MARCH-APRIL 2022

The Angelus

"Instaurare omnia in Christo"

The Voice of Traditional Catholicism

The World between the Wars

Hope in the Incarnate Word: The Unexpected Theme of T.S. Eliot's Poetry by Dr. Matthew Childs

Fr. Robert MacPherson: The *Nouvelle Théologie* versus Neo-Scholasticism

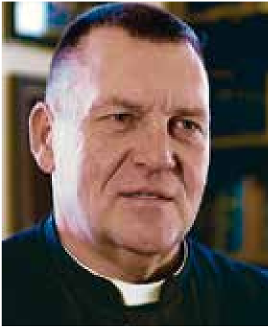
Jonathan Wanner: Chesterton's "Ordered Chaos": Knowledge of Ignorance in *The Everlasting Man*

The Art of War by Prof. David Clayton

Dr. Andrew Childs: An Inverted Pose: Culture amid the Wars

BALFOUR-KER

Letter from the Publisher



Fr. John Fullerton
District Superior of the United States of America

Dear Reader,

It is sadly ironic that this issue of *The Angelus* is dedicated to the theme of the World Between the Wars when, at the time I write this letter, Ukraine and Russia are the midst of one. Will the rest of the world soon enter this conflict? Will Russia's ambitions end at Ukraine or are other lands, such as Poland and Lithuania, in its sights as well? In a way the world is already embroiled in this conflagration. The United States and Western Europe have imposed stiff sanctions on the former Soviet Union and continue to arm Ukrainians defending their land.

The Priestly Society of Saint Josaphat, a fraternity of traditional Greek Catholic priests from Ukraine affiliated with the Society of Saint Pius X for over 20 years, recently made a request to the Society's Superior General, Fr. Davide Pagliarani, to invite traditional Catholic faithful to pray for Ukraine. While people may differ in their opinions on the war's origins and purpose, we should never forget the devastation being felt by the Ukrainian people. At the same time we cannot help but wonder what larger reverberations this conflict will have.

In this issue, we examine the cultural effects of World War I and how they contributed to the even greater conflict that was World War II. As several of the articles make clear, it is impossible to understand either breakout of mass hostilities in isolation from each other. Unsurprisingly, both cataclysms had considerable consequences for the Catholic Church which are still felt today.

No true and lasting peace is possible without Our Lord and King Jesus Christ. Even if many nations around the world turn away from Him, faithful Catholics cannot. Now is the time to pray for His Mercy and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, not only for the people of Ukraine, but the entire world.

Fr. John Fullerton
Publisher

ON OUR COVER: World War I Roman Catholic chaplain depicted in a Knights of Columbus poster, 1917. Artist: William Balfour Ker.

CONTENTS

Volume LXV, Number 2
MARCH - APRIL 2022

Publisher
Fr. John Fullerton

Editor-in-Chief
Mr. James Vogel

Assistant Editor
Mr. Gabriel Sanchez

Associate Editor
Miss Esther Jermann

Marketing Director
Mr. Ben Bielinski

Design and Layout
Mr. Simon Townshend
Mr. Victor Tan

Director of Operations
Mr. Brent Klaske

FEATURED:

4 FEATURED Hope in the Incarnate Word: The Unexpected Theme of T.S. Eliot's Poetry
Dr. Matthew Childs

9 FEATURED An Inverted Pose: Culture amid the Wars
Dr. Andrew Childs

CULTURE:

14 CONTEXT The Nouvelle Théologie versus Neo-Scholasticism
Fr. Robert MacPherson

21 COMMENTARY The Distributism of Belloc and Chesterton
Michael Warren Davis

25 COMMENTARY The World of Integral Humanism
Pauper Peregrinus

28 ART The Art of War
Prof. David Clayton

30 LITERATURE Chesterton's "Ordered Chaos": Knowledge of Ignorance in *The Everlasting Man*
Jonathan Wanner

33 HISTORY A House Divided Against Itself: Catholic Action and the Interwar Era
John Rao, D. Phil. Oxon.

38 REVIEW "In the meantime, in between time": Films portraying the interwar era
Bridget Bryan

FAITH:

43 FROM THE ARCHBISHOP A Knight's Spiritual Guide
Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

50 LIVES OF THE SAINTS Innovation with Integrity: Pope St. Pius X Confronts the Modern World
Dr. Louis Shwartz

54 THEOLOGICAL STUDIES Karl Rahner: The Greatest Modernist of All Time
Fr. Dominique Bourmaud

59 SCRIPTURAL STUDIES Meditations on St. John's Gospel: Chapter Twelve
Pater Inutilis

61 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS Fr. Juan Carlos Iscara, SSPX

65 THE LAST WORD
Fr. David Sherry, SSPX

"To publish Catholic journals and place them in the hands of honest men is not enough. It is necessary to spread them as far as possible that they may be read by all, and especially by those whom Christian charity demands we should tear away from the poisonous sources of evil literature."
–Pope St. Pius X

The Angelus (ISSN 10735003) is published bi-monthly under the patronage of St. Pius X and Mary, Queen of Angels. Publication office is located at PO Box 217, St. Marys, KS 66536. PH (816) 753-3150; FAX (816) 753-3557.

Periodicals Postage Rates paid at Kansas City, MO. Manuscripts and letters to the editor are welcome and will be used at the discretion of the editors. The authors of the articles presented here are solely responsible for their judgments and opinions. Postmaster sends address changes to the address above.

©2022 by Angelus Press. Official Publication of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X for the United States and Canada

Entry of the banner of St. Therese of the Child Jesus into St. Peter's in Rome on the day of her canonization, May 17, 1925.

Clarification

The Angelus always invites thoughtful feedback from its readership on the articles featured in its pages. Certain concerns raised about the January/February 2022 issue warrant a reply.

In art, literature, and movies, it is exceedingly difficult to illustrate the magnitude of Our Lord's Redemptive Act. How can one adequately represent the depth of darkness from which this grace can draw souls? Would the heroism of Desmond Doss have been as dramatic, or as appreciated, without the graphic violence shown in *Hacksaw Ridge*? For those that have experienced actual combat, maybe such visual horrors are not needed. But for many, they cannot fathom the brutal experience of war. The use of such intense and graphic violence can be debated, but it certainly does aid the naïve audience in better understanding Doss's incomprehensible feats. This may be why Mel Gibson's *The Passion* had such a tremendous impact on viewers. For many, perhaps most, this was the first time they were presented with or seriously considered the reality of our Our Lord's suffering for our sins. Much of what people show of themselves and see of others in the public sphere is sanitized; when the true horrors of sin are exposed, their reality cannot be witnessed without remorse and weeping.

At a minimum, for a thing to be considered "good," its consumption should improve the consumer. The greater the benefit, the more the thing is "good." Of course, what is consumed is unlikely to be perfect, nor, in the case of a film, suitable for all audiences. For all the good produced by *The Passion*, allowing a 5-year-old to watch it could be traumatic, and would be imprudent at best.

Films worth watching may be "worth it" not for their moral perfection, but for the depth of the message. There are many films that are neither for the whole family, nor perfectly in line with moral perfection, but can certainly contain valuable food for thought. Works of human artistry are never perfect; there always remains some flaw, some point or theme that could have been done better or perhaps completely avoided (these things can be debated). As Montesquieu wrote nearly three centuries ago, "*Le mieux est le mortel ennemi du bien*" (the best is the mortal enemy of the good). This does not mean the pursuit of the best, that is the perfect, should be abandoned; it is a warning against abandoning the good too hastily.

In future issues of *The Angelus*, greater care shall be taken to highlight articles and recommendations, whether books, music, or movies, that may not be appropriate for all audiences, particularly children and adolescents.

Hope in the Incarnate Word:

The Unexpected Theme of T.S. Eliot's Poetry

"Not Known Because Not Looked For" ("Little Gidding" V. 145)

Dr. Matthew Childs

In Part V of "East Coker," the second of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*—the earth quartet—the speaker recalls "Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*" during which time "every attempt" at "trying to use words" has been

> . . . a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
> One is no longer disposed to say it. (128)

We can understand that sense of waste or failure (which is actually a mature valuation of art *per se* in light of the eternal, rather than a sense of futility) from *Four Quartets* itself, but we can, as well, assess for ourselves whether or not T.S. Eliot's efforts between the two great wars of the twentieth century—a period during which the poet became a British citizen and converted to Christianity—were largely wasted. If we can "have the experience" of reading his work and *not* "miss the meaning" ("Dry Salvages" II. 133), we can both assure Old Possum his time was not wasted and come to understand something about the possibility of hope even for hollow modern men in the waste land of post-modernity. Eliot's major poems of the period between the world wars, from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to *Four Quartets* along with his first plays, are profoundly thematically of a piece. All of these poems and plays acknowledge and dramatize the emptiness and fragmentation of the post-WWI landscape. The texts are absolutely truthful in their assessment of the modern situation—they are non-sentimentally bleak—but also surprisingly consistent and spiritually hopeful, if read well. Hence Eliot's poetry not only helps us understand the world of his time, but, more importantly, can help us avoid falling into its despair as we read the signs of our own times "That seem unpropitious" ("East Coker" V. 128). Eliot's years of "*l'entre deux guerres*" will

not have been wasted on us at least if we can see that his poetry which in itself "does not matter" ("East Coker II. 125) can "fructify in the lives of others" ("Dry Salvages" III. 134) who read it well since it consistently and increasingly insistently "Point[s] to one end, which is always present"–the Word ("Burnt Norton" I. 117).

Eliot's first major poem, his first big hit, was "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), a work we can consider a WW I poem despite the fact he began writing it many years before the war. The dedication in later editions, "For Jean Verdenal, 1889-1915 *mort aux Dardanelles*," along with its first lines, evoking the idea of gas warfare and the sickness and death it caused, tie the poem directly to that war. In those beginning lines all hope in the sentimentality of romanticism is broken with the first image in Eliot's poetry of modern man, physically alive but profoundly sick and only "partly living" (*Murder in the Cathedral* 180):

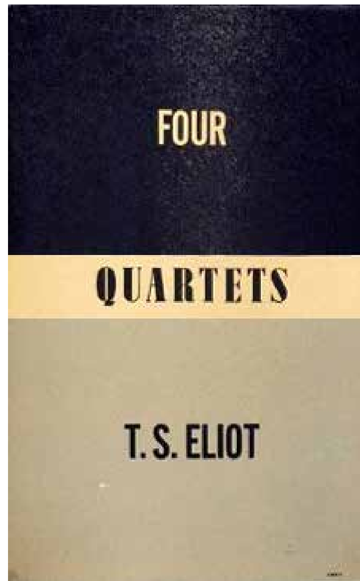
> Let us go then, you and I,
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table . . . (3)

Whatever ideals and hope modern man may have taken into the war to end all wars have been dashed and we are left in a state of death within life, an idea that recurs especially through "Prufrock" and the other early major poems *The Waste Land* (1922) and "The Hollow Men" (1925). These early poems present post-war man living a hell on earth. The epigraph to "Prufrock" is from Dante's *Inferno*–a damned soul speaking only because he is certain no one on earth will ever hear what he says; Eliot's introduction to his poem, his major poetry, is a despairing start. The modern city dwellers in *The Waste Land* who move mechanically to work in the morning, flowing like the river they cross rather than walking, and returning home as "human engine[s]"(line 216, 43) to eat food from tins and engage in loveless, automatic, physical interaction–prelude to our contemporary "hook-up" culture–are also compared to Dante's damned: " . . . so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many" (lines 62-63, 39). The hollow men of that poem can't even stand or speak, but only "[lean] together" and "whisper": having denied the eternal, the speaker hollow man describes himself as "Shape without form, shade without colour,/ Paralysed force, gesture without motion" (I. 56). All these poems present a profound loss of meaning and of purpose in living, along with a more pernicious problem: the *will* to adopt "deliberate disguises" ("The Hollow Men" II. 57), to avoid even asking the "overwhelming question" ("Prufrock" 3) that could lead a pilgrim back from the dark wood of mere temporality into the light of eternal truth. Ironically, herein lies the hope of all these poems: there is an awareness that something has been lost and even a sense, if only fragmentary, of *what* has been lost and the means of its recovery. Though the stifling drawing room world in "Prufrock," where "human voices wake us and we drown" (7), holds him back, that poem's speaker has in fact gotten away from the city enveloped and choked in the ubiquitous fog of modernist malaise. He has been on the seashore–the intersection of land and sea, a symbol of "The point of intersection of the timeless/ With time" ("Dry Salvages V. 136), between time and eternity–and heard the mystical "mermaids singing, each to each." Though he "do[es] not think that they will sing to [him]" (7), the very fact he has heard the sound of transcendence holds out a kind of hope. That hope only gets stronger in subsequent poems.

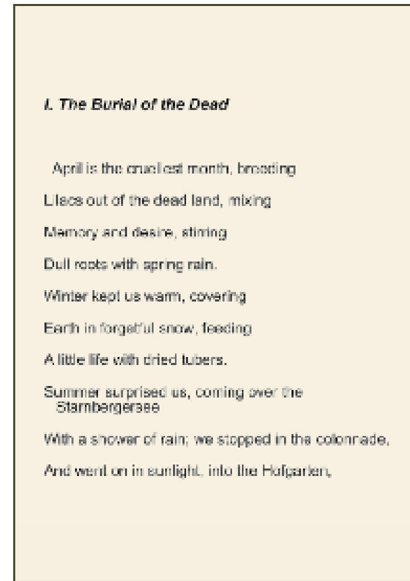
Even in *The Waste Land*, Eliot's most famous poem, the awareness of loss is strong and, arguably, leads to hope and the possibility of recovery–water/ baptism–rather than despair and death, though many commentators on the poem insist upon its hopelessness. In the same way Prufrock progresses from the city "Streets that follow like a tedious argument/ Of insidious intent" (3) to the beach, the speaker in *The Waste Land* begins in a desert land where "roots . . . clutch [and] branches grow/ Out of this stony rubbish" (I. 19-20, 38), a place of ruin, "A heap of broken images, where the sun beats . . ." and there isn't even the "sound of water" (I. 22-24, 38) and ends at the sea shore. The poem finishes with the speaker fashioning the "broken images" of seemingly lost poetic tradition, beauty, and meaning into a mosaic of recovery: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (V. 431, 50).

"The Hollow Men," Eliot's last major pre-conversion poem, presents most directly the true nature of transcendent hope only hinted and guessed at by way of mermaids singing or the thunder speaking (*The Waste Land*)–along with many other images–in the earlier

T. S. Eliot in 1934.



First U.S. edition published by Harcourt.



I. The Burial of the Dead

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,

First lines of *The Waste Land* (1922).

poems. The hollow men, like Prufrock who has "seen the eternal Footman hold [his] coat, and snicker, And in short . . . was afraid" (6), wish to be no nearer to "death's other kingdom" ("Hollow Men" II. 57). Though they live in the waste land—"This is the dead land/ This is cactus land" (III. 57)—where "There are no eyes," no "windows of the soul" and apparently no one watching over them; and though they are likened yet again to the shades in Dante's *Divine Comedy* at the moment of death, "Gathered on this beach of the tumid river," (IV. 58) there is the awareness of the possibility of redemption. It is important to know that there are two rivers souls take to the afterlife in *The Divine Comedy*: one to Hell, Acheron, (referred to in *The Waste Land,* I "The Burial of the Dead") and one to Purgatory, the Tiber. The hollow men may be awaiting their angelic guide on the bank of the Tiber, rather than Charon on the shores Acheron:

> Sightless, unless
> The eyes reappear
> As the perpetual star
> Multifoliate rose
> Of death's twilight kingdom
> The hope only
> Of empty men. (IV. 58)

The rose is the image of the saints within the Empyrean of *Paradiso*; the perpetual star is Our Lady, who prays for Dante the pilgrim and his final vision of God at his journey's end, and who can still intercede for modern, hollow men if they throw off their deliberate disguise of soul-less "stuffed men" and "dare disturb the universe" ("Prufrock" 5) by asking and answering "the overwhelming question" ("Prufrock" 3), and by *not* fearing "death by water," recognizing it as the only source of life; for "we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Their only hope lies in *emptying* themselves of their stuffing of mere temporality and opening the way for eternal action which we increasingly see in the later poems that insist repeatedly eternity can and still does intersect and interact with time, even in the waste land.

Eliot's post-conversion poems and plays become more explicit and sustained reflections upon religious themes—though religious imagery and allusion are present even in the early poems—and the source of hope for modern man is more clearly expressed in the later work. What the earlier poems present "through a glass in a dark manner" the later poems and the plays—especially *Four Quartets* and *Murder in the Cathedral*—propose directly, "face to face" (I Cor 13:12). Though the message becomes more explicit, it is not obvious, for Eliot's poetry is hardly ever obvious, even when appealing, to first time readers, myself included. The poems in their apparent difficulty—the paradoxes, the subjective images, the abstruse language, the many allusions—are manifestations of the

fact that while truth is still present to modern man, "even among these rocks" ("Ash Wednesday" VI. 67), it is very difficult to see and to keep, to grasp, without effort in our times. The poems engage readers in the struggle and prove that it is worth the effort to pursue the truth. The eternal within time, only vaguely understood or barely hoped for in the early poems, is named directly in *Four Quartets*, Eliot's last great poem and the transition point to his drama. That poem—made up of four poems of five parts each—begins with the problem or question that is resolved throughout its remainder and resolves the overwhelming dilemma of the early poems: "If all time is eternally present/All time is unredeemable" ("Burnt Norton" I. 117). If there is nothing beyond, outside of, or different from time, there can be no redemption of time, no meaning or purpose to life. Each quartet presents a moment "in and out of time" ("The Dry Salvages" V. 136)—a scene that brings together past, present, and future, or the living and the dead in one way or another—demonstrating that we all have an inkling and even some, albeit fleeting, experience of the eternal, just as Prufrock hears the mermaids on the beach, or the hollow men perceive "the eyes" of "death's dream kingdom" in "Sunlight on a broken column/. . . a tree swinging/ And in the wind singing/ More distant and more solemn/ Than a fading star" (II. 57), or the traveler in Part V *The Waste Land* who sees a "third who walks always beside" his companion though they two are alone (360-365, 48).

The third quartet, "The Dry Salvages," names the reality of eternity's redemptive interaction with time:

> The hint half guessed, the gift half understood,
> is Incarnation.
> Here the impossible union
> Of spheres of existence is actual,
> Here the past and future
> Are conquered, and reconciled,
> Where action were otherwise movement
> Of that which is only moved
> And has in it no source of movement . . . .(V. 136)

How many people are even aware Eliot, the poet of *The Waste Land*, wrote these lines? They are extraordinary, but the idea is already in the early work, "Not known, because not looked for" ("Little Gidding" V. 145), not yet named in the earlier poems. Eliot's poetry is God-haunted from the beginning and God-manifesting toward its end—"Journey of the Magi" (1927) and "Ash Wednesday" (1930) are also explicitly "religious"—and that is the most striking thing about his work as whole aesthetic that grows, develops, and matures, demonstrating how, even in the cultural, intellectual, philosophical, and theological wasteland of the twentieth-century, between two wars that took tens of millions of lives and their companion revolutions that took many untold more, God still works in souls. Eliot's poetry, as a body, is a profound source of hope because when we read it well, we can see the "unhurried Ground swell" ("Dry Salvages" I. 131) of providence working in it; his corpus is *sacramental* in the sense that it stands as a sign of the often-hidden transformative work of eternity within time, changing despair to hope, confusion to clarity. His later work in particular might be described as a sign of contradiction: as modernism in art turned to postmodernism after WW II, moving on "In appetency, on its metalled ways/ Of time past and time future" ("Burnt Norton" III. 121) of pure temporality, waiting for Godot rather than looking for God, Eliot's work turned to eternity as the "still point of the turning world" ("Burnt Norton" II. 119) that had always been there if only as a "fading star" ("Hollow Men" 57), a presence by way of absence or desire, "Before the beginning and after the end" ("Burnt Norton" V. 121). The beginning and end only co-exist fully in the *alpha* and the *omega*, so it makes sense that when Eliot's poetry completes its pilgrimage—"arriv[ing] where [it] started/ And know[ing] the place for the first time" ("Little Gidding V. 145)—it arrives at Incarnation. The Word made flesh is the source first of vague hope, despite its apparent loss, and finally of redemption, giving meaning to our daily lives.

The final movement of Eliot's work is his transition from poetry to verse drama—his first play *Murder in the Cathedral* was literally begun with lines cut from *Four Quartets*—a transition that applies the lesson learned in the poetry: redemption requires incarnation and so the poetry takes life on stage in order better to "fructify in the lives of others" ("Dry Salvages" III. 134), to participate in the action of the Incarnate Word, in a way. It is not an exaggeration to say Eliot's drama, what I call the "theater of the eternal" in another work, is an attempt to bring true life back to the "dead land" of the anomic and finally suicidal twentieth century:

> What I should hope might be achieved, by a generation of dramatists having the benefit of our experience, is that the audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: "I could talk in poetry too!" Then we should not be transported into an artificial world; on the contrary, our own sordid, dreary, daily world would be suddenly illuminated and transfigured. (*Poetry and Drama* 31-32)

The goal is not to make some new myth or deconstruct all myth, as many in the twentieth century seek to do, either making new truths in our own image—the positive, "vital immanence" part of modernism, in St. Pius X's terms—or rejecting any capacity to find meaning—the negative agnosticism and concomitant phenomenology of modernism—but rather to engage in "the fight to recover what has been lost/ And found and lost again and again" ("East Coker" V. 128). Eliot's work insists upon the Real Presence, the reality of eternity's action in time, our "Ridiculous . . . waste sad time" ("Burnt Norton" V. 122).

"East Coker" starts with "In my beginning is my end . . ." (I. 123) and finishes with "in my end is my beginning" (V. 129). This invocation of the eternal present, which is God, is the movement of Eliot's poetry from beginning to end; his work as a whole, a pattern—by which alone "Can words or music reach/The stillness" ("Burnt Norton" V. 121)—is an image of the pilgrim in the modern world, always moving, most often without a sense of direction yet with a heart that, even in *The Waste Land* "would have responded/ Gaily, when invited, beating obedient/ To controlling hands" (V lines 421-422. 49-50). By *Four Quartets* it is more clear whose hands guide the boat, "expert with sail and oar" (V line 420. 49); they are the "bleeding hands" of the "wounded surgeon" ("East Coker" IV. 127) who heals from the cross, that "bedded axle-tree" ("Burnt Norton" II. 118) connecting heaven to earth by way of which, all wars, those "long forgotten" of men and the incessant conflict of, dare I say oppressor and oppressed, "the boarhound and the boar" are "reconciled among the stars" ("Burnt Norton" II. 119). T.S. Eliot's work and vision in the twenty years of "*l'entre deux guerres*" are not representative of those times; they rise above those times, offering hope in a world which prefers despair, and proclaiming light to a world of darkness, the very Light presented to us at the end of every Mass:

> If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
> If the unheard, unspoken
> Word is unspoken, unheard;
> Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
> The Word without a word, the Word within
> The world and for the world;
> And the light shone in darkness and
> Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
> About the centre of the silent Word. ("Ash Wednesday" V. 65)

If those twenty years were "largely wasted," it is not because of what Eliot left behind, but because we receive his poetry in much the same way many readers of Christ's time, especially the Pharisees who never read beyond the literal, received the culminating object and resolution of His work: "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn. 1:5). To see the eternal signs within the times, we need to read well with the light of grace and the "direct eyes" of faith fixed upon our true end in "death's other Kingdom" ("The Hollow Men" I. 56).

Works Cited

Eliot, T.S. *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1950.

——. *Poetry and Drama.* Harvard University Press, 1951.

The Holy Bible, Douay Rheims Version. Bishop Richard Challoner, 1752. Reprinted, TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1971.

An Inverted Pose: Culture amid the Wars

Dr. Andrew Childs

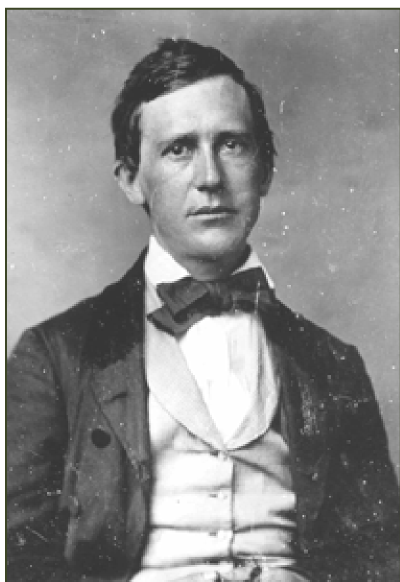
Cultural development in the 20th century prior to World War II occurred in response to two cataclysmic episodes: the ascendance of modernism and World War I. The relation of these two—something very much like cause and effect—merits its own analysis, but if modernism declared that the supernatural could not be believed, the horrors of WWI made it difficult to imagine, especially when amplified by artistic expression. A reader unimpressed by the factual news reports of the "War That Will End War"[1] should question his sanity; a reader unmoved by the war poetry of Wilfred Owen should question his humanity. The present discussion will consider musical development during this time of supreme disillusionment and will focus on two points as motivating factors: the lingering societal shock and exhaustion that followed WWI, and the emergence and coalescence of American popular forms that would come to dominate global musical culture by the outbreak of WWII.

The Faith draws a hard line between two incompatible views of reality. The life of faith assumes the necessary cooperation and compatibility of faith and reason and the existence of the supernatural. The humanist worldview progresses from the insistence on the distinction of faith and reason to the ultimate rejection of any possibility of supernatural reality. The believer who accepts the Church's declaration "If anyone says that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason by means of the things that are made, let him be anathema,"[2] and the agnostic philosopher who insists, especially in relation to religious belief, that "What can be asserted without evidence can be dismissed without evidence," will find very little common philosophical ground.[3] In fact, each views the other as delusional.

A denial of absolutes accompanies the denial of the supernatural—as truth evolves necessarily in the humanist construct—and the dismantling of hierarchy naturally follows. Preference replaces objective qualitative standards, and the leveling required to afford equal validity to every expression of art or ideas creates a very uncomfortable sort of critical chaos. Rubens and graffiti, Shakespeare and cummings, ballet and burlesque all deserve equal consideration according to the enlightened assessor, but just as the humanist philosopher commits a crucial mistake in denying original sin—wrongly assuming optimistically that left to his own devices man will choose to do good—the humanist critic errs in assuming that the elimination of standards allows artists the unchecked creative freedom necessary to develop greater and more advanced techniques and genres. In an atmosphere of unchecked amoral liberality things descend rather than ascend. Ultimate freedom, as it turns out, remains ultimately subject to the gravity of fallen nature.

Aristotle posited, "nature abhors a vacuum." Culture abhors a vacuum as well. Throughout the history of western music, a healthy—or at least reasonable—balance has existed between cultivated and vernacular art.[4] When and why, however, did the balance tip irretrievably toward the vernacular? I have suggested previously in these pages[5] that vernacular dominance emerged as much from an abandonment of purpose and process on the part of modernist high-art composers as from the irresistibility of popular forms, though any honest observer must cede the point of undeniable appeal. With the overthrow of hierarchy, dissolution of standards, and betrayal by the musical Academy, audiences increasingly chose to indulge in the previously guilty pleasures of lower forms. Beyond this, listening well to music of substance requires significant effort. I would argue that the rewards—profound emotional consolation and transcendent beauty, not to mention an invigorating intellectual workout—make the work worthwhile, but the counter-argument exists that recreation should not require any real effort, and that a man should at some point be able to loosen his tie if not remove it altogether.

In the era in question, the issue of fatigue loomed even larger. "The average American youth," writes Richard Weaver, "put into uniform, translated to a new and usually barren environment, and imbued from many sources with the mission of killing, has undergone a pretty severe dislocation. All of this runs counter to the benevolent platitudes on which he was brought up, and there is little ground for wonder if he adopts the inverted pose."[6] Or put even more passionately by historian Samuel Hynes, "Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to the war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past



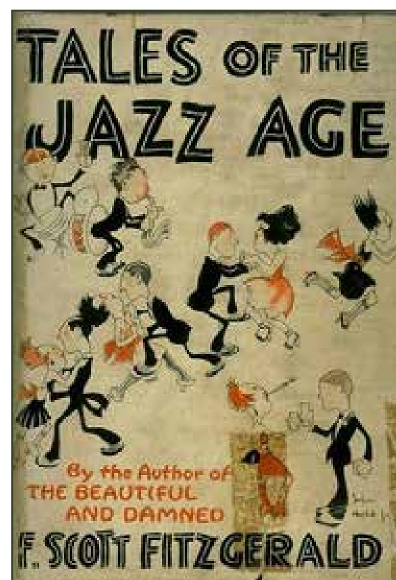
Stephen Foster circa 1860.

Scott Joplin around age 35 (c. 1903).

Music published by Stark Music Co, 1902.

Duke Ellington, ca. 1940s.

George Gershwin, ca. 1935.



1922 edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's book.

and from their cultural inheritance."[7] Mankind had taken a supreme beating and never had easy and "rebellious" culture seemed so appealing.

At the turn of the 20th century, American popular music had begun to dominate on a global scale, building on the successes of indigenous talents Stephen Foster (1826-1864) and Scott Joplin (1868-1917). Foster "understood as did no other composer before him, that truly popular music must be grasped at first or second hearing, remembered with some accuracy after only a few more, and must be easily performable at home by those with rudimentary skills."[8] Foster's songs, canonical and instantly recognizable to this day, have a universal, almost preternatural appeal. "Musicological methods," according to music historian Charles Hamm, "cannot adequately explain how he was able to write…songs that have been popular for over a century. The means are so simple as to suggest that almost anyone could write such songs; yet no-one but Foster did."[9] Foster did not discover the vein of nostalgia in American vernacular music, but no one has mined it more effectively. For an increasingly world-weary audience, "My Old Kentucky Home" seemed a more comfortable and hospitable place than a Mahler symphony.

Ragtime, and particularly the music of Scott Joplin, expresses a perhaps unlikely but undeniable mixed European and African lineage. Though now a niche genre, ragtime at once legitimized baser elements of the African tradition and gained acceptance as part of the serious piano repertoire, imitated by numerous European composers including Debussy, Stravinsky, Dvořák, Satie, and Darius Milhaud. Joplin, through his distinctive stylistic and interpretive genius, proved instrumental in bridging the crucial socio-cultural gap between black and white, opening the door to broader popular acceptance of African-influenced styles marked by recognizable traditional elements: "call and response" antiphony, repetition of short melodic phrases, non-melodic vocalization, syncopation, polyrhythm, and improvisation.[10]

Two marginalized demographic groups had effectively conquered global musical culture before the outbreak of WWII: the predominantly Jewish composers of Tin Pan Alley, and black urban musicians who developed the Blues and more or less related strains of Jazz, first in New Orleans but eventually in major cities throughout the country. Tin Pan Alley originally referred to a lower-Manhattan neighborhood near Union Square which housed numerous music publishers by the end of the 19th century. These publishers employed genuinely talented and prolific composers and lyricists, now universally recognized–George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein, Frank Loesser, Cole Porter, Al Jolson, Johnny Mercer–as well as an army of "Song-pluggers" to pitch new songs in public places and performances. They effectively franchised popular music, creating easy to follow formulas guaranteed to succeed based on market research. Indi-

Advertisement for the film "The Girl with the Jazz Heart" (1920).

vidual songs sold by the millions. "Probationary" white Jewish and black composers formed an understandable social and professional alliance, and their collaborative efforts not only continued to expand the genres of Blues, Jazz, and popular song, but resulted in the emergence of new genres—Musical Theater and the American Songbook, Big Band, Swing, and ultimately Rock 'n Roll.

Each of these popular sub-genres has persisted long enough to develop its own literature and scholarship, some of it legitimate (objective chronicling of stylistic development and cataloging of artists, performers, and repertoire) and some of it mildly embarrassing (pseudo-musicological paeans to popular artists or works).[11] The breadth of this literature notwithstanding, these sub-genres do not represent many distinct mansions in an exalted artistic realm, but merely different rooms in the same house in a questionable neighborhood, the occupants of which continuously redecorate, renovate, and expand. Though in certain aspects the "structure" has been altered substantially, the address has never changed.

Here the cautionary tale begins. Though tempting, demonizing popular or vulgar forms does little to inspire noble behavior. We can mock the architecture of the cultural boarding house of popular music and excoriate the residents as purveyors of sin. We can express outrage at the "spirit of fornication" that animates much of the genre, but this outrage can easily turn to caricature, which speaks as much to the critic as to the criticized. To wit, this piquant 50's-era assessment of the effects of Jazz: "After the dissemination of Jazz, which was definitely 'put through' by the Dark Forces, a very marked decline in sexual morals became noticeable. Whereas at one time women were content with decorous flirtations, a vast number of them are now constantly preoccupied with the search for erotic adventures, and have thus turned sexual passion into a species of hobby."[12] The Devil, who plays Jazz saxophone, made *her* do it. Jazz—specifically undefinable in technical terms, simultaneously monotonous and dazzling—does no more or less than any other popular form for its particular group of adherents: it proves that as regards cultural recreation separated from moral consequences, left to his own devices, man will choose to be naughty and seek pleasurable experiences at the lowest possible cost.

The hard fact remains that by WWII, men had lost the will to fight for transcendental absolutes, and the forward progress of nearly a millennium of cultivated cultural development had come to a near-full stop, hindered, derailed, and impeded by friend and foe alike. As with anything, lost cultural momentum requires more effort to restart than it would have to maintain. Every individual striving for nobility must make

King & Carter Jazzing Orchestra, Houston, Texas, 1921.

the difficult decision to take up his cross and work—to recommit daily to the efforts required to transcend the alluring desolation of a purely natural reality while never denying the realities of human nature, shared by base and beautiful souls alike. "Education," writes Alan Bloom, "is not sermonizing to children against their instincts and pleasures but providing a natural continuity between what they feel, and what they can and should be."[13] The Devil is a wrecker, and 20th-century artists had to build amid the rubble for an audience of disillusioned souls. The popular artist built cheaply, but seeing no other shelter in sight, the whole world went inside and found an easy and familiar place to strike a comfortable pose. While neither denying the need for shelter nor underestimating the allure of ease, we must never lose sight of the fact that this pose is inverted; we must choose not to inhabit potentially dangerous cultural spaces no matter how inviting or legitimately pleasurable we find them. Culturally, we know where we belong. The journey there remains long, uphill, and absolutely glorious.

Endnotes

1 The title of H. G. Wells' 1914 book.

2 Vatican Council I, *De Revelatione*, can. 1.

3 Christopher Hitchens, *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Twelve Books, 2007), 150.

4 Handel composed alongside John Gay, and though audiences flocked to see *The Beggar's Opera*—which contained such immortal and edifying numbers as "Our Polly is a sad Slut!"—few would have argued seriously for Gay's artistic superiority.

5 "Modernism in Music—Who cares if you listen?" *The Angelus* magazine, September-October 2020, *Modernism*.

6 Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Hermagoras, 1985) 225

7 Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (Atheneum, 1991) iii.

8 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (MacMillan, 1995) Volume 15, 101.

9 *Ibid.*

10 J. Peter Burkholder, *A History of Western Music: 7th Edition* (Norton, 2006) 753-754.

11 Scholarly consideration of any of the Beatles' concept albums fall into this category.

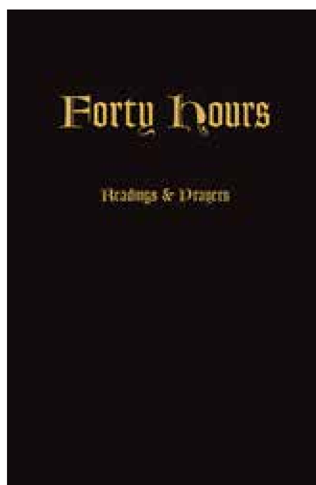
12 Cyril Scott, *Music, Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages* (Aquarian Press, 1958) 152.

13 Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (Simon and Schuster, 1987) 80.

FROM ANGELUS PRESS

Forty Hours

by Rev. Fulgence Meyer, O.F.M.



This gorgeous devotional book with gilt edging and ribbon is destined to be a treasured classic in your collection!

This book contains reflections and readings on the Most Holy Eucharist along with psalms, hymns and prayers for the Forty Hours devotion, or holy hour, or private Eucharistic visits.

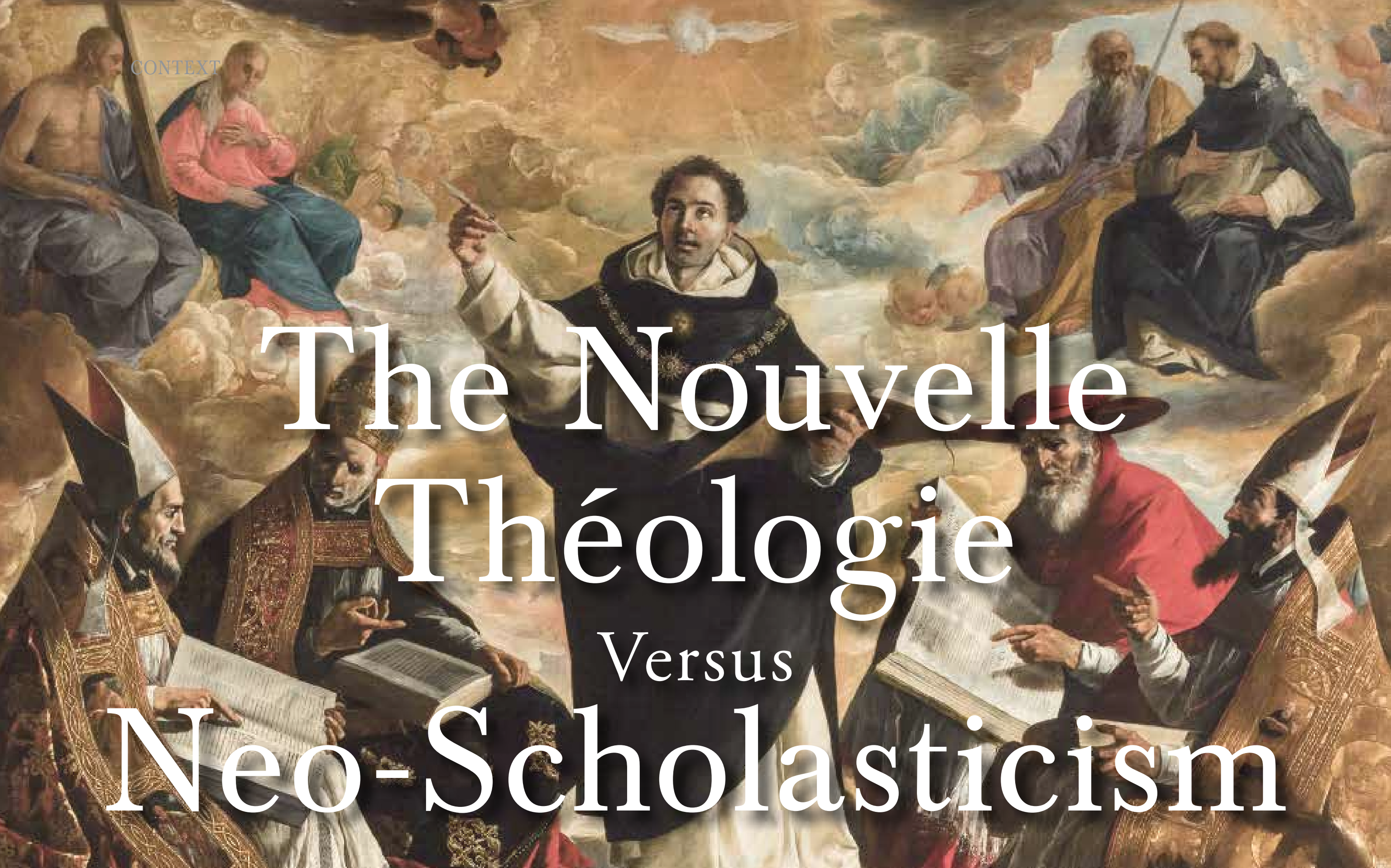
This devotional is actually two books printed in parallel.

The left-hand pages consist of Psalms, hymns, and prayers, that can be used during Eucharistic adoration. The right-hand pages consist of a series of conferences on Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament that is sure to inspire the reader's appreciation and devotion to Christ in the Holy Eucharist. If you are trying to make spiritual reading part of your new daily resolutions this excellent book is for you.

583 pp. 4.25" x 6.5". Synthetic leather cover. Sewn with ribbon. Gold gilded. STK# 8798 $29.95

www.angeluspress.org | 1-800-966-7337

Please visit our website to see our entire selection of books and music.



The Nouvelle Théologie Versus Neo-Scholasticism

Fr. Robert MacPherson

The teaching and conduct of the current pontiff has shaken many Catholics to their core. The papacy of Pope Francis seems to be characterized by one shameful scandal after another. How could a pope be willing to sacrifice one dogmatic and moral teaching after another on the altar of globalism? Those that were adamant in their support of the preceding Pope are often the most severe and insulting to the present one: he is denounced as being demonically evil, as not being pope at all, of being a fool, and of many more derogatory attributes. By and large, the ones least surprised or shaken by this pontificate seem to be those in the SSPX. This is largely because the bad fruits of the current pontificate have not sprung out of thin air, but out of a bad tree that has been growing for years, one which had taken root even before Vatican II.

Yet it would be both wrong and simplistic to transpose the accusations of "demonically evil" and "non-Catholic" to all the forerunners of these ideas from a century ago. The truth is a little more complex; it is also far more instructive if we have the patience and wisdom to learn from the past.

Although any theology might be considered new when it is first conceived, the "*Nouvelle Théologie*" (the "New Theology") refers now almost exclusively to the theological movement in the Church from the 1930's to the 1950's.[1] In brief, it was an attempt to revitalize and "Catholicize" the already condemned errors of modernism. To better understand why any Catholic should wish to do so, one must appreciate the political and philosophical influences of the era that characterized the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

On the political side, the growing antagonism of anti-Catholic governments towards the Church prompted a response from the Church and Catholics to insist upon the importance of adherence to Rome. The history of the First

Vatican Council is itself a striking reminder of the opposition of the City of God and the City of Man. The Council, which was defining papal infallibility and the rights of the Church, was itself interrupted by a Freemasonic revolution intent on overthrowing the Church. This harsh division, so different from the ages of Faith, stamped its character not only on the evolving political powers, but upon the Church herself and upon her faithful. As anti-Catholicism was typified by opposition to Rome, so too fidelity was typified by an absolute adherence to Rome.

Rome, of course, had always been the head of the universal Church, but a simple example can highlight how varied the notion of "adherence" might be. Citizens of a nation *at peace* have little problem in critiquing government policy (at least until recently), the wisdom of their leaders' decisions, or the like. Let the same citizens do so in time of war and they will soon find that a cloud of suspicion hovers around them. Are they challenging the authority? Do they sympathize with the enemy? The gravity of the external threat can compel an exaggerated and mistaken notion of loyalty. This is not to say that "war measures" are not reasonable during war, but that does not make those measures the inherently necessary methodology for times of peace.

The Church's war had been intensifying for centuries. The principles and powers of Freemasonry had taken deep root, and they led to open war with the Church. The faithful responded by a deeper expression of loyalty to Rome; there was a greater insistence upon the authority of the magisterium and the infallibility of Rome. On the part of the hierarchy, there was a centralizing of power. Rome was to assume the brunt of the burden in dealing with the non-Catholic governments, against whom the local bishops were considered or assumed to be too weak and ineffective. Yet Rome's interventions in national affairs did not always show the strength or prudence that would seem to accord with her divine claims. A sound Catholic recognized therein the human element in the Church hierarchy; more liberal minds felt the Church was becoming more insular and detached from the real world.

What solution lay at hand for a mind convinced that the Church was thus drifting from its apostolic mission and fading into irrelevance? As all too often is the case, many men turned to what was ultimately a worldly solution in order to answer the problem of the world. The fault—so argued these "new theologians"—was not with the Church as such, or with her revelation, but with the outdated formulae in which that revelation was ensconced. Such arguments manifested that these men had already become enchanted with the philosophy that they would then try to baptize, namely, existentialism.

Yet one would be mistaken to think that these men opened up a book on a clearly defined system of thought and memorized it by rote. Existentialism was a tangled web of prevalent ideas. It existed in many forms. It was an intoxicating atmosphere that promised purpose and vitality to thought and action. Fr. Dominique Bourmaud summarizes the movement accurately and generally by saying that it is "the philosophy of the concrete and of that phenomenon which is human existence,"[2] but such was not the definition its early adherents were reading. Another author describes its vision as follows: "the real is only that which exists, and the human existent is a striving to transcend himself in anguish without the possibility of help from any absolute… The striving is blind and the core of existence. Thinking is an instance of this striving; it is not the illumination of reality but merely another blind manifestation of it."[3] Part of its great appeal lay in its seeming vitality and dynamism, in its opposition to stale rationalism as well as to the detached idealism of Emmanuel Kant. It seemed to offer a way to present theology as more than a stoic ordering of ideas. For the Catholic existentialist, the Church is constituted by the religious strivings of Catholics and from the attitudes those strivings produce. All human life is supernatural, because God is always breaking into it; the Incarnation is simply the apex. These are seductive words to those wearied by syllogisms.

The First World War, which had not allowed much time for study, had thrown many Catholics and non-Catholics together in the French resistance movement. They surfaced with a conviction that the presentation of the Church's position could only be made more attractive if it were placed in terms more vital and existential. In fact, St. Thomas was argued to be an author-

ity for this existentialist approach. Fr. Rousselot, S.J. had written already in 1908 a work entitled "The Intellectualism of St. Thomas." Fr. Gustave Weigel explains Rousselot's position: "for St. Thomas the intellectual assent in judgment was a *dynamic grasp* of the real, and not a mere ordering of concepts in a pattern."[4] His work was to garner renewed interest after the war.

As a short aside, it is worthy to note that theology has never been a stagnant repetition of previous statements. There have been many schools of thought. Even among Thomists, there can be a wide variation of emphasis, understanding, and development. The distinctions may seem non-consequential to non-theologians, but there is great leeway of ideas where the Church has not intervened, reserving her solemn judgments for such occasions as the Faith itself was at stake.

Coming back to the case in hand, however, not all were happy with the leeway already given by the Church. In the philosophical arena (as in the political), they thought theology and apologetics were in need of a new energy. Reviving the notion of dynamism seemed to many the way this could be done. The Jesuits and Dominicans both had their representatives among the proponents of what would later become known as the "*Nouvelle Théologie.*" Most influential among the Jesuits were Fathers Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, and Henri Bouillard; among the Dominicans, Fathers Marie Dominique Chenu, Yves Congar, and André Dubarle. All held prestigious editorial or teaching positions in France. In fact, this dominance of French theologians at the core of this movement seems to be one of the chief reasons for something of an academic oddity: the movement as such is virtually always referred to by its French appelation ("*Nouvelle Théologie*") regardless of the language being used (rather than by its equivalent meaning in the given languages, *e.g.* "New Theology," "Nueva Teología," *etc.*).

As mentioned earlier in the article, these men did not examine a definition of existentialism and then embrace it as an abstract theory. They were entranced not so much by a theory as by a mood, an attitude, one that was sweeping Europe and which they became caught up in. At first it might have appeared only as an interior attraction, with the person little grasping his own reason for that attraction. "A Catholic with existentialist preoccupations will find the consideration of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, a living human thing, very congenial. On the contrary, a legalistic consideration of the Church as an abstractly fixed juridical institution will be annoying."[5] Or again, the one with existentialist leanings will see his purpose in Apologetics as being to inspire a longing for Catholicism rather to demonstrate the rational validity of the act of Faith. Nevertheless, where both attitudes may have their place, the existentialist philosophy could only support one of them. The reason for this will be more evident later in the article when we consider its corruption of the notion of truth and Faith. As a consequence, theologians promoting an existentialist viewpoint drifted ever further from seeing the perennial validity of the Church's magisterium.

Before considering some of the "New Theologians" themselves, a word or two is due to the Catholic French philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861-1949). His influence on the *Nouvelle Theologie* is widely recognized, and particularly on De Lubac. In 1906, Blondel proposed a new definition for truth. Instead of the classic definition "the adequation of intellect and reality," he substituted "the conformity of mind and life." In his obscure and controversial work *L'Action*, (1893), he argued from "human experience, and maintained that it pointed to, and in the end required, the supernatural. Thus by what was known as "the method of immanence" he arrived at the transcendent. By "action" he did not mean only activity but all that is involved in the human response to reality, including affection, willing, and knowing."[6] In addition to its Pelagian spirit by which the natural somehow leads to and necessarily requires the supernatural, Blondel's position undermines the absolute nature of truth. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange thought that Blondel little foresaw the terrible consequences that his theories would have for the Faith. The "New Theologians" preferred this new and "dynamic" definition of truth. But the error of all that they would build upon this foundation of sand can already be seen in Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's rebuttal:

> What "life" is meant in this definition of "conformity of mind and life"? It means human

Maurice Blondel, ca. 1890.

Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

Cardinal Pietro Parente.

> life. And so then, how can one avoid the modernist definition: "Truth is no more immutable than man himself, inasmuch as it is evolved with him, in him and through him." One understands why Pius X said of the modernists: "they pervert the eternal concept of truth."[7]

Indeed, by binding truth to experience, existentialism—for all its assertions of believing in nothing but a "concretely lived reality"—cannot help but fall into hopeless subjectivism. "Everything beyond the subject is known only in its 'I' relevance, never in itself."[8]

Having now an idea of the spirit that animated the new theologians, let us consider how they proposed to reform the Church. De Lubac listed four things that he perceived as "deficiencies" in the Church. These things, he said, accounted for the Church's weakness in her interior life, in the sense of the supernatural, and for the corresponding rise of atheism. The first "deficiency": the contrast in many men between their secular knowledge and their catechetical instruction which resulted in a certain dualism in their knowledge. For example: science, evolution, polygenism on one side and creationism and monogenism on the other. Once one recognizes that De Lubac was not simply advocating for Catholics to better understand and defend their position, but some kind of "dynamic understanding" that would allow a new presentation of Catholic doctrine, one sees how absurd such a position must be. No amount of representation can change the fact that the human race originated from a single pair of parents (monogenism) such that it can be made more appealing to a polygenist.

The second perceived "deficiency" was a "poorly balanced doctrinal edifice" whose "dominant concern is less to seek an understanding of faith, to be nourished on mystery, than to respond to heresies."[9] By this weak doctrinal edifice was meant too much emphasis on theological argumentation based on Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. De Lubac did not deny the validity of such reasoning, but he argued that it was only preparatory. The surest path to understanding the faith was not in the definitions and divisions of the scholastics, but in the contemplation and experience of the mystery of revelation. This desire for a more profound experience of revelation at its source invariably leads the existentialist to do two things: first, to set aside centuries of theological development and second, to "return to the sources," for example the early Fathers of the Church. This was ostensibly to arrive at a purer expression of Faith before the stagnating effect of scholasticism had intervened. Among these, they preferred the Greek Fathers whose manner of expression was often more mystical, and whose theological precision did not develop as quickly. The more mystical and metaphorical the expressions, the more freedom they allowed for reinterpretation by contemporary theologians.

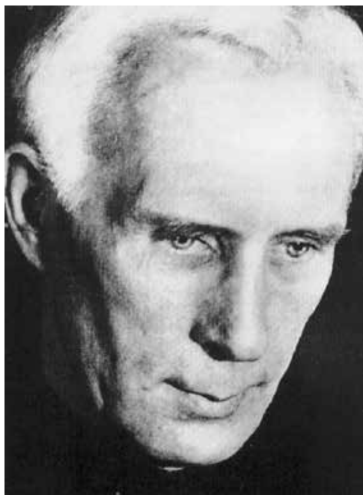
The third internal "deficiency," according to De Lubac (and in his mind likely the most important), was "a duality going so far as to be a kind of separation between nature and the supernatural." He argued that this had become so problematic that it would deny the "intimate relation between them, an ordination, a finali-

ty." Although it is true that it is possible to *separate* these aspects (natural and supernatural) in an artificial and dangerous way, the distinction between the two is essential both for understanding the Faith and for progress in virtue. De Lubac's assessment of scholastic theologians was that they had pushed the distinction too far. As will tie in with his next point, a "return to the sources" was necessary in order to reclaim what was lost. Effort must be focused on recovering "the 'breadth and depth' of the tradition, including the Scriptures and the Fathers. These were seen as crucial to the articulation of a 'redemptive theology,' which would bring the faith to bear more fully on the lives of Christians living in the world."[10]

Although De Lubac's writing is always touched with moderation, the mistake in his assessment seems to have been demonstrated all too quickly. For centuries, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church had found and taught the true relationship between nature and grace, showing their distinction and complementarity. De Lubac's attempt to re-establish this doctrine by focusing on the "intimate relation" and common finality of grace and nature led unhappily in his disciples to the merging of the two elements—and consequently promoted two opposing errors: a naturalist spirit on the one hand and a pseudo-supernaturalism on the other. On one side, one's natural efforts are considered salvific (and thus for example, we are told that there is "good" in every religion; it matters not that the religion is man-made. God is somehow obliged to reward natural goodness with supernatural beatitude). On the other side, there is a tendency to proclaim as divine any and every inspiration one has (and so for example, all the claims that every innovation that takes place in the Church is the "work of the Spirit"). This confused mixing of the natural and supernatural would later become one of the fundamental errors in John Paul II's first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, which links the redemption of man more to the Incarnation than to the sacrifice of the cross.

Finally, De Lubac complained of the "rationalist spirit of those theologians who…can inventory, arrange, and label everything, and who have answers for all objections—but who have, unfortunately, lost sight of the mystery of the Lord." It is quite true that a theologian may operate in a rationalist spirit; one might study God without loving Him. But the fundamental "mystery" in theology comes from the immensity and infinity of God—it does not require obscurity of language and abandonment of years of theological development to maintain the mystery. Quite the contrary, the more one penetrates the profundity of God, the more he understands how incomprehensible the Divinity really is. But what De Lubac was especially trying to highlight by this supposed "deficiency" in the Church's magisterium was her neglect of *ressourcement* theology.

This desire for a "return to the sources" (*ressourcement*) was a universally held position by advocates of the *Nouvelle Théologie*. It



Henri de Lubac, S.J.

Jean Daniélou, S.J.

Henri Bouillard, S.J.

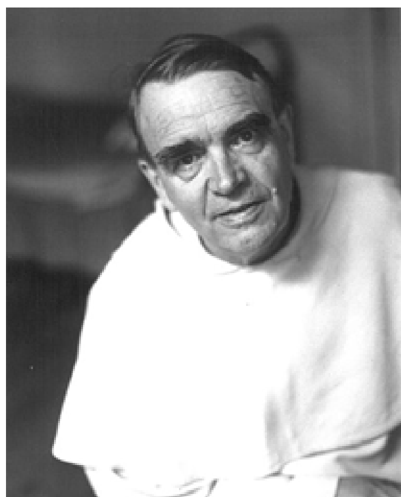
has already been mentioned above how this allowed a means to circumvent the precisions of scholastic theologians. However, equally if not more important to these renovators was emphasizing the notion of history in positive theology. Positive theology is "the part of theology which seeks to establish the truth of the Church's teaching from the evidence of Scripture, tradition, and the analogy of faith, i.e., consistency with the whole body of Catholic doctrine."[11] History has its place in this labor, of course, because the work of salvation was realized in a particular time and place. But for the innovators, the role of history in revelation was considered intrinsically tied to the revelation. So intimately united are the two, that the revelation can only be understood by understanding the time. As the times and cultures evolve, then so naturally will the understanding of the revelation, which–if it is to be current–must evolve with the times. For example, the Jews had a notion of the spirit world, so Christ may well have spoken of "angels" simply to refer to a spiritual influence from above. But if our modern culture is not open to the notion of angels, then certainly there is no reason to say that this is part of revelation; Christ was only speaking according to His time. Contained in such principles were the seeds to undermine the whole body of divine revelation. Champions of the Church's teaching were not long in stepping forward to denounce this re-packaging of liberalism and naturalism.

To Fr. Pietro Parente, one of the most eminent and respected of Italian theologians, belongs the credit of first employing the expression "Nouvelle Théologie" to describe this dangerous movement. He critically assessed the movement and condemned it in an article written for the *L'Osservatore Romano* in 1942. The innovators did not at all care for the title, as Parente clearly linked them to the already-condemned errors of Modernism.

A couple of years earlier, Pius XII's personal theologian Mariano Cordovani had already warned against the "new theological tendencies" at a conference held at the Angelicum, the Dominican Order's house of studies in Rome.

In 1946, Pius XII weighed in on the debate personally in two addresses directed towards the superiors of the two most illustrious orders emmeshed in the debate: one address was given to the superiors of the Jesuits, the other to those of the Dominican order. He urged them to abandon the new and dangerous theological approach and to return to its antidote, namely Thomism.

Deserving of special note, and whose article on the matter is as applicable today as it was when it was written is Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. He was one of the most competent and combative defenders of Catholic orthodoxy of his time. A professor at the Angelicum in Rome, he was also an advisor to the Holy Office. Recognizing the dangerous positions that many theologians were now promoting, the respected Dominican wrote an



Marie Dominique Chenu, O.P.

Yves Congar , O.P.

ANALECTA BIBLICA

A. M. DUBARLE, O. P.

JUDITH

FORMES ET SENS DES DIVERSES TRADITIONS

Tome 1: Études

A work by André Dubarle , O.P.

article which would later be published under the title, "Where is the New Theology leading us?" It should not be surprising that the publisher of the *Revue Thomiste*, an influential Dominican journal founded in France, was a fellow Dominican; however, what was disappointing (if not altogether unexpected from a liberal) is that although he showed every sign of "respect" to his liberal contemporaries, he simply refused to publish Garrigou-Lagrange's article, the reason apparently being that too strong a blow from the representatives of the Magisterium would stifle "dialogue." Fr. Garrigou Lagrange simply had the article published in the Angelicum's own journal in 1946. The article came as a hammer blow upon the liberals. It expertly tackled the false principles and arguments of the new theologians.

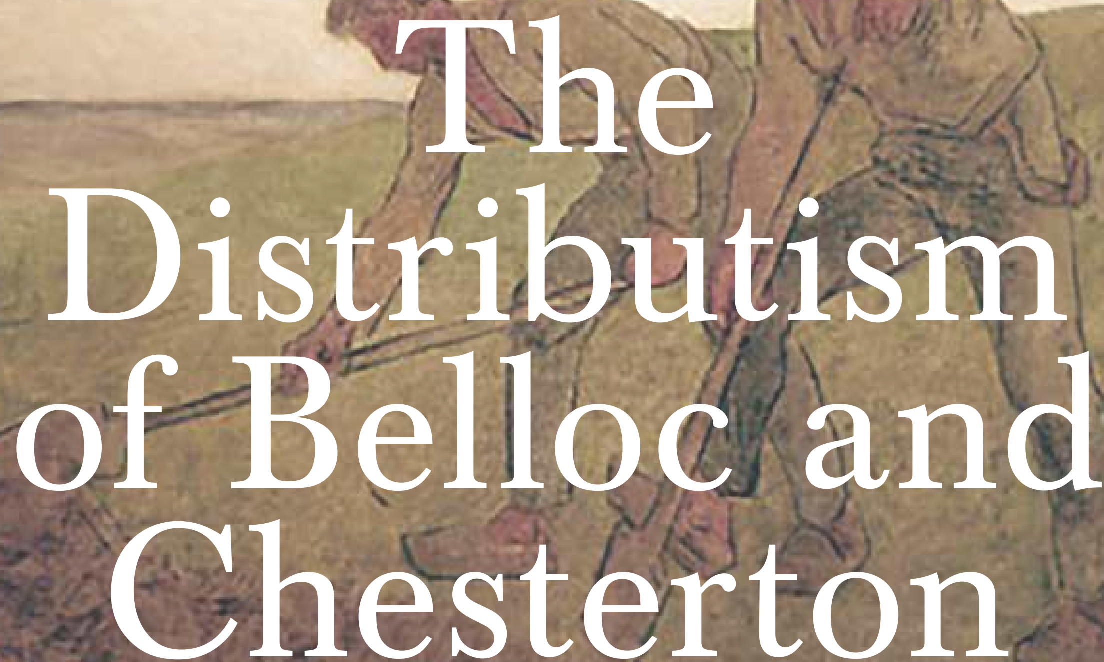
Consider his response to the misleading attack against by Fr. Bouillard against Thomism. Fr. Bouillard had written that the Council of Trent had not intended to "canonize an Aristotelian idea, nor even a theological idea conceived under the influence of Aristotle. It simply wished to affirm, against the Protestants, that justification is an interior renewal. Toward this end, it used some shared theological ideas of the times. *But one can substitute others for these, without modifying the sense of its teaching.*" An old philosophical system, a new philosophical system–one might think there is merely a question of terminology. But Bouillard is not talking about paraphrasing and synonyms. He is attacking the very notion of whether there can be any stable, human ideas. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange responds: "But how can one maintain *the sense* of this teaching of the Council of Trent, namely that 'sanctifying grace is the formal cause of salvation'? I do not say, '*if one substitutes a verbal equivalent*'; I say with Father Henri Bouillard 'if one substitutes *another idea*.' If it is another idea, it is no longer that of formal cause: Then it is no longer true to say with the Council: 'Sanctifying grace is the formal cause of salvation.'"

Garrigou-Lagrange likewise points out that if the ideas themselves can be substituted, then the idea of truth can be substituted. Consequently, the very expression that "This thing is true" could mean different and even contradictory things in different centuries. He dissects in detail how the notions of striving, history, and progress had warped Catholic teaching based on the principle that "a doctrine which is no longer current, is no longer true," giving special consideration to how the new theologians had twisted the doctrines of Original Sin and Transubstantiation.

On August 12, 1950, Pius XII published the encyclical *Humani Generis.* In it, he critiqued and condemned the novel teachings yet again with the full weight of papal authority. Unhappily, the tares had already been sown far and wide, and they would come to choke and smother centuries of the Church's Magisterium at the Second Vatican Council. Yet the *Nouvelle Théologie* is already dated. Its aging adherents forever talk about life and vitality while all their work is marked by death and decay. There is only One who can "make all things new," and His theology is eternal.

Endnotes

1. Cf. Mettepenningen, Jurgen: *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (2010), p. 18.
2. Dominique Bourmaud, *100 Years of Modernism*, p. 190.
3. Weigel, p. 221.
4. Weigel, p. 215.
5. Weigel, p. 224.
6. https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy-biographies/maurice-blondel.
7. *Where is the New Theology leading us?*, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange.
8. Weigel, p. 222.
9. Quoted in Murphy, *Thomas & the Nouvelle Théologie*, p. 9.
10. Murphy, p. 15.
11. "Positive Theology," from Fr. John Hardon's *Modern Catholic Dictionary,* excerpted at catholicculture.org.



The Distributism of Belloc and Chesterton

Michael Warren Davis

"The atmospheric ugliness that surrounds our scientific war," said G. K. Chesterton, "is an emanation from that evil panic which is at the heart of it." And that panic induced by a fear of the past. Governments were designing bigger, deadlier guns because it was the guns that did the killing.

It takes a brave man to carry a gun into battle, of course. But the generals knew full well that it wasn't the caliber of men that won wars: it was the size of the guns. So came the automated slaughter, the mustard gas, the napalm, the atom bomb.

What drove Chesterton mad was the fact that we call this "progress." Today, a drone may blow up a school in Syria if NATO thinks there are terrorists hiding inside. The drone is operated by a soldier in an aircraft carrier hundreds of miles away. One push of a button, and the deed is done. The dead children are just black specks on a screen.

All the while, we take pride in how far we've come from the crusaders, who marched from France to Jerusalem to defend the Holy Land from Muslim invaders. Most would die along the way. Those who made it to their destination fought hand-to-hand with sword and lance in the hot sun. They didn't have pensions or benefits. They didn't have their student loans forgiven; most couldn't even read. There was no life insurance, though most of them would never see home again. They fought because *Deus vult.* God wills it.

"The brain breaks down under the unbearable virtue of mankind," said Chesterton:

> There have been so many flaming faiths that we cannot hold; so many harsh heroisms that we cannot imitate; so many great efforts of monumental building or of military glory which seem to us at once sublime and pathetic. The future is a refuge from the fierce competition of our forefathers. The older generation, not the younger, is knocking at our door.

Hilaire Belloc portrait, 1910.

Chesterton was writing in 1910, four years before the advent of World War I. As with Isaiah, Chesterton's beautiful rant turned out to be a prophecy.

But often enough a prophecy is just a pattern. It's a matter of cause and effect. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God," Isaiah warned the Israelites, "and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." In other words, your actions have consequences. You reap what you sow.

What was true for ancient Israel would also be true for Victorian England. Because the West had given itself over to the Industrial Revolution, of course its warfare must be industrial warfare.

Put it this way. Back home, all the workers—the farmers, craftsmen, and laborers—had been replaced with laborers. Men no longer *made things.* Machines made things, and men were only there to assist the machines. So, too, in battle. They weren't warriors, like the old crusaders, but soldiers. Now the guns did the killing; the soldiers were only there to be killed.

Those who know Chesterton's work will know that all of these insights are part of his philosophy, known as *distributism.*

As you might have guessed, distributism is anti-industrialism. Things that can be done by men shouldn't be outsourced to machines. To be clear, though, it isn't anti-industry. Men need machines to build planes, for instance, so the distributist doesn't mind if planes are made in factories (unless, like me, he's afraid of flying).

War is another example. Imagine if World War I had been fought with swords and lances. We may as well try to imagine if it had been fought with bendy straws. Machines can kill 68 million people in four years. Men can't.

Politics is yet another. The Enlightenment brought with it brand new theories on how to build more rational governments based on scientific principles. The result was the most powerful machine ever created: the administrative state. This new state controls everything, from taxes and trade to healthcare and even education. As the Prince of Paradox observed, "The State did not own men so entirely, even when it could send them to the stake, as it sometimes does now where it can send them to elementary school."

Distributists generally admire the medieval model of statecraft: governments so small and weak as to be virtually non-existent. Chesterton liked to say that the tyrant of the Middle Ages "hanged and burned in quite a small way."

Yet distributists recognize that a mechanized government is impossible without a mechanized economy. In his book *The Servile State*, Hilaire Belloc—another leading distributist—records how Henry VIII stole lands from the Catholic Church: about thirty percent of Medieval England. He then gave most of that land to his unscrupulous courtiers, the "New Men."

In time, the New Men's heirs would use their fortunes to build factories, thus kicking off the Industrial Revolution. Ordinary, middle-class workers couldn't compete with the speed and efficiency of the machines. Their work was superior in terms of quality and durability, but the machines were quicker and cheaper. So, those middle-class workers—men who owned their own businesses, trading on their skill and experience—were herded into factories to work the boss's machines for a small cut of the boss's profits.

Clearly, this system was bad for the workers. But it also turned out to be bad for consumers, who were increasingly forced to buy goods made in factories by "wage-slaves" rather than

goods handmade by independent craftsmen. The only people who benefitted from the Industrial Revolution were the heirs of the New Men.

This system—what we call capitalism—has a deleterious effect on a society's morals as well. According to Chesterton, "what destroyed the Family in the modern world was Capitalism":

> It is Capitalism that has forced a moral feud and a commercial competition between the sexes; that has destroyed the influence of the parent in favour of the influence of the employer; that has driven men from their homes to look for jobs; that has forced them to live near their factories or their firms instead of near their families; and, above all, that has encouraged, for commercial reasons, a parade of publicity and garish novelty, which is in its nature the death of all that was called dignity and modesty by our mothers and fathers.

According to Belloc, there were only two ways out:

> The first solution may be called the attempted establishment of the Distributive State. The second may be called the attempted establishment of the Collectivist State.

Hence the name "distributism," though Belloc uses different names:

> Those who favour the first course are the Conservatives or Traditionalists. They are men who respect and would, if possible, preserve the old forms of Christian European life. They know that property was thus distributed throughout the State during the happiest periods of our past history; they also know that where it is properly distributed to-day, you have greater social sanity and ease than elsewhere. In general, those who would re-establish, if possible, the Distributive State in the place of, and as a remedy for, the vices and unrest of Capitalism, are men concerned with known realities, and having for their ideal a condition of society which experience has tested and proved both stable and good. They are then, of the two schools of reformers, the more *practical* in the sense that they deal more than do the Collectivists (called also Socialists) with things which either are or have been in actual existence. But they are less practical in another sense (as we shall see in a moment) from the fact that the stage of the disease with which they are dealing does not readily lend itself to such a reaction as they propose.

G. K. Chesterton at work.

The question, then, is how do we bring about a "distributive state"? Well, first it should be clear what we *don't* do. Contrary to what our critics claim, distributists don't want to seize all private property and dole it out equally.

Chesterton was very clear on this point: "We have formulated questions to be addressed to Parliamentary candidates," he wrote. "We think that something can be done through Parliament to make small ownership easier to gain and to hold. But we are not a Party, and our main effort must be always outside Parliament." Rather, "The one thing needful is to preach steadily and work steadily for small ownership and the localization of production and consumption, while refusing to consider the irrelevant problem of the big town."

The distributist program is simply that. You, as a free citizen, make choices that lead to a fairer, freer society.

Step one is to get out of the city. Fr. Vincent McNabb, the third Founding Father of distributism, dreamed of an England "shaking the town-dust of neopaganism from its feet." When asked by a young man for practical advice, he published an open letter called "Fifteen Things a Distributist May Do." You can read the list in

the collection online, and you should. My favorite is number four:

> Buy some hand-woven cloth. Wear it. Buy some more. Wear that too. Remember the noble advice on how to eat cucumber, cut it into two parts (equal or unequal). Eat one part. Then eat the other. Your home-spun will instruct you better than the Declaration of Independence will instruct you on the dignity and rights of man.

Buy some land and start a garden. Grow as much of your own food as you can. Forego a vacation so you can spend a little extra money buying the rest of your meat, dairy, and produce from a local farmer.

If you can't buy your furniture from a craftsman—very few of us can—get some used from a consignment shop. Find something sturdy and reasonably attractive. Just don't, whatever you do, give your money to a corporation like Amazon or Ikea. Even if we can't give our business to the good guys, we don't have to give it to the bad guys. As Fr. McNabb wrote,

> Quit Babylon for love of the Babylonians. And do not seek ease or security you can obtain by using Babylon. What will it avail you to cease living in Babylon if you do not also cease living on Babylon?

And, if you can, band together with other families who share your values. The point isn't to have faithful Catholics holed up in little compounds all over the country. No: men are made for community. And community is yet another good that industrialism has robbed from us.

It's simple, really. Every Christian is called to imitate Christ; every family is called to imitate the Holy Family; so, too, every society is called to imitate Nazareth. Again, to quote Fr. McNabb,

> Nazareth was always a highland hamlet, whose every stone was hallowed by thirty years of God's redemptive love. Gradually our eyes began to see this highland hamlet as one of the necessities. . . of the enterprise of redemption. For Nazareth was the Unit of human society. It was a family of families gathered together in aid and defense of life.

I've never seen this ideal lived more fully than in St. Marys, Kansas—a place known and loved by every soul reading this magazine. If anyone tries to tell you that distributism is a kind of communism, look to St. Marys. *That's* what we strive for: a "family of families" working together to build a more just and fair society according to the perennial teachings of the Catholic Church.

That's a very rough definition of distributism, and this has been a rough outline of the distributist philosophy. I hope it will at least whet the reader's appetite. If he'd like to learn more, I recommend these three books: *The Outline of Sanity* by G. K. Chesterton, *The Servile State* by Hilaire Belloc, and *The Church and the Land* by Fr. Vincent McNabb.

Then again, as Fr. McNabb himself said, "The Bible, and especially the Gospels, are the world's best handbook of economics." Start there, and see if you don't hear the call of Nazareth.

Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P. from a painting by Kenneth Green.

The World of Integral Humanism

Pauper Peregrinus

When the nucleus of an atom is broken up, great energy is released, for good or ill. This is not a bad analogy for Europe after the Great War. Until August 1914, a social and political order prevailed, which for all its grave spiritual defects gave to the old continent a certain stability. What St. Pius X called "the suicide of Europe" broke up this order of things; and after the armistice of 1918, the revolutionary energy that had been released was free to do its work. Enthusiasts, both simple-minded and sinister, sought to harness this energy, and to direct it, each to his chosen end.

Pope Leo XIII, reigning from 1878 to 1903, had set forth the blueprint for the evangelization of the world and the rebuilding of Christendom in a series of lucid and lapidary encyclicals. But evangelization and rebuilding are hard work, and the results were mixed. In the United States and Britain, the Church grew. In other places such as France, Catholics were still giving ground, despite the many monuments of holiness and learning that the reigns of Leo XIII and St. Pius X had witnessed. No wonder that some ardent Catholics, finding themselves after the Treaty of Versailles in a new and uncertain world, and fearing that the de-Christianization of their native lands would continue apace, looked with interest or envy at the revolutionary energy that surrounded them, and wondered if they could press it into Christ's service.

One of the principal names here is that of Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Maritain was the grandson, on his mother's side, of Jules Favre, who had been one of the founders of the anti-Catholic "Third French Republic" in 1870. While at university in Paris, Maritain underwent a powerful conversion and was baptized into the Catholic Church in 1906. A philosopher by vocation, he put his considerable gifts of intellect and rhetoric at the service of the 'Thomistic revival' launched by Leo XIII a generation before, and collaborated with, among

others, the Dominican theologian Fr. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange. By the 1920's, his brilliant expositions of St Thomas and his readiness to bring the perennial philosophy to bear on all the subjects of the day, from Einstein's Theory of Relativity to Picasso's Cubism, had already won him great prestige among French Catholics. Yet he wished to do more to bring his fellow countrymen, especially the workers, back to Christ.

For a while, Maritain had co-operated with Charles Maurras (1868-1952), the principal organizer of *Action Française*, a movement that combined intense French nationalism with a desire to undo the atomizing effects of the French revolution. In 1926, Pope Pius XI condemned Maurras and *Action Française* on the grounds that it subordinated Christianity to the goal of national greatness. This Pope, who admired Maritain's work, asked the philosopher to write a work explaining the condemnation to Maurras's many Catholic supporters, who were to be found not least among the French clergy. Maritain obliged with a work called *La Primauté du Spirituel*; translated into English as "The Things that are not Caesar's," the title literally means "the Primacy of the Spiritual." This was chosen as a riposte to Maurras's well-known slogan, *La politique, d'abord!* ("Politics first!").

These events proved a turning-point in Maritain's political thinking. Yet it may be doubted whether he had grasped the true intention of the pope. *Action Française* was a 'reactionary' political movement that promoted monarchism, but which, in Pius's judgment, made religious truth an optional extra. By the time the dust had settled from the papal condemnation, Maritain was endorsing a 'progressive' political movement that promoted democracy, but that also made religious truth an optional extra. Yet it was precisely treating religious truth as optional in politics that was the problem!

The Church had long enshrined her political doctrine in practice. The emperor Constantine first legalized and then favored the religion of Christ, making Sunday a time of rest and building magnificent basilicas. The emperor Theodosius I, who reigned from 379 to 395, united citizenship and faith more closely, decreeing that those who reneged on the Catholic faith would be subject to the discipline of the laws, and forbidding Arian heretics to reside in Constantinople. In words that his successors would often repeat, Pope St. Leo the Great (440-461) told the emperor of his day that royal power had been granted to him not only for governing the world but even more, for the protection of the Church. Doctors of the Church from St. Peter Damian and St. Bernard onwards would later see this salutary union of the spiritual and temporal powers as foreshadowed by our Lord's mysterious instruction to the apostles to take "two swords" with them when they went out into the night (Lk. 22:34-38).

Jacques Maritain, ca. 1930.

The seal was set on Christendom when Charlemagne was crowned as the first holy Roman emperor by the pope, on Christmas Day 800. Although neither Charlemagne nor his successors governed all Christian people, the emperors enjoyed a primacy of honor over other Catholic kings, and the continued existence of the Holy Roman Empire served to make vivid the ideal of Christendom, as the realm where earthly matters are duly subordinated to heavenly ones, and rulers recognize the service of Christ and the defense of His faith as their greatest glory.

The German philosopher Hegel once wrote that "the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the coming of the dusk." Minerva was the pagan Roman goddess of wisdom, and so he meant that wisdom to understand the principles at work in a given age only arises when that age is drawing to its close. However that may be,

it is certain that the popes began to expound the ideal of Christendom most clearly and thoroughly only when Christendom had been struck by the cataclysm of the French Revolution in 1789. Although this was not the first secularizing revolution in Europe—Portugal, for example, had already known the anti-clerical government of the Marquis de Pombal—it proved to be the most doctrinaire, dramatic and communicative of them, and it has rightly been seen as a watershed ever since.

The popes of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with Leo XIII standing above them all for clarity and thoroughness, articulated the doctrine of Christendom from many angles: the rights of God the Creator over the human societies of which He is the cause; the rights of Christ the Redeemer over these same societies, which cannot be healthy except by His grace; the need of men to be taught by divine light and the hierarchy of the Church to live well on earth; the need of men to be protected even by material force from the wiles of the devil and his human agents, witting and unwitting. At times, as in Pius IX's assertion in *Quanta cura* that Scripture and the Fathers require the civil power to favor the Catholic religion beyond all others, even individual teachings during this period rank as infallible judgments of the Roman see. And when we consider this body of doctrine as a whole, and how it was unanimously accepted by the episcopate, we can say that the desirability of Christendom ranks as a teaching of the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church and hence as something that must be held by all Catholics.

Maritain did not want to disavow the Church's past. He believed that Christendom had been good in its time. But he supposed that the time had come for a new organization of society, in which the Church would seek no special aid or protection from the civil power, and where countries would no longer declare themselves Catholic or even Christian, but would give equal respect to all religions, or at least to all monotheistic ones. For him, this was not a betrayal of the gospel; he thought that it was a way to advance it. Non-Catholics, he supposed, would be more easily freed from their prejudices against the Church when they saw her renouncing all claims to temporal power. By relying on spiritual means alone, her true visage would appear more radiantly. She would become the inspiration, even if unacknowledged, of a more fraternal human society, and this new society, since it would be animated by the grace of Christ—which Maritain supposed was to be very often found in the hearts of non-believers, even pagans, atheists and communists, without their knowing it—could be called a 'new Christendom.' Only it would be, he said, a 'lay' or 'secular' Christendom, unlike the 'sacral Christendom' of medieval times. He called this vision 'integral humanism,' the title of a hugely influential book that he published in 1936.

The idea of a fraternal human society, respecting the rights of man, and inspired unbeknownst to itself by the grace of Christ, captured the imaginations of many French clerics from the 1930's on. Archbishop Lefebvre once remarked that his time in Africa separated him from the influence of this spirit in the French church. Through them, and also through Pope Paul VI, who in his youth had translated Maritain's book into Italian, integral humanism asserted itself powerfully at the Second Vatican Council and thereafter.

Today, a long lifetime later, it is easy to smile at Maritain's naivety. He did not realize that the moral consensus of his time, itself an inheritance of the Catholic centuries, was destined to pass away within a generation. Still more, his belief that it was possible, even common, to be in a state of grace without knowing and confessing Christ as Saviour, prevented him from grasping the enduring hostility of the world toward the Church. What is stranger is that he apparently overlooked the duty of rulers to offer acceptable, public worship to the God from whom all authority comes.

Maritain still has heirs in high places. Yet they are less traditional than he. We still hear many churchmen speak about fraternity and human rights, but who among them today will aspire to 'Christendom,' even to a secular one? The phrase 'secular Christendom' has quite passed away: a sign, no doubt, of its unreality.

We have, today, what Maritain partly lacked in his time: empirical demonstration of the papal teaching that states must publicly honor Christ or tend to ruin. *He who is not for me, is against me*, our Lord said: and this applies to nations as well as to men. Integral humanism sought to avoid this stern saying in the name of 'the movement of history'; but Christ Himself has told us that His words *will not pass away.*

Gassed by John Singer Sargent.

The Art of War

Prof. David Clayton

Full size mural of the painting *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso made with tiles. Location: Town of Guernica, Spain.

Who does a better job as a war artist: John Singer Sargent, or Picasso?- First, consider this painting commissioned by the British Government's British War Memorials Committee and completed in 1919. It is called *Gassed* and shows troops being led away from the field of war who have been blinded by mustard gas. It is a large painting, about eight feet by twenty feet, and is in the Imperial War Museum in London.

Now, consider this painting, *Guernica*, commissioned by the Republican government of Spain in the 1930s and painted by Pablo Picasso. Its permanent home is in the Prado in Madrid.

I argue that Sargent's portrayal of war is superior to that of Picasso in that Sargent's approach is consistent with that of a Christian understanding of the horrors of war and the way that it directs us toward hope even in light of war. It is also superior artistically, I suggest. Here are my reasons:

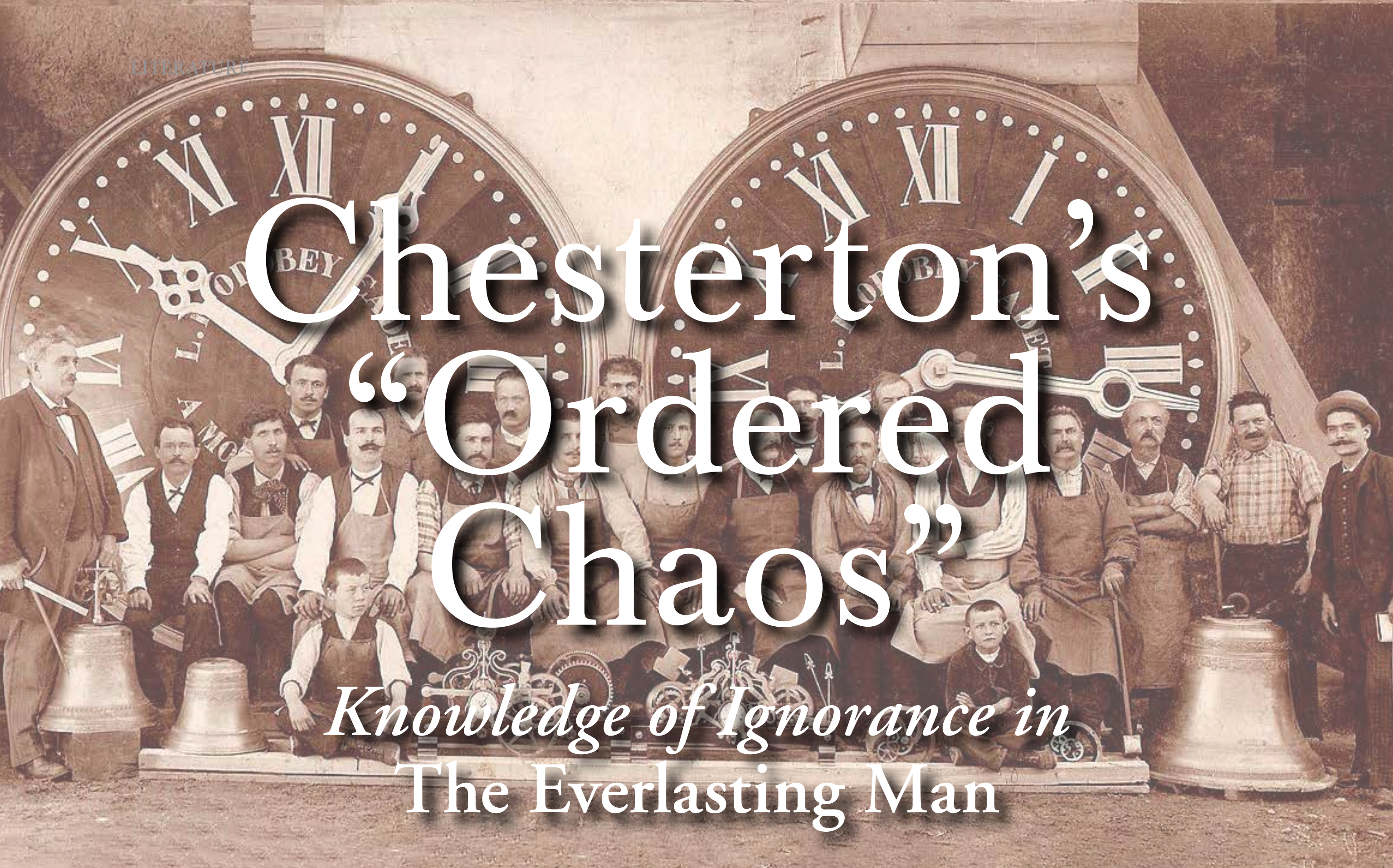
First, Sargent's painting looks as though it is a painting of war. We know what we are looking at with minimal explanation. I suggest that if someone didn't tell you what Picasso's painting was about, you wouldn't know what you were looking at. Clarity–the property by which we can see what we are looking at with minimal prior understanding or knowledge–is an essential quality of Christian art. Without clarity the appreciation of art is only possible to the elite *cognoscenti* who set themselves apart as the modern-day Gnostics who understand and appreciate what is beyond he masses.

Second, Picasso can't draw; Sargent can. Sargent is a superior artist because the level of his drawing and painting skill is orders of magnitude higher than Picasso's. This is the obvious fact that only those who have never been to university dare state, for they haven't had their common sense 'educated' out of them–in this sense, literally drawn out of them so that it is lost. Some, I am aware, will point to the early art of Picasso to claim that he was a brilliant draughtsman who chose to paint this way deliberately in order to make a philosophical point. The truth is that in comparison with other students who were academically trained at the time, his ability was mediocre. He could not have competed with them for skill if he had wished to. True, he did have a philosophy that was contrary to a Christian worldview and the ugliness and distorted imagery of his art suited this purpose–but this doesn't make his work well drawn. He is certainly a master self-promoter, and that's mostly what you need to make it in 20th and 21st-century mainstream art. If someone on an illustration course at any university produced *Guernica* as a project, they would get an F for bad technique.

Third, Picasso's painting is ugly and dull. Its childish caricatures of screaming faces obviously portray suffering and angst, unsubtly and crudely. Neither design nor accident makes this portrayal appropriate– it makes it a bad painting. Some critics tell us it offers hope as well, but you could have fooled me. If I see anything, it is despair, crudely portrayed, without hope. This demonstrates an artist who doesn't care for his audience and an artist who doesn't have a grasp of truth. For the Christian, no matter how desperate the situation, there is always hope that transcends suffering.

Fourth and finally, Sargent portrays the horrors of war clearly, but that horror is still infused with hope and compassion. Picasso's painting, to the degree that it communicates anything, communicates despair, and this is anti-Christian. In *Gassed*, we see compassion and hope in the human interactions: the blinded are being led by those who have sight. The light of the sun pierces the gaseous air and is painted so that it seems to be their destination.

Sargent modeled his painting style consciously on that of the 17th-century Baroque Master, Diego Velazquez. The Baroque style is one developed specifically to communicate hope in suffering and is an authentically Christian tradition. In traditional Baroque art, the bright light is typically contrasted with deep shadow as a visual language that is intended to communicate the fact that there is evil and suffering in this fallen world, but that through Christ, who is the Light, there is hope and consolation that transcends the suffering. In this painting, Sargent is more subtle; the contrast between light and dark is veiled and not so great as in a 17th-century painting. However, his use of the sun as a focal point, albeit veiled by the thick gaseous clouds, indicates to me the Light. Furthermore, the gestures of the figures communicate compassion. This use of gestures to communicate loving interaction is also intrinsic to the Baroque style of art. The Baroque style, as used by Sargent, is uniquely suited to portray therefore the suffering of war without compromising on revealing the truth of the degree of that suffering, but ensuring that Christian hope is portrayed at the same time. Sargent was not a Christian, but his mastery of this Christian style meant that hope was there; as such he has, in my opinion, created a Christian painting.



Chesterton's "Ordered Chaos"

Knowledge of Ignorance in The Everlasting Man

Jonathan Wanner

> *"The function of the imagination is not to make strange things settled, so much as to make settled things strange." –G.K. Chesterton*

I have long read Chesterton's apologetic works with a sort of agitated veneration. As an icon of the Catholic Literary Revival (1845-1961), he is hailed as the "prince of paradox":[1] even his arch-nemesis (or as he puts it, "friendly enemy") George Bernard Shaw confessed that "He was a man of colossal genius."[2] Yet, the little English professor inside my skull complains he breaks all the Writing 101 rules: he is neither clear nor concise, but rambles prettily and swerves wherever his fancy pleases—sometimes off the road entirely. Often, he speaks in absolutes, granting him a commanding and decisive tone; at the same time, his ironic style—the constant parade of paradoxes, reversals, and chiasms—blurs the boundaries between words. In short, Chesterton is master of being definitive and ambiguous *at the same time*. The preface of *The Everlasting Man* is a prime example. It begins,

"There are two ways of getting home …"[3] So far so good. Sounds plain and resolute. That is, until the punchline: "… and one of them is to stay there."

And now your brain is a bowl of mashed potatoes. In the face of such a blatant contradiction, who wouldn't toss their sanity into the Kitchen Aid? Next comes the gravy:

"The other is to walk round the whole world till we come back to the same place."

The sentence *sounds* sensible. Yet, it doesn't explain how "staying home" is a way of "getting home." Was the opener a red herring? A faux punchline to hook the audience? It isn't until five cocktail parties later that you realize "getting home" is a poetic way of saying "understanding home."

As you can see, Chesterton draws a fine line between confusion and wonder. One might describe his style as an "ordered chaos." Of

course, the most endearing part of reading Chesterton is that he makes your brain do a handstand. He has a way of turning the pockets of every phrase inside out, and if you read him long enough, you begin to realize that you disliked Chesterton because there was too much to like about him. For this reason, every Chesterton critic is a fanatic in disguise.

To be honest, there are two reasons why every literate soul should read Chesterton: 1) 50% of the time, you have no idea what he's talking about, and 2) if you're an educated Catholic, he almost always concludes with an idea you already know. To put it more plainly, he's the kind of writer whose greatest vices are actually virtues. You see, ignorance–and even confusion–becomes a virtue when it inspires a reader to move from error to knowledge. All too often we think we know when, in fact, we don't know that we don't know. It is the difference between ignorance and error, and as every sage realizes, it is much better to know you don't know than to think you know when you don't. A lapsed Catholic with the firm convictions of an atheist is always worse off than a child who has never heard the name of Christ. Even for a rational giant–an Aquinas–steeped in philosophy and Revelation, ignorance outpaces knowledge. There is a reason the "Angelic Doctor" famously declared, "All that I have written seems like straw"; he knew that man's nature allots him more ignorance than understanding. As much as we pretend to have "gaps of knowledge," as if the human mind is a continent with a few craters in it, the reality is our little islands of knowledge dot a vaster ocean of ignorance. Or, if you prefer, our knowledge is not simply gapped like Swiss cheese: if we zoom out, we learn that there are more holes *around* the Swiss cheese than there are inside it. This is not to say that ignorance is bliss. Not knowing *should* agitate us: it nags us to seek knowledge.

Conveniently, there is a word that compacts this idea into a few microcosmic syllables: wonder. Wonder, in its classical sense, is "the passion that arises from consciousness of ignorance."[4] Emerging from an encounter with the extraordinary, the strange, the baffling, it seizes the soul and disturbs it with the realization of "I do not know." As Josef Pieper says, "Wonder acts upon a man like a shock, he is 'moved' and 'shakend' and in the dislocation that succeeds all that he had taken for granted as being natural or self-evident loses its compact solidity and obviousness; he is literally dislocated and no longer knows where he is."[5] It is Gollum's agitation of not knowing the answer to Bilbo's riddle; it is the anxiety of not understanding the seemingly meaningful and yet elusive symbols of Eliot's "Wasteland"; it is the perplexity of reading that time-old paradox "love is a pleasing pain" for the first time. What makes this disturbance unexpected is the fact that it is rooted in the ordinary: whatever is in Bilbo's pocket, it is surely something simple and common to a traveler; whatever Eliot's poem signifies, it is about fire, a sailor, London; whatever the paradox means, pleasure and pain are part of everyone's daily toil. This is where the wisdom of life lies veiled: in common places. In the words of Pieper, "the deeper aspects of reality are apprehended in the ordinary … it is in the things we come across in the experience of everyday life that the unusual emerges, and we no longer take them for granted."[6]

To the average Joe and Jane of today, however, this two-syllable word is, if anything, cheap in meaning: in a time when dish soap, Wonderbread, Taylor Swift, and the latest iPhone are "wonderful," literary critics tend to dismiss wonder as mere sentiment. Yet, its significance cannot be overstated. As the beginning of wisdom, it yokes poetry to philosophy; as the cattle prod of the intuition, it awakens the heart to the joyful disturbance of the passions. It extends beyond mere sentimentality and awakens readers to the awful and sublime mystery of the *real.* I say awful because when we arrive at any point where knowledge is inaccessible–for who can comprehend God's allness or evil's nothingness?–then we must have enough courage to allow reality's unknowability to terrify us. Experiencing our ignorance's enormity, in an odd way, gives us an experience of truth's immensity: truth, after all, is infinitely vaster than our infinite souls. The wiser man knows that the more you know, the more you know what you don't know. This is, in fact, Chesterton's enchantment–he teaches knowledge by forcing the reader into a state of ignorance. By the riddling language of irony, he turns confusion into an art and fashions stale ideas in strange, new garments.

Which brings us to his tour de force: "The Everlasting Man." If I had to choose, I'd say my favorite chapter is the one that isn't one: the

preface. It is about a book he never wrote–one that tells of a farm boy who galivants far from home in search of a giant's grave only to find, upon his return, that it was under his kitchen garden the whole time.[7] The moral: squint hardest at what is right in front of your eyes. If you do, you may just find that strangeness is tucked under the familiar, that the extraordinary is entombed within the ordinary. You might just *wonder.*

Most of all, the book is a bullhorn of wonder for lapsed Christians. More than anyone else, these souls need a full dose of ignorance because their familiarity with Christianity fools them into believing their errors are truths. They are the kind of people who need to know that they don't know that they don't know. The surprising truth is that apostates would be much better off if they knew nothing whatsoever about Christianity. Then, at least, ignorance might be a gateway to wonder:

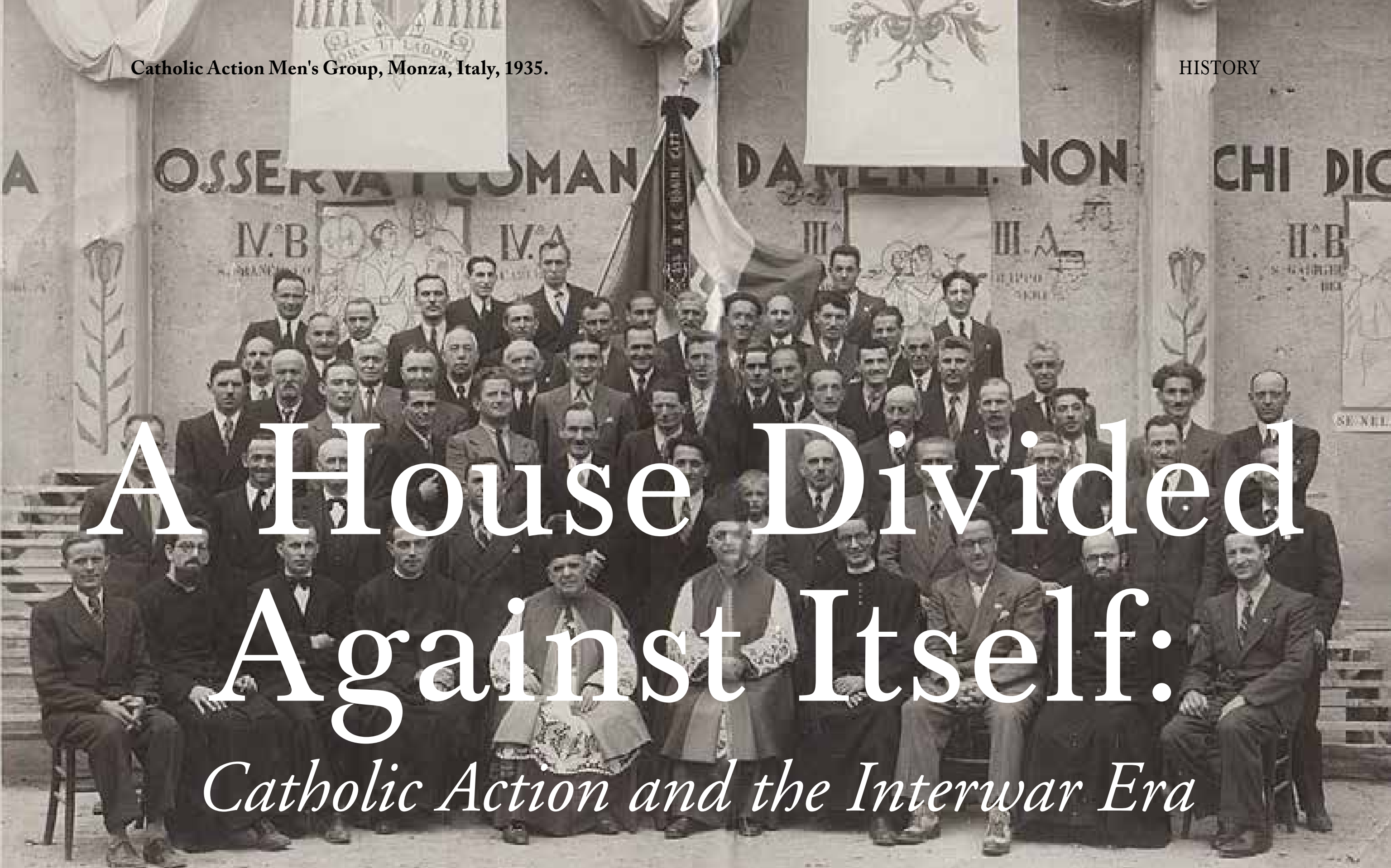
"It would be better to see the whole thing as a remote Asiatic cult; the mitres of its bishops as the towering head dresses of mysterious bonzes; its pastoral staffs as the sticks twisted like serpents carried in some Asiatic procession; to see the prayer book as fantastic as the prayer-wheel and the Cross as crooked as the Swastika."[8]

Oddly enough, the problem with lapsed Christians is that they are so familiar with Christianity that they don't understand what it is. This is why "while the best judge of Christianity is a Christian, the next best judge would be something more like a Confucian."[9]

Of course, even devout Catholics have their errors and routinely need to be jolted into an awareness of their ignorance. If Aquinas' greater writings were straw, how much cheaper are the thoughts of pious Joes? The ones who presume to know the Catechism are rarely the ones who live by it, and even the devil can quote canon law. We must never be too faithful to wonder, just as we must never believe ourselves too wonderful to need faith. Even when you are inside Christendom, you need strange eyes to see how often you live as one outside it.

By now I have sufficiently failed to explain what *The Everlasting Man* is about with the higher hope that you may know what the book is for. Do not thumb its pages expecting to comprehend Chesterton's riddles at the first bat of your eyelashes. Here is a book for unhurried rumination, for leisure. Second, convince yourself that this book–as challenging as it is–is charged with mystery. You will encounter old errors and older truths, but Chesterton labels them with new and peculiar names to remind us that the strangest realities are the familiar ones. Look where you have always been and you might see how scarecrows hang on crosses, how crosiers hang off fiddles, how even God may live in your stomach.

Flannery O'Connor once said, "The truth will make you odd." In Chesterton, this notion comes full circle: He makes the truth odd so that, made familiar with falsehood, we might become as strange as we always were.



Catholic Action Men's Group, Monza, Italy, 1935.

A House Divided Against Itself:

Catholic Action and the Interwar Era

John Rao, D.Phil., Oxon.

Perhaps no word characterizes the interwar era better than "intensity." This intensity was enormously encouraged by the sense in the minds of many contemporaries that the First World War and its revolutionary aftermath had somehow offered an unparalleled opportunity for a general "purification" of Western Civilization, interpreted by social and political activists in a kaleidoscope of ways. Believers at least began the era by joining in this intense battle for purification, possessing as they did a nineteenth and early twentieth century treasure trove of theological, philosophical, and socio-political writings on just how a Christian order should be constructed–the so-called "thesis"–a sense of the life and death importance of putting this thesis into practice, and a network of organizations with an experience of the manifold, practical, historical difficulties of actually working to achieve their goal through "Catholic Action"–what thinkers labeled the "hypothesis."

Attempting a practical Catholic purification of the social order based upon sound doctrine has always been a daunting enterprise, even where such a labor has been undertaken in societies publicly confessing the Faith. When evangelization of a non-or anti-Christian world has been at stake, it has involved the taking of serious risks that might or might not be successful; risks whose mistakes could only be handled through maintenance of a truly self-critical attitude on the part of believers prepared to entertain objections to their hypothetical decisions and correction of them in line with the Catholic thesis. Pius XI's establishment of the Feast of Christ the King in his encyclical letter, *Quas Primas* (December 11, 1925), might be looked upon as the most solemn of calls for continued commitment of the entire Church to the thesis in its broadest strokes, and documents like *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931) a proof of the presence of the thesis in dealing with precise economic and social questions as well.

Vatican and Italian government notables posing at the Lateran Palace before the signing of the treaty, 1929.

Collective wedding organized by the Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (JOC), Quebec, 1939.

Consideration of the "hypothesis" to which the "thesis" had to be applied in the years 1918-1939 involved dealing with a number of forces—philosophically hostile liberals, friendly but primarily politically rather than religious focused monarchists, military men of unpredictable faith, and even some fascists and communists. All of these, either for the sake of maintaining a "Party of Order" against a greater and obvious common menace, or by appealing seductively to one or two emphases of Catholic Social Doctrine, sought to forge an alliance with activist believers. But here, unfortunately, the actual "hypothetical" interwar decisions of popes, local episcopacies, and many lay leaders left contemporary observers, anxious friends and hopeful enemies alike, with serious doubts as to just how efficacious the thesis supporting substantive Catholic Action would ever be permitted to be.

Italy provides the basic key to the Roman outlook and its potential deficiencies. Already before the Great War, St. Pius X had brought its free ranging and basically lay dominated national Catholic Action movement, organized in 1874 in what was called the *Opera dei Congressi*, to heel. Pope Pius XI confirmed his approach through his abandonment of the *Partito Popolare Italiano,* which had appeared on the national political scene in 1919 to fight for control of Parliament with initial Vatican support. In Italy and elsewhere, Rome was worried that political parties could easily nurture the temptation both to call "Catholic" whatever might appeal to the voters at large, as well as to make "being Catholic" seem to demand support for all manner of party programs about which believers could legitimately disagree. The Holy See came to the conclusion that a suitable lay activity that could justly be given the name "Catholic" would have to be more lobby-like in character; a "Catholic Action" composed of a variety of organizations. Each of these would be entrusted with specific tasks—such as the defense of education—whose doctrinally solid goals could clearly be identified for the sake of a proper purification of the precise "spaces" of political and social life that they targeted. This unambiguous, lobby-like Catholic Action, carried out by laymen, would then be kept to the straight and narrow path under a firm and properly doctrinally and spiritually focused parish, diocesan, and Vatican clerical control.

No one should underestimate the difficulties of the issues concerned. The willingness of a number of *Popolari* leaders to value an alliance with the militant Socialists of the time and to demonstrate commitment to liberal Italian political institutions that had not been particularly friendly to Catholics in the past did not seem particularly suitable for attainment of the Catholic thesis. Moreover, it was still not fully clear exactly what Italian Fascism really was all about in the early 1920s, thereby offering some justification for allowing its leadership the benefit of the doubt, especially given its "Party of Order" appeal to a joint front against the obviously anti-Catholic "Red Menace." Nevertheless, trustworthy Italian Traditionalist friends of mine have always been very critical of the Lateran Accords, signed by the Holy See with the Mussolini government in 1929, as a long-term disaster.

Yes, they would admit, these did set up an independent base for the Papacy in Vatican City, proclaim a respect for at least those Catholic moral teachings that fit in with Fascist goals, and promise freedom for the Italian-style Catholic Action movement to function.

And, yes again, they would agree that abuses on the part of the government were met with Vatican reiterations of practical commitment to the theoretical demands of the Catholic thesis, very firmly so once Mussolini started to adopt Nazi-like racial laws in 1938. Still, their chief complaint is that the general spirit that was created and maintained among Italian Catholics was really one of "not rocking the boat." With sacramental life guaranteed, the clergy free to teach the catechism, divorce prohibited, and the Reds in check, the grumbling was to remain just that—impotent lamentation.

In fact, all too many Roman interventions in Catholic affairs elsewhere in the interwar era seem to me to presume that the local hypothesis would continue forever; that the best one could do was to obtain governmental guarantees: either from friendly "Party of Order" forces or from liberal, Enlightenment-minded, constitutional or Concordat-backed "laws" somehow infallibly preventing anyone—hostile dictators and the devil included—from arbitrarily violating them. In other words, they indicate a general papal desire simply to get along with the "powers that be" in a way that would keep clergy and cult alive while consigning the project of "transformation of all things in Christ" to the practical, historical trash can.

Rome had to tread much more lightly in imposing any Italian-like policy in lands where strong lay leaders of obvious Catholic inspiration directed government policies. This can be seen in the Portugal of António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), or in Austria, where a Christian Social Party had long existed, under Engelbert Dollfuss (1892-1934), aided by the editor of the newspaper that the chancellor funded to promote his vision, the great Catholic philosopher, Dietrich von Hildebrand. Both Salazar and Dollfuss sought to construct the kind of holistic, thesis-friendly "corporate" society that many nineteenth century thinkers had described and *Quadragesimo anno* seemed to approve: an anti-totalitarian, anti-materialist "society of many societies" honoring the principle of subsidiarity that would jointly protect the freedom of the human person and social equity. Rome realized that interference in their overwhelmingly lay-dominated ventures could have disastrous consequences—in Austria's case, the victory of the National Socialists, the prevention of which led the Vatican to back away considerably from its Italian anti-Catholic Party position.

The Low Countries were equipped with long-established and successful Catholic Action organizations that continued to exercise an enormous influence in the Interwar Era. In these lands, local episcopacies served as the organ for clerical influence over lay social and political activity, especially to torpedo any new, potentially boat rocking personalities and forces, as happened in Belgium with Léon Degrelle (1906-1994), the Christus Rex Movement, and his Rexist Party.

Belgium was also the home of Fr. Joseph Cardijn (1886-1967), who became convinced of the need to create a "specialized" form of Catholic Action that sought to target and develop a fervor within specific "milieu" giving birth to evangelists ready to bring the light of Christ to others like them in the world at large. His *Jeunesse Ouvrières Chrétienne* (1924), aimed uniquely at young workers, was very influential as a model in the "years between," spreading to France in the following decade, where it paralleled the similarly inspired Scouting Movement, and was looked upon by the bishops as the great hope of the future. But here, too, dangers lurked for the Catholic "thesis," which I will return to at the conclusion of this article.

Germany was the home of the oldest organized Catholic Action movement, ranging from political parties to mass cultural organizations and labor unions. All of these had different emphases that could pull them in contradictory secular directions, with those interested in economic justice ready to work together with leftist Social Democrats and others eager to pursue nationalist goals more inclined to ally with rightist forces. They became so divided by the late 1920s that the Papal Nuncio, Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, urged the more rigidly parish and diocesan-focused Italian Catholic Action model upon them.

In fact, the only way that the Catholic Centre Party itself could retain some unity was by reinforcing its religious base and naming a priest, Msgr. Ludwig Kaas (1881-1952), as its head. The final interwar result was clarified in 1933 when the Centre, many of whose members were influenced by fears of the "Red Menace" and eager for a "Party of Order" response to it, voted full powers for the Hitler Regime and dissolved itself. A much reduced and generally persecut-

ed remnant of German Catholic Action, aided by certain courageous bishops, managed to survive within an Italian-like framework under the new Concordat, signed in July. Pursuit of the "Catholic thesis" in Germany was quite clearly gone with the wind—and here not only or even perhaps chiefly due to the Vatican.

Two other examples of Catholic Action can complete this overview of the interwar era, the first of them in France, whose story was complicated by divisions regarding the form of government and the absence of any serious political party representing believers' interests. Before the First World War a number of French Catholics had been attracted to Marc Sangnier's (1873-1950)'s republican movement, the *Sillon*. It was condemned by St. Pius X in 1910 for falling prey to the error of treating a political system—in this case, the democratic one, which was also proving to be highly anti-Catholic in behavior in France—as though it were itself redemptive, and thereby more important than the Faith for the purification of society.

Charles Maurras' (1868-1952) *Action Française* was fervently in favor of a return to the legitimate monarchy. Although the Holy Office had deemed his movement worthy of censure as well as that of the *Sillon*, Pius X had blocked it, on hypothetical grounds, given that it so strongly defended the French Catholic Church. When Pius XI did proceed to its condemnation, as he did between December 29, 1926 and January 7, 1927, the grounds given were, broadly speaking, similar to those used against the *Sillon* and, more recently, the *Popolari*. He argued that it put support for a political system, the legitimate monarchy, before things spiritual in importance, thereby overturning the hierarchy of values for Catholics, who, in Maurras' case, were compounding their error by following a man who was not even a believer.

Aside from alienating many practicing Catholics, who now saw the only hope for their particular political views to succeed as involving the same kind of reliance on other apparently acceptable Party of Order forces, the condemnation did nothing to prevent the victory of the "politics first" mentality. What it actually accomplished was a resurrection of the "democratic politics first" position of the *Sillon*. Rome reshaped the French episcopacy with anti-*Action Française* bishops more and more open to a democratic secularist vision of society, which, through men like Achille Lienart (1884-1973), appointed Archbishop of Lille in 1928, was to be one of the central radicalizing forces of Second Vatican Council. Pius XII ultimately lifted the condemnation of the *Action Française* in 1939, after the damage had long been done.

Our second example, the vigorous Mexican Catholic Action movement, had no quarrel with the form of government as in France, only with its anti-clerical and anti-religious policies. These became so outrageous by 1926 that they forced Catholics into an outright rebellion, the *Cristiada*, which lasted until 1929 and the sacrifice and even martyrdom of the *Cristeros*, men and women specifically invoking the call of Pius XI to make Christ their King. There is no space here to go into detail regarding the *Arreglos* of 1929, supposedly bringing the persecution to an end. Suffice it to say that the agreement in question turned out to be yet another "save the basics and chuck the rest" decision. Brokered by the Vatican, several Mexican bishops, and an American government worried more about restoring peaceful, profitable business south of the border than anything else, it proved to be incapable even of guaranteeing its main goal, since persecution soon broke out again with even greater intensity in parts of the country. Mexican Catholics ultimately had to rely more on a change of heart on the part of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party after 1940 than on assistance from Rome or the local bishops.

Portugal and Austria tried their best, but as Salazar openly admitted, such little countries could not do much to defend Christendom if the Great Powers were not "converted." The murder of Dollfuss and the abandonment of his successor to a Nazi takeover in 1938 proved this to be true. General Francisco Franco's victory in Spain on the eve of the Second World War seemed promising, and certainly saved clergy and cult from destruction, but the pyramid of Party of Order forces on which his power was based did not allow for any really solid Catholic direction. Portugal at least had the stimulus of Salazar's brilliant writings and the message of Our Lady of Fatima to help the Catholic cause, and Austria the private devotion of Dollfuss, but all three countries were working mostly from the top downwards, and Austria, once again, with a gun aimed at its head.

The interwar era's failure to tie hypothetical

Engelbert Dollfuss, Chancellor of Austria 1932-34, ca. 1930.

Signing of the *Reichskonkordat*, 1933. L-R: Msgr. Ludwig Kaas, von Papen, Pizzardo, Card. Pacelli, Ottaviani, and Buttmann.

policies together with the thesis in a more constructive, long-sighted, evangelical manner—as did the missionaries of the Middle Ages, who were highly conscious of all manner of cultural issues as being central to the success of their labors—set Catholic Action up as a sitting duck for the annihilation that it was to face by the 1960s. Catholic activists still loyal to the movement were left like unguarded sheep, open to seduction by the clever wolves laying traps for them throughout the broad cultural environment in which they daily lived and breathed. All that was needed to blow the entire hypothesis and thesis argument sky high was for these wolves, whether conscious predators or self-deceived, to exploit the failures of the mainline Catholic approach.

Significant intellectual support for this demolition were very much already available in "the years between" in the writings of men such as Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), the founder and editor of the journal *l'Esprit* (1932). Mounier's "Communitarian Personalism" argued that Catholics were losing the battle for control of society because their thesis was corrupted by a doctrinal and philosophical "rationalism." Victory required an expansion and perversion of Cardijn's vision of the importance of cultivating specialized "milieu," going beyond the Belgian's more limited approach to urge "diving into," ceasing to criticize, and bringing to fruition the "energies" unleashed by successful contemporary cultural and political "milieu," Fascist and Marxist in particular. This was because such successful energy indicated the obvious presence of the Holy Spirit, whose guidance would cause the present contradictions of these vibrant movements to converge for the benefit of mankind and the greater glory of God. *In other words thesis and hypothesis would have to merge, since the embrace and acceptance of the strongest existing hypotheses is being urged upon us by the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity as the sole guide to Catholic Action.*

Fascists lost energy, the Second World War, and, therefore, the support of the Holy Spirit. The more energetic Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union, in alliance with the United States, the representative of another "vital milieu"—that of Pluralism—won it, proving that they both had a pneumatic friend in the Godhead. The divine merits of the latter conduit for the voice of the Holy Spirit were underlined by Jacques Maritain (1892-1973), whose work on Integral Humanism of 1936 had pointed the way to his later evangelization of the American message, itself already a cultural giant in the interwar era.

Marxism-Leninism made an appeal to Catholic Action because of a superficial connection with its concern for an economic social justice neglected by individualist American Pluralism. American Pluralism made an appeal to Catholic Action against Marxist-Leninist atheism. Acceptance of the voice of the Holy Spirit found in the message of American Pluralist "liberty" by the Church of the Conciliar Era opened the door to the ravages of every conceivable "milieu" foisting its loud-mouthed, vital, energetic teaching upon the Catholic sheep as channels of irresistible pneumatic prophesy: Marxist, sexually perverse, psychotic, and, yes, once again Fascist and racist as well. The intellectual and cultural time bombs for the sell-out were laid down in the Interwar Era, at least partially through the failures of Catholic Action. And the only way to deal, "hypothetically" with the ruins is to dive into, cease to criticize, and bring to fruition the Catholic Thesis.

"In the meantime, in between time"

Films portraying the state of the world in the interwar era

Bridget Bryan

Note: Each film reviewed has scenes, characters, or language that are objectionable. But nothing in this life is perfect, clean, always acceptable: real life is a mess, and it is into that mess that Christ wanted to come and save us. Some parts definitely need a "skip" or "fast forward," but the author trusts the viewer is adult enough to recognize when one ought to do that.

"Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns
Driven time and again off course, once he plundered
The hallowed heights of Troy. . .
Many pains he suffered, heartsick on the open sea. . .
Launch out on his story, Muse. . .sing for our time too." [1]

Between World War I and World War II there was discouragement, and there was hope. Five films portray this time well. To understand the films more deeply and our connection with them, I'd like to highlight eight monumental impacts the world was experiencing during the setting of the films.

First, the world had just been heavily depleted of its population: 57 million people died in WWI. That would be equivalent to 2,850 average-sized US cities or present-day England being wiped out completely. Another 50 million people would die with the onset of the Spanish flu in 1918. That's nearly a combined two present-day Englands gone, and another war soon to come.

Second, Christendom was dying. The three main Christian empires of Russia, Germany, and the Holy Roman Empire of Austria Hungary had been killed,[2] making way for democracy. . . and communism. There is no large country to stand by the truths of Holy Mother church now, no country to help man to his eternal end.

Third, the natural family unit was being torn apart, and through the woman. No longer protected by civil governments standing consistently for absolute truth, and helped by advertising, the family was besieged by feminism, abortion, birth control, contraception, and eugenics. Very quickly the family, the building block of society, began to crumble.

Fourth, WWI was originally called the "War to End All Wars"; it brought about an inverted peace, an upside-down order: the ultra-nationalism and imperialism that had fueled WWI only enabled godless socialism, democracy, and worse to flourish.

Fifth, Communism was energetically blossoming in Russia, fertilized by barbaric slaughter. Our Lady of Fatima had just appeared, the sun had danced, and Mary implored the world for prayer and penance and the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart lest Russia's errors were spread throughout the world.

Sixth, while continental Europe gasped for breath, completely ravaged by war, America reveled in the money she had made by the war.

Seventh, a world unlike any other was influencing and distracting the sorrowful survivors of the war. The artificial world created by television, journalism, advertising, entertainment, and popular music made the world smaller. Advertising constrained man's thoughts and choices to the trend of the moment.[3]

Eighth, this artificial environment created a world at the "height of its material power and the depth of its spiritual emptiness." Because of all this suffering—war, death, sickness, and the loss of Christendom—a spiritual vacuum was created. Mankind looked for meaning—and for distraction. The interwar era presented a utopia: "the salvation it promises is collective and of this world. But the earthly order is part of the heavenly order. And to reject the heavenly order is to reject reality."[4] To reject reality is what makes an insane person. Ultimately, in a world made safe for democracy by World War I, mankind was being brainwashed into forgetting where he came from. So much for the garden of Eden.

Having considered the background of the era, we can now turn to the five films reviewed here—but make sure you've got only a mature audience. The movies below are not for children.

The Great Gatsby, 1974[5]

Roaring 20's in America, here we come! This film, starring Robert Redford, is based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's book, *The Great Gatsby.* Set during one summer in upper-class New York society in the 1920's, the hope is revealed of a self-made man, Jay Gatsby, who has built his dreams around his war sweetheart Daisy.

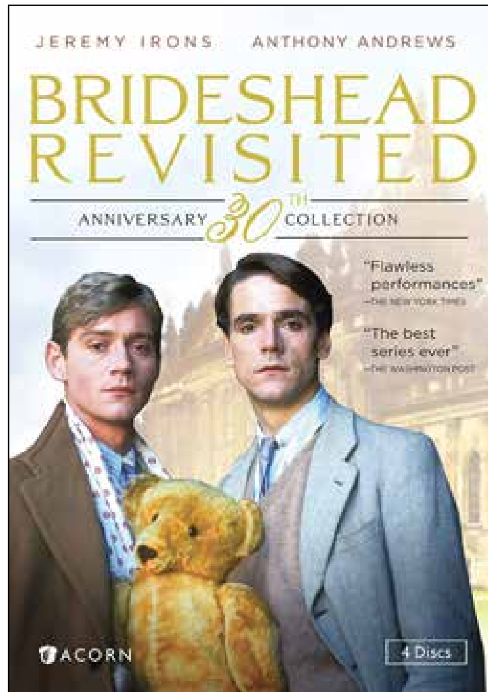
The story is told to us by the eyewitness Nick Carraway, cousin to Daisy and neighbor to Gatsby. Daisy, from an old wealthy southern family, instead of waiting for Gatsby after the war, married Tom Buchanan because "rich girls don't marry poor boys." Regardless of the amount of money Tom has, it is clear from the beginning of the film that Tom is an unfaithful husband, chauvinistic and racist to boot, and Daisy knows it. But Daisy also avoids any difficult conversations that get to the bottom of things. Tom's immoral behavior is portrayed as typical and to be expected of men in their circles. Daisy tells Nick of their child's birth; she cried when it was a girl because all a girl can hope to be these days is a "beautiful fool," she tells her cousin Nick. (The sad objectification of women was well on its way in this era.)

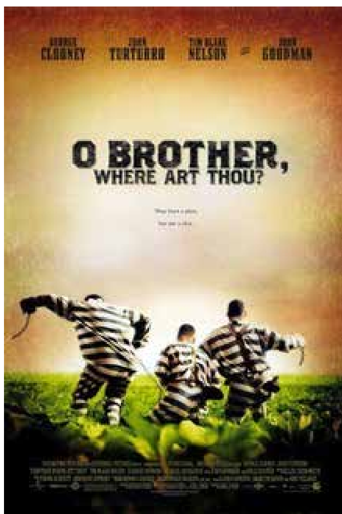
At the same time, Nick is let into Gatsby's life. His unassuming, nonjudgmental comportment and conversation win Gatsby's trust. Through Nick, we're able to see the immense hope Gatsby has in Daisy's love, and how hard he worked to create a fortune that would be accepted by her and her family. Gatsby's end justified the means to achieve his American Dream.

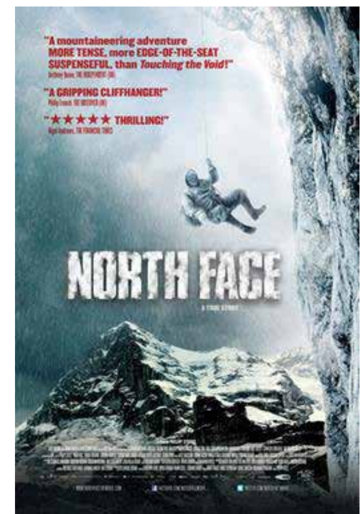
As the story unravels, a sad tapestry is revealed: infidelity, dishonesty, an inability to confront the truth and talk about difficult things, the distractions of parties, drinking, love affairs, and extravagant trips, the veneer of status hiding shallow morals: ultimate consumerism. And no real authority—there's no one to be beholden to, and might makes right.

If there is a God, it's the solemn eyes of T.J. Eckleberg looking down on everyone from an old billboard advertisement for eyeglasses, but even this is up to a subjective interpretation. The only one who really stops to think about God is the desperate destitute husband of Tom's mistress.

It may sound a little depressing, and yet this era is part of our story; this particular story can help us to be more understanding of where we came from. The conversion of souls today







requires much compassion—a compassion perhaps embodied by Nick in his friendship with Gatsby. Nick stuck by Gatsby to witness his journey, stood for him when friendship was most needed, and was willing to see the ugly and the beautiful. Nick's line, "reserving judgment is a matter of infinite hope,"[6] can be so typical of non-judgmental indifferentism, but perhaps there is something of a gem here.

The Untouchables, 1987

Overlapping with Gatsby's era in New York is the Prohibition era. During this time a group of heroes called The Untouchables brought down Al Capone in Chicago. This iconic film depicts the integrity of Eliot Ness and his few good men; it's a classic good guy/bad guy story. This has the elements of an Indiana Jones movie (Sean Connery stars in it, and Kevin Costner wears a fedora), some Godfather aspects with Al Capone, and some tender drama with Eliot Ness's family life.

The Untouchables tells the of an epic struggle to enforce Prohibition laws during the time when our country made it illegal to produce and sell alcohol from 1920 to 1930. It's an insight into how Protestant America, fueled by moralizing institutions, enforced by government mandate a matter that was too intricate and prudential to be mandated away. Rather than asking "why" men might want to drink so much, or presenting a moderate way to consume alcohol, Prohibition laws created a huge and illegal market for the very thing they were trying to restrict. Bootleggers and rum runners became heroes by bringing in the spirits to the towns.

Al Capone, the mafia king of Chicago, was a huge supplier, and Eliot Ness of the Justice

Department, with the help of an incorrupt crew, brought him down in an unlikely way. Where most of the people in *The Great Gatsby* lead lives without principle, the men in *this* story were not perfect, but they stood for what they believed in and were willing to lay down their lives to make the world a better place.

Be prepared for realistic heavy language and violence, redeemed by an incredible true story of how the integrity of a few good men triumph against the odds of a corrupt metropolis and bring down the giant Al Capone.

O Brother Where Art Thou, 2000

Flannery O'Connor, humor, and old-time bluegrass meet the *Odyssey* in this 2001 film. Set in the deep south, *O Brother Where Art Thou* tells the story of Ulysses Everett McGill, played by Gerard Clooney, trying to get home to his family. He has a small crew of men with him (Tim Blake Nelson), and the hope of treasure lures them all on, all the while hounded by a relentless seeker of justice. The crew has many memorable twists and turns before their journey's end is reached.

While Ulysses makes his way home, his wife is being wooed by another, more 'bona fide' suitor. No Odyssey is complete without the Sirens and Cyclops, and instead of being turned into pigs, one of them is turned into a toad.

All the while the viewer is treated to, in a light-hearted way, what life would have been like in the Depression-era South with the justice system, politics, cops and robbers, radio shows, dress, good ol' bluegrass music, and the heavier and sadder realities of white supremacy, the Ku Klux Klan oppressing its Papists, Jews, and African-Americans.

Like George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and like so many of us after a long trip, Ulysses just wants to come home, back to his Penelope and his Warby Gals. His wife doesn't take him back so easily; this shows both her self-respect and that he cares enough about his family to do what it takes to be reunited with them.

The best part of the film, besides the great quotes, is the music. Even if bluegrass isn't your thing, the music, drawn from that era, draws you in and sets the mood perfectly. The trick to enjoying this "picture show" is to not expect anything out of it. The quality of the movie is seen when appreciating it at face value. While this is a humorous spin of the Odyssey, it's simply that, with a nod towards our old-time American culture. Many a person I know has sat down to see a modernized Odyssey and was disappointed. Those who approach the film with no expectations, however, will be immensely entertained.

North Face, 2008

Over in Austria, while Franz Jaggerstatter (*The Hidden Life*) was converting and beginning to wrestle with his religious convictions, and just over in Italy Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, an accomplished mountaineer, had just passed away, Maria had married Captain von Trapp, beginning their Sound of Music, and a particular mountain was calling to be climbed.

This German film captures the ultra-nationalism and socialism that had continued to infect the world more intensely since World War I. The North Face of the Eiger was the scene of the intense competition to be the first country to ascend the last frontier of the Alps.

Two Austrian young amateur climbers, Toni Kurz and Andi Hinterstoisser, leave their soldierly duties to climb the Eiger. Originally Toni is against it because of the serious life threat presented by the climb. But encouraged—almost pushed—by his girlfriend Louise to climb the mountain, the boys accept the challenge.

Toni and Andi arrive in their hiking outfits, poor gear compared to the sponsored Italian and German groups also making an attempt on the mountain. Louise, working for a newspaper, also arrives with her boss to cover the story.

The film, filled with the majestic scenery of the Alps, the ominous cloud of Nazism, and the unmoving mountain with its precarious ice and shifting weather, soon has you on the edge of your seat. Near misses and falls on the mountain keep your hands clenched tight, as nationalistic competition turns men into cutthroats, and hearts hurt as you see the influence of Louise, wishing she wasn't so set on Toni tackling the mountain.

It is in the hardest moments, in spite of the intense nationalistic competition, that true sportsmanship and nobility are live out on the North Face of the Eiger.

Brideshead Revisited, 1981

While Jeeves was singing "Hodee-hodee-hodee-ho. . .sah" to Wooster, Poirot was using his little grey cells in solving a murder, *Downton*

Abbey was being carried along by the issues of the day (and our day), the King was making his Speech, *Chariots of Fire* were running, *Gandhi* was challenging the world to practice what one preaches, and the sacred and profane memories of Charles Ryder were being made in *Brideshead Revisited.*

This film is a masterpiece. It was made originally made for British television, won 17 international awards, and launched the careers of the renowned Jeremy Irons and Anthony Andrews, who appear alongside a whole host of great British stars.

A very messy story, a very real story, and because it is so, *Brideshead* is the best of all the stories told in the films here of this era. It is the best because it embraces the guilty man while giving him redemption. *Brideshead*, in telling the story of a (rare) old aristocratic Catholic family in England growing up in the moral upheaval of the interwar era, tells the story of all families trying to raise children in this upside-down world. It gives hope to the present and future that God will give their children the grace they need to save their souls as they go out into the world.

Charles Ryder becomes good friends with young Sebastian Flyte of the Marchmain family, and thus becomes bound up in his family: Lord and Lady Marchmain, and their other three children, Bridey, Julia, and Cordelia. Lord Marchmain is a father who has deserted his post for his own selfish pleasure. Lady Marchmain is a loving but somewhat overbearing mother. She is strong and persevering in her faith, a perfect sorrowful mother. Charles witnesses the odyssey of each of the Marchmains as they journey through the twists and turns of life, and in his telling of their story, we see his own.

The struggles of each character are very pertinent to our day: college life, friendship, status, homosexuality, alcoholism, divorce, adultery and fornication, perseverance in the Faith, marrying for money, unmarried and plain in the eyes of the world, religious vocation, war, death. In spite of the twists and turns that each of the family and Charles go through, some sinking lower than others, and some a constant lighthouse of God's love, God's grace does not abandon them.

Julia's words to Charles in one incredible scene reveal how *Brideshead* offers a view that resolves the other films' stories and the story of the interwar era:

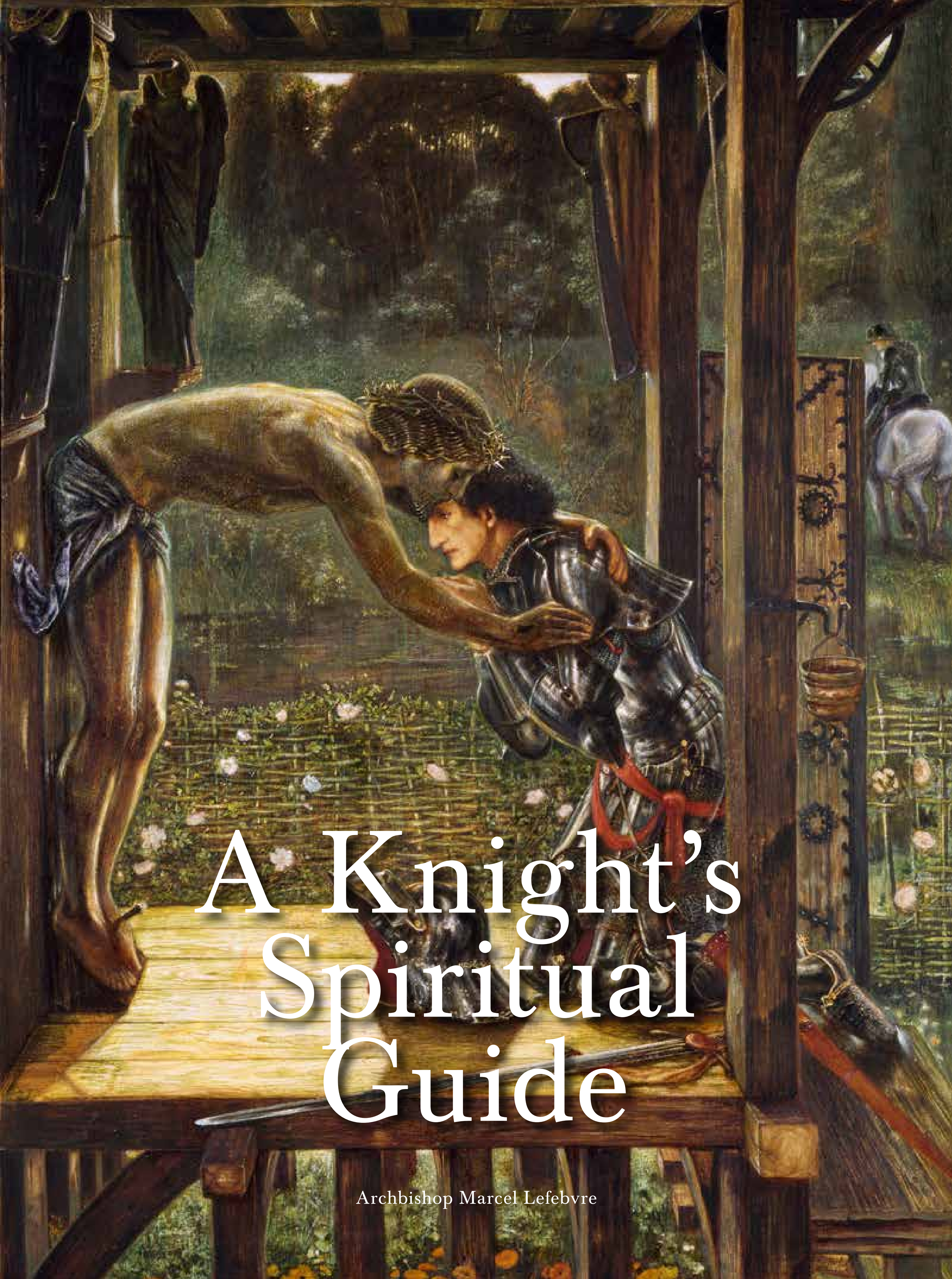
> "Julia, she can't go out, she's got to stay in and take care of her sin . . .–Sin. It's a word from so long ago, from nanny Hawkins stitching by the hearth and the night light burning before the Sacred Heart. Cordelia and me with the catechism, in Mummy's room for luncheon on Sundays. Mummy carrying my sin with her to church, bowed under it. . .slipping out with it. . .Mummy dying with my sin. . .Mummy dying with it; Christ dying with it, nailed hand and foot and high among the crowds and soldiers. . ."

Like Nick, Daisy, Tom, and Gatsby, Al Capone and Eliot Ness, Toni Kutz and his crew, Ulysses, and all the rest, the Marchmains and Charles lived in the interwar era. They lived in the moral upheaval and all the impacts the world was–and still is–suffering, but trying to distract itself. Unlike any of the other films, the true reality is shown: "the earthly order is part of the heavenly order." No matter how far the Marchmains and Charles went with their sins, "the hound of heaven" was at work. The way Charles entered Brideshead was not the same way he left it. God willing, it's the same for us too.

About the Author: Bridget Bryan has been writing and drawing since she was ten years old. With her bachelor's in Catholic General Education from SMC, she taught for 10 years within SSPX schools and traveled the world in the summertime. Bridget currently works as a freelance artist and also for LIVE-ACTION, a pro-life organization. You can follow her work at bridgetbryan.com where she's excited to share this year's project: The Camino de Immaculata: a travel journal capturing both the physical progress of the building and the interior journey of a pilgrim to the New Immaculata.

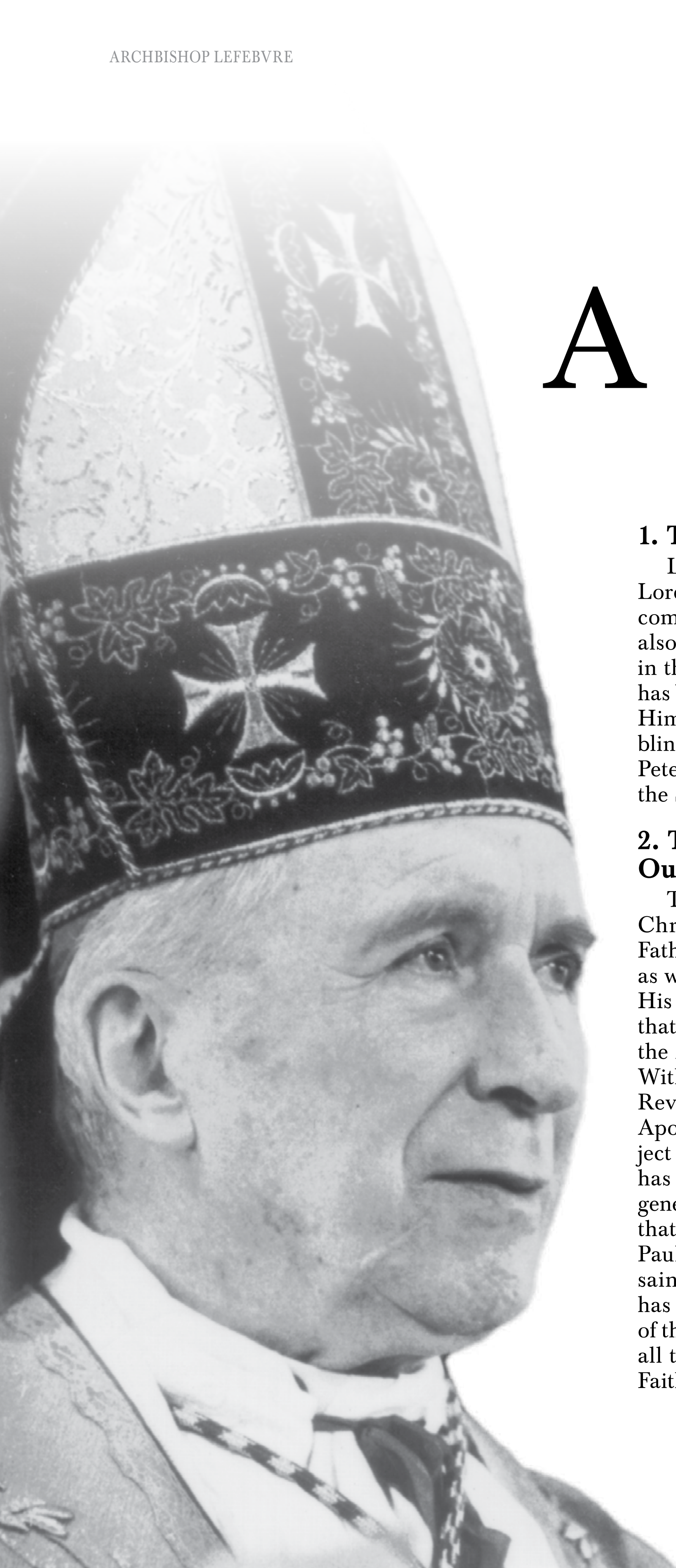
Endnotes

1. The opening lines of Robert Fagle's translation of Homer's *The Odyssey*, the ancient story of a man's return home from years of war.
2. MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years.* London: Penguin Publishing Group, 2010. Print. via Wikipedia.
3. Maclin Horton, "What the Culture War Really Is," *The Lamp*, Issue 07.
4. Caryll Houselander, *Guilt* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1951).
5. The 1974 film is a work of art, very discreet and yet communicating perfectly. There is a 2013 film out, but sadly, it's an assault on the senses and doesn't do the story justice.
6. Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Alma Classics, 2017), p. 3.



A Knight's Spiritual Guide

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre



A Knight'

1. The Knight believes

Like all those who encountered Our Lord and from whom He asked a personal commitment of their faith, the Knight has also encountered Our Lord, most notably in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; he has bowed down before Him; he has adored Him, like Zacchaeus, like the man who was blind from birth, like the paralytic, and, like Peter, he has attested: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

2. The Knight believes in Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Knight believes in Our Lord Jesus Christ, Word of God, Who revealed His Father and His Charity toward sinful men, as well as the Mission that He entrusted to His Son and to the Holy Ghost. He believes that all these truths were handed down by the Apostles, that is to say, by the Church. With the Church, he believes that Public Revelation ended with the death of the last Apostle and that, as a consequence, the subject matter of his Faith is that doctrine which has been passed down from generation to generation by the successors of the Apostles, that is to say, by Tradition. Imitating Saint Paul, all the Fathers of the Church, all the saints, and the whole Church, the Knight has a duty to safeguard this sacred deposit of the Faith. Therefore, he flees novelty and all that might look like an evolution of the Faith. His Creed is immutable.

Fundamental Principles to Which the Knight Commits His Entire Life and Activity

s Spiritual Guide

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

3. The Knight detests infidelity

Consequently, due to the nature of the Faith, the Knight hates infidelity, as well as heresy, schism, and all that interferes with safeguarding the sacred deposit of the Faith. He is ready to do all in his power to prevent heretics from harming the faithful or turning him away from his Faith. He tolerates heretics only insofar as intolerance of them would be a source of greater evils. However, he does not forget that there is nothing more precious than the gift of the Catholic Faith, without which one cannot be saved. It is also in this sense that the Knight believes that he has a God-given mission to protect the poor and the weak from any errors threatening their Catholic Faith. His own lively and militant Faith, the result of ceaseless combat, makes him suspicious of the enemies of that Faith. After the example of Saint Paul, he does not put his trust in conferences, discussions or dialogue, which scandalize the humble and always favor error. In fact, the only type of contact he has with the enemies of the Faith is one imbued with a zeal for their conversion to the Catholic Faith. On this point of doctrine, he adheres faithfully to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church, expressed with luminous clarity by Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Satis Cognitum* (*Pontifical Teachings*, Solemnes. *The Church*, I. no. 53 & sq.).

His zeal for the integrity of the Catholic Faith causes the Knight to be suspicious, and he takes great care to avoid any opinion or current thinking that would attempt a forced alliance of the Catholic Faith with the errors of heretics or freemasons. Liberalism has attempted, and continues its attempt, to show that the ideology of the 18th century philosophers, that of the French Revolution, and that of all subsequent errors, is not incompatible with the Catholic Faith.

In this connection, and resting upon the most solemn and irrefutable Church teachings, such as that of Gregory XVI in his Encyclical *Mirari Vos*, Pius IX in his Encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus*, Leo XIII condemning the "novel conception of law" in his Encyclical *Immortale Dei,* Saint Pius X condemning Sillonism and Modernism, Benedict XV, Pius XI in his Encyclical *Ubi Arcano*, Pius XII in his Encyclical *Humani Generis*, the Knight is ready to fight, using all the means at his disposal, to dispel these errors, which destroy the family and civil society, ruin the Church, and lead to the most atrocious wars.

In order to sustain his Faith and its integrity, he would do well to study Church Tradition and the unremitting battles fought by the Church to protect the Catholic Faith. In order to fortify his Faith in the midst of any trials it might have to undergo these days, he should read the Fathers and Councils of the Church.

4. The Knight is not afraid to openly acknowledge his Catholic Faith

He is deeply attached to what has become, over the course of history, a witness to the Catholic Faith: churches, monasteries, pilgrimages, wayside crosses. He is happy to know about them, to make them known to others, and to safeguard them. Conscious that he would thus be promoting the reign of his King, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Queen of Heaven, the

The Knight knows that Charity is queen of the virtues, but he does not forget that this virtue is very demanding and does not merely consist in some vague sentimentality, but in a more or less sensible affection vis-à-vis God or one's neighbor. "If ye love me," says Our Lord, "keep my commandments." That is why, in order not to be deceived by false Charity, the Knight fully expects to prove his Charity by deeds.

most gracious Virgin Mary, he should encourage pilgrimages, and even bring them into being himself and lead them, if necessary.

Just because Faith is one of the virtues that best characterizes the Knight, it does not mean that he should not develop the virtues of Hope and Charity. Moreover, they are so interconnected, that zealously seeking to practice the virtue of Faith produces an immediate increase in Hope and Charity.

5. Hope is the virtue of both the warrior and the pilgrim

This virtue is also particularly well suited to the Knight in combat, certain of the final victory, but who is not surprised by numerous apparent failures that may occur during his struggle. "*In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum.*"–"O Lord, in Thee have I hoped: let me not be confounded forever."

6. The Knight knows that Charity is the queen of all virtues

The Knight knows that Charity is queen of the virtues, but he does not forget that this virtue is very demanding and does not merely consist in some vague sentimentality, but in a more or less sensible affection vis-à-vis God or one's neighbor. "If ye love me," says Our Lord, "keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). That is why, in order not to be deceived by false Charity, the Knight fully expects to prove his Charity by deeds, that is to say, by practicing the virtue of Justice, which also characterizes Charity, as does Faith.

"*Justus ex fide vivit.*" The just man liveth by Faith. The virtue of Justice has its source in the Faith. Now the virtue of Justice is the practical application of Charity towards God and towards our neighbor.

7. The Knight is just

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill" (Mt. 5:6).

Justice is Order, assigning every person and thing to its true and rightful place, according to God's Will. The Knight hungers and thirsts for Order. He instinctively detests disorder. Now, it was by sin, which is disorder itself, that disorder entered Man, society and the world.

That is why the Knight closely follows the advice of Our Lord and is always ready to fight sin and the occasions of sin, both in himself and in his environment. He rises up in opposition to impiety, which is contempt for God and for His Holy Religion; like Saint Michael, he exclaims: "*Quis ut Deus!*" Who is like unto God! He works to restore authority in society, in the family, in schools, and in social institutions. He is ever ready to fight against the scandals caused by public immorality. However, he never forgets that the most effective weapon of combat is the Holy Cross and the Holy Passion of Our Lord. That is why he is especially devoted to the Cross, which he venerates with respect, and to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Its continuation.

Uniting his life to that of Christ crucified is an honor, a grace, a glory for him. That is why he accepts suffering as a sign of Our Lord's predilection.

After this brief outline of the depth and the importance of the virtue of Justice, we will take a look at the fields of activity in which it is practiced and how the Knight strives to be faithful to it, so as to merit the most beautiful praise of all, and only given to holy souls, like that of Saint Joseph. "*Joseph erat vir justus.*"–"Joseph was a just man." Does Saint Peter not attribute this title to Our Lord Himself, when he says: "*Sanctum et Justum negastis.*"–"But you denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14).

8. The Knight is devout

The Knight is devout, in the ancient and original meaning of the word. He recognizes that the first duty in Justice for every spiritual creature is to adore God, to love Him, and to serve Him faithfully. The godless man lives in the most profound injustice, in the most extreme disorder. Order demands that God, the Creator and Redeemer of the human race, be honored, praised and adored.

That is why the Knight will dedicate the better part of his life to the service of his God and King, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He will honor Him publicly and in the solitary depths of his soul. It will be a great joy for him to act as honor guard for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, thereby making reparation for the outrages and the indifference to which He is subjected. He will take care to set aside moments for prayer, to attend Holy Mass and to receive Holy Communion, daily, if possible. Kneeling to receive Holy Communion, he will recollect this passage of Holy Writ: "*In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, coelestium, terrestrium et infernorum.*"–"That in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10). He will regularly approach the sacrament of Penance, in which he will find the consoling graces needed for his spiritual combat.

He will especially love all the ceremonies and prayers in honor of the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary, toward whom he should have a profound and tender devotion. He will see her as his Sovereign and will strive to extend her Reign everywhere. He will regard the Rosary as a most effective weapon against heretics and against Satan.

He will be mindful to make his home a place characterized by its reverence for God, by decorating the walls with crucifixes and pictures that elevate the soul to God.

The Church, being essentially of a priestly nature, which is to say, made for the continuation of the Sacrifice of Our Lord, the Knight should have the most profound respect for the Supreme Pontiff, for bishops and for priests, because of their priestly character, being the selfsame character as that of The Priest par excellence, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He will refrain from showing this kind of respect to Protestant pastors, even if they call themselves bishops, whereas they possess no priestly character whatsoever.

He will refresh his soul in the company of contemplative religious, who have kept all the nobility and grandeur of Divine Worship. If it is at all possible, he should pursue the study of the Latin language and of Gregorian chant, which remain the best means of conveying our enlightened and prayerful Faith.

The Knight will rejoice at being able to pray with his brethren-at-arms, thereby uniting his Faith, his piety and his devotion to theirs. It is in this common prayer that the brethren will find the source of fraternal unity around their Grand Master, and from which they will draw the graces essential to co-ordinated and disciplined action.

9. The Knight is pious

Piety is the gift of the Holy Ghost that crowns the virtue of Justice.

Unquestionably, this gift is practiced in the most excellent way through the virtue of Reli-

gion, of which we have just spoken, but it also extends to our behaviour in the various kinds of societies to which we belong: family, homeland, Church, and any other association.

In particular, Piety is practiced with respect to all authority and paternity. Filial piety is what makes possible the kind of respect that only a deep Faith in God can give to relations of authority and obedience.

Indeed, contrary to liberal ideology, which names the people as the source of authority, reason and Faith teach us that all authority comes from God, "*Omnis potestas a Deo*," even in cases where someone in authority is appointed by members of society. No human being has the innate power to command another human being. All authority is a participation in the authority of God. This basic concept is essential to the good ordering of society, because it is a reminder to the man holding a position of authority that this power does not belong to him, and that he will have to render an account of it to God. It is an invitation to practice humility and discretion. On the other hand, it makes obedience easier, since obedience, when understood in this way, is made to God and for the sake of God. It leads to respect for the person vested with this authority. Now, respect is the flower of Charity. It brings about truly Christian relations, raising them to the level of heavenly relations, because the reason for, and the gift of, filial piety come from God.

Therefore, the Knight should have a sense of respect, fruit of the gift of Piety, and will endeavor to restore this all-important concept in his family, in all social relations, and wherever else he can. Nothing has been, nor continues to be, more corruptive of societies than the false notion that authority resides in the masses. For the past two centuries, this has led societies into anarchy and tyranny.

10. The Knight is merciful

Thus it is that the virtue of Justice would restore Order in all things: order in one's relationship with God, through devotion; order in one's relations with those in authority, through filial piety; order with respect to one's neighbor, by means of great Charity, expressed above all by mercy.

Like Saint Martin, the good-hearted Knight cannot remain indifferent to misery. However, he should be particularly sensitive to moral decay, to those who are enslaved by sin. Solicitous of the conditions responsible for this slavery to sin, he will strive, with his brethren-at-arms, to remedy the situation. This means that any effort to improve legislation, the constitution, and occasionally the government, could greatly benefit the salvation of souls.

This should not exempt the Knight from making a personal effort to free souls from their slavery to the devil. This slavery extends even to the most cultured and wealthy people. By all the means at his disposal, the Knight must always be ready to drive out the enemy. Careful to act with prudence and according to the gift of Counsel, he must also be confident and courageous. His mercy should also be extended to the humble in particular, to the weak and to the forsaken. He will generously fight against all the evils that afflict men, not only those who are near and dear, but also strangers.

He should be ready to defend Catholics everywhere, oppressed and persecuted by the enemies of God and of His Church.

Meanwhile, during all these manifestations of generosity, he must not forget, first and foremost, to faithfully carry out his duty of state, which constitutes the Will of God for him. Specifically, he will take care to faithfully fulfill his duties as a husband and father. In particular, he will see to the proper education and Christian instruction of his children. This is a particularly difficult job today, given the current scandals in our midst. He will be militantly in favor of truly Catholic schools, devoid of the influence and the spirit of liberalism, which is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

11. The Knight is magnanimous

Lastly, because he practices the virtue of Justice and is strengthened by the virtue of Fortitude, the Knight is magnanimous. He is fully aware of the dignity of his soul, baptized in the Blood of Jesus Christ, while he tries hard to imitate the nobility of soul of his Lord and Master, Who was magnanimous in all the circumstances of his Life, and particularly during the course of His Sacred Passion. Jesus was never vulgar or faint-hearted, even in the midst of the crowds that surrounded Him. Therefore, amidst the vicissitudes of daily life, the Knight must likewise keep his soul serene and brave. His conversation should always be worthy, out of respect for his soul and his entire person, bearing in

mind that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that his guardian angel is also present.

Regardless of how strongly he may have his heart set upon the virtues of Faith and Justice, he should not neglect the virtues of Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance.

12. The virtue of Prudence

Those holding positions of responsibility must make a special effort to cultivate the virtue of Prudence and the gift of Counsel. They should remind themselves that the three prudential acts of counsel, judgment and execution are necessary in order to act responsibly. Relying on one's own experience, on the wisdom of other people considered prudent, reaching a decision without undue delay, and finally proceeding to the implementation of that decision, regardless of the difficulties encountered, is proper to the exercise of authority. It is one thing to consult other competent people, but quite another to wish to associate all of one's subordinates with the exercise of power, as though this authority also belonged to them. It would be like agreeing with the liberals who say that authority lies with the people.

13. The virtue of Fortitude

The virtue of Fortitude is particularly prized by the Knight, since the incessant combat which he has undertaken against the forces of evil demand of him the two attributes fundamental to this virtue: patience, which sustains him in difficulties, including failures, and courage, which permits him to undertake hardy exploits, without being presumptuous, but placing all his confidence in He Who confers victory.

14. The virtue of Temperance

Temperance, which regulates the use of worldly goods, helps the Knight to find in their proper use and in all circumstances, that measure suitable to the Christian, to his duty of state and to his responsibilities. However, he cannot forget that the disorder resulting from Original Sin is revealed especially in concupiscence, which is why he must take care not to enslave himself to worldly goods and not allow himself to be dominated by the "*prudentia carnis*," but rather by the "*prudentia spiritus*" (Rom. 8).

15. Conclusion

Thus vested with the seven Virtues and the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost as with an invincible armor, the Knight does not fear combat with the powers of darkness, nor with the agents of Satan in this world.

Drawing his spiritual vitality from the founts of Penance, of prayer, of the Holy Eucharist, of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to Saint Michael, and seeking true wisdom within a deep Faith, enlightened by the entire history of the Church, he remains vigilant and strong in his attachment to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to His One Holy Church.

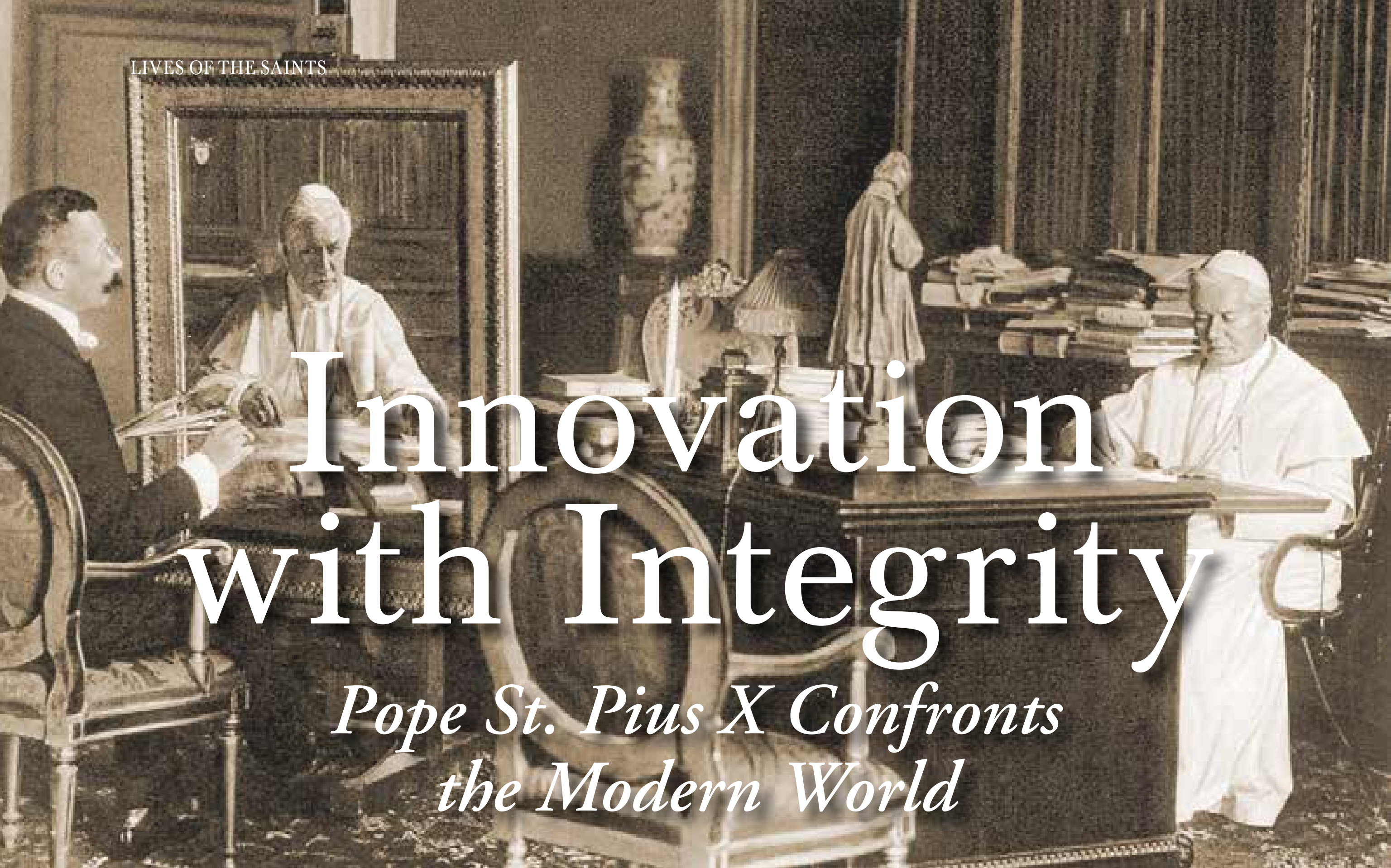
Thus, he will discover that his membership in the Order of Knighthood, his dubbing and his personal commitment all strongly support his spiritual life. He will find therein the courage to fulfill his duties and live his entire life as a true comrade-in-arms of Our Lord, of She who is as powerful as an army in full battle array and of Saint Michael the Archangel, Prince of the Heavenly Host.

He will have thus become heir to all the martyrs, to all the saints, whose noble lineage he endeavors to continue, refusing to join those who, under any senseless pretext, betray the cause of the Church and deliver her into the hands of her enemies.

Consequently, in his last hour here below, he will be able to say with Saint Paul: "*Cursum consummavi, **Fidem** servavi, in reliquo reposita est mihi **corona justitiae** quam reddit mihi Dominus in die illo justus judex.*"–"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day" (II Tim 4:7 & sq.).

La Croix-Valmer
Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord
1970

✠ *Marcel Lefebvre*
Titular Archbishop of Synnada in Phrygia



Innovation with Integrity

Pope St. Pius X Confronts the Modern World

Dr. Louis Shwartz

A liminal figure, and the first canonized pope after a nearly 350-year hiatus, Pius X clung tenaciously to sacred traditions while stretching forth to grapple with daunting modern problems. His very motto: *Instaurare omnia in Christo*, "to renew or restore all things in Christ," indicates a willingness to adapt time-honored teachings to the impending challenges of a decadent new secular era. During the eleven years of his pontificate (1903-14), Pius X focused on liturgical, disciplinary, and educational reforms, relying on sound doctrine and solid tradition as the basis of his many new initiatives. He prioritized Gregorian chant, supported frequent reception of the Eucharist, standardized Church law, encouraged renewed zeal and vigilance in education, catechesis, and priestly formation, and endorsed traditional approaches to philosophy and theology. In doing so, he developed an antidote—even a vaccine—against the modern errors and callous worldliness which would infect the entire civilized world during the first half of the twentieth century.

To the mind of Pius X, a renewal of Christian life in general would spring from a restoration of liturgical purity, a reality which could only be accomplished by clearing away abuses which had accumulated over the ages. During the first year of his pontificate, Pius X issued a *motu proprio* which insisted upon the restoration of Gregorian chant to its rightful place of primacy in liturgical worship throughout the Universal Church. He argued that, by drawing on this ancient source of sanctity, the faithful would flourish. The pope then stressed that, thanks to recent zeal and study, the treasures of Gregorian chant, faithfully preserved from the vicissitudes of time in liturgical codices, had been rediscovered and restored to their pristine dignity and integrity. Finally, he imposed these ancient liturgical forms as the worldwide standard of Catholic worship, thus intending to

counteract the profane and secular trends then infecting sacred music.

Later in his pontificate, Pius X corrected another liturgical abuse—that of denying to children access to the Eucharist—by recalling the traditional norms laid down by Church law. Citing the greatest ecumenical council of the Middle Ages, the pope noted that all Catholics who had attained the "age of discretion" were bound to confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at least once a year around Easter. The pope argued, invoking many theologians including St. Thomas, that since children could generally distinguish between good and evil around the age of seven, at that point they too were bound to annual Confession and thus also to Communion. By fixing a standard age for reception of the Eucharist, the pope explicitly sought to correct "deplorable abuses that have crept in over the course of time." Once again, in the plan of Pius X, a renewal of Christian life would spring from a reliance on tradition and the correction of modern abuses.

Fixing an age for First Holy Communion was simply part of Pius X's grander plan for standardizing and clarifying ecclesiastical discipline. Early in the second year of his pontificate, the pope established a commission tasked with organizing into one Code the sprawling mass of canon law. He noted that, over the centuries, some laws, which were once suited to the difficulties of their age, had grown obsolete; others had been rescinded or were unknown and unapplied, hidden in obscurity within a growing heap of legislation; others still had become less well suited to the common good of souls. To resolve these infelicities, the pope imitated the efforts of medieval canonists and the actions of his papal predecessors; like them he would bring together and up-to-date the law of the Church. Consulting with select cardinals, he himself would oversee a pontifical commission tasked with addressing this pressing need for legal clarity, uniformity, and utility. The 1917 Code of Canon law, promulgated by Benedict XV, was the eventual result, a code which manifested to the Church and to the world the precise disciplinary norms guiding the Mystical Body of Christ.

One of the most ancient and sacred traditions in canon law addressed the proper relations between spiritual and temporal authorities, between Church and State. Medieval theories on this crucial topic guided Pius X in his approach to the secular governments of twentieth-century Europe. For example, he refused to acknowledge as legitimate the despoliation of the Papal States by the new Republican government in Italy, and he openly and vocally opposed legislation which sought to curtail the liberty of the Italian Church. Similarly, when the French Third Republic passed laws effectively confiscating all national church property, placing it directly under secular control and proclaiming France devoid of any official religion, the pope denounced this injustice and condemned, on principle, the complete separation of Church and State. In an encyclical written to the French bishops in 1906, he rehearsed traditional teachings on this subject, ones echoed previously by his predecessors Pius IX and Leo XIII:

> That the State must be separated from the Church is a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error. Based on the principle that the State must not recognize any religious cult, it is in the first place guilty of a great injustice against God; for the Creator of man is also the Founder of human societies, and He preserves their existence just as He preserves that of individuals. We owe Him, therefore, not only a private devotion, but a public and social worship.
>
> Besides, this thesis is an obvious negation of the supernatural order. It limits the action of the State to the pursuit of material prosperity during this life only, which is but the proximate object of political societies; and it occupies itself in no way (on the plea that this is foreign to it) with man's ultimate end which is eternal happiness after this short life shall have run its course. But as the present order of things is temporary and subordinated to the acquisition of man's supreme and absolute blessedness, it follows that the civil power must not obstruct its attainment, and must even aid in promoting it.
>
> The same thesis also upsets the order providentially established by God in the world, which demands a harmonious agreement between the two societies. Since both the civil and religious authorities, although each in its own proper way, rule over the same subjects, they must have means of resolving disputes which will inevitably arise. Remove agreement between Church and State and the result will be that from these disputes will spring the seeds of most bitter conflicts, conflicts which

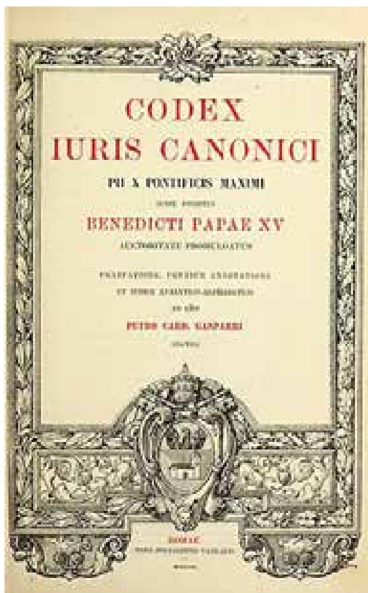
> will obscure the truth and cause great distress to souls.
>
> Finally, this thesis inflicts great injury on society itself, for it cannot either prosper or last long when due place is not left for religion, which is man's supreme guide and sovereign mistress for the sacred preservation of law and order. Hence the Roman Pontiffs have never ceased, as circumstances required, to refute and condemn the doctrine of the separation of Church and State.

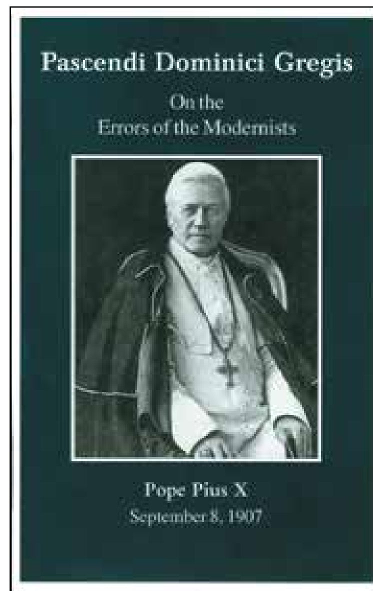
In this powerful and lucid summary of traditional Catholic political theory, Pius X anticipated and perhaps even inspired the great work of his successor, Pius XI, who 20 years later would proclaim the social kingship of Jesus Christ in the famous encyclical *Quas Primas*.

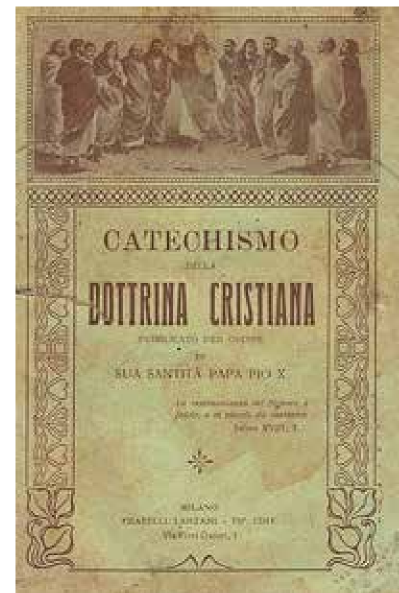
Involvement in high affairs of state did not distract Pius X from the more humble but also more essential matters of catechizing the youth and forming seminarians. Indeed, the pope recognized that a renewal of the Church depended on the sound education of the next generation of Catholics. In an encyclical published in 1905 concerning the importance of religious instruction, the pope lamented that "it is hard to find words to describe how profound is the darkness in which some Christians are engulfed and, what is most deplorable of all, how tranquilly they repose there. They rarely give thought to God, the Supreme Author and Ruler of all things, or to the teachings of the faith of Christ." In consequence, Pius X urged his Italian bishops to invest heavily in catechesis. For instance, he commanded that on every Sunday and Holy Day, one hour be set aside for the instruction of the parish youth. The pope himself even developed a concise catechism for use in Italy which later spread in translation to other nations.

Another practical initiative undertaken by Pius X involved the reform of seminary life and instruction. Again writing to the Italian bishops, the pope acknowledged that he had received "letters full of sadness and tears from several of you, in which you deplore the spirit of insubordination and independence displayed here and there among the clergy. Most assuredly, a poisonous atmosphere corrupts men's minds to a great extent today . . . and what is even more serious is the fact that such maxims are being more or less secretly propagated among youths preparing for the priesthood within the enclosure of the seminaries." To combat this dire threat to priestly sanctity, Pius X insisted that bishops exercise much greater vigilance over their seminaries, expelling all who are unworthy. He added that, in seminary studies, the traditional courses of philosophy, theology, and scriptural exegesis must hold pride of place. Yet in the pope's broader plan, this focus on obedience and respect for traditional teachings would extend far beyond the walls of Catholic seminaries.

Perhaps the greatest combat undertaken by St. Pius X involved the suppression of a whole network of heresies conveniently labelled "modernism." In his 1907 encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, the pope identified the defining fea-







ture of modernism: an emphasis on subjective religious experience leading to a rejection both of objective truth and of an integral vision of reality. To counteract this proud modern subjectivism which submits even the most sacred realities to the private judgment of the individual, Pius X encouraged the study of traditional scholastic philosophy and theology, particularly the realism and dogmatic precision found in the medieval writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

However, three years after the publication of *Pascendi*, the pope recognized that, in general, the bishops of the world had not taken his warnings about modernism very seriously. He even complained that "this plague of modernism has spread through those parts of the Lord's field whence we expected to reap more abundant fruit," that is, among the very households and dioceses of the world's Catholic bishops. Therefore, in order to lend force to his condemnation, Pius X demanded that, in addition to the traditional profession of faith, every ecclesiastical superior, including all priests and seminary professors, take an anti-modernist oath before assuming their duties of office, "lest the integrity of divine revelation suffer any loss." This oath included an explicit rejection of religious subjectivism:

> I hold with certainty and sincerely confess that faith is not a blind sentiment of religion welling up from the depths of the subconscious under the impulse of the heart and the motion of a will trained to morality; but faith is a genuine assent of the intellect to truth received by hearing from an external source. By this assent, because of the authority of the supremely truthful God, we believe to be true that which has been revealed and attested to by a personal God, our Creator and Lord.

The pope thus insisted that divine revelation—unimpaired and uncompromised, in its integral fullness as the unerring Word of God, received from above and passed on through sacred Tradition—is the only sure foundation from which to attempt an authentic renewal or restoration of Catholic life amidst the intellectual and spiritual confusion of the modern era.

Pius X's emphasis on the sacred Liturgy, Gregorian Chant, the Mass, and the Eucharist; on clerical discipline, seminaries, and priestly formation; on the social reign of Jesus Christ; on education, doctrinal integrity, and Tradition—are these not also the hallmarks of Archbishop Lefebvre's vision for his own work? Indeed, St. Pius X provided the good archbishop with a clear plan for the great task of restoring all things in Christ, of renewing and reinvigorating the Church in a modern world where, according to the words of St. Matthew's Gospel, "iniquity abounds and the charity of many grows cold." In this way, the first saint-pope of modern times prophetically laid out the very path which leads to a resolution of the crisis in the Church, a path which Archbishop Lefebvre's spiritual children continue to follow with confidence.

Karl Rahner:

The Greatest Modernist of All Time

Fr. Dominique Bourmaud

The figure of Karl Rahner, highly praised by some, and surrounded by secrecy and religious mystique by others, has marked the 20th century. In Germany, he was given the title *novus praeceptor Germaniae* and Cardinal Frings of Cologne hailed him the greatest theologian of the century. In his wake, every theologian of the Rhineland, whether mitred or not, echoed the Jesuit's chorus of praise. Numerous talents identify themselves with this singular individual. And since he is recognized by all, friends and enemies alike, as the most influential theologian, we propose to show that Karl Rahner, far from being the greatest theologian of the twentieth century, was in actual fact the greatest modernist of the modernist century, and of all time. To achieve this, following a brief sketch of his intellectual career, we will see what properly defines a modernist theologian and then apply this to our subject.

Rahner's life and works

Karl Rahner, born in Fribourg, Breisgau in Germany, entered the Jesuit order at an early age, like his brother Hugo, and studied theology in Holland before returning to Fribourg to pursue philosophy under Heidegger and to prepare for a doctorate in philosophy and theology. His philosophical thesis, *Geist in Welt* (Spirit in the World), was quite comprehensive. Rejected by his supervisor but nonetheless published in 1939, it proposed to be an existentialist interpretation of Thomist thought. It is Thomism, but revised and modified by Kant, Heidegger and Maréchal. From then on, the greater part of his work revolved around the Department for Dogmatic Theology in Innsbruck, Austria. It was from there that he wrote the majority of his books and articles. He also directed the Latin edition of the *Denzinger* (compendium of the Church's dogmatic texts) from 1960 to 1965. He published major works, disseminating his new theology in all German-speaking univer-

sities, including: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Dictionary of Theology and the Church), and *Quaestiones disputatae et Schriften zur Theologie,* which runs to 20 volumes.

In spite of the Roman mistrust which threatened his writings until the opening of the Council, due in particular to questions concerning concelebration (1949), virginal maternity (1960) and the married diaconate (1961), Cardinal Köning of Vienna decided to take Rahner under his wing and make him his theological expert at the Second Vatican Council. This was the moment that gave rise to his worldly fame. His influence at the Council dominated as soon as the European Alliance took over the leadership of the Council. He was considered such a master of thought in the German-speaking countries and on the banks of the Rhine that everyone was bowing down to his every wish. The attitude became: "*Magister dixit, causa finita.*" His *placet* and *non placet* carried a lot of weight in the burning debates: the question of the diaconate, of the liturgy, of the sources of Revelation, of the refusal of the mediation of the Blessed Virgin, of religious freedom, of ecumenism, not to mention collegiality, which Rahner defined as the decapitation of the papacy and the democratization of the Church. And this influence was to be consolidated and perpetuated by the Concilium Review–the bulletin of avant-garde theology–which he co-directed at the time alongside Schillebeeckx, Vorgrimler, Metz, Lehmann, Küng, and Ratzinger, his friends and students. Appointed a member of the International Theological Commission from its foundation in Rome (1969-1974), he was to become the apostle of ecumenism and of relations between Christians and Marxists. Called back to God in 1984, he left in his wake some 4000 works that confirm him as the most prolific and original theologian of all times.

What is a modernist theologian?

Modernism, which was reviled in the time of St. Pius X, was defined by the Pope saint as the collective sewer of all heresies and the fruit of Kantism which attacks all the branches, near and far, of the Magisterium of the Church: faith, dogma, philosophy, apologetics, Holy Scripture, history. In the Pope's judgment, therefore, it is indeed a very particular heresy. The "traditional" heresies were in fact limited to a few dogmas and, around this clearly circumscribed poison, they intended to preserve the whole corpus of doctrine on which they were based.

The "modernist" heresy is unique. It is a complete apostasy that ignores the entire body of dogmatic and moral doctrine, for it is the very concepts of religion, faith and dogma that are radically distorted, since God and his immutable truth are rejected outright. Modern man no longer accepts a faith imposed upon him from the outside by a transcendent God. To this rejection of all dogma is added the inseparable correlative of the rejection of all revelation which is external to man. God, in the person of the Word made flesh, could not reveal himself, speak and act like any other man: the historical Christ differs completely from the Christ of the Faith as narrated in the Gospels. At the root of all this doctrinal and scriptural agnosticism is a radical skepticism which denies that things exist, that they have a nature and that our intelligence can know them. It is this refusal on three levels, philosophical, scriptural and dogmatic, that constitutes modernism. Modernism, condemned by St. Pius X and Pius XII, is defined as ontology without being, revelation without the historical Christ and theology without God. It is really the vertigo of emptiness, intellectual and moral nirvana.

Any heresy must be able to seduce its followers with more tempting propositions than pure and simple truth. If Luther's free will could exert a certain appeal of freedom and independence over the masses, the modernist void on the other hand, presents none. The nakedness of modernist error must therefore be adorned with false ornaments in order to become attractive and act under the guise of the Church. That is why modernists are, by definition, professional impersonators. They are sheep transformed into wolves who pretend to convert the Church to their nihilistic ideas, so that the good modernist is an apostate and a traitor. At the level of ideas, these adornments are the craze of immanentism which makes everything come out of man, who becomes the center of the world. They are also the new interest in evolution, which makes everything come out of nothing and makes it evolve into everything. Finally, there is the desire to accommodate faith and truth in the world in order to obtain its salvation, as if truth, and not the world, were to be sacrificed for the salvation of man.

Rahner, prince of the Modernists

Philosophy teaches us that there is always a *princeps analogatum* of some kind. The modernist genre must also have its *princeps*, its first and its prince who exhausts all its possibilities. It is Rahner who holds this place, since he perfectly fulfils the definition of it.

Rahner's philosophy is meant to be eclectic. This is not without drawbacks, especially when it is a question of amalgamating opposites such as Thomistic truth based on reality and Kantian truth based on the thinking subject: *cogito-volo-est* – I want, therefore I think, therefore everything exists. The philosophy of common sense thinks being because beings are. Since Kant, modern thinking thinks its thinking, and then beings are. Under the pretext of interpreting Saint Thomas, Rahner undertakes to introduce into Thomism the following idealistic principles: identity between the intelligent, the intelligence and the being; unity of sensibility and intelligence; identity between the object and the subject. According to him, the truth of existing beings is not specified in a determined structure, but resides in the uninterrupted becoming of historical consciousness, in accordance with existential factors at work in time. This is the philosophical basis of the dogmatic historicism of the modernists, according to which truth varies with time and morals.

For our protagonist, Revelation is also a purely human and internal affair:

"I have experienced God, the nameless one, the unfathomable, the silent God, and yet close, he turned to me in the Trinity. . . God himself; it is God in himself that I have experienced, and not human words about him. . . (an experience which generates such a) certainty of the Faith that, if Holy Scripture did not exist, I would still remain unshakeable." As a good pupil of Heidegger, the immanentist prison renders him incapable of speaking of a revelation that is not revelation by and for the thinking subject. "If one wishes to speak of God, one must speak of man. When man surpasses himself and the world, he encounters transcendence: God. Naturally, the first experience of God. . . can only be thought of as an experience of God given above all and before all with the transcendence of man, as the horizon of this transcendence. That is to say, man as man is oriented towards God. Orientation towards God is part of his being. . . 'Transcendence' is given at the same time as human nature. . . It is not grafted onto nature, as the neo-scholastic says, but it is its basis, its foundation." When one reads this, it is not surprising that Rahnerian philosophy is for some the key to a third Copernican revolution, where human subjectivity is the foundation of the revelation of being and of divine revelation in general.

Upon such irrational and unscriptural foundations, what theology will he be able to articulate? It will be *anthropological theology*, which will also circle around man, the navel of the world and, why not, the navel of God! It is above all dependent on Hegel. In the latter, the Being within oneself needs the Being outside oneself in order to become the Being for oneself. The Infinite needs the finite in order to become the conscious Infinite. This conscious infinite is the necessary consequence of the finite that becomes the infinite, which defines God as the Being dependent on man and man as the being who makes himself God. No wonder the Hegelian system has been defined as the most logical and implacable pantheism ever conceived. Rahner was to establish the Hegelian system as a theological system. He focused his study on human nature, the obligatory meeting point between God and matter, for man is the link between the created and the uncreated, matter and spirit. It is the nature in which the Word was annihilated and begotten, and it is the same human nature which, in men, is open to the divine. We are taught that man shares the essence of the Word, that it is defined as the capacity to become the Word and the exteriorization of God. In fact, the Rahnerian man presents himself as the configuration, the photographic negative of God. In Rahner's case no more than in Teilhard's, there is no solution of continuity between the links of this Hegelo-Rahnerian chain that goes from God to the non-God (man-world) to return to the super-God (conscious God).

Our theologian of man completes the work begun by finally identifying God and man. It is that man is the abbreviation and the number of God, and that God has annihilated himself to the point of becoming a non-God, that is to say, man. "If God himself is man and has been so from all eternity; if for this reason all theology is eternally anthropology, if man is forbidden to hold himself for little, for then he would hold God for little, if this God continues to be the

Karl Rahner.

ineffable mystery, then man is from all eternity the mystery of God expressed, who participates from all eternity in the mystery of his foundation. This reality proper to God Himself, which He cannot abandon as outdated, must be for us as our true salvation, beyond the difference between God and the creature."

Rahnerian theology has an obvious apologetic purpose: God is good, therefore he wants to save all men, therefore he saves all men: Outside the Church, salvation! His theology identifies the unbeliever with the believer since, by nature, every man is an answer to the question of God, and he feels God on the horizon of his conscience, "He who, therefore (even if he is far from Revelation and the Church) accepts his existence, and thus his humanity. . . he says yes to Christ, even though he does not know it." In the process, it is the very concept of the visible Church–the Ghetto Church–that falls under the blows of the democratic theology of the automatic salvation of man as a pure man. Out of the ashes of the Vatican Church will rise the pantheon of the modern ecumenical Church, which joyfully blends opposites, letting each one live in its own mellow stratosphere, in a climate of cordial understanding, in the perfect acceptance of differences, and in the refusal of a realistic, unchanging and scandalously exclusive revelation. Rahner's religion is based on man and remains his private property. The supernatural being thus erased, one can only identify nature and supernatural: man is naturally supernatural; he is called to grace and glory by his own strength.

In addition to his cerebral fantasies in a closed vase, there is a dubious morality in which our author acts as a double man. It is obvious that, as early as *Geist in Welt,* Rahner was warned by his mentor to remain faithful to St. Thomas or to abandon any serious philosophical or theological effort. It could only have been with full knowledge of the facts that Rahner systematically used St. Thomas to forge viscerally anti-Thomistic and anti-realistic theses. Far from being an impetuous Teilhard who does not know how to quit while he is ahead, Rahner knew how to imitate perfectly his French colleague Henri de Lubac who knew how to act under cover while relentlessly pursuing the destruction of perennial philosophy and Thomistic theology. He could testify to his satisfaction in 1981 of "having contributed to the ousting of the neo-scolasticism of the 19th and early 20th centuries," but this presupposed a conscious contempt for "the monolithism of the Magi," that is to say the Magisterium of all time. Lehmann, a disciple of Rahner, explained that his thought was "a concealed revolt against a traditional and outdated philosophy and theology." Rahner had the fine idea of keeping the classical terms, thus giving the illusion of preserving their content, a task made all the easier by the fact that he had to do so in the first place. When the Holy Office threatened to censor him and all his works, Rahner wrote to his friend Vorgrimler: "I have already declared that in this case I will write nothing more (and I thought: then my name will be Vorgrimler, Metz, Darlapp). I have already warned König, Döpfner, Volk and Höfer in a long letter." Around him, powerful trump cards stood guard and prevented the muzzling of the spokesman of the new theology, who was going to make the sunshine and the rain on the future German-speaking Council Fathers and, from there, take the reins of the Council. In the same way, when it was known that the new Abelard had his Heloise in the person of Louise Rinser from the Council, the Jesuits did everything possible to hide the affair that risked compromising the ascendancy

of his revolutionary theology which served as the locomotive for the wagon of the conciliar Church.

Conclusion : Rahner, paragon of Modernism

It seems natural to conclude our study with an objective assessment of the scope of Rahnerian theology. Whilst Rahner did not have the international influence of a Loisy during the modernist crisis, nor the charisma of a Teilhard and his reputation as a scientist and poet, or the consummate prudence of a Lubac in protecting his interests, he satisfied perfectly the definition of a modernist. On this point in fact, he greatly surpassed his predecessors, for reasons which are multiple.

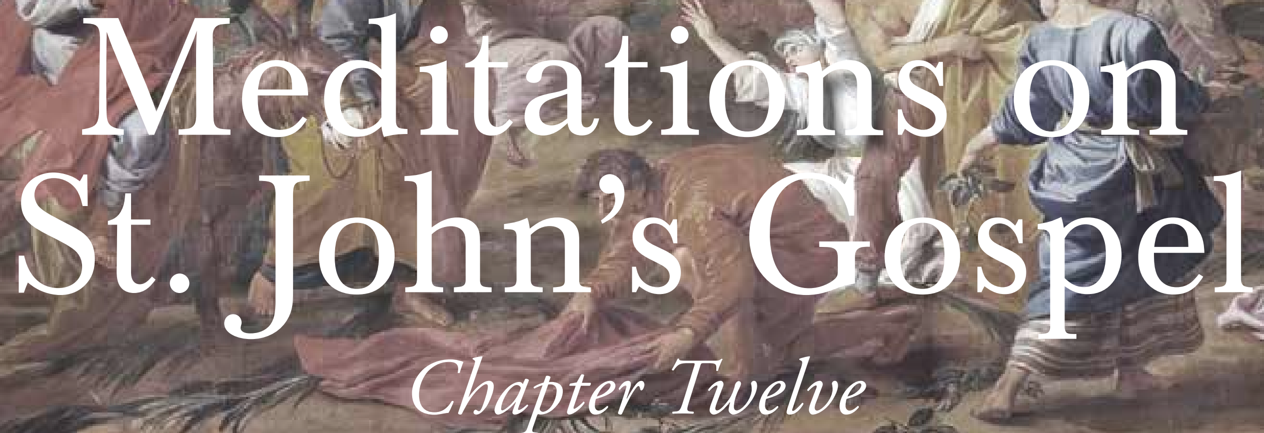
As for its achievements, this new Rahnerian theology reaches the perfection of the genre by its camouflage under orthodox and Thomistic appearances, while the principles and conclusions are diametrically opposed to faith and Thomism. There is not a single Trinitarian heresy that has not been endorsed by Rahner, not to mention his *lapsus linguae* in speaking of "Christian polytheism." There is no Thomistic thesis that has not been vitiated by his truth and his religion born of pure conscience. There is no vision of creation and of the salvation of man that has not passed under the wheels of the bulldozer that swallows God from man, the supernatural from nature and Jesus Christ from man pure and simple, to end up with a Hegelian-type pantheism. It seems that the new Rahner-style theology is based on the sacred Gnostic tripod dear to Hegel: the devaluation of the world, the mystical flight to the beyond and the means of this flight, Gnosis or esoteric knowledge. Now, such an apotheosis of the Rahnerian cerebral elucubrations alone constitutes the Omega point of modernism.

As for the means used to reach the final goal, it must be said that Rahner far surpasses his predecessors. Until the neo-modernism of the interwar period, the heretics still being hunted down had not been able to clearly state their guiding principles. The new theology was in vogue with its sails unfurled. Its principles are the *cogito-volo-est* of the existentialists who come to deny the essences of things, and Hegel's dialectical principle according to which the infinite is poured into the finite to become the conscious infinite. These principles have nothing of the acidic aspect of pure Kantian criticism nor of the vertiginous evolutionism of Bergson and Loisy.

Not only are the Rahnerian principles in full view, but they take on an attractive richness and fullness thanks to this theology of pure consciousness. It is knowledge walled up within oneself and closed to beings. It is the most complete immanentism which, by its natural inclination, leads straight to narcissism and selfishness. This point of view is the exact opposite of realism open to being. And these principles command all intellectual effort according to an implacable logic worthy of Hegel. They are valid both for theology and for philosophy, so that, leaning on a Kantian philosophy of consciousness, drawn from the Heideggerian revelation, Rahner's Hegelian theology is defined as a theology of consciousness without God, that is to say, properly atheistic. This is why, with the combination of Kant-Hegel-Heidegger-Rahner, it seems that neo-modernism reaches the perfection of its genre. We will no doubt be able to clarify it—our authors' language is as obscure as one could wish—it will be difficult to improve it. In fact, for forty years now, thinking heads have been simply warming up dishes prepared with Rahner sauce.

But paradoxically, on this negative aspect of man closed in on himself, forging his own truth, is also grafted a broad-mindedness towards all systems of thought. One is sensitive to the most contradictory creations. Within the pantheon that is the Universal Synarchical Church, there is a niche for all gods, even for Jesus Christ. In the Rahnerian theology of consciousness, in the religion of man by man and for man, all find a refuge there, excepting no creed or Revelation, since all individuals are Christians who ignore each other. Nowhere has modernism succeeded in offering a synthesis that is both more logical with its basic principles and more advantageous for all.

That is why it seems that our thesis has strong points of support. Rahner represents the Omega point of modernism. Insofar as such a theology represents the most perfect depravity of divine wisdom, to call it by its name, it should be called human folly to the highest degree.



Meditations on St. John's Gospel

Chapter Twelve

Pater Inutilis

We now come to the last week of Our Lord's life before His death and resurrection. We come, therefore, to subject matter common to all four Gospels. Hitherto, St. John's gospel has treated of very different things than those of the Synoptics: in common there have been only the first multiplication of loaves and Jesus' walking on the waters following that (6:1-21). These St. John also wrote of, we noted, because of their relationship with the discourse on the "Bread of Life," as in the rest of that chapter. But now we come, somewhat, to common ground: 12:1-8 is the anointing at Bethany, and 12:12-16 is the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Until Gethsemani and what follows, there will again be in common only the foretelling of Peter's denial (13:36-38). St. John, obviously, writing over a generation after the other evangelists, presumes their teaching to be well known. He will supply things they have omitted, particularly with an eye to his purpose: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31).

Let us note too that the Synoptic Gospels treat primarily of Jesus' mission in Galilee. The only Passover they write of is Jesus' last, when He went up to Jerusalem to be delivered to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and spat upon; and after that, to be put to death.[1] Thanks to the Fourth Gospel, we know that Our Lord's public life did not last only one year, with only one final journey to Jerusalem. St. John speaks explicitly of three Passovers during the public life: 2:13; 6:4; 13,1.[2] It is Our Lord's teaching in the Holy City that takes up a major part of his Gospel: 2:13-3:21, 5, 7:10-10:39, and 12-17. St. John is more particular also when it comes to chronology. The others, and especially St. Matthew, join Our Lord's sayings and doings one to another by theme, more so than by order in time. And so, for example, this second anointing by St. Mary Magdalene: St. Matthew talks of it after the solemn entrance into Jerusalem

and several days' preaching there, linking it to Judas' pact with the chief priests to deliver Jesus (Mt. 26: 14-16), as a consequence to Judas' indignation at the "waste," as he called it, of the precious ointment (Mt. 26:8). St. John, though, is careful to point out that it took place "six days before the Pasch" (12:1), and on the eve of entering the City (12:12). It is his too to indicate Judas as the chief murmurer against Mary.

From gospel to gospel there must be difference in details: different things strike different witnesses or writers. Sts. Matthew and Mark speak of Mary's pouring the precious ointment on Jesus' head: she has been fully pardoned (Lk. 7:47-50) as is now a beloved friend (11:5). For his part, St. John says she poured it upon His feet, wiping them with her hair (12:3). She did both.

It had so pleased Jesus then, and herself, that she wants hereby gratefully to please Him again. Back then, it was Simon the Pharisee who took umbrage; now it is Judas (12:4). On each occasion, she does not speak in her own defense: Jesus does. He adds delicately that this accomplishes already her pious desire to anoint Him again at His burial–which later she will not be able to do (12:7; 20:1).

For some, Jesus is not the "star attraction" at this feast: it is Lazarus, who was dead and lives (12:9). He is a walking miracle, convincing proof of Christ's mission (12:11). So what do Our Lord's enemies consider? They want to kill not only Jesus (11:52) but also Lazarus. For what semblance of crime? None, save the fact that his being alive promotes and publishes the truth that Jesus Christ comes "in the name of the Lord," as they sing on the next day. Is He not the one who "called Lazarus out of the grave" (12:17)? And so, is He not the prophesied meek "king," who "cometh, sitting on an ass's colt" (12:15)? He is, and they loudly hail Him "the king of Israel" (vs. 13). The Pharisees cannot abide this (12:19). They are blind. "And whereas he had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in him" (12:37). Even those of them who do believe this evidence would not say so, not to be excommunicated (12:42), "for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (12:43). This blindness Isaias again had prophesied (12:38-41).

The people at large also must now see and believe; there is not much time left to choose. "Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk, whilst you have the light. . . Whilst you have the light, believe in the light" (12:35). This light is, of course, Jesus Himself: "I am come a light into the world" (12:46). This light will soon pass from Israel to the Gentiles. Already they gingerly approach, through Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (12:21). "I came," says Jesus, "to save the world" (12:47)[3]. This will be the fruit of His passion and death. "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (12:24). A poetic prophecy of His imminent passion and death. He will be dead before the week is out. He must be crucified. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. (Now this he said, signifying what death he should die)" (12:32). Knowing its fruitfulness does not make it any less dauntingly painful. "Now is my soul troubled. . . Father, save me from this hour" (12:27). But it is the Father's glory that is supreme for His Son. "Father, glorify thy name" (12:28); "I know that his commandment is life everlasting" (12:50).

He who would be Christ's disciple, who would minister unto Him, must follow Him (12:26) in this spirit and along this way. "He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal" (12:25).

Endnotes

1. *E.g.*, Mt. 16:21; Mk. 10:33f; Lk. 18:31-33.
2. Some say 5:1 refers also to another Pasch: so, a public life of 3 years and some, rather than 2 years and some. (Be that as it may, we commonly speak of the "3 years of public life").
3. If He says "I came not to judge the world" (12:47), though He will (5:22), it is because we must distinguish two comings (e.g. Heb. 9:26-28): the first, in a body subject to suffering, to be a victim for sin, a time of mercy and merit (e.g. Mt. 20:28); the second, with an eternally glorified body, to reign in power, a time of justice and reward (e.g. Mt. 16:27).

Fr. Juan Carlos Iscara, SSPX

The spiritual authors encourage us to acts of devotion, but what is "devotion" exactly?

In a strict theological sense, devotion consists in the ready giving of oneself with fervor to the things that pertain to the service of God. Therefore, the "devout" are those who are always available for everything that refers to the worship or service of God.

Devotion is an act of the virtue of religion, although it also comes from the virtue of charity. The two virtues influence one another: charity causes devotion, while love makes us ready to serve the one we love; and, in turn, devotion increases love, because friendship is preserved and increased by the services rendered to the friend.

St. Thomas warns that devotion, as it is an act of religion, refers properly to God, not to His creatures. Hence, the devotion to the saints—and even the devotion to Our Lady—must end in God through them. In the saints we venerate what they have of God, that is, we venerate God in them.

The extrinsic and main cause of devotion is God, who calls those He wants and lights in their souls the fire of devotion. But the intrinsic cause, on our part, is the meditation or contemplation of divine goodness and divine benefits, together with the consideration of our misery. Thus, it excludes presumption and leads us to submit totally to God, from whom help and remedy will come to us. Its main effect is to fill the soul with spiritual joy, although sometimes it can accidentally cause a beneficial sadness,

either because we do not fully possess God or because of the consideration of our own defects, which prevent us from giving ourselves totally to Him.

The fervor or readiness of the will consists first and foremost in the forceful determination of the will to remain faithfully consecrated to the service of God, in spite of frequent and painful aridity and spiritual trials. This fervor of the will constitutes, at the same time, the firm foundation on which the whole practice of devotion rests and the cause of all its merit before God. Without it, a purely sensible devotion, a "feeling," has no consistency or true utility.

The truly devout soul remains calm and unwavering in the service of God through all the variations of sense impressions. In the midst of desolations and the absence of any consolation, true devotion continues to sustain the soul in the service of God. However, sensible consolations should not be despised, when God gives them, for they constitute a powerful stimulus to spiritual activity in the service of God. But we must not inordinately cling to them—as if seeking the consolations of God instead of the God of consolations.

This fervor of devotion, instead of being a simple transitory and passing act, can and must become a habitual disposition, existing and influencing the practice of all acts of divine worship. Nourished by a generous and constant charity and strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, particularly those of piety, understanding, science and wisdom, this habitual disposition is further aided by an incessant, faithful fulfillment of the duties of one's own state of life.

To be perfect, this habitual devotion must extend itself not only to religious acts prescribed by divine or ecclesiastical precepts, but also to everything that appears clearly to one's own conscience as more pleasing to God.

What is the "spirit of penance" that we must practice during Lent and, in fact, throughout our whole life?

The "spirit of penance" is the habitual contrition of the soul, expressed by the continual repetition of acts of repentance, which impregnate our whole lives.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (I Jn. 1:8). Even when we have been forgiven, nothing prevents us from continually saying to God: "Although everything is forgiven, I will gratefully keep repeating that I regret having offended Thee and that I want to do whatever I can to remedy that wrong."

For souls that aspire to perfection, this spirit of penance is necessary and is one of the most excellent means to quickly ascend to the greatest holiness.

The spirit of penance helps us to avoid lukewarmness and keeps us humble and generous, as compunction and lukewarmness cannot coexist in the soul.

It is the source and origin of a lively charity towards God and towards one's neighbor. Towards God, because habitual perfect contrition is one of the purest and most delicate acts prompted by supernatural charity, and, by erasing our faults, it makes us more pleasing to God. Towards our neighbor, because it makes us merciful in our judgments and our conduct with others, as he who knows himself well cannot despise his brethren.

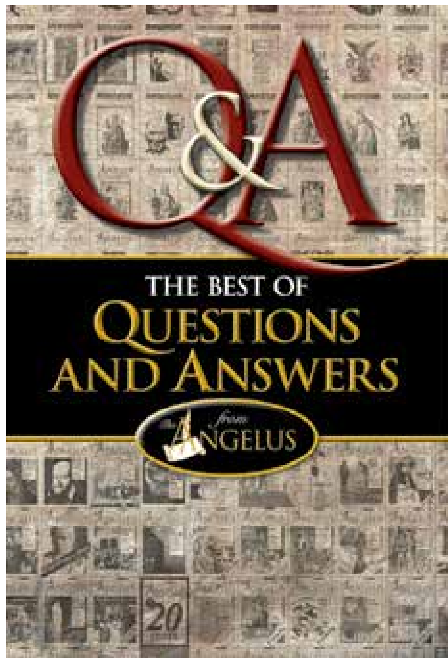
It is also a sure bulwark against temptations. Continuous vigilance over our own conduct, persevering prayer, the spirit of humility, aversion to sin, and the sincere and loving search for God are the means of sanctification provided by the spirit of compunction. Thus, temptation always finds the soul armed and alert and disposed to reject sin.

How can we acquire this spirit of penance? First of all, by humbly asking God: *"Almighty and merciful God, who made a spring of living water spring from the stone for the thirsty people; draw from*

our hard hearts tears of repentance, so that we may cry for our sins and thus deserve forgiveness through your mercy" (Prayer to ask for the gift of tears, from the Roman Missal).

We must also consider with sincerity and courage the abyss of our wickedness. Even the smallest sin is an enormous evil if we consider it in the light of Truth and in contrast to the immense Goodness of God towards us. Let us remember the example of the saints.

We must remember how much our soul has cost Christ. *"I have not loved you in a laughing way,"* Our Lord said one day to St. Angela of Foligno. Calvary, the bloodied Body of Christ, His pierced hands and feet, the crown of thorns, the spittle on His divine face and His ignominious death on the Cross, should remind us how seriously God takes sin and to what extent He has loved us.



The Best of Questions and Answers

The best questions and the best answers of 40 years of *The Angelus*.

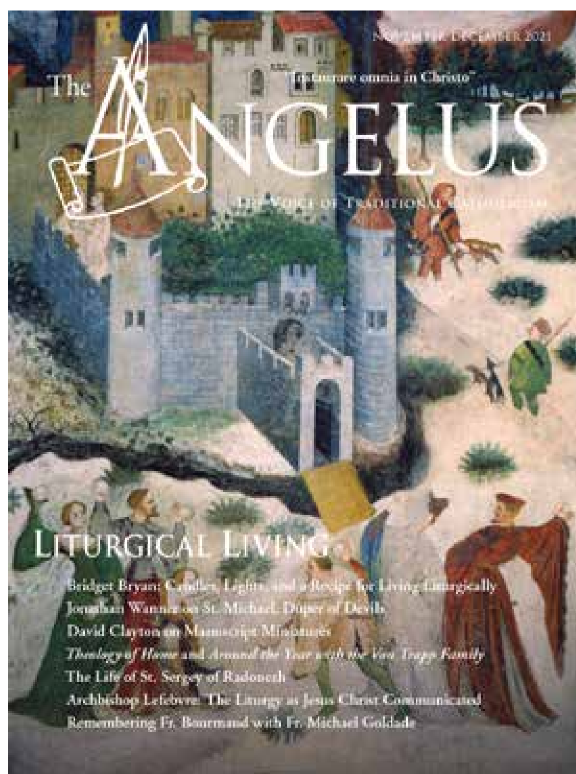
This will be a family's heirloom reference book for everyday Catholic living to match the Catholic Faith we believe and the Latin Mass we attend. Over 300 answers classified under 30 subtitles.

- Marriage, Parenting, Family Life and Child Rearing
- Science and Medical Matters
- Life After Death
- Church Practices and Customs
- The Papacy and the Church Teachings
- The Bible and Biblical Matters
- The Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Virgin Mary, Angels, and Saints
- The Mass and the Liturgy
- The SSPX and the Crisis

344 pp. Hardcover. STK# 8343 $25.55

The ANGELUS

Support the Cause of Uncompromised Traditional Catholic Media



For over three decades, *The Angelus* has stood for Catholic truth, goodness, and beauty against a world gone mad. Our goal has always been the same: to show the glories of the Catholic Faith and to bear witness to the constant teaching of the Church in the midst of the modern crisis in which we find ourselves. Each issue contains:

- A unique theme focusing on doctrinal and practical issues that matter to you, the reader
- Regular columns, from History to Family Life, Spirituality and more
- Some of the best and brightest Catholic thinkers and writers in the English-speaking world
- An intellectual formation to strengthen your faith in an increasingly hostile world

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Name ____________________

Address ____________________

City ____________ State ________ ZIP ________ Country ____________

CHECK VISA MASTERCARD AMEX DISCOVER MONEY ORDER

Card # ____________________ Exp. Date ____________

Phone # ____________________ E-mail ____________________

Mail to: Angelus Press, PO Box 217, St. Marys, KS 66536, USA

PLEASE CHECK ONE

United States

1 year	$45.00
2 years	$85.00
3 years	$120.00

Foreign Countries (inc. Canada & Mexico)

1 year	$65.00
2 years	$125.00
3 years	$180.00

All payments must be in US funds only.

ONLINE ONLY SUBSCRIPTIONS

To subscribe visit: www.angelusonline.org.

Everyone has FREE access to every article from issues of *The Angelus* over two years old, and selected articles from recent issues. All magazine subscribers have full access to the online version of the magazine (a $20 Value)!

The Last Word

Fr. David Sherry
District Superior of Canada

Dear Reader,

In 2015, the veteran broadcaster Gay Byrne, now retired from his many years of corrupting Irish life via *The Late Late Show*, recorded an episode of his new programme, *The Meaning of Life*. His guest was Sir Stephen Fry, actor and atheist. What would he say, Byrne asked, if after death he discovered that he was wrong and that there was indeed a God? Fry grew angry: "I would say 'How dare you! How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault. It's not right. It's utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world which is so full of injustice and pain?' That's what I'd say."

That's what he said. But tell me, Stephen, why the anger? How can you be angry with someone who doesn't exist?

Surely you can't blame a non-person for something? Ever been angry with the yeti? The tooth fairy perhaps? I have an idea. Could it be, could it possibly be that it's not that God does not exist, but that you do not want him to exist?

The interview continued. Byrne: "And you think you're going to get in?" Fry: "No, but *I wouldn't want to.* I wouldn't want to get in on *his* terms." He calms down and smiles. "Now if it was Pluto, Hades and the twelve Greek gods, then I would have more truck with it, because at least *they didn't pretend not to be human.*"

An atheist on the western front in 1918 writes this about the same God who apparently didn't exist.

> *O universal strength, I know it well,*
> *It is but froth of folly to rebel;*
> *For thou art Lord and hast the keys of Hell.*
> *Yet I will not bow down to thee nor love thee,*
> *For looking in my own heart I can prove thee,*
> *And know this frail, bruised being is above thee.*

Self-sufficiency above God. Pride. "I will not serve a God who doesn't do things my way." Hatred of subsistent Good. Sin brought to its logical and diabolical conclusion. Hell.

If the world is not to continue to suffer the consequences of the hatred of God, and the deepest hell on earth, we must convert. Dependence on God. Faith. True Humility. Charity. The way? Penance. Christ and His Blessed Mother.

Fr. David Sherry

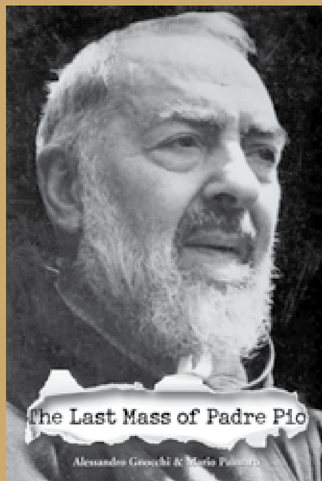
The Society of Saint Pius X is an international priestly society of almost 700 priests. Its main purpose is the formation and support of priests.

The goal of the Society of Saint Pius X is to preserve the Catholic Faith in its fullness and purity, not changing, adding to or subtracting from the truth that the Church has always taught, and to diffuse its virtues, especially through the Roman Catholic priesthood. Authentic spiritual life, the sacraments, and the traditional liturgy are its primary means to foster virtue and sanctity and to bring the divine life of grace to souls.

The Mission of Angelus Press

Angelus Press, in helping the whole man, tries to be an outlet for the work of the Society, helping them reach souls. We aspire to help deepen your spiritual life, nourish your studies, understand the history of Christendom, and restore the reign of Christ the King in Christian culture in every aspect.

Available from Angelus Press



The Last Mass of Padre Pio

THE STARTLING TRUTHS UNCOVERED BY THIS BOOK WILL FOREVER CHANGE THE WAY CATHOLICS VIEW THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

On September 23, 1968 after having borne the stigmata for exactly 50 years, the saintly Padre Pio died. This holy mystic spent his life as a living imitation of Christ and is the only priest in history to bear the stigmata. During his life, in spite of the physical pain he endured, Fr. Pio continued to say his daily Mass. But part of his suffering was unknown. Fr. Pio wrote a petition appealing directly to Pope Paul VI so as to obtain permission, from the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth, to never be required to say the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The existence of this petition was kept secret from the public . . . until now.

Things to learn about this holy friar:

- Mystical vision and calling to be an *Alter Christus*
- Life-long combat with the demonic spirits
- Profound physical suffering especially during the Canon of the Mass
- His loyalty to the traditions of the Church and the Mass of all times
- His pious admonitions to his spiritual children

For the first time published in English read the startling testimony and eyewitness accounts of close friends and spiritual sons of Padre Pio as they reveal his thoughts on the sanctity of the Mass, the changes occurring in the Church during his lifetime, and the chilling effects they would have on the future. Look behind the cloister wall and discover a side of Padre Pio you've never seen before.

216 pp. Softcover. Photographs. STK# 8803 STK# 8744 $15.95

Sacred Heart Flag of Reparation

PROUDLY FLY THIS FLAG

June is the month traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His heart is the striking symbol of Divine love and redemption. June, follows the month dedicated to His Immaculate Mother, whose role ever remains to give Him to the world and lead men to the pierced Side of Her Divine Son, in order that they be cleansed by the Waters and fortified by the Blood flowing therefrom.

Thus, there is one color to fly this month, and every month, and one alone:—

SACRED BLOOD RED!

As such, we are offering a custom 3 x 5 ft. flag for order.
Durable polyester construction with rivets.

Suitable for indoor or outdoor usage. STK# 8800 ~~$90.00~~ $72.00

www.angeluspress.org | 1-800-966-7337

Please visit our website to see our entire selection of books and music.