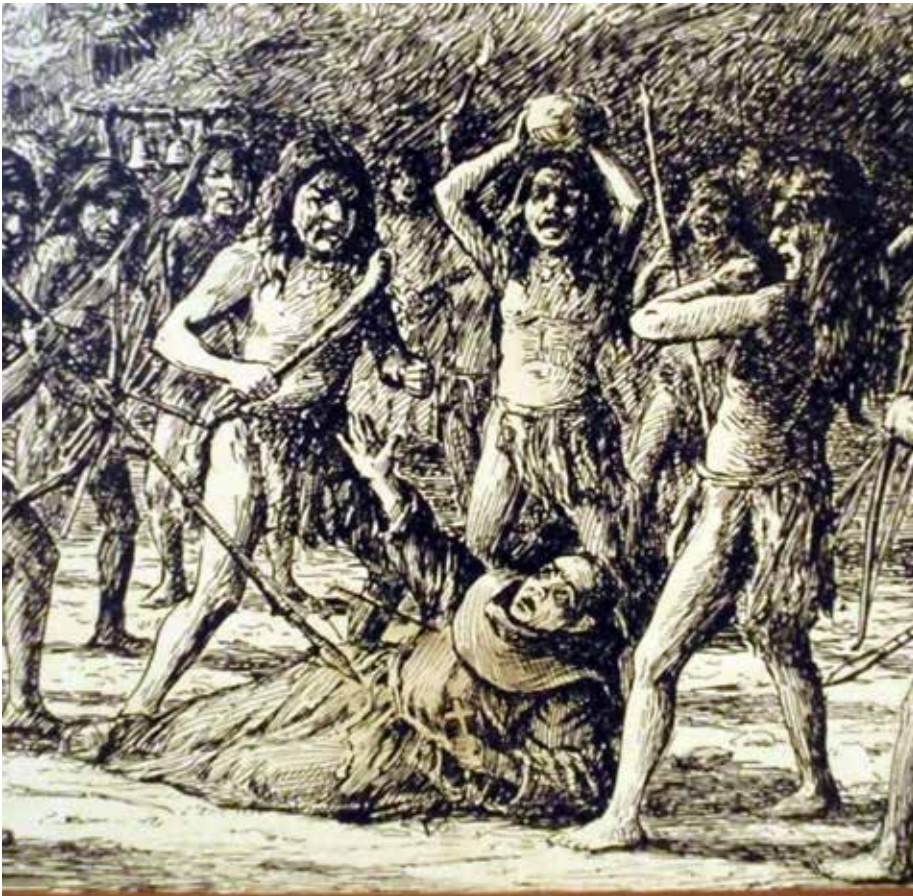
is still an active parish serving the Diocese of San Diego. In 1976, Pope Paul VI designated the church as a minor basilica. The parish is partially funded by a gift shop and self-guided tours of the grounds and buildings are available to the public for a small donation.

Mission industries: the goal of the missions was, above all, to be self-sufficient in relatively short order.

Farming, therefore, was the most important industry of any mission. Prior to the

establishment of the missions, the native peoples only knew how to utilize bones, seashells, stone, and wood for building, tool making, weapons and so forth. The missionaries discovered that the Indians, who regarded labor as degrading to men, had to be taught industry in order to learn how to be self-supporting. The result was the establishment of a great manual training school that comprised agriculture, the mechanical arts and the raising and care of livestock. Everything consumed and otherwise utilized by the natives was produced at the missions under the supervision of the padres; thus, the

neophytes not only supported themselves, but after 1811, they sustained the entire military and government of California. Wheat, corn, wine grapes, barley, beans, cattle, horses, and sheep were the major crops in San Diego. In 1975, construction on a system of aqueducts was begun to bring water to the fields and the Mission.



Fr. Luis Jayme during Kumeyaay raid, shortly before his death.

ownership of the Mission to the Roman Catholic Church, something the Freemason Washington would never had done!

When it was granted back to the Church, the Mission was in ruins. Restoration started in the 1880s, but it ceased in 1907 until 1931. In 1941, the Mission again became a parish church. It



The Dispenser of Holy Water



By Guy de Maupassant

Editor's Note: The following article by Guy de Maupassant appeared originally in *Nouvelles de Chrétienté* No. 174 Nov/Dec 2018.

It is customary at Christmastime to read stories to children. This story that we are proposing to the readers of the *Nouvelles de Chrétienté*, is not properly speaking, a Christmas story, but a Christian account, because its author is not a writer known for his fervent Faith. But, once upon a time in France when it was still Christian, certain writers had fallen away from their baptismal promises, but found their Faith again in a moment of definitive re-conversion. This was the case for Paul Verlaine in *Sagesse* (1880), of Francois Coppee in *La Bonne Souffrance* (1897) and of Guy de Maupassant in *Le Donneur d'eau Benite*, published by the review *La Mosaique* on November 10, 1877.

Once upon a time there was a small house situated near the entrance to a village. Established there was a wheelwright who married the daughter of a farmer. Since they both worked a great deal, they were able to amass a small fortune. But sadly, they had no children, which caused them much suffering. At last, they had a son whom they named John. They caressed him one after the other enveloping him in their love and cherishing him so much that they could not go more than an hour without gazing upon him.

When John was five years old, a group of acrobats passed through the country and established a stage in the town square.

John, who saw them, snuck out of the house >

to go watch the festivities. His father, after looking for him for a long time, finally found him. He was sitting upon the knees of an old clown bursting into laughter as he watched the goats and dogs doing tricks.

Three days later at dinner time, the wheelwright and his wife realized that their son was no longer in the house. They looked for him outside, but since they couldn't find him, the father, shouted into the dark with all of his might, "John?!"

Nighttime came. The horizon was enveloped in a foggy vapor which rendered objects in the distance as dark and frightening. Three large pine trees close to the house bent as if they were weeping. There seemed to be indistinct groanings in the night air. The father listened for a long time, believing that he was hearing something sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, and having lost his composure, he ran into the night constantly calling out, "John! John!"

He ran thus until dawn filling the shadows with his cries, frightening the nocturnal creatures, ravaged by a terrible agony and thinking himself mad at times. His wife, seated upon the doorstep sobbed until morning. They did not find their son.

Thus, they wearied into an inconsolable sadness.

At last, they sold their house and they left in order to search for their son themselves. They asked the shepherds on the hills, the merchants passing by, the peasants in the villages, and the authorities of the towns. But it had already been a long time since their son had been lost; no one knew anything; John himself had, without a doubt, forgotten his own name and that of his country; and they wept without hope.

Soon they had no more money left; therefore, they were hired out for the day on farms and in hotels, accomplishing the humblest of tasks, living off of the scraps of others, sleeping upon the hard floor, and suffering from the cold. And since they had become very weak due to their exhaustion, they were forced to beg on the streets. They accosted travelers with their sad faces and begging voices. Once they implored harvesters for a scrap of bread who they found eating against the trunk of a tree on a plain at noon...and the couple ate silently.

A hotel manager, having heard their misfortune

said to them one day, "I also knew someone who lost their daughter; it was in Paris that they found her again."

They then left immediately for Paris.

Just as they entered the big city, they were intimidated by its immensity and by the multitudes of people who passed by. They understood however that John must be among all of these people, but they didn't know how to go about searching for him. Also, they feared that they would never be able to find him, because 15 years had passed since they had last seen him.

They visited every place, every street, stopping at every group of people, hoping for a providential meeting, some prodigious chance, a moment of destiny!

Often they walked great distances, one against the other, having such a sad air about them and so poor that one gave them alms without them having to beg.

Every Sunday they spent their day outside the doors of churches, watching the crowds enter and leave and searching the faces that might resemble John even a little bit. Many times, they thought that they recognized him, but each time, they had made a mistake.

They had, at the threshold of one of the churches where they visited the most frequently, an old holy water dispenser who befriended them. His story was also very sad and the commiseration that they had for him turned into a special friendship.

Over time, the three of them ended up living together in a poor slum in the attic of a large household situated far away from the city and close to farmlands. The wheelwright sometimes replaced his new friend at the church if he was ill. A harsh winter came. The poor holy water dispenser died and the curé of the parish designated the wheelwright to take his job to distribute holy water when he learned the sad news.

Thus he went every morning and sat in the same place, on the same stool, using the old column of stone that he leaned against to support his back. He looked attentively at all those who entered the church, and he waited for Sundays with as much impatience as a youth because the church was continually full of people on this day.



He became very old and weakened under the humidity of the vaults; his hope of finding John waned a little more each day.

He knew at that moment, all who came to attend the offices; he knew their schedules, their habits and was able to distinguish them by the sound of their footsteps on the floor.

His existence had narrowed such that the entrance of a stranger in the church was a big event for him. One day two women came. One was an adult, the other a young girl. It was probably a mother and daughter. Following close behind them was a man. The man greeted the ladies at the exit of the church, and after offering them holy water, he took the arm of the woman.

"This must be the fiancé of the woman." the wheelwright thought.

And he reflected all day until nighttime where he could have seen a man who resembled the one he saw that day. But the person who he remembered would have been an old man by now, because it seemed that he knew the face in his youth.

This same man came back often with the two ladies, and this vague resemblance, far away, yet familiar was so frustrating to the old holy water dispenser that he had his wife come with him to aid his weakened memory.

One evening, when the day was winding down the three strangers entered. As they were passing by the wheelwright said to his wife: "And? So! Do you know him?"

The wheelwright's wife, who was also a bit perplexed, tried to remember who this man was. All of a sudden, she said in a whisper:

"Yes...yes...but he is darker, stronger, and dressed like a gentleman; still, father, do you see, it is your face from when you were younger."

The old man jumped with surprise.

It was true! The young man looked like him and he also resembled his brother who was dead, and his own father when he knew him as a young man. They were so overcome with emotion that they were speechless. The three people came back down to exit the church. The man touched the bottle of holy water with his finger. The old man was trembling so much that he made a puddle of holy water on the floor and he cried, "John?"

The man stopped and looked at him. The wheelwright said more quietly this time, "John?"

The two ladies examined the old man without understanding.

Again, he said for the third time while sobbing: "John?"

The man inclined very closely to the old man's face, and illuminated by a childhood memory, he responded, "Papa Peter, Mama Jane!"

He had forgotten everything, among other things, the name of his father and that of his country; but he remembered always these two words that he had heard repeated so many times: Papa Peter, Mama Jane!

He fell, his face upon the knees of the old man and he cried, and he kissed them one after the other his father and mother who were overwhelmed with immeasurable joy.

The two ladies cried as well understanding that a wonderful blessing had come upon them all!

Then, they all went to the home of the young man and he told them his story.

The acrobats had kidnapped him. For three years, he travelled with them to many lands. Afterwards, the troupe dispersed, and an old woman, one day, in a castle, gave the troupe money in order to keep John because she found him to be an agreeable young man. Since he was intelligent, he was put into school, then into high school, and the old woman, having no children of her own left him her fortune. John also looked for his parents; but since he was only able to remember their two names, "Papa Peter and Mama Jane," he was not able to find them. Now, he was about to get married and he presented to his parents his fiancée who was very good and very pretty.

When the old couple told them of their sorrows and trials, he embraced them once again; and they stayed up very late that night, not daring to go to bed, in fear that this happiness they finally found would abandon them again during their sleep.

But they conquered the tenacity of their misfortunes, because they lived happily ever after.

Translated from the French by Associate Editor Jane Carver.



The Eighth Arrow

By Brendan D. King

In a recent YouTube interview, Catholic priest turned Fantasy novelist Fr. J. Augustine Wetta reveals that the idea for his novel *The Eighth Arrow* came during a conversation with British Fantasy novelist Philip Pullman. Fr. Wetta, who admires Pullman's writing abilities while disagreeing with his atheism, was intrigued by the fact that the latter had written a novel set in the same fictional universe as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As they talked, Fr. Wetta suggested that Pullman could also write a novel set in the same fictional universe as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Pullman replied that he hates Dante, but urged Fr. Wetta to write such a book himself. The resulting novel, which was published last September by Ignatius Press, is already being compared to the writings of the Inklings. This is its story.

After spending 3,000 years with his fellow tricksters in the Eighth Circle of Hell, Odysseus, the anti-hero of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, has two unexpected visitors. In a voice with "a faintly Trojan ring," one of the visitors asks, "You there—you two, who burn together, speak. Tell us who you are and how you died."

Odysseus replies, "I am Odysseus, King of Ithaca, and this blistered mess to my left is brave Diomedes, Conqueror of Thebes."

The visitor replies, "Speak to us then, Odysseus of Ithaca, for I am Publius Vergilius Maro, singer of tales. With me walks the poet Dante of the Alighieri."

Odysseus responds, "It was my curiosity that killed me. Had to see the far ends of the earth. Fell right off the edge and landed here." But as the two visitors are departing, Odysseus notices that Dante is leaving footprints behind.

Realizing that there must be a way out of Hades, Odysseus cries out a prayer to the goddess Athena, whom the Greeks called the *Parthenos*. To his shock, the flames die away and before him stands a woman robed in stars. She wears the storm shield of Zeus in her left hand and wears a helmet upon her head. Timid as fawns before a stream, Odysseus and

Diomedes creep out of the fire and into her shining presence.

"Odysseus," she says in a voice as clear as a bell, "You called. I have come. Tell me, though, why have you waited so long to invoke my assistance?"

Odysseus replies, "Virgin Goddess, forgive us. You know everything already, so you must know that we have always had more courage than wisdom. Release us from this prison, and we will offer you a hundred bulls, pour forth rich, honeyed wine at your temple, and dust the fires of your altar with barley."

The Virgin answers, "You used your wit as a weapon, Odysseus. You squandered your talent among brutes like Agamemnon and Achilles. And the worst of it, you son of Laertes, is that you knew better. Therefore, it is fitting that you find yourself in this prison." She admits, however, that a general is needed. One who knows the geography of Hell and who can be as gentle as a dove and as wise as a snake.

When Odysseus pleads for the job, the *Parthenos* replies that the King she serves "has no use for a lying, thieving, adulterous, idolatrous crook like you." She explains that to be worthy of her service, they must prove themselves. Before seeking to enter Heaven, they must bear witness to the Nine Rings of Hell and learn the limits of evil. Opening her cloak, she gives Odysseus and Diomedes their armor, swords, shields, Odysseus' bow, a quiver of arrows, and a small leather pouch.

The *Parthenos* explains that she will not be with them for the journey. As they both lied and swindled their way into Hell, they must fight their way out. Adding that they now know their weakness but not her true name, she urges them to prefer their wits to their swords, to trust their armor over their arms, and to let mercy triumph over justice.

As she departs, Odysseus asks whether it was Zeus who consigned them to this prison. The *Parthenos* responds that it was not Zeus, but "He of the Four-Letter Name."



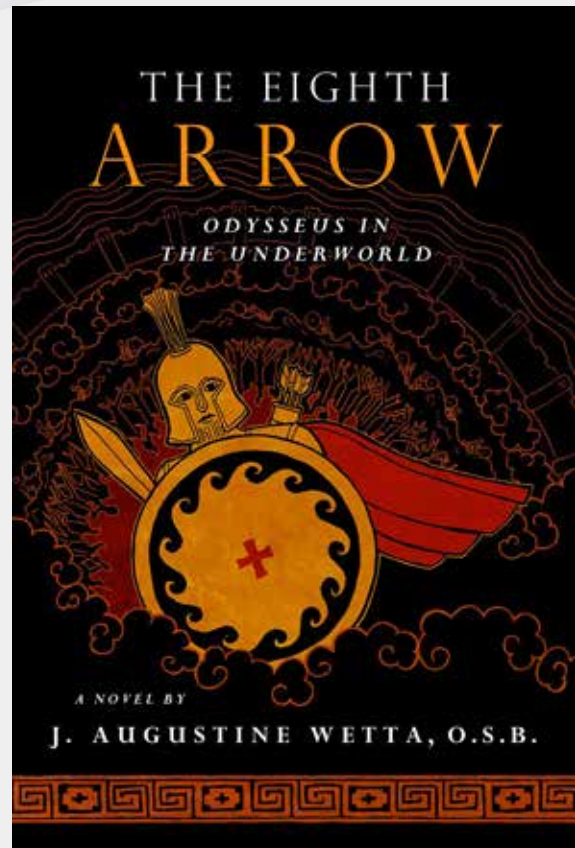
Although some will be bothered by this novel's suggestion that it is possible for the souls of the damned to escape from Hell, they need simply be reminded that "Athena" is really the Blessed Virgin, whose powers of intercession are attested to by the Church Fathers.

If this is not enough, a simple reference to the disclaimer at the beginning should suffice. Fr. Wetta explains that his novel is a work of fiction, but that it provides an avenue of escape for those righteous souls, like Pope St. Celestine V, whom Dante's pen confined to a fictional Hell and a fictional Limbo. This should reassure even the most hardened sceptic.

Finding themselves outside the entrance to the underworld, Odysseus and Diomedes begin a quest that will bring them through Limbo and all Nine Circles of the Inferno. In Limbo, they encounter the blind poet Homer, who has long wanted to meet Odysseus but who had known him to be farther down. Homer reveals that Penelope, Odysseus' long-suffering wife, is also in Limbo.

In a brief and painful reunion, Odysseus realizes not only how deeply he has hurt Penelope, but also that his wife is a much, much better person than he is and that he wants to make her proud. Penelope tells him that, until he returns for her, she will remain at her loom, praying to the *Parthenos* to protect her husband. As Odysseus departs, Penelope calls out the traditional parting cry of women in Classical Greece, "Come back with your shield, or come back on it!"

As Odysseus and Diomedes continue their quest, they encounter, not only the fallen angels who dominate Hell, but also Helen of Troy, the shapeshifting magician Proteus, numerous figures from Greek Mythology, and, ultimately,



the Devil himself. In the climax, Odysseus learns that even the ultimate evil is powerless in the face of virtue. This realization is worth the price of the book in itself.

The last word is best left to St. Antony the Great, "Since Our Lord lived, the enemy is fallen, and his powers have lost their strength. Therefore, though he can do nothing, nevertheless, like a fallen tyrant, he does not rest, but threatens, though it be but words. Let each of you think of that, and he can despise the demons."



Faith is to believe
what you do not see;
the reward of this
faith is to see what
you believe.

St. Augustine



Q & A

By Fr. Juan Carlos Iscara, SSPX

How often should I go to confession?

In accordance with divine law, the Church stresses the necessity to confess each and every mortal sin that is remembered after proper and diligent examination, with all the circumstances which may change the species of sin. In the present times, as a consequence of the requirement of receiving communion at least once a year, by ecclesiastical precept we also have the grave obligation to confess at least once

a year any mortal sins not yet declared in a valid confession.

The Church does not demand more—neither a greater frequency, nor the confession of venial sins. But both the Church and all spiritual authors advise and encourage us to two additional things. First of all, to seek absolution from our mortal sins as soon as we can and as often as needed.

Second, we are also advised and encouraged to the devotional confession of even our venial sins. As the Council of Trent puts it, “venial sins,



which do not deprive us of the grace of God and into which we fall more frequently, may rightly and profitably and without any presumption be told in confession, as is clear from the practice of devout people. They may be left unsaid without any fault, and they can be atoned for in many other ways.”

The pious practice of frequent confession ensures a more rapid progress in the way of perfection. By requiring a frequent examination of conscience and acknowledgement of our weaknesses, it increases self-knowledge and the growth in humility; “our bad habits are corrected, negligence and tepidity are resisted, conscience is purified, the will strengthened, a salutary self-control is attained and grace is increased in virtue of the sacrament itself” (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*).

While for professed religious canon law requires a weekly confession and for priests at least every two weeks, for the laity “frequent” confession usually means between once a month and once a week, according to the possibilities and needs of the individual.

To advance in spiritual perfection, frequent confession will ordinarily require having a regular confessor. He will be the best qualified person to suggest the frequency suited to the spiritual development and the physical and moral possibilities of the penitent.

Q&A

If I go wilderness camping over the weekend, do I have to trek out four hours to go to Mass?

By natural law and by positive divine law, we have to render worship to God. Ecclesiastical law

determines that this obligation must be fulfilled by the attendance to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. This precept binds *sub gravi* (*i.e.* under pain of mortal sin) all those who have reached the age of reason, *i.e.* seven years of age. Moreover, any person who is bound to obey a law is also bound to make efforts to avoid any obstacle for its observance.

As no law can oblige to what is impossible, the Church admits that, in certain circumstances, one may be excused from observing the law. Thus, a moderately grave cause may excuse us from attending Mass on a Sunday. The principal causes usually argued are: (1) physical or moral impossibility, for example, illness, great distance from a church, dangerous weather conditions, risk of serious material loss, *etc.*; (2) charity that obliges us to help our neighbor, for example, by taking care of a sick person, or being present so as to protect somebody from falling into sin; (3) obligation imposed by certain functions or offices, for example, soldiers, nurses, firemen, *etc.*, while on duty.

But while God does not expect us to do what is impossible, He does expect that we put up with some inconveniences or obstacles to our own plans in order to be able to do His will.

Thus, it is not licit for us to put up what is an obstacle for fulfilling the law, unless there is a proportionate grave cause.

Relaxation and recreation are certainly legitimate human needs, as well as gifts from God. But as there are many ways of attaining the needed relaxation, we should choose one that does not force us to skip Sunday Mass.

Thus, if we choose to engage in a recreational activity that will prevent us from attending Sunday Mass, the reason for doing so must be of a gravity proportional to the gravity of the ecclesiastical precept. A motive of such proportionate gravity would be, for example, if wilderness camping is devised as the most helpful means to strengthen the mutual bonds of a family that is at risk of falling apart. Other motives of proportionate gravity would be, for example, if we will not have the opportunity of taking an annual vacation at any other time, or when it is question of a foreign trip which we will have never again the occasion to make. >

In any case, we must avoid making our recreational activities the starting point for arranging our weekend schedule, thus relegating God and Mass to an afterthought.

The Mass is a gift from God, and to attend it is an incredible privilege for us, especially in the present crisis of the Church where there are a diminishing number of Masses and Mass attendees to render to God the worship that is due to Him.

Therefore, we should not be trying to find excuses for not attending, but, on the contrary, to make efforts to attend Mass even on other days of the week...



Do I really have to get a hunting or fishing license, morally speaking?

God has given man stewardship over all creatures, including animals, allowing them to be used by man for just purposes, such as food, clothing, scientific experimentation, work, and even leisure. Sport hunting and fishing fall under this aspect of leisure and recreation. On the other hand, needless cruelty to animals is sinful, not because it violates supposed animal “rights” (which do not exist, as only rational beings are subjects of rights), but because it detracts from man’s own dignity as a rational being and as steward of God’s creation.

As God has provided animals for the use of all men and also for future generations, the civil authorities—temporal ministers of God—have a duty to see that animals will be preserved and

not wantonly destroyed, as it would easily happen if there were no regulations.

In our times, that duty is exercised by means of civil laws that regulate the time, place and kind of animals that may be hunted or fished. Those laws are established to care for some particular elements of the common good of men—the preservation of wildlife, which has been created for all of us, and the safeguard of human life and property.

That being the case, the civil laws regulating sport hunting and fishing are true laws, according to the Thomistic definition: “an ordinance of reason, designed for the common good, and promulgated by the authority that has charge of the community.”

Therefore, yes, if one hunts or fishes for sport and recreation, there is a moral obligation to observe these laws. They bind in conscience—that is, to disregard and violate them is a sinful act. Nonetheless, not all of them bind under pain of mortal sin, but in direct proportion to the gravity of the matter.



WWII Prisoners of War Built a Catholic Chapel in Wales

During the early days of World War II, some 1,200 Italian soldiers were captured by the Allies in North Africa. In 1943, these men were sent to a prisoner of war camp in a small village located in Wales and housed in relative comfort. After some time, the men asked the officers in charge of the camp if they could create a Catholic chapel in one of the huts in the camp. Given permission, they began work in earnest. The chapel is all that remains of the former camp and is still remarkably well preserved given its age and the crude materials the men had to work with.

One of the prisoners, Mario Ferlito, a self-taught artist, created much of the artwork which adorned the chapel. The men used an emulsion derived from boiled fish bones to bond and preserve the paintings. They used various fruits, vegetables, tobacco and tea leaves to create the various colors

they needed for the religious artwork.

This chapel indicates the strong Catholic Faith which flourished in Italy, and indeed most of Europe, in the first half of the 20th century. Sadly, this vibrant Catholic life is now almost completely gone, and is being replaced in many places by Islam.



Jesus, the ransom of man,
Who, ere created light began,
Didst from the sovereign Father spring,
His power and glory equalling.

The Father's light and splendor Thou,
Their endless hope to Thee that bow;
Accept the prayers and praise to-day
That through the world Thy servants pay.

Salvation's author, call to mind
How, taking form of humankind,
Born of a virgin undefiled,
Thou in man's flesh becam'st a child.

Thus testifies the present day,
Through every year in long array,
That Thou, salvation's source alone,
Proceedest from the Father's throne.

The heavens above, the rolling main
And all that earth's wide realms contain,
With joyous voice now loudly sing
The glory of their new-born King.

And we who, by Thy precious Blood
From sin redeemed, are marked for God,
On this the day that saw Thy birth,
Sing the new song of ransomed earth.

O Lord, the virgin-born, to Thee
Eternal praise and glory be,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Ghost forevermore.
Amen.



From Disinformation

to True Information

By Fr. Alain Lorans

Editor's Note: The following is a transcript of conference given by Fr. Alan Lorans, August 12, 2018 during the Summer University of the Society of Saint Pius X in St. Joseph des Carmes School (France). The oral style of the conference has been retained throughout.

Theme: 1968-2018 Chaos: How Can We Reconstruct Society?

If we take the tryptic around which the theme of this summer university articulates itself this year: order, disorder, and restoration of order, and if we apply it to the domain of the media, which is the topic of this conference, we can bring up three stages: Information, disinformation, and re-information. The order corresponds to true information; the disorder to disinformation, and naturally, you will say that restoring order is to "re-inform."

The term *disinformation* has reappeared several decades ago and in particular under the pen of Vladimir Volkoff who authored two books: the *Set Up* as well as *A Short History of Disinformation*.

Re-information is more recent. This is a term which the alternative media, the media on the net (especially right wing media), use in order to oppose themselves to the official disinformation, to counteract the disinformation of the great press or what the Anglo-Saxons would call the *mainstream* media which is the dominating current, exclusive thought, and the proper way of thinking.

When you consider these terms, you may think that they are quite clear and that we can apply them to the theme of our summer university. Information, order; disinformation, disorder; re-information, return to order. However, in reality, it's not that simple.

I would like to show you that it is not certain >

that the true information is as clean as we think, that it has not interfered with (I wouldn't say) disinformation, but that it certainly has undergone a filtering, a framing, an illumination of the facts. We need to be aware that information is not the presentation of a raw event. It's an event that has already been selected and chosen according to several criteria. What information does is to make the event presentable to the public, as one does when presenting a photo—by choosing the proper frame. You go through a selection process: why this angle, why not another? Why this light, rather than another? So, in fact, there is no such thing as neutral information.

Does this impossibility of neutrality make this information a disinformation which ignores the reality of itself? No! Dis-information, on the contrary, tries to pass a message surreptitiously. Successful disinformation is the one which goes unseen. If we were aware that disinformation is intoxication, that it is not credible, and therefore, it would lose its efficacy. Between information which is obliged to have a framework and a special light in order to present an event, and disinformation that intended to hide its ideological frame, prejudicial lighting, in short, the formatting of the mind, where can we find the the distinction?

In my exposition, I will be using the book written by Ingrid Riocreux, who teaches at the Institute of St. Pius X called *The Language of the Media, Destruction of Language, Fabrication of the Consent*. This woman, who has a PhD in modern literature, specializing in grammar, rhetoric, and stylistic texts, draws the attention of her readers to the fact that re-information itself, which is the goal of the alternative media, is not always exempt of the very method proper to disinformation, not, of course, with the forbidden ideas, but of certain means being employed. This shows us, once more, that the distinction between information, disinformation, and re-information is not as simple as it may seem at first glance. We need to look at this in more detail.

Methods of Disinformation

Let's have a look at disinformation as Volkoff analyzed it. We can say that if information necessarily involved framing, a special light, or a selection of the facts, disinformation itself seeks to be forgotten and to go unnoticed in order to become efficient. It is characterized by the *logomachia* that is "the battle

of words" or the "combat of words," the weight of the words, the shock of the photos, a slogan like *Paris Match*. The weight of the photos and the shock of the words because in the *logomachia*, it is the shock of the words which is important. This shock is much more interesting since it allows you to neutralize any rational discourse. The words have an emotional charge so strong that it dispenses one from all reflection which does not support critical judgement. There are several indisputable words used in the media as a means of true disinformation.

If you pronounce a certain taboo word, one word, right away you fall under the stroke of the law. There is no possible distinction. It's illegal, but especially before the tribune of public opinion it is indisputable. This pure *logomachia* can be seen in certain televised debates. There are words so unqualifiable in the world of media that they immediately disqualify those who pronounce them.

Another system of disinformation is what we French call the "*langue de bois*"—the "bamboo language"—that is the language which says nothing, is perfectly stereotyped, and is a chain of statements that are perfectly politically correct. This is the language of the world. This bamboo language would be characterized by a great poverty of vocabulary which is a sign of a great poverty of thought. A rich and nuanced reflection is expressed by the richness of the vocabulary and the nuances of the words. To a poor language corresponds poor thought.

The *logomachia* which is similar to diabolization dispenses from all reflection. The bamboo language also invites one to have the minimum possible reflection without nuances and without distinction. This is the way we make a herd of bleating sheep who certainly do not think. The masters of this great information were Lenin, Goebbels...and before them there was the Chinese general Sun Tzu six centuries before Christ, whose most famous book, *The Art of War* is often quoted by Volkoff.

The master idea of disinformation is to prevent any critical perspective and to neutralize reflection without the interlocutor being aware of it. Discreetly we are telling him, "Do not think; we are thinking for you." True disinformation gives you the illusion of thinking for yourself while really, you are thinking only by proxy. One arrives at giving this illusion by bringing about quasi-Pavlovian reflexes which obviously are not rational but simply based on the



passions, meaning, at the level of the fundamental passions which Aristotle explained which are rooted in the concupiscible and irascible.

Diabolization consists in provoking an emotional reaction. People complain: “this person is pro-life, she is against abortion; this is diabolical.” There’s no need to think; there is no need to go any further. See how the media have pitted persons who have defended the life of the child born in Argentina recently. The emphasis was placed on the sadness of the pro-abortion supporters because the law had not passed, but there was no thought about the real murder of the children in the womb of their mother. Every time, it’s a question of raising a form of pity, of anger, or of envy at the level of the concupiscible or irascible passions.

This is the reason why disinformation functions so simplistically in a binary mode according to the Manichean dialectic. There is the good as we can conceive it and the evil as it is defined and the less we discuss it, the better. We must adhere like Pavlov’s dog, by reflex. What Volkoff shows in a very interesting way in his books is the role of the sounding box. The media may be an efficacious sounding box at the service of one who is controlling the disinformation campaign. For example, during the war in Iraq with the question of the weapons of mass destruction. A campaign was created to make this idea pass in the public opinion. We must have military interventions in Iraq!

The ideal is that the message passes by itself. A sounding box, in good faith, is like the useful village idiot. The journalist relays the message sincerely. Here there is no need to look for a plot. It’s explained by the simple intellectual laziness and the will to agree or to bleat like a sheep along with the compact majority whatever the message happens to be. This fear of being different, of dissidence vis-a-vis the politically correct, is protected by an auto-censure which was most efficacious in the totalitarian regimes.

Fighting Rigorously Against Disinformation

An effort needs to be made in the language itself: many journalists today speak and write quickly and poorly. Few are those who express themselves with clarity. The terms employed are often blurred, ambiguous. We aren’t speaking of misspellings, but of the choice of the words. Many are taken from the

English (foreign) vocabulary.

We must know that the thought is expressed in the word the *verbum mentis* or (the idea of the concept); the *verbum oris* or (the word which expresses the concept). But if the *verbum oris* is tottering or improper we can be sure that the *verbum mentis* (the idea itself), the conceptual tool is not very sharp, but rough. This is a pity for a journalist who must present the facts and analyze them. It would be best for him to do something else.

Doubtlessly, we must be free from slogans, from the weight of the words, the shock of the photos, of *logomachia*, of the Bamboo language and, today, the ecclesiastical soft language. Truly, we must make an effort to rise to the level of reason and diffuse a clear and precise message. This is not a luxury; it is an intellectual exigency and a moral responsibility. We must be wary of yielding to intellectual laziness and to the desire to agree without reflection which characterizes certain journalists. We must verify the quotes, cross check the sources, the facts and not just say, “Given what I want to prove, this enemy *must* have said that, therefore I reject him.”

We wouldn’t be achieving re-information, but rather inverted disinformation seen as information, by justifying ourselves with the sophisms of the type: “Well, but at least it serves a good cause.” No, the good cause can only be served with good arguments, *i.e.* with true arguments. This is what the popes have said all along. I’m thinking of Pius XII and his allocution to the reporters. I’m thinking also of a beautiful sermon by Cardinal Ottaviani pronounced on the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron of journalists.

On this subject, it is ironic to think that the holy patron of journalists is against what constitutes today, the ideal of all the journalists, all the medias of the day, the *buzz*. Indeed, St. Francis de Sales used to say, “Noise doesn’t make anything good and the good doesn’t make noise.” If this quotation was displayed in all editorial offices, there would be nothing of all these infamies presented so freely selling paper or trying to raise the audience.

This rigor is absolutely necessary without which we would be correcting some excess without touching the cause of evil which is disinformation. And without it, we would be in the symptomatic medicine which is softening the symptoms but would leave the root of evil, the infectious source intact. When >

inverted, this information, like the revolution against the revolution, is not true re-information because it's not truly contrary to disinformation. We must understand that the motto of St. Pius X requests that we restore everything in Christ, that we recapitulate everything in Him. That is to make sure that Christ is truly the head, the leader of families and institutions, including the media.

Now, you are going to tell me that this is not possible, that I'm dreaming. You see me coming into an editorial office with pious medals brandishing on one hand a crucifix and on the other side the aspergillum. No, we're not talking about that, we are simply talking about our duty of state. We can react against disinformation, but not become accomplices of the revolution, and work efficaciously for the restoration of the truth which is the correspondence of our mind with reality. This pertains to each person within his graces of state. It is not a question of going out to occupy *Radio France* but just where God has placed us with the graces He grants us to act in such a way that there is no room for intellectual laziness, for approximate language, for diabolization, or the short-circuiting of reasoning submerged by our emotions. This is why now I would like to offer you some examples which will show you that it is possible to do something concretely.

Some Examples

The question which is brought here is this: How can we bring a listener to the true events when he is disinformed by the media and he seems to be so brainwashed that there doesn't seem to be one drop of common sense left?

Despite the gravity of the situation, we must know that this is not a new thing. Throughout history, there have always been minds contaminated by sophistry in such a way as not to believe in the truth. Everything was a matter of opinion; everything was based on a question of what pleased me, of what displeased me. I like this; I don't like that. Today is represented by *I like* and the *likes* on Facebook. What a rich nuance of thought: one click, one *like*. The emoji thought, the smiley thought. What can we do when we are approaching the level of zero reflection?

In the 5th century before Christ, Socrates had to deal with Sophists and their leader was Protagoras who used to say that "Man is the measure of all

things." According to him, man is the one who decides what is true, what is false, what is good, what is evil. Everything is subjective. Socrates, by his irony, brought these false minds to reality—to objective reality. He reduced their subjectivist relativism to absurdity.

In the 17th century after Christ, after the wars of religion, Bossuet, along with the other great preachers of the Counter-Reformation, worked to bring the Protestants back to the Church. Thus, he composed a remarkable work entitled *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*. Already, in his time, everything was in disorder. It is not the chaos of 1968, but rather the Protestant chaos, the free examination which turns each reformer into a pope. The Protestants do not know where the Church is. Is it visible, institutional, invisible, purely spiritual, has it survived throughout the periods before Luther? Visibly or not? In book 15 of the *History of the Variations*, Bossuet declares that now is the time to find out if a fact is or is not. The Church is or she is not. She is visible or she is not. So, Bossuet is bringing back his reformed interlocutors by a well-documented and very precise argumentation to recognize things as they really are. The Church cannot be and not be, cannot be both visible and invisible.

Because we must know that even in these brainwashed minds as we said before, human nature and reason always remain. Reason always preserves the self-evident propositions. As soon as you know the subject and predicate you know instantly whether the propositions are correct. So when I say the whole is greater than the part, we don't need to be a polytechnic or a rocket scientist to know that; it's obvious. As a whole, I see what it is. The part—I see what it is. And it's obvious that the whole is greater than the part. Likewise, when I say an effect cannot exist without a cause, or that there is no smoke without fire. If you know what an effect is and what a cause is, and if you know what the smoke is and what the fire is, you know very quickly that there cannot be one without the other. The principle of causality is evident. We need to always return to these first principles.

Closer to us is Romano Amerio's work *Iota Unum*. He wrote again a *History of the Variation* but it is those of the Catholic Church since Vatican II with all the changes, all the mutations which Bossuet called "the variations." He minutely studied all the



ruptures which were introduced in perennial tradition. And if you read *Iota Unum*, read it under the light of Bossuet by thinking that there is a reason why Romano Amerio gave the subtitle: *History of the Variations of the Catholic Church in the 20th Century in the post-Conciliar Period*.

Now, let us look closer at what the superiors of the Society of Saint Pius X are writing today and we'll see that they do not proceed in other ways than those of Romano Amerio.

On the occasion of a recent address to the Roman congress on the roots of the crisis in the Church, Bishop Bernard Fellay was showing how Archbishop Lefebvre wanted that there be, in response to the Conciliar subversion, a doctrinal, theological response but also (and this is not exclusive of the other), a factual response. Touching on this response with the facts Bishop Fellay said this: "In the eyes of Archbishop Lefebvre this practical application of tradition, *i.e.* this experiment of tradition, is an efficacious remedy to relativism." Why? Of course, Archbishop Lefebvre wanted to answer doctrinally to the doctrinal errors but also he wanted to reply pastorally. Because we must not forget the ideological dimension of the post-Conciliar novelties. "And we cannot respond purely speculatively to an ideology because it will see in it only a contrary ideology, that is contrary subjectivity, contrary opinion but in no way will it see the contrary of an ideology, the truth which transcends subjectivity. And Bishop Fellay specified by quoting Cardinal Ottaviani, "This is the way of listening which the subjectivist relativism eludes 'the objective and absolute truth' and 'the objective rule of morality'."

How can we return to this 'objective and absolute truth,' to this 'objective rule of morality'? By returning to reality, to the first principles which rule reality, and here the principle of causality." The reality today is the decline in vocations, the loss of vocations, the loss of religious practice. Just open the book of Guillaume Cuchet *How Our World has Ceased Being Christian* with the clear subtitle: *Anatomy of a Catastrophe* in order to understand the reality in these numbers. But to confront reality, it is necessary to appeal to the principle of causality. These facts have causes; they are not the fruit of spontaneous generation. Nothing in reality is produced without there being an explanation. In daily life, we know full well that an effect necessarily has a cause.

When there is no religious practice, no vocations, no seminary, what do you say? Did it just happen by chance?

No! Bishop Fellay concludes, "That's why Archbishop Lefebvre insisted so much that they [Rome] let the Society of Saint Pius X have total liberty to pursue tradition." Confused with the relativist ideology and its terrorizing consequences for the Church—declining vocations, the constant fall of religious practice, *etc.*, he knew that it was necessary to oppose *experimentally* the fruit of the 2,000 year-old tradition. He wished that this return to tradition would allow the Church one day to re-appropriate tradition. Getting back to the roots of the crisis is, at the same time, to get back to tradition, from the effects of the cause, from the fruits of the tree. That's the way Our Lord invites us and, here, no ideology will hold. The facts and the numbers are not traditionalist, much less, Lefebvrist. They are good or bad as the tree which produces them.

Let's move on to the one who succeeded Bishop Fellay at the head of the Society, Fr. Pagliarani. Responding to an interview at the end of the Congress of the *Courier de Rome* in 2011 where it was a question of the hermeneutic of continuity. With much common sense he said that, "the hermeneutic of continuity is trying to appeal to tradition in order to prove that there is a continuity with tradition in the Council and if there is a rupture, it's only a matter of interpretation, of hermeneutic." Fr. Pagliarani asked them: "it is rather surprising that there is such a disproportion between the cause and the effect. How can we explain the universal rupture since the Council manifested by a liturgical, catechetical, *etc.*, change because everything is in rupture today and the cause would simply be an error of interpretation?" His answer is no! The cause is in the fact that there is no continuity *de facto* and not only in a later error of interpretation. In other words, there is a rupture in the continuity *ab origine*, from the beginning.

Fr. Pagliarani continues: should we think of a reciprocal fecundation of the new Mass by the old Mass and the old Mass by the new? Benedict XVI wished it happened. He says that this doesn't make sense, it is absurd, and therefore contrary to the principle of identity and of non-contradiction. A thing is what it is, it cannot be its contrary. The new Mass is what it is, it cannot be its contrary. >

Fr. Pagliarani explains that the Conciliar liturgical reform which introduced the new Mass involves an intrinsic problem; it cannot be anything else. It cannot be a hermeneutical problem—an exterior and posterior interpretation. It's an ontological, intrinsic, problem.

It's important to underline this principle of identity or of non-contradiction, and the principle of causality. We see that our superiors are always bringing to their interlocutors the first principles which are not only the necessary laws of the human mind, but also the laws which rule reality itself.

Don't Open the Cat Door!

In conclusion, here is a last example drawn from an editorial which appeared in *DICI* in June 2018 which also tries to show the contradiction of the progressivists and remind them of the exigencies of the principle of contradiction. In the present case, these are the German bishops who have decided to admit Protestants to Communion who are married to Catholics. Some bishops have manifested their disagreement with their confreres and they appealed to Rome. The pope responded: "work out a consensus among yourselves." Because he didn't want to make a decision and recall the Church doctrine against the intercommunions. In his name, Cardinal Ladaria, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith just said that the German document presenting this project was not ripe to be published. They would have to think about it. There might be some particular cases to study.

We see that it is really the principle of non-contradiction which is suffering from the statement of Cardinal Ladaria. This is what we need to show the reader even if he doesn't have a great theological or philosophical culture. He can easily understand that one thing cannot be its contrary. That goes against elementary common sense. The cardinal says, "The document is not ripe." The use of this adjective on such a clear question, such an obvious thing, is revealing. The Catholic Faith teaches that we cannot authorize intercommunion by saying to Protestants who do not believe in the real presence, that they can receive communion along with Catholics who believe in the real presence.

Thus, when the cardinal says, "The project is not ripe," what he really means is that it is not opportune. But, at the root, the question of intercom-

munion is not a question of calendar, but of the perennial doctrine of the Church. Is intercommunion opposed to the Catholic Faith on the real presence? Instead of a doctrinal reminder more than necessary, this declaration of Cardinal Ladaria is only objecting to a premature publication of the documents of the German bishops, making it understood that ripening is not excluded. In reality, this project of intercommunion is much too ripe, it is the fruit of a softened theology and really in full decomposition.

A little further down, Cardinal Ladaria has this extraordinary sentence: "It seems particularly opportune to let the diocesan bishop judge the existence of a grave necessity." Let's translate: it's not ripe, we cannot give you permission, but let each diocesan bishop judge the existence of a grave necessity in the name of which, out of pastoral mercy, most likely, he will be able to free people in his diocese from the universal doctrine and discipline. This again is a suspension of the principle of non-contradiction. Intercommunion is generally forbidden, but it may be permitted in certain cases. They call this a pastoral overture. No: let us give the names their true sense. This overture is not pastoral, it is a breach in the unity of the Church. In naval terms, it would be a hole under the ship's floating line, which means certain short-term shipwreck.

We have here a typical illustration of the tactic of the cat door. This image is here to draw the curiosity and to draw the interlocutor to think a little ahead about what a cat door is doing here. A door is closed but we have an opening at the bottom to let the cat out. This is what has been done since Vatican II. Without any doubt, Cardinal Reinhardt Marx, the president of the congregation of German bishops will know how to exploit this situation. Marx, "the expert in all cases," will open the cat door while keeping the doctrinal door closed and thus, what is doctrinally false will become pastorally true. What is universally forbidden is authorized locally.

Wondering what to think about the doctrinal deviations of Vatican II?

A Layman's Guide to Vatican II

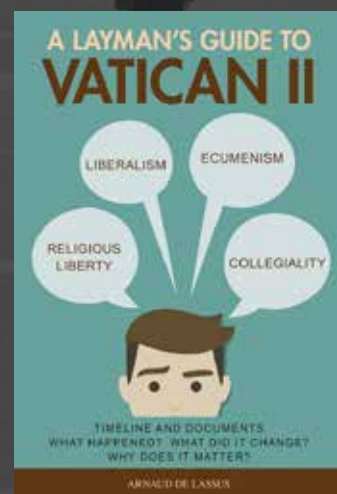
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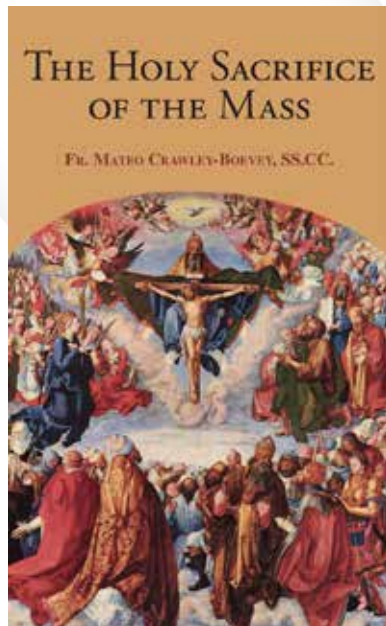


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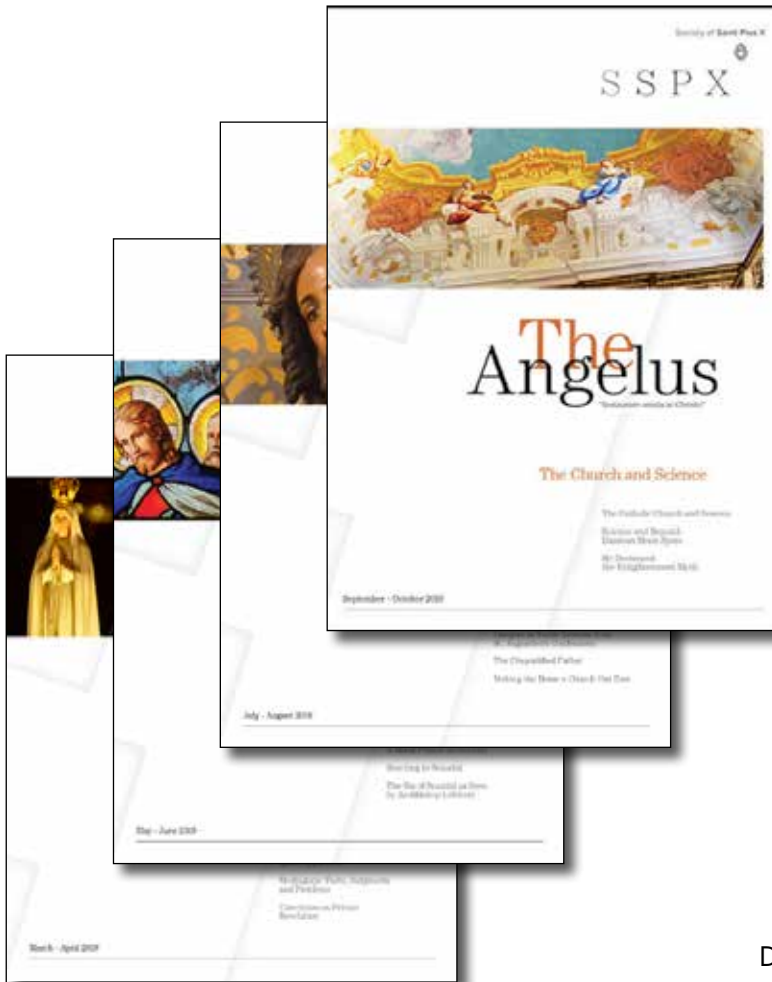
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The Last Word

Dear Reader,

In his meditation on the Two Standards, St Ignatius tells us how Lucifer, the chief of the enemy, “goads his innumerable demons on to lay snares for men and bind them with chains” (nn. 141-142).

The snares and chains are inveterate bad habits, addictions, blackmail, and whatever else gives the feeling of being entangled morally, spiritually, in our reputation, and with a sense of impossibility to emerge from it, of powerlessness, of being a prisoner.

St. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, describes that very same struggle he had between being attracted to chastity by the wonderful example of so many Christians who were chaste, and a will chained in a frightful passion of lust.

“Wretched youth that I was, I had entreated chastity of Thee and had prayed, ‘Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.’ Thus, I was sick and tormented, reproaching myself more bitterly than ever, rolling and writhing in my chain till it should be utterly broken.”

Augustine, after seeing his utter weakness to free himself, had the humility to admit it and to ask for that divine grace which he received, precisely through the inspired pages of the apostle.

He heard a young voice chanting: “‘Pick it up; read it!’ I snatched up the apostle’s book, and in silence read: ‘Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof’ (Rom. 13:13). Instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away.”

Any addiction can be broken by the power of grace. It is a theological certainty proven by history.

St. Paul, pray for us!

Fr. Daniel Couture

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

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