

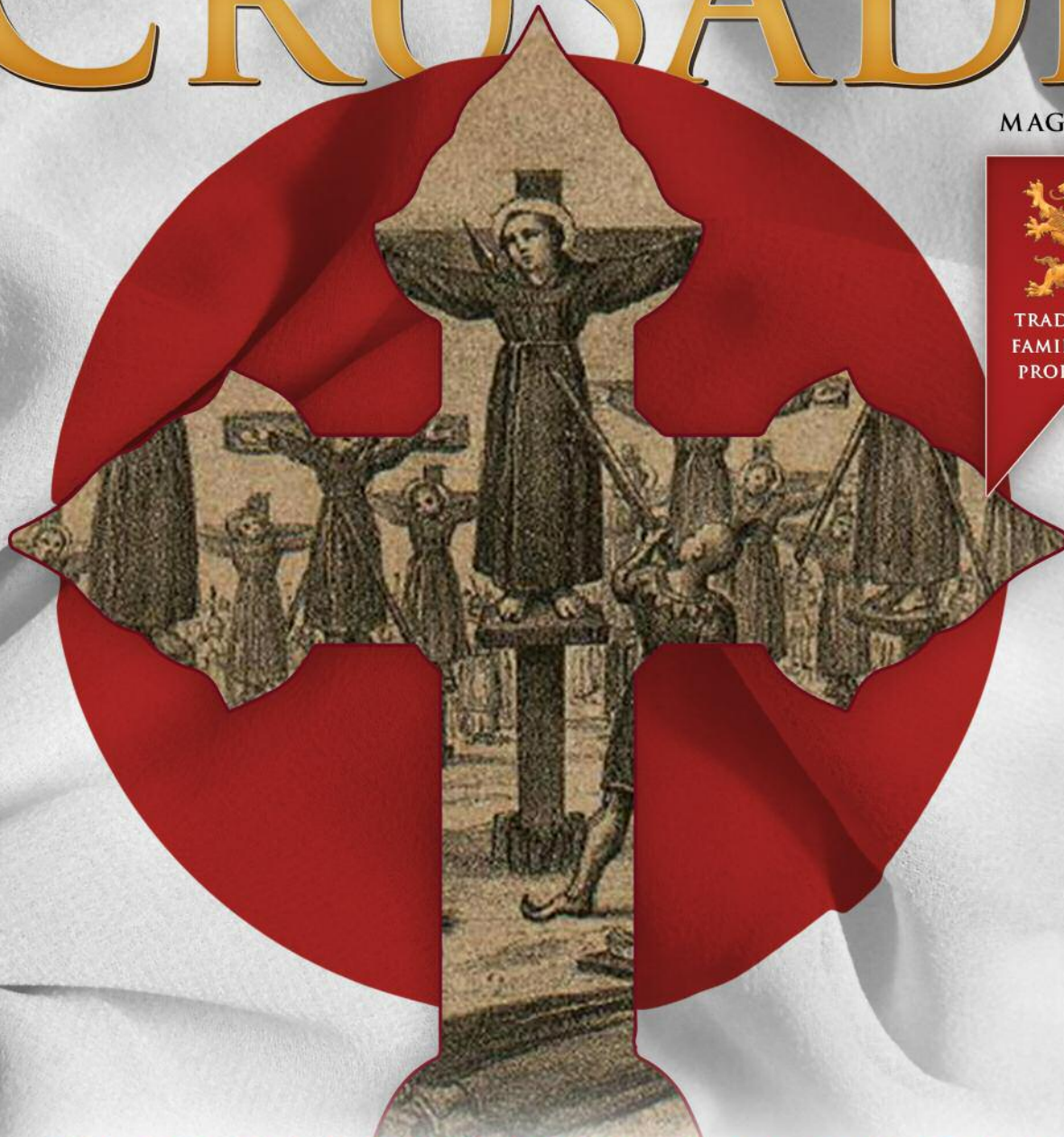
CRUSADE[®]

March/April 2017

MAGAZINE

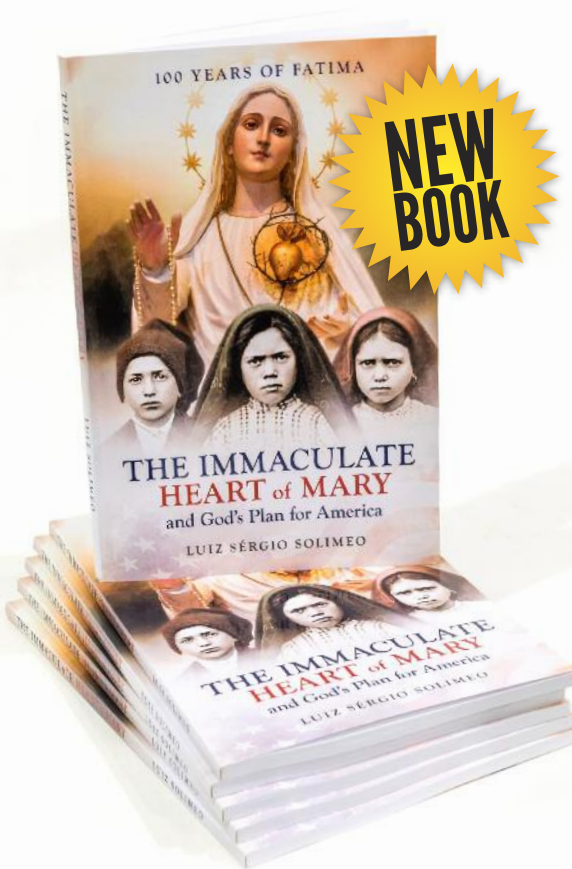


TRADITION
FAMILY AND
PROPERTY[®]



THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN:
CHAMPIONS
OF THE **FAITH**

WHAT IS THE CORE *Message of Fatima?*



100 years after Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, the world has seen a century of upheavals, wars, tragedies and natural catastrophes. Our Lady's admonitions and prophecies are being fulfilled. But in spite of this, her core message at Fatima is still widely unknown and largely ignored by the majority of mankind. What is this core message and what is its significance, especially today? What is the solution that she gave the world to solve its many problems? What remedy did she give us to save our own souls from eternal damnation? A new book by American TFP member, researcher and author Luiz Sérgio Solimeo, answers these questions and more.

Titled *The Immaculate Heart of Mary and God's Plan for America*, the release of the book coincides with the start of the centennial year of the Fatima apparitions. What better way to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the appearance of the Mother of God on earth than to study and understand her message?

This timely and beautifully-illustrated book explains in depth, the importance and significance of the centennial, reveals the true meaning of Our Lady's core message and its relevance today, and finally describes the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as she promised at Fatima in 1917.

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**FORGOTTEN
TRUTHS**

Saint John the Baptist—First Martyr of the Indissolubility of Marriage

Shortly after Saint John the Baptist baptized Jesus on the banks of the Jordan, John denounced Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, to his face.

"For Herod had apprehended John and bound him, and put him into prison, because of Herodias, his brother's wife. For John said to him: It is not lawful for thee to have her. And having a mind to put him to death, he feared the people: because they esteemed him as a prophet." (Matt. 14: 3-5)

For thirty years the dissolute ruler had indulged his every whim. His latest crime: Herod had divorced his own wife and married Herodias, the wife of his elder brother Philip.

During the four months following Saint John's imprisonment, Herod's visits to his prisoner began to have a strange effect on him. An irresistible awe gradually took possession of him, which in turn gave place to respect. This did not go unnoticed by Herodias and she watched for the chance to end this inconvenient "friendship."

A favorable occasion soon presented itself in the form of Herod's birthday for which an elaborate banquet was to be laid. His arrest of John the Baptist had not been well received. Thus, both Herod and Herodias took care that the celebrating and feasting should be more brilliant than usual,

a luxurious affair that would purchase him the favor of his flatterers once again.

Influential and powerful officials, from near and far, gathered at the palace—their differences dissolving round Herod's loaded table. At a certain well-calculated moment, the succession of entertainers is replaced by a single dancer: Herodias's daughter, Salome. Her performance so pleased Herod that he promised her whatever she should ask of him, even if it be half of his kingdom. Thus was the trap set, that having pronounced a rash oath before such an audience, Herod's pride would not permit him to withdraw it. Upon asking her mother's advice, Salome requested the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

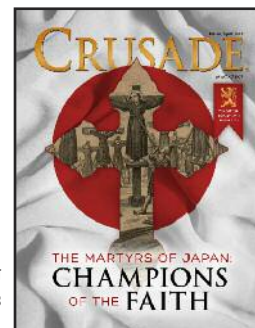
Although inwardly regretful, Herod could not refuse the request. As Saint Augustine so aptly described what followed, "an oath rashly taken was criminally kept." A guard was sent to behead John in prison. Thus, the "voice crying in the wilderness" was silenced.

Saint John the Baptist, defender of true marriage, pray for us! ■



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Composite depicting
the Japanese Martyrs
400 years ago.

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CRUSADE

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THE AMERICAN TFP

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is an organization of lay Catholic Americans concerned about the moral crisis shaking the remnants of Christian civilization. Its earliest origins date back to January 1971, when the first TFP members started to group around the publication *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*. It is a civic, cultural and nonpartisan 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 inspired the formation of other autonomous TFP sister organizations across the globe, thus constituting the world's largest anticommunist and antisocialist network of Catholic inspiration.



IN BRIEF

Macy's Quits Support for Planned Parenthood

After supporting Planned Parenthood for some time, Macy's Department Store will no longer make any donations to the abortion provider. This was revealed by the organization 2ndVote, a pro-life group that tracks corporate donations to Planned Parenthood. Last year, four other big corporations—AT&T, Coca-Cola, Ford and Xerox—publicly distanced themselves from Planned Parenthood.

Transgender Lifestyle Anything But "Gay"

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), a homosexual rights organization, recently released the findings of its 2015 survey of 27,715 self-described "transgenders." The survey shows that the transgender lifestyle is anything but "gay." Nearly half (47%) said they were being sexually assaulted; 39% have serious psychological stress; 40% have attempted suicide; HIV infection is five times that found in the general population (1.4% vs. 0.3%); 12% admitted prostituting themselves; and 77% have experienced partner violence.

Jesus Christ Declared King

In an official ceremony attended by President Andrzej Duda and the Church hierarchy, Poland declared, "In our hearts, rule us, Christ!

Through the Polish nation, rule us, Christ! We pledge to defend Thy holy worship and preach Thy royal glory, Christ our King, we promise!"

A previous king of Poland, John Casimir, declared the Blessed Virgin Mary honorary queen of the country more than 300 years ago.

Faith and Politics in 2016

In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential elections, the Pew Research Center reported that 52% of Catholics voted for Republican candidate Donald Trump and 45% voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton. The report also found that 58% of Protestants and other Christian denominations voted for Trump and only 39% voted for Clinton. Of the religiously unaffiliated group, 68% voted for Clinton and 26% voted for Trump.

Repeal of North Carolina's "Bathroom Law" Fails

Immediately after a Democrat was elected governor of North Carolina in the last elections, efforts were

underway to repeal the controversial law regulating "transgender" individuals' use of public restrooms in the state. In a special nine-hour session of the legislature, however, these efforts failed to rescind the law. The Senate voted down the repeal bill and the House adjourned without acting. Both bodies will reconvene in the future to reconsider the issue.

Study Confirms: Excessive Social Media Leads to Depression, Anxiety

A recent study done by the Center for Research on Media, Technology, and Health of the University of Pittsburgh found that using multiple social media platforms may put individuals at increased risk of depression and anxiety. The study discovered that people who use anywhere from seven to ten social media platforms are three times more likely to be depressed or anxious, compared to those using no more than two.



Attempt to Expand Abortion in the United States Failed

The anti-abortion organization Operation Rescue just concluded its annual survey of abortion facilities and found that despite the largest attempt in



decades to expand abortion since the 1980's, the number of abortion facilities in the United States did not increase and remains the same as in 2015. Overall, the number of abortion facilities declined by 27 percent since 2009 when

Operation Rescue started to monitor abortion facilities nationwide.

Texas and Ohio Pass Pro-life Bills

The State of Texas recently passed a bill requiring abortion facilities to give proper burials to aborted babies. Governor Greg Abbott, who signed the bill into law, said that aborted babies should not be "treated like medical waste and disposed of in landfills." In Ohio, the legislature passed a bill to ban all abortions after an unborn baby's heartbeat begins. However, the Heartbeat Bill was vetoed by Ohio Governor John Kasich. Another bill making assisted suicide a felony was passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Ohio governor.

The Good Catholic Daughter: The Best Hope for a Renewed World

BY FR. MARTIN J. SCOTT, S. J.



CHRIST IN
THE HOME

The good Catholic daughter who honors her parents and follows their advice is safeguarded against the risks of living in an immoral society. It is one way God has of rewarding the good daughter. The girl who flings reverence for her parents aside to claim her own way—harmless though it be at first—will find herself on a dangerous road. Before long she will lose control and then—the price she must pay for her mistakes is terrible.

One comfort of a good daughter is the fact that she is making her parents happy. In their happiness her own becomes manifold. Devotion to them becomes a pleasure because she sees that their only thought is for her and her brothers and sisters.

But if she is not a good daughter? I dread to think of the consequences to her. Some girls break their parents' hearts by their selfishness and excess. Eventually their own hearts are broken. But worst of all, they are living in sin. For deliberate misbehavior towards parents is a sin. A daughter who died in that sin would appear before God as one who had turned her back on Him in life. It is treason to God to ignore His commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

I do not refer to thoughtless acts of disobedience, sometimes committed out of carelessness or immaturity, but of that downright insulting disobedience which some girls continually display. The good daughter will be shocked to learn that there are girls of this kind. The good daughter finds so much pleasure and comfort in doing her duty to her parents, she has so much dread of sin, that she cannot understand the misbehavior of the bad daughter. Some daughters are bad because they fail to realize the mischief they are doing. But you may be sure that if dishonoring one's parents were not a dreadful thing, God would not condemn it so terribly.

In present times, young women are more and more drawn from the home by business. In many cases that is necessary. The danger to girls in the

If daughters were all they should be, the world would be a far better place to live in. A good girl is a good influence everywhere.



The good Catholic daughter fulfills her duties toward her parents. Her example is a constant inspiration for her family and society.

business world is that they may lose the reserve which is their greatest protection. No matter who the man or what the circumstances, a Catholic girl should never permit anything anywhere which may be in the slightest way against womanly decorum and Christian modesty. Fidelity to her religion is her greatest safeguard.

In all walks of life there are men with little or no religion, who are ready to do all in their power to mislead a young woman. If she values honor and happiness, she should make no concessions to these unprincipled men. If in doubt about anything, she should turn to her mother or to her confessor, and she will thus avoid the pits into which so many fall, often, alas, never to rise again to what they were before.

A girl's religion and her mother are her best friends. Not that I leave out father or brother, but there are certain helps and protections which religion and mother are best qualified to provide.

In conclusion, my dear young woman, I wish to say that your happiness here and your blessedness hereafter are bound up with your devotion and reverence for your parents. Your influence in the home and outside of it is incalculable. Indeed, it is not too much to say that society at large will be what you make it. If daughters were all they should be, the world would be a far better place to live in. A good girl is a good influence everywhere.

Leave other girls, therefore, to their own duties and spheres of influence. Your responsibility is your own. No one has finer opportunities than the Catholic daughter, and, thank God, no one, for the most part, employs her opportunities better. The good Catholic daughter is the pride and joy of her parents, the inspiration of her brothers and husband, and the best hope for a renewed world. ■

From the book *You and Yours: Practical Talks on Home Life*, pp. 94-99.



The Manliness of the Prodigal Son

BY JAMES BASCOM

The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most memorable and moving of all the parables taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Many who cannot name all Ten Commandments can nevertheless give a rough outline of the story. It has been widely represented in Christian art since the Middle Ages, and even today is often referenced in literature and film.

Its divine themes—grievous sin, terrible suffering, true repentance, and unconditional forgiveness—are like the finger of God touching the very heart of the human condition. No matter how often we see others follow the same path of perdition as the Prodigal Son, our pride fools us into thinking that our lives will end differently. No matter how much we are warned, we fall into sin. No matter how much we sin, we repent only when we encounter suffering. And no matter how virtuous we think we are, we are all Prodigal Sons in need of forgiveness from an all-merciful Father. These themes touch Americans very deeply.

On the one hand, we are a nation that maintains a good and healthy regard for justice, especially towards unrepentant evildoers. We cheer the policeman who arrests the rogue criminal and find satisfaction in his just reward of a long jail sentence. We still support, by a large majority, the death penalty for our very worst criminals. We instinctively fight back against Islamic terrorism and—to the horror of

liberals everywhere—cheer when unarmed American civilians beat unconscious would-be terrorists on a French train, or when an American Navy warship blows Somali pirates out of the water.

But something has changed in the American soul over the last few generations. Although we still have a love of justice, we increasingly refuse to take responsibility for our actions. We shirk our duties and obligations. We have the tendency to blame everyone and everything except ourselves for our faults and failings. And worst of all, we feel no shame for assigning blame and even cheer those who do so.

This mentality dominates so many aspects of our culture. Our legal system is overwhelmed with frivolous lawsuits from people who often take advantage of their own mistakes to extort money from others. Husbands and wives often blame each other for their marital disputes and prefer divorce to working through difficulties. Hollywood glamorizes characters that live for themselves and shirk responsibility, and even portrays idealistic and self-sacrificing people as stupid or naïve.

We teach this mentality to our youth. When “helicopter parents” berate their children’s teachers for daring to give them a less-than-stellar grade, or when they confront a referee who made an unfavorable call in a sports game—regular occurrences today—those children learn that actions have no



But something has changed in the American soul over the last few generations...

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consequences. When able-bodied fathers sign up for food stamps rather than earn an honest living, or when career women abort their unborn children so they can continue to climb the corporate ladder, children learn that irresponsibility pays off.

A generation of Americans has grown up immersed in this ethic of irresponsibility. Unfortunately, there is no easy way out. Without a widespread conversion, a culture of irresponsibility naturally falls into a death spiral. Selfish, irresponsible people corrode their own culture, economy, and family structure, which leads to further selfishness, finger-pointing, and irresponsibility.

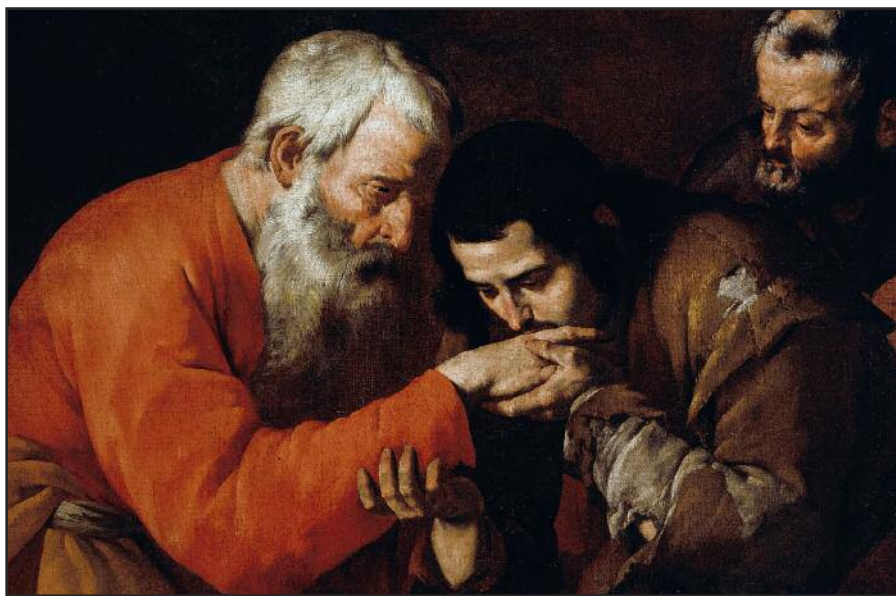
That brings us back to the Prodigal Son. In His infinite Wisdom, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave parables as supreme examples for all times and all peoples. Indeed, the parable of the Prodigal Son has many striking similarities with the specific situation in which America finds herself, and provides a clear path to repentance and conversion if we are willing to take it.

The Prodigal Son certainly didn't leave his father's house thinking he would end up herding swine. Although he walked away from immense wealth and happiness, he probably thought that he could enjoy the pleasures of the world while avoiding the pitfalls that befell other, less "enlightened" young men. His father, no doubt, warned him of the dangers of the world, but even he was unable to sway his son's determination.

For a little while at least, he spent his father's inheritance enjoying all the delights the world had to offer. Food, drink, and prostitutes were his new idols. Secure with his inheritance and new "friends," he likely scoffed at his father's paternal advice. When he talked about his father—if he did at all—he may have even mocked his former life at home.

In spite of all his father's paternal advice and love, it was only through suffering that the Prodigal Son began to seriously consider the folly of his life. A great famine came upon the land, making life expensive. The Prodigal Son soon ran out of money and was reduced to herding swine. Worse than any physical suffering must have been his public humiliation. His new master may have known him before the famine struck, saw him frequent the local taverns, and stagger back drunk to his comfortable lodgings. If so, he probably didn't let him forget it, as he went about his daily tasks taking care of his master's pigs.

The Prodigal Son likely had many legitimate grievances against others for his predicament. The famine that exposed his bad decisions was not his fault. Our Lord did not give a cause, but it could very well have been a man-made disaster. Perhaps



the "ruling class" of that country, like the Prodigal Son himself, made bad decisions, which destroyed the local economy. There might have been a war that exhausted the whole country and crippled agriculture. As a rich man in a foreign country, he was certainly a target for thieves and hucksters.

As he sat watching the swine devour the husks that he so ardently wished to eat, many ideas must have flashed through his mind. He may have been tempted to wallow in self-pity. He could have spent his days telling anyone willing to listen all the gory details of how "they" caused his misfortune.

This is the effeminate response to a crisis. Effeminate men are unable to do the two things that define manliness: take responsibility for their actions and do one's duty regardless of the difficulty. They blame others for their own faults, create intricate justifications for their irresponsibility, and above all criticize men who don't make excuses (behind their backs, of course).

The Prodigal Son, on the contrary, reacted to his predicament with true manliness. It took courage to confront his failings directly, to say the words "I have sinned" and to ask for forgiveness. To be sure, there certainly were factors outside his control that contributed to his misfortunes, but he recognized that he alone bore ultimate responsibility. It took manly heroism to humiliate himself in front of his father, older brother and their whole household after he had so proudly defied them and suffered the consequences.

This timeless parable has many lessons for us Americans today. Our culture, economy, and society are in crisis. As John Horvat points out in his book, *Return to Order*, we are spending our inheritance like passengers on a great cruise ship

It took courage to confront his failings directly, to say the words "I have sinned" and to ask for forgiveness.

without any consideration for tomorrow. While we are enjoying ourselves, our government is paralyzed, our economy is plunging full speed into bankruptcy, and the traditional family is disfigured almost beyond recognition. A modern-day famine in the form of an economic crash would plunge the whole world into chaos.

Like the Prodigal Son, we have a choice. We can listen to the many voices of irresponsibility coming from both the left and the right. They place the blame exclusively on others, be it “Wall Street,” the Chinese, or the “1%.” These outside forces, to be sure, have played a role in undermining our economy. But to place the blame entirely on them is akin to a man who blames a casino for taking his money. The casino certainly was dishonest in its dealings with him, but no matter how one may spin it, the blame for his loss lies entirely in his disordered tendencies and vices.

We must reject this effeminate response and imitate the manly example of the Prodigal Son. Like him, we must look inward very deeply and ask ourselves if our vices, and not some faceless external enemy, are the root cause of our predicament. How much do I participate in the “frenetic intemperance” of our modern economy? Have I participated in the cruise ship mentality, spending as if there were no tomorrow? Do I grieve for our beloved nation, or do I shrug my shoulders at her destruction as if it were the bankruptcy of a Fortune 500 company (a pity to be sure, but no real loss)?

Do I live according to the Rule of Money, which elevates all that is vulgar, egalitarian, and materialistic, or the Rule of Honor, which admires the sublime, heroic, and noble? Do I embrace the restraining influence of Christian morality in economy, with its natural checks and balances rooted in the Ten Commandments, or do I participate in the modern mania for destruction of every barrier and restraint? If so, am I willing to turn away from this path and return to my Father’s house, or do I care only for myself and for today, with no regard for tomorrow?

Our society and economy will return to order only after we take responsibility for our actions and do our duty to God and country, no matter how difficult. The father of the Prodigal Son was willing and ready to receive him at any moment, but he was powerless to help his son until the day when his son stopped blaming others, admitted his guilt, repented of his sins and returned to his father’s house. But no matter how sinful he had been, the father was willing to forgive and forget in an instant all the evil his son had done, and to even rejoice in his return. Our nation is that Prodigal Son. May we respond to God’s grace and muster the courage necessary to imitate his manliness and return to the house of our most loving Eternal Father. ■

Soldiers Don’t Die So Protesters Can Burn Flags

BY JOHN HORVAT II

Protesters are burning and trampling upon the American flag again. When veterans counter-protest against this behavior, some people object, saying soldiers die so that others might have the freedom to burn the flag in the public square.

This “soldiers-die-so-protesters-can-burn-flags” slogan has become a mantra repeated everywhere. Many people find a bizarre beauty in this tragic contradiction. They understand neither freedom nor flag.

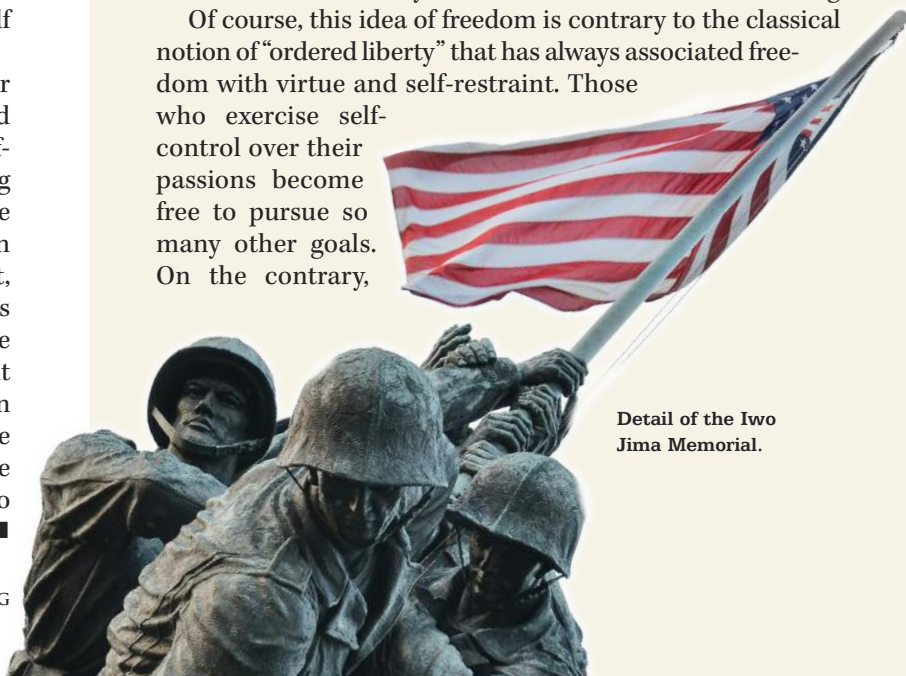
They Do Not Understand Freedom

Flag burning is wrong, purely and simply. Deep down everyone knows it, but many are afraid to admit it. However, they should at least realize that they insult the soldier when saying he dies so that others can burn the flag.

Such conclusions used to be obvious in times when objective standards of right and wrong were universally recognized. Prohibiting flag burning was enshrined in law for decades without any threat to the freedom of citizens. Moreover, such a prohibition is, even now, supported by many common-sense Americans who wish to see the flag defended by a constitutional amendment.

But this is not obvious to others in these times of moral relativism. Such people follow the worn-out liberal dogma that confuses freedom and license. They define freedom as doing anything one wants to do as long as it does not hurt others. This is to misunderstand natural liberty. This liberal way of thinking turns “freedom” into a means of justifying the practice of vice, gratifying passions or dividing the nation. This kind of “freedom” resents authority, order and restraint of all types. Inside this definition, they invent the “freedom” to burn the flag.

Of course, this idea of freedom is contrary to the classical notion of “ordered liberty” that has always associated freedom with virtue and self-restraint. Those who exercise self-control over their passions become free to pursue so many other goals. On the contrary,



Detail of the Iwo Jima Memorial.

those who give in to their passions are enslaved by them.

Thus, the true nature of freedom is the faculty of choosing the means toward an end that is perceived as good. The choosing of an evil reflects a defect of judgment, not a proof of freedom's proper functioning.

This distinction of freedom is particularly true of the soldier. The soldier does not fight for the "right" to do whatever. His fight is oriented toward the defense of order.

His moral universe makes a clear distinction between right and wrong because his life depends upon it. He puts force at the service of the good and directs his action against the forces of evil. The soldier does not give his life to defend disorder. Rather his fight implies a rule of law that limits the activities of people so that order might exist in society and true freedom might flourish.



The contradiction of attitude between some who die for the flag as a symbol of our nation and others who claim the right to burn it is one of the shocking facts of our modern time.

To suggest that a soldier might die so that others can have the freedom to do something wrong goes against everything the soldier stands for. Thus, the soldier does not fight, for example, so that others might have the "freedom" to have abortions. Likewise, those who think soldiers die to defend flag-burning misunderstand freedom's true nature.

They Do Not Understand the Flag

The flag is not just a piece of cloth. In these times of extreme individualism, many want to hijack the flag and turn it into a symbol of a person's right to pursue happiness without any social commitments.

But that is not the flag's meaning. The flag is a visible symbol that invites individuals to think beyond their self-interest. It represents a moral commitment to the common good of the collective entity called America.

The visible flag represents the invisible bonds that link Americans together as a people. It expresses those common

ties that unite Americans—past, present and future.

Indeed, the flag belongs to no political party, social class or special interest lobby. It belongs to everyone and rises above the petty intrigues and politics of the day. The flag honors a collective vision of what America was, is, and might be. It is the celebration of what is called the *unitas ordinis*, that unity of order that makes up America. It is a symbol of the commitment made by all Americans to be members of the nation.

That is why the soldier fights for the flag and is buried with one draped atop his coffin. It is symbolic of his giving of his entire self to the common good of the nation. The union from this selfless giving is so great that flag and soldier almost form a single whole. Attacking and burning the flag is like attacking the soldier.

The Flag Belongs to All Americans

Thus, when protesters burn the flag, they are burning the symbol of this moral commitment to be part of society, the very commitment needed if solutions are to be found for the problems afflicting the nation.

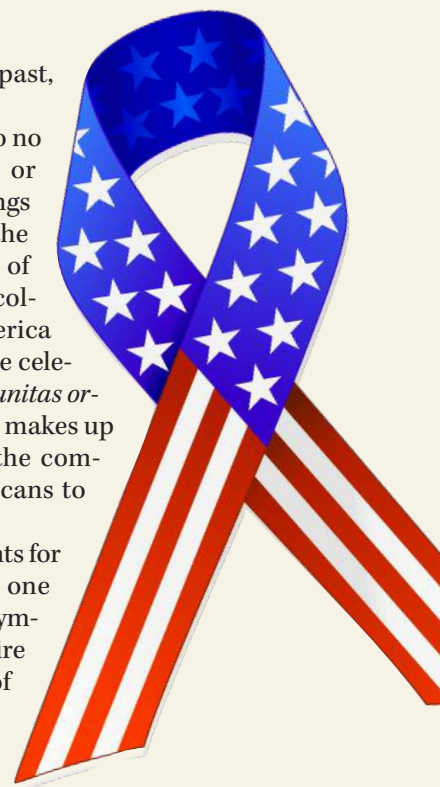
When protesters burn the flag in the public square, they are not just burning a material piece of cloth, but rather a symbol that does not belong entirely to them. The flag belongs to all Americans. Flag-burning is wrong because they are destroying something that belongs to others and have no right to deface.

It is natural that people take measures to stop the destruction of something that belongs to them. That is why veterans gather to defend the flag they fought for. As members and soldiers of the nation, the flag is also theirs. Such an act of injustice is an injustice against them as well.

That is also why flag-burning has always been banned. Public flag-burning is an anti-social act, a provocation to violence, a disturbance of the peace and a suicidal denial of national identity.

In such cases, the nation has always had the right of self-defense. If corporations can defend their trademarks against infringing abuse, how much more reasonable it is for Americans to protect their flag from desecration.

These considerations are not politically correct. They probably will not convince those who believe freedom includes the right of self-destruction. But in these times of moral relativism, they need to be said and re-iterated. Soldiers do not die so that others might do wrong. Freedom is not license. The flag belongs to all Americans. Flag-burning is wrong. ■



THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN: CHAMPIONS OF THE FAITH

BY BEN BROUSSARD



It was March of 1585. After three exhausting years spent traveling halfway around the world, Julian and his friends, all Japanese converts to the Catholic Faith, looked out on Rome. They were probably the first Japanese to gaze on the Eternal City, which seemed like something out of a dream. As they arrived, a large crowd gathered to welcome them in the evening twilight. Julian and his fellow Japanese nobles were escorted by the cavalry of the Pontifical Army. Trumpets blasted and torches blazed before them. The magnificent Jesuit Church of the Gesù, a solemn *Te Deum* resounded in thanksgiving for their arrival.

Julian eagerly awaited meeting the Holy Father the next day, so much so that he could hardly sleep. In the morning, he and his entourage were met by the ambassadors of the Catholic powers of Europe. The Papal Guards led the grand procession through the streets. As they approached Castel Sant'Angelo, the cannons fired in salute. Entering the Vatican Palace, Julian and his fellow Japanese prostrated themselves before the Holy Father's throne.

Pope Gregory XIII rose, bedecked in papal tiara and flowing robes of state. With tears in his eyes, the aging pope raised Julian from the floor and embraced him. He did the same for the others in the entourage, the first of the Holy Father's Japanese children to have the honor.

Julian at long last solemnly presented the letters of the Catholic princes whom he represented. Through an interpreter, he declared: "Your Holiness, we come in our own names and in the names of our princes to acknowledge you as the Vicar of the Son of God on earth, and to pay you the homage of the Christians of Japan."

Seeking Peter's Blessing

Julian Nacaura, Mancio Isto, Martin Fara and Michael Cingina had left their homes in Japan in the spring of 1582. Though their mission took three years of traveling to fulfill, here they were, standing before the Vicar of Christ. After a visit to St. Peter's Basilica, the Holy Father conversed with them at length on the needs of the Church in Japan.

Pope Gregory was gladdened at hearing reports from these serious young men and zealous Catholics. With over 300,000 in the ranks of the baptized, growing seminaries and many converts of influence, the Church in Japan was the largest in

Above: The heroic martyrs of Japan now stand ready to intercede for us in all our trials.
Below: Pope Gregory XIII received the first Japanese embassy to the Vatican in 1585.



Asia. Pope Gregory listened intently as they related their hopes for Japan's conversion.

Remaining in Rome for some time, the Japanese visited many places of pilgrimage, including the catacombs and tombs of the holy martyrs. The four young Japanese knelt before the shrines of their forerunners in the Faith. Little did they know that Julian Nacaura would one day join the ranks of the martyrs.

Three weeks later, Pope Gregory XIII passed away. His successor was Pope Sixtus V. The new pope immediately called an audience with the Japanese entourage. He imparted the apostolic benediction and gave them places of honor at the awe-inspiring Papal Coronation.

A few days later, Pope Sixtus made the four young men the first Japanese Papal Knights. They knelt before the Holy Father and swore to defend the Faith with their lives. After assisting at a Solemn Mass and receiving the Sacred Host from the hands of Pope Sixtus, the four young men departed to bear the Apostolic Blessing to the Catholics of their country.

Their journey from Japan to Rome had taken three years and two months. The return journey would take even longer. Having left Nagasaki in 1582, they did not see Japan again until 1590. Their return marked the start of brutal persecution.

Brutal Persecution and Martyrdom

Saint Francis Xavier had arrived in Japan in 1549. The Jesuit mission in the country soon flourished. Every kingdom on the islands had large groups of Christians. Trouble began in 1580 as Catholics grew in number. Dutch merchants began spreading lies, insisting the Catholic Jesuits were the means for subjecting Japan to European rule.

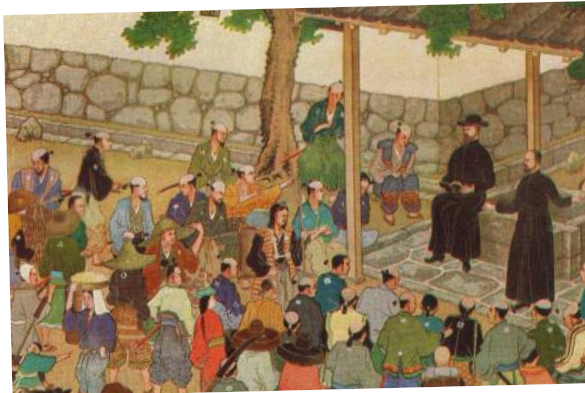
The Japanese prince, Taicosama, who came to power by defeating other princes in battle, began to pressure Catholic nobles to abandon their Faith. In 1587, he issued an edict of banishment against foreign Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans, forcing most into exile. Twenty-six of their residences and more than 140 churches were destroyed.

In 1590, the news of the arrival of the four young nobles from their embassy to the Vatican soon spread. Advisors close to Taicosama lied to him, saying that they had gone to Europe to hand over Japan's sovereignty to foreigners of the West.

At Taicosama's orders, soldiers soon arrested all of the clergy in the kingdoms of Osaka and Miyako (modern-day Kyoto). Taicosama next issued an order outlawing the Christian religion. He ordered



Above: Saint Francis Xavier arrived in Japan in 1549 as the first Catholic missionary. **Left:** Saint Francis Xavier and his fellow Jesuits won many converts by their serious example and ardent preaching.



that six European Franciscan missionaries, three Japanese Jesuits and fifteen Japanese laymen, including three young boys, be executed by crucifixion in Nagasaki. They were transported more than 500 miles and exposed to the insults of the people as they passed. Onlookers were astonished to see looks of profound joy on their faces, knowing they would shed their blood for Jesus Christ.

The three youngest prisoners, Thomas age 14, Anthony age 13, and Louis age 11, tied together in the same cart, began singing the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* when they passed through the cities. The multitudes were filled with admiration.

Two young Japanese Catholics, Peter Sekugiro and Francis Fahalente, followed the condemned religious the entire way. The guards tried in vain to



The 26 Martyrs of Nagasaki, canonized by Pope Pius IX in 1862. Their sacrifice inspired many other Japanese Catholics to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ.

make them leave. Peter and Francis were thus also condemned, bringing the total to 26.

On February 5, 1597, they were led to a hill overlooking Nagasaki where crosses had been prepared for them. They all began to weep tears of joy. Each embraced his cross and kissed it. They were tied to the crosses with coarse cords and lifted up. Father Peter Baptist intoned the canticle *Benedictus*, which the others joined in. One by one they were pierced through with two lances which, thrust into their sides, crossed each other at the breast and came out through the shoulders. Eyewitnesses said that a heavenly light surrounded their bodies. Faithful Catholics soon approached and gathered the blood of the martyrs.

The Blood of Martyrs: Seed of the Church
Word spread quickly of this first martyrdom. Thousands of Japanese soon flocked for instruction in the Faith, edified by the heroic example of the martyrs. Miracles worked through the prayers of the martyrs became numerous.

Japanese Catholics began to invoke the new martyrs for the grace to suffer and die for Jesus Christ. Our Lord granted their splendid petition

“The sufferings are light and short. The reward is great and is eternal. Be you the witnesses that we die for faith in Jesus Christ.”

in short order. In honor of Our Lady, communities were formed with the particular intention of praying for the fortitude necessary to die for Christ.

The death of Taicosama in 1598 brought no relief to the Catholics of Japan. Dai-fusama soon replaced him,

the first ruler of the Tokugawa Shogunate. This dynasty ruled Japan throughout the 17th century, multiplying the attacks on the Catholic faithful.

Intense pressures were put in place for Catholics to renounce their faith. Officials rounded up the faithful and forced them to step on crucifixes or holy objects as a sign of their repudiation of the Faith. The weak among them relented, but large numbers of the devout refused, marking themselves for death.

When the clergy were expelled, a poor blind man named Damian began to teach catechism and baptize, encouraging his fellow Christians. The local prince offered him great gifts if he would give up his faith, and threatened him with death if he refused. He quickly replied: “You give me the choice of life and death. It is death I choose, and I prefer it to all the goods you promise me.” He was led out to a place of execution, and his executioner told him he could still be saved should he deny his

faith. Damian answered: "I am a Christian. Do your work." He was then beheaded.

Nobility of Japan Martyred

Near Arima, there were eight noble families condemned to die for refusing to renounce their faith. Twenty thousand Christians soon appeared to accompany them to their deaths. They formed columns singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin as they approached the place of execution.

The youngest, James, was asked if he would like to be carried as he became tired from walking. He replied: "We are imitating our Captain who ascended Calvary on foot. Now we must labor; eternity will give us a long rest." When others wept at seeing him condemned, he chastised them: "Why do you weep? Do you not envy my happiness? Walk merrily, as you see me doing."

Approaching the place of execution, the con-



Engraving showing the tortures endured by Japanese Catholics on Mount Ungen near Nagasaki.

demned kissed the stakes they would be tied to and burned. Leo Caniemon spoke boldly to the crowds of Christians there: "My brethren, the Christian religion is the only one in which we can be saved. Persevere in the faith. Let not our torments frighten you. The sufferings are light and short. The reward is great and is eternal. Be you the witnesses that we die for faith in Jesus Christ." The fire beneath them was lit, and all the Christian onlookers fell on their knees. The remains of the martyrs were taken to Nagasaki and buried beside a church.

The following year, any samurai who refused to renounce Christianity was stripped of his title and banished. A famed samurai named Justo Takayama faced exile for his refusal to abandon his faith. He and 300 Japanese Catholics set sail from Nagasaki, never to return.

Throughout the decade of 1620, new persecutions arose, and larger numbers of Catholics were executed. On just one day in 1622, twenty-five religious were burned to death after witnessing the beheading of thirty Japanese faithful.

A Fate Worse than Death: Torture

A new edict came from the emperor: the Christians should no longer be put to death, but tortured until they renounce their faith. At Mount Ungen near Nagasaki, hundreds of Christians were tortured with flames, lashings, boiling water poured over their heads, and all manner of cruelties. Many of those tortured died from their wounds. Father Anthony Iscida, a Japanese Jesuit priest, spent three years in prison, after which he was taken to Mount Ungen. All his limbs were dislocated and sulfuric waters were poured over him for thirty days. He was finally burned alive.

In 1633, Julian Nacaura was led through Nagasaki to be executed. Though far from the Rome of his earlier travels in time and distance, he was closer than ever to the Eternal City in his heart. He was now a Jesuit priest, and was the last remaining in the country. He reminded those he passed that he was among the first Japanese sent to Rome, and was glad to give his life for Christ. Julian was hung head down in a pit, and died after three days of agony.

Shimabara: The Catholics' Last Stand

For years the Catholics of Japan had suffered persecutions with heroic patience. However, the Catholics of the south soon took up arms against their cruel overlord. Early in 1643, more than 35,000 Catholics rose up and occupied the fortified town of Shimabara,

Below: Shimabara Castle, where Japanese Catholics took up arms against those seeking to wipe out the Faith. Right: Statue of Shiro Amakusa, the Japanese samurai who led the defense of Shimabara.



which they held for several months.

The Tokugawa Shogunate sent an invasion force to put down this rebellion. 125,000 troops surrounded Shimabara for a lengthy siege. Shiro Amakusa, a samurai who had lost his position, led the Catholic army to inflict heavy losses on the enemy. He famously cried out during a skirmish, "We would rather die one swift death than a thousand slow ones."

The Catholics held out for some time. However, the Protestant Dutch landed with their heavy cannons and breached the walls. Men, women and children were massacred. The remaining 4,000 Catholics taken prisoner were transported to the rock of Papenburg overlooking Nagasaki harbor. The last survivors of Shimabara were hurled to their deaths from a high cliff.

Underground "Treasure" Discovered—200 Years Later

The Tokugawa Shogunate fully implemented a policy of isolation that lasted 200 years. Only the Dutch were allowed to maintain a trade mission in the country; all other Europeans were banned. The Jesuit clergy, who would attempt to enter undetected during this time, were all arrested and executed.

Catholicism in Japan went underground for two centuries. In 1867, the Japanese policy officially changed, and religious were allowed back into the country. Priests of the Foreign Mission Society of Paris were the first to arrive and erect a church at Nagasaki. To their great surprise, many Japanese approached asking if they were celibate and venerated the Blessed Virgin.

Upon investigating, the European priests were shocked to find large communities of believers numbering in the thousands. For centuries they had preserved the sacrament of baptism. Every Catholic they

questioned knew the catechism and prayers in Japanese and Latin by heart.

The missionaries soon sent word to Europe of the incredible preservation of the Faith in Japan. Catholics deprived of priests for 200 years had faithfully clung to the Faith and passed on Church teaching intact. Pope Pius IX, on hearing the report, declared it a miracle.

Future Workings of Grace

From the first baptisms by Saint Francis Xavier in 1549, enemies of the Church have been working to extinguish the Faith in Japan. In spite of brutal persecutions, however, the Faith lives on.

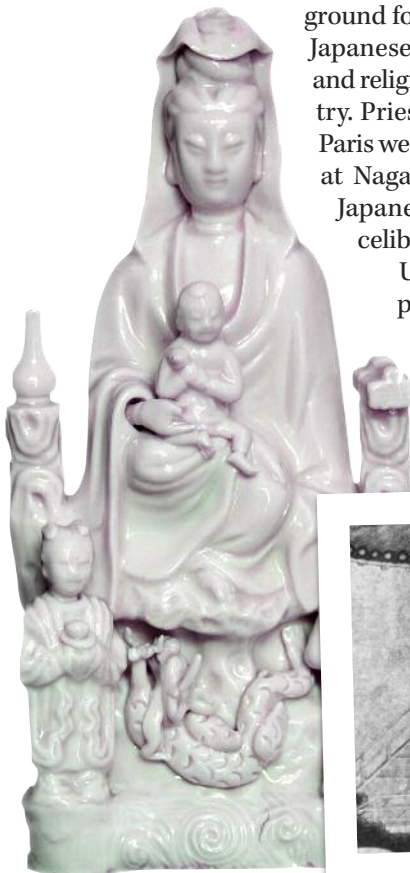


Today, a museum dedicated to the memory of the Japanese martyrs stands in Nagasaki.

Catholics in Japan today make up less than 2% of the population. Through centuries of imposed cultural uniformity, most modern Japanese show little openness to conversion.

God's ways are not our ways, however. Through the heroic sacrifices of thousands of martyrs, many known only to God, a glorious future period will certainly come to Japan. Contrasting their centuries of isolation, a Christian civilization will one day take root in Japan, sending out missionaries to spread the Gospel.

The Japanese martyrs are now glorifying God forever and stand ready to intercede for us in these dark times. Let us continually beg them for the fortitude needed to be faithful unto the end. ■



Left: A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary disguised as Kanon, a Japanese goddess, was one of many means of preserving devotion in the centuries of persecution. Below: A missionary offering Mass in secret. Any European priests who attempted entry into Japan were hunted down and executed.



MARCH/APRIL 2017

PROGRESS REPORT

Defending Our Children from Satan

BY JOHN RITCHIE

The spiritual struggle between good and evil was apparent at Point Defiance Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington, as dozens of people gathered to protest the opening of an “After School Satan Club” that targets children as young as five.

America Needs Fatima and TFP Student Action mobilized their members in Tacoma. They assembled in front of the school for a peaceful prayer vigil and protest on December 14th, from noon to 1:00 p.m., shortly before the Satan Club was scheduled to hold its first meeting on school property.

Between the recitation of the holy rosary, the faithful sang *Hail, Holy Queen Enthroned Above* and *God Bless America*. Signs and banners on display expressed the thoughts of millions of Americans: “God always!—Satan never!” One of the 10-foot banners read: “Satanism is not an American value. By accepting Satan we expel God from our schools.”



Protesters used bold signs with clear messages to express their indignation against the After School Satan Club.

A parent whose child attends Point Defiance Elementary School spoke of her distress. However, her voice and the voices of other parents were not given the importance they deserved. Their parental rights to oversee the education of their children is being trampled upon. Against their parental authority, Satan was given access to their children’s school.

Catholics are on the front lines of this spiritual battle. In fact, a contingent of ANF volunteers traveled from California, Pennsylvania and Kansas to Washington State where they joined forces with local Catholics, including America Needs Fatima local members and Public Square Rosary Rally captains. Their message was clear: Satan is evil. Evil has no rights. Protect our children. Keep Satan out of our schools.

During the peaceful protest, Saint Michael, Captain of the Angelic Hosts, was invoked repeatedly over the bullhorn by veteran TFP member Philip Calder. As the faithful prayed, a man across the street yelled loudly: “Hail Satan.” His dark cry did not deter the prayer warriors on the sidewalk who continued invoking the Queen of Heaven with their rosaries.

At the end of the protest, 103,000 petitions collected online against the Satan Club to Point Defiance Elementary School were presented to the school. The box of petitions, along with a letter addressed to school principal, Lisa Boyd,



Members of the American TFP joined local Catholics to deliver 103,000 petitions against the After School Satan Club.



Spiritual warfare comes to the schools of America. Catholics are continuing to take a strong stand against the promotion of Satanism in America's schools.

was received by Dan Voelpel, executive director of communications for Tacoma Public Schools.

The Satanic Temple opened its first Satan Club—also amid protest—in Portland, Oregon, and plans to start more in other cities. There is a broad attempt to eradicate the very notion of “one nation under God” by increasing the number of public sacrileges and blasphemies. The satanic revolution is gnawing at our nation’s moral fabric, numbing our culture to the horror of sin, and paving the way for more sordid aberrations. For example, a public Satanic Black Mass was held in Oklahoma City on August 15th last year and a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was desecrated by Satanists. The date chosen was the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven. The previous year, a similar desecration was staged on Christmas Eve.

However, as the forces of darkness strive to mainstream Sa-

tanism in America, more and more parents and faithful are stepping forward to block its advance and protect the innocence of their children and the future of Christian Civilization.

“If we don’t keep fighting, our children will be lost,” said a concerned lady. “What’s happening is terrible, but we know that God’s victory over evil is already assured.”

Speaking of God’s victory, Saint Louis de Montfort explains a passage from Genesis: “God has only made and formed one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and grow even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil—between the children and servants of the Blessed Virgin, and the children and tools of Lucifer... The humble Mary will always have the victory over that proud spirit, and so great a victory that she will go so far as to crush his head, where his pride dwells.” ■



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Timely Campaign Launched to End Satanism in America

BY VINCENT GORRE

Satanism is on the rise. Its adherents are making inroads into areas of American life that most of us would never have imagined to be a target—our vulnerable young children. Satanic groups such as The Satanic Temple (TST) have already begun opening up “After School Satan Clubs” in public schools in eight states, as well as Washington, DC. This program intentionally targets 5- to 12-year-olds. TST also aims to place demonic books in public libraries, as well as having satanic “prayers” recited at high school games.

Satanic antics are not limited to schools, though. Several cities are now being forced to open their meetings with satanic “prayer.” Black masses have been held in public and many more are held in secret on a regular basis. Two instances of public desecration of Mary’s statues have occurred with expressed approval from civil authorities. Several television shows and movie productions blatantly promote Satanism while simultaneously attacking

the Catholic Church.

Hope is on the horizon. With the aid of the most potent weapon against the power of evil at our disposal—the Holy Rosary—Catholics can now enlist in a timely campaign aimed at ending the scourge of Satanism in our country, once and for all. To be counted in this effort, all one needs to do is to visit the America Needs Fatima website at www.ANF.org/BegoneSatan. From there one can pledge to pray any number of Rosaries in 2017. Currently, the campaign aims to collect as many as 3,000,000 Rosary pledges.

The Church Militant is defined as the Christian Church on earth engaged in a constant warfare against its enemies. Therefore, as Catholics, our lives must be lived as soldiers in the war against Satan, our perennial enemy. With the Mother of God as our leader, and with the Holy Rosary as our weapon, America Needs Fatima is confident that the scourge of Satanism will come to an end in 2017. ■



Your help will make the following works possible:

- Home visitations with Pilgrim Virgin statues of Our Lady of Fatima, reaching tens of thousands of families annually
- Acts of reparation and protests nationwide to stop blasphemous attacks against the Sacred Persons of Jesus and Mary
- Massive promotion of religious literature, books, medals and especially rosaries
- Thousands of Public Square Rosary Rallies annually



Use your will to give devotion to the next generation!

Louisa is waiting to help you. Call her at (888) 317-5571.




Our Readers Write

Centennial Fatima Calendar

We get about 15 calendars every year—but yours is the one that we hang in our dining area!

R. D., New Prague, Minn.

I want to thank you for the lovely 100th Anniversary Fatima Calendar! Words cannot express the feelings one has when the calendar is hung on the wall!

E. W., Metairie, La.



The 2017 calendar of Our Lady of Fatima is heavenly! I appreciate all the daily titles of Our Lady around the world. I did not know there were so many! THANKS for this gift for my daily celebration of Our Lady's Centennial.

J. S., Huntington, Ind.

Public Square Rosary Rallies

I received your Fatima Rosary Rally banner last week and write to tell you that I will be going home to Ghana next month and taking the banner with me so my family and church members of Christ the King Cathedral in Cape Coast will celebrate Mother Fatima Virgin during the Christmas Season—rallies, crusades, and revivals. Your devotional gifts are really appreciated!

R. M., East Hartford, Conn.

Our Rosary Rally was made a part of our family reunion. The good news is that several of my siblings who have put aside the Catholic Faith agreed to say the Rosary by the campfire, giving a good opportunity to meditate upon Our Lady's help for our family and nation. They've been signed up for the free book on her you were offering to Rally attendees. We had about 20 of my



family members surrounding us around that campfire, praying the Rosary aloud—thanks be to God! We are doubling our efforts here to promote Our Lady of Fatima for our presidential election, and peace of heart and soul. God bless you for the fight—keep up the good work!

J. M., Cashion, Okla.

This was the first Rosary Rally I have volunteered for—being a Captain was an honor and a privilege. Thank you, America Needs Fatima, for doing such a great job organizing this Rally. From your professional website to the Rally Captain manual to the beautiful rally banner—it was simple and fun putting together everything for the Rosary Rally! I now feel much more peace in my heart after being a Rosary Rally Captain. Our Lord and Our Lady's presence was felt by me from the time I said yes to being a Captain and all the way through the days leading to the Rosary Rally.

G. W., Phoenix, Ariz.

Books

Thank you for the book *True Devotion to Mary*. My granddaughter has enjoyed the two books I gave her since she's been in Japan. She is very devoted to Our Blessed Mother and since she is in the Navy, I think she needs to read this type of book. God bless you all!

L. S., Bloomfield, N.M.

Back in January 2010 I hadn't gone to church for many years. Then in February 2010, I got a letter in the mail from America Needs Fatima and a book about Fatima. One week later I met with a priest, and I have been going to church ever since. I have two sisters that are nuns praying for me. I'm going to be 86 years old this year. I am your friend always. God bless.

L. L., Sharon, Vt.

Greetings! We are writing to express our deep, sincere devotion to America Needs Fatima. We wish to remain allied with ANF for many years, and hope to be educated and reinvigorated by the Spirit! With that being said, we are delighted by the new book entitled *The Virgin Mary* that was sent to us. This book highlights the spiritual mystery and dignified magnificence of Our Lady.

T. S., New Brunswick, N.J.



Have something you'd like to share?
Send us your feedback by writing to **Crusade@TFP.org**



CUSTODIAN'S CORNER

Our Lady Rewards a Grateful Soul

BY MARC ANTHONY VARGAS

The Home Visitation Program of ANF provides a venue for Our Lady's children to know her, love her and serve her more. Many of her children ask her aid in the trials of their lives. As more of her children increase in love for the Blessed Mother, so also do they increase in gratitude.

In November, we visited a home in Northern Virginia with a group of ladies from the local parish. Near the end of the visit as everyone was socializing, Rosemond asked for everyone's attention. We all listened as she related her story of how the Blessed Mother rewarded her gratitude.

A few years ago Rosemond had a life-threatening stroke. Falling into a coma and in danger of death, she was rushed from her home to a nearby hospital. She recalled that during the whole ordeal, she never stopped asking the Blessed Mother for her help. Miraculously, she fully recovered in a short time, defying all the doctors' expectations. Rosemond knew it was Our Lady who helped her recover. "If it weren't for Our Lady, I would not even be talking to you now," she told us.

In 2012, Rosemond decided to thank Our Lady by making a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Filled with a desire to thank Our Lady, she went to the embassy in Washington to apply for a visa to go to France.

A trial ensued. The person she talked to at the embassy denied her application, as she was not an American citizen. Rosemond did not lose hope, however. Mustering the courage to apply again, she confided everything to Our Lady. She even went to a shrine of Our Lady at her parish and asked the parish priest to bless her visa documents!

After receiving the blessing, she returned with her papers to the embassy. At first, the embassy official asked her many questions, giving the impression she would be rejected. Rosemond asked to speak with the supervisor for a final decision. She explained all, begging him to have pity on her, insisting that the visit to France was strictly a visit of gratitude to Our Lady. She then finally spoke to the supervisor, and was again questioned. In the end, despite the barrage of questions, she was not granted merely a two-week visa, as she requested for her pilgrimage, but was given a full two months for the visa. The Blessed Mother came through once again!



Mr. Marc Anthony Vargas joined the ranks of the Fatima custodians in 2015.

After Rosemond returned from Lourdes, the following year she wanted to make a pilgrimage to Fatima. She did not have enough money to go, but again placed her confidence in Our Lady. Again, Our Lady would not be outdone in generosity. At the last minute the means to pay came through, and Rosemond was able to make a pilgrimage to Fatima.

Her story reminds me of the need to always have confidence in Our Lady despite the odds. As Our Lord says in the Gospel, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." This is exactly what Rosemond's confidence showed us. We must be sure that our actions for the glory of God and Our Lady will always be supplemented with supernatural help. ■

Since 1995, America Needs Fatima volunteers, referred to as "Fatima Custodians," have been traveling across our country bringing a number of Fatima statues into homes, showing an audio-visual presentation on the apparitions and message of Our Lady of Fatima and teaching people how to pray the Rosary.

To schedule a Fatima visit in your home, call (888) 460-7371.



COMMENTARY

The Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Chastisement Foretold at Fatima

BY LUIZ SÉRGIO SOLIMEO

Many Catholics struggle today with the idea that Our Heavenly Mother in Fatima warned humanity of possible chastisements, as well as the fact that she showed hell to three little innocent children. “How can the best of all mothers have done such a thing?” they will ask.

One possible reason for this difficulty may lie in a not-so-clear notion of two of God’s attributes: justice and mercy.

When we think of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we frequently forget that no creature loves God more than she does, and that sin, being an offense to the infinite perfection and holiness of God, is consequently hated by the Mother of all Love with the same intensity. It would be a contradiction to love God and to be indifferent to the offenses made against Him.

Love of Divine Justice

Since the love of God in the Blessed Mother is most perfect, it cannot be limited to only one of the attributes of God, that is, Divine mercy, but must also extend to all the others, and therefore to God’s justice. Divine justice is as worthy of adoration as any of His other attributes. Moreover, as Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches us, Divine justice and mercy are so

linked together that one does not exist without the other. Mercy is active even when justice punishes an unrepentant sinner with the pains of hell. Indeed, while not preventing the execution of the sentence, mercy makes the reprobate suffer less than he deserves.¹

The sublime love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for God’s mercy and justice helps us understand why she herself maternally came to warn us at Fatima of the divine punishment if men

did not stop offending God.

The texts below from two great saints and devotees of the Mother of God, Saint John Eudes and Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, will help us to understand the subject better.

Saint John Eudes Explains

Saint John Eudes (1601-1680), one of the great promoters of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, explains the love of the Blessed Virgin for Divine justice.

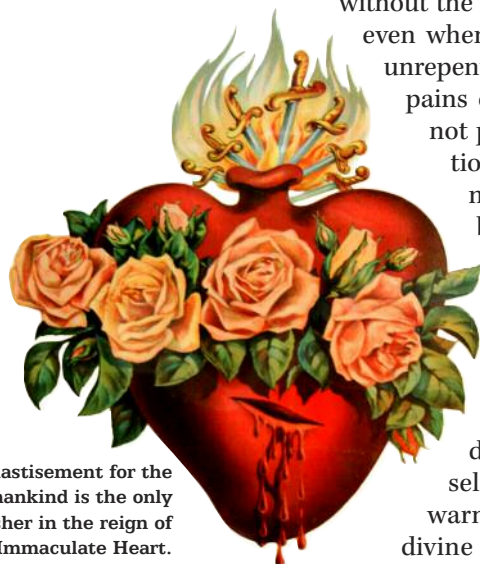
In the third chapter of his masterful book, *The Justice of God Mirrored in the Admirable Heart of Mary*, the saint writes:

“Mercy and justice resemble two sisters, inseparable and holding each other by the hand. Wherever mercy is, there also is justice; where justice goes, mercy follows. Hence King David sang to God: ‘Mercy and judgment I will sing to thee, O Lord.’”²

He mentions them together and does not separate these qualities. Continuing, he writes:

“If the Holy Heart of Mary is filled with such terrible hatred of sin that she consented to the cruel death of her beloved Son, because she saw Him loaded with the sins of men; if she readily sacrificed Him to divine justice in order to crush the mortal enemy of God and men, who can doubt that she still hates the infernal monster wherever she finds it? She hates sin to the point of sometimes uniting herself to divine vengeance in order to destroy it in souls, especially in those souls who are their own enemies to the extent of supporting evil and opposing its destruction. They force their sweet Mother, as it were, to relinquish the tenderness of her maternal love and to participate in the severity of divine justice in order to punish the obstinacy of a rebellious soul hardened in malice.

“O most holy Virgin, since thou hast but one Heart and one spirit with thy divine Son and since thou hast no other sentiments save His, thou dost love what He loves and thou dost hate what He hates. Hence, as Christ has an infinite hatred for sin, thou also dost hate it beyond all thought and words. Thy hatred for the infernal



Divine chastisement for the sins of mankind is the only way to usher in the reign of Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart.

monster is equal to the love thou hast for God. O Blessed Mother, the love of thy Heart for God is infinitely greater than that of all the hearts of the angels and saints. Consequently, there is in thy Heart more hatred against God's enemy, sin, than in the hearts of all heaven's citizens. Make us sharers, O Mary, in this love and hatred so that we may love our Creator and Savior as thou hast loved Him, and that we may hate sin as thou hast hated it."³

**Saint Alphonsus de Liguori—
"The Abuse of Mercy Leads to Hell"**

Given the love of the Immaculate Heart for Divine justice, we understand better not only why she announced a punishment for sinful humanity, but also why she showed hell to the three shepherd children, explaining, "You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go." And she maternally added: "In order to save them, God wants to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world."

In fact, there is much talk about mercy but little is said about the justice of God, causing many to get a notion of mercy as being separate from Divine justice. With that, people indulge in a life of sin or at least one of unconcern in regards to eternal salvation.

Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, Doctor of the Church and great Marian scholar, deals with this topic in one of his published sermons:

"But God is merciful.' Behold another common delusion by which the devil encourages sinners to persevere in a life of sin! A certain author has said that more souls have been sent to hell by the mercy of God than by His justice. This is indeed the case; for men are induced by the deceits of the devil to persevere in sin, through confidence in God's mercy; and thus they are lost.

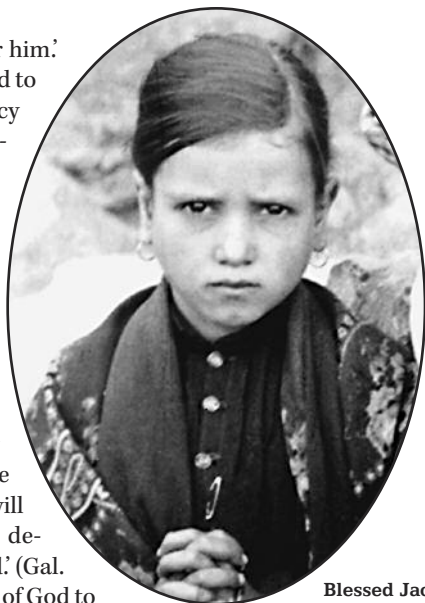
"God is merciful. Who denies it? But, great as His mercy is, still how many does He every day send to hell? God is merciful, but He is also just, and is, therefore, obliged to punish those who offend him. And 'His mercy,' says the divine mother,

extends 'to them that fear him.' (Luke 1:50.) But with regard to those who abuse His mercy and despise Him, He exercises justice.

"The Lord pardons sins, but he cannot pardon the determination to commit sin. Saint Augustine says, that he who sins with the intention of repenting after his sins, is not a penitent but a scoffer. *Irrisor est non poenitens*. But the Apostle tells us that God will not be mocked. 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked.' (Gal. 6:7) It would be a mockery of God to insult Him as often and as much as you pleased, and afterwards to expect eternal glory."⁴

Mary Most Holy in Fatima represented both the Divine mercy and the Divine justice of God, showing the terrible mystery of hell and presenting the means to avoid it. She also alerted mankind to the chastisement that would fall on our sinful world if it does not cease offending God.

To those who question Our Lady's maternal goodness, one should note that at the same time she showed the innocent children the torments of hell, she sustained them with the grace of God as explained by Sister Lucy. ■



Blessed Jacinta Marto remains a sublime example for us. She continually offered sacrifices to gain graces for the conversion of sinners and to appease the Divine justice.

Notes:

1. "Even in the damnation of the reprobate mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally remit, yet somewhat alleviates, in punishing short of what is deserved." (*Summa Theologica*, q. 21 a. 4 ad 1.)

2. Ps. 101:1.

3. Saint John Eudes, *The Admirable Heart of Mary* (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1948), 144-6.

4. Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, *Sermons for All the Sundays in the Year*, eighth edition (James Duffy & Sons, 15 Wellington Quay; 1882) 109.

*"In order to save them, God wants
to establish devotion to my
Immaculate Heart in the world."*



Being Faithful to Our Baptismal Vows

BY LUIZ SÉRGIO SOLIMEO

The Most Reverend Robert W. McElroy, Bishop of San Diego, convened a Diocesan Synod on October 29-30, 2016, with the participation of priests and lay representatives from close to one hundred parishes.¹

The Synod's purpose was to reflect on the teaching of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and how to apply it to the diocese's pastoral policy.²

Synod Proposals and "LGBT Families"

One of the proposals presented for Synod discussion was how to "develop resources for parishes to minister to families (i.e. divorced, single-parent, widowed, deployed, deported, special needs, multi-generational households, LGBT)."³ In a list of fifteen priority-ordered proposals, this proposal came in as number two, immediately after the proposal to

Marriage is the indissoluble union of one man and one woman. No power on earth has the authority to change it.



COMMENTARY

"provide marriage preparation and ongoing support of marriage as a vocation."

Synod Embraces "LGBT Families"

The Diocesan Synod accepted the notion of "LGBT families." This can be seen from various sources, as for example the National Catholic Reporter,⁴ but above all in "an update from the Diocese" published in various parish bulletins on November 13, 2016.⁵

The diocesan update states, "The Synod pointed to the need to invite young couples lovingly, non-judgmentally and energetically into Catholic marriage...."

Concerning "those who are divorced and remarried and cannot receive an annulment," the Synod delegates spoke of a need for the Church to assist them "to utilize the internal forum of conscience in order to discern if God is calling them to return to the Eucharist."

The diocesan update further states that "the Synod proposed a spirituality of family life which is deeply inclusive: embracing... LGBT families."

In closing, the update states, "During the coming months Bishop McElroy will be working with a committee of synod delegates who will focus on the implementation of these goals."

The diocesan update is clear that, in its "deeply inclusive" outreach, the Synod accepted that God can "call" irregular couples to receive Holy Communion. The update is also clear that the Synod's "embracing" of "LGBT families" was its response to the Diocesan Synod Proposals, and that Bishop McElroy will be implementing this "embracing" throughout the San Diego diocese.

What Does "Embracing... LGBT Families" Mean?

Interviewed by the National Catholic Reporter, Sister Tobie Tondi, SHCJ, a theologian assisting the Synod, declared: "Pope Francis' document is incredibly fresh and new and eye-opening, and there's a lot of education that's needed to understand the direction that he is seeing for the church." Sister Tondi continued, saying she is



“hopeful... that there will be an even greater outreach to people who feel alienated from the church, whether it’s divorced people, or people who might be in same-sex relationships, or cohabitation, people who are living together.”⁶

Nowhere in the diocesan update and in reports on the Synod does one see that there was any mention of, much less emphasis on, the sinful nature of same-sex relationships. Nevertheless, Catholic doctrine’s clear condemnation of homosexual sin was all the more necessary considering the country’s immersion in homosexual propaganda, pressure from unjust laws, and the Supreme Court’s iniquitous decision to legalize same-sex “marriage.”⁸

This omission is all the more disturbing since the Church Magisterium, faithful to Scripture⁷ and Tradition, has always condemned homosexual practice as an extremely serious sin, to the point of including it among the “sins that cry to heaven for vengeance.”⁸

Homosexual Unions Are neither Similar nor Remotely Analogous to Families

Regarding marriage and the family, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document on June 3, 2003, titled “Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons.” Signed by its Prefect, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) and its Secretary, Archbishop Angelo Amato, this document states unequivocally:

“There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law.”⁹

We Must Protest This Subversion of Catholic Faith and Morals

We cannot be indifferent and silent in face of the attempt by Bishop McElroy and the Diocese of San Diego to spread confusion and diminish the horror of Catholics for the sin of homosexual acts and same-sex “marriage.” Rather, we must reiterate our repudiation for homosexual sin and this diocesan ambiguity that seems to equate marriage and the family established in accordance with nature and God’s grace, with spurious unions based on an unnatural and gravely sinful act.

If we are to be faithful to our Baptism and Confirmation we cannot escape from this obligation. Our Baptism gave us supernatural faith. Our Confirmation turned us into “soldiers of Christ”¹⁰ and gave us “the grace and strength to profess and defend the faith courageously.”¹¹

In addition to our firm and respectful protest, we must pray and offer reparation to God for this offense against Divine justice and mercy. Yes, against

What God Has Joined Together, Let No One Separate

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:3-9)

Divine mercy. Because the divine and natural laws are means provided by God’s mercy to help us attain eternal salvation by showing us the sins that prevent us from loving and adoring Him above all things—the very reason for which we were created. ■

Notes:

1. Cf. Most Rev. Robert W. McElroy, “Embracing the Joy of Love: A Pastoral Message to the People of the Diocese of San Diego,” www.sdcatholic.org/Portals/0/Bishop/Documents/Embracing_the_Joy_of_Love.pdf?ver=2016-05-09-151145-653, accessed Dec. 3, 2016;

2. Cf. Diocese of San Diego—Synod on the Family, www.sdcatholic.org/en-us/diocese/synodonthefamily.aspx, accessed Dec. 3, 2016.

3. Proposal Documents (English), www.sdcatholic.org/en-us/en-us/diocese/synodonthefamily/proposals.aspx, accessed Dec. 3, 2016. (Our emphasis.)

4. Amy and Dan Morris-Young, “San Diego Diocesan Synod Seeks to Put ‘*Amoris Laetitia*’ Into Action,” www.ncronline.org/news/parish/san-diego-diocesan-synod-seeks-put-amoris-laetitia-action, accessed Dec. 3, 2016.

5. “Pastor’s Column: Diocesan Synod ‘Embracing the Joy of Love’” in Saint Thomas More Catholic Church parish bulletin, Nov. 13, 2016, www.stmoside.org/pdf/weekly_bulletins/STMoside20161113.pdf, accessed Dec. 3, 2016. See also “Diocesan Synod Update” in Saint Joseph’s Cathedral parish bulletin, Nov. 13, 2016, www.sdcathedral.org/uploads/mce/edd6bb4181065a5b9fb559ad9fddeef16a975d07/970271%20November%2013%202016.pdf, accessed Dec. 3, 2016, and “From the Desk of Msgr. Dennis” in San Rafael Parish bulletin, Nov. 13, 2016, sanrafaelparish.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/November_13_Bulletin.pdf, accessed Dec. 3, 2016.

6. www.ncronline.org/news/parish/san-diegos-next-synod-focus-young-adults.

7. Cf. Gen. 13:13; Lev. 18:22; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:16-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; and 1 Tim. 1:10.

8. Francesco Cardinal Roberti et alii, *Dictionary of Moral Theology*, p. 1139. Cf. CCC §1867.

9. www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html, accessed Dec. 3, 2016.

10. Thomas Scannell, “Confirmation” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), accessed Dec. 4, 2016 at www.newadvent.org/cathen/04215b.htm.

11. Gregory Manise, O.S.B., “Confirmation,” in Roberti, *Dictionary of Moral Theology*, p.282.



BEAUTY:

A Need of the Soul

God created beauty for the life of the soul. It has no corporal usefulness. It does not satisfy hunger, shelter us from a storm or provide warmth. For the life of the body, it is perfectly useless.

However, beauty is more useful than food, shelter and warmth. This is because beauty is useful to the soul, and the soul is worth more than the body.

Let us say, for example, that a city has no bread. Without food, everyone dies. But can a soul live in a world without beauty?

When the Jewish nation under the Maccabee family revolted against the foreign pagan domination of their country, the first Maccabee, the one who started the revolt, launched it with this cry: "It is better to die than to live in a land devastated and without honor." We could say: "It is better to die than to live in a land devastated and without beauty." The beauty of the things of the earth is one of the reasons for their existence.

Beauty makes life worth living.

Because of this, one who wants to love God must be sensitive to beauty. Normally, a person insensitive to art is insensitive to God. In Catholic civilizations, art is cultivated as much as possible. That is why a church building as a whole is beautiful, or at least attempts to be beautiful. This is why even in the catacombs in the bowels of the earth, we find chapels that were attempts at beauty. The worship of God ought to take place in beautiful circumstances so that the soul might be truly led to God by means of the worship rendered. This is beauty's reason for being.

Since everything that is beautiful leads to God, it is natural that those who would destroy Christian civilization would want to diminish and eliminate beauty from the world. ■