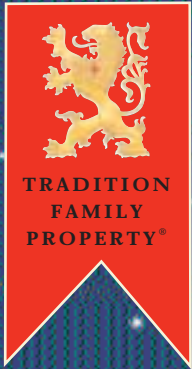


CRUSADE

MAGAZINE



Harry Potter *and the Innocence of Our Children*



TFP Responds to President Bush's Statement on Embryonic Stem Cell Research



In an August 11 statement, the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) criticized President Bush's recent statement on federally funded embryonic stem cell research on existing stem cell lines. It qualified the compromise as a decision that has opened "a veritable Pandora's box of moral, ethical and legal problems."

While Mr. Bush's efforts to avoid the killing of additional embryos are laudable, the TFP statement notes that no amount of spinning of his decision can obscure the reality that to obtain the existing stem cell lines, "those in the biotech industry and others have already killed human embryos."

That taxpayer funded spending will be prohibited for further embryonic stem cell murders matters little, for Pandora's box has just been blown open. The TFP fears this "Faustian bargain will come back to bite not only the president, but our nation as well."

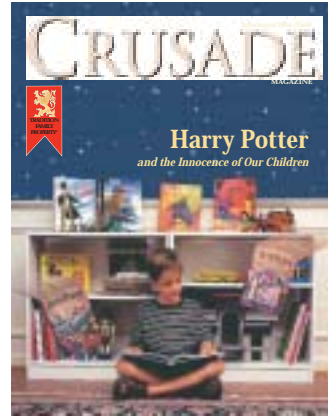
Voices in Congress and elsewhere already clamor for more federal funding, and the expanded use of other embryos. Contrary to what it may seem, the moral dilemma has not been solved. The moral, ethical, political, scientific and legal ramifications of this decision are only starting to be felt.

"Those who remind us of the evils of Nazism in the current context engage in no exaggeration," the TFP statement continues. "Today, however, the proven and continuing advances in medical treatment with morally licit adult stem cells are taking the back seat to the immoral, unethical, unproved, illegal and ill-gotten gains to be possibly obtained at the expense of the littlest members of the human race."

"May God help us, and may we follow His unchanging moral norms," the statement concludes.

CONTENTS

July-August 2001



Cover: Harry Potter challenges the traditional children' books.

EDITORIAL	2
When Human Life Becomes a Commodity	
ONLY IN AMERICA	3
The Third Place	
TFP IN ACTION	7
Catholics to Santa Fe Museum: Keep Blasphemy Out!	
FORGOTTEN TRUTHS	8
The Poisoned Arrow	
COVER STORY	11
The Harry Potter Syndrome	
RAISING OUR CHILDREN	17
The Missing Ingredient	
INTERVIEW	20
Chinese Communist tiger has not changed its stripes	
PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA	23
Considerations on Catholic Culture	
COMMENTARY	28
Surviving Reality TV: A Frightening Look at a Tribal Future	
BASIC HISTORY COURSE	31
Three Monarchs: Two Saints and a Tyrant	
FAMILY SERIES	35
The Legend of Saint Dismas	
BOOK REVIEW	37
The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome	



Page 7 Defending the honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Page 11 Why allow Harry Potter to threaten the innocence of our children?



Page 20 Helping America by boycotting Communist China

Crusade Magazine is a publication of The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP). Subscriptions in the United States and Canada, \$30.00. Foreign subscriptions, \$42.00. List of other TFP publications available upon request. Direct all subscription requests and inquiries to: Crusade Magazine, P.O. Box 341, Hanover, PA 17331 or e-mail to: Crusade@tfp.org Tel.: 888-317-5571, Fax: (570) 450-6352, © 2001 by The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc. This publication includes images from Dynamic Graphics, Corel, and Art Today which are protected by Copyright laws of the U.S. and elsewhere.

ISSN 1096-3782
LCCN 98-641433
M-52



EDITOR'S
CORNER

When Human Life Becomes a Commodity

BY THOMAS BECKET

When someone undertakes an evil act he in some way seeks to see the evil as a good in order to overcome the dictates of his conscience. No other issue

today better displays this trait of humanity than the debate over stem-cell research and related reproductive technologies. Being constantly bombarded with the affirmation that a host of cures are just around the corner, we need only swallow the idea that using human embryos is acceptable.

Whenever a society has undertaken mass cruelty, it has proven necessary first to remove the human face from the victims. If they are not really human or too far removed from our field of perception for us to feel their pain, it becomes much easier to ignore their plight. Whatever good we seek seems less costly, especially if there is little or no immediate threat to ourselves.

In stem-cell research, the embryos in question do not yet have central nervous systems or brains. They are the least apparently human of all humans. Nevertheless, nothing more than time and a suitable environment are required for their complete development into babies and then adults.

Yet, they were produced in the initial fertility treatments as mere commercial products to be chosen for implantation or not as the desires of their owners dictated. The ones designated for research are "by-products" and, as such, have a value to labs. They are mere objects, someone's or some institution's property.

This summer, Steven Spielberg's latest film, *A.I.*, hit the cinemas. Perhaps many who saw it detected the link to the deeply troubling question of personhood of those conceived by artificial means.

A.I. is about a robot who wants to be treated as a real boy. The film raises questions that go to the heart of the modern conscience: What happens when we abandon the notion that human life is sacred and begin to treat it as if it were a mere commodity?

The right to life becomes a question of who has been granted positive rights as persons. In *A. I.*, While exhibiting all the characteristics of a human child, "David" is a mere product manufactured to supply happiness to a childless parent. His existence has only one purpose and his value is determined by customer satisfaction. He has no rights; after all he is not a real boy. There is nothing to prevent him being destroyed or even tortured. He is the creation of engineers. They own him.

Today's frozen embryos are the creation of biologists. They are a commodity whose future depends

entirely on their utility. Will they satisfy a couple wanting children or researchers staking out a claim to a yet uncharted domain of human genetics? It all depends on the market.

David's mechanical nature sets the issue of personhood in the context of the philosophical and scientific debate on the possibility of artificial intelligence and, in his case, artificial emotions. Spielberg does not deal with the technical issue of how this might be achieved, so we are presented with David as he is.

David is trapped, feeling all the desire and potential to be just like everyone else, but he is perceived as a mere object. He wants to be loved and accepted, but he knows that his adoptive mother does not view him as she views her natural son.

David's fate puts a human face on the issue of what is taking place today with the development of various reproductive technologies and the related research on human embryos. Human life has become a commodity to be bought and sold and disposed of at will. Made-to-order children are brought into existence to satisfy the whims of parents. What matter if thousands of others, all by-products, are created and frozen? They can be used as spare parts to fill the whims of others.

How many will see the connection to what they themselves have already swallowed in terms of the devaluation of human life? They might feel an impulse of empathy for David, but do they see that they have bought into an even worse reality when they concede to stem-cell research and the host of other possibilities that this new frontier opens? Unfortunately, they generally do not. They have gone down the slippery slope just far enough not to feel the horror anymore. The debate has become a cold and utilitarian question of how far and fast shall we go this time.

Sure, there is resistance to the idea of using more developed babies for commercial and experimental purposes. But it was not so long ago that the idea of using embryos was abhorrent and, before that, test-tube babies seemed to be a question of mere science fiction. Once human life is not respected at its inception, there is no line. There is merely a question of public sentiment. If too many feel uncomfortable with the use of human beings in certain ways, it will be stopped for a while. But, when they become desensitized, the next set of aberrations can be enacted. Yes, we are on a slippery slope. It will not be long before new technical boundaries will be crossed. Once they are, it will be just a matter of time before the horror subsides and the legal restrictions fall away. ■

CRUSADE

Editor: C. Preston Noell III

Associate Editors:

Earl Appleby, Thomas Becket, Eugenia Guzman, Gary Isbell, Thomas J. McKenna

Photography: Gary J. Isbell

Circulation: Jack Burnham

Foreign Correspondents:

Raymond de Souza, Australia;

Charles E. Schaffer, Austria;

Jose Carlos Sepulveda, Brazil;

Paul Foley, England;

Benoit Bemelmans, France;

Beno Hofschulte, Germany;

Antonio de Azeredo, Portugal;

Juan M. Montes, Italy;

Felipe Barandiarán, Spain

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 anti-communist and antisocialist network of Catholic inspiration.



Courtesy of Deborah K. Dix

The Third Place

BY NORMAN J. FULKERSON

The informal gathering place provides a way for many Americans to survive their hectic daily lives. Ladies have their tearooms, but many men have found a solution also.

Years ago, I had the chance to visit Italy. I loved my stay there and had an amusing experience in the airport the day of my departure. While standing in line to check my bags, an employee announced that our flight would be delayed. The next man in line went ballistic and vented his anger on the lady who was checking us in. "This is terrible," he said. "I'll miss my appointment." He went into great detail about how all of this was really of earth shattering importance.

The Italian lady stood calmly and listened, with a sympathetic look and a pensive gaze. She could just as easily have been watching a popular Italian opera as listening to an American complaining about the tragedy of a delayed flight. He eventually finished his operatic dramatization of the disaster of his altered travel plans. She looked at him with her droopy eyes and serene face, and all she had to say was, "Compared to life, its not that bad."

This was a memorable experience for me since it gave me a brief glimpse of two opposing philosophies! On one side of the counter was the stereotypical "time is money" philosophy, which cannot tolerate an unplanned moment, while on the other side was a "joy of life" philosophy that welcomes the spontaneous moments that enrich life.

Such situations are a chance to take a deserved break for some, but for our businessman it was a source of anger and frustration. His world is one of travel planners and nifty computer programs to schedule his every minute. His life is a succession of airports, taxis, hotel rooms, business lunches or quick burgers at McDonalds, then quickly off again to some other destination to close yet another deal.

Fortuitous circumstances that allow a moment of relaxation are considered vile intruders in his world of production. An outsider witnessing such a scene might think that America is simply one big machine, with man playing the part of cogs in a massive industrial wheel.

Those who think this way have missed a growing trend.



**Above: Brown Palace
Churchill Bar, Denver,
Colorado**



Entrance of Tinder Box Internationale Club Havana, Charleston, South Carolina

With the cigar boom of the mid '90s, smoke rooms for men sprouted up in almost every major city in the country.

With the cigar boom of the mid 90's, smoke-rooms for men sprouted up in almost every major city in the country. And since my first trip to Italy I began to notice how these rooms are a haven for men who long for more than time management.

Riding the crest of this new wave was Denver's elegant Brown Palace Hotel. They simply took what was formerly a small bar servicing their Atrium Lounge, added a wall in 1996, and transformed it into a cigar bar named after Winston Churchill. In its first year of operation, "the Churchill Bar did \$1 million worth of business, a 500 percent increase over the previous year. There are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on the bar's mailing list, which continues to grow." What is the attraction? The reason is simple: "Cigars force you to stop and do something that is pleasurable for at least one part of your day," said one regular of the bar.¹

"The Great Good Place"

Americans avidly search for such informal "third places" that will provide them with the elements necessary for a relaxing conversation.

Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place* says that "Great civilizations, like great cities, share a common feature. Evolving within them and crucial to their growth and refinement are distinctive informal

public gathering places." Most men need an occasional break from work and home. What is often missing is that unique third place where they can get together with other men to enjoy a simple yet satisfying pleasure of life: conversation.²

Women may have their Victorian tearoom escapes to enjoy a nice chat, but now many American men have also found an escape. Providing us with yet another *Only in America* paradox. In a nation that promoted the "time-is-money philosophy," you also find a good number of men who appreciate fine tobacco and the relaxation their third place provides.

Such third places are common in Europe. It is difficult to imagine an Irishman without a pub close by to enjoy a pint of Guinness and discuss politics. French cafes supply the necessary *ambiance* for speaking openly about philosophical currents of the day, and the beer halls of Germany are the breeding ground for new ideas.

Similar places also exist in America, however, and their role in society is becoming more important. And Mr. Oldenburg's blueprint of the third place provides necessary elements to see that such locations provide the same benefits for Americans that Europeans enjoy in their pubs, coffee houses, and beer halls.

Almost every town in America has its local diner, which is not just a place to get an inexpensive breakfast and hot cup of coffee — good portions of conviviality are served up as well. The corner barbershop is a frequent stop for retired men who want someone to talk to, and the public squares of many cities provide more than a park bench in the shade to rest on a hot day.

The common denominator among all of these places is the note of surprise. Who will show up today? Those that do are always welcome since frequenters of the third place are people with loads of personality and lots to say. So the ordinary stop at the barber, the diner, or the park bench becomes an experience that enriches life like few things can.

The regular, the newcomer and the bore

According to Oldenburg there are many distinct characteristics that make up a third place. The third place is comfortable, a home away from home. It is a place that has its regulars, but also the occasional newcomer who adds a fresh element to the ambience. "What

Courtesy of Club Habana

attracts the regular visitor to the third place,” says Oldenburg, “are the fellow customers.” Informal meeting places are “upbeat because those who enjoy them ration the time they spend there.” Besides the “regulars” and the “newcomers,” he also describes another type: the bore. He is the one who has “long since lost that edge that makes people interesting, an edge that is honed by confrontation with life outside.” While the regular and the newcomer leave “before the magic fades,” the bore has a tendency to hang on forever, milking the moment for all its worth.

The reason informal meeting places are upbeat is simple: It is a place where the pretensions of work and the responsibilities of home can be put aside. It provides us with the situation and surroundings in which we can be ourselves and explore our ideas and dreams in a neutral environment with non-threatening participants.

Smoke-rooms are perhaps the best examples of the “third place” for men that I found. Born over 300 years ago in London, the gentleman’s club or smoke-room was an essential element in the social life of men, described by one astute observer as “mausoleums of masculine inactivity.”³

“Where the problems of the world are solved”

It was an overcast day as I walked down the cobblestone walkway of what I later learned is the gentleman’s quarter or arcade. It is the oldest part of Nashville, a place where men of the past gathered to do business. This area of town is home to the Arcade Smoke-room, where men of the present remember the past. The closely laid cobblestones seem analogous to the close friendships that are formed, strengthened, and solidified in the Arcade. Housed in the oldest building in town, it is a popular gathering place for Nashville men.

My visit to the Arcade proved to be an experience. Tennesseans by nature are a very hospitable people, and as I entered the shop I immediately felt at home due to the kind treatment of the owner, Wilson Frazier.

Do you get a lot of customers here, I asked. “Yes, sir,” he said, pointing to a couch pushed up against the wall, “the problems of the world are solved right there.” With such a small sitting area, I figured there couldn’t be more than a handful at any given time. When I returned during lunchtime to see who it was that



Bar at Club Habana

Courtesy of Club Habana

solved the world’s problems, I found a constant flow of men coming and going.

The Arcade Smoke-room was the classic example of a third place as defined by Oldenburg, “where individuals may come and go as they please and in which none are required to play host and in which all feel at home and comfortable.”

Patrick Owen is a regular of the Arcade and the owner of his own smoke-room up the street. He works for the Department of Human Services in downtown Nashville and does Civil War reenacting as a hobby.

“Why do men come to these smoke-rooms?” I asked him.

“Men need the company of other men,” he said, “time to recapture camaraderie. Smoke-rooms give them the opportunity to discuss traditional things.” Men need a place to relax with other men and pound out those perplexing questions that have been ruminating in their head during the day. The segregation of sexes “accounts for the origins of the third place,” says Oldenburg, “and remains the basis for much of the appeal and benefits this institution has to offer.” Men sometimes need to be with other men, as ladies often need to be with other ladies.

Patrick is an archetypal example of a civil war reenactor. When he first greets you there is the charac-

“The smoke-rooms of today are like the campfires during the time of the Civil War; where men would gather to converse.”



Courtesy of Club Habana

“A pipe gives a wise man time to think, and a fool something to put in his mouth.”

teristic bow of the head, and the gentlemanly usage of the title *sir*. He doesn't just barge into a conversation but is the champion of a smooth entrance and gentle transition. His mannerisms were thus more civilized, like someone of the nineteenth century. He was polite, chivalrous, a joy to be around. “The smoke-rooms of today are like the campfires during the time of the Civil War, where men would gather to converse,” he said.

“We have always needed this type of thing,” he continued. “The Greeks had their *agora* — an ancient marketplace of Greece; the Romans had the Forum — the public square where laws were read; early Americans had taverns and coffee houses.”

Suddenly I found myself engaged in an elevated conversation surrounded by a pensive group of men; some puffing on cigars, others drawing from elegantly shaped pipes. Waiting my turn to speak I was amused by the sign hanging on the wall overhead. “A pipe gives a wise man time to think, and a fool something to put in his mouth.”

“Do angels have free will?”

This experience in conversational cuisine is by no means restricted to Nashville's Arcade. While visiting Rae's Tobacco Shop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, one day I unexpectedly found myself drawn into a theological debate with one of the regulars, David Ravegum, on the existence of angels and whether or not they have free wills. With the help of a friend I was able to explain that they do. Upon leaving David looked at me and said, “You have piqued my interest. I am going to go home and read up on the angels.” The next time I visited Rae's, David recognized me and affirmed, “You are right, angels do have free will.”

The men who frequent the Tobacco Chandler in Hanover, Pennsylvania, enjoy conversations more along the sociological line. “What is happening with

the youth of today? Why don't they have respect for elders?” One such conversation was so interesting that Mike Evans, the owner, suggested that we invite some of the area youth to participate. Instead of just playing billiards on Mike's table, he felt they could also benefit from the simple pleasure of an elevated conversation.

The Humidour in Timonium, Maryland, provides a dignified ambience for its customers, with leather armchairs, rich wood paneling, a splendid air freshener, and large crystal ashtrays. Don Curtis of the National Investors Company is one of the regulars. Don is a master conversationalist with whom it is easy to talk and who has a lot to say. His concerns are more of a political nature and when I first met him he wasted no time in venting his anger over the myriad scandals surrounding the Clinton administration, especially the moral ones. “If we are not careful,” he said, “We could end up like the Roman Empire, rotting from within. If that happens we won't need an outside invader, we will simply give up.”

Back in Nashville...

Before leaving the Arcade, Wilson Frazier was kind enough to show me the upstairs of the shop. As we reached the top of the stairs, a dimly lit sitting area caught my eye. Two comfortable armchairs faced each other with a table between them. Arranged on the table was a chessboard ready for play. Outside the window was a birds-eye view of the cobblestone arcade below. The back room had a conference table where some men go to escape the agitation of the workplace. “It gives them the opportunity,” Mr. Frazier said, “to get away from their offices, secretaries, and noisy phones.”

The smoke-rooms of America are a strong indicator that some men are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the rat race and desire a solution to the rush of every day life. The cigar boom provided the excuse, the smoke-room the place — a third place “where the problems of the world are solved.” ■

Notes:

1. Frank T Andorka, Jr., “Cigar Bars,” *Hotel and Motel Management*, Vol. 212, no. 10 (6/2/97), p. 50.
2. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* (New York: 1989), p. xv.
3. Jolee Edmondson, “Clubland,” *Cigar Aficionado*, March/April 1997.





TFP IN ACTION

Catholics to Santa Fe Museum: Keep Blasphemy Out!

BY GARY J. ISBELL

Nearly a thousand Catholics gathered and prayed in front of Santa Fe's Museum of International Folk Art on June 30 to express their outrage at an exhibit they considered blasphemous. The rally centered on Alma Lopez's "Our Lady," an "art" display that has divided this New Mexican city for months.

Press reports describe the exhibit as a computer collage portraying a bikini-clad Virgin of Guadalupe held aloft by a topless woman "angel."

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) and its affiliate campaign, America Needs Fatima, coordinated a rally of peaceful protest and reparation. Offended Catholics from all over New Mexico and at least seven other states

were represented in the crowd.

Rally attendees heard inspiring addresses from clergy and local leaders such as Major General (Ret.) Melvin Montañó of Albuquerque. The rosary, litany to Our Lady and many other prayers marked the act of reparation with devotion.

Many protest efforts

Public outcry has been nothing short of overwhelming. Local grassroots reaction has prompted hearings on the issue. Local Catholics arranged for buses to bring people to the rally.

In addition, TFP and America Needs Fatima supporters are sending e-mail protests to the Museum of International Folk Art, and



Ret. General Melvin Montañó



Fr. William Sanchez, Pastor of St. Edwin's Church, Albuquerque, New Mexico



Fr. Michael Shea, Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Anti-blasphemy protest in Santa Fe, New Mexico — June 30, 2001





Patricia Gaskin, America Needs Fatima member, Bakersfield, California

the museum is receiving tens of thousands of the TFP's "Enough is enough!" protest postcards. Both efforts will continue until the exhibit ends on October 28.

"I am appalled at the insensitivity of the artist and museum directors in face of the countless Catholics who are offended by this exhibit," said campaign director Robert E. Ritchie. "This rally is living proof that Our Lady has children who honor and defend her."

The Santa Fe protest is one of many such protests that seek to stem the epidemic of blasphemy that threatens to sweep the nation. Thousands of Catholics appeared for similar peaceful protests against the play *Corpus Christi*, the movie *Dogma*, and other blasphemies.

"What makes this particular exhibit so horrendous," Mr. Ritchie added, "is the fact that, on October 12, 1945, Pius XII proclaimed Our Lady of Guadalupe as Patroness of all the Americas and especially of Mexican-Americans. It is hard to believe that she who has been so good to us is being publicly portrayed in such a horrible manner."

Rally says keep blasphemy out!

The Saturday morning rally began with a warm welcome and with Marian hymns sung before a large picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The program included rosaries, prayers, and addresses applauding and encouraging the efforts to combat blasphemy.

"This protest is truly inspiring. Your presence here truly proclaims 'Santa Fe' — our Holy Faith. It is so wonderful to see Catholics willing to rally around the Blessed Mother wherever she is so callously attacked," said TFP vice president Thomas J. McKenna, addressing the crowd that filled the museum parking lot before him. Banners, homemade signs, and pictures made the protest particularly visible.

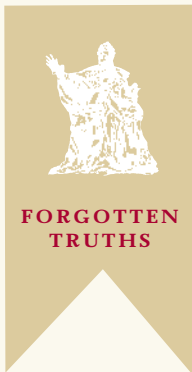
"It is ironic that a museum of folk art that claims to represent popular culture chose to exhibit a blasphemous piece which is neither popular nor cultural." Mr. McKenna added.

Letters and prayers

Tens of thousands from across the country who could not attend the rally promised their prayers and sacrifices. Inspiring letters of sup-

The Poisoned Arrow

Revelations of Our Lord Jesus Christ to Sister Marie Pierre, Discalced Carmelite



"Gathering the powers of my soul, Our Lord addressed me in these words: 'My name is everywhere blasphemed! Even children blaspheme!' He made me understand that this frightful sin, more than any other, grievously wounds Him. By blasphemy the sinner curses Him to

His Face, attacks Him openly, annuls redemption, and pronounces his own condemnation."

...to heal the wounds inflicted on the heart of the Savior by the poisoned arrow of blasphemy, the Master offered me a prayer which He called the Golden Arrow. The words of this short act of praise are as follows: 'May the most holy, most sacred, most adorable, most incomprehensible and ineffable name of God be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified in heaven and on earth by all the creatures of God and by the Sacred Heart of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.'

...Then, after Communion on the Feast of Saint John of the Cross, November 24, Sister Marie Pierre received another revelation.... "As soon as Jesus had entered my soul, He made me hear these words: 'Until now I have shown you only in part the designs of My Heart, but today I will reveal them to you in all

their fulness. The earth is covered with crimes, the violation of the First Three Commandments of God has irritated My Father; the Holy Name of God blasphemed, and the Holy Day of the Lord profaned fills up the measure of iniquities; these sins have risen unto the Throne of God and provoked His wrath, which will soon burst forth, if His justice be not appeased; at no time have these crimes reached such a pitch!"

Sister Marie Pierre tried in her own way to appease Divine Justice for the sins of the age. "It seems to me," she wrote, "that I heard Our Lord say, 'You cannot comprehend the malice of this sin; were my Justice not restrained by my Mercy, it would instantly crush the guilty. All creatures, even those that are inanimate, would avenge my outraged honor, but I have an eternity in which to punish.' After this He made me understand the excellence of the Work of Reparation, how it surpassed various other devotions, how agreeable it was to God, to the Angels and Saints, and how salutary it was to the Church. Oh, if you did but know the glory a soul acquires in saying only once in the spirit of Reparation for blasphemy, *Mirabile Nomen Dei* — Admirable is the Name of God."

This text was selected from *The Holy Man of Tours* (Tan Books and Publishers, Inc.), pp. 119-126.

port were received from Norberto Cardinal Rivera Carrera, Archbishop of Mexico City, Bishop Thomas Doran of Rockford, Ill., Bishop Emeritus Rene Henry Gracida of Corpus Christi, Bishop Thomas L. Dupré of Springfield, Mass., Mother Angelica of the EWTN television network, Congressman John Hostettler of Indiana, Joseph Scheidler of the Pro Life Action League, Mary Anne Hackett of Catholic Citizens of Illinois, and others.

Mexican Cardinal Carrera wrote: "We cannot keep silent nor be indifferent before such a monstrous attack on the religious convictions

and sentiments of our Mexican people, who are mostly Catholic. It seems to us to be deeply lamented that in the name of culture and freedom in your country, our culture should be attacked at its very root: the evangelization of our peoples in such an outstanding fashion by the Guadalupe event."

Archbishop Michael Sheehan of the Santa Fe archdiocese addressed the issue of this blasphemy in a recent article: "As Archbishop of Santa Fe, I certainly find it offensive that the Catholic symbol of Guadalupe has been so disrespectfully treated."

"I hope and pray that the Rally will be a great success," wrote Bishop Gracida, "and that all who participate in it will be blessed by God for their efforts."

"How utterly brutish it is of the museum's directors to revile an image so sacred in the



Fr. Donnan Herbe, Pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Cerrillos, New Mexico



Left: Thomas McKenna, Vice President of the American TFP, introduces Fr. Michael Shea.

Below: Nearly one thousand Catholics kneel in prayer, offering reparation for the blasphemous attack against Our Lady of Guadalupe.





Dr. Henry J. Casso, Chairman of Our Lady of Guadalupe Ministry, Queen of Heaven parish, Albuquerque, New Mexico



Fr. Terry Brennan, Pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Arroyo Seco, New Mexico



Deacon Anthony Trujillo, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Santa Fe, New Mexico

esteem of the very people whom they serve," commented Bishop Doran.

Fr. John Trigilio of the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy wrote that "to be silent or to do nothing when God and all things holy are being attacked is to be in darkness." Mother Angelica also sent words of encouragement, reminding people that the protest "is about giving Our Lady the comfort of knowing that she is the Mother of children who truly love her!"

Congressman John Hostettler wrote that he "is appalled and saddened that this is even an issue in today's culture." Paul Weyrich of Washington's Free Congress Foundation wrote: "You have my full support in your effort to counter this horrible sacrilege."

Enough is enough

Many of those in the crowd had received invitations from volunteers who passed them out on the streets or after Sunday Mass. The American TFP also mobilized its Fatima Proclaimer volunteer network to pass out its "Enough is enough!" protest postcards nationwide. Catholics from all walks of life worked together to bring this rally to a successful conclusion.

With a rash of blasphemies assailing our Faith, the Santa Fe protest makes a positive statement by showing others that Catholics can stand firm in the cultural fray. Nothing so

discourages blasphemy as opposition. Nothing attracts more the blessings of God than to have Catholics rise up in defense of the honor of Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Church when they are attacked by blasphemy. ■



Above and below: different scenes of the anti-blashphemy protest in Santa Fe, New Mexico





The Harry Potter Syndrome

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR



"We carry many copies of these books, but they are all checked out," said the librarian in response to my inquiry for the latest sensation, the "Harry Potter" chronicles. It was only one more confirmation of what I had read in the *Newsweek* website. Harry Potter, the character created by Joanne K. Rowling, doesn't stay long on shelves and has become the active companion of young reader's imaginations these days.

J.K. Rowling insists she never saw it coming. "I never expected a lot of people to like it," she affirmed to *Newsweek*. A single mother of a little girl, divorced from a Portuguese man, and struggling to support herself and her daughter, she began to write at the

suggestion of a friend.

As of last year, 35 million copies were in print in thirty-five languages. So far, four books have been published. The first three earned an estimated \$480 million in three years. There has never been a larger first printing, with 3.8 million in this country alone. Nor has there been a book that sold faster in pre-orders. According to the *Newsweek* website, as of July 1, 2000, 282,650 orders had been entered at Amazon.com in anticipation of the fourth book's coming out on July 8. A friend who lives in Florida told me that the day the fourth novel was launched in Barnes & Noble in Miami, the store was packed. And the launching was at midnight!

Harry Potter is also number one on the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller lists as well as the winner of the National Book Award (U.K.). It is also the winner of the Gold Medal Smarties Prize (U.K.).

Now, the world awaits a fifth book and the first movie launching in November, by Warner Brothers, certainly only the beginning of an ongoing series.

The bend of the books

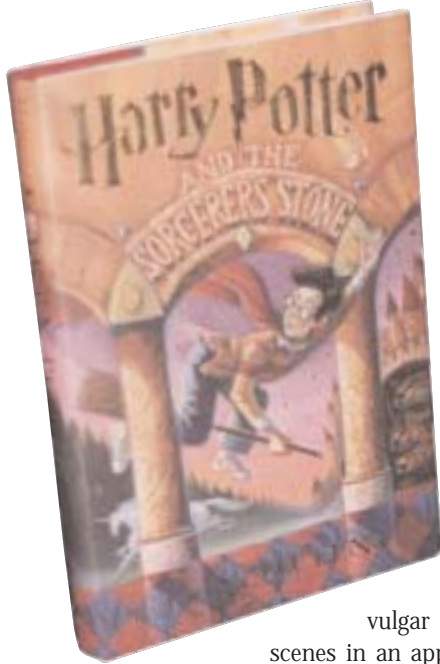
Doubtlessly, the author is an able and imaginative writer. The books are fascinatingly written as the adventures unfold in an ongoing variety of scenes. Yet the main compelling ingredient is witchcraft — albeit with a glamorous hue.

Rowling brilliantly presents a battle between a supposed "good" witchcraft portrayed with all the virtues of chivalry in the person of a young hero and an "evil" witchcraft impersonated by a veritable demon-like char-



Ten year-old boys cheer as store employees at Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh, N.C., countdown to midnight Saturday, July 8, 2000, when a new Harry Potter book went on sale. The lightning shaped mark seen on their foreheads, is the mark left on Harry Potter's forehead after a wizard tried to kill him.

AP / Wide World Photo



acter. Here seems to lay the fascination of the plot.

Yet the element of witchcraft and sorcery are heavily present on both sides of the spectrum, confusing in the minds of young and adult alike the basic notion that dabbling in sorcery and witchcraft is, of itself, intrinsically evil and forbidden by the Catholic Church. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, articles 1852, 2117, 2138)

Moreover, the book often employs vulgar and base language, while describing scenes in an appallingly violent manner bordering on the satanic.

A synopsis

Rowling begins the book by describing a common, middle-class, everyday English family, the Dursleys. Mr. Dursley dedicates his life and energy to managing a factory that makes drills. Mrs. Dursley, is a common-place English housewife who, in turn, dedicates her life and energies to their only son, Dudley, who is spoiled beyond measure.

With them, slighted and ill-treated, lives an orphan nephew, Harry Potter, who was born, in turn, in a very uncommon family: his father was a wizard and his mother a witch.

His father and mother were killed by a powerful and wicked wizard by the name of Lord Valdermot. Valdermot's power was seemingly broken when he failed to kill their infant son, under the protection of his mothers' own body, as well.

Harry carries a peculiar scar right in the middle of his forehead. It has the shape of a lightning bolt, which was the place targeted by the wicked wizard's wand. Because of this and unbeknown to him, Harry is famous in the entire world of wizardry and witchcraft. At the mere mention of his name, something akin to veneration fills the air. After all, Harry must possess some incredible internal power to have stopped the mighty wizard's wand. The book goes on to explain that it was the mother's sacrifice of her life that gave her son the power to block the wizard's fulminating spell.

When Harry Potter turns eleven, he is contacted by this other world and invited to enroll in Hogwarts

School of Witchcraft. A giant who is the gamekeeper at Hogwarts arrives at a given moment and takes him to buy all the necessary school supplies. To do this, they go into a coffee shop in the middle of busy London. As they approach it, Harry notices that only the two of them seem to notice the shop. All others pass the spot as if it doesn't exist. (All non-wizard and non-witches, that is, all normal people, are called "muggles" in the Harry Potter books.)

In the coffee shop, the giant presses a particular brick in a particular wall, and a door opens to a street called Diagon Alley. There, in different shops, they buy his school supplies, including a black cape with silver fastenings, a plain pointed hat, a wand, a cauldron, and an owl. The schoolbooks include *The Standard Book of Spells* (Grade 1), *A History of Magic*, *Magical Theory*, *Magical Drafts and Potions*, and *The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection*. For the first year at Hogwarts broomsticks are not allowed so this item is not on the list.

The giant leaves Harry with a ticket for Hogwarts that reads: "September 1, King's Cross Station, Platform nine and three quarters, eleven o'clock." Harry is beside himself with excitement and anticipation after such a dull, unhappy life with the Dursleys.

He is finally about to leave this boring, dreary, materialistic world of drills, TVs, computers, dead toys, Dursleys and Dudleys for an exciting world of magic where brooms fly and wands work spells; where potions of slugs, snake fangs, and human hairs work transformations; where cars fly and owls deliver messages.

When the day comes for Harry to catch his train, his uncle drops him at King's Cross and leaves him to find his way alone. He is confounded at realizing that there is no such thing as station nine and three quarters, but only stations nine and ten and so on. At a loss as to what to do next, he sees a family consisting of a matronly, kind, and bustling woman who is bringing three of her sons to the station. By their conversation, Harry realizes they are headed for Hogwarts as well. As he watches, he sees the first and second boys head straight for the barrier between the two stations and, instead of crashing into it, suddenly disappear.

Realizing Harry's predicament, the matronly woman coaches him on to do the same. Shutting his eyes and bracing for a crash, Harry emerges instead onto a new platform and sees a red locomotive headed by a sign saying "Hogwarts Express." The train is packed.

Hogwarts is a full-fledged school of witchcraft and sorcery. The curriculum includes classes on making potions, spell-casting, charms, formulas for curses and transformations, and so on. The recreational part of the program includes the game of Quidditch, executed with flying brooms and balls.

"As a result of a spell gone awry from his defective wand, Ron, Harry's friend, begins to vomit slugs."

— *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

“...for that was the terrible power of the dementors: to force their victims to relive the worst memories of their lives, and drown, powerless, in their own despair...”

— *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

A dark fascination

Though witchcraft is always present, the books begin on a mild enough note. But as the adventures unfold and as the books progress so does the intensity of the “magic,” with detailed descriptions of scenes of witchcraft and sorcery that are truly shocking. The books envelop the reader in the guise of a wonderful adventure with brush strokes of innocence, and virtue, while the ugly, vulgar, macabre, and even violent scenes are weaved in and out of the narrative.

We will describe or quote a few of these scenes so parents can judge for themselves. We will be using descriptive subtitles to point out the different aspects the books present. These aspects seem to be the antithesis of all that virtue and good taste traditionally mandated for our children in view of their precious innocence.

Dirt and revolting ugliness

“Harry’s eyes darted downward, and what he saw made his stomach contract. There was a hand protruding from the cloak and it was glistening, grayish, slimy-looking, and scabbed, like something dead that had decayed in water...” (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 83).

“Professor Sprout was a squat little witch who wore a patched hat over flyaway hair; there was usually a large amount of earth on her clothes and her fingernails would have made Aunt Petunia faint” (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, p. 89).

At one point Professor Sprout is re-potting Mandrakes, a plant described as: “Instead of roots, a small, muddy, and extremely ugly baby popped out of the earth. The leaves were growing right out of his head. He had pale green, mottled skin, and was clearly bawling at the top of his lungs.” Professor Sprout then proceeds to plunge him into another pot of dirt (*Ibid.*, pp. 92-93).

As a result of a spell gone awry from his defective wand, Ron, Harry’s friend, begins to vomit slugs: “...he gave an almighty belch and several slugs dribbled out of his mouth onto his lap...The Gryffindors (friends of Ron) were gathered around Ron, who kept belching large, glistening slugs. Nobody seemed to want to touch him” (*Ibid.*, p. 113).

At one point an awkward student by name of Neville accidentally melts his sixth cauldron in a Potions class. As a punishment, he was made to “disembowel a barrel full of horned toads.” Hermione, a girl student, then proceeds to teach him a “Scouring Charm to remove the frog guts from under his fingernails” (*Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire*, p. 209).

Vulgarity

(We ask our readers to forgive us for reprinting these passages, but we thought them necessary for parents to

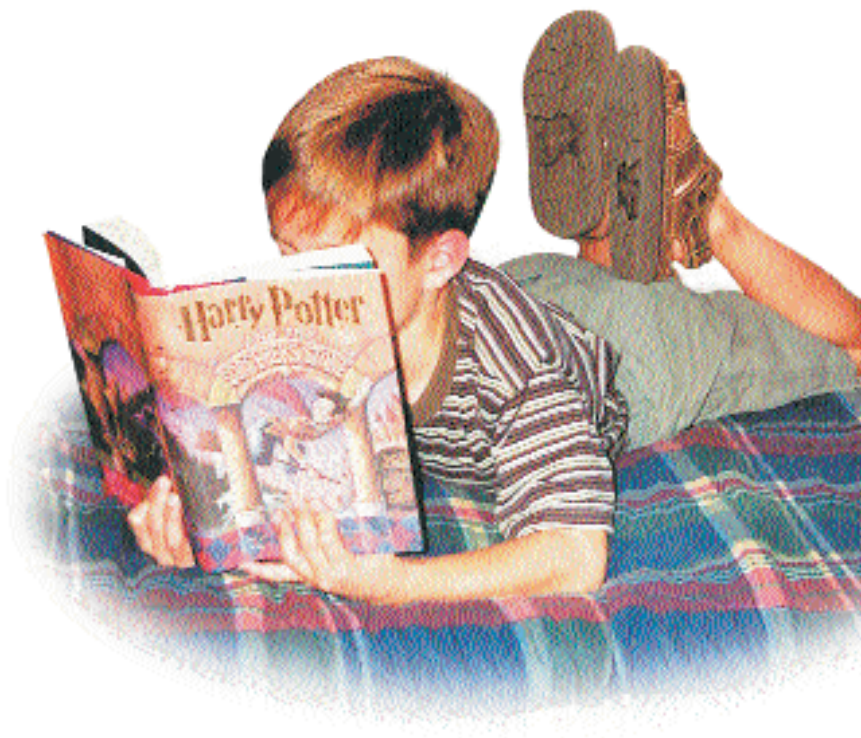
have an accurate idea of this aspect of the books.)

Harry buys some candy labeled, “Every Flavor.” Ron warns him: “When they say every flavor, they mean every flavor. You know, you get all the ordinary ones like chocolate and peppermint and marmalade, but then you can get spinach, and liver, and tripe. George reckons he had a booger-flavored one once” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, pp.103-104).

There is the ghost of a girl who died in a bathroom that lives in the “s” section of a toilet pipe. In a conversation with Harry where the little wizard is inquiring about a lake, the ghost says: “I sometimes go down there...sometimes don’t have any choice, if someone flushes my toilet when I’m not expecting it...” “Trying not to think about Moaning Myrtle (the ghost) zooming down a pipe to the lake with the contents of a toilet, Harry said...” (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, p.464).

Demons

In *The Goblet of Fire* there are some fearsome beings that guard a prison for wizards who are called “dementors.” These are beings that have the power to empty minds. This is how the book describes them: “...for that was the



terrible power of the dementors: to force their victims to relive the worst memories of their lives, and drown, powerless, in their own despair..." (*Ibid.*, p.217).



Horri-fying curses

There are three curses that the students are never supposed to use because they are "illegal curses," which only thug wizards and witches use. Nevertheless, the children must still know about them so they may avoid them at all costs.

One of them is the "Cruciatius Curse," the curse of Pain. The professor, at a given moment, gives a demonstration using a spider. Pointing his wand at the spider he commands, "Engorgio!" The spider swells bigger than a tarantula. Then, pointing the wand at it again he mutters, "Crucio!" What follows horrifies the children. "At once, the spider's

legs bent in upon its body; it rolled over and began to twitch horribly, rocking from side to side." Even though there was no sound, the description states that Harry was sure that if it could have made noise, it would have been screaming. The description continues: "Moody [the professor] did not remove his wand and the spider started to shudder and jerk more violently." Finally, a girl begs shrilly, "Stop!" because she notices that Neville, the awkward, sensitive boy, was clenching his desk, his knuckles white, his eyes wide and horrified (*Ibid.*, pp.214-215).



A sinister, disgusting party

A ghost called Nearly Headless Nick invites Harry to a Halloween party. It is held in a cold, musty dungeon where Harry and his friends meet hundreds of other ghosts. As they approach the banquet table in hopes of a good meal, they are repelled: "The smell was quite disgusting. Large, rotten fish were laid on handsome silver platters; cakes burned charcoal-black were heaped on salvers; ...a slab of cheese covered in furry green mold...an enormous gray cake in the shape of a tombstone..." (*Harry and the Chamber of Secrets*, p.133).

A blood-curdling "resurrection"

The thirty-second chapter of the 734-page fourth book, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, is entitled, "Flesh, Blood and Bone." It is a horri-fying, macabre ritual to bring Lord Valdermot back to life. A short wizard by name of Wormtail, whose hand is missing a finger, ties Harry to a tombstone. Close to Harry is the body of Cedric, the boy who had accompanied him to this spot

and whom the short wizard had just killed.

As Harry watches, Wormtail begins to mix in a huge cauldron a concoction that soon starts boiling, bubbling, and sparkling. In it he throws the semblance of a struggling human fetus of a dark red color. Then, pointing his wand at the tombstone, he cracks it and brings up a pulverized bone of Valdermot's father (whom Valdermot had killed because he was a worthless "muggle") and adds it to the potion. Next, in an apex of fanatical dedication, Wormtail cuts off his own hand and adds it to the cauldron. Writhing in excruciating pain, he walks over to Harry Potter and, making a gash in his arm, collects his blood and adds it to the solution. In a given moment the fearsome Lord Valdermot, who had been vanquished thirteen years earlier when he failed to kill Harry, rises out of the cauldron once again (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, pp.636-643).

What the reviews are saying

Despite the aggressiveness of the scenes described and quoted above, the controversy rages on in view of the tremendous popularity of the work.

While such entities as Hollywood, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* promote the books enthusiastically, other reviews, most from religious sources, vary in their degrees of condemnation. Some venture to say that, given the positive values presented in the plot, such as the virtues of self-sacrifice, courage, loyalty, and the ongoing struggle between "good" and evil, the books could be read under parental guidance since they are just fiction, just a fantasy.

Others don't share the same opinion. A Harry Potter program was canceled in the Oskalloosa, Kansas, library at the request of parents worried that their children would learn witchcraft from the books and be influenced by the "evil" factor in the novels. Many other parents, including home schooling couples, think the same.

Harry Potter within today's scenario

Given the conflicting opinions, even among Catholics, let us analyze what this article calls "The Harry Potter Syndrome" in the context of modern reality.

Our world today, and especially the world of youth, is besieged by a tendency to the occult. Paganism, witchcraft, and Satanism, no longer things of bygone pagan times, are making strong comebacks and claiming the attention of the young. Movies, music, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, and pagan rituals have become an enticing alternative to today's materialism.

And we needn't go far to confirm such a reality.

Punch in "sorcery" to search the internet and get such sites as: Sorcery: Home page for heavy metal rock band Sorcery; Risus Magic: Expanded rules for sorcerers and sorcery in Risus, with a large collection of sample

Clichés; Sorcery by Andreika the Witch: Powerful Spells cast by Andreika, the most powerful witch of all. (Her work is absolutely guaranteed, or your money back!); Sorcery: Videoflicks.com/ Easy to order from 100,000 Video and DVD's, we ship anywhere in the world! This is just a sampling of the first page of search results.

Then punch in the word "pagan" and get such websites as Pagan Temple: Pagan Temple is a place where Pagans, Wiccans, Witches, and all other religions can visit in peace; Acceptance of Pagan Religions in Society (UK): UK and European organization which campaigns for the Acceptance of Pagan Religions in Society, and provides comprehensive information on Paganism; Ohio State University Pagan Student Association; The Cauldron: A Pagan Forum: A virtual community for members of Earth-based Pagan religions; Dowsmist Tomes: A pagan wiccan site, selling the best books on magic, spells, wicca and pagan ideals. Tarot decks and books. Again, these are entries from just the first page.

Considering this modern-day reality, *Harry Potter* seems almost like the "initiation kit" to this macabre trend for an even younger age bracket. The fact that it is "only fiction" in an appealing form of witchcraft and sorcery may simply be the enticing lollipop for further dabblings.

A blurring of the notions of good and evil

No, the Harry Potter chronicles are not exactly recommendable. We cannot allow the easy, compelling, and fascinating style in which these chronicles are written to deceive us. The pill is beautifully and sweetly coated, but the contents are misleading. The danger lies exactly in the "pink hued" presentation with brush strokes of sacrifice, loyalty, courage, friendship, innocence, and pure fun — in "white" witchcraft.

In short, it is a very ably written way of introducing the child to the idea that witchcraft, after all, is an innocent and exciting pastime. It depends only on how you do it.

The first book achieves this at the outset by means of the innocent, misunderstood, and persecuted young hero.

A misleading message

Harry is tired. Tired of dullness. Tired of being misunderstood. Tired of materialism. Tired of superficiality. Tired of the everyday humdrum. Tired of mediocrity. He is also tired of being persecuted because he doesn't belong. Harry is an

AP / Wide World Photo

"As Harry watches, Wormtail begins to mix in a huge cauldron a concoction that soon starts boiling, bubbling, and sparkling. In it he throws the semblance of a struggling human fetus of a dark red color."

— *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

orphan in more than one sense. He is an orphan in the biological sense but also in the sense that he is the heir to a wonderful heritage that has no place in this pragmatic century. He has been marked. And he is not happy until he is allowed to live with others like himself.

The atmosphere built by the book is: Oh! If I could only escape! And then the solution is given: But you can! And your escape lies right in this world. You have only to find the right door.

And our youth today want to find that door.

Again, many people may argue that, after all, this is only a fantastic fiction and a harmless pastime for our children's imaginations. But where are seeds of future actions planted but in the imagination? What are actions but thoughts materialized?

Dissatisfaction of youth today

Let us again face today's reality. Yes, our young want to find a door and an outlet. They want to find it only

A customer checks newly launched Harry Potter books at a book store in Shanghai.





because their souls are bursting at the seams for something higher, better, and more exciting than today's pacifistic materialism and daily humdrum so devoid of combat, beauty, poetry, and higher ideals. They, too, have been marked by something much more awesome than a lightning bolt from a wizard's wand. Every child has been marked with the likeness of God Himself. Those who have been baptized have been marked further with the sign of the Cross. Their souls instinctively ask for more.

At a given point, no number of video-games, TV shows, computers, paint-ball-guns, Barbie dolls, Nintendos, and so on are enough to fill that void. Again, they want more. They want to reach beyond. They also want an easier life; one created by materialistic pacifism is only easier in appearance. In truth, it spoils the child to such a degree that it denies him or her the benefits of discipline. It makes it difficult for them to reach higher and to extract from their own minds and spirits the strength and the motivation to conquer.

And here is the danger of Harry Potter. It presents a solution to the problem created by the materialistic boredom of the world today by taking their imaginations into a transcendent world "beyond."

As we saw above, our society is already permeated by the satanic, by music, games, and other means including more serious practices. Harry Potter is only another push.

Conclusion

Years ago, and not so long ago, we used to tell our children marvelous fairy tales where magic was present but it was truly the magic reminiscent of God's power. The good fairies were the personification of angels and of the Blessed Mother. They were light, shimmering, beautiful beings. In the child's mind there was no doubt that these came from a light-filled source, from the source of good

fighting against witches with pointed hats mixing dark potions in cauldrons as the emissaries of evil. Though not a exactly a catechism, these stories pointed to a battle on earth but also to a reality above.

Harry Potter entices our children into a dark, shocking world away from the true source of light and good, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, Harry Potter is a great scandal to our youth. As Saint Matthew says, "But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in Me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone around his neck" (Matt., 8:16).

It hurts to see a world so asleep and so prepared to accept the dark world that it hands over its young unsuspectingly into the range of yet another seduction. As if drugs, alcohol, pornography, sex, immoral fashions, vulgarity, ugliness, and perverse language were not enough, now we must also face witchcraft and sorcery offered to our children. It hurts to see entities that by the very nature of their constitutions should have sounded the alarm remaining silent. One can only hope they have not thoroughly reviewed the books and are not

wholly aware of what they offer.

Once, in Mexico, the Mother of God herself visited the earth and triumphed over the reign of evil in which that country was immersed. In response to the apparitions of Guadalupe, in a matter of just a few years millions were received into the Church, turning to the worship of the True God and abandoning the worship of the Evil One. In the Aztec native language her name means "Crusher of the Serpent."

May Our Lady of Guadalupe have pity on our children. Meanwhile, we must fight with every weapon available, and pray. Let us pray that her kingdom come over this earth as it once came over Mexico. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us. ■

Harry Potter entices our children into a dark, shocking world away from the true source of light and good, Our Lord Jesus Christ.



The Missing Ingredient

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR

Many a parent today is up against the unthinkable. In face of a culture that promotes everything from pre-marital sex to Satanism, parents feel at a real loss. What can they possibly do to protect their child when the assault comes at them from all sides?

It comes from TV, movies, music, games, school, literature, friends, etc., etc. Moreover, it is all presented so alluringly that the parent necessarily becomes the universal party spoiler.

Many Catholic parents, after years of church going and Mass attendance and hours of catechism, watch helplessly as one or another of their children suddenly veers off down the wrong road.

WHAT did we do wrong? is the desperate question.

The missing ingredient

Anyone who has baked a cake that flopped knows that it is a very disappointing experience. You go into the kitchen, all geared up for baking; out come all the ingredients, you follow the recipe to the T, you pre-heat the oven, you set the timer and you wait in great expectation. You dream of a fluffy, mouthwatering result, savor the delicious aroma and, then, as the alarm goes off, you make a beeline for the oven. But oh! disappointment! It flopped.

There you sit contemplating the child of your dreams with one obsessive thought churning in your mind: "WHAT did I leave out?" You go over the recipe again and again and you are not satisfied until you have found the missing link.

Sometimes, all it will take is one ingredient. But if that ingredient is essential, what promised to be a joy will turn into bitter disappointment.

The "tendencies," the forgotten ingredient

Most of today's moral assault targets an area of the human psyche that is called the "tendencies." The "tendencies" is that area of the human mind and the human sensibility that is influenced rather than persuaded. In other words, the "tendencies" is the backdoor to the mind and sensibility of a person.

Thus, for example, there are ambiances, such as in certain restaurants, where one feels at home as soon as one walks in. One was not approached by someone saying: "Please, feel as if you were in your own house." Yet, the atmosphere is cozy, the fire is crackling in a fireplace, the music is low and charming. Immediately, you think of a delicious cup of hot chocolate and you sit down with your companions and have one of the best conversations ever. Two hours go by like fifteen minutes.

On the other hand, one walks into a McDonald's, orders, eats, and walks out. No one approached and said: "This is a fast moving business. You must leave after fifteen minutes."

What happened? The ambiances acted on the tendencies. One was warm and welcoming; and the psyche felt it. The other was cold and business like; and the psyche felt that also. One acted on the inborn tendency to equate warmth with welcome and the other acted on the inborn tendency to perceive coolness as rejection.

Another example: dress a little girl in a beautiful dress and watch her behavior; or a little boy in a suit and watch the transformation.

Immediately, all that is feminine, dainty and delicate in the girl's nature will surface. All of her feminine





Left: Living room, Brazilian TFP's Headquarters, São Paulo, Brazil.

Although most people cannot afford to decorate their home in this fashion, can one deny that such an ambience has the power to modify someone's behavior? No words need to be said, no sermons need to be preached and suddenly, a transformation is underway. The slouching gives way to erect posture, vulgar words are left unsaid, and things begin to change.

instincts will respond to that dress. No one told her: "Now that you are in a dress you must act like a little girl and not like a Tom-boy." Yet, the inborn tendency to femininity in her nature will instinctively respond to the dress.

Dress a boy in a suit and watch as he straightens up, becomes more serious and greets people better (at least for a while). The suit has conveyed to his tendencies the message that he is a gentleman now and, therefore, must act like one.

We could mention an almost infinite number of similar examples if space permitted.

The battle for the tendencies

Most of the moral battle today is fought in the tendencies. It is in the fashions, in the ambiances, in the music, in the language, and in the manners or lack of them. In short, it is in that part of a civilization that is labeled culture.

Many parents give their children a solid Catholic formation as far as direct doctrine is concerned, but completely leave out the cultural aspect of formation. At a certain point, if the child has received Catholic doctrinal formation but goes out into the world and starts being influenced by modern culture, there is bound to be a clash.

If the child's formation has been solid both in the doctrinal field and the cultural field, there is a good chance that he or she will not only sustain the impact but also start to influence the tendencies of his or her peers and colleagues. If the child has not had Catholic cultural formation along with Catholic doctrinal formation, it is likely he or she will be swallowed up by the cultural onslaught out there.

As an example, let's take fashions. A girl has been taught all her life about modesty as a virtue but yet is allowed to dress in the modern fashions that directly

contradict the doctrine on modesty. Her mind knows the theory but her tendencies don't. In other words she has, in fact, lost the sense of modesty that is acquired and preserved only by actually dressing modestly and seeing those around her doing the same.

Now, let's take music. This same girl has heard a lot about character building, and the pursuit of excellence, quality of life, and higher virtues and ideals. She has been told or given to read innumerable lives of the saints as examples. Yet, all that is played in her house in the way of music is rock and roll.

On the surface, there seems to be no connection, but rock and roll and excellence of virtues and ideals are in direct contradiction. Rock has a beat that appeals purely to the senses and the lower tendencies of man. It has nothing that appeals to the spirit or to the more refined tendencies of the human soul. In fact, the origin of rock lies in the savage tribes of Africa.

Now, place immodesty and rock and roll together and you will have a ready recipe for disaster. Many a Catholic parent has shed copious tears when their fifteen-year-old, the apple of their eye and the recipient of all their hopes, comes home pregnant one day. "But we said so many rosaries together! She knew she wasn't supposed to do that! Why did she do it? What did we do wrong?"

Dear parents, it is not so much what we did wrong but what we didn't do right. We overlooked an essential ingredient for the recipe: We ignored the tendencies. With this ingredient lacking, we cannot expect the dough to rise and shine in the furnace of corruption out there.

In our next article, we will attempt to address many other aspects of the "tendential revolution" and how we can launch our own tendential counter-revolution in our homes. ■

The Prince of Peace

*Exquisitely sculpted and individually hand-painted, **The Prince of Peace** comes with a beautiful and FREE, hand-made brocade pillow.*

America Needs Fatima artist Dias Tavaréz is unrivaled in his sculptures and paintings. The "Prince of Peace" is no exception. For Christmas 2001, he offers a unique and magnificent statue of the Infant Jesus to grace your home. From the luster in His eyes to the folds of His garment to the intricate halo around His head, the representation of the Prince of Peace is a museum quality masterpiece. Each statue is painstakingly painted in every detail. Special attention is given to the expression on the Infant's face and eyes, those eyes that look upon all who approach Him with a life-like expression



Limited Supply!

Shown smaller than actual size of 12" in length.

infinite sweetness. The "Prince of Peace" is 12 inches long and weighs over 3 pounds. It is yours for just \$129 (s/h included). Satisfaction **guaranteed**. The gold damask pillow, bordered with four elegant tassels, comes at no extra charge.

To order, call toll free:

1-888-317-5571

Chinese Communist tiger has not changed its stripes

BY NORMAN J. FULKERSON

The forcing down of a U.S. naval plane and the capture of its crew by the Chinese military last April gave lie to the naive fantasy that communism is dead. It has also caused many Americans to question the wisdom of trade and other policies that serve to benefit the repressive dictatorship in Beijing.

To provide our fellow citizens with important information essential to this long overdue public debate, the *American TFP* has launched a nationwide educational campaign. We are pleased to bring our readers the following interview with Mr. Norman Fulkerson, who leads the caravan of volunteers conducting this critical initiative.

Crusade: If you were to walk into almost any store in any mall, you would find products marked “Made in China.” Why are you urging your fellow Americans to boycott such goods? What is the message that you are trying to convey through your campaign?

Mr. Fulkerson: When a Chinese fighter pilot knocked down our naval plane and China held our countrymen hostage, we were reminded, once again, that the Chinese Communist tiger has not changed its stripes.

The caravan’s youngest volunteer, James Bascom, distributes “Reality Check” fliers in Los Angeles, California.



The proponents of favored nation trading status and other arrangements favorable to the Chinese Communist regime have long claimed that these concessions would engender political reforms in China. After more than three decades of business-as-usual, however, China’s human rights record remains a mockery of every decent principle that is dear to the American people — and to free people everywhere.

Our message to our fellow Americans is that we should not repeat the failed policies of Nixon and Kissinger. They are recipes for disaster.

Crusade: When did the TFP launch its campaign? How has it been going?

Mr. Fulkerson: Our plane was forced to land on Hainan Island on April 1. On April 18, our caravan hit the streets in our nation’s Capital. We have been on the road ever since. We have campaigned from coast to coast, reaching 35 states and 85 cities.

Crusade: And how has your campaign been received?

Mr. Fulkerson: In different ways, by different people.

A common reaction is disbelief. In a day when all too many cannot be bothered to make the slightest sacrifice for principle, many are shocked to see young men traveling America to defend the rights of others who live on the other side of the world.

Our message to our fellow Americans is that we should not repeat the failed policies of Nixon and Kissinger. They are recipes for disaster.

Crusade: Did America's anticommunist spirit die with the so-called "death of Communism?"

Mr. Fulkerson: Not entirely. Although we saw countless passers-by whose unawareness was exceeded only by their indifference, we also met a significant minority who shared our concerns and commended our actions.

Just the other day, a young man approached me in Des Moines. After taking one of our leaflets and reviewing it, he thanked us for "forcing people to think."

We are finding support for our stand in even the most liberal cities. In Minneapolis, for example, we met a gentleman who told us, "What you are saying about China is absolutely right. I've been warning folks for years that we are funding a government that is arming itself in order to destroy us. I appreciate what you are doing."

Such healthy reactions encourage us. We hope our presence in the public square enables other anticommunists to see that they are not alone and that it encourages them to stand up for what they believe. History is not made by the indifferent many, after all, but by the committed few.

Crusade: When you "force people to think" — to borrow that young Iowan's phrase — do you run the risk of provoking a hostile reaction?

Mr. Fulkerson: An encounter with the truth can awaken us from our apathy. When we embrace the truth, we are liberated from enslavement to lies. As Our Lord proclaimed, "you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Many, however, choose to reject the truth, particularly when it demands sacrifice on their part. They do not wish to give up the comfort of their apathy, and when confronted with the truth, the anger that often lies just below the surface of apathy breaks through. This is the source of the hostility we encountered on the streets.

Crusade: Are the American people well informed about what is going on in China?

Mr. Fulkerson: The average American feels that something is going on in China. He may even vaguely recall the Tienanmen Square massacre of 1989. It is our job to ground his misgivings in facts and to update his understanding with the latest news — news he is unlikely to receive from the liberal media.

Recently, I was discussing the situation with a gentleman in Minneapolis, who was telling me that we must deal with the Chinese government in a positive way. He was shocked to learn that the same Chinese Government was insisting that the county of Huaiji perform 20,000 abortions and sterilizations by the end of the year to enforce the dictatorship's "one-child" decree. The meager wages of the county's 15,000 workers will be cut in half to buy portable ultrasound machines so that all women of child-bearing years may be examined. If a woman is found to be pregnant, her unborn child will be aborted on the spot! This is the true face behind the false smile of the Chinese Communists.

Crusade: What is your most memorable impression of the campaign thus far?

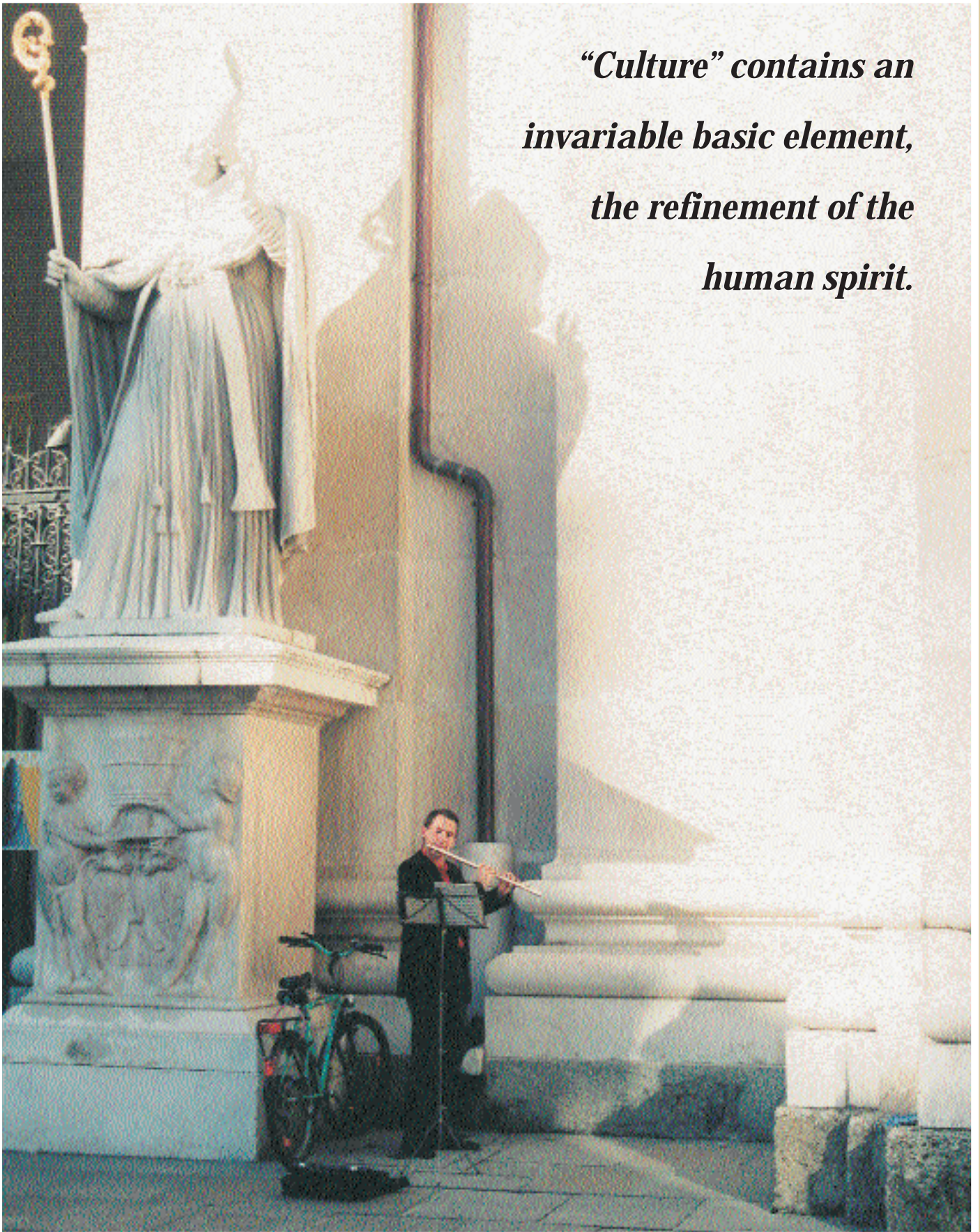
Mr. Fulkerson: The generosity of the American people. We have eight volunteers—enough to fill a van. We started out with very little money, but we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of people who have provided us with places at their tables, beds in their homes, and, most important, their prayers and moral support.

Our campaign could not continue another day without the support of our fellow citizens across the country, and their spontaneous generosity, in turn, bears witness to the fact that the anticommunist spirit yet lives in America despite decades devoted to extinguishing its flames forever. ■



**Campaigning in
Seattle, Washington**

*“Culture” contains an
invariable basic element,
the refinement of the
human spirit.*



PLINIO
CORRÊA DE
OLIVEIRA

Considerations on Catholic Culture

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA

What is culture? The question has received a variety of responses, some inspired in the study of literature, others in philosophic or social systems of every kind. So complicated are the contradictions surrounding this term and another related to it—civilization—that international congresses of professors and other learned men have met especially to define them. As usually happens, much discussion shed little light on the subject.

It is impossible in the space we have here to mention all the theses and arguments of the various currents, to affirm and justify our own thesis, and afterwards to treat of Catholic culture. We can, however, seriously consider the subject, taking the term culture in the thousand modes in which it has been clothed by the language of so many peoples, social classes, and schools of thought. We begin by showing that in all of them, “culture” contains an invariable basic element, the refinement of the human spirit.

At the heart of the notion of refinement is the idea that every man has in his spirit qualities susceptible

of development and defects that can be restrained. Refinement, then, has two aspects: one positive, signifying the growth of what is good, and the other negative, the removal of what is bad.

Many current ways of thinking and feeling about culture are explained in light of this principle. Thus, we do not hesitate to recognize as cultural a university, a school of music or acting, or even a chess club. These entities or social groups directly seek the refinement of the spirit, or at least pursue ends that in themselves refine the spirit.

We also recognize that a university or any other cultural institution may work against culture, however, as happens when, because of errors of any kind, its action deforms the spirit. One could affirm this, for example, about certain schools that impress upon their students disdain for everything philosophical or artistic. A person whose state of spirit moves him to adore technology as the value supreme and the only foundation of the soul, to deny every certainty not derived from laboratory experiment, and to scornful-



University of
Coimbra, Portugal



U.S. Marine color guard on parade, Washington, D.C

At the heart of the notion of refinement is the idea that every man has in his spirit qualities susceptible of development and defects that can be restrained.



Girls dressed in ethnic costumes, sing at the St. Genevieve festival, Missouri

ly reject everything beautiful is, without a doubt, suffering from a deformation of spirit. Deformed also would be the spirit that, moved by an inordinate philosophical appetite, were to deny any worth to art, poetry, or even more modest activities that also require intelligence and culture, such as technology. We would say that universities which form their students according to some of these false orientations exercise an anti-cultural action or propagate a false culture.

In this current sense, fencing is recognized as an exercise of a certain cultural value, for it supposes physical dexterity, vivacity of soul, and elegance. But it would be contrary to common sense to attribute any cultural value to boxing, which, aiming heavy and brutal blows at the very face of a man, is inherently degrading to the spirit.

Culture and instruction

At first sight and in the general understanding, the distinction between instruction and culture is less clear. But, things being well analyzed, one sees that such a distinction exists and rests upon a solid foundation.

A person who reads a great deal is generally considered very cultured, at least as compared with another who reads little. And, between two who read a lot, the one who reads more will be seen as the more cultured. As instruction in itself refines the spirit, it is natural that, all else being equal, one who is better-read is considered more cultured. The danger of error in this proposition arises from the fact that many people inadvertently simplify notions and end up considering culture a mere consequence of the number of books read. It is a flagrant error, for reading is advantageous not so much in the quantity as in the quality of the books read, and principally in function of the quality of the one who reads and the reason for which he reads.

That is, reading, in thesis, instructs—in the sense of merely providing information. But a person well-read and instructed, or as it may be, a person informed of many facts or notions of scientific, historical, or artistic interest, may well be less cultured than another with a lesser store of knowledge.

Instruction only fully refines the spirit when followed by profound assimilation resulting from sound reflection. And for this reason, he who has read little but assimilated much is more cultured than he who has read much but assimilated little. For example, a museum guide is usually quite informed about the

exhibits he shows visitors, but, not infrequently, he is little cultured. He limits himself to memorization and looks not to assimilation.

How one acquires culture

Everything a man learns with the senses or intelligence exercises an effect over the powers of his soul. A person may free himself more, less, or even entirely from this effect, according to the case, but in itself each measure of knowledge acquired tends to exercise an effect over him. As we already said, cultural action consists in accentuating all the effects that refine and in curbing those that do not.

Well understood, reflection is the first of the positive means of action. Much, much more than a bookworm, a walking encyclopedia of facts, dates, names, and texts, the man of culture ought to be a thinker. And for the man who thinks, the principal book is the reality before his eyes, the author most consulted is himself, while the other authors and books, albeit precious elements, are clearly subsidiary.

Nevertheless, mere reflection is not enough. Man is not a pure spirit. Through an affinity that is not just conventional, there exists a link between the superior realities he considers with his intelligence and the colors, sounds, forms, and aromas he perceives through his senses. The cultural effort is only complete when man absorbs, through these sensible channels, the entire

essence of the values his intelligence considers. Song, poetry, and art have exactly this as their end. And it is through an accurate and superior interrelationship with what is beautiful (rightfully understood, it is clear) that the soul entirely absorbs truth and good.

Catholic culture

For a culture to be founded upon true principles, it is necessary that it contain exact notions concerning the perfection of man—be it in the powers of the soul or in the relations of the soul with the body—and concerning the means by which it ought to attain this perfection, the obstacles it may encounter, and so on.

It is easy to see that culture, thus understood, must be entirely nourished by the doctrinal sap of the true Religion. For it belongs to the true Religion to teach us in what man's perfection consists, the ways to attain it, and the obstacles opposed to it. And Our Lord Jesus Christ, the ineffable personification of all perfection, is thus the embodiment, the sublime model, the focus, the vigor, the life, the glory, the standard, and the delight of true culture.

This is to say that true culture can only be based on the true Religion, and that only from the spiritual atmosphere created by the interrelationship of profoundly Catholic souls can the perfect culture be born, as the dew is formed in the sound and vivacious atmosphere of the early morning.



**The Grand Canal,
Venice**



This is also demonstrated in the light of other considerations.

We said above that man is susceptible to the influence of all he sees with the eyes of the body or the soul. All the natural marvels with which God filled the universe are made so that the human soul, considering them, may refine itself. But the realities that transcend the senses are intrinsically more admirable than the sensible ones. And if the contemplation of a flower, a star, or a droplet of water can refine man, how much more the contemplation of that which the Church teaches us concerning God, His angels, His saints, paradise, grace, eternity, providence, hell, evil, the devil, and so many other truths? On earth, the image of Heaven is the Holy Church, God's masterpiece. The consideration of the Church, her dogmas, her sacraments, her institutions, is for this very reason a supreme element of human refinement. A man born in the tunnels of some mine, who never sees the light of day, would lose a precious, perhaps even capital, element of cultural enrichment. He who does not know the Church, of which the sun is naught but a pallid figure in the most literal sense of the word, loses much culturally.

Instruction only fully refines the spirit when followed by profound assimilation resulting from sound reflection.

But there is more. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. In her circulates grace, coming to us through the infinitely precious Redemption of Our Lord Jesus Christ. By grace men are elevated to participation in the very life of the Most Holy Trinity. It suffices to say this in order to affirm the incomparable element of culture the Church gives us by opening the doors of the supernatural order.

Therefore, the highest ideal of culture is contained in God's Holy Church.

Non-Catholic cultures

Can man develop a true culture outside the Church?

No one would deny that the Egyptians, the Greeks, or the Chinese possessed authentic and admirable elements of culture. However, it is undeniable that the Christianization of the classical world gave it much higher cultural values.

Saint Thomas teaches that human intelligence is able, of itself, to know the principles of moral law but that, in consequence of Original Sin, men easily deviate from the knowledge of this law, wherefore it became necessary for God to reveal the Ten Commandments. What is more, without the help of grace, no one can enduringly practice the law in its entirety. And though grace is given to all men, we know that the Catholic peoples, with the superabundant graces they receive from the Church, are those who do manage to practice all the Commandments.

On the other hand, a human society is only in its normal state when the greater part of its members observe the natural law. And from this it follows that if non-Catholic peoples are able to have admirable cultural attainments, their culture is always gravely lacking in some capital points, depriving it of integrity and full harmony, so necessary to all that is excellent or even simply normal.

Again, in the Church alone is found true and perfect culture. ■

Published in *Crusade Magazine*, May-June 1996



Our Lord Jesus Christ, the ineffable personification of all perfection, is the embodiment, the sublime model, the focus, the vigor, the life, the glory, the standard, and the delight of true culture.



Surviving Reality TV: **A Frightening Look at a Tribal Future**

BY MICHAEL WHITCRAFT

A small group of tribe members gathers in a circle around what appears to be the ruins of a Mayan temple. A burning torch casts a dim light on each of them in such a way that darkness consumes everything but their faces. One man steps forward and says: "Fire still represents life; one of you will have your torch extinguished tonight." The participants then cast votes for the demise of one of their fellow tribesmen while spells are chanted in the background.

Such a ritual, which could easily be part of a prehistoric tribal ceremony deep in the jungle, has actually become quite recognizable to the most modern among us. It appeared on screens across the country as reality television's greatest success story, *Survivor*. Although to many this may seem like harmless make-believe, it is no joke, and the tribal mimicry goes much deeper than mere cosmetics.

In fact, reality television is not about reality at all; rather, it is an invitation to fantasy. Modern men and women are immersed in a carefully controlled environment and made to live the scripted dramatic story of twenty-first century noble savages.

Moreover, *Survivor* is not just a story of sixteen people put in the tribal context. It is countless Americans vicariously living the same experience with a message that unceasingly promotes the "values" of tribalism, placing it on the cutting edge of the Cultural Revolution now transforming the country.

How the Cultural Revolution works

Survivor and its genre are prime examples of classical Cultural Revolution. According to Marxist theoretician Antonio Gramsci, cultural expressions, events, and ideas pave the

way for political and social transformations. Culture communicates ideas, and these ideas can have grave consequences.

Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, in his masterful work, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, explained that the Cultural Revolution targets Christian civilization. It plays a major role in forming a postmodern society envisioned by Marx himself in which total equality and absolute liberty would exist as supreme values.¹

He further pointed out that primitive tribalism is much more expressive of this Marxist ideal than the moribund commu-

At a time when traditional family life is struggling for survival and respect, reality TV glamorizes sex and promiscuity.

nist state. Furthermore, cultural fashions and trends can do much more to advance the agenda than politics and legislation.

Through "free" love, nudity, and the rejection of logic, man finds absolute liberty. Total equality arises from the abolition of any form of private property and the reduction of leadership to the tribal chief or witch doctor.

This radical egalitarianism leads to a strong notion of communal life where individuality almost entirely disappears. Prof. de Oliveira described this in the following terms:

"In this collectivism, the various 'Is' or the individual persons, with their intelligence, will, and sensibility, and consequent-

ly with their characteristic and conflictual ways of being, merge and dissolve in the collective personality of the tribe, which generates one thought, one will, and one style of being intensely common to all."²

Overtones of this primitive tribalism permeate postmodern culture. Indeed, twenty-first century man absorbs a continual flood of tribal imagery that flows from the streets, issues from computer screens, and gushes from television sets almost imperceptibly.

Enter reality television

In this context, *Survivor*, the archetypal reality show, definitely communicates a neo-tribal message and imagery. Other reality shows also participate in the same spirit since most feature diverse groups — types of "neo-tribes" — of unrelated people who live, work, and overcome problems together without established rules or leadership.

It is a new medium wherein contestants are filmed without privacy and having surrendered their natural defenses. They are frequently humiliated by the manufactured circumstances of the show's masters. Viewer and contestant are thrown into a fantasy world of the unknown where even meals are uncertain.

In such an atmosphere, the spontaneity of first reactions is prized over reasoned logic; fantasy and feelings take precedence over the methodical analysis of reality. Security is found not in principled stands but in the universal consensus of the tribe.

A pervasive sensuality

One of the most aggressive aspects of reality television is its casting off of the civilizing restraints of morality. There is a pervasive sensuality that works on the imagination and breaks down moral barriers; a disturb-

ing amorality that sidesteps the whole question of decency and virtue.

Richard Hatch, winner of the first season of *Survivor*, for example, gained early popularity, by running up and down the beach naked, while Kaia from MTV's *The Real World* was known to walk around the house topless.

Besides blatant nudity, most — if not all — reality television shows feature scantily clad contestants to attract and hold viewers. Jeff Probst, the host of CBS's *Survivor*, pointed this out when comparing the first and second seasons: "There is a sexuality to this show [*Survivor 2: The Australian Outback*] that S1 [*Survivor's* first season] didn't have, people chop down trees in bikinis."³

Other reality shows like Fox's *Temptation Island*, *The Real World*, and CBS's *Big Brother* go yet farther by insinuating promiscuous relationships between contestants. Some believe that the harm stemming from prime-time fixation on promiscuity is far more profound than the mere infliction of bad taste on mainstream entertainment.

"I have noticed a definite circular pattern in my experience at college," claims University of Texas law student Joe Marrs. "People watch MTV to calibrate their lifestyle to what is cool. *The Real World* glamorizes a lifestyle of casual sex. Accordingly, people at school mimic this lifestyle and admire those who attain it. So it is not surprising that MTV continues to meet demand — a demand it has created — with a ready supply."

No taboos

In the surreal world of *Survivor*, there is also an undercurrent that suppresses rules, decorum, and manners. Contestants are in their "natural" state. The legitimate taboos imposed upon men by Christian civilization are suspended, and the aura of an absolute freedom remains.

A new set of rules is in place, dictated by the tribe and the need to survive. Any means, even repugnant and outrageous ones, can be employed. This was evident on *Survivor*, in which eating insects and rats was commonplace. In its first season, Kimmi, a vegetarian, ate a foot-long mangrove worm.

But even more profound is the rule of the jungle. The neo-tribe periodically votes to remove tribesmen until only one victor remains, fostering an anything-goes mentality where loyalties and principles can be



Reality television takes people out of the civilized context. Above: Kenya, setting for "Survivor III."

sacrificed and alliances made and broken at will in the mad rush to win the million-dollar prize.

Egalitarian and mystical structures

Unquestionably, every healthy society recognizes qualities and leadership, which in turn produces hierarchy and individuality. Yet this very natural way of organizing society is notably absent in *Survivor* and other shows.

At first glance, it is evident that there is a profound lack of hierarchy within reality television's neo-tribes. There are no captains or referees to judge fair play.

In fact, superiority or distinction can result in banishment. Commentator David Bloomberg described this well while analyzing a *Survivor* episode: "Both Gretchen and Greg are taking on leadership roles in Pagong, though of different types — both Gretchen and Greg would be targeted and voted off immediately by the Tagi alliance because of their leadership."⁴

Contestants even engage in practices of tribal religion. The rituals of the egalitarian tribal council create a kind of mystical air. Toward the end of *Survivor II*, for example, each person was assigned "to carve and paint an idol as a gift to the land." The idol-making fest was a daylong event, where each contestant constructed his idol to reflect his Outback experience.

The larger message

Of course, reality television is not real. It is a contrived reality where every detail is carefully crafted. Hours of film are edited into a storyline where the characters are meticu-

lously sculpted to transcend the drab existence of their daily lives. Each episode is packaged to push the limits of the shocking and outrageous in order to create drama, suspense, ...and advertising dollars.

However, reality television undeniably sends a message that coincides with the Cultural Revolution's assault on Christian civilization. At a time when traditional family life is struggling for survival and respect, reality TV glamorizes sex and promiscuity. When the nation clamors for honor and leadership, viewers feast on backstabbing and scheming. When individuals need to stand up for principles, the message is to meld all principles into a tribal consensus.

Truly, amid the chaos of this postmodern world, everyone struggles to be a survivor. The solution, however, lies not in escaping to unreality by fashioning new idols for the altars of a neo-tribal society. Rather, it lies in firmly rejecting this and every aspect of the Cultural Revolution and struggling to restore Christian civilization — a civilization that is serious, hierarchical, respectful of God's laws and, thus, antiegalitarian and antiliberal.⁵ ■

Notes

1. Part 1, Chapter VII, section 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
3. Quoted by James Poniewozik, in "Survivor 2. Back to Reality," *Time*, Jan. 20, 2001.
4. Bloomberg, David, "Survivor: Episode 4 in Retrospect," September 21, 2000, <http://www.themestream.com/articles/184392.htm>.
5. Cf., *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 74.

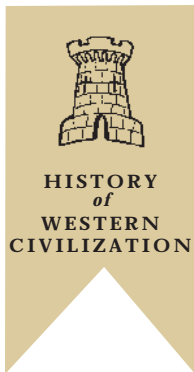


*“Christ redeemed us not
in the sweet arms of His
mother but on the hard
arms of the Cross, and
His knight will not serve
Him in any other way.”*

Ferdinand III of Castile at the age of 16



Seville, re-conquered by Saint Ferdinand from the Moslems in 1248. Above: Monument to Saint Ferdinand III



Chapter XXVI

Three Monarchs: Two Saints and a Tyrant

BY JEREMIAS WELLS

Part I: Saint Ferdinand III of Castile

King Alfonso VIII of Castile, the great leader of Las Navas de Tolosa, left two daughters who became queen mothers of two young kings, both of whom developed into illustrious warriors, crusaders, and saints. Because Alfonso's two sons died in their youth, one from illness in 1211 and the other from a tragic accident in 1217, their sister, Berenguela, rose to the throne of Castile. However, realizing that it was improper for a woman to occupy the throne in this most chivalrous state, she renounced her kingdom to her first born son, Ferdinand III, then only eighteen. Blanche, the second daughter, married King Louis VIII of France who, after an exhausting campaign against the remnant of the Albigensian rebellion, died in 1226. Since Louis, his oldest boy, was only twelve at the time, the Queen acted as regent while the young King slowly assumed the control of government during the next two decades. In a remarkable display of piety, both Kings saw the necessity of renouncing any earthly comfort to further the interests of Christendom and their own realms.

Youth of Ferdinand of Castile

Because the future King's parents were related within the forbidden degree of consanguinity — they were second cousins — Pope Innocent III insisted they separate and, as a result, young Ferdinand was brought up at the court of his grandfather. The serenity of the boy's life was shattered when a terrible malady overtook him at the age of ten. Consumed by a high fever and horrible restlessness, the devout lad could not eat, sleep, or take any rest. When the poor child developed large repulsive sores which caused

unrelieved pain, death seemed imminent. Dona Berenguela took him to a chapel of Our Lady where she prostrated herself on the cold tile floor in front of the main altar and prayed throughout the night. When her servants returned the following morning, they found the boy sleeping soundly. As a consequence of the miraculous cure, San Fernando from then on dedicated himself to the service of the Blessed Virgin.

In 1214, Alfonso VIII died, leaving the Kingdom of Castile to Berenguela's adolescent brother Enrique (Henry) who, in turn, was entrusted to the regent Count Alvaro Nunez de Lara, a man noted for his ambition and avarice. More misery fell upon the family when Fernando's father, King Alfonso IX, ordered his son — now fifteen — to be sent to his corrupt court in the Kingdom of Leon.¹ Since the upright young man could find no alternative to his obligation of obeying his father's command, he told his heartbroken mother, "Christ redeemed us not in the sweet arms of His mother but on the hard arms of the Cross, and His knight will not serve Him in any other way," and went off.

For the first time in his life, he witnessed the degrading spectacle of immorality and found the things that he saw and heard deeply repulsive. What was more painful was that his father was one of the worst sinners. He realized that he must fight like a hero or be dragged into the mud like so many others, losing in the process an unrecoverable treasure: his innocence. During this period Fernando practiced the handling of weapons for long hours and rode great distances in cold, rainy weather to accustom his body to hardship.

Meanwhile, Count Alvaro was terrorizing Castile with cruelty and injustice. His ambitious plans were suddenly unraveled when young Enrique, while playing with some companions, was struck on the head by a roof tile and died a few days later. After cleverly escaping from his father's clutches, the eighteen-year-old heir to the Castillian throne rode south to give support to his mother. However, she quickly yielded her rights to Fernando, who was proclaimed King of Castile.

Once Alfonso realized he had been tricked, he, with encouragement from Alvaro, invaded Castile in order to drive his son from the throne. Fernando, now faced with a dilemma of either taking up the sword against his father, which greatly troubled his sensitive soul, or abandoning his responsibility to his subjects, brought an army into the field opposite his father's. That night he sent his wise counselor Archbishop Roderigo Ximenez de la Rada along with other bishops to plead with the Leonese King to act honorably and with justice. Realizing that even his own followers sympathized with the young saint, Alfonso agreed not to attack providing Fernando pay a large sum of money. When the bishops returned to Fernando's tent that night to report on the successful negotiations, they found the young King in his private chapel praying with his arms in the form of a cross and with the back of his white tunic stained with blood. He had applied the discipline for the sins of his father.

Although the two were reconciled as Kings, they never entered into a father and son relationship. Alfonso finished out his



Spain after Saint Ferdinand's conquests

days fighting against the Moors with a contingent of Castilian troops. Shortly after the conclusion of peace, Berenguela arranged a marriage for Fernando with Beatrice of Swabia, a close relative of the ruling Hohenstaufen family in Germany and Sicily.

Fernando renews the Reconquest

In 1224, with his internal political affairs resolved, the youthful Crusader turned his attention to the Reconquest, a military campaign that with a few short intervals occupied him for the rest of his life. Quesada, the first town to fall, was typical of the many that followed. The Castilians placed cloth-muffled ladders against the walls just before daylight. Fernando raced up a ladder, jumped on the wall first, and struck down an approaching guard with a firm gashing blow to his head. The other knights were just seconds behind. Shouting, "Santiago and Castile," the Crusaders threw themselves into the fight to protect the life of their valiant King, who always seemed to be ahead of them. Slashing and cutting, they gained control of the wall and towers and opened the gates, allowing their army to rush in and capture the streets and squares. The first rays of the sun saw the town in Christian hands.

On the highest tower, Fernando, covered with Moslem blood from head to toe, planted the Cross and, gazing at it lovingly, prayed:

"Knowest that I do not seek my glory but thine; not the greatest of perishable kingdoms, but the kingship of Christ on earth." Throughout the next six years, Fernando raided central Andalusia, capturing most of the small towns, ravaging the countryside, collecting much booty. Only the three large, walled cities of Cordoba, Seville, and Jaen avoided capture because of their massive fortifications and large garrisons.

King Alfonso of Leon died in 1230. As Fernando rode north to claim his father's kingdom, he received shocking news. Although the mercurial King had earlier chosen his son as his heir in a formal session before Parliament with the Pope's approval, he changed his mind and left Leon to two daughters from a previous marriage which was also annulled. Alfonso had reached from beyond the grave to injure his son one more time.

Both the mother of the princesses, Dona Teresa,² who had retired to a convent many years before, and Dona Berenguela traveled to Leon to prevent a bloody dynastic war since several ambitious noblemen saw an opportunity for riches and political gain. In a series of calm, recollected discussions, those two magnificent ladies realized that the only just and appropriate solution was for the two royal daughters to abdicate. Although it required a great sacrifice on their part, they followed their mother's wise advice and were rewarded

with a generous pension from Fernando. As the monarch rode back to the battlefield, he was now backed by the resources of the new, powerful Kingdom of Castile and Leon which, from that point on, remained unified.

During the 1230's, the Christian rulers of Spain maintained continual pressure against the Mohammedans by pushing south along a broad front. West of the Gaudiana, the military orders of Calatrava and Santiago helped Portugal extend their southern boundaries. Just to the east of the river, Fernando's brother, Alfonso de Molina, led a marauding army past Cordoba and Seville to Jerez where he won a stunning victory over superior numbers. Santiago (Saint James) was seen, even by the Moslems, on a white horse and with his sword drawn, leading a legion of knights. On the eastern front, another successful crusading King of the first rank, Jaime (James) I of Aragon, who had previously captured the island of Majorca, forced the capitulation of Valencia, which in essence completed the Aragonese Reconquest.

Cordoba

Cordoba reached the height of its material splendor under the Omayyad Caliphate of Abdu-r-Rahman III (d. 961) and the ruthless dictator Al-Mansur (d. 1002) who, after he razed the great church of Santiago de Compostela, forced Christian captives to carry the huge church bells back to his capital city. Thereafter, the opulent city suffered something of a decline in wealth and culture because of the repeated conquests of the fundamentalist Berbers from North Africa (the Almoravides and Almohades). Nevertheless, Cordoba remained a formidable target for any Christian attack.

One night during the cold, rainy season at the end of 1235, a group of adventurous knights scaled the walls and gained possession of one of the suburbs and sent word to Fernando explaining their precarious circumstances. Knowing that his vassals had exposed themselves to great danger for their Christian faith, the warrior-King immediately gathered up a few companions and rode rapidly for the next few days through rain

and floods to bring needed relief. As spring came on, Fernando, with increased forces, captured the main defending castle at the opposite end of town, ravaged the Moslem fields, and tightened the siege. Late in June, Cordoba, once the ornament of the world, capitulated. For the next few weeks, village after village came out and watched in amazement as Moslem captives carried the huge bells of Santiago on their shoulders back to Compostela.

Seville

In 1246 Fernando besieged Jaen once again, having already failed three times. When it became evident that this time the fortified city would fall, the King of Granada, its master, knowing his own kingdom would be next, decided to cut his losses. He agreed to surrender Jaen and become Fernando's vassal if the latter would allow him to keep the Kingdom of Granada, which included the port cities of Malaga and Almeria. Fernando approved and Granada became a vassal state of Castile, a status that it retained until 1492. The crusading Castilian could now turn his attention to Seville, the greatest city in Western Europe at the time.

Seville was situated on the west or left bank of the Gaudalquivir River sixty miles from the Atlantic Ocean and was connected with its suburb, Triana, on the opposite bank by a bridge of boats. The river downstream, actually an estuary, was navigable. Fernando's first task was to break the ring of walled towns and fortresses within a twenty mile radius that guarded the approaches to the city. The residents of those towns that capitulated could remain unmolested in their homes but had to turn over the citadels and fortifications to the Castilians. The towns that resisted were captured and the inhabitants killed.

Since the Gualalquivir was navigable up to Seville, naval vessels played an integral part in the investment of the city in order to cut off communications and supply routes. The Spanish Admiral Ramon Boniface assembled a fleet in the bay of Biscay, brought it around the peninsula, and after several engagements

gained control of the river. His most spectacular success came in May 1248 when two large galleys rammed the bridge of boats with such force that the chains which held the boats in place snapped, allowing the current to carry the two halves harmlessly to shore.

The siege reached a critical stage during the summer when famine, disease, and terrible heat brought unbearable suffering to both sides. The moral elements of fortitude and determination gained in priority, which gave the advantage to the Christians because of their battle-hardened warriors, a large number of whom were the devoted monks of the military religious orders. The Moslems capitulated in November and after lengthy negotiations agreed to evacuate the city along with its dependent villages. Hundreds of thousands of Mohammedans under Christian escort retired to Granada or were transported to North Africa.

The privations and austerities of camp life and the rigors of his spiritual life had destroyed San Fernando's health, and he died shortly after in 1252. The great Crusader, whose body is whole and incorrupt to this day, was revered as a saint long before his canonization in 1671. ■

Bibliographical Note

The intimate details and quotations come from Sister Fernandez de Castro Cabeza, *The Life of Saint Ferdinand III*, Mount Kisco, N.Y., 1987. That biography, which was compiled from contemporary documents, especially the chronicles of Fernando's son King Alfonso X, is available from the Foundation for a Christian Civilization. (Call 1-888-317-5571) Two other works that complement that information are Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1975) and Derek Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (London, 1978).

Notes:

1. Ferdinand's maternal grandfather, Alfonso VIII of Castile, and his father, Alphonso IX of Leon, were actually of the same generation. They were both grandchildren of Alphonso VII.

2. She is also canonized (feast, June 17) because of the holiness of her life after her separation from Alphonso IX.



When Al-Mansur conquered Santiago de Compostela and razed its church, he forced the Christians to carry the large church bells to Cordoba, his capital. Years later, Saint Ferdinand re-conquered Cordoba and obliged the Moslems to return the same bells to Compostela.





FAMILY
SERIES

The Legend of Saint Dismas

BY PAULINE SANDERS

Many years ago, after Jesus was born, the very bad King Herod waited for the three kings from the Orient to return to his kingdom with news of the newborn King. When they did not return, Herod grew afraid that this new King would cause him to lose his throne. Because of this, he ordered his soldiers to kill all the babies in Nazareth, from those newly born up to two years of age.

Now, God the Father could not allow Herod's men to kill the Infant Jesus, so He sent an angel to speak to Saint Joseph while he slept. The angel told Saint Joseph in a dream to take his family and flee with them to the land of Egypt, where they would be safe.

Saint Joseph woke up and prepared in great haste to leave their simple home. When the time came to leave, Mary the mother of Jesus woke her Infant, Who wept a little, as might any little child who is suddenly awakened in the middle of the night. But Our Lady soothed Him tenderly, cooing and kissing Him reverently until He became quiet again.

Saint Joseph placed the Mother and the Holy Child on a little donkey and set off for Egypt. Now, Egypt could only be reached by crossing a vast desert, which the Holy Family had to cross without much food or drink, for they were very poor. Sometimes, they suffered much from hunger, not having anything to eat the whole day, and at night they had little protection against the bitter cold. Our Lady was quite afflicted by all this because the baby in her arms shivered and sobbed in the cold. So it was that the Holy Family suffered terrible hardships on their way to Egypt.

Nevertheless, nature came to their aid

time and time again in a miraculous way. Once, when the Holy Family was very hungry, they came to a place in the desert where a fig tree stood, laden with fruit. The fruit was too high for Saint Joseph to reach, so the tree bent its branches so that Mary and Joseph could help themselves to as much fruit as they needed for Jesus and themselves. Another time, when they had gone all day without eating, Our Lady, using her power as queen of the angels, commanded them to bring some nourishment. Thousands of angels rushed to help the Holy Family, bringing them heavenly juices and delicious food. They also walked with the Holy Family during the night, and their brilliance lit up the way as if it were a sunny day!

One night, after many long days on their journey, the Holy Family came to a very desolate place, one full of great danger, for a gang of thieves hid in nearby caves and assaulted lonely pilgrims. They heard the Holy Family coming closer and closer, and at the opportune moment, pounced on them. However, the minute they looked at the beautiful child, a bright ray, like an arrow, penetrated the heart of the leader. Strangely moved, the leader had a change of heart. He ordered his fellow robbers not to harm the holy pilgrims and to the gang's surprise, he invited the Holy Family to dine with him at his house. The robber told his wife how strangely his heart had been moved, and while many of the thieves shyly looked on, the woman brought the awe-inspiring pilgrims little rolls, fruits, honeycomb, and juice.

After they had eaten, Our Lady asked the robber's wife for some water to bathe her child. The woman brought a tub filled

with water and stood by with her husband as Our Lady tenderly washed the desert dust from the Infant Jesus. The husband and his whole gang of thieves were deeply moved by the appearance of the Holy Family, whose charm, beauty, and goodness wrought a change of heart in nearly all who came into contact with them. Our Lady was so beautiful and queenly that it is said that people came out of their homes to gaze at her as she walked by. She was not only sweet, and wise, but full of life and holy counsels. Saint Joseph and the Infant Jesus also touched hearts in a similar manner. Imagine what manner of grace and splendor they brought into that dingy den of robbers and sinners!

At a certain moment during the visit, the robber whispered to his wife, "This Hebrew child is no ordinary child. Ask the Lady to allow us to wash our leprous son in His bath water, for it may do him some good." Before the wife approached the Blessed Mother with this request, Our Lady turned to her and kindly instructed her to wash her boy in that same water. The poor couple's son was really terribly afflicted by this horrible disease. At Our Lady's word, the woman hurried to the darkest corner of the room and lifted her three-year old boy, whose limbs were stiff from the leprosy. As she lowered the child into the basin, she saw the leprous scabs fall from each part of his body as soon as the water touched it. Everyone watched in wonder as the boy became clean and healthy once again. The woman, beside herself with joy, ran to embrace Our Lady and the Infant Jesus, but Mary gently warded her off. She told her to save the water in a hole in a rock for similar future uses, then spoke to her for a long



time, counseling her to escape from her home among the thieves at the first opportunity. The woman promised, and in fact, did leave them later on and joined the women at the balsam garden.

Early the next morning, the Holy Family left the den of thieves with their host and hostess leading the way past the snares set up for travelers. When at last, they had to take leave of the Holy Family, the husband and wife expressed their deep feelings, beseeching them, "Remember us wherever you go!" The region where all this took place was called Gaza, the last town before passing into Egypt.

* * *

Thirty years passed. As the Child grew wondrously in holiness and beauty, the robber's child also grew, but in wickedness and sin. Then, Savior and the robber found themselves side by side once again.

This was, sadly, not in comfortable baths of warm, life-giving water, but cruelly nailed

side-by-side on crosses of wood. The One was the Son of God, sinless and innocent, suffering to free us all from the bonds of sin. And the other?

Ah! Poor Dismas, thy first
 leprosy was fair
 To that which now disfigures
 thy poor soul.
 No water from His bath will
 cleanse thee now,
 His blood alone hath power to
 make thee whole.
 A thousand worlds in one
 blood-crimson bath.
 With godlike prodigality it pours,
 In such strong streams that even
 crimes like thine
 Are borne away in its
 irresistible flood!*

Jesus hung between the two thieves,
 bleeding, silent, and dying. His sacrifice had

been made. Dismas looked at Him, and his heart was moved as strangely as his father's had been long ago when looking into the face of the King of kings. He suddenly saw the hideousness of the life he had led and knew that he deserved to hang there on this awful cross. But this other Man, this Jesus who was called the Son of God, He was surely innocent!

Dismas could contain his remorse no longer. He drew in a ragged breath and addressed Jesus impulsively: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!"

Ah! what strange echoes those familiar words must have rung in Our Lady's memory!

And Jesus, lifting His dying gaze to the face of Dismas, promptly offered him this everlasting promise: "This day, my Dismas, thou shalt be with me in Paradise!" ■

(*) *A Legend of St. Dismas and Other Poems*,
 Copyright by P. J. Kenedy and Sons. 1927, p. 18.



BOOK
REVIEW

The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome

BY THOMAS BECKET

In progressivist circles, the changes brought forth by the Edict of Milan in 311 A.D. which lifted the state of persecution against Christians, and Emperor Constantine's subsequent conversion after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 are seen as a step away from the Christian ideal. The Church was no longer a marginal group within society, but came to dominate the Roman world both spiritually and politically. In place of torture, death, and destitution of Church property came access to public office, state financial support, and endorsement from the highest powers in the land. Thus the "Constantinian Church" with its wealth and political privilege is seen as a negation of the spirit of poverty and a union of Christianity with the spirit of the world.

Constantine has often been viewed as either a Machiavellian who used his powers to impose Christianity or an insincere convert who saw Christianity as a means to unite the Roman world under him. Little has been said about the possibility that he was a sincere Christian attempting to walk a difficult and narrow path as Rome's first Christian emperor.

In *Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome*, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser explores the influence of the Christian apologist Lactantius on Constantine. She focuses on Lactantius's most known work, the *Divine Institutes*. This book has been studied in the past as merely a theological work and, as such, its historical relevance in the transition of Rome from a state that persecuted Christians to a Christian state in just a few years has never been adequately dealt with.

In fleshing out the religious and political debates that were the context of Lactantius's work, Digeser sheds light on the mechanism that created the intellectual conditions for Rome to make the transition from paganism imposed by the state to an empire that embraced Christianity. Lactantius, called the "Christian Cicero," converted during the Great Persecution of emperor Diocletian. He argued for tolerance for Christians by appealing to the best ele-

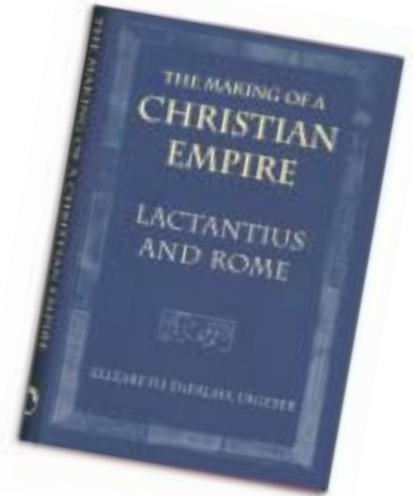
ments of Greco-Roman philosophy and jurisprudence.

Under the Tetrarchy of Diocletian, Rome had departed from its traditional approach to government by making the emperor a God and developing a complicated theology to justify his rule. The Empire had just come out of a period of intensive civil war. It seemed necessary to have religious unity in order to preserve civil political unity. Arguments of pagan philosophers such as Porphyry supported the notion that Christian refusal to participate in the pagan festivities was a form of treachery.

Lactantius argued that Christian monotheism was more in tune with Roman tradition than the style of state paganism imposed under Diocletian. He did this by appealing to the traditions of philosophy that approached a form of monotheism much nearer the Christian concept of God than the popular polytheism the state advocated. By doing this he showed that Christians could indeed be loyal citizens.

As the tutor of Constantine's son, Crispus, Lactantius gained influence and read his *Divine Institutes* at the emperor's court. The interplay of political and intellectual forces set in motion by his work continued to influence the policies of Constantine. This led to the establishment of a Christian empire that, while supporting the Church, did not, as it has been supposed, impose undue restrictions on the other religious convictions.

Digeser's book is a fascinating exposition of this critical point in Church history. It is highly readable but at the same time is an academic work based on in-depth scholarship and knowledge of the period. By bringing to light the intricacies of the philosophical and political debate that surrounded Constantine's conversion, Digeser has done much to clear the air of rash presuppositions about Constantine and the transition in the Church and state brought about by his conversion. ■



The fo Prince of Peace



This beautiful hand-crafted statue of the Child Jesus is now available for your home!

- See Page 19