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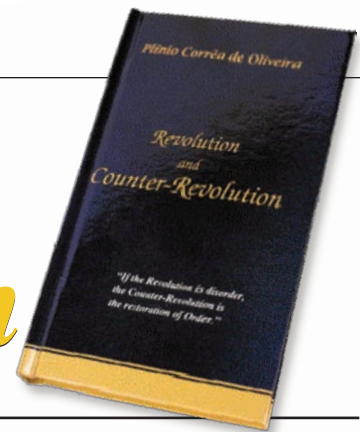
INSIDE

- *Anti-Dogma* Campaign Update
- Is it reasonable to believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ?
- Gone with the Wind?

Reflections on Holy Week

Revolution and Counter-Revolution

by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira



A new Swiss Guard swears allegiance to the Pope with the traditional gesture of three extended fingers to signify faith in God, one and three.

Photo: Arturo Mari

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Lenin inciting the Russian people to the Communist Revolution

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CONTENTS

March-April 2000

EDITORIAL	2
Is the Church among our concerns?	
IN BRIEF	3
♦ Shepherds speak out against homosexuality ♦ Too many spills? ♦ Communist vengeance ♦ Where have all the young radicals gone?	
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION	4
Reflections Upon a Globalized Apple	
TFP IN ACTION	6
♦ March for Life 2000 ♦ "They turned it into a polemic!"	
COMMENTARY	12
The Human Spirit Thirsts for Sin and Absurdity	
CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS	15
Is it reasonable to believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ?	
COVER STORY	18
Embracing Christ and the Cross — What Does It Mean?	
ONLY IN AMERICA	22
Gone With the Wind?	
RELIGION	25
The Feast of the Annunciation: How Important Is It?	
BASIC HISTORY COURSE	26
The Second Barbarian Invasion	
BACK TO MANNERS	30
A Destructive Equality	
TEACHING OUR CHILDREN	32
No! Why not?	
FAMILY SERIES	34
Jaques and His Charge	

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Page 18

Reflections on Holy Week and the Passion of the Church, by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira



Cover: Our Lord blindfolded, by Fra Angelico, superimposed over a destroyed church.



Page 8 Protests against the blasphemous film *Dogma*



Page 34
Jaques and His Charge



Is the Church among our concerns?

In fast-paced times like ours it is often quite difficult to pause and think, let alone to meditate and pray. Cares and concerns of all sorts, material things both necessary and not-so-necessary, events in our own neighborhoods and in the world at large, all compete for the attention of our eyes, ears, and minds.

Every day brings news of tornadoes here, floods there; ongoing accounts of the presidential campaign; further details on the most recent plane crash; reports on this or that new health concern; the latest financial updates; news about the war in one place, the civil strife in another, the peace talks somewhere else.

Amidst these important national and global concerns, there are the more immediate ones of our own family affairs: meeting the monthly bills, rearing our children in a world ever less congenial to them, caring for an aged and infirm parent, facing anxieties over a loved one who has gone astray, and so many more — all matters meriting our attention.

Yet, indeed, these often seem to leave us little if any time for consideration of “those things that do not pass away,” those which, among all our legitimate concerns, are really most important. The sense of lacking time and calm for these higher things surely becomes more acute for Catholics who truly love the Church as they approach the season of Lent, a time that calls us, perhaps more than any other, to such thoughts.

Many people, of course, have no such concern. Some have consciously rejected any notion of eternal realities, others are simply indifferent to them. In either case, whether

they be optimists or pessimists in overall outlook, they are certainly not realists.

Realists — only those who see this world as it is, as God created it and governs it; only those who marvel at the splendors of His material creation but know that there exist a spiritual creation and an un-created spiritual reality as well; only those who know that all God’s creation is good, but also that sin entered the world, first the angelic world and then the material, and that all humankind labors under that sinfulness; and finally, only those who know that sinfulness is overcome solely by Our Lord’s redemptive sacrifice and our cooperation with it.

We, realists, cooperate by examining our own sinfulness, by confessing our sins, and by making amends for them through prayer and penance. The penance may, and should, include fasting, but it should also include the patient bearing of all the crosses of our daily lives, including the cross of finding scant time for prayer and reflection amidst the others. But our reparation should not be focused solely on ourselves and our concerns, for we are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and this in a world and age that ignores, blasphemes, and even persecutes the Church and what remains of Christian civilization.

We can and should make this one of *our* concerns. It is this that Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira deals with in our cover story, “Embracing the Cross of Christ — What does it Mean?” a thoughtful meditation for this coming Lent, even as we face our daily crosses.

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The American TFP

The American Society for the Defense of *Tradition, Family and Property* (TFP) was founded in 1973 to confront the profound crisis shaking the modern world. It is a civic, cultural and non-partisan organization which, inspired by the traditional teachings of the Supreme Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, works in a legal and peaceful manner in the realm of ideas to defend and promote the principles of private ownership, family and perennial Christian values with their twofold function: individual and social. The TFP’s words and efforts have always been faithfully at the service of Christian civilization.

The first TFP was founded in Brazil by the famous intellectual and Catholic leader Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in 1960. His work has inspired the formation of other autonomous TFPs in 26 countries across the globe, thus constituting the world’s largest anticommunist and anti-socialist network of Catholic inspiration.

✓ **Shepherds speak out against homosexuality**

Advocates of homosexuality are unrelenting in their numerous and widespread efforts to obtain tolerance, or, rather, complete acceptance of their vice. Anyone who disagrees with them, they contend, biased and intolerant. Nevertheless, at least a few of their recent initiatives are being forcefully opposed by Catholic bishops.

Thomas Cardinal Winning of Glasgow recently enraged homosexual activists in the United Kingdom when he told the truth about their vice. "It pains me to use the word perverted when discussing the homosexual act, but that is what it is," the Cardinal said.

The head of Scotland's 750,000 Catholics, Cardinal Winning urged the "silent majority" to "speak up for their society" as he openly criticized a proposal of Tony Blair's government to overturn a prohibition against teaching schoolchildren that homosexual activity is acceptable.

A spokesman for the homosexual rights group Outrage! accused the cardinal of "scaremongering," "storing up prejudice and intolerance," and "provoking false fears and worries," according to a January 18 Reuters report.

Closer to home, Most Rev. Kenneth A. Angell, Bishop of Burlington, Vermont, rallied over 1,000 people at Vermont's statehouse on February 1 to protest the Vermont Supreme Court's ruling that the State's marriage statutes discriminate against homosexuals seeking marital status. The Court ruled that homosexuals must receive the same rights and benefits as married couples and left it to the State's legislature to remedy the "discrimination." The issue has sharply polarized public opinion in the state, as is evident from the two recent, opposing rallies that have attracted well over a thousand people each. *The New York Times* reported that such numbers from Vermont's 600,000 people would be equivalent to gatherings of 90,000 people in New York.

During the rally against the ruling, Bishop Angell exhorted all

to political action by petitioning the state legislature for an amendment to protect traditional marriage against same-sex unions and domestic partnership. In a pastoral letter to the priests and faithful of his diocese, which he also shared in his testimony before the Vermont House Judiciary Committee, Bishop Angell said "Often the truth does not 'tickle our ears,' but rather calls us to bear witness when perhaps we would rather not become involved. I believe such a time is upon us, right here in our own Green Mountains and in our own backyards. Today in Vermont, the sacredness of marriage and the family as ordered by God is in jeopardy, and those who honor that sanctity are called to defend it with courage and conviction."

The promoters of this unnatural vice want nothing short of total equality between vice and virtue. That, however, is impossible, for unless society discourages vice and upholds virtue, vice inevitably attains an imperious status and demands being called virtue itself. It is to be hoped that other shepherds will courageously stand up with Cardinal Winning and Bishop Angell in this urgent matter.

✓ **Too many spills?**

Along with the other changes since Vatican II, it has become common practice for the faithful to receive Holy Communion under both species. The practice has given rise to a growing number of complaints about stains on altar linens. The purificators, the small linens used to wipe the chalice after each communicant partakes of the Blood of Christ, easily become stained. The wine or precious blood is also occasionally spilled on the altar cloth itself. These linens are often hand-woven and delicate, so cleaning them can be a laborious process that becomes complicated by the numerous stains.

In face of this problem, a parish in Irving, Texas, obtained "permission" to substitute paper towels for the purificators! A more common and quickly spreading solution is the use of a

white or light red wine for Mass. San Antonio Winery, a producer of sacramental wines, reported a doubling in sales of white and light red wines in recent years, while the sales of red wines decreased twenty percent.

The real question here is one of value, the value of the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Even if much work is required to clean the linens, His Presence and the opportunity of the faithful to receive Him are of infinitely greater importance. Any effort or expense is nothing compared to the infinite God.

✓ **Communist vengeance**

The communists have always shown a pathological desire for revenge against anybody who swings free from their evil clutches. At the end of World War II, the United States, to satisfy Stalin's vindictiveness, repatriated several thousand Russian soldiers who had fought for Germany. Anyone fortunate enough to get over the Berlin Wall had to expect a fusillade of bullets in the final stages of his escape. Now in the first year of the twenty-first century, a six-year old Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez, becomes the target for communist revenge.

In the past the United States had been sympathetic to victims of communism, but seven years of President Clinton's appeasement of Marxist dictators has eroded that sympathy. We have forgotten the misery of life on the island of Cuba, where the most prized gifts from visitors are soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste. More debilitating is the inherent spiritual evil, for communism is by nature atheistic, materialistic, and evolutionary. It refuses to admit that God, our Creator Who has always existed in His infinite beauty, is a pure spirit, as is our soul, and that He is the absolute, unchanging Truth. This lies at the bottom of Western Civilization's conflict with Marxism and its subsequent socialistic offshoots.

Into this monumental conflict



drifted a young boy, bouncing on the sea on an inner tube, protected by his guardian angel to whom he was praying and by a circling school of dolphins that ward off the sharks. His mother had already died

risking his life and hers to flee from Cuban tyranny. Now powerful and determined forces in this country want to return young Elian to the island prison. We have fallen a long way in seven years.

✓ **Where have all the radicals gone?**

Young radical Catholic progressivists used to be the cutting edge of those who claimed the role of modernizing the Church and society. Their constant demands for women priests, structural reforms, and other social issues were all championed in the name of keeping up with the times. Ironically, the only element of the radical Catholic movement that seems unable to keep up with the times is the young radicals themselves.

At the latest Call to Action National Conference, held last November in Milwaukee, 3,500 members gathered together in a virtual Who's Who of Catholic progressivists. The organization's Call to Action News reported on the event. It was hard not to notice the number of graying heads among the theologians and activists who took the podium.

Yet, the newsletter did mention a sizable younger participation. Stretching the limits of youth into middle age, the article exulted over the tangible presence of 400 younger adults aged 42 or under. Even the 3100 non-younger adults over 42 were euphemistically termed the "wisdom generation."

Paraphrasing the popular song from the 1960s, one has to ask, "Where have all the young radicals gone?" It seems that the "wisdom generation," warned back then not to trust anyone over thirty, has revised that vital age-limit.



Reflections Globalized

BY JOHN HORVAT



All too often, the debate around globalization centers on the economics of production. It is naturally assumed that nations which are able to undersell others in a certain product should do so. Such a system insures the greatest variety of goods at the lowest price.

While the globalized economy does enrich the world by circulating a vast array of quality goods, that is only part of the story. It also impoverishes.

There is a cultural aspect to globalization that is often ignored.

Culture and production

Culture, by definition, incorporates the beliefs, behavior, language, and entire way of life of a particular people. It is reflected in customs, ceremonies, works of art, inventions, technology, traditions, foods, and economy. Christian civilization, with its constant impulse toward perfection, especially enriches culture.

However, there is something in the very nature of man whereby anything he touches expresses his culture. All peoples take delight in the uniqueness of their own existence and constantly look for different ways to express it or see themselves reflected in their surroundings and products.

Thus, the world rightly praises Italy's vast array of pastas, Germany's variety of beers, or the assortment of Kentucky bourbons. In some way, all these

products reflect the respective locale and culture.

It is a tribute to the inventiveness of a people when they create surprising and novel products by extracting, developing, and refining resources from their surroundings.

Sometimes the place itself is so important that the product cannot be produced anywhere else. From the blending of local berries and special grapes, for example, the great Burgundy wines were born. From the cactus in the scorching Mexican desert, tequila was distilled.

A globalized apple

Something of this local creativity is lost in globalization.

Take the case of a lowly apple. Buy a simple bottle of apple juice at an American supermarket and look at the listing of the juice's origin. "Contains concentrate from Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Turkey and United States," one such label reads.

In this case, the multi-national apple juice ceases to express a single culture and becomes a savorless product to slake the thirst of its indiscriminating consumer.

The metaphysics of quantity

The globalized apple juice flees from any kind of distinctiveness. It makes a metaphysical statement by affirming that quantity is worth more than quality

Upon a Apple

and that large quantities of a thing are more important than its refinement and individuality.

While there are literally hundreds of varieties of apples, the globalized apple suppresses their characteristics and turns them all into a bland mixture of apple concentrates. All apples are equal and blended in a concentrate where the particular characteristics of a Hungarian apple are indistinguishable from those of an Argentine apple.

Gone is the distinctive, tart flavor of a local cider, replaced by the homogenized essence of apple made for the globalized masses.

Sinking in a sea of juice

It might be argued that globalized apple juice is a lamentable but necessary reality in the world market economy. Apple concentrate from several nations simply supplies overwhelming American demand.

Again, that is not the full story.

Globalized apple juice comes at a time when American apple production is at an all-time high. Apple orchards across the country are producing record harvests. However, the prices, adjusted for inflation, paid to growers are now the lowest since the Great Depression — while consumer prices are actually inching upward.

Apple juice prices, \$189 a ton in 1995, now stand at \$40 a ton. Other farmers report offers as low as \$10 a ton and simply let the apples rot rather than

pick them. Floods of imports, especially from Communist China, have run orchard owners out of business.*

A climate of instability

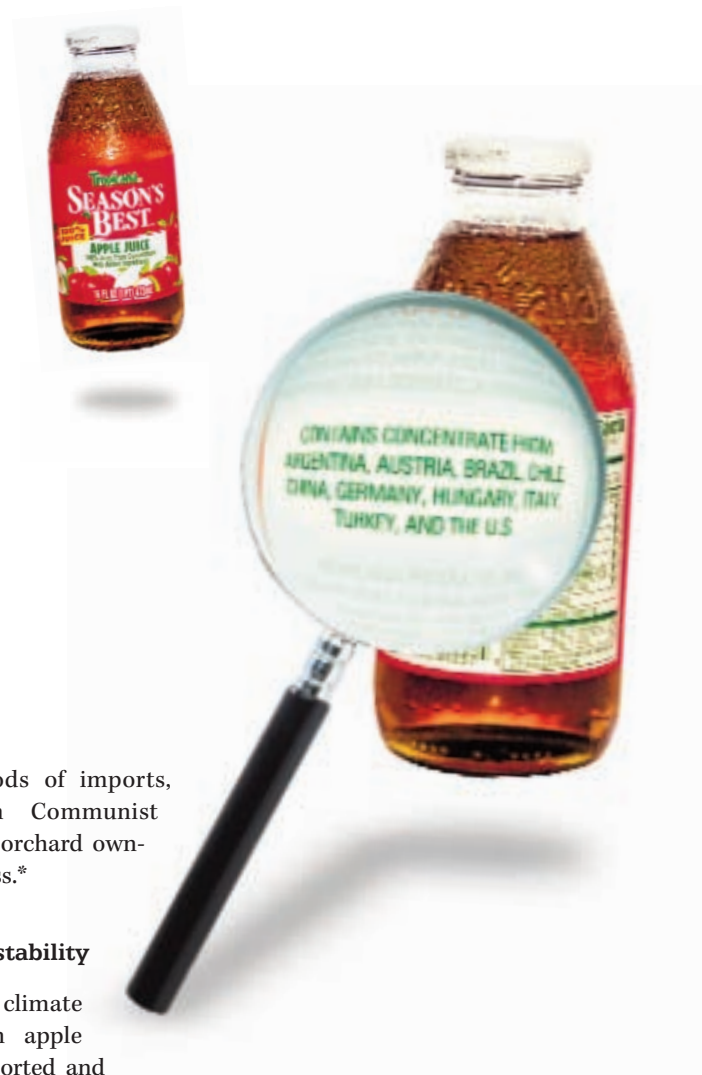
An economic climate wherein Turkish apple juice can be imported and sold cheaper than juice produced a mile down the road creates instability among producers. The incentive to produce new kinds of juices and other apple products is lost in the struggle for survival.

Something of the local creativity in the quest for a better apple is lost. Something of tradition is lost when orchard owners who have raised quality apples for generations leave their farms.

Ultimately, the consumer loses. There will always be high-priced quality juices available at gourmet shops. However, those common tangy juices so expressive of an area and accessible to all are inevitably the first victims of the globalized apple.

The apple is but one example. When the apple's plight extends to other fields, something of the way we express ourselves and something of our culture is lost — never to be regained. ■

(*) Sam How Verhovek, "Growers' Lament: The Crop's Bright Red, but So Is the Ink," *The New York Times*, 10/26/99, A-14.





2000 March for Life

A milestone & a crossroads



The marchers setting out toward Capitol Hill

On the occasion of the 27th March for Life in our nation's capital on January 24, 2000, the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property offered the following reflections in a leaflet given to thousands of March participants, in the hope that it might help redouble their anti-abortion efforts in the difficult years ahead.



The American TFP band marching with the more than 100,000 participants in favor of the unborn



American TFP volunteer distributes leaflets during the March

As we begin the year 2000, the contrast with the early years of the twentieth century could not be more striking. The America of 1900 was a young, vibrant nation full of large healthy families and teeming with immigrants from all nations. It was an America inebriated with the dream of an aborning new world in which technology and economic progress would resolve all problems and the headlong pursuit of happiness would be the sole rule of life.

In that optimistic atmosphere, however, lay the seed of a secular culture that called for throwing off all the restraints of morality.

As a logical consequence, that seed later produced the bitter fruits of moral laxity, including the drug-laced sexual revolution of the sixties and the nefarious abortion movement.

Today, as we look both backward and forward, the extravagant optimism of a materialistic redemption is waning. We have witnessed the bloodiest century in all history, with its devastating wars, famines, and civil strife. The sexual revolution has left in its wake countless shattered families, ruined lives, and the sad legacy of an aborted generation. In the United States alone, forty million Americans have been aborted and sacrificed to what has been so accurately called the "Culture of Death."

A vigorous crusade goes on

The onslaught of this Culture of Death has been so great, so total, that it has permeated all fields. For some, resistance would seem futile; the year 2000 should have marked the complete triumph of this culture.

But that did not happen.

As we enter the year 2000, the very existence of a powerful reaction in favor of the unborn marks a glorious milestone of which we may be proud.

The anti-abortion movement stands firm

Since *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in 1973, a vibrant resistance has had to brave the most daunting obstacles. The anti-abortion movement has faced hostile and biased treatment by the news media, betrayals by those who should be our staunchest allies, and hate-filled slurs of abortion advocates. We have resisted calls for unacceptable compromises and overcome internal difficulties. Persecution has only heightened our resolve.

Today, the anti-abortion movement stands erect before the nation in the presence of God, calling for a great common effort. The movement is alive and thriving, with widespread grassroots support from clergy, youth, students, and families across the nation. Anti-abortion activists around the world look to America for inspiration.

Moving ahead

Nevertheless, we cannot rest upon the laurels of past achievements.

We face the reality of a future ever more hostile to Christian morality.

Promoters of the Culture of Death are not satisfied only with crueler methods of abortion or more sophisticated means of contraception. Other ways of further undermining family, religion, and morality are constantly appearing.

For example, we are seeing increasingly blasphemous portrayals of God and religion on television and in theaters.¹ Supporters of homosexual "marriage" and other moral aberrations militantly seek to destroy the family. The innocence of children is shattered at an increasingly tender age.²

Reaching a crossroads

In face of these attacks, the year 2000 represents a crossroads.

In this moral crusade for America's soul, there are some who feel overwhelmed by the power of the adversary. They tend to isolate themselves and accept with resignation the encroachment of the Culture of Death.

To this, we respond, Never! In the anti-abortion fight, we cannot be intimidated. God does not want us to isolate ourselves in resignation; rather, He asks for undaunted strength and hope. Just as



March for Life — Washington — January 24, 2000

when we overcame the formidable obstacles of the past, we can count on God's help for the future.

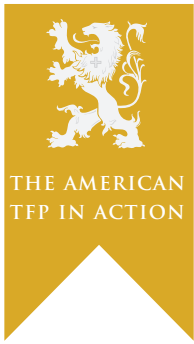
The lesson of Covadonga

The fate of nations has frequently depended on the efforts of people — often fewer in number. When the Moors thought they had dominated Catholic Spain, a handful of Catholics refused to give up and, from a small stronghold in a place called Covadonga, began the long but successful reconquest of their country.

With similar resolve, we must continue doing all that we can, while calling upon God's help, in this moral crusade for America's soul. ■

1. In 1998, Terrence McNally's play *Corpus Christi* portrayed a Christ-figure who engaged in homosexual relations with his apostles. Kevin Smith's 1999 movie *Dogma* mocks all that Catholics hold sacred. The American TFP mobilized millions of Americans to voice their opposition to these productions.

2. Today's scandalizing of children calls to mind the prophecies about our times made by Our Lady of Good Success to the Conceptionist nun Mother Mariana de Jesus Torres in Quito, Ecuador, in the sixteenth century. Referring to the twentieth century, Our Lady said: "in those times, the atmosphere will be saturated with the spirit of impurity which, like a filthy sea, will engulf the streets and public places with incredible license.....Innocence will scarcely be found in children or modesty in women."



"They turned

*Tons of mail and
400 public
protests: not the
publicity Dogma
needed...*

BY ROBERT RITCHIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICA NEEDS FATIMA



Dogma's blasphemies were being screened in over 1,200 theaters of our beloved land. It was November 23, 1999, and the theater-front protests all over the country were entering their twelfth day.

While walking to the ANF office amidst the first chills of an approaching winter, I was pondering the intense action of the last six months. None of us had ever seen anything like it before.

In Kansas, our "Protest Coordination Center" was abuzz with activity. Calls were coming in profusely, often late into the night. Local coordinators from Maine to Hawaii were asking for supplies, suggestions, and the names of nearby ANF members to invite to their protests.

Here at HQ in Pennsylvania, things had

long been in high gear. Since June 1, more than three million *Stop Blasphemy Now!* leaflets had been mailed out to the tens of thousands of people who offered to help distribute them. The impact had been immediate. By June 10, the entire leaflet had been scanned into, and was being vilified on a Kevin Smith fan website.

On October 4, *Dogma's* U.S. debut had been held at the New York Film Festival. Kevin Smith — author, director, and actor in the film — had been there with his following.

So were more than 2,000 dedicated children of Mary. During the three-hour protest, they had prayed fervently and offered their public reparation for the blasphemies against God and His Blessed Mother, the mockeries of the Church, and the misrepresentation of the Catholic faith. New York

Auxiliary Bishop Francis Garmendia had led everyone in reciting the rosary. Fathers Benedict Groeschel and Andrew Apostoli of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, and many other speakers had given most inspiring addresses. Letters from Cardinal George (Chicago), Bishops Curtiss (Lincoln), Timlin (Scranton), Dupré (Springfield, Mass.) and Doran (Rockford), and Senator Bob Smith (I-NH) had been read to the crowd and distributed to the media.

Bishop Doran's words were ardent: "I have often advised Catholics in this diocese that they would do a great work of religion if they were to forego using any Disney products or services and any Miramax films. The dismal work of both companies since the inception of this anti-American type of activity leads me to suspect that the latest

it into a polemic!”



Allentown, Pennsylvania

work is a product of their desperation, and I do not blush to invoke Saint Michael the Archangel to rebuke them with the other devils and to consign them to the same fate.”

Now, upon entering our office building, my gaze automatically swept the news board in the hall, searching for new postings. A CNN transcript caught my eye. One of the volunteers who scanned the Web, the airwaves, and the printed media for anything on *Dogma* had picked it up on his “radar.” It was an interview of Kevin Smith on *Larry King Live*.

As I read the transcript I could not help smiling, seeing how Larry King, in true textbook fashion, warmed up to the media’s favorite mantra on how peaceful and lawful protests of a blasphemous film... are just free publicity: “Well, you had a very

good opening. Why do you think — don’t — it’s — one thing incomprehensible is when you bring about to slam something, you increase the interest in it?”

Accustomed to the wiles and guiles of the more media-savvy, the answer from *Dogma*’s New Jersey scriptwriter caught me entirely by surprise:

“They really brought a lot more awareness and attention to it. However, it wasn’t the kind of awareness or attention that I was really looking for. I mean, it’s an entertainment, right, and they turned it into a polemic!”

It rolled like thunder in my ears: “They turned it into a polemic!”¹ Wow! I knew the nationwide protests against *Dogma* — not just America Needs Fatima’s, but those being promoted by many dedicated organ-

izations, parishes, and even isolated Catholics — were hitting home, and hard. However, one seldom hears as much “from the horse’s mouth” ...and so soon, too!

Of course, it is our obligation as devoted children of Mary to stand up and defend our precious faith; to make public reparation for *Dogma*’s unspeakable blasphemies. We would be bound to do so even if only the angels in Heaven were paying attention.

Nevertheless, this was welcome news. Kevin Smith’s lament was that many, many indeed of our fellow Americans had taken notice of the protests and this had impacted their perception of the film... dramatically!

What a confession! I recalled Smith’s vain boast at a special party after *Dogma*’s New York Film Festival premiere. Smith threw



Protest against *Dogma* in Los Angeles.



St. Louis, Missouri



Protest in front of the Disney Studios, Burbank, California



Lafayette, Louisiana

out his challenge, to the general applause of those present: "It's easy to pinpoint one location, but the movie's opening on 1,200 to 1,500 screens all at once. How are you going to move people around like that?"²

With the number of local protests estimated at over 400 already and news of more coming in daily, I felt humbled. It really seemed that the angels were intervening!

With a quick prayer of thanks to the Blessed Mother, I rushed to share the news with the staff and the volunteers manning the phones. These twenty-three brave souls certainly deserved to be the first to hear the news. They were also the fastest way I could think of to spread the word far and wide.

Working in shifts so that several were always on hand, these dedicated helpers were crucial in the operation. They were always there with words of encouragement and the much needed "how-to" for first-

timers. They were also the "spokes in the wheel," putting people in touch with one another so that everyone who wanted to protest *Dogma* knew the times and places of local showings and rallies.

An interesting example was that of

Typically, most of the public kept their distance. — It was no different on Calvary!

Gaynell Russell, a 19-year-old from Louisiana. *Dogma* was coming to her town and she set out to organize a protest. Despite her best efforts she could not muster support. Faced with the prospect of

protesting alone, she was somewhat discouraged, but she did not give up. Calling the America Needs Fatima protest center for help, she obtained the names of other concerned Catholics in her area. She contacted them and more than 60 joined her on the street.

Another case was that of a young mother in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Yes, she wanted to do something, she told the ANF caller, but how would *she* ever be able to organize a protest? It all sounded so overwhelming! Nevertheless, she was determined to try if someone else in her area could help. It was not long before another young mother with the same predicament phoned her. Obviously, the angels wanted them to make the effort. Well, they did. They organized *two* protests with 70 protesters each and received good local media coverage.

Of course, no two protests were alike.



Hazleton, Pennsylvania



Washington, DC.

Some, like the one in Westminster, Maryland, had a priest leading the Rosary. Others had nuns in attendance, while many had just a few of Christ's faithful. The protest in front of Disney's Burbank, California, headquarters drew over 300 people, while in front of one Delaware theater, the sole protester, a brave lady, was able to convince four moviegoers not to see the film.

This apostolate of dissuasion was one of the protests' most rewarding aspects. At a theater in the outskirts of Pittsburgh, which attracted some 120 protesters, including two busloads from the University of Steubenville, teen-age moviegoers stopped to speak with one of the protesters. Some of the teens were soon convinced that *Dogma* was the wrong choice. At a mall in York, Pennsylvania, a woman and her children were thankful that the protest educated them as to *Dogma's* real nature.

This poor mother, dreadfully mistaken about the film, had innocently believed it to be a pro-faith film that would do her children some good!

"They really brought a lot more awareness and attention to it. However, it wasn't the kind of awareness or attention that I was really looking for."

Another gratifying aspect was that now and then those passing by a rally thanked the protesters for their public witness. See-

ing the banners and posters with the thousand different ways people came up with to say "*Dogma* = blasphemy," they tooted their horns, waved, or clapped in support as they drove by. Here and there, some would join the picket line for a while, pulling his or her rosary out of a pocket or a purse and adding another voice to the chorus of reparation. Others, as if they were disciples of Nicodemus in the Gospel, would approach a protester and whisper, as if fearful of being overheard, "Thank you for what you are doing here. God bless you!" and then go on their way.

Typically, of course, most of the public kept their distance. It was no different on Calvary!

Some protesters were taken aback by the dour disposition of the theater managers and employees. These did not seem convinced in the least that the protest was "free advertising" for *Dogma*. Practically everywhere, theater personnel were adamant that the protest be shut down or at least removed by the police or mall security staff to some obscure corner of the parking lot. They brought out every argument: property rights, anti-loitering laws, obstruction to pedestrian traffic, unlawful littering, social nuisance, liability hazard.

Some protesters, showing that their protest was not disruptive nor likely to induce anyone to violence and was not preventing access to the theater, were able to hold their ground. Others, having to move to a public street in front of the mall, sometimes found that the relocation worked out for the better. A busy intersection, especially when protesters had large and well-placed posters, banners, and a statue of the Blessed Mother, often became the perfect stage to broadcast the protest. Thousands who would have missed it otherwise thus came in touch with the issue. And those thousands all talk... at the water cooler, over lunch, after Mass, on the phone with family and friends.

Word definitely spread that *Dogma* was being picketed. At a suburban Baltimore theater, some devoted volunteers were taking their posters out of their cars and making ready for the protest. A woman awaiting a bus with her two children walked over and asked, "Are you here to protest against *that* film?"

Our protests did not nor could they stop

everyone from seeing *Dogma*. But they had a powerful impact even on some people who viewed the film. For example, at Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., an area considered by many as somewhat “beyond the Pale” after sunset, not a few among those going in to the theater flaunted their “alternative lifestyle.” Laughingly, some of them boasted of going to see *Dogma* for a second or even a third time. Some even blasphemed as they walked in!

I am convinced, however, that not all of them were fire-eaters from Hell. In my opinion, some of the viewers show themselves to be steeped in malice, but they are a tiny minority. This handful, however, gathers around them others who do not actually share their degree of wickedness. For both types of viewers the impact of a protest is *vital*. The first type needs to be shown that resistance to their work of damnation is organized. As for the tag-alongs, they may have shrugged off the protest as they walked into the theater so as not to appear squeamish, but I believe it registered, and deep down in them, a seed was planted. One day, perhaps years from now, the tears of Mary could make that seed germinate in some of those souls and blossom into sincere contrition for a sinful life.

I will never forget the comment of one young man in Washington. He had been watching the protesters from a chair in a sidewalk café for some time. Eventually he came up to one protester and said: “I’m an atheist and do not believe in God, but I’ve been watching your protest, and think I’ve figured it out. You’re raising the stakes on this film. You’re forcing everyone to make a moral choice!”

Indeed, the protest against *Dogma* is all about a moral choice. From the unfortunate screenwriter to Bishop Doran, from the protesters to the passersby, each of us is called to stand up and be counted. Each of us makes a moral choice. And we do so not just in the secret of our hearts, but through the example we give to others. ■

1. Excerpts from the rush transcript of “Larry King Live Weekend,” CNN.com Transcripts. Aired November 20, 1999 — 9:00pm ET.

2. *Los Angeles Times*, Today’s Calendar Stories, October 6, 1999.

The Human Spirit Thirsts for Sin and Absurdity

BY JUAN DONOSO CORTÉS

Our Lord did not conquer the world by the beauty of His doctrine. Had He been no more than a man of beautiful doctrines, the world would have admired Him for a moment, and then forgotten not only the doctrine but the Man as well. At first, only the common people followed that so-admirable doctrine; the more distinguished among the Jewish nation despised it, and the human race largely ignored the Master during His lifetime.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not conquer the world by His miracles. Even among the men who bore witness to Him and who with their own eyes had seen Him transform things, changing their nature by His word alone, who saw Him walk on the waters, calm the sea, still the winds, exercise His empire over life and death, some called Him God, others a devil, and yet others a prestidigitator and magician.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not conquer the world because the ancient prophecies were fulfilled in Him. The very synagogue, depository of the prophecies, did not convert; the doctors who knew the prophecies did not convert, nor did the multitudes who had learned the prophecies from the doctors of the law.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not conquer



the world by the power of truth. The truth contained in Christianity, as far as its depths and essence are concerned, already existed in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament, because the truth does not change: it is always one, eternal, and identical with itself. Eternally present in the bosom of God, it was revealed to man, communicated to his

soul, and deposited in history at the very moment in which the first divine word resounded in the world. Nevertheless, the Old Testament, in its eternal and essential teachings as well as in supplementary, local, and contingent elements, in its dogmas as well as in its rites, remained an exclusive possession of the Chosen People, never passing beyond their domain.

That same people often made itself a spectacle of great prevarications and revolts. We see them persecute their prophets, strangle their doctors, follow the ways of the Gentiles even to idolatry, make abominable pacts with the infernal spirits, give themselves up body and soul to bloody and horrible superstitions; and finally, on the day in which the Incarnate Truth was before them, they denied Him, cursed Him, and crucified Him on Calvary.

At that precise moment, when the Truth

Juan Donoso Cortés (1809-1853), a Spanish marquis, was a brilliant student of the intellectual and moral conditions in Europe of his time. At first an admirer of the Enlightenment, he turned strongly against liberalism and socialism in his later years. This article, comprising most of Chapter 5 of his Essay on

Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism, stresses the preference the human intellect and will have for error and evil over truth and good as a consequence of Original Sin. First published in 1851, the essay could have — save perhaps for its rhetorical style — been written yesterday.

hidden in the ancient symbols, represented by the ancient figures, announced by the ancient prophets, attested to by the most astounding prodigies, by the most amazing miracles, was nailed to the cross; while He was personally on earth to give, through His presence, the very reason for all those miracles, all those prodigies, to fulfill all the prophetic words, to show the reality hidden under the veil of the figures and the symbols; at that very moment error reigned over the earth, and had invaded and covered everything completely with its shadows, freely, as if without any obstacles, with exceptional rapidity and without any assistance from symbols or figures or prophecies or miracles. It is a terrible lesson, a memorable teaching, for those who believe that the power of expansion [supposedly inherent] in the truth is sufficient to prevail by its own strength over the radical impotency of error and establish itself on this Earth.

If Our Lord Jesus Christ overcame the world, He overcame it in spite of being the Truth, in spite of being the One foretold by the prophets, the symbols, and the figures. He overcame the world despite His prodigious miracles and despite the incomparable beauty of His doctrine. No doctrine other than that of the Gospel could have triumphed with such an ensemble of undeniable testimonies, irrefutable proofs, and invincible arguments. If Mohammedanism managed to spread like a flood in so many parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe, it did so without all that burden, and because it carried all its miracles, all its arguments, and all its testimonies at the point of its sword.

Prevaricating and fallen man is not made for the truth; nor the truth for man in this state of prevarication and decadence. Ever since man's prevarication, God has placed an undying repugnance and an invincible rejection between the truth and human reason. The truth contains within itself the titles of its sovereignty, and it

imposes its yoke without asking permission; now, man, ever since he revolted against God, recognizes no sovereignty but his own and wishes to accept nothing except that which first solicits his approval and consent. Thus, when truth presents itself to him, his first movement is to deny it; by denying it, he affirms his sovereign independence. If he cannot deny it, he struggles against it; so struggling, he asserts his sovereignty. If he defeats truth, he crucifies it; if vanquished, he flees; by fleeing, he imagines himself having escaped servitude; by crucifying it, he believes he is crucifying his tyrant.

On the contrary, there is a secret affinity and a close kinship between human reason and absurdity. Sin has united them by the bond of an indissoluble "marriage." Absurdity triumphs in man precisely because it is destitute of any right previous and superior to human reason. Having no rights to allege, absurdity cannot have any pretensions [to man's allegiance or service]; now behold why man, in his pride, finds no motive for repudiating it. Far from that, his pride leads him to embrace absurdity; his will accepts absurdity because it is engendered by his own intelligence, which, in its turn, takes its pleasure in absurdity, that is, in its own offspring, in its own word, the living testimony of its creative power.

Creating is proper to the Divinity; by creating absurdity, man makes himself like God, as it were, and confers upon himself divine honors. As long as he may be God, and he may act like God, what difference does all the rest make to him? What difference does the existence of a God of truth make, if man himself is the god of absurdity? Is he not thenceforth independent like God, sovereign like God? In adoring the work of his own creation, and glorifying it, he glorifies and adores himself.

Let anyone who aspires to subjugate men, to dominate the nations, to exercise



Man's pride leads him to embrace absurdity; his will accepts absurdity because it is engendered by his own intelligence, which, in its turn, takes its pleasure in absurdity.



Let anyone who aspires to subjugate men, to dominate the nations, to exercise some empire over the human race, not announce himself as the herald of manifest and evident truth.





As the only proof of your affirmations and blasphemies, repeat those same affirmations and those same blasphemies; the world, have no doubt about it, will raise you up to the clouds.

some empire over the human race, not announce himself as the herald of manifest and evident truths; above all, let him who possesses certain and indubitable proofs abstain from showing them; the world will never recognize such men as masters. The clarity of the evidence, far from persuading the world, makes it revolt; it is a yoke it does not wish to bear.

There is a better way: It is to announce that one has an argument that overthrows such and such a mathematical truth, by which it is demonstrated that two and two equal not four but five; that God does not exist or that man is God; that the world up until now has lived under the empire of the most shameful superstition; that the wisdom of the ages is nothing more than mere ignorance; that all of revelation is an imposture; that all government is a tyranny and all obedience a servitude; that the beautiful is ugly, and ugliness is the supreme beauty; that evil is good, and good is evil; that the devil is God, and God is the devil; that after this life there is neither heaven nor hell; that the world we live in always was and continues to be a true hell, but that man can transform it, and he will transform it, within a short time, into a true paradise; that liberty, equality, and fraternity are dogmas incompatible with the Christian superstition; that robbery is an inalienable right, and that property is a robbery; that order exists only in "an-archy" [no government] and that true anarchy is order, and so on.

Promise to implant such anti-truths or others like them, and you may be certain that with this simple promise the world

will be taken with admiration; fascinated by your knowledge and imbued with respect for your wisdom, it will lend attentive ears to your words.

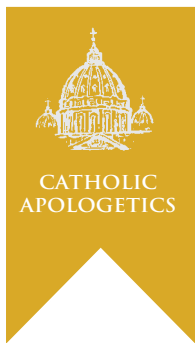
Then go further: Having given abundant proofs of common sense on announcing the demonstration of these remarkable things, show that you still have much more of that good sense by always abstaining from any demonstration whatsoever. As the only proof of your affirmations and blasphemies, repeat those same affirmations and those same blasphemies; the world, have no doubt about it, will raise you up to the clouds. If you wish to attain the heights in this art and make your triumph even more brilliant, boast of your sincerity, which is such that you present the naked truth without that vain apparatus of proofs and arguments, of historical testimonies, of prodigies and miracles, by which people ordinarily try to deceive men. Nothing will persuade better than your faith, which rests solely in the power of the truth, and that you count on nothing except truth itself to guarantee your triumph. This done, point out everything that is not you, and ask where and who are your enemies, and the world, with but one voice, will admire and celebrate your magnanimity, your grandeur, and the brilliance of your triumphs; it will proclaim you worthy of all respect and all felicity; in a word, it will glorify you.

I know of nothing under the sun more vile and more despicable than the human race outside the ways of Catholicism.

In the depths of this abyss, in the extremities of degradation and abjection,

are the multitudes led astray by the artifices of impiety and bent under the yoke of oppressive masters; right afterwards come the false doctors who seduce them. Going to the very bottom of things, tyranny is still less degrading, less vile, less despicable than those sophists and those multitudes who go where they are driven by the blows of their bloody whips; for error works to the benefit of tyranny, and it has always led the peoples to servitude. The first idolaters escaped from the hand of God only to fall into the hands of the tyrants of Babylon.

Ancient paganism did nothing but fall from one abyss to another, from one sophism to another, from one tyrant to another, to become finally, the slave of Caligula, a monster under human appearances, horrible, unclean, joining together the paroxysms of madness and the appetites of a beast. As far as modern paganism goes, it began by adoring itself in the person of a prostitute, and ended by prostrating itself at the feet of Marat, the cynical and bloody tyrant, and the cruel Robespierre, the supreme embodiment of human vanity and of all of humanity's ferocious and inexorable instincts. Behold, there arises a new paganism; it will fall into an abyss even more profound and more obscure; and it is possible that already now, in the sewers where the dregs of society lurk, there may be in germination the monster that will bend mankind's head; that will impose upon it a yoke surpassing everything seen in the past in weight and ignominy. ■



Is it reasonable to believe in the Divinity of Christ?

BY RAYMOND DE SOUZA

"I knew all along that the Y2K story was just a propaganda scare, you know?" said Father Thomas in his customary good mood. "Yet it did help bring back to the minds of many the idea that this computerized world of ours is not infallible, and, sooner or later, something can and will go wrong and ignite a series of events that will bring the house down, I reckon." He paused for a moment, and continued, "In any event, we are talking about the third millennium of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And we lived to see its dawn... good, eh?"

It was January 1, A.D. 2000. Father Thomas and I were just exchanging New Year's greetings outside the church after Mass.

"Yes, Father, it's good," I replied. "And I think that if the Western world has made an incredible progress from the computer and other technological points of view, from the spiritual point of view it's gone backwards in an even more incredible way. That's why Pope John Paul II spoke of 're-evangelizing the baptized.' The Western world has been de-Christianized to the marrow of the bone of its socio-economic and political structure."

"Afraid so," sighed Father Thomas. "Afraid so. We must aim at rediscovering the mind of Jesus Christ, the God-made-man, born of the Virgin, Who died for our sins and established His Church for our salvation. There will never be another Christian civilization unless we rid ourselves of this secular humanistic, anti-Christian 'culture' that has taken over society."

Suddenly, his eyes brightened up, as



**"Why should I believe
that only the religion
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Christ contains the
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What about all the
other great religions?
Does it make sense to
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the Son of God?"**

though he had remembered something, and he stuck his hand in his pocket and produced an envelope addressed to him — a letter handed to him the day before by a parishioner.

"Say, I've got something here for you. It's from a namesake of mine, Thomas — but a doubting one, like the Apostle, so I like to call him 'Doubting Thomas the Second.' Since you are so involved in apologetics, perhaps you might care to answer his letter. His question is right up your alley. See you on Sunday, and God bless." And he moved on to greet other parishioners.

* * *

While awaiting my wife and children to join me after greeting some friends, I couldn't resist opening the envelope. The letter was both poignant and challenging. I am sure that many a good Catholic has had this problem, albeit in passing, from time to time.

The topic is very *apropos* in view of the end of the second millennium of Our Lord Jesus Christ — since we must re-discover Him, His Church, and His holy Mother, and defend His Cause.

* * *

The heart of the letter read thus:

"Why should I believe that only the religion founded by Jesus Christ contains the fullness of truth? What about all the other great religions, counting so many millions of followers? Does it make sense to believe that



Buddha



Confucius

*Did any of these
founders claim to
be God Himself,
not just a prophet
of God?*



Mohammed



Zoroaster

only Jesus, and nobody else, was the Son of God? Am I really expected to take this on pure faith?

If it is only a matter of faith alone, any decent Muslim can say that his faith is sufficient to believe in Allah's prophet, Mohamed, can't he? The followers of Reverend Moon can also claim their faith in him, can't they? The Mormons say that you are supposed to pray to God and He'll tell you that Joseph Smith was indeed the true prophet. The late Sri Dwami Baktivedanta Phrabupadha (forgive me if I've misspelled his name) was revered as the guru par excellence, the master of truth, among the Hare Krishna fellows. The same goes with the Baha'is, and that other Indian guru worshipped by the Beatles. And so on and so forth.

So, without trying to be pedantic, may I ask you this: could you please give me some logical argumentation to suggest that it does make sense to believe that a young carpenter, who never went to school, who lived in a backward village in the poorest part of the most obscure province of the Roman Empire some 2,000 years ago, who was crucified like a common criminal between two thieves, was really God in the flesh, the Way, the Truth and the Life? How can I logically believe that?"

* * *

In this article I invite all *Crusade* readers to do what "Doubting Thomas the Second" asked: simply to consider whether or not it makes sense to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Yes, let us do just that: let us see if it makes sense from the point of view of pure logic. We'll leave Faith aside for the time being, and consider the Hebrew holy books (Old Testament) and the early Christian writings (New Testament) as historical documents, just like any good history books.

Of course, it is impossible for us to *prove* in an absolute, physical way that Christ is God — we were born some 2,000 years too late, just as we cannot absolutely *prove* that Columbus came to America as the history books say — we were not physically there to verify it. We use the elements provided by reliable historians and reason about the evidence in a logical manner.

We have to use the deductive powers of our minds — a bit like Sherlock Holmes would do — and, starting from the available evidence, we'll reason step by step to find out if it really makes sense to believe just what the new doubting Thomas asked.

"Does it make sense to believe that a young

carpenter, who never went to school, who lived in a backward village in the poorest part of the most obscure province of the Roman Empire some 2,000 years ago, who was crucified like a common criminal between two thieves, was really God in the flesh, the Way, the Truth and the Life?"

* * *

Let us begin the reasoning process with an overview to establish the proper context:

History has seen many founders of religions. Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Jesus Christ, to name those most well known. We leave aside for the time being Martin Luther, John Calvin, Henry VIII, Joseph Smith, Charles Russell, John Thomas, and all the others who claim to be the authentic interpreters of the Gospel of Jesus Christ — albeit outside of, and against, the Church He established. They all claim to be Christians, followers of Christ. We shall deal with them later. Here we are concerned with the Founder they claim to truly follow.

All the founders of religions had one thing in common: They claimed to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — so God help them. All of them have claimed to be some sort of mediator between God and man — teachers, prophets, messengers of the Truth. That claim puts all of them on the same level.

That all religions have some elements of truth is a self-evident affirmation. The trouble is not with the elements of truth, but with the elements of error mixed up with the truth. It is something like getting food poisoning by eating something that has remained a couple of days too long out of the fridge; The appearance and the taste may be good, but the poison is there to get you in the end. Similarly, the elements of truth act as a sort of bait to attract the human mind to accept the whole system, errors included.

If all religions are man-made, however well-meaning their founders may have been, one is as good as another. Some may have more elements of truth than others, but in the end, your choice is as good as mine. It will depend on a number of factors, such as, history, culture, language, education, tougher or looser moral code, family background, or simply personal preference.

If one of those religions is actually divinely made, however, then we have a totally different story. If such a religion exists, we must look for it and, upon finding it, embrace it. It would be illogical for anybody to be able to know the one

true religion and still prefer the more pleasant one being offered around the corner.

How to find out which one is divinely made, thereby possessing the fullness of the truth and avoiding any contamination of falsehood? Would it be by analyzing each and every religion, one by one, reading all their books, talking to their followers, arguing in the streets, you name it, until you drop dead? But is there one that has any claim of having the authentic Truth, in the first place? How on earth do we find out in a logical way?

Let us imagine that we were able to see all founders of the great religions standing in front of us, a great hall of fame. All of them claim that their respective religion is divine. But it is illogical that they could indeed be so, for there are visceral contradictions among those religions. In most cases, what one affirms the other denies, but the fullness of Truth cannot admit inner contradictions. If one of them has the fullness of Truth, the others are a mixture of truth and error. All cannot be totally true. Not all. Not even two.

Then we ask ourselves these simple questions: Did any of these founders, standing there before us, claim to speak the truth? The answer is easy: Yes, all of them. Second question: Did any of them claim to speak on God's behalf? The answer is again easy: Practically all of them. If anyone did not, it was Buddha, because he did not believe in a personal God. Third question: Did any of them claim to be God Himself, and not just a prophet of God? The answer is, once again, very simple: Only one did — Jesus Christ.

The proof is easy to verify: Ask any devout Jew if he believes that Moses was God Incarnate; he will be scandalized and deny it immediately. Ask any Muslim if Mohammed was God Incarnate; he will reply that Allah is the only God and that Mohammed was his prophet. The same applies to all of the other founders; they claimed to be messengers, prophets, gurus, whatever you like, but not God Himself. Only Jesus Christ claimed that.

If Jesus' claim is true, it is a unique claim, which gives His religion an infinite degree of superiority over all others: He would be God Incarnate, the very One whom all men are called to worship. All of the other religions, regardless of the elements of truth they may have, would be just man-made philosophies. So all we've got to do is to investigate Jesus' claim of divinity. If it is true, we're on the right path. If it is not, well, we'd better try again...

Now, there are many who deny that Jesus ever claimed divinity: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, modernist Catholics and Protestants of various ilks. Once I heard an Aussie priest saying that, "Yes, Jesus was God but He was not aware of it." I found it remarkable that Jesus did not know who He



Our Lord walking over the sea, by Gustave Doré

was, but that that priest did... What nerve! And what an outrageous insult against Our Lord to accuse Him of being so obtuse!

So, we must first establish whether or not Jesus indeed claimed to be God. If He did not, then belief in His divinity is nothing but wishful thinking on the part of the Apostles. If this can be established, then we'll proceed to find out if that claim makes sense. If it does, we'll move on to what other unique features are present in that remarkable young carpenter of Nazareth, Whom we adore as the Word made Flesh, of the purest flesh of the Virgin Mother, Whom we receive in Holy Communion as food for life eternal.

This is the context of the argumentation. As professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira often said, the best way to answer a question is to define its basic premises clearly. If the context is clear, the text will make sense by itself. In the next article we'll investigate whether Jesus Christ indeed claimed to be God, or if the belief in His divinity was, as some trendy theologians would have it, a further development of the faith of the Apostles. ■

CRUSADE readers wishing to hear the complete talk from which this article was taken may obtain a tape-recording from the author at:

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When Our Lord confronted St. Paul on the way to Damascus, he asked him: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?" Now, Saul was persecuting the Church. Our Lord made it plain that it was He Himself whom Saul was persecuting



Embracing Christ and the Cross What Does it Mean?

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA



An authentic piety penetrates every recess of our souls, naturally stirring our most intimate emotions. Piety, however, is far more than feelings. It arises deep within ourselves from our knowledge of the truths that govern an interior life formed in accord with the Faith. To be sure, these life-giving truths are often acquired through diligent and disciplined study, but intelligence, like emotion, is an inadequate foundation for piety, which also resides in the will.

Thus we must desire to live the truths we know. It is not sufficient to understand that God is perfect, for example. We must also love His perfection and desire to have some share in it; we must aspire to sanctity.

To desire is not simply to entertain vague notions or feelings. We truly desire something only when we are ready to make every sacrifice necessary to attain it.

Without the will to sacrifice, our "pious desires" are but vain illusions. Tender contemplations of divine truths and sacred mysteries are sterile seeds if they do not bear fruit in firm resolutions to live our faith.

It is especially timely to recall this during Holy Week. Meditating on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ is a praiseworthy devotion, but we must follow the Way of the Cross in our lives as well as in our churches. We must give Our Lord sincere proofs during these days of our devotion and love, amending our lives and fighting with all our strength in defense of the Holy Catholic Church.

"Why persecutest thou Me?"

When Our Lord confronted Saint Paul on the road to Damascus, He asked him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest

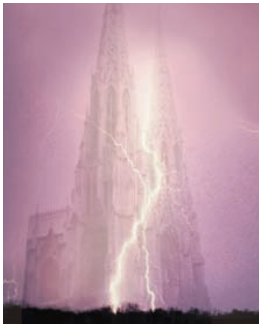


Holy Week in Seville, Spain

thou Me?” (Acts 9:4). Since Saul was persecuting the Church, Our Lord’s words make it clear that to persecute Christ’s Church is to persecute Christ Himself, for the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ.

If the Church is persecuted today, then Christ is persecuted, and Our Lord’s Passion is being relived in our days. Every act that draws a soul away from the Church persecutes Christ. To separate a soul from the Church is to amputate a member of the Mystical Body of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head. To wrench a soul from the Church is like chopping off Our Lord’s hand, severing His leg, pulling out His eye.

Therefore, if we desire to identify with the Passion of Christ, let us indeed meditate on His sufferings at the hands of His persecutors nearly 2,000 years ago, but let us not forget to consider all that is being done to inflict the same wounds on His Mysti-



Behold the Church suffering, persecuted, insulted before our indifferent or cruel eyes. She stands before us as Christ stood before Veronica.

cal Body today.

Above all, let us not fail to examine our own acts of indifference, cowardice, and betrayal. While His sacred blood mingled with the dirt during His agony in the garden, Our Lord foresaw the sins of all men of all times. He saw our sins and suffered for each one of them. In the Garden of Olives we were present with Christ as executioners and, as such, we accompanied His bloodstained steps to the heights of Golgotha.

Behold the suffering of Holy Mother Church mocked and jeered before our jaded eyes. She stands

before us as Our Lord once stood before Veronica. Let us console the Church by defending Her whatever the cost. In doing so, we will be consoling Christ as Veronica did.

How many souls will lose their faith?

Certain truths about God and our supernatural end we can learn by using the reason He has given us. Because our reason has been clouded by sin, however, we can know other truths only because God has taught us. In His infinite goodness, He has revealed them to us in the Old and New Testaments.

Our belief in Revelation is grounded in the virtue of faith. Without faith there is no salvation, but no one can make an act of faith without the supernatural help of God’s grace. God offers this grace to all men, but He showers it in torrential abundance on the members of His Mystical Body, the Church.

Through faith, the Holy Ghost dwells within us, sanctifying our bodies as His holy temple (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19). To abandon the Faith is to reject the Holy Ghost, to expel Jesus Christ from our souls.

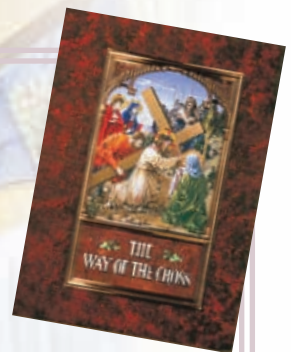
Yet, around us we see many Catholics who have rejected the Faith. They were baptized, but in the course of time they lost their faith. Alas, they suffered this loss through their own fault, for howsoever enticed by others, no one loses his faith without mortal fault. Behold them, indifferent and hostile, thinking, feeling, and living like pagans. They may be our relatives, our neighbors, perhaps even our friends. Their disgrace is immense. The mark of their baptism is indelible. Marked for heaven, they are bound for hell. The blood of Christ has been

The Way of the Cross

By Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira’s meditations on the fourteen stations of the cross, especially suited to our days, in a handsome new edition.

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sprinkled on their souls, and no one can efface it, yet they defile it by adopting principles and norms that violate the doctrines of Christ's Church.

And we? Are we troubled? Are we concerned? Does this pain us? Do we pray for their conversion? Make reparation? Are we apostolic? Where is our counseling? Our argumentation? Our charity? Where is our fearless and energetic defense of the truths that they deny or insult?

The Sacred Heart of Jesus bleeds because of this. It bleeds for the apostasies of these souls and for our indifference, an indifference that is twice guilty because it is indifferent to our neighbor and, first and foremost, to God.

How many souls around the world are losing their faith? Consider the endless numbers of impious newspapers and magazines, broadcasts and films, that flood the world daily. Consider the innumerable workers of Satan who, in academia, in the bosom of the family, in meeting rooms, in places of entertainment, propagate impious ideas. The consequences are before us. Institutions, customs, and art are becoming ever more de-Christianized, an undeniable indication that the entire world is losing God.

Is there not some great scheme in all of this? Can so many articulate and uniform methods, united in their objectives and development, be merely coincidental? Since when have spontaneous motions concerted-ly produced the most complete, organized, extensive, ingenious, and formidable ideological offensive in history, fully consistent in its essence, its goals, and its development?

We don't think about it. We don't even perceive it. We sleep the heavy sleep of our daily lives. Why are we not more vigilant? The Church suffers greatly, but alone. Far from Her, very far from Her, we slumber. The scene in the Garden of Olives is repeated.

"Could you not watch one hour with Me?"

We, thanks be to God, still profess the Faith that so many have abandoned and betrayed.

But what use do we make of it? Do we love it? Do we understand that our greatest happiness in life consists in being members of the holy Church, that our greatest glory is the title of Christian? If we respond in the affirmative — and how rare are those who, in good conscience, could so respond — are we ready to make every sacrifice in order to preserve our faith?

Before answering with a romantic yes, let us take a moment to examine our consciences honestly. Do we ever seek occasions that might put our faith at risk? Do we enjoy worldly pleasures that are — at

best — indifferent to it? Do we read or view materials that violate its standards? Do we welcome the company of those who disregard or even disparage it?

By virtue of their instinct of sociability, all men are prone to conform to popular opinion, to accept the conventional wisdom around them. Today's dominant opinions contravene the teachings of the Church in philosophy, sociology, history, science, art — ultimately, in everything. Our friends quite likely follow the trend. Do we have the courage to stand against it? Do we guard our hearts against any penetration of erroneous ideas? Are we of one mind with the Church in everything? Or are we content with negligently going about our business, taking in everything the spirit of the times instills simply because it instills it?

Perhaps we have not expelled Our Lord from our souls, but how do we treat this Divine Guest? Is He the object of all our attention, the center of our intellectual, moral, and affective life? Is He our King? Or do we allot Him only a small space where He is tolerated as a secondary guest, a rather uninteresting and inconvenient guest?

When the Divine Master groaned, wept, and sweat

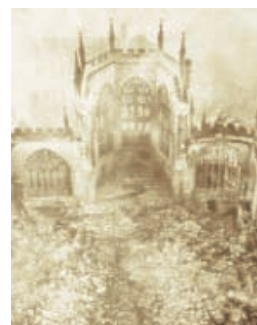
...Let our hearts go out to Her and console Her for all She suffers. We may be sure that, by doing so, we will be consoling Christ Himself as did Veronica.

blood during His Passion, He was tormented not solely by physical sorrows, nor just those sufferings occasioned by the hatred of those who persecuted Him then. He was also tormented by everything that we would do against Him and the Church in the coming centuries. He wept because of the hatred of all the evil men, every Arius, Nestorius, and Luther. But He also wept foreseeing the unending procession of lukewarm souls, apathetic souls, that, while not persecuting Him, do not love Him as they ought.

This is the innumerable multitude of those who spend their lives neither hating nor loving and who, according to Dante, remain at the gates of Hell because not even Hell has sufficient place for them. Are we among these?

This is the great question that with God's grace we must answer in the days of recollection, piety, and expiation we are about to enter. ■

This article is an abridged translation of the author's "Reflexões durante a Semana Santa," published in O Legionário, March 3, 1947





ONLY IN
AMERICA

Gone with the Wind?

The movie captured our attention, but it was the customs that conquered our imaginations. Reenactors bring back the best of the past.

BY NORMAN FULKERSON

"Sunday morning's Mass was absolutely magical for me," said Cindy Lambert, an office manager in New Orleans who portrays a nun in Civil War reenactments. "In all the years we have [reenacted], this is the first time we had a Latin Mass with Gregorian Chant. Many folks were awestruck by the beauty of it all."

The Latin Mass, of course, was not a reenactment nor were the sentiments expressed so well by Mrs. Lambert. Her words indicate how the ceremonial and ritual of the past satisfy the yearnings of those living in the present.

This struck me one day not so long ago when I had occasion to accompany an out-of-state friend to Gettysburg battlefield here in Pennsylvania. In front of the visitors' center I saw a man dressed as a doctor of the late 1800s doing what I then learned is called "living history" or "reenacting."

My curious nature got the better of me, so I approached the gentleman to inquire further. He was a distinguished man, as shown in his polite manners and

Michael McClosky (center) surrounded by soldiers in Gettysburg



Photo: Michael McClosky



Debbie Vail from Gettysburg represents a lady from the past in a red ballgown.

respectful demeanor. His deportment, however, was not that of the twentieth century but rather something of long ago.

He said that after retiring some years before, he had begun doing volunteer work for the National Parks Service. Becoming interested in reenactments, he had researched his character very well, purchased clothes to authentically match his "impression," and was having a great time teaching others about the last century.

"What drives you to do this," I asked.

"It gives me the opportunity to escape this century," was his prompt reply.

Considering that the United States has been *the* leading nation of the twentieth century, this was a remark I never expected to hear from an American. After all, we have everything we need to be happy: fax machines, cell phones, computers. We even survived Y2K! And here is someone wanting to break away from all this.

He is by no means alone. Over 100,000 Americans nationwide, sharing that same desire, have made reenacting their "hobby" as well. Clearly, the modern world does not have the same attraction for everyone.

Looking back to the beginning of this century, we see that mankind was marching forward with an enthusiasm for technology and what was thought to be true progress. The 1939 New York World's Fair, for example, chose a curious theme: the "World of Tomorrow." Not only did it present a glimpse of the future with a showcase of different technological advances, it sup-

plied a catchy name as well. Even so, visitors to that “World of Tomorrow” were still enjoying a look at the past. Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*, published just two years earlier, was a best seller in 1939. Later awarded the Pulitzer Prize, Mitchell’s book soon became an all-time-favorite motion picture as well. The society depicted in that story captivated America and the world. In spite of being a sugary-sweet romance with some illicit and indecent messages, it portrayed on the big screen appealing aspects of aristocratic life, packed full of ritual, charm, gallantry, and other ideals that were quickly becoming passé.

Once again, Hollywood presented a false alternative: a civilized world, with ceremony, manners, and allure, but with an overtly immoral message. It was an invitation to either reject the true ideals that still existed in those days or to accept Hollywood’s skewed, dissolute version of life in the 1860’s. That seemed to be the only alternative.

Reenactors think otherwise. They do not accept Hollywood’s distorted view, nor are they willing to allow those times to be “gone with the wind.”

This hobby, therefore, is more than just a pastime, and my goal was to find the reason why people threw themselves into it so wholeheartedly. They spend thousands of dollars — one family told of an annual investment exceeding \$4000 — and endless hours to portray someone from the last century. Their desire seems far greater than the simple joy that a hobby brings. “Reenacting isn’t just a hobby,” affirms another man at Gettysburg, “it’s a lifestyle.”

Is this a way so many Americans have found to escape this “World of Tomorrow” and return to the world of yesterday?

“Yes, there are many wonderful advances in the world these days,” said Susan Carpenter, a member of United Daughters of the Confederacy from North Carolina, “but it just seems like people within themselves have gone backward.” Mrs. Carpenter described it well: “I grew up lost in the 1860s. I always felt I was born at the wrong time.” She went on to tell how she stumbled upon reenacting through her involvement in the United Daughters and, yes, she had seen *Gone with the Wind* as a child and “loved it.” Even as a child she knew the “movie was not very authentic. The book is better, and I have read it countless times. I never wanted to be Scarlet,” she continued “because she was not what I thought a southern lady should be.”

Reenactors know what southern ladies and gentlemen should be, since their intense studies provide a clear perception of what is authentic



Cindy Lambert (left) from New Orleans as a Nun with Faye Dufour

and what is not. This search for accuracy goes right down to the person virtually living the life of the one he portrays. “When I wear my habit,” Mrs. Lambert said, “I ‘become’ a sister in my head and in my heart.” This is only attained through hundreds of hours of research, which allows for an exact impression that goes beyond mere imitation. Reenactors realize that the clothes are an important part of the person. “You can’t put on those clothes and behave like people do now,” Mrs. Carpenter said, “your way of walking, your way of moving, what you can and can’t do, and your entire mindset changes.” This mindset could never be achieved using today’s clothing.

If I haven’t convinced you yet, then come to Gettysburg!

Attending my first reenactment there gave me the opportunity to meet people, in their element, who live out this hobby. What I found left an indelible impression. Arriving at the battle site, I could not believe my eyes. There, in living flesh, was one of my heroes, Stonewall Jackson, astride his famous horse “Little Sorrel.” It was an auspicious beginning to a very memorable day.

I found myself walking around the first few minutes as if in a daze. It all seemed so surreal, yet authentic at the same time. Everyone was dressed in what many referred to as “costumes.” I somehow found it hard to label them as such.

Scenes surrounded me, as if from a movie, of gallant men upon their fierce steeds ready to wage war, with little boys looking on in utter amazement. When was the last time you saw a child (or an adult) gaze with admiration on another human being? At this event it was common. It was as if

*“When I wear
my habit”,
Mrs. Lambert
said, “I
‘become’ a Sister
in my head
and in my
heart.”*

The reenactment of a
Military Marriage



someone had opened a window to the past and, looking inside, saw a room full of the great men and gentle ladies of yesteryear.

Everywhere I looked there was a spectacle to behold. A precocious little girl approached one lady carrying a parasol that matched her hoop skirt. “You look so beautiful,” said the child, “from your head to your toes.” Then she quickly added, “You look like the Queen of England.” No doubt, the recipient of such a noble comparison was very moved, and why not? How often is someone admiringly compared to a queen? Attend a reenactment and you might think you are walking amongst royalty, such is the elegance.

At a certain distance from me was an activities tent where attendees, sitting on bales of hay, could enjoy everything from a banjo recital to a lecture on etiquette. As I entered and took a seat, I noticed a light mist covering the area, adding to the dreamlike aspect of this event. Suddenly a magnificent sight caught my eye. A lady and her “beau” were sauntering across the hillside. He was dressed in a spotless military uniform. She wore a black dress that, shimmering in the sun and blowing in the light breeze, seemed to be made of silk. Because it reached the ground, as all ladies’ dresses did in that period — it was considered indecent for ladies’ ankles to be showing — she seemed to be literally floating on air. Looking over my shoulder to see if I was alone in my appreciation of this idyllic scene, my eyes fell upon two elderly ladies seated in a distinguished manner. Sitting on a bale of hay can be anything but dignified, but they,

also dressed in period dresses, transcended their meager seating arrangements and displayed an impeccably erect posture. How refreshing, I mused.

Leaving my bale of hay to mingle a bit, I ran into a lady named Susan Taylor. She owns a shop that makes 1860s-style formal dresses. Learning that she was dressed in one of her own creations, I couldn’t resist venturing a rather mischievous question: “What do you wear when you’re not in period clothing, blue jeans and tennis shoes?” She promptly and proudly responded, “No I wear long dresses. I like being a lady.” And she was.

Having up to this point visited only the Northern section of the reenactors, I felt it was time to stroll on over to the Southern camp to see what they had to say. Without more ado, I approached a group of people sitting around a campfire, relaxing in the world of yesterday.

One young man, upon being questioned, was more than happy to share his reasons for reenacting. It was the customs of the time that attracted him so much. Men were obliged to “follow the gentleman-like code” in those days. “When a lady was in the campsite the men were very respectful” he said. “The ladies didn’t have to sit around and listen to cursing” and things of that nature. “It’s a great feeling,” he added. “You don’t want to come back, honestly you don’t.”

I had to chuckle when he pointed to a friend and explained how they both were “very much out of uniform.” With a certain pride at knowing what proper etiquette required, he continued: “We should have

our jackets and hats on around these ladies. I am a gentleman first and then a soldier.” He went on to say that these rules are always followed to perfection when reenactors get together. Well, almost always!

One of the ladies chimed in: “If a man was talking offensively in front of a woman, she was allowed to tell him to clean up his mouth or leave,” which custom of the time obliged him to do without hesitation. “That’s what we need nowadays,” she added decidedly.

As I left Gettysburg that day, her words lingered in my head. It’s true. What we need today are those ideals of the past — honor, courtesy, respect — so well illustrated by those who participate in reenactments. Although I am not a reenactor, I sympathize with Mrs. Carpenter, who said, “It’s very hard to go home after a weekend [of reenacting] knowing you have to return to the way people are now. It just means so much for people to be polite and mannerly” and treat one another in a civilized way.

Entering the parking lot to find my car, I could not believe my eyes! Some latecomers were arriving for the evening’s formal ball. Among them was a lady who looked and dressed just like Scarlett O’Hara. No need to worry though, reenactors know what a Southern lady should be and how a gentleman should treat her. Maybe those days are not entirely gone with the wind after all. Or just maybe we are seeing glimpses of the real “World of Tomorrow.” ■

Photos next to title and on this page courtesy of *The Ladies of Blue and the Gray* and the *Gettysburg Civilian*.

How important is it?

BY REX TEODOSIO



And Mary said to the Angel Gabriel, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.” And thus came to pass the greatest event in the history of creation.

The spirit of contemporary man has difficulty in understanding the grandeur of the Annunciation. We live in a culture where the greatness of an event is measured by cost, numbers, or effect on the stock market — like some celebrity gala that thousands attend, for which millions are spent, and that billions watch from home. We see nothing of this in the Annunciation: nothing spent, no spectators, and no fluctuations in the market.

On March 25, two thousand years ago, the Angel Gabriel appeared quietly to an unknown young maiden in an obscure town. No bells, no whistles. Nevertheless, no other event in the entire history of creation could ever compare to the universal and time-defying implication of this event, whose consequences extend from the beginning of time to eternity, from every individual person ever born to those still to be born, and from the smallest atom in creation to the largest constellation. Again, with neither bells nor whistles. Two elements constitute the grandeur and sublimity of this event: God, the Supreme Being, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most perfect of His creatures.

Tradition tells us that Mary was in prayer, contemplating the Messianic promise. In her meditation she reached a height of understanding of the promise, and in that very act the Most High saw that the “fullness of time” had come. It was then that the Angel Gabriel appeared to her, saying, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with

Continued on page 37

Chapter XX

The Second Barbarian Invasion

BY JEREMIAS WELLS

On a late spring day in 793, long, sleek ships glided swiftly towards the monastic island of Lindisfarne off the northeastern coast of England. The monks were going through their normal spiritually-inspired pursuits of prayer, study, and meditation when the ships knifed onto the sandy beach and ground to a halt. Dozens of wild, fearsome warriors jumped onto the land and with sword and ax hacked away at the defenseless monks. After the blood stopped flowing, the plundering pagans, who called themselves Vikings, loaded their ships with a rich supply of golden crucifixes, silver ciboria that had held the body and blood of Christ, and illuminated Bibles encrusted with precious gems. And so this atrocity against the monastery founded by Saint Aiden inaugurated a 200-year barbarian devastation of Christendom, not only by the Northmen or Vikings, but also by Moslems from the south and by Magyars from the central Danube Valley.

The following year, the marauding Norsemen, mostly Norwegians in the beginning, plundered Wearmouth and Jarrow, Saint Bede's old monastery. Throughout the next decade, their well-crafted ships with horrible beasts carved on the prows ranged over the coasts and islands of England, Ireland, and Scotland, devastating the undefended, vulnerable monasteries and abbeys that had been the cultural centers of Western Civilization. The savage raiders plundered the monastic island of Iona, founded by the pioneer Saint Columba, in 795, and again in 802 and 806.

However, these commando-type raids involved little sustained fighting. When the Danes joined in on the ravages and slaughter, a dark storm of terror enveloped civilized Europe. The swift, shallow-drafted Norse boats penetrated far upstream in the great river valleys of France, Frisia (modern Netherlands), and northern Germany. Although it is outside the scope of this study, the Swedes also participated by sailing into Eastern Europe and creating the Russian State of Kiev.

Disintegration of the Carolingians

The descendants of Charlemagne compounded a desperate situation by provoking a series of destructive civil wars. Only one of Charlemagne's sons (Louis the Pious) survived him, but his grandsons proved to be a contentious, avaricious lot who engaged in a variety of alliances against each other, frequently opposing their own father, to increase their power and territory. Some months after Louis the Pious died in 840, his three sons, Charles the Bald, Lothair, and Louis the German, chose up sides and fought a bloody, indecisive battle, while the Vikings continued their brutal ravaging. In a celebrated incident, the crews of sixty-seven Norse ships pillaged the city of Nantes at the



Division of Verdun 843

Kingdom of Charles
Kingdom of Lothair
Kingdom of Louis



A typical Viking ship

mouth of the Loire. Among other atrocities, the barbarians broke into the cathedral during High Mass, slew the bishop, and set the building on fire.

Realizing that continual, internal strife was breaking down the unity of Christendom, the three brothers agreed in the Treaty of Verdun (843) to divide the Empire. The western portion, speaking Romance, developed into France; and the eastern portion into Germany, with its own language. The central strip, under Lothair and running a thousand miles from the North Sea to Rome, had neither political, geographic, nor linguistic unity. At Lothair's death (855), a further split subdivided his lands. Louis II received Italy and the imperial title, which by this time was almost meaningless; another son received Burgundy; and Lothair's third son and namesake, the northern strip roughly comprising the Netherlands, Belgium, Alsace, and Lorraine, which shortly became the battleground for contesting powers in Europe until this century.

Nevertheless, the Carolingians continued to enjoy their domestic squabbles and ignored their obligation of repelling the invaders. As the ninth century progressed, the Vikings established fortified strongholds on the coasts of both England and France to serve as winter quarters and bridgeheads for further conquests. By the middle of the century, Paris was sacked for the first time (845) and Bordeaux captured (848). Charles the Bald responded to the military danger by the cowardly expedient of bribing the Danish chieftain with 7,000 pounds of silver. Nantes was sacked again in 853, along with Poitiers and Angers. The Norsemen stole horses and added reckless cavalry raids to their monstrous repertoire. Throughout the Loire and Seine river val-

leys, the terrible outrages increased.

The weakness of the Frankish kings added to the wretchedness of Christendom. Subsequent generations of Carolingians lost all sense of grandeur, lowered their horizons, and returned to the myopic pursuit of vainglory and illusive power. The lack of substance in their characters can be discerned in their rather disrespectful cognomens: Charles the Bald, Louis the Stammerer, Charles the Fat, and Charles the Simple, among others.

Moslems attack from the South

Not only were the enemies of Christendom penetrating deep into western Europe, but hostile forces in the form of the Saracens of the Arab Empire were swallowing up Christian islands in the Mediterranean, including Sicily. In these studies we are treating Islam or Mohammedanism as a military and political force inimical to Christianity and, because of space limitations, neglecting their cultural achievements, especially in philosophy, mathematics, and the arts. After Constantinople, the known world's most opulent and refined cities in the period under review were Baghdad, under the Abbasid Harun al Rashid, a contemporary of Charlemagne, and Cordoba, under the Omayyad refugee Abdu-r-Rahman in Spain.

The Arab tendency towards luxury on one hand and asceticism on the other coupled with a love of violence contributed to insurmountable internal disputes, which led to a fragmentation of the empire. In 750 the Omayyads of Damascus, the first important ruling dynasty of Caliphs, were driven from the throne and completely massacred by the Abbasids, with one notable exception. Abdu-r-Rahman narrowly escaped death and fled to Spain, where he established what eventually became known as the Caliphate of Cordoba. The Berber-Arab Moslems in North Africa, sometimes referred to as Moors, also broke away from the central control of the Middle East. However, the separation did not debilitate their ferocity, for when the sensuality of soft living threatened the inner strength of both kingdoms the fierce austerity of the Berbers reinvigorated the process.

The Saracens ravaged Sicily in 826. Five years later, they seized Palermo, and in 839 took Messina, thereby controlling the narrow straits that separated the island from Italy. One year later they established a bridgehead at Bari, on the back of Italy's heel, from which they terrorized with impunity the entire southern coast on both seas.

In August of 846, the Saracens appeared at the mouth of the Tiber, took the port city of Ostia, and sailed up the river towards Rome. The strong walls stopped the ruthless pirates, so they turned their wrath against the venerated basilica of Saint Peter



The Normans on the Seine

and the church of Saint Paul, both located outside the protective walls at that time. The Moslems sacrilegiously carried off their booty, including the altar stone that covered the body of Saint Peter, and departed. But they had little time to enjoy their ill-gotten goods, for a dangerous storm arose and sent the expedition to the bottom of the sea.

Throughout this period of constant and widespread attack, Christendom found a sufficient number of heroes, not enough to overwhelm the attackers, but sufficient to hold them in check. Louis II, King of Italy, one of the few later Carolingians with a crusading spirit, made the expulsion of the Moslems from Italy his major objective. Without his efforts, the Saracens would have occupied central and southern Italy. He finally took the Saracen stronghold at Bari by direct assault while at the head of his troops, greatly reducing the Moslem menace.

Still holding Sicily, which they would control well into the eleventh century, the Moslems raided the mainland once again after the death of Louis in 875, but then two Popes jumped into the breach. A year after Louis' death, when the Arabs once again threatened Rome, Pope John VIII took personal command of the papal squadron and soundly defeated the Moslems at sea. Eighteen enemy vessels were captured and six hundred prisoners liberated. But unfortunately he failed during the rest of his pontificate (872-882) to unite the selfish, quarreling Italian nobles.

Where one John failed another succeeded. In 915 John X forged an alliance of the leading Italian nobles and, with the assistance of Byzantine ships, laid siege to the Moslem Italian headquarters. At the end of three months, driven by hunger, the Arabs tried to cut their way through the Christian lines. With Pope John leading in the front ranks, the Arabs were totally destroyed.

Resistance in Spain

In few other places of conflict did the forces of Christianity and those opposed to it take on such an uncompromising character as in Spain. Joseph O'Callaghan realized this when he stated, "The conquest may be described as a holy war in the sense that it was a conflict prompted by religious hostility.... Both sides came to recognize that it could only end with the complete triumph of one over the other."¹

The Moslems failed to drive the Christians out from the far Northwest and gave them the opportunity to establish a base camp known during the ninth

and tenth centuries as the Kingdom of the Asturias and eventually Leon. From there the Catholics initiated the long, arduous task of reconquering the land that was stolen from them. During these centuries, they pushed the boundaries between the implacable adversaries further south at the cost of much blood and many humiliating defeats. But they also won the occasional great victory to sustain them.

An example of the intransigence in the face of Moslem encroachment was the sacrifice made by the Martyrs of Cordoba. In the Moslem-controlled area of the peninsula (al-Andalus) many Christians, in order to lead a more comfortable life, made accommodations with Islam. Mixed marriages became frequent, with the resultant children being raised as Moslems. Arab literature became an attractive course of study, and Arab customs were imitated.

The martyrs, with their leader, Saint Eulogius, believed they must speak the truth and give public testimony of their belief in Christ. When, one by one, over a period of nine years, some fifty brave souls repudiated Mohammed and condemned his evil life in outspoken terms, they were beheaded. Spain alone of all the lands converted to Islam, returned to Christianity.

The constant ravaging of the growing settlements in the Northwest almost sent the Spanish Christians back to the mountains. However, the tenacious King Alfonso II, the Chaste, spent the long years of his reign (791-842) rebuilding the civil administration and the Church organization of his harassed nation. During this reign, a hermit led by the singing of angels and bright lights discovered the tomb of Saint James the Greater. The site, which came to be known as Santiago de Compostela (Saint James of the Field of Stars), grew into one of the great European centers of pilgrimage. Saint James became the patron saint of Spain and the hope of all Christian people in time of stress and threatening ruin.

Alfonso III, the Great, also enjoying a long reign (866-911), won resounding victories over the Mohammedan armies at Polvoraria and Valdemora in 878. Much of his reign was spent in the resettlement of the Duero plains, so that by his death the Spanish had reclaimed one-fifth of their land. During the Omayyad Caliphate of Abdu-r-Rahman, the Moslems reached the height of material splendor. Yet the great caliph suffered a devastating defeat against a combined army from Leon and Castile in 934 at Simancas. Outnumbered 100,000 to 30,000, the Christians, with their heavily armored cavalry, outmaneuvered the Moors in the blistering August heat and sent them reeling back to Cordoba. Dark days again descended upon the Spanish Christians when the ruthless dictator al-Mansur (Sp. *Almanzor*) assumed absolute power, but the days of El Cid and Saint Ferdinand III were just over the horizon.

Vikings invade England

England had experienced intermittent, violent raids from the Norse pirates from the late 700s, but the island and Catholic civilization itself were dangerously threatened by an all-out invasion in 866 with permanent conquest as its main objective. Landing on the coast of East Anglia, the Vikings, after forming a cavalry from stolen horses, moved into Northumbria and overwhelmed York with terrible loss of life. They followed up this success by riding to the southwest where they seized the Kingdom of Mercia (the Midlands).

The savage raiders then turned back to finish with East Anglia. King Edmund challenged their progress but was decisively defeated. When he refused to renounce Christianity and become a pagan vassal, the cold-blooded barbarians used him for archery practice and then beheaded him. He is now venerated as a saint and martyr, with his relics located at the famous shrine at Bury St. Edmunds. Only the Kingdom of Wessex now stood between the annihilation of English Christianity and total Viking conquest. Wessex, which also included the kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Essex, was ruled by King Ethelred and his young brother, Alfred, eventually surnamed the Great.

The brothers confronted the main Viking force at Ashdown in 871. Alfred led a spirited charge “like a wild boar.” The Vikings gave way and fled, with the Saxons cutting them down as they ran. The Vikings, however, regrouped and again took the offensive. Slowly, in several bloody but inconclusive battles, the invaders wore down the stubborn Saxons. After Ethelred died either from battle wounds or the cold rainy weather, Alfred, now King at twenty-two, sued for a peace that lasted for five years.

In 878, a new aggressive Danish leader, Guthrum, swept down on the Saxon headquarters during the Christmas season and destroyed the Wessex army. Total disaster seemed imminent. Alfred fled deep into forest marshes with a handful of followers. Here the fortitude, determination, and courage that only the great possess in times of crushing adversity came into play. Over four months later, the resolute King had assembled another band of hearty warriors and marched out to meet the invaders. The two armies clashed on the sparse downs of Edington. For hours both sides smashed away with sword and ax. Finally the Saxons, fighting for survival for themselves and Christian civilization, prevailed and drove the enemy from the field. Alfred pursued the fleeing barbarians relentlessly back to their camp, where the devastation was completed. Guthrum surrendered and three weeks later was baptized into the Catholic Church along with several of his noblemen. After this great



Invasions of Europe 7th-11th Centuries
Areas affected by invasions

turning point in history, pagan control in England declined, sometimes through warfare, sometimes through submission to a superior force.

A large army of marauding Norsemen sailed back to the Continent to ravage Belgium and France; but even there they met with resistance. Louis III, not yet twenty, intercepted a Norse army laden with booty at Saucourt in 881 and soundly defeated them. Unfortunately, he died a year later. The defense of Christendom fell more and more on local military leaders who had the power to protect their areas from the barbarians. Eudes, the Count of Paris, fought a great battle against the invaders in 886 at Mountfaucon where he killed thousands of the enemy. In 891, the German Frank Arnulf completely overwhelmed the Northmen at Louvain on the Dyle River, again with terrible losses to the Vikings. These bloody victories turned the tide in continental Europe, for the Vikings had difficulty replacing their depleted ranks.

In the end, however, the ultimate factor was not so much the heroic military resistance as the spiritual vitality of the Church that disarmed the barbarians. We have seen that Alfred the Great insisted that the Danes accept Christianity, which in time changed the avid raiders to peaceable settlers. Rollo, a powerful Viking chieftain who controlled a large tract of land at the mouth of the Seine, converted to Christianity in 911. As Duke of Normandy and the king's vassal, he protected northern France from further Viking attacks. By the end of the century several pagan kings had converted to Christianity.

The subsequent history of the Northmen very much resembles that of the early Christian Franks — battles and fighting but also missionaries, remorse, and penance in a rough and tumble world where in the end Christian culture prevailed. ■

Bibliographical note

The works cited at the end of the last chapter by Halphen, Mann, and Folz carry over to this time period as well. For the Vikings, see T. D. Kendrick, *A History of the Vikings* (London, 1930) and Johannes Brondsted, *The Vikings* (Harmondsworth, 1960), both scholarly and informative. We recommend two books that are refreshingly free from the usual anti-Spanish hostility: Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (London, 1978), and Derek W. Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (London, 1978). For Alfred the Great, see the biography by E. S. Duckett.

Note

1. J. O'Callaghan, op. cit., p. 22.

A Destructive Equality

The pride-driven feminist agenda and one of its natural destructive consequences in society

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR



The other day I opened a news magazine. The mannish face of a young woman stared at me from the glossy page. It was one of those faces that one could describe as almost handsome even though it was a woman's. Yes, handsome was certainly the adjective; not beautiful or pretty, but handsome. The jaw was too wide, the features too chiseled, the expression too hard, to merit the usual feminine adjectives.

Sure enough, she was an avowed, all-out, go-getter feminist. Her name was given, of course, but the object of this article is not a name but a mentality, which she, at that particular moment, embodied in my mind, setting the wheels turning.

The face, and the mentality behind the face, had intrigued me enough that I turned more pages to see other pictures of this modern warrioress. What I really wanted to see was if the face corresponded to the body, if the body was as muscular and hard as the face. To my surprise it was a frail and, actually, very feminine frame. The ensemble

produced a contradictory impression that was not altogether pleasant to the eye.

Days later, I found myself thinking of one of Aesop's fables. It was the story of a bullfrog much admired for his size by the other frogs. One day, as an ox began grazing nearby, the frogs all began to croak and comment on the size and muscular form of the ox. Hearing the various admiring comments, the bullfrog began to suffer from something of an inferiority complex. Suddenly, he announced to an astounded and unbelieving audience that he could expand himself to the size of the ox. Then began the bullfrog's incredible ordeal of taking his name literally. He swelled and swelled until — inevitable disaster! — he burst.

I also recalled watching a crew opening the road in front of my house a few years ago. Five or so men and one woman toiled to break the macadam and uncover a problem pipe. I remember noticing that the men never panted for lack of breath. The woman, on the contrary, was constantly in

a terrible exertion that actually made me feel sorry for her. She was obviously not as naturally fit for that physically demanding job as the men were.

Suddenly, a question popped into my mind. Why? Why so much effort to be what one is not? Why try to equalize what is fundamentally different? Are these advocates of equality between men and women not aware that things which are fundamentally diverse cannot be compared, let alone equated?

Why compare a flower to a pumpkin or a stone to a tank or a frog to an ox? Surely women have something in common with men, their same human nature — just as a flower has the same vegetable nature as the pumpkin, the stone the same inanimate nature as the iron, and the frog the same animal nature as the ox. Of course, between a man and a woman there is a lot more similarity than between these other examples, especially since they have a human soul in common, but the differences are still great and fundamental.

Could it be that underlying all this “tough talk” and “tough acting” on the part of feminism is an inferiority complex after all?

Surely, if women are to start from the premise that because they share the title “human” they have to look and act equally, they are bound to have an inferiority complex. If a woman thinks of herself like a bullfrog that absurdly tries to live up to its name, so to speak, she might as well start huffing and puffing. But if she thinks of herself, for example, as a bird compared to an ox, would she want to exchange her wings for all the ox’s muscle? Could she not be as perfectly proud of her plumage and wings as he is of his strength?

Yes, I like to think of a woman as a bird. Better still, as a fairy or an angel.

Don’t smile; I know. Many, many times at the onset of life this is the young girl’s ideal: She will be the caring angel of a large family of little angels headed by a knight in shining armor. She soon learns that the knight in shining armor keeps the roses flowing uninterrupted only before the walk down the aisle; after all, he is really just a man.

She finds, too, that to bring forth little angels she must brace herself for much pain and much worrying and much caring — and that these angels are only such

when asleep.

Furthermore, the tears flow easily and life hits hard. Finally, she discovers that she is not the gentle fairy she imagined herself to be, especially when her nerves tense up and irritation tightens like a noose around her throat... For, after all, she is only a woman...

Yet, to every ideal there are two sides: the unreal romantic and the sublime.

The unreal romantic is the deceptive side, the side that promises but does not fulfill because it does not provide the tools to attain the goal.

The sublime is the side of truth. It never lies, but it still points; it points to an ideal still loftier than the one proposed by the romantic side. It points to sanctity and provides the supernatural tools for attaining it, mainly prayer, the sacraments, and the practice of solid virtue. It tells a woman that she can be a fairy and an angel if she just makes her chief strength the strength to bear; if she just seeks to complement rather than compete; if she just practices humility and, at times, has the courage to remain in the background. There is no shame in that; only the tremendous merit of loving disinterestedly.

This nation, like every other nation around the world, has witnessed the silent spectacle of the hand that rocks the cradle. No fairy hand could ever compare to that hand. Even the angels must have knelt in speechless silence when they saw such a hand rock the cradle of the Divine Infant.

For human nature to become that sweet and to do that much good takes more strength than any feminist could ever muster at a construction site or on a soccer field.

Such a woman is so admirable that Scriptures could not refrain from singing her praises: “Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.... Her children rose up, and called her blessed: her husband, and he praised her. Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all” (Proverbs 31:10, 28-29).

Now, I am not advocating that a woman’s role is that of a mother and no other. A woman can discharge many roles

*Why compare a flower
to a pumpkin or a
stone to a tank or a frog
to an ox?*

No!



successfully, but I still sustain that our world maintained a better emotional balance when a woman found no shame in a full-time mother's role without feeling the necessity to acquire other titles.

A good example is presented in the book *She Said Yes* by Misty Bernall, the mother of Cassie Bernall, the Columbine student who was shot to death after admitting to her murderer that she believed in God. Cassie is now widely seen as a heroine, and she certainly is. It is not easy to look straight into a mad assassin's eyes and see certain death spelled there as a sure answer to her forthcoming "yes." Yet, according to a fellow student hiding nearby who heard the exchange, when, after a short pause, her "yes" came, it was strong.

Yet, just two years earlier, Cassie had been on the same path as her killer. She was involved with a group of Satanists who were planning to kill a teacher and suggesting to Cassie in unspeakable terms that she "get rid" of her parents.

If Cassie made a complete "U-turn," as Misty Bernall calls her daughter's change, it was because her parents decided to fight for her. At one point, her mother quit her job, and the family was living on one salary (as most families used to be able to do, as some readers will recall) so that she could give fuller attention to her daughter. It was a terrible ordeal, but it resulted in a complete turnaround, even at the price of life itself.

This is the power of a mother full-time behind a child, the power to make heroes.

Something we have difficulty understanding is that God, being the Creator of the natural order, stands behind His creation. Once someone decides to act according to her God-given role in the natural order of things, she has the full right to count on His cooperation. It is what clearly happened in the Bernalls' case.

Is it too much to expect that women go back to "just" being mothers? Is it realistic? Maybe not.

After all, the whole system seems to have devolved into requiring two paychecks just to make ends meet, even as incredible headlines seem to cry out for some radical changes or solutions, even at the price of making less or being poorer.

In any case, even if it is not completely realistic; even if women have had the career mentality so infused in their veins that they cannot feel fulfilled otherwise; even if sheer necessity does not allow them to "just" be mothers, at least they can still be feminine.

The other day, while teaching religion class at my parish, I was amazed when this subject came up. All the girls began to speak of "body building" and how they knew this girl and that girl who could beat this or that boy in a fight.

This is the mentality being instilled today, permeating society from all angles. Surely we have much to lose, for at her best, a "muscle-woman" will always be only a small man. And her unique role will be left unfilled.

There is so much talk and concern about various endangered animal species, but few seem to realize what havoc the feminist agenda is wrecking in feminine ranks. A truly feminine woman is becoming a real rarity, especially in the younger generations. Will she soon be extinct all together?

I hope not. I hope we soon return to the realization that a woman's role is truly unique, that we must start bringing up our daughters to be proud of being feminine, that they develop their incredible natural feminine capacity to love, to care and, therefore, to sacrifice, which is their main strength.

Forget the muscles, forget the competition. Spread your wings and rock the world — to the right side. ■

Modern pedagogy — that is, the pedagogical, psychological, and psychiatric schools of the '60s, advocated that parents never say "no" to their children. These pedagogues taught that prohibiting a child from anything from sucking his thumb to attending bad movies would cause a negative traumatic experience.

In May of 1968 the Sorbonne Revolution launched the challenge to the civilized world that people should discard both divine and social laws that were too constricting. They would then be free to express themselves as they wished; that is, to live by instinct. "It is forbidden to forbid" was the motto of the Sorbonne revolutionaries.

Today, some of the same students who launched that cry thirty years ago and are now parents and professors are retracting it. Mugged by reality, they are turning to traditional standards. They might now say that "it is permitted to forbid."

Yes, time and experience have proven the prior theories wrong; they have collapsed like a deck of cards. Consequently, the end of the twentieth century has ushered in a new class of pedagogues. These teach that, yes, parents must set limits.

Why limits?

No is a strong word, and to say it to one's child is hard. Yet, Asha Phillips, a psychotherapist who teaches at the Tavistock Clinic of London, affirms on the basis of extensive experience, studies, and research that, under certain circumstances, it is necessary to know how to say no.

She has published a book titled *Saying No — Why It's Important for You and Your Child*. She writes that from the first months of a baby's life it is important for parents to establish certain limits. She also says that it is important for parents to choose the right time

Why not?



and the right formula for saying no: “Those who say yes the whole time, so as to avoid the authoritarian image, are creating a fantasy and a situation that is dangerously removed from reality.”

Back to the basics

No matter how far out modern theories venture, reality and sheer necessity seem to pull them right back to traditional ideals and principles.

Our Holy Mother Church, the great Divine Teacher who has so often been accused of being unbending and unsympathetic because She preaches the truth, has always been very clear on this point. She teaches us that we cannot leave our children to the indiscriminate mercy of their instincts. That is simply because, after Original Sin, not all their instincts are good. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says regarding original sin: “The consequences of this first sin are death, concupiscence or the rebellion of man’s lower appetites against reason and will, and a darkening of the intellect.”

The tendency, then, to choose wrongly and to make mistakes is ever present, so if we love our children we must curtail or forestall the consequences of their erroneous choices.

If it is a child’s ultimate good that is at stake, how can any parent, teacher, or other guardian give the child free rein?

Besides, the same Catholic Church affirms that parents have a divinely appointed authority. To exercise this authority is not only a right but a positive duty. They must use it to help form their children’s character. Otherwise, they run the risk of losing their children to the competition, to the fierce internal enemy — to original sin.



“Because it is the most character building, two-letter word in the English language, children have the right to hear their parents say ‘No’ at least three times a day.”

If we love them

So, if we love them we must say no. Yet, that no must be so laden with reason that it never crushes and always builds. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus used to say that it is imperative that a child never sense irritation or a “taking off on him” attitude in the parent or teacher.

In his innocence, the child sees authority as something from God because, to him, his

parents are the nearest beings to God. How many times we hear of children who think their parents were never born? To young children, parents are more or less infinite.

If, when corrected or told no, they understand that it was done justly and, therefore, for their ultimate good, they are not only open to the correction but, ultimately, grateful.

Again, it is hard to say no to our children. But children, despite what was taught in the ‘60s, love affectionate parents who know how to forbid when necessary. Hearing a firm no, the children may stamp their feet and cry, but once the crisis blows over they harbor a greater admiration for their parents, confident of being able to count on them in more difficult situations.

Dr. John Rosemond, a family psychologist in North Carolina and a newspaper columnist, affirms: “Because it is the most character building, two-letter word in the English language, children have the right to hear their parents say ‘no’ at least three times a day.”

You see how positively he puts it: They have the *right*.

Yes, they have the right to have their bad inclinations curbed and their rightful characters enhanced. They have the right to be prepared for the much bigger no’s that life is certain to present to them.

Yes, no’s must be said and they must be said emphatically, with full and firm authority — a no can never be something between a yes and a maybe.

Yet, as Saint Thérèse puts it, it must be just. It must be devoid of personal content, that is, irritation, vengefulness, impatience. The child must sense that the no is really a big yes in disguise. A yes to discipline, to good, to virtue — ultimately, to God. ■



FAMILY
SERIES

Jacques and His Charge

BY BEN HIEGERT

In Paris at the time of the terrible French Revolution, around the year 1790 there were evil men who hated God and His Church and the King and everything that was good and orderly. These men began to persecute many good people. The king, the queen, many nobles, and many priests and nuns lost their lives in those dark days.

Amidst all this there were many stories of faith and courage and great miracles. One of these is the story of Jacques and his sister.

Jacques was a small boy of about ten years of age who lived with his good parents and little sister in a modest but comfortable house in one of the suburbs of Paris.

One day, Jacques' parents came to him and said: "Jacques, we are going to have a good priest stay with us for some time. We are going to make a bed for him in the attic of our house, but no one must hear that he is there. Do you understand, son? If the sans-culottes [the revolutionary police] hear that we are hiding him they will have him killed and throw all of us into prison."

"But, why? Why do we have to hide him if he's a good priest?" asked Jacques.

"Because the new government does not like priests who obey the Pope, Jacques. They want only those who have given up their obedience to the Pope and obey this government that overthrew our King. But the priests who obey the Pope in Rome are the only true priests in the eyes of God, so we must help them."

So it was that Father Pierre came to live with Jacques' family. He was a wise and patient priest, and he taught Jacques many beautiful things about his Faith and told him many a good story, for which Anne, Jacques' sister,

was always sure to come in.

One day Father Pierre invited Jacques upstairs to his room and showed him a small chalice and a cross. "Do you know what I use these for?" asked Father Pierre, who continued without waiting for the answer: "To say Holy Mass. Would you like to learn how to serve Holy Mass, Jacques?"

"Oh yes, Father!" answered wide-eyed Jacques, who remembered watching the altar boys when they could still go to Mass at their parish church. Now, all the churches had been closed.

So, Father Pierre taught Jacques how to serve Mass while little Anne watched in awed silence. For several months, Jacques assisted Father Pierre at Mass. Every day, up in the attic, where Father slept, a small table was transformed into an altar. There,

with the small family gathered around, Father consecrated the white hosts and offered the family the Body and Blood of their God. The family considered it a tremendous privilege to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass everyday in their home, especially in those times of persecution when it was almost impossible to attend a true Mass.

One night, however, as Jacques slept in his bed he was awakened by someone shaking him gently yet urgently: "Jacques, Jacques, it is Father Pierre, wake up!"

"Whaaat is it...Father? What happened?" stammered the lad as he fought off sleep and rubbed his quivering eyelids.

"The sans-culottes are here, Jacques. They have come for me..."

"Father! What are we going to do?"

"There is little to be done, my boy. There is no time. But take this." As he spoke, Father Pierre pressed a small metal box into the frightened boy's hand. "These





are consecrated Hosts, Jacques. You and your sister are small. Take her and get away. You won't be noticed. Go to your uncle's, taking this pyx with you. Guard it with your life. Keep it with you until you find a true Catholic priest who has not sworn to the new constitution. Then, and only then, hand these sacred Hosts over. Goodbye, Jacques, God keep you!"

That done, the priest was gone, and Jacques was left there clasp- ing the golden pyx, his head whirling as rough voices began to shout downstairs. Hearing the terrible cacophony of curses and insults below, Jacques understood what was happening. Someone had let on to the sans-culottes that his parents were hiding a priest in their house. Yes! The revolutionaries had now invaded the house and would take Father Pierre and Jacques' good parents away!

Jacques looked down at the small golden box he held. Here

was the same Body and Blood that Father Pierre had so often held in his hands for his parents, his sister, and him to adore.

The terrible shouts and other noises continued. Jacques' first impulse was to join his parents and get arrested with them. But he could not forget the pyx clasped in his fingers. "I must save Him. Father Pierre entrusted Him to me. He is my responsibility now."

In a flash, Jacques had awakened his little sister and thrown a warm wrap over her, and both had made their way down a back staircase, out to the backyard, and over the fence. One pained look back at their house and they were gone.

After that terrible night, Jacques and his sister lived with their uncle and aunt. They heard no more of their parents or Father Pierre.

No one but Jacques and his sister knew of his secret. In their room, in a small cupboard, Jacques kept his precious Charge wrapped in a clean linen handkerchief. Early each morning, the two would go out looking for a church in the hopes of coming across a good and true Catholic priest to whom they might hand over their awesome responsibility. But, how were they to recognize a true priest? All of them were in hideouts these days; when they ventured out, they always wore some sort of disguise.

Each night, before going to sleep, the two knelt and prayed that God would send them or lead them to a priest to whom they could give the consecrated Hosts. And so the months wore on.

One day rumors began to circulate that a certain priest who had been harbored by a young couple was going to be executed.

"It must be Father Pierre!" thought

Jacques. "Anne," he whispered to his little sister

that night, "Anne, we must meet Father Pierre somehow before he is executed. I must see him and show him that the Hosts are still safe. He must know that before he goes to God."

"I can't do it, Jacques," answered little Anne, "I will be too frightened, and afraid of losing you in the huge, shouting crowds that gather for these executions. You go; it will be easier for you to go through the crowd without me. I'll stay here praying for you all the time."

Jacques was a shrewd boy. By asking here and there, he soon knew the exact day of the execution. Early that morning he made his way to a street through which he knew Father Pierre must pass on the way to the scaffold.

Standing at the edge of the sidewalk, Jacques waited. Soon, there were people all around him: curious people who had heard of the priest and wanted a glimpse of a condemned man; hateful people

who sided with the evil men of the Revolution and wanted to insult the holy man as he passed; good people whom the good priest had helped and served and who wanted to stand by him to the end.

And then there was the boy who wanted to console the priest with the knowledge that the Body and Blood of Our Lord was still safely in his care. Without realizing it, however, Jacques was doing much more than that for Father Pierre: He was providing the Presence and the blessing of Our Lord to the martyr on his last walk.

Jacques must have stood several hours on that sidewalk when, at long last, he noticed some commotion at the far end of the street. Father Pierre was coming. Jacques vainly sought the familiar stocky figure of the priest; he was shocked when he finally recognized him in the thin, grayed, and much-aged man now approaching between two *sans-culottes*. Yes! It was he. The features, though pale and drawn, were certainly Father Pierre's. Above all, there was no mistaking the eyes that suddenly were upon Jacques.

The boy lost no time. Gently, so that no one noticed the gesture, he pulled the pyx from within his shirt; just enough for Father to catch a glimmer of it. Then, there it was, the familiar smile in the otherwise tired eyes and a slight nod of the head. Father had seen and understood. And Jacques, despite the terrible weight on his heart, was immensely happy.

As the priest passed, Jacques made his way through the crowd and back home where he told Anne all that had happened. They both knelt and prayed that God would help Father Pierre in his last battle.

As the days and weeks wore on, Jacques and Anne continued praying every night to find a true priest to whom they could hand over their precious Charge. But they never heard of one, much less saw one. Nevertheless, they persisted.



One day they entered an abandoned church and knelt on the broken marble floor to pray, as so many times before, in the faint hope of finding a priest. After a time, they noticed someone ascending the steps of the altar. He was dressed in white and his bearing reminded them of Father Pierre's. Rooted in their place, the children watched and listened. The priest began praying. Jacques immediately recognized the prayers of the Mass, having served so many. Keeping still and silent, the two children watched and prayed as the Mass progressed, seemingly unnoticed by the white-robed man. But behold! As the time of Communion approached, the priest slowly turned in their direction and began to walk toward them.

When he stood directly in front of Jacques and his sister, they looked up into his face. A luminous, calm, kindly set of eyes looked down on them, making them sure not only that this was a true priest but that, in some way, they had come home. They felt a great peace and total trust in this man's presence. Jacques suddenly knew that he had come to the end of his search. Not a word was spoken, but he understood. Reaching into his shirt, he brought out the golden pyx and held it out to the priest. As the man in white reached for the small box, both children noticed a deep wound in the palm of his hand.

Then, as he solemnly opened the pyx, the children heard the words: "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world..." Then, both received Communion from the wounded hand.

When Jacques and Anne lifted their heads from their thanksgiving, the church was completely quiet and there was no sign of the man in white. Looking at each other, they knew their Charge was in the best of hands. ■

thee. Blessed art thou amongst women."

Mary, hearing those words, was troubled. Well-versed in the holy books, she knew there was no case in which that manner of greeting was used by a divine messenger.

"Hail" was a common greeting, but the expression "the Lord is with thee" was relatively rare in the Old Testament. It meant God's guarantee of assistance to carry out a demanding task. The expression "full of grace" was entirely new and occurs in no other place in Scripture. Though properly translated, "full of grace" does not cover the richness of the original Greek *kecharitomenē*, which could also be properly understood as "most full in grace," "most beloved," "most privileged," or "gratified," all of which give the greeting a different nuance. As a combination, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee" had never been used.

For all her knowledge and wisdom, she could not fathom the full meaning of the salutation. The angel had to reassure her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary had a singular reaction. Any other woman given the proposal of being the mother of God might have agreed immediately. Instead, Mary, though desiring to obey God, presented a grave difficulty to the angel. "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Exegetes consider this a very subtle way of presenting the obstacle of the vow of virginity she had taken. How can she accept the proposal without violating an irrevocable vow?

The angel immediately resolved her dilemma: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth



*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,
and the power of the Most High
shall overshadow thee.*

month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God."

The divine proposal was made. Mary was assured that she would remain a virgin and still be the mother of God. She then submitted unconditionally to the divine offer, pronouncing those sublime words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And the Word was made flesh; and dwelt amongst us. The great expected Messiah was conceived, and thus began the work of redemption.

* * *

How might a Catholic celebrate this feast properly? Aside from the Mass and the Divine Office, perhaps the next best way would be to study Saint Louis de Montfort's treatise on *True Devotion to Mary* and make or renew the act of conse-

cration as "slaves of love to Jesus through Mary" that the great Marian apostle recommends. In this, we may imitate Jesus in submitting Himself entirely to the will of His Father, even to the point of uniting His divinity to flesh to be carried intimately in Mary's womb, "taking the form of a slave in order to rescue us from the cruel slavery of the devil," as Saint Louis states. Likewise, we may imitate Our Lady, "who sacrificed herself in everything to bear, nurture, and sacrifice her Divine Son for our redemption."

On this two-thousandth anniversary of the Annunciation, then, let us commemorate this greatest event by imitating Jesus and Mary as slaves of God's will. And let us ask her, as our mediator with Jesus, to give us the grace of appreciating the grandeur of this event, whose devotion will one day spread all over the world, as foreseen by Saint Louis de Montfort, in the era he called the Reign of Mary. ■



Pope Pius IX

The great and Venerable Pope Pius IX is to be beatified in September of this year. His reign, the Church's longest, encompassed an extraordinarily trying period for the Church and Christian civilization, as both were beset by the liberal revolutions of the nineteenth century. Standing uncompromisingly against liberalism, Pius IX was reviled and feared, but often respected as well, by the Church's numerous adversaries, both secular and religious.

His writings and pronouncements, ranging from his splendid definition of the Dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility to his resounding denunciations of liberalism's errors in his Syllabus of Errors, made friend and foe alike take notice. They are well worth considering still today as we close out a century equally beset by liberal errors. We present here a mere sample of his wisdom.

Quotations adapted from Regis Barwig, *More Than a Prophet: Day-by-Day with Pius IX* (Benziger Sisters, 1978).

"Imbue our youth and children with Christian doctrine; give them regular doses of that medicine for souls which is the constant and courageous explanation of the Gospel. Furthermore, never tire of saying '*Non licet*' — It is not permitted. It is not permitted to attend those theatrical performances in which the most sacred rites are insulted and in which licentious actions are presented. It is not permitted to frequent schools with atheistic professors, materials, or even worse."

"Fathers of families must not risk their children's frequenting theaters having programs that disparage morality and religion, and that idealize blasphemy and immorality. Such places are forbidden to the Christian family, which cannot stand as a spectator of actions that constitute an affront to God and the Faith, to the Church, and to every sacred law."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ continues His battle with His cross. We will use that same weapon. We will pray for our enemies, but will never accept their principles. We will condemn the cowards who do nothing save repeat 'What are you hoping to accomplish? What can we do anyway?' These questions are ridiculous, worthy not of men but of worms."

"Governments have their politics, but We also have ours. Our politics is 'Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven....'"

"Let us place ourselves in Mary's heart. There we will be in the safety of Noah's Ark, so to speak, even though surrounded by the deluge of evils."

"O Mother of God and my mother, by the great supplication of thy heart, beg for me a strong and solid devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

"Let us thank God that He has given us life by the death of His Son and called us to participate in the miracle of His Resurrection."