

March/April 2023

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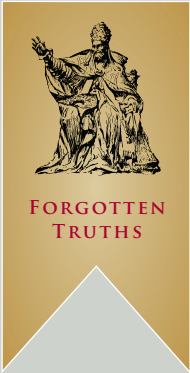
MAGAZINE



TRADITION
FAMILY AND
PROPERTY[®]

A painting of a man in a red cloak holding a child, with another man in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with the man in the red cloak being the central focus.

THE GOLDEN KEY TO
PARADISE



Strengthen Us Against Your Enemies

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA

Thine enemies conspire against Thee, Lord. With little effort, they instigate the ungrateful populace, now seething with hatred, against Thee. Unwarranted, furious, implacable hatred surrounds Thee everywhere. It envelops Thee like a dense cloud. It assails Thee like a dark, cold storm.

Not satisfied with humiliating Thee, covering Thee with shame, and heaping Thee with bitterness, Thine enemies hate Thee so much that they can no longer bear Thy presence among the living and want Thy death. They want to silence the language of Thine examples and the wisdom of Thy teachings. They want Thee dead, annihilated, destroyed. Only then will the clamor of hatred within their hearts be stilled.

Centuries before Thy birth, the Prophet had already foreseen the hatred that the light of Thy truths and the divine brilliance of Thy virtues would arouse: “O my people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee?” (Mich. 6:3). And, interpreting Thy sentiments, the Sacred Liturgy exclaims to the faithful of then and now: “What more should I have done for thee and did not do? Behold I have planted thee as My choicest and most precious vine, and thou hast become very bitter unto Me, for thou hast quenched My thirst with vinegar, and with a lance thou hast pierced thy Savior’s side” (*Improperio*).

So strong was the hatred against Thee that Rome’s very authority, which judged the whole world, fell back disheartened, retreating and faltering before the hatred of those who, without any cause, wanted to kill Thee. Roman haughtiness, victorious on the Rhine, the Danube, the Nile, and the Mediterranean, now drowned in Pilate’s basin.

“*Christianus alter Christus*,” a Christian is another Christ. If we were really Christians, that is, really Catholics, we would be other Christs.

Inevitably, the gust

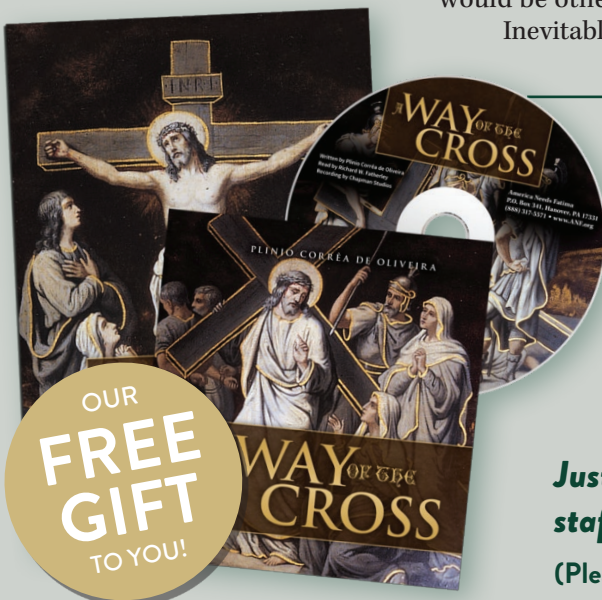
of hatred that was raised against Thee will also blow against us, furiously.

And, Lord, how it blows! Pity and strengthen, O my God, the poor schoolboy who suffers the hatred of his classmates in the terrible form of mockery, isolation, and contempt because he honors Thy name, and refuses to profane the innocence of his lips with impure words. Fortify, O my God, the student who hesitates to proclaim Thy name in class before a wicked professor and a group of jeering classmates. Toughen, O my God, the young woman who would proclaim Thy name, by refusing to wear the clothes that clash, by their extravagance or immorality, with a true Catholic’s dignity. Confirm, O my God, the intellectuals who see the doors of fame and glory shut before them because they proclaim Thy doctrine and profess Thy name. Strengthen, O my God, the apostle who suffers the enemy’s merciless assault and hostility upon Thy Church because he does not consent to the weakness and the one-sidedness with which the so-called “prudent” accept the world’s tolerance for their apostolate.

Oh, my God, how wise are Thine enemies! In the language of these so-called “prudent” ones, they read between the lines that Thou dost not hate evil, error, or darkness. And so they applaud the prudent according to the flesh, as they would have applauded Thee in Jerusalem instead of killing Thee had Thou addressed the Sanhedrin in the same language.

Lord, strengthen us: We do not want to strike deals, to retreat, to compromise, to weaken, to allow them to deface the divine integrity of Thy doctrine on our lips. If a wave of unpopularity breaks upon us, may our prayer always be that from Sacred Scripture: “I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacle of sinners” (Ps. 83:11). ■

Taken from: *A Way of the Cross*, by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira



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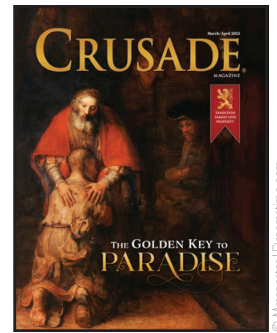
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THE AMERICAN TFP

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

Chinese Communist Party Forms Secret Police Stations Overseas

A recent investigation by “Safeguard Defenders,” a human rights organization, revealed the existence of over 100 secret overseas police stations operated by the Chinese communist government in the United States and dozens of other countries. Besides serving to expand Beijing’s global sphere of influence, these illegal stations were formed to keep tabs on Chinese citizens living abroad to ensure they remain ideologically aligned with the

Communist Party and to hunt down ideological dissidents. Disturbing reports have surfaced about Chinese citizens being spied upon, harassed, and threatened by Chinese secret police. Hundreds of thousands have been forced to return to their homeland to face charges. The bombshell revelations have spurred governments around the world to launch their own investigations.



New Study Finds Smoking Marijuana Can Be More Harmful Than Tobacco

As recreational marijuana is legalized in more states, a recent study from the department of radiology at Ottawa Hospital General Campus, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Radiology*, found that marijuana smokers are more likely to have the lung disease emphysema and airway

inflammatory conditions such as bronchial thickening, bronchiectasis, and mucoid impaction than non-smokers and tobacco-only smokers. “There’s a public perception that marijuana is safer than tobacco, and this study raises concern this may not be true,” said study author Giselle Revah, assistant professor in the department of radiology at the University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada.

Half of Americans Believe Woke Policies Are Undermining the Military

According to a poll by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, half of Americans, mostly Republicans, believe that “woke” policies such as a fixation on race and gender diversity training are one of the greatest threats to the military’s overall effectiveness and the greatest cause of Americans’ rapidly diminishing trust in the institution. In contrast, 46% of respondents, leaning Democrat, saw “far-right or extremist individuals” serving in the military as a primary contributor to loss of confidence in the military’s ability to carry out its overall mission.

Conservatives Score Major Wins in School Board Elections

While the November 8 elections did not deliver the victory Republicans had hoped for on a national level, conservatives picked up a wave of wins in local school board elections across the country. Hundreds of conservative school board candidates, backed by parental rights in education groups, won their races and flipped school boards in the states of Michigan, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, California, and Florida to conservative majorities. Aside from local school board wins, conservatives also won majorities on both the Texas and Kansas state education boards. These victories may point to a growing reaction from the public as children are being exposed to radical left-wing positions in the classroom such as Critical Race Theory and gender ideology.

Disney’s Pro-LGBT Agenda Backfires

As The Walt Disney Company aggressively pushes its leftist, homosexual agenda on children, there is mounting evidence that Americans are not interested in watching pro-LGBT films and TV programs. One of Disney’s latest animated films to tout homosexual themes, *Lightyear*, grossed just \$222 million against a \$200 million budget, despite much fanfare and promotion. Another box office disaster was the 2022 homosexual teenage romance film *Strange World*, which became the lowest-rated Disney animated film of all time and cost the studio over \$100 million in losses. Meanwhile the company lost nearly \$50 billion in stock market value since March of 2022 while subscriptions to its Disney+ streaming service slowed to a crawl.



Large Protests in Malta Against Proposed Abortion Bill

In the small island-nation of Malta, over 20,000 people, representing four percent of the population, marched in the streets of the capital city of Valletta on December 4 to protest a bill under consideration in parliament that would legalize abortion. Those who attended the rally included former president Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Archbishop Charles Scicluna of the Diocese of Malta, as well as numerous high-ranking politicians, pro-life activists, and Catholic leaders. Malta, an overwhelmingly Catholic nation, is the only European country to fully protect the right to life of preborn children while also ensuring that mothers receive the medical care they need. The current president, George Vella, has stated that he intends to resign rather than sign the bill into law if it passes in parliament.

How to Prepare for a Happy Marriage

BY FR. RAOUL PLUS, S.J.



For a happy marriage, it is necessary, of course, that the engaged couple find each other congenial and enjoy each other's company. They must agree to share loyally the joys and the sorrows of wedded union and fulfill its obligations. Each one must be bent on procuring for the other as much happiness as possible and oblige himself beforehand to a mode of life which will disturb his partner as little as possible.

The husband must love his profession, and his wife should share this love or at least neglect nothing in order to respect and facilitate it. They should be able to make their decisions together, not certainly without sometimes having recourse to the counsels of competent authorities, but with a beautiful and joyful independence

of any member of the family who may be too prone at times to attempt to domineer over the young couple. There should, of course, be no presumption, but a serene and supple humility.

In order to be able to practice the sanctity of their state in all the details of their life, they must understand their duty of leaning upon God.

They must likewise have a certain concern, a legitimate concern, for physical charm, without, however, losing sight of the fact that beauty of soul is superior to beauty of body.

Both of them must love children. They must develop in themselves to the best of their ability the virtues necessary for parenthood, the courage to accept as many children as God wants them to have, and the wisdom to rear them well—all difficult virtues requiring strong souls.

Each must be possessed of a rich power of cordiality for the members of the other's family. Both must resolve to take their in-laws and their household as they find them. Consequently, they must refuse to be drawn into family quarrels, seeking rather in all their actions to promote charity, union, and peace.

Even before their marriage, the young couple should decide to keep their expenses at a minimum, according to their situation, not with avarice or niggardliness, but with the desire to live in the gospel spirit of detachment from the goods of earth. Such judicious economy will enable them to set aside something useful and necessary for their children. It will also enable them to relieve the misery around them.

It is to be assumed that both individuals contemplating marriage have the requisite health, since marriage has been created not only for mutual support but also to transmit life. It is further to be assumed that each of the two has kept nothing of his past life hidden from the other, and that in view of this entire loyalty which is so desirable a trait in married couples, each has kept himself pure.

As a couple approaches the sacrament of marriage, a focus on these essentials, and less on planning the wedding day, is the key to a lifetime of happiness in marriage. ■

Prayer in Defense of Marriage

God our Father, we give you thanks for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love, and the font of the family.

The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children, fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service, and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for His Church.

The grace of Jesus flowed forth at Cana at the request of the Blessed Mother. May your Son, through the intercession of Mary, pour out upon us a new measure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as we join with all people of good will to promote and protect the unique beauty of marriage.

May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife, and guide our leaders to sustain and protect the singular place of mothers and fathers in the lives of their children.

Father, we ask that our prayers be joined to those of the Virgin Mary, that your Word may transform our service so as to safeguard the incomparable splendor of marriage.

We ask all these things through Christ Our Lord,

Amen.

Are You Spiritually Prepared for Nuclear War?

BY JOHN HORVAT II



The winds of war are blowing as the conflict in Ukraine threatens to expand to include all of Europe and even America. There is much talk of nuclear war—at no time since the 1962 Cuban Crisis has the possibility of such an outbreak been so likely.

America could be attacked by nuclear weapons soon. From a Catholic perspective, what should a person do?

Preparing for War

The most logical question most American Catholics should ask themselves is if they are prepared for nuclear war. Even if war does not come, the most prudent thing to do is to prepare. The consequences of not preparing are very grave.

Talking about nuclear war shocks the sensibilities of a nation whose natural optimism prefers not to think about such things. America has long been blessed with peace on its soil. Many people assume it will always be that way. Others are tempted to run away from the problem, preferring not to ponder and prepare while there is time.

However, despite wishful thinking, disaster can suddenly strike. Catholics need to ask these unpleasant questions. So much is at stake.

Establishing Priorities: Taking Care of Spiritual Needs

The next question is how to prepare. What measures should be taken to prepare best? There are many needs when nuclear war strikes. Some of these can be foreseen; many others are unpredictable.

The best plan is to take care of the most urgent needs first and follow up with others. Much anxiety can be avoided by establishing priorities.

For a Catholic, the greatest needs are spiritual ones. Above all, the primary preparation must involve putting one's spiritual life in order. The greatest prepping operation is not material, which can include huge expenses. It is spiritual and thus freely accessible to everyone.

Maintaining the State of Grace

The greatest challenge of the spiritual life is maintaining a state of grace whereby one stays in the friendship of God by being free of mortal sin. Then, regardless of what happens, one's eternal salvation is assured, even with time in purgatory.

Therefore, the best preparation is a good confession while nuclear war looms. Catholics

should make good and thorough examinations of conscience so that, when forgiven, they might have the peace of mind needed to deal with the extreme material challenges they will face in war.

However, it is not enough to confess in anticipation of a conflict. Dangerous times put people in peril, and they fall into sin. As World War II approached, Saint Maximilian Kolbe recommended to the Polish faithful that they stockpile a special spiritual weapon as part of preparations. It consists of knowing what to do in chaotic times when priests and confession are unavailable. It is about knowing how to make a perfect act of contrition to return to a state of grace.

A Golden Key

Every Catholic prepper needs to keep this “golden key” within reach. In his booklet *The Golden Key to Paradise: Perfect Contrition* (reproduced in this issue), Catholic author Rev. J. Von Den Driesch offers what he calls a key for dire circumstances that, “with the grace of God, will open heaven for you.”

The Church teaches that a vital part of confession is for the penitent to have contrition, which is “a pain of the soul and a hatred for sins committed.” This contrition can be imperfect as when sinners regret their sins out of fear of “the loss of heaven and the pains of hell.” This imperfect contrition suffices in the confessional, where the priest gives the absolution.

However, when confession cannot be obtained, a better contrition is needed and should be used by the Catholic prepper.

Perfect Contrition

Perfect contrition is sorrow and hatred for one’s sins not out of fear but from a perfect love of God. The penitent does not love because of the benefits received but because God is infinitely perfect, beautiful, and good. He is deserving of all love outside of any benefits He may give or punishments he may inflict.

The golden key consists of inciting in oneself a state of intense contrition. The Church teaches one’s sins are forgiven through this act (although the sins should be confessed later). The penitent must ardently ask God for this great grace of sorrow out of love for Him. The sinner might repeat with great fervor the part of the Act of Contrition that announces this sorrow for sin by declaring, “but most of all because I offended Thee my God who art all good and deserving of all my love.”

An act of perfect contrition is more difficult than the imperfect contrition needed for confession, although its effects are the same. In times of peril, the sinner can regain a state of grace and friendship with God by using the golden key.

Where Are the Sermons?

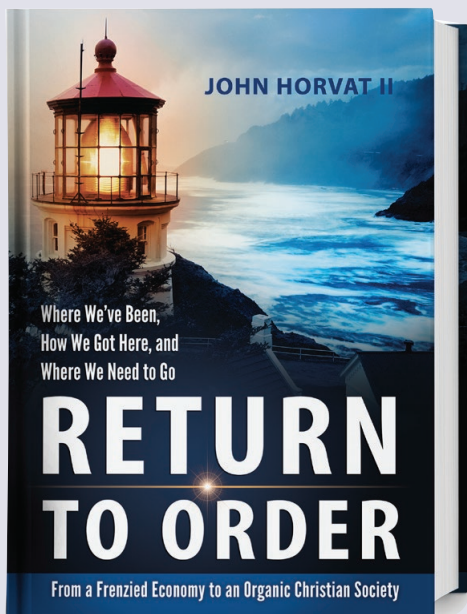
There are, of course, other means of spiritual preparation for Catholics in times of nuclear war. However, this first one is a good beginning. A soul at peace with God becomes capable of confronting suffering and dealing with adversity. The petitions of such souls will be more readily granted. This is a secure preparation that will benefit souls regardless of what happens.

To the golden key must be added a golden sword in the form of the rosary, a most powerful weapon in times of crisis. The Church has many assets for the times of trial that Catholics should use.

Catholics can and should also secure reasonable material needs that an emergency requires. However, these measures are not the most essential.

The threat of nuclear war endangers the salvation of so many souls. Thus, topics like the golden key of perfect contrition should be the matter of many sermons to prepare the flock for the dangers ahead. Other topics might include the efficacy of the rosary, the effects of sin on society, or the reality of God’s justice. Alas, few preachers broach them.

This tragic neglect is part of the great crisis in the Church that leaves Catholics so unprepared to deal with a world in chaos. ■



“Sirs, I am in dire need of positive reinforcement for our nation. What I see and hear coming out of our elected officials sickens me. Please send me your book—I love our country and I pray this book will lift my heart by letting me see there is still faith in our God and in our country.”

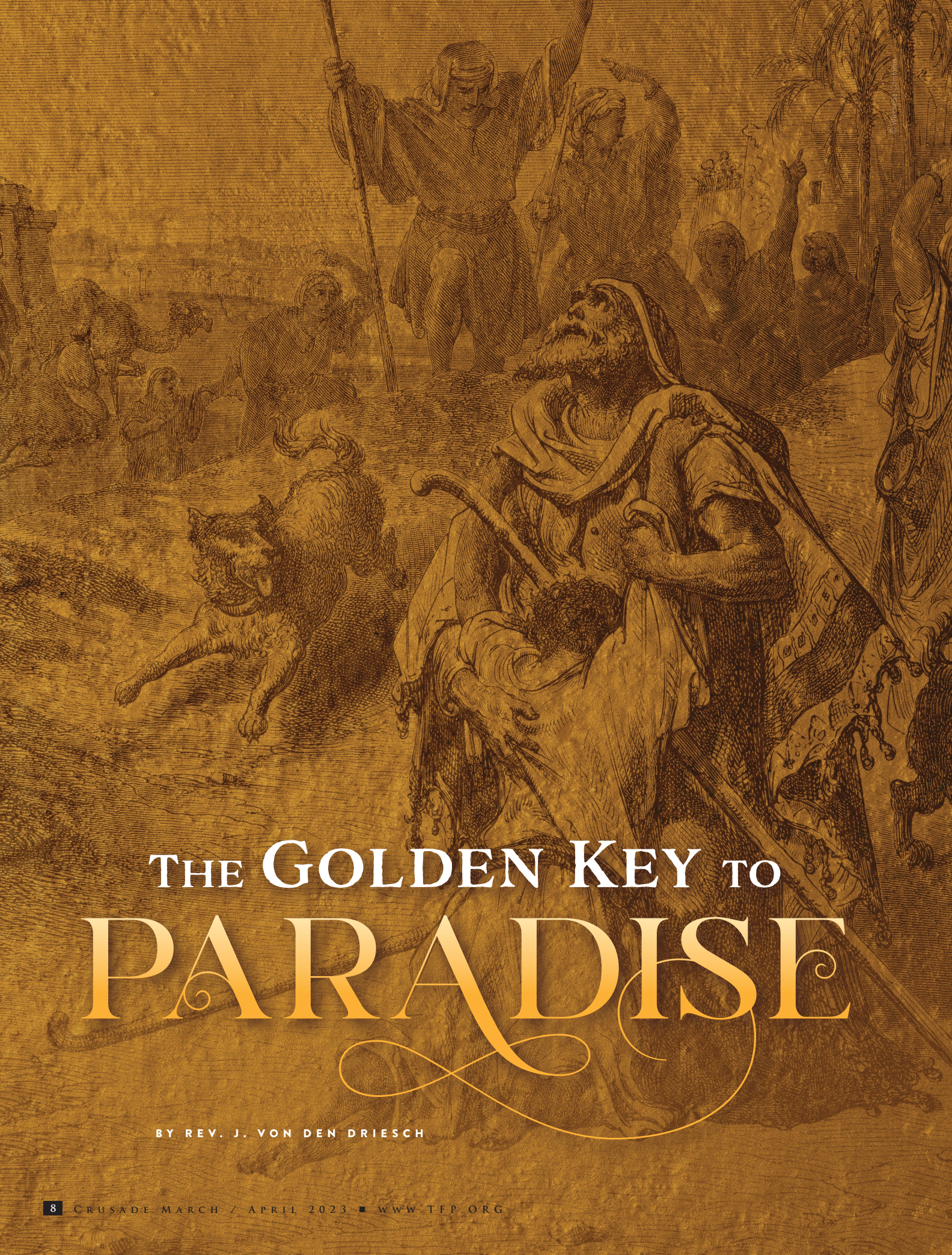
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THE GOLDEN KEY TO PARADISE

BY REV. J. VON DEN DRIESCH

Upon seeing the title “The Golden Key to Paradise,” you will perhaps, dear reader, experience the curiosity of seeing whether the content matches the title.

Perhaps some mistrust will inspire you, and you will ask with misgiving if you are dealing with one of those so-called sensational and foolproof pieces of mass-market literature.

Well, then, dear reader, no, it is a genuine and tangible key, and certainly, easy to handle: it is perfect contrition. It can open heaven for you, every day, at every moment, if you have had the misfortune to close it through mortal sin, and especially if, at the hour of death, you do not have by your side a priest, the dispenser of divine mercy. Perfect contrition will be the last key that, with the grace of God, will open heaven for you.

However, to do so, you must have gained the habit of employing it effectively during your life. How many souls, thanks to perfect contrition, have been assured of heaven, who without it would have been irremediably lost! “If I were able to traverse the countryside preaching the divine word,” said the learned and pious Cardinal Franzelin, “my favorite sermon topic would be perfect contrition.”

What Is Contrition?

Contrition is a *pain of the soul and a hatred for sins committed*. It must be accompanied by a good purpose, that is to say, a firm resolution to correct oneself and to sin no more.

In order for contrition to be real, it is necessary that it be interior, that it come from the depths of the heart; it must not then be a simple formula uttered without reflection. It is not necessary to show it either by sighs or tears, etc. All those displays may be an indicator, but they are not the essence of contrition. That resides in the soul and in the will determined to flee from sin and return to God.

Beyond that, contrition must be *universal*, that is to say, it must be understood of all sins committed—at least of all mortal sins. Finally, it must be *supernatural* and not purely *natural*, for that has no use.

This is why contrition, like every other good thing, must come from God and from His grace.

Only the grace of God can engender it in us. However, God always grants us the necessary grace provided that we ask it of Him, provided that we possess good will and a sincere and supernatural repentance.

If our repentance is based on a motive of interest, or for a purely natural reason (i.e. temporal evils, shame, or illness), we shall have only natural contrition without merit. However, if it is based on some truth of the faith (i.e. hell, purgatory, heaven, God, etc.), then we will truly possess a supernatural contrition.

This supernatural contrition can be, in turn, *perfect or imperfect* and here we are come to our topic of *perfect contrition*.

What, then, is perfect contrition? In a few words, perfect contrition is contrition based on the motive of *love*, and imperfect contrition is that which is based on the *fear* of God.

Perfect contrition is that which flows from the *perfect love of God*. Now, our love of God is perfect if we love Him because He is infinitely perfect, infinitely beautiful, and infinitely good (love of benevolence) or because He has shown us His love in such an admirable way (love of gratitude).

Our love of God is imperfect, if we love Him because we expect something from Him.

Accordingly, in imperfect love, we think above all about the favors received, and in perfect love, we think above all of the goodness of the One who bestows these favors. Imperfect love makes us



Each act of perfect contrition increases grace and an ounce of grace is worth more than all the treasures in the world.



preferably love the favor itself, whereas perfect love makes us love the Author of these favors, and that less for His *gifts* than for the *love* and the *goodness* that these gifts manifest.

From love, contrition flows. As a result, our contrition will be perfect, if we repent of our sins for the sake of the perfect love of God, whether from *benevolence* or from *gratitude*.

It will be imperfect, if we repent of our faults owing to the *fear of God*, whether because sin has made us lose the reward that we have been promised, viz., heaven; or because we have earned the punishment imposed on the sinner, viz., hell or purgatory.

In *imperfect* contrition, we think particularly about ourselves and about the evils that sin brings to us, according to the light of faith. In *perfect* contrition, we especially think of God, His greatness, His beauty, His love, and His goodness; we consider sin an offense and that it has been the cause of the many sufferings endured to redeem us. We wish not only our own good, but that of God.

An example will help us grasp it better. When Saint Peter had denied our Savior, “he went forth and wept bitterly.” Why did he weep? Was it for the shame that he was going to endure in front of the other Apostles?

In such a circumstance, it would have been a purely natural pain and without merit. Is it because

his divine Master is perhaps going to strip him of his dignity as an Apostle and Supreme Pastor, or drive him from His kingdom? In this case, the contrition would be good, but imperfect. No indeed! He repents, he weeps because he has offended his beloved Master, so good, so holy, and so worthy of love. He weeps because he has responded to that immense love with base ingratitude, and that is perfect contrition.

Now, don't you, too, dear reader, have the same motive as Saint Peter to detest your sins, *for the sake of love, for the sake of perfect love, and for the sake of gratitude?*

Without any doubt, God's favors are more numerous than the hairs on your head and every one of them should make you repeat the words of Saint John: “Let us love God, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

And how has He loved you?

“I have loved thee,” says God Himself, “with an everlasting love, I have had pity on thee and I have drawn thee to me” (Jer. 31:3).

“With an everlasting love I have loved thee.”

From all eternity, before there was even a trace of you upon the earth, He cast upon you this look of love that penetrates everything. He prepared for you a soul and a body, heaven and earth, with all the tenderness of a mother who prepares to welcome the child who is going to come into the world. It is God Who has given you life and death;

it is He Who gives you the good things of nature every day.

This idea was sufficient for the pagans themselves to bring them to the knowledge and the perfect love of God. For a greater reason, it should bring you there—you a Christian who possesses the love and the supernatural goodness of God for you. Through the prophet He says, “I have had pity on you.”

You were condemned like all men as a result of original sin; God sent His only Son who became your Savior and redeemed you with His blood by dying on the cross.

It was of you that He lovingly thought in His agony in the Garden of Olives, when He shed His blood under the whips and the thorns, when He followed, carrying His cross, the long and painful path of Calvary; when, nailed upon the cross, He expired in the midst of ghastly torments, it was of you that He thought, with a tender love, as if you had been the only person in the world. What shall we make of that? “Let us love God, because He loved us first.”

Moreover, God *drew you to Himself* by baptism, which is the first and chief grace of life, and by the *Church*, in whose bosom you were then incorporated. How many men have been able to attain the true faith only through the strength of effort and sufferings! But to you, God gave it to you from the cradle, out of pure love. He drew you to Himself, He draws you every day by means of the sacraments and by numberless graces, interior and exterior, with which He showers you.

You are, as it were, submerged in an ocean, the ocean of goodness and divine love, and He wishes again to crown all these graces by placing you near Him and making you eternally happy. What will you give Him for such love?

Isn't it true that you must make a return for these advances? Then let us love our God, since He loved us first.

Let us come to the point: How have you responded to the love of a God so lovable and so good? Without doubt, by your ingratitude and by your sins. But do you repent of this ingratitude? Ah, yes, without any doubt, and you burn with a desire to make amends for it by a limitless love. Well, then, if that is so, you have at this moment perfect contrition, that which is based on the love of God and which is called *contrition of love* or *of charity*.

But in contrition of charity itself, there is a degree, more elevated yet, that consists in purely loving God, because He is infinitely glorious, infinitely perfect, and worthy of being loved, the abstraction of His mercy for us. Let us make a comparison. There are, in the firmament, a number

of stars so distant from us that we cannot perceive them, and yet they are all as large and as bright as the sun that so freely imparts to us warmth and life.

Likewise, suppose that man had never been in possession of this eternal star that is God's love. Suppose that God had created neither the world nor any creature: He would be no less great, no less beautiful, no less glorious, no less worthy of being loved, for He is Himself and in regard to Himself the greatest good, the most perfect, and the most lovable.

Such is the sense of the formula: I am heartily sorry. . . because You are infinitely lovable and You deplore sin. Reflect a moment and consider God's love; especially contemplate the Savior's bitter sufferings. In this light, you will easily understand, and it will pierce your heart through.

Here, then, are the practical means to achieve perfect contrition.

How Do You Obtain Perfect Contrition?

You must recall first of all that perfect contrition is a grace, and a great grace, from the mercy of God. You must ask it of Him earnestly. Ask it of Him, not only at the moment when you wish to make an act of contrition, but frequently. It should be the object of our most ardent desires. Therefore, repeat often, “My God, grant me perfect contrition for all my sins.” Our Lord will grant your prayer, if He sees in you a sincere desire to please Him.

That said, here is how you will easily be able to make a perfect act of contrition. Cast yourself at the foot of a crucifix, either at church or in your room, where you imagine yourself in the presence of Jesus crucified, and, in the sight of His wounds, meditate with devotion for a few moments and say to yourself:

“Who, then, is nailed on this cross? It is Jesus, my God and my Savior. What does He suffer? His mangled body covered with wounds shows the most terrible torments. His soul is soaked with pains and insults. Why does He suffer? For men's sins and also for my own. In the midst of His bitterness, He remembers me, He suffers for me. He wishes to expiate my sins.”

Stop there, while the ever-warm blood of your sweet Savior falls drop by drop upon your soul. Ask yourself how you responded to your lovable Savior's tokens of tenderness.

Recall your sins and, forgetting for a moment heaven and hell, repent especially because they are your sins that have reduced your Savior to such a state. Promise Him no longer to nail Him to the cross with new sin, and lastly, recite, slowly and with fervor, an act of contrition. The act of contrition may be expressed in many ways, according to the feelings of each penitent.

Is It Difficult to Make a Perfect Act of Contrition?

Without a doubt, the act of perfect contrition is more difficult than the act of imperfect contrition required for confession. However, there is no one who, with God's grace, cannot obtain perfect contrition, provided he desires it sincerely. Contrition is in the will and not in the sentiment, though even without tears its intensity should have some proportion to the sin or sins we have committed.

Moreover, and this is a very proper consideration to give us encouragement, before the time of Our Lord, in the ancient law perfect contrition was, for 4,000 years, the only means of obtaining forgiveness of sins. Again, in our times, there exists no other form of forgiveness for thousands of pagans and heretics. Now, it is true that God does not wish the death of the sinner; He cannot wish to impose a perfect contrition impossible to attain. Contrition must, on the contrary, be within the range of all men. Well, then, if so many unfortunates who live and die can obtain this perfect contrition far from (though through no fault of their own) the stream of grace and the Catholic Church, is perfect contrition so difficult for you who have the good fortune of being Christian and Catholic, who are the object of much greater graces and who are better taught than these poor infidels?

I will go further. Often, without your suspecting it, you have perfect contrition. For instance, when you devoutly hear Holy Mass, when you make with fervor the Stations of the Cross, when you meditate with devotion in front of an image of Jesus crucified or of His divine Heart.

What Effects Does Perfect Contrition Produce?

Some truly admirable effects! For the sinner, thanks to perfect contrition, he immediately receives forgiveness for each of his faults even before making his confession. Nevertheless, he must make a resolution to confess himself at an opportune time; of course, this resolution is included in perfect contrition. Every time he makes an act of perfect contrition, the pains of hell are immediately remitted, he recovers all his past merits, and he turns from being an enemy of God to being His son by adoption and co-heir to heaven.

For the just man, perfect contrition enlarges and strengthens the state of grace. It erases the venial sins he has detested, and increases in him the true and sound love of God. Here are the marvelous effects of divine mercy in the soul of the Christian owing to perfect contrition. Perhaps, they may appear unbelievable to you. Undoubtedly, you think,

in danger of death, we should ask for contrition; but is it credible that at every moment perfect contrition produces such effects? Is this teaching concerning perfect contrition well founded? I answer you that it is as solid as the rock upon which the Church is built and as certain as the very word of God. At the Council of Trent, the Church, in explaining the chief truths disputed by the heretics, declares (Session xiv, Chap. 4) that perfect contrition, that which proceeds from the love of God, justifies man and reconciles him to God, even before the reception of the sacrament of penance.

Now, the Council nowhere says that this is only in danger of death. Therefore, perfect contrition at all times produces this effect. Besides, in that the Church relies on the words of Jesus: "If anyone love me"—and with perfect contrition we truly love Him—"my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode in him" (John 14:23). God cannot live in a soul stained by sin. Perfect contrition or the contrition of charity accordingly wipes away sins.

But then, someone will say, if perfect contrition wipes away sin, what good is it to confess it afterwards? It is true that perfect contrition produces the same effects as confession, but it does not affect them independently of the sacrament of penance, since perfect contrition precisely supposes a firm purpose to confess the same sins that it has just pardoned. For, to confess all sins, at least the mortal ones, is a law of Jesus Christ and a law that cannot change. Is it necessary to confess one's sins as soon as possible after the act of contrition? Very strictly speaking, that is not necessary, but I strongly urge you to do so. You will thus be all the more sure of being forgiven and you will obtain, at the same time, the precious graces attached to the sacrament of penance, those that are called the sacramental graces. Perhaps, now, you will be tempted to say to yourself: "If it is easy to obtain the remission of sins through perfect contrition, I do not have to trouble myself about confession. I will sin without scruple, and I will be discharged of the debt by an act of perfect contrition!" Anyone who would think in such a way will not have even a shadow of perfect contrition. He would not love God above everything, since he would not have the serious desire to break with sin and change his life, the condition required equally by confession and perfect contrition. He could well fool himself, but he could never fool God. He who truly has perfect contrition is entirely resolved to renounce mortal sin. He will cleanse himself as soon as possible in the sacrament of penance, and, by his good will aided by the grace of God, he will keep himself

from sin, and he will strengthen himself more and more in the happy state as a child of God.

Perfect contrition is a great aid for those who loyally and sincerely wish to recover and preserve the state of grace, and especially for those who fall into sin from habit, i.e., who, in spite of their good will, lapse again from time to time owing to their bad habits and their own weakness. It is, however, entirely different for those who use perfect contrition as a means of sinning with impunity: they turn the divine remedy of perfect repentance into a hellish poison.

Why Is Perfect Contrition So Important and Sometimes Even Necessary?

It is important throughout our life and at the moment of our death.

First and foremost, it is important during our life. What, in reality, is more important than grace? It beautifies our soul; it penetrates it and transforms it into a creature of a new order by making it a child of God and heir to heaven. It renders all the works and sufferings of the Christian worthy of eternal life, it is the magic wand that changes all into gold—into the gold of supernatural merits. What, on the contrary, is sadder than a Christian in the state of sin! All his sufferings, all his works, all his prayers remain barren, without any merit for heaven. He is an enemy of God, and if he dies, he goes to hell.

The state of grace, therefore, is of capital importance and necessary to the Christian.

If you have lost grace, you can recover it in two ways:

1. by confession,
2. by perfect contrition.

Confession is the ordinary means, but since it is not always available, God has given us an extraordinary means: perfect contrition.

Let us suppose that one day you have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin. After the worries of the day, in the quiet of the night your conscience awakens; it condemns you forcefully, and you are in agony. What are you to do? Well, then, God puts in your hands the golden key, which will open for you the gates of heaven. Repent of your sins intensely, for the love of the good and bountiful God.

On the contrary, how much is to be pitied the Christian who ignores the practice of perfect contrition. He goes to bed and rises in the state of mortal sin. He lives in this manner two, three, four or more months, from year to year, perhaps. The dark night in which he is shrouded is not for one moment interrupted after confession. A sad

state, to live almost always in mortal sin, as an enemy of God, without any merit for heaven and in danger of eternal damnation!

Another benefit: if before receiving a sacrament, say confirmation or matrimony, for instance, you recall an unpardoned sin, perfect contrition allows you to receive this sacrament worthily. Only for Communion is confession required.

Even for a Christian in a state of grace, the frequent practice of perfect contrition is very useful.

First, we are never certain of being in a state of grace. Now, every act of perfect contrition increases this certainty. It often occurs to us to wonder whether we have given in to temptation. Such doubts delay and discourage the soul on the path of virtue. What are we then to do? Scrutinize ourselves if we have or have not consented to temptation? This would be fruitless. Make an act of perfect contrition and be at ease.

The practice of perfect contrition is, therefore, very important during our life, but most especially at the hour of our death and above all if we are in danger of sudden death.

“But,” you will ask me, “will I have the time to make an act of perfect contrition?” Yes, with God’s grace. Perfect contrition does not require much time, especially if, during your life, you have practiced it often. It takes only an instant to make it from the depths of your soul. Besides, God’s grace is more efficacious at the moment of danger, and our mind is much more active. At death’s door, the seconds seem like hours.

Everyone rushes about; they do not understand the tears and cries; they lose their heads; they go to find the doctor or the priest; they bring fresh water and all the remedies that they secretly possess. And while the sick person is in agony, no one, perhaps, has pity on his immortal soul; no one suggests to him to make an act of perfect contrition. If you find yourself in a similar situation, hasten to the side of the dying person and, calmly and serenely presenting to him, if possible, the image of Jesus crucified, with a sure and firm voice, tell him to think and to repeat from the depths of his soul what you are about to say. Then slowly and clearly recite the act of contrition even though it would appear



Opening the Gates of Heaven begins with opening one’s heart to forgiveness in the sacrament of confession, whenever possible.



that the sick person understands and comprehends nothing. You will have done a supremely good work that will earn you his eternal gratitude. Even if you are dealing with a heretic, help him in his last moments in the same way. It is not necessary to speak to him about confession. Urge him to make an act of love of God and of Jesus crucified in slowly reciting to him the act of contrition.

When Should You Make An Act of Contrition?

Let me at once ask this of you: for God and your soul, every evening do not fail to make an act of contrition along with your prayers. Assuredly, it is not a sin to leave it out sometimes, but what I offer is good and useful advice. Do not say that the examination of conscience and perfect contrition are good for priests and for perfect souls; do not say, "I don't have time. In the evening, I am too tired!" How much time do you need? A half hour? Fifteen minutes? No, a few minutes will suffice. Don't you say some prayers lying in your bed? Well, after praying, think a

few moments about the faults and the sins of that day and recite slowly and fervently, at the foot of the crucifix, the act of contrition. Start this evening, and you will not regret it. If you should ever have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin, do not remain in this state. Restore yourself by perfect contrition. Restore yourself at once, or at least at your evening prayers, and without delay go to confession.

Finally, dear reader, sooner or later the hour of death will strike for you, and if, God forbid, it comes unexpectedly, you know the remedy; you know where to find the key to heaven. If you do have the time to prepare yourself, may your last action be an act of love toward God, your Creator, your Redeemer, your Savior, a sincere and perfect act of contrition for all the sins of your life. After that, throw yourself into the arms of divine mercy.

Cherish perfect contrition; practice this precious means of obtaining grace, which Providence has placed in your hands. In sum, the true key to heaven. ■

The preceding article is taken from the book *The Golden Key to Paradise* by Rev. J. Von Den Driesch and has been adapted for publication without his revision. —Ed.

There is no greater inducement to repentance than a serious contemplation of Our Lord's sufferings on the cross.

CALL TO CHIVALRY

SUMMER CAMPS FOR 2023

Much more than just a camp, this first-rate program invites boys ages thirteen to eighteen to follow in the footsteps of crusader saints, and discover the treasures of Christian civilization.

Activities include informative talks, rosary processions, challenging games, adventurous hikes, treasure hunts, skits, and medieval banquets.

If you would like to learn more about these unique formation opportunities for a young man in your life, just write to Domenick Galatolo (dgalatolo16@gmail.com) or call him at (717) 225-7147 ext. 255.





AMERICA NEEDS FATIMA[®]

MARCH / APRIL 2023

PROGRESS REPORT

From the Desk of Robert Ritchie

Dear Soldier of Our Lady,

As I reflect on the recent past, one of the biggest blessings Our Lady bestowed upon us was the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. On January 21, 2023, we held the first March for Life since this ruling.

When I think of how I felt on that day, what comes to mind is that we must continue to fight. Although we have won a battle against the pro-abortionists, we have not won the war.

We cannot settle for returning to a pre-*Roe* way of life where states can decide if abortion is legal. We must continue to defend the unborn and pray for a return to God and ordered liberty. We can't stop now.

The only way we will return to order, morality, and God is through the power of prayer. I hope you will join me and host a Rosary Rally for Traditional Marriage in March. Rallies will take place on **March 18th**—the Saturday before the Feast of Saint Joseph—at noon your local time. It's really simple to host a rally. Just contact Bernard on the Public Square Rosary Hotline at (866) 584-6012 and he will help you plan a peaceful and legal rally.

We are called upon to look beyond the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and toward a great return to order in America. As faithful Catholics, we have confidence that Our Lady will hear our prayers for an abortion-free America. I know you join me in participating in the triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart!

Sincerely,

In Jesus and Mary,

Robert E. Ritchie
Executive Director





BATTLELINES



TAKEN FROM ANF'S PUBLICATION, *BATTLELINES*

Connecticut Catholics Oppose Father Martin

Many faithful Catholics held a rosary rally of reparation and protest against Fr. James Martin, S.J., who was speaking at a conference sponsored by the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut.

During the rosary rally, a conference participant came outside and spoke to the rosary rally group stating she did not like what Father Martin was saying. Conversely, the rally participants faced some opposition from LGBTQ activists, who were attending a Pride festival down the street.

They prayed the rosary and Litany of Saint Michael, which provided an exorcistic spirit to all the evil going on around them.

Rally Captain Michael said, "These rosary rallies are so important. This is our way to show our love for God and Our Lady and make reparation for the sins and blasphemies committed against them. The benefit our souls receive is immeasurable. The rosary rallies provide a grace-filled light in a dark world."

Honoring Our Lord in Louisville

Rally Captain Frank and many TFP-ANF supporters held a rosary rally of reparation against a Drag Queen Story Hour at Hi-Wire Brewery in Louisville, Kentucky.

The group placed Saint Benedict medals around where they stood and held signs asking cars to honk for Mother Mary, purity, and marriage. Although they didn't receive as many honks as at their previous rallies and dealt with two vicious protestors, the group stood strong to honor Our Lord.

"I felt proud that twenty Catholics showed up to stand up in public for Our Lord's teaching against the corruption of children. Our ANF banner was beautiful and the image of Christ and the message denouncing such DQSH perversion couldn't be denied," he said.

Frank encouraged others to host their own rallies: "Confronting demonic activity aimed at the sexual enculturation of children is not easy. But the devil is a coward and with Our Lady, you will prevail against him and be eternally rewarded."



Pro-Life Supporters Pray in Wisconsin

A community of pro-life supporters gathered in Kewaskum, Wisconsin to hold a three-hour rosary rally to pray for an end to abortion and for the unborn.

Although Rally Captain Jean faced opposition from protesters who held vulgar signs and shouted profanities, she felt that Our Lady was pleased that approximately seventy people joined her in prayer.

"It was a very blessed rally with a lot of support from the community. We had a lot of support from the people passing by. The weather was especially good with a gentle breeze keeping us cool while we were there for three hours," Jean said.

Rally Captain Jean held a three-hour rally for the unborn in her hometown in Wisconsin.





Evidence that Rosary Rallies Work

TFP-ANF supporters held two rosary rallies in the Northern York County School District in York, Pennsylvania, to make reparation against the district's plans to host "After School Satan Clubs" and a satanic "back-to-school" event at school facilities.

Although the back-to-school event was held, the school board voted eight to one to deny satanists their proposed club—thanks to outspoken opposition. This is powerful evidence that rosary rallies work!

TFP-ANF supporter Evan said, "Some things should NOT be allowed in schools. Adults have to protect children from evil, not expose them to it. Having a program in school where Satan is invoked exposes every child—directly or indirectly—to real spiritual harm."

The TFP-ANF supporters faced small, but unmistakably demonic, opposition at both rallies, but stood firm in taking a stand against the devil.

Spirited Protest Against Grooming of Children in Katy, Texas

More than fifty TFP-ANF supporters gathered outside of the First Christian Church in Katy, Texas, to make reparation against an upcoming Drag Queen Bingo.

Many of these drag queen events, including Drag Queen Story Hour, target children. This is one of the reasons the rosary rally supporters wanted to fight back.

The peaceful protest took place at the entrance of the church. Pro-family activists held signs that said "Stop DRAG events for kids," "Stop sexualizing children," "Honk Against Drag Events for Kids," and "Male and Female He Created Them." Participants prayed the rosary and sang hymns, often accompanied by bagpipes.

Rally Captain Cesar said, "Americans have fought back with protests against LGBT drag events for children. Since the start of September, drag shows have been cancelled in Chicago, Boise, Idaho, Denton, Texas, and Everett, Washington due to public outcry. This is proof that protests and public pressure work."



What Happens When People Take Action

Our Lord and Our Lady triumph every day! And you help make their voices heard; they ask us to take action! You might think that your voice can't make a difference, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Here are two examples of effective action through prayer and perseverance:

In Miami, a group of concerned mothers and their children gathered and spoke directly to the director of Saint Michael Catholic School. They petitioned for the removal of immoral books from the school's curriculum. When the director was told these books had been used for at least two years at the school, he apologized and immediately e-mailed all the Catholic schools in Miami and urged them to remove the books from their curriculum too.

In West Chester, Pennsylvania, families spoke out against a planned LGBTQ+ event by inundating the event heads and borough officials with e-mails and phone calls asking them to stop the event. Officials were forced to cancel the West Chester Community OutFest as a result of the backlash. ■

You, too, can take action!

If you hear of immoral, impure curricula and pro-homosexual events being presented to children in your community, let us know and we'll help you make a plan of action!

Contact Jose Ferraz toll-free at (844) 830-3570, or e-mail him at Protest@TFP.org.



Our Readers Write

ANF Apostolate

"It's important to me that America Needs Fatima is successful because Our Lady spoke of fixing our country as well as the world if we prayed to her more often."

T.C., Salem, Oregon



"God bless your fantastic organization that I have been a member of for thirty plus years."

G.A., Sacramento, California

"Thank you for ALL your good work. America needs Fatima more and more each day. God bless you all for your great work. I will continue to support you. I believe in all your work and want to help so badly. Please continue your efforts. I do believe in you and your cause. The world is getting worse every day and we can't do it without your help. Do not give up. America needs your help so badly. The world needs to know the great work that you're always doing. The world needs to hear Mary's message at Fatima."

M.M., Brockport, New York

"Thank you for promoting Christianity in the world. I pray we can keep the light of the faith lit, to fight satanism. Please use my gifts to spread the message of Fatima and I will pray for all of us to promote Christianity. My husband, God rest him, and I are Presbyterians though."

A.M., Knoxville, Tennessee

2023 Fatima Calendar

"Thank you so much for the calendar, it is beautiful. I work at an assisted living home and residents there are so very dear and special. One dear lady prays the rosary all day. She carries it with her everywhere she goes. She was so afraid of something. I took her the calendar you sent me. She cried and said, 'Our Lady is with me!' Now I have a priest and another resident asking me for one of your calendars too. They pray daily rosaries and even got those who don't know the rosary to come out and pray the rosary together every morning."

D.D., Great Bend, Kansas

"I mentor an incarcerated prisoner by mail, and I want you to know that I sent this inspiring Fatima calendar to him."

V.M., Dubuque, Iowa

"Thank you so much for the calendar, too. It's great stuff to have at home and for everyone who visits us to take a look at those pretty religious images of Our Lady of Fatima. Very merciful eyes looking on us. Deep within those eyes, gives us peace of mind and contentment in the uncertainty of our times."

P.S., Walnut, California

"I sort of scribbled on the confirmation sheet and I wanted to tell you more clearly how beautiful the calendar is and that I love it. If possible, I would love it if you could send it to my granddaughters. Meghan and Molly are teenagers and share a bedroom. They both go to Catholic school but there is little or no devotion in the home. The household is very much in the world. Mia is another granddaughter in another household. She was born on May 13th and on one of her birthdays, I gave her the Fatima movie, but I don't think she's watched it yet. She too goes to Catholic school but again, not a lot of Catholic devotion in her home."

H.A., Metairie, Louisiana

Fatima Home Visit/Team

"Your presentations on Fatima are so informational. I haven't smoked a cigarette since the day you brought Our Lady into our home! Anxiety and cravings are bad, but she is helping me. Thank you for all that you do for Our Lady of Fatima. God's blessings to you and your coworkers, especially to keep you safe and loved. I'm keeping you in my daily prayers for all to go well with you all."

A.B., Gibsonia, Pennsylvania

"It was several years ago now that we had your Fatima custodian bring the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima to our house. I personally believe that the graces of that visit had a lot to do with uncovering two bad priests, one of whom was our parish priest. He was caught by a miracle of God. He was a satanist and a con man. P.S. We pray our rosaries every day."

K.C. and B.C., Pearl River, Louisiana



Send us your feedback by writing to Crusade@TFP.org



CUSTODIAN'S CORNER

A Miracle for Ronnie

BY KENNETH MURPHY



On October 7th, 2022, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, I had a Fatima home presentation in Massachusetts. The mother of the family was not Catholic and some others were non-practicing but happy to attend. For their benefit, I recounted the story of the wedding feast of Cana and why we should turn to Our Lady when we need a miracle.

"We also need a miracle!" the host and hostess began to explain. "Our daughter Ronnie has this cancerous tumor up against her aortic artery." Eight months of chemotherapy and forty-four sessions of targeted radiation had failed to shrink the tumor. Surgeons attempted to remove the tumor but found a plastic mesh left from a hernia treatment was blocking their way to the tumor. After 2.5 hours the surgeons gave up saying, "One small mistake would result in fatal blood loss." Second opinions from hospitals throughout New England and New York also said surgery was too risky. At this point Ronnie's cancer was judged to be stage four and inoperable.

Mr. Robert, Ronnie's father, had been praying the rosary daily since his daughter's diagnosis and on October 7th the whole family gathered from long distances to ask Our Lady for a miracle. Through online research Ronnie had found a surgeon with experience doing high risk stage four cancer surgeries. Even this surgeon said, "The tumor is in a very bad spot and I see surgery was tried and failed. Give me a week to think about doing it, consult a vascular specialist surgeon, and discuss it with my team." After a week he responded, "Let's go for it! Your surgery is set for October 13th!" With the help of rosary guides and free rosaries we began to pray for this surgery that was only days away.

Looking around I thought, "Most here are in the military, law enforcement, or healthcare, but only prayer can prepare a family for a surgery like this." I took a photo to send to them after the surgery. "No matter what happens they will remember this beautiful day they gathered together."

After the surgery, Mr. Robert texted this amazing report to me:

"As [far as] we all are concerned, Our Lady and Our Lord have answered our many, many prayers and everyone else's prayers.

"On October 13, me and my wife and Ronnie's husband are in the surgical waiting room. Ronnie's name is on the digital board as first 'being prepared for surgery' and then as 'surgery in progress.' So it was under way.

"As hour one and two went by we became very nervous because this is where the Springfield surgical team gave up. Hour three came we were still nervous. Then hour four and five we started to feel hopeful. Hour eight and nine came and we were all just wondering: 'Is he actually being able to do something?'"

"Then hour ten hit and we were really jittery. At 6:15pm we got a call in the waiting room from the surgeon Dr. Lindberg:

"Put the phone on speaker phone... How is everyone doing?'"

"We all said, 'Good, but nervous.'"

"Are you all ready to hear some GOOD NEWS?'"

"We said, 'We certainly are!'"

"He explained, 'Well this has been a very long day and a very challenging day BUT Ronnie is cancer FREE!' It took extra long because that hernia mesh had melted into place and the surgery team needed to move everything else around instead. However, this challenge helped the team discover new techniques that might save future lives."

Mr. Robert concluded this report saying, "My wife, even though she is Baptist, does attribute Ronnie's miraculous healing to Our Lady and her intercession with Our Lord Jesus.

"I ask Mother Mary's continued intercession with Our Lord Jesus Christ to stay with Ronnie as she continues to heal after surgery. I also include Dr. Lindberg for being the amazing talented man that he is." ■

A Wreath of Little Flowers for “The Little Flower”

BY ISABELLE DUNCAN



Every year for many years now, America Needs Fatima (ANF) sends to each of its treasured members a tiny, red silken rose with an invitation to participate in a grand gesture of love and gratitude to Saint Therese, the Little Flower. This last year, over 13,000 devotees of this beloved saint and miracle worker accepted the invitation and sent back their rosettes. We fashioned a large wreath out of the thousands of silk rosettes, and I, along with my parents, had the great honor to take the wreath to Lisieux, France, on her feast day, October 1, 2022.

First, we brought the wreath to Saint Therese’s Carmelite convent. Many pilgrims were praying there, presenting petitions and roses, of which there was a vast number. Witnessing their heartfelt and unabashed devotion was particularly moving to me. I also brought a large number of petitions and had them placed under her shrine in the Carmel chapel. As one of ANF’s customer service representatives, these were prayer requests I had personally accumulated over the last year from ANF supporters who called in to our customer service hotline. I received prayer petitions of every type: from deliverance from spiritual dilemmas, to cures of physical maladies, to the urgent conversion of family members. While praying for our dear supporters and benefactors at the Carmel, I admired the beautiful statue of “Our Lady of the Smile,” the very one that smiled at the deathly ill Saint Therese, hastening her miraculous cure at the age of ten.

After the Carmel, we proceeded with the wreath to *Les Buissonnets*, Saint Therese’s childhood home. It was a very charming and serene place complete with a garden. It was not difficult to imagine a playful, little Therese skipping down the path to greet her beloved father, Saint Louis Martin. We were privileged to see the room she lived and prayed in until she entered the Carmel at the age of fifteen. There was a splendid display of all her various childhood effects . . . the famous skipping rope, a tea service, a kaleidoscope, and many other items. The two that struck me the most was her First Holy Communion dress and a standing crucifix. Saint Therese described her First Holy Communion day as the “beautiful day of days” and that “there are certain things that lose their perfume as soon as they are exposed to air and there are deep spiritual thoughts that cannot be expressed without losing their intimate and heavenly meaning.” It was before that very crucifix that Saint Therese was filled with a great charity for poor sinners. “I burned with desire to snatch them from the eternal flames.” She prayed for the conversion of a great criminal named Pranzini, and after receiving a requested sign of his conversion, on account of a tremendous grace, it became her mission to save souls through prayer and suffering.

After *Les Buissonnets*, we then carried the wreath to the Basilica of Saint Therese, where we venerated her relics as well as the relics of Saint Therese’s holy parents, Saints Louis and Zelig Martin. In a world where God’s marriage is under such attack, it was particularly poignant to pay homage to the saintly couple who raised one of the greatest and most beloved saints.

The following day, after attending morning Mass, we took the wreath to the site of Saint Therese’s burial in the town cemetery. From this spot, now marked by a life-size statue, Saint Therese performed her first miracles and her reputation spread throughout the world. It is truly a blessed and fitting place to lay the wreath. For one last time in Lisieux, we prayed for Saint Therese’s intercession on behalf of all America Needs Fatima’s members, but especially for those who sent their little roses to honor “the Little Flower.”



TOP: A wreath made of over 13,000 red rosettes was presented at Saint Therese’s Carmelite convent as a token of love from participating members of America Needs Fatima MIDDLE LEFT: The crucifix before which Therese was filled with a great charity for poor sinners MIDDLE RIGHT: First Communion dress worn by little Therese BOTTOM LEFT: Relics of Saint Therese’s holy parents, Saints Louis and Zelig Martin BOTTOM RIGHT: The author with her parents before the saint’s childhood home, *Les Buissonnets*



Moving Forward to the Next Phase in the Pro-Life Crusade



On this fiftieth annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) celebrates the overturning of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision with all the pro-life multitudes nationwide.

After so many years of marching, we have the joy of seeing the impossible made possible. God has blessed our efforts, and this first goal has been achieved. The *Dobbs* decision energized the pro-life movement and demoralized pro-abortionists worldwide.

As the euphoria over the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* fades, the reality of the fight ahead is sinking in. The defeat of *Roe* was a huge step forward. However, it was only a step—many more are needed if America is to be abortion-free and return to a moral order.

Indeed, the results of the mid-term elections show that just because the Supreme Court finally overturned *Roe v. Wade*, public opinion has not significantly changed. The stalemate between the ardent partisans of the two sides continues with a decisive center between them. Any further developments must involve the grueling battle to persuade this middle to oppose the slaughter of innocents.

Now is the time to press the attack, not to pursue compromise or complacency. The way to additional victories calls for a new phase in the pro-life struggle that will completely undermine the pro-abortion position.

The Three Lessons of the *Dobbs* Victory

The *Dobbs* victory prepared the way for the next phase with three valuable lessons from the long struggle to overturn *Roe*.

The **first** lesson is the undeniable proof that things deemed impossible can be done. The efforts and, above all, the prayers proved that with God, all is possible. We must not doubt that if *Roe* was overturned, then so can all procured abortion be eliminated in our times.

The **second** lesson is that the adversary is vulnerable and weak. The pro-abortion side still has an overwhelming advantage in terms of money, media, and establishment support. Its media do everything possible to promote the dominant yet false narratives of “reproductive freedom” and “women’s rights.” However, these advantages were erased by the hideousness of abortion that pro-abortionists try so hard to hide. The aging pro-abortionist activists failed to attract enough new radical recruits to its cause. The *Dobbs* decision showed the weakness of the pro-abortion establishment when confronted by an ardent and dedicated adversary.

A **final** lesson shows that perseverance and tenacity are vital to this fight. The SCOTUS tragic 1973 ruling was meant to settle the abortion issue definitively, with resistance expected to fade away. Most thought abortion would be gradually accepted, as happened in many European countries.

However, the persistent efforts and prayers of pro-life forces (mostly women) turned the tide. The movement changed the terms of the debate from a women’s health issue to a moral dilemma. Countless people changed their minds. The pro-life movement assembles hundreds of thousands of protesters (many of them young people) at the nation’s capital annually at the March for Life. It mobilizes activists nationwide and inspires pro-lifers worldwide.

Pro-life 2.0

The next phase of the pro-life struggle proposes another “impossible” task that prayers and efforts must make possible



Participants like those pictured here are united by the common goals of ending abortion and restoring Christian civilization.

again. It consists of relentlessly attacking the root cause of abortion—the sexual revolution.

This revolutionary event turned American morality upside down and prepared the ground for the infamous 1973 abortion decision. It created apocalyptic social destruction by brutally eliminating the consequences of the sexual act—slaughtering the unborn, unwanted American baby. Thus, the floodgates for all kinds of sensuality and sexual deviation were opened.

As long as these gates remain open, procured abortion will not be defeated. The pro-life movement must take the offensive in the great culture wars that still rage across America. It is not a matter of abandoning the abortion issue but only broadening its scope.

Learning From the Unity of the Opposition

The *Dobbs* decision makes it apparent that the debate is not only about abortion. Leftists erupted in rage over the ruling, *Dobbs* finds its way into so many discussions that have nothing to do

with abortion specifically. Thus, we must be convinced that these adversaries share a common materialistic and secular worldview that extends beyond the abortion issue.

Indeed, the diverse ideologies of the left all eventually come together as one. The abortion cause naturally melds into the LGBTQ+ agenda governing all things immoral and sexual. This further explains why abortion finds radical support from all shades of the political left. The religious left rallies behind abortion, as do even satanists, who see it as a “sacrament.”

In the face of the left’s unity, the pro-life movement must naturally unite to engage all culture war issues.

What It Will Take

Thus, a post-*Roe* America must reject the entire sexual revolution. From contraception and no-fault divorce to the present LGBTQ+ agenda in all its moral horror. Just as pro-

life Americans cannot rest while procured abortion remains legal in any part of the country, a post-*Roe* America must not rest until every last moral destruction wrought by the sexual revolution has been reversed.

We must recognize that procured abortion is the effect of a profound revolt against God’s moral law. Society will have no true peace or order until this rebellion is quelled.

We must especially reject the proposal that the next phase of the pro-life fight must consist solely in providing economic benefits to struggling single mothers. Important as this work is, it will not solve the underlying moral problems. Instead, it shifts focus and attention away from the moral counter-revolution that must take place.

A Moral Counter-Revolution

Our challenge is to imagine a moral counter-revolution that will ensure each child has a father and mother and grows up in a healthy family atmosphere. It will insist upon Christian morals and reject sins of impurity. Such a society is the best guarantee of an abortion-free world.

Thus, we must not only oppose but also propose. Our plan cannot merely eliminate procured abortion but must build a free society based upon Christian principles that will facilitate the restoration of families and communities.

This involves upholding the natural relationships that have inspired Christian civilization. We must reward modesty and purity. We must uphold, praise, and reward true marriage (the lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others) and the mutual fidelity of the spouses. All these measures conform to human nature and bring out the best in individuals.

With God’s Help, It Can Be Done

Some say this cannot be done. Such a counter-revolution is beyond the reach of a world so enslaved to promiscuity and impurity.

We faced similar claims in 1973 after *Roe v. Wade*. To those who say it cannot be done, we can reply that it was already done once and can thus be done again . . . and quickly.

However, as we redouble our efforts, we would be foolish if we did not call upon God and His Blessed Mother to level the playing field and compensate for our disproportion with the adversary. God and His Grace have sustained us over the years. He will continue to do so, but only if we ask Him.

The effort is made easier because the entire liberal order that gave us *Roe* is crumbling. Suffering the consequences of living in a sinful society without God, people are looking for solutions outside the liberal box.

As we march this year, let us thank God for the victorious overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Let it catapult us to the next phase of the pro-life crusade. May God use our legal and peaceful action to change hearts and minds, and may this moral counter-revolution, through the merciful intercession of Mary Most Holy, emerge triumphant.

January 20, 2023
The American TFP



*P*ius XII affirmed that: “Society, as it were, speaks with the clothing it wears; with clothing, it reveals its secret aspirations, and uses it, at least in part, to build or destroy its own future.”

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But what would we say if the priest celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass were to leave the church wearing a T-shirt, shorts, and sandals? It would be inconsistent, because just as there are sacred vestments suitable for celebrating Mass, there is also the cassock, which is the way of dressing by which the priest reminds himself and others daily of his vocation.

Why should the priest have the duty to always manifest his identity, and the layman—the simple Christian—not also have the duty to speak, move, and dress as a Christian? This applies to both men and women, who in their outward order should always express the inner order toward which they must tend. This order reflects the infinite beauty that is God.

This is what “lived Christianity” means and this is why we can speak of a Christian fashion.

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Fashion and Gender

Fashion made the agitated year of 1968 into a radical turning point in Western social life. The criteria of beauty and decorum were overcome by the egalitarian and anarchic spirit which was the very soul of the student movement. Jeans became a sort of uniform for the youth.

In 1954, Austrian designer Rudi Gernreich (1922—1985), with his “partner” Harry Hay (1912—2002), founded the Mattachine Society, the first organization promoting homosexual liberation in the United States. Gernreich exerted a profound influence on fashion, anticipating the notion of “gender fluidity.” He invented the Unisex Project, dressing male and female models in identical clothes.

Along these lines, gender studies developed within American feminism in the seventies. Its advocates placed

the denial of an authentic difference between men and women at the center of their conceptual approach. The concept holds that the male/female difference is merely a cultural, and not a natural, fact.

Since culture can change, the next step is to suggest interchangeability in practice. Thus, the medical establishment offers surgical operations to make a man “a woman” and a woman “a man.” To make this utopian idea a normality, it must be imposed in schools, indoctrinating children from an early age.

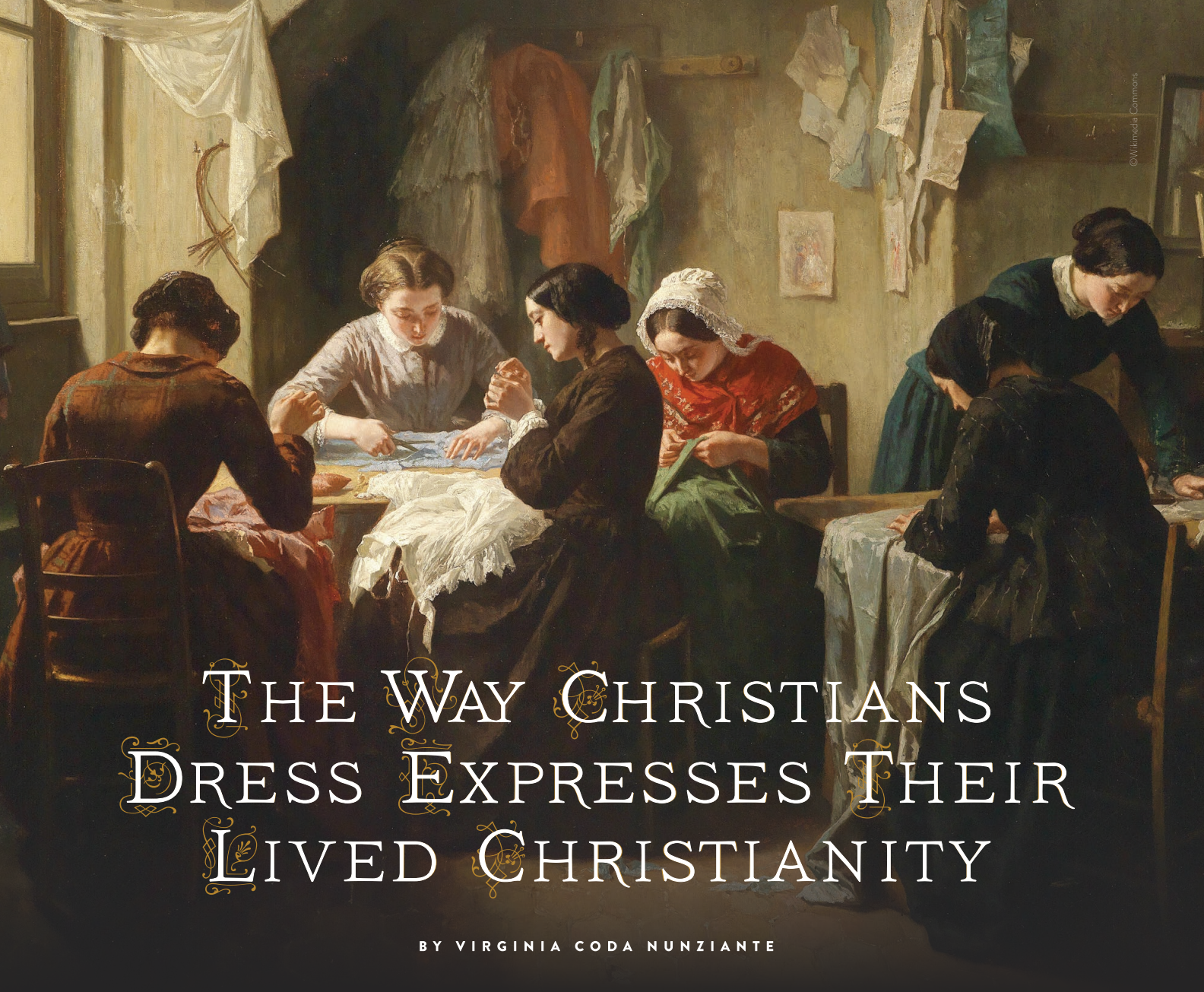
Fashion is therefore a formidable revolutionary weapon and needs to be opposed when it threatens to overthrow the principles of Catholic morality and the core values of Western culture.

On May 22, 1941, while World War II was raging, Pius XII stressed the need for a “crusade” against those who threaten Christian morality. According to the same pope, it is very important to recognize that fashion has an influence on society and, through it, on the common man.

In the years immediately after the Second Vatican Council, many sought to separate doctrine from the *modus*—the style or form in which doctrine is expressed. Thus, these people expressed themselves differently from the past and brought about a cultural transformation that is deeper than it may seem. The styles in which we express ourselves reveal a way of being and of thinking.

Fashion is basically a person’s style. Style expresses the ideas which guide us. Through our clothing we express a world vision. If it is true that examples count as much as ideas, then the way we dress also can express our “lived Christianity.” ■

Note: This article is adapted from the presentation of the book, *Christian Fashion in the Teaching of the Church*, by the author on June 9, 2022 at the Brompton Oratory in London.



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THE WAY CHRISTIANS DRESS EXPRESSES THEIR LIVED CHRISTIANITY

BY VIRGINIA CODA NUNZIANTE

The reason I have dedicated myself to putting together the small book, *Christian Fashion in the Teaching of the Church*, is because I am convinced that a life lived in a Christian way—and consistently so, especially for a woman—is partly expressed by the way one dresses, and that this is particularly important in today's world.

Allow me to present you with an image. In the summer days, holiday resorts and big cities alike are invaded by people dressed in the most indecent manner. This represents a brutal violence against Christians, jeopardizing one of the most important, but fragile, virtues of our faith: chastity.

In the streets and squares of large cities, scenes are imposed on passers-by that provoke disordered desires and, in this sense, constitute a real assault.

There is a certain consistency in this indecent attire: it corresponds to the dominant philosophy of life, which is materialism and the dissolution of all values. Everything is permitted, and the pursuit of pleasure is the ultimate goal.

Let us now look at a second image; a church in Rome or London where Mass according to the ancient Roman rite is celebrated with exactitude and magnificence. The liturgy, the celebrants' vestments, the music, the recollection—all form an atmosphere opposed to that of hedonism. This scene implies a philosophy of life ordered to God, which is the Christian philosophy of life. It is ordered not to man's spasmodic pursuit of pleasure, but to his sanctification and the glory of God. In this scene, too, there is a supreme consistency.

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