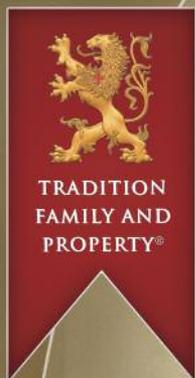


CRUSADE[®]

May/June 2014
MAGAZINE



Medal of **Many Graces**

and THE CONVERSION OF
ALPHONSE RATISBONNE

ANNOUNCEMENT CALL TO CHIVALRY SUMMER CAMPS

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.

The Call to Chivalry Summer Camps will be held in Herndon, Pennsylvania from June 4 to June 15 at the St. Louis de Montfort Academy, in Louisiana from July 1 to July 9 at the Feliciana Retreat Center in Norwood, in California in the San Bernardino Mountains from July 27 to August 2.



**For more details,
please contact:**

Pennsylvania June 4-15
Contact: Thomas Schneider
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Louisiana July 1-9
Contact: Cesar Franco
(717) 521-8013
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California July 27 to August 2
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Saint John Vianney, also known as the Curé of Ars, is the patron saint of priests.

The Power of the Scapular

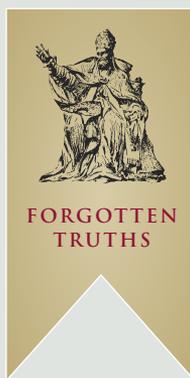
BY THOMAS RYDER

Abbé Francis Trochu, in his book, *The Curé D'Ars*, relates a story of a young lady who, having decided to consecrate her life to religion, sought the holy pastor of Ars, Saint John Vianney, for a general confession.

When she finished relating her sins, Saint John Vianney asked her if she was not forgetting something. The girl, upon recollecting her thoughts, could not recall anything else. The holy priest then proceeded to refresh her memory.

He asked if she remembered a certain dance party where she encountered a handsome young man with whom she desired to dance, but who, in turn, only danced with the other girls, passing her up.

Surprised, again she replied in the affirmative,



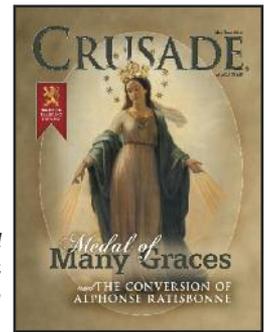
that such was indeed true. The Curé D'Ars then asked her if she remembered how downcast she had felt at the snub, and how, upon leaving the ballroom, she had glanced back once more and had seen the young man dancing with a girl, but this time there were two small blue lights under his feet.

Again she agreed and confirmed that in fact she had seen the two blue lights under the youth's feet, but that, finding them strange, she could not account for them.

Saint John Vianney then explained to her that the young man was in fact the Devil in human form, and that the only reason why he would not dance with her was because she was wearing the holy Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. ■

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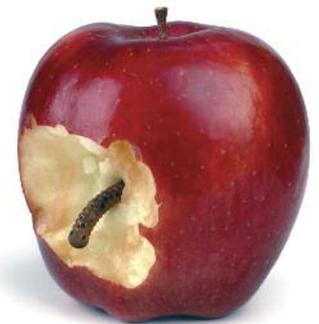


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 Miracolo, Saint
 Andrea delle Fratte
 church in Rome, Italy.**

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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

Man Walks Across United States in Reparation

Forty-nine-year-old Mark Byerly could not take it anymore. He resigned from a successful job, gave away or sold all of his belongings and embarked on a 3,000-mile walk from his hometown of Newark, Delaware to California “to make amends for his own crimes and the crimes of others committed against God and neighbor.” He told LifeSiteNews.com that “Ultimately, I just couldn’t stand around and watch this happen anymore.” Byerly intends to visit 150 Catholic shrines along the way and pray the rosary at all sites.



Scientists Out to Prove Global Warming Stuck in Antarctic Ice

As the mass media covered the rescue of a group of Australian scientists stranded in Antarctica late last year, most reports failed to mention that the reason for their being there in the first place was to prove that the region is melting due to global warming. Ironically, the Russian ship, which housed the scientists, was so stuck in ice that it was impossible for scientific research to continue. A growing number of other scientists have come out to dispute global warming theories.



Global Reactions Against Homosexual “Marriage” Gains Seen as “Sweeping”

The *Associated Press* reported recently that while homosexual rights activists celebrate their gains in some parts of the world, “their setbacks have been far-flung and often sweeping in scope.” The report cited Russia, where a new law criminalizes homosexual propaganda; India, where a high court re-criminalized homosexual relations; Nigeria, where a new law sets ten-year prison terms for joining or promoting any homosexual organization; and Uganda, where there is a pending bill that would impose life sentences for persons engaging in homosexual relations. Globally, at least seventy-six countries retain laws criminalizing homosexual relations, the report said.

Elián Gonzalez, Now Twenty Years Old, Reveals His God: Fidel Castro

An older Elián Gonzalez, who was the subject of a controversial custody battle fourteen years ago, resurfaced in Quito, Ecuador recently as part of an official Cuban delegation to a youth conference. Speaking to an interviewer he said, “Fidel Castro for me is like a father. I don’t profess to have any religion, but if I did, my god would be Fidel Castro.” Gonzalez was returned by the Clinton administration to his native Cuba when only six years old after being rescued at sea trying to flee his country. His mother died while accompanying him. Although his father was left on the island, it is believed that the Communist government took charge of the young Elián upon his return to Cuba.



Jewish Doctors “Puzzled” by Miracle Healing of Christian Woman

Israel Today recently reported a miracle healing of a Christian woman with a huge cancerous tumor in her leg. Jewish doctors who examined her recommended amputation as the only chance of survival. After three postponements of her surgery, Therese Daoud believed that “this was a clear sign to me that I should not have the surgery.” She then prayed in a church north of the country. Three months later, her doctors were shocked to see that the tumor receded dramatically. Prof. Yaakov Bickels, head of the Orthopedic-Oncology Department at the hospital said, “We just could not accept that the cancer had gone without any treatment.”

Obama Administration Ignores Supreme Court’s Decision, Says Archbishop

In an article posted at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) blog, San Francisco’s Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone warned that Attorney General Eric Holder’s decision to recognize same-sex “marriages” in Utah constitutes a direct contradiction of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *U.S. v. Windsor*. In this decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government is to respect a state’s definition of marriage. Since the State of Utah defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman, Holder’s actions show a complete disregard for the Supreme Court decision. The archbishop encouraged all people concerned about true marriage to stand up for their rights and not to remain silent on this important issue.

One Hundred Percent Catholic

BY FATHER RAOUL PLUS, S.J.



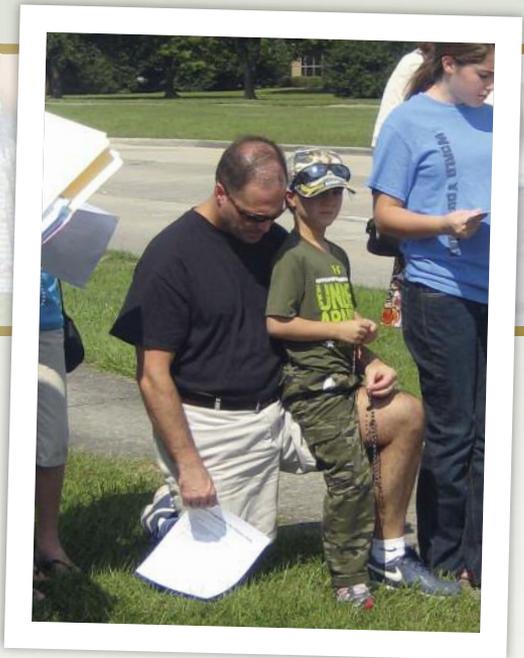
We are not concerned here with refuting the doctrines of secularism. Every Christian ought to know the mind of the Church on this subject; we need not go back to ancient documents either to discover it.

It is enough to recall the encyclical *“Summi Pontificatus”* issued by Pius XII in 1939 at the beginning of the Second World War. Denouncing the aggressive encroachment into the field of religion by some present-day particular doctrines, he traced even further back the source of the evil which has poisoned the whole life of Europe; he pointed to the doctrines which tried to build up the present and the future of humanity by getting rid of God and getting rid of Christ. The problem now is to determine which of the unfortunate species of secularism has invaded me, my home, my habits, and which now may dominate me.

Of course there is no question of a denial of God or of Christ. But what place do they hold in my family life? In my daily life, in my profession, in my participation in civic affairs? Has it not often happened that in choosing schools or colleges for their children, so-called Christian parents often evidence a utilitarian materialistic spirit; they give lame reasons for choosing the secular colleges instead of a Catholic college—the teachers are better, the chances for success after graduation are more certain. Are they so sure? And if by chance it were true? Do the souls of their children mean less than a diploma?

Has it not often happened that the influence of such Christian parents in their social and civic life was practically nothing as far as bringing the doctrines of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church to bear on those domains? And even though they neglected nothing of the essential practices of their religion, was it not primarily mere formality rather than based on solid convictions; conformity or fashion rather than true worship? Was there a great disparity between their external actions, their attitudes and real prayer, the living knowledge of the gift of God?

Is not following the doctrines and the morality



A father and son pray during a Public Square Rosary Rally.

of Christ nothing more than letting them be evident in my life and my family?

The world must be made over. In the light of an Apocalypse, terrible ruins have been effected. The edifice that was the European world appeared solid; the foundation stone was deficient. Are we going to build the new world on an equally fragile base? If we are, then, the causes remaining the same, the results must inevitably be the same. And we shall continue indefinitely to see renewed destructions. If God has no place in the foundations of the City with all that His inclusion implies, then how can the City remain standing? That is a thought expressed in an ancient psalm (Psalm 127:1); there is no exception—the truth of this fact remains. The stability of nations and of society is bound up with eternal principles. Am I sufficiently convinced of this? Do I not have much more confidence in human formulas than in the rule of complete truth? Do I not unconsciously try to establish human life only upon the human? Am I not still and always, in spite of the lesson in world events, the victim of a deficient ideal, of inadequate principles?

I must Christianize my Christianity. I must make it evident in every department of my life—in my relations with my family and with society; in the opinions I hold regarding national and international issues. In all that depends on me there shall be one hundred percent Christianity. ■

Adapted from Raoul Plus, S.J.’s *Christ in the Home* (Colorado Springs, CO: Gardner Brothers, 1951). This book is a treasure chest of advice for Catholics on the practical and spiritual concerns of raising a family. To obtain a copy, visit www.GardnerBrothers.com.

In Search of a Calling

BY JOHN HORVAT II



It is graduation time and college students from the class of 2014 will be assembling on campus greens everywhere to mark the occasion. It is a time of hope, joy and expectation as they enter the next phase of their lives. Yet beyond a climate of optimism that usually prevails, I cannot help but feel a bit afflicted as these students venture into the real world.

The reason for my affliction is that many of these graduates have yet to find what I would describe as their calling in life. In fact, a sizeable number began their college years without really knowing what they should study, constantly changing majors. And now many leave with a degree unsuited to the desires of their hearts.

It is not by chance that a number find unrelated jobs or return unemployed to live with their parents. I often meet or hear of students who have spent fortunes (often those of their parents) and incurred great debt at college. Many of these have secured degrees and even advanced degrees in a certain field yet want to do something else.

One such student graduated in business administration only to find himself selling insurance. What he really wants to be is a writer. Another person I know is trained to practice in some specialized medical field, yet now works as a gourmet cook (and a very good one at that!). I know several young ladies who have put aside their degrees after only a few years to start a fam-



ily. Another scrapped his degree and did the unthinkable—he followed in his father's footsteps.

In these cases, there is a mismatch between the degrees these students obtain and the desires of their hearts that they later discover. They go to college because they are told everyone goes to college. As a result, so many of these young people make a \$60,000 four-year detour in their lives before figuring out what they really desire. Yet more tragic are others that never find what they desire and enter into jobs for which they have no passion or liking.

I believe the reason for this mismatch lies in a culture that sets no limits on the individual. The bewildered high school student is told he can be anything, yet is prepared to be nothing. He is overwhelmed by the vast array of choices to the point of indecision.

Adding to the dilemma, college freshmen are told they need not make decisions about their future right away. They can do whatever they please, and, as a result, the university often becomes an extension of childhood where the real decisions of life can be postponed. . . even until after graduation.

Missing from the lives of these students is the discernment of a calling. Childhood used to be a preparation for adult life. From an early age, children were encouraged to ponder the purpose of their lives and prepare themselves for their future by discerning the calling that would corre-



Medal of Many Graces



BY ARMANDO SANTOS



The medal of Our Lady of Graces, more commonly known as the Miraculous Medal, is undoubtedly the most widespread medal of all times. It originated in France in 1830, having been revealed directly by Our Lady to Saint Catherine Labouré while yet a young religious.

The Miraculous Medal is oval. On one of the faces Our Lady is depicted with her arms extended. The rays of light symbolize the graces with which she showers the faithful. At the same time, she crushes the head of the infernal serpent with her virginal feet. Framing the Virgin around the edge is the prayer: “Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.”

On the other face is the letter “M” with a cross on top. Below are the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Twelve stars encircle the medal, reminding us of the famous words of the Apocalypse: “A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon at her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Apoc. 12:1).

Childhood and education of Saint Catherine Labouré to whom Our Lady revealed the Miraculous Medal

Saint Catherine Labouré was born in 1806 in Fain-les-Moutiers in the French Province of Burgundy. Her father, Pierre Labouré, owned a rural property that he worked himself. Her mother, Magdalène Gontard, belonged to a distinguished and cultured family related to the nobility of the region.

Catherine was only nine years old when her mother died. Desolate, the girl climbed onto a piece of furniture and embraced a statue of Our Lady. Weeping, she asked the Virgin to replace her mother whom she had just lost: “From now on, you

will be my Mother.”

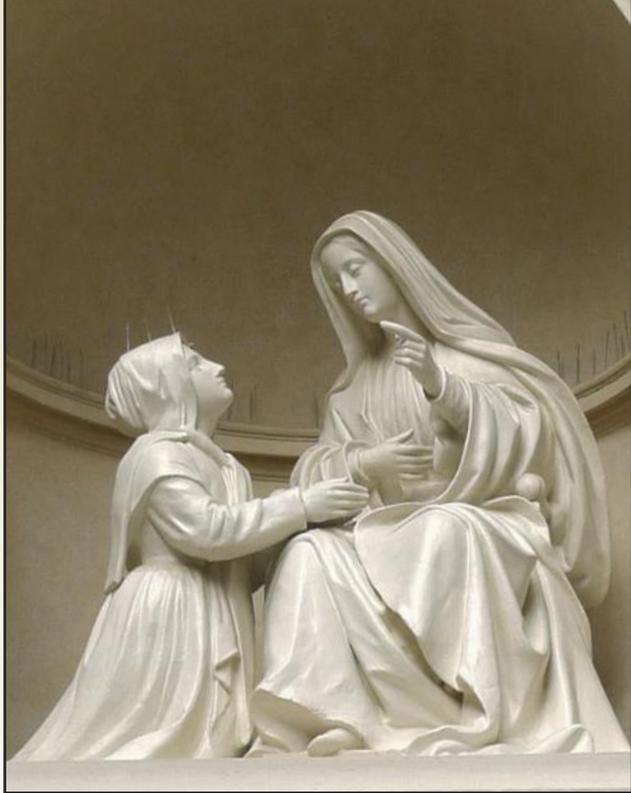
Her religious vocation seems to have its origins in her early childhood and reaffirmed itself on the occasion of a mysterious dream she had when about eighteen years old. She dreamt that she was in the little church of Fain-les-Moutiers and that an elderly priest, with an impressive gaze, was celebrating Mass. At the end of the Mass, the priest motioned her to approach. Afraid, she hesitated, but was fascinated by the extraordinary brilliance of his gaze. Shortly afterwards, in the same dream, she once again came across the old priest who said: “My daughter, you flee from me now, but one day you will seek me. God has designs for you, never forget this.”

At the time, Catherine did not understand the dream. Only some time later when she saw a picture of Saint Vincent de Paul at the house of the Daughters of Charity in Châtillon-sur-Seine, where she went to study, did she recognize the mysterious personage of the dream. She then understood that the founder of the Daughters of Charity was calling her to be his spiritual daughter.

Saint Catherine’s earthly father put all sorts of obstacles to her entering the religious life. After a long struggle, and only when she was twenty-three years old, did she finally obtain permission to enter the Daughters of Saint Vincent de Paul in Châtillon-sur-Seine. Three months later in April of 1830, she was transferred to another house of the congregation in the Rue du Bac in Paris.

Shortly after Catherine’s arrival at Rue du Bac, the body of Saint Vincent de Paul—who had died 170 years earlier—was solemnly transferred to the Chapel of Saint-Lazare from the Notre Dame





A statue outside the Rue du Bac of Our Lady speaking with Saint Catherine Labouré. Saint Catherine relates that she knelt so close to Our Lady as to rest her forearms on her knees.

Cathedral in a magnificent silver reliquary. His body was incredibly well preserved, as if he had died just a short while before.

The following week, Catherine had the first of her supernatural visions.

She narrates:

“The heart of Saint Vincent appeared to me under three different forms, for three consecutive days. First it was light in color, flesh color, bespeaking peace, calm, innocence and concord. Next it was red as fire, as if to signify the charity that, by enkindling all hearts, should renew the entire community and enable it to spread to the remotest parts of the earth. Finally, I saw it as dark red, which caused me great sadness that seemed to me nearly insurmountable and, I know not why, linked to a change in the government.”

With docility and confidence, Catherine told her confessor, Father Jean-Marie Aladel, about her visions. But he, fearing they were diabolical illusions or the effect of an over-excited imagination, was adamant and advised her not to take them seriously.

Vision of the Blessed Sacrament and the first apparition of Our Lady

During her whole novitiate, Catherine was privileged to see Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament “except when I doubted.” In other words, when she, in order to be faithful to her confessor, tried to resist the supposed illusion.

During one of these visions, “Our Lord appeared

to me in the Blessed Sacrament as a king with a cross on His breast. At the moment of the Gospel, it seemed to me that the cross slipped down to His feet. It seemed that Our Lord was bereft of all His vestments as they fell to the ground. Then I had the darkest and saddest thoughts: the earthly king would be dethroned and despoiled of his royal ornaments.”

This vision took place on Trinity Sunday on June 6, 1830, seven weeks before the political agitation that culminated in the dethroning of King Charles X. Illuminated by this supernatural vision, young Catherine understood that the monarch would soon lose his crown and that this would be a victory of the forces of evil in France. She deemed it necessary to warn her confessor Father Aladel, who once again took the warning lightly.

On the night of July 18, 1830, the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Catherine saw Our Lady for the first time. It was her Guardian Angel, under the guise of a little boy, who took her to the Virgin. Let us once again read her own account which is impressive for its simplicity and unction:

“The novices had received a piece of Saint Vincent’s linen surplice. I cut mine in half, swallowed one piece, and then went to sleep with the thought that he would obtain for me the grace to see the Most Holy Virgin.

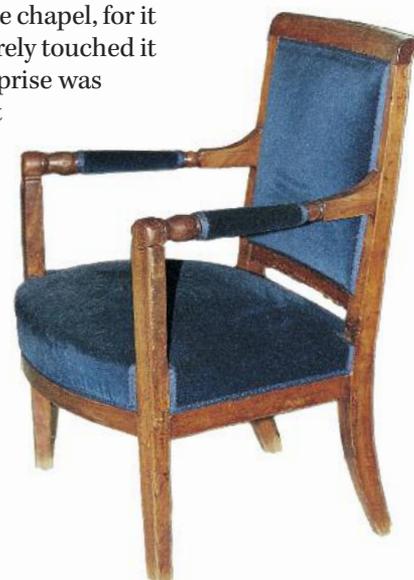
“At eleven thirty I awoke to the sound of my name being called: ‘Sister Labouré! Sister Labouré!’ I drew aside the curtain and saw a little boy of about four or five years of age, dressed in white and surrounded by a radiant halo, who said: ‘Come to the chapel. Our Lady is there waiting for you.’

“I dressed in haste and went to the side of the little boy, who had remained standing at the head of my bed. He accompanied me, keeping to my left side. All the places we went through were illuminated, which greatly surprised me. However, I was even more surprised at the door of the chapel, for it opened at once when the boy just barely touched it with the tip of his finger. And my surprise was even more complete when I saw that all the candles were alight, reminding me of the midnight Mass.

“However, I did not see the Most Holy Virgin. The little boy led me to the presbytery next to the Spiritual Director’s armchair. I knelt there, while the boy remained standing the whole time. . . . Finally, the moment came. The boy advised me, ‘The Holy Virgin is coming; here she is.’

“I then heard something like the rustling of a silk dress, from beside the pulpit near the picture of

The chair used by Our Lady to speak with Saint Catherine. To this day, it is preserved at the convent at the Rue du Bac in Paris as a precious relic.



“The whole world will be disturbed with evils of all sorts. . . But come to the foot of this altar. Here graces will be poured out over all persons, great or small, who request them with confidence and devotion.”

Saint Joseph and ceasing over the steps of the altar on the Gospel side, on a chair like that of Saint Ann. At that moment, seeing the Most Holy Virgin, I rushed forward, knelt before her, and placed my hands on her knees. It was the sweetest moment of my life, but I cannot express all that I felt.”

In another manuscript, Saint Catherine Labouré was more explicit and revealed, at least in part, what she heard from the Most Holy Virgin:

“My daughter, the good God wants to give you a mission. You will suffer much, but you will overcome those sufferings by considering that you will do so for the glory of God. . . . You will be contradicted, but you will receive grace. Do not fear. Tell everything [to your confessor] with confidence and simplicity. Have confidence, do not fear.”

A little later, Our Lady began to speak of future events that soon took place:

“The times are very evil. Great calamities will befall France. The throne will be overthrown. The whole world will be disturbed with evils of all sorts (the Most Holy Virgin was very sad when saying this). But come to the foot of this altar. Here graces will be poured out over all persons, great or small, who request them with confidence and devotion.”

Next Our Lady spoke about the community of the Daughters of Charity to which Saint Catherine belonged, and about the Lazarist priests, also founded by Saint Vincent de Paul:

“My daughter, I am pleased to shower this community with graces, for I love it very much. But I am saddened to see the great abuses that exist regarding regularity. The Rule is not kept. There has been too much relaxation in both communities. Relate this to the person in charge of you, even though he is not yet your superior. Later, when he is given charge of the community, he should do everything in his power to restore the Rule again. Tell him that I say he must guard against bad reading material, against the wasting of time, and against useless visits.”

She then spoke anew of the terrible events that would happen in the more distant future. Forty years before their time, she predicted the agitation of the Paris Commune and the assassination of the Archbishop of Paris. And she promised her special protection for the sons and daughters of Saint Vincent de Paul during those tragic times:



Our Lady of Graces appearing to Saint Catherine Labouré at the Rue du Bac in Paris, France.

“You will know my visit and the protection of God and Saint Vincent over the two communities. Have confidence! Do not lose courage. I will be with you. But this will not happen with other congregations, among whom there will be many victims. (When saying this, the Most Holy Virgin had tears in her eyes.) There will be victims among the clergy of Paris: the Archbishop himself will die. (At these words, she again wept.)

“My daughter, the cross will be despised and thrown down. Blood will flow. The side of Our Lord will be reopened. The streets will flow with blood. The Archbishop will be deprived of his vestments. (Here the Most Holy Virgin could not speak anymore; suffering appeared on her face.) My daughter, the whole world will be in suffering.” At these words Saint Catherine wondered when this would happen. And she understood very well: in forty years.

As always, Catherine faithfully told everything to her confessor. Once again he was severe saying that this was “pure fantasy” and reprimanded the novice. But the incredulous confessor could not help but be struck with terror, because one week later the prophecies began to be fulfilled.

By July 26, news arrived of mayhem in the streets and within a few days King Charles X had

been deposed. Besides being liberal, the revolution of 1830 was also violently anti-clerical. But the Lazarists and the Daughters of Saint Vincent de Paul went through this critical period unharmed just as Our Lady had promised.

During the second apparition, Our Lady reveals the Miraculous Medal

Four months later, on November 27, 1830, Our Lady appeared again to Saint Catherine. She taught her the devotion to the medal, which, because of its prodigies, Catholics would call the Miraculous Medal. Let us once again listen to the words of the saint:

“I saw the Most Holy Virgin; she was at the level of the picture of Saint Joseph. She was of medium height, standing and dressed in a silk robe, as white as the glow of the dawn. . . She wore a white veil on her head that extended to her feet and covered her entirely. Through this veil, I saw her hair parted in the middle and held by a piece of lace of about an inch in width. Her face was uncovered, totally uncovered. She stood on a half sphere. . . and had in her hands a sphere of gold that represented the globe. Her hands were raised to the height of her waist in a very natural way and her eyes looked up to Heaven. . . Her face was extremely beautiful. I would not know how to describe it. . . And then, suddenly, I saw rings appear on her fingers, covered with stones, some more beautiful than others, some larger and some smaller, and shedding rays, each more beautiful than the other. The most beautiful rays came from the largest stones, always extending downwards, filling the lower area. I could no longer see her feet. . . . At this moment, as I was contemplating her, the Most Holy Virgin lowered her eyes and looked at me. A voice spoke within me:

‘The sphere you see represents the whole world, particularly France, and everyone in it. . . .’

“Here I do not know how to express what I felt and saw, the beauty, the brilliance, the splendid rays. . .

“The rays of light from my hands are the graces I shower on those who request them. I understood how pleasing it is to pray to the Most Holy Virgin and how generous she is to those who pray to her, how many graces she grants to those who pray for them, the joy she feels granting them.

“A sort of oval frame formed around the Most Holy Virgin, with the following words on the upper part: ‘O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you,’ written in gold letters. The inscription, in a semicircle, began at the right hand passing over the head and ended

at the left hand.

“Then a voice said: ‘Have a medal struck upon this model. Everyone who wears it, when it is blessed, will receive great graces especially if they wear it around their neck. The graces will be abundant for those who wear it with confidence.’”

The following month, Saint Catherine saw Our Lady once again:

“It is impossible to express what I understood at the moment when the Most Holy Virgin offered the globe to Our Lord,” the seer wrote. And then added, “As I was enraptured in the contemplation of the Most Holy Virgin, a voice resounded in the depth of my heart: ‘These rays symbolize the graces the Most Holy Virgin obtains for those people who ask for them.’”

Saint Catherine noticed that no rays were issuing from some of the stones on the rings. A voice enlightened her: “The stones from which nothing issues are graces men forget to ask from me.”

The first medals are struck and stupendous prodigies take place

Saint Catherine’s confessor, however, continued to be incredulous. He considered her to be a visionary not to be taken seriously. For more than a year, Saint Catherine indefatigably insisted with the priest that medals be struck as Our Lady had determined. But he inflexibly continued to resist.

One day Father Aladel was asked to accompany his superior to an audience with the Archbishop of Paris, Archbishop Quélan. Taking advantage of the opportunity, he informed the Prelate what was happening at Rue du Bac without revealing the name of the visionary. This audience took place in January of 1832, ending a long period of affliction for the holy religious.

The Archbishop, contrary to Father Aladel, immediately endorsed the striking of the medal. Encouraged, Father Aladel changed his attitude and four months later, in May, placed an order for 20,000



In 1830, Our Lady appeared to Saint Catherine Labouré and gave her the mission of having the Miraculous Medal struck and distributed throughout the world.

Saint Catherine lived a “hidden” life, a life for God alone. Her daily tasks were sanctified by her fidelity to her vocation even though she never worked a miracle nor did she accomplish feats of unusual grandeur.

She died on December 31, 1876 at the age of 70. In 1895, her cause for Beatification was introduced in Rome. Exhumed in 1933, her body was judged to be incorrupt by the church, and it now lies in a glass coffin at the side altar of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Paris, one of the spots where the Blessed Mother appeared to her. She was beatified on May 28, 1933. On July 27, 1947, she was canonized by Pope Pius XII.

medals with Vachette House.

As the first medals were being made, a terrible epidemic of cholera, coming from Eastern Europe, struck Paris.

The disease first appeared on March 26, 1832, and carried on until the middle of the year. By April 1, seventy-nine people had died; on the 2nd, 168; on the 3rd, 216. In this way the death toll rose until reaching 861 on April 9. In total, the official records say that 18,400 people died. In reality, the number was much greater because the official statistics and the media purposely under-estimated the numbers to avoid even greater panic.

On June 30, the first 1,500 medals were delivered by Vachette House and the Daughters of Charity began distributing them among those afflicted. The epidemic receded immediately and a

series of prodigies began that very quickly made the Miraculous Medal world famous.

The Archbishop, who had received some of the first medals, immediately obtained an extraordinary grace through them and became an enthusiastic promoter and protector of the new devotion. Pope Gregory XVI also received a package of medals and began distributing them to people who visited him.

By 1836, more than fifteen million medals had been struck and distributed throughout the world. In 1842, this figure reached 100 million. From the furthest corners of the earth arrived reports of extraordinary graces obtained through the medal: cures, conversions—like that of Alphonse Ratisbonne, described below—, protection against imminent dangers, and other favors, too numerous to mention here. ■

The Conversion of Alphonse Ratisbonne

BY ARMANDO SANTOS

Alphonse Ratisbonne was a young Jew from a family of well-established bankers in Strasbourg, France. He also was socially prominent due to his wealth and blood-ties to the Rothchilds.

In 1827, Alphonse's older brother, Théodore, converted to Catholicism and entered the priesthood, thus breaking with his family whose hopes now lay in the young Alphonse, born in 1814.

Alphonse was intelligent and well mannered, had already finished his law degree and was engaged to a young Jewess, his niece. He was twenty-seven years old and, before marrying, he wanted to travel on holiday to Italy and the East. Upon his return, he planned to marry and take on his responsibilities in his family's banking business.

God, however, had other plans for him in Rome.

Alphonse was not a practicing Jew. He nourished a profound hatred for the Catholic Church, especially because of the resentment his whole family had due to their first-born's defection. Alphonse said he would never change religion. But if one day he were to change, he would become a Protestant,

never a Catholic.

While in Rome, Ratisbonne visited works of art, as well as some Catholic churches, out of cultural curiosity. These visits hardened his anti-Catholic stance.

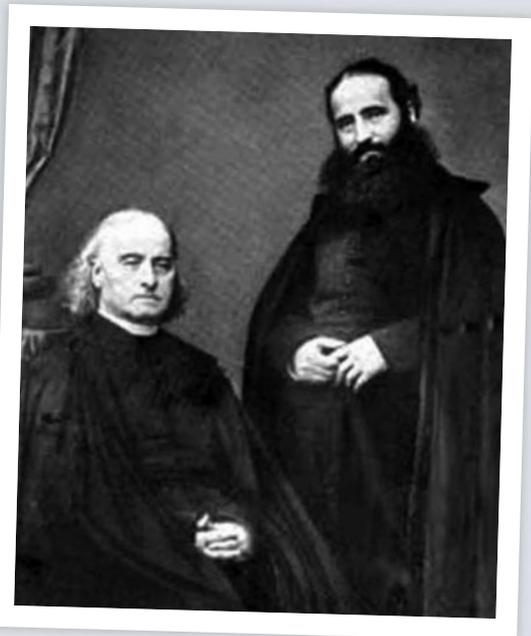
He also visited an old schoolmate and close friend named Gustave de Bussièrès. Gustave was a Protestant and several times had tried, in vain, to win Alphonse over to his religious convictions. In Gustave's house, Alphonse was introduced to Gustave's brother, Baron Théodore de Bussièrès, who had just recently converted to Catholicism. Baron Théodore, in turn, was a close friend of Father Théodore Ratisbonne. Because of these two circumstances, Alphonse greatly disliked him.

Thus it was only on the eve of his departure that he reluctantly resolved to fulfil his social obligation to leave his calling card at the Baron's house as a farewell gesture.

Hoping to avoid a meeting, Alphonse intended to leave his card discreetly and depart straight away. The Baron's Italian servant, however, did not understand his French and showed him into the parlor while he went to call the Baron. The latter greeted the young Jew

and immediately established cordial relations, while trying to attract him to the Catholic Faith.

With much insistence, he was able to persuade Alphonse to delay his departure from Rome in order to attend a ceremony to be held at Saint Peter's Basilica.



Alphonse (right) and his brother Theodore founded the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion for the conversion of Jews.



The side altar of the Church of Saint Andrea delle Fratte. To the left a small plaque reads, "Alphonse Ratisbonne of Strasbourg, an obstinate Jew, came here. This Virgin appeared to him as you see her; falling on his knees a Jew, he rose a Christian."

He further succeeded in persuading Ratisbonne to accept a Miraculous Medal and to promise to copy down a very beautiful prayer: the Memorare. Had this not been inspired by grace, it would have been utterly indiscreet.

The Jew could hardly contain his anger at the Baron's boldness of proposing these things to him, but decided to take everything good-heartedly, hoping, as he later declared, to write a book about his travels. In this book, the Baron would appear as nothing more than an eccentric man.

On January 18, a close friend of the Baron de Bussières died. He was Count de La Ferronnays, the former French ambassador to the Holy See and a man of great virtue and piety. On the eve of his sudden death, La Ferronnays was talking to Bussières about Ratisbonne and, at the request of Bussières, prayed the

Memorare one hundred times for his conversion. It is even possible that he offered his life to God for the conversion of the young banker.

Around midday on January 20, the Baron de Bussières went to the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte to arrange for his deceased friend's funeral to be held the following day. Ratisbonne reluctantly went along making violent criticisms of the Church and mocking Catholic practices. When they arrived at the church, the Baron left him alone for a few minutes and entered the sacristy to see about the funeral arrangements. Alphonse decided to look around and went up one of the side aisles since he could not cross over due to the preparations for the Count's funeral in the central nave.

When the Baron returned just a few minutes later, he did not find Alphonse where he had left him. After much

searching, he found him on the other side of the Church kneeling close to an altar, weeping. He no longer found a Jew, but a convert who ardently desired baptism.

Ratisbonne himself tells us what happened in those few minutes:

"I had only been in the church a short while when, all of a sudden, I felt totally uneasy for no apparent reason. I raised my eyes and saw that the whole building had disappeared. Only one side chapel had, so to say, gathered all the light. In the midst of this splendor, the Virgin Mary appeared standing on the altar. She was grandiose, brilliant, full of majesty and sweetness, just as she is in the Miraculous Medal. An irresistible force attracted me to her. The Virgin made a gesture with her hand indicating I was to kneel and as if saying 'very good!' Although she did not say anything, I understood everything."

Ratisbonne never could explain how, being in one of the lateral naves before the apparition, he was found in the other, since the central nave was obstructed. However, in face of the magnitude of the miracle of his conversion, this was but a detail.

The news of such an unexpected conversion, so fulminating and complete, immediately spread and caused a great commotion throughout Europe.

Pope Gregory XVI wished to meet the young convert and received him paternally. He ordered a detailed investigation with all the rigor required by canon law. The conclusion was that it was truly an authentic miracle.

Having taken the name Maria Alphonse at baptism, Ratisbonne wished to become a Jesuit and was ordained in 1847. After a while and at the suggestion of Pope Pius IX, he left the Jesuits and joined his brother Théodore in founding the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, dedicated to the conversion of the Jews.

Father Theodore spread his congregation throughout France and England, while Father Maria Alphonse went to the Holy Land. In Jerusalem he bought a plot of land where the praetorium of Pilate had formerly stood. Here he established a house of the congregation. The two brothers died in 1884, both with the fame of exceptional virtues. ■



AMERICA NEEDS FATIMA[®]

MAY/JUNE 2014

PROGRESS REPORT

Fifteen Years of Fatima Visits with Joseph Ferrara

Crusade: Looking back at the fifteen years of Fatima visits, what do you most value in this apostolate?

Mr. Ferrara: The fact that I am able to spread devotion to Mary, who is our life, our sweetness and our hope. I never cease to be impressed with how much the Blessed Virgin Mary touches each and every one of those with whom She comes in contact. She exerts a powerful influence on all those present and like a mother she seems to incline herself to attend to the needs of her children, giving them the spiritual weapons needed to confront the evils of our days.

Crusade: How would you describe the impact of the Fatima message?

Mr. Ferrara: Our Lady appeared during World War I and predicted that if mankind did not amend, an even worse war would come. There was much persecution of the Faith in Portugal. The situation was desperate and the only hope would be a divine intervention of spectacular proportions. Our Lady gave a message of grave import and a mission to warn the world of impending disasters if mankind would not heed her requests. What impact did this make on the world? For many of those present it most certainly led to conversions and even cures. For those who have taken to heart what the Blessed Mother requested in her message, it has been an enormous source of consolation and hope in a hopeless world. Sadly though, the world at large has all but ignored the merciful warnings of Our Lady and we now have a situation by far much worse than those days.

Crusade: Our Lady appeared almost 100 years ago. Is her message outdated?

Mr. Ferrara: I believe Our Lady's message is more perti-

nent and more urgent than ever. Where do we see the penance, the amendment of life she requested? With total disregard for God's law and abandon to licentious customs, the world now finds itself

in a decadence that is unprecedented. Take abortion in America alone. Since the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, more than 50 million innocent lives have been brutally snuffed out. In Russia, the country which Our Lady warned would spread its errors throughout the world, surveys show that among teenage girls the most preferred occupation is prostitution. It is one of the countries with the highest rate of abortion in the world. The attack on the family, through the contraception mentality, divorce and homosexual rights is also unequalled in history. With television and now the advent of the technological/computer era, the familial fabric is being eroded more than ever. Seeing how mankind is so far from what God intended could anyone even imagine that Our Lady's plea for prayer, penance and amendment is outdated? No, I think Our Lady's message is more urgent than ever.

Crusade: What is the daily life of a Fatima custodian like and could you tell us in what parts of the United States you have been doing visits? Do you have a personal preference where you make the visits?

Mr. Ferrara: First and foremost, no apostolate will be effective and bear good fruits without an intense interior life. During the almost forty years I have been a volunteer with TFP, and more recently with the America Needs Fatima campaign, the directors and especially our founder Prof. Plinio



Mr. Joseph Ferrara has been an America Needs Fatima custodian for the past fifteen years.



Correa de Oliveira have always stressed the necessity of a solid prayer life. I am committed, along with my colleagues, to live the sacramental life and pray the fifteen decades of the rosary daily. We have all consecrated ourselves to Jesus Christ through His most holy Mother by the method taught by Saint Louis de Montfort. We often invoke the Holy Angels to come to our assistance; for example, I start my day praying the "Appeal to the Angels" composed by our founder. Generous friends will often provide lodging, but many times I find myself using a hotel. In this case it is always good to have holy water on hand which I use to expel the demons and to ask God's blessing upon my new dwelling. I make two visits daily and will do the visits for one person, for ten or for a hundred. I travel all year round and put close to 20,000 miles on my van every year. I have made visits mostly in California and the New England states and have also made some visits in the South, in Louisiana, for example. Do I have any personal preference? Yes, it's where Our Lady wants to go!

Crusade: Can you tell us of a couple incidents where people have been specially touched by grace or even conversions connected with Our Lady of Fatima?

Mr. Ferrara: While the effects of Our Lady's presence are clearly evident, the custodians may not always see the extent to which the Blessed Virgin Mary touches souls in the visits until the repercussions make their way back to us later. For example, I was closing up a visit and was seated at the table with the man of the house when he confided to me what happened to him after a visit of mine he attended two years prior. He said, "After your visit two years ago I thought to myself, 'If I'm going to be good, I need to pray the rosary.' I want you to know that I am praying the rosary morning and night." Another visit I did was also in this line. The mother of that household was so grateful for the visit, she contacted us to thank us and said, "My son was so impressed with the visit of Our Lady to our home. Now he is teaching his friends how to pray the rosary." These two cases illustrate how much Our Lady desires our conversion. At Fatima, Sister Lucy asked Our Lady for the cure of some person and Our Lady replied, "Tell him to amend his life and I will cure him within the year." ■

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

100,000 Sanctuaries of Mercy and Hope

At a time when it is most needed, a blessed picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was recently distributed by America Needs Fatima to 100,000 homes. The beautiful picture of Our Lord and His wounded heart symbolizes God's infinite love for all of us. When it is prominently displayed and honored, it turns homes into sanctuaries of purity and peace amidst today's materialistic and irreligious culture. One only has to read the newspapers and magazines or watch television or movies to see widespread godlessness and all sorts of evil playing out before his or her very eyes. These abominations are not only offending God, but are also causing anxiety and a sense of hopelessness in so many people.



During these trying times, to gaze at an image of Our Lord and to practice devotion to His Sacred Heart give hope and consolation. Families and individuals afflicted by society's ingratitude toward God in spite of His supreme sacrifice at Calvary will be blessed by displaying and honoring an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In her writings, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque wrote, "Our Divine Lord assured me that He takes a singular pleasure in being honored under the figure of His heart of flesh, the image of which He wishes to be exposed in public in order to touch the unfeeling hearts of men. He prom-

ised that He would pour out in abundance into the hearts of all those who would honor His heart all the gifts with which it is filled, and that everywhere this image is exposed and honored, it would draw down all kinds of blessings."

Also included in the distribution was a little red candle, which when returned, will be melted down with other candles and made into one huge red candle. This candle will be presented and lit in every participant's name at the shrine in Paray le Monial, where Our Lord revealed to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque the

devotion to His Sacred Heart. For those who pledged to do the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a special certificate with Saint Margaret Mary's prayer of consecration was also provided, along with personalized address labels with a beautiful image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In his message to all those who received the blessed picture, Mr. Robert Ritchie, Executive Director of America Needs Fatima said, "I believe with all my heart that many more souls could be saved if more families would enthrone the Sacred Heart of Jesus in their homes." ■



CUSTODIAN'S
CORNER

The Greatest Gift to a Friend

BY KENNETH MURPHY

What is true friendship? Perhaps the most profound answer to this question can be found in Our Lord's own answer to another question, when He was asked, "Lord, what is the greatest commandment?" (Matt 22:36) He answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt 22:37-39) And in another instance, Our Lord further said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 13: 34)

Our Lord's challenge to "Love one another as I have loved you" certainly gives us a more profound answer to our first question. Friendship can only be true when, among other things, one has the same zeal for a friend's salvation as one's own. One of my Fatima visits in California recently gave me a good illustration of this truth. In my talk, I mentioned that we have an obligation to help others, especially our own family and friends, to get to heaven. My host, who was once a successful banker, recounted a personal experience, which perfectly illustrated my point.

When I was a banker, my best friend was a broker. We enjoyed doing everything together and grew very close to one another. I always felt the need to try to convert him. He was Jewish by upbringing. Every once in a while, I would drop a word here and there about our responsibility to love God. He would always dismiss my advice by saying, 'Get out of here with your God-talk,' or 'God doesn't have time for me.'

"After I retired, my Jewish friend's health began to deteriorate. I became more concerned that after all this time, I still hadn't succeeded in converting him. I decided to talk to him directly. I told him,



The Conversion of Mary Magdalene by Paolo Veronese, 1547.

'Listen, both of us know that your health isn't too good. We've been friends all this time and what I fear most is that in eternity you aren't going to be waiting for me in heaven where we'll be able to spend more time. I want you to talk to a priest so that you can resolve your doubts about God.'

"My Jewish friend told me to 'keep your priests away from me.' I retreated defeated but two weeks later, he called me and said, 'I've been thinking about what you told me and I want to convert!'

"He resolved his problems with a priest. A few months after he was baptized, he died. I know he's waiting in heaven for me."

My host's story further illustrates that we should work for our own and even our neighbor's salvation unceasingly with all our strength, by our prayers, by our good works, by our words and by our good example. And yes, that we should love our friends with the same love as Our Lord has shown us. Although by nature, it is more difficult to love one's neighbor than to love God, these loves cannot be separated one from the other. ■

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



Kathy Worboys has been a Rosary Rally Captain since 2010.

Praise be to God and Mother Mary!

Kathy Worboys left everything in the hands of Our Lady when she found out that she had only a few months to live. Her doctor told her that her breast cancer had metastasized and spread to her spine. Despite her deteriorating health, she had her Rosary Rally last October*, vowing to continue her devotion, and promoting the rosary regardless of her medical condition.

Last November, she ventured to travel outside the United States with friends from her parish. They embarked on a pilgrimage that took them to Lourdes, France and Fatima, Portugal among other destinations. She knew that it was going to be difficult, as she had to be in a wheelchair due to her weak

state. Her companions, including Father Michael Upton of Saint Paul of the Cross parish, had assured her that everything would be alright and encouraged her to join the pilgrimage.

When she got back from the trip, she had an appointment with her doctor after a few new tests she had taken. He told her, "This is remarkable! Jesus loves you!" She then learned that the tests showed that the tumors in her spine had disappeared. The tests also showed no trace of the cancer that covered her chest wall and was in her bones. The tests also revealed that most of the cancer in her liver had disappeared, although not completely.

Kathy immediately sent a message to all those who prayed for her, thanking them for "all the miracles in my life." She promptly made reservations for the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima to be present at her next Rosary Rally in October, 2014. In an email, she said, "It looks like I may be around for a while—praise be to God and Mother Mary!" ■

*See *Crusade Magazine*, January-February, 2014 issue, p.18.

Our Readers Write...



Fatima Home Visits

Matthew, the young man who came and brought Mother Mary, really connected with my family. I truly believe God works in very good ways because five years ago I was at my college, Mt. San Antonio College, and the TFP came and was passing out flyers and Matthew was also there. Because of the flyer and seeing my fellow Catholics, I became involved with this wonderful organization. Years later I signed up for a home visitation. My family and I want to thank Matthew and everyone who volunteers and works at the organization. Because of this visit my family and I are encouraged to continue in Our Lady's message and the message of Our Lord.

T.B., Pomona, Calif.

Thank you for coming to my home. My son and I both noticed a wonderful change in my husband! Being allergic to many allergens and finding it so difficult to manage the pain, he had been so miserable with pain and discomfort.

He is now sleeping most of the night which has not happened for at least the last six years, the last 16 months being the hardest! To me, this is a small miracle!

Writing this almost makes us sound like "Kooks." Living here 24 hours a day, you would understand.

M.V., Pittsburgh, PA

Pro-Life Marches

I am not a Catholic, but a strong believer in pro-life and that life begins at conception. I support those in the Catholic faith who I call the Marines of the Pro-Life movement. They have been from the start out on the front lines fighting to stop these mass murders.

It saddens me that so many Catholic institutions, i.e., Notre Dame University, honored America's most pro-death abortion president, and now to hear that this College is weakening to the demands of the dark side. We know what the Lord's call for Christians on all sides is, and we must answer that call or one day stand before our Savior and answer for it.

L.M., via e-mail

Thank you for defending the rights of the unborn children, the lost generations of souls. May the saving of the unborn be multiplied upon the face of the earth by stopping this outrage in all colleges. May you be blessed for the part you have played in saving their precious little lives!

M.S., via e-mail

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



COMMENTARY

HEALTH CARE: Safety Nets, Not Spider Webs

BY JOHN HORVAT II

Before entering into the Obamacare debate, I should probably mention that I am among those who suffer from a major pre-existing medical condition. It is not pretty, but I have to deal with it. This condition has no cure. I know it can strike me at any time and leaves behind enormous hospital bills. There are things I can do to take care of myself and attenuate my condition's bad effects. But the painful fact is that, as it reaches its final phases, the more the health establishment works to defeat this condition in me, the more expensive it becomes.

The sad thing is that I am not the only one with this pre-existing condition. In fact, I share it with everyone. My pre-existing condition is called death. We all suffer from it, and it is like a ticking time bomb inside of each of us that can at any time explode and land us in the hospital with all its liabilities.

And so in discussing health care, we should begin with the premise that there is no single health care system in the world that can defeat death. The health establishment will always lose since the

numbers are stacked against it. If a system is forced to deal with every single threat to the body, it will either go bankrupt or provide substandard, subsidized service.

Indeed, the monopoly of death is so strong that even the free market cannot withstand its unfair advantages without help. Death does not believe in level playing fields but rather ruthlessly levels anything in its way.

There is only one way a health care system can survive the universal pre-existing condition of death. It must share the responsibility, costs and risks with those outside the system. It must enlist the help of society to meet the challenge and minimize the costs.

This can be done in two ways: one positive and one negative.

The positive way is by promoting good health and thus preventing illness.

Society does this by promoting the natural institutions that make for good health. It puts up the safety nets of family, community and faith that keep us healthy.

It is especially true in the bosom of the traditional family where the individual finds affection, well-being and security that put up strong defenses against death's inroads. When people are inserted into thriving families, communities and parishes, they more easily lead moral lives, which not only support physical health but also the all-important spiritual and mental welfare. These safety nets significantly diminish the immense tribute that we must pay to death.

Indeed, to survive, any health care system must cooperate with these natural institutions that keep out sickness, which is the breach through which death frequently tries to enter our lives.

There is a second way to enlist help against death. It consists not of preventing but dealing with illness and death when it inevitably comes.

Once again, it involves the safety nets of family, community and faith since they provide the natural means to treat sickness and share the burden of illness and death.



The family is the first and best safety net for good health care, where children learn what is good for them and receive the care they need from a mother who will go many extra miles to keep her children healthy. The health techniques are then passed from generation to generation.

Most health problems, for example, can be resolved inside the family without cost to the health establishment. Inside the family, everyone from tender children to elderly parents finds spiritual comfort, psychological well-being and physical care in times of illness. Even when death strikes, the family softens the blow with solace and support. It is around this affectionate relationship that a true health policy must be constructed since the family has the resilience and resources to absorb death's repeated attacks.

But the family alone is not sufficient. There are times when it is overwhelmed by health challenges. It is then that associations and communities must provide a second line of defense. Employers can provide health benefits. Communities can sponsor health programs. Associations of all sorts can pool resources to lessen the burden. A grateful nation can reward the sacrifices of veterans of war by caring for them. A highly innovative free market can provide numerous options that aid the family in its resistance to death's fatal charges.

In this way, families and communities can usually take care of almost all health problems. They cannot stop death but they can certainly minimize its devastation and cost.

But death is a terrible and formidable enemy. At times, even these two safety nets are not enough. Catastrophes frequently strike and leave us prostrate.

When catastrophe strikes, the third safety net of faith must be employed. The fiery furnace of charity must be unleashed to resist the cold, dark grasp of death. Medicine must then return to its origins in charity and faith.

In modern times, civilized nations have always promoted institutions, children's hospitals and charitable foundations to care for those stricken by catastrophe and incurable disease. Even the State and secular associations engage in work of this kind.

However, the real powerhouses of charity are those religious institutions that have cared for the sick and dying. It must be remembered that modern hospitals began in the medieval monasteries where for the first time in history the poor and suffering could gather for free care. Over the centuries, a vast network of religious hospitals reserved beds for the unfortunate. Religious orders of nursing sisters worked selflessly and without salaries for the sick and dying.

With touching solicitude, the Church went yet further. When the poor could not come to the hospitals, Her ministers went out in search of them, providing them physical and spiritual solace. Moreover, all Christians join in the mandate to care for and comfort those who suffered illness wherever they might be.

Over the centuries, a vast network of religious hospitals reserved beds for the unfortunate. Religious orders of nursing sisters worked selflessly and without salaries for the sick and dying.



Hospitals began in medieval monasteries where religious dispensed free health care to all.

Inside this triple safety-net framework of family, community and faith, we have the best means to confront the universal, pre-existing condition of death. Amid the tragedy, we can face death inside an atmosphere of support, affection and dignity.

Our health care challenges today come from the fact that our culture of unrestraint has led to the breakdown of family, community and faith. The individual is left alone to face overwhelming challenges.

The problem is aggravated yet more when these individuals give themselves over to unhealthy practices and promiscuous lifestyles outside these safety nets, which leads to the shattering of good health, broken lives and psychological trauma. This not only provokes sickness but creates an underclass that is least able to meet the costs of its bad habits. The burden is thrown over to big government.

The logical solution would be to strengthen the safety nets. But on the contrary, these nets are being dismantled and in their place is put a giant spider web of rules and regulations that engulfs rather than protects the individual. A cold bureaucratic government assumes all roles, makes all decisions and spends a vast amount of taxpayers' money. The tyranny of socialism is joining with the tyranny of death to impose a rule of misery upon the land.

Health care policy must be based on the premise that no health care system can withstand an unhealthy culture that actively allies itself with the pre-existing condition of death. No government can replace the social safety nets that share the responsibility, risks and costs of death. Such efforts are doomed to fail no matter how much money we pump into the system.

When it does fail, we must turn away from those who will propose more socialism. What we need to do now is take down the spider web of government intervention and put up the safety nets of a sound social order. For those with a pre-existing medical condition like my own, it is the only real option. ■



Shaping Our Children's Future: The Common Core Controversy

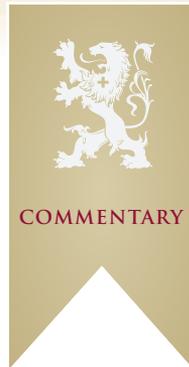
BY VINCENT GORRE

Since its release in 2010, the infamous Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), popularly known as "Common Core," is causing a lot of uproar throughout the country. Parents, teachers, school administrators, state governments, advocacy groups and the federal government are all entangled in a web of controversy that gets more contentious and expansive as schools start to adopt Common Core by aligning their curricula with its content.

What is Common Core? Who's behind it and what motivated them to initiate it? Who's to benefit from it and why do so many oppose its implementation? Should private schools and homeschoolers be concerned about it? The answers to these questions are important not only to parents and those in the field of education, but also to every tax-paying American and those who are generally concerned about our children and the future of our country.

The "What" and the "Who" Behind Common Core

Common Core is a list of standards or benchmarks designed to regulate what students from kindergarten to grade 12 should know in English Language Arts and Mathematics. It was conceived quietly by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Together, they enlisted the expertise of Achieve, Inc., a non-profit organization supported by business corporations and private foundations, to develop and promote its implementation. One of the biggest funders of the Common Core initiative is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Microsoft Corporation. According to CCSSI's website, the standards are designed "to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting



the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers."

Initially, forty-five states and the District of Columbia adopted the standards. Texas, Virginia, Alaska and Nebraska refused, with Minnesota adopting only the English Language Arts standards. But because of the controversy, several states are now reconsidering. As of this writing, thirteen states have pending legislation to withdraw or delay implementation in their states.

Controlling Curricula to Control the Country

A careful review of Common Core's long and intricate history reveals the philosophical, political, economic and moral dimensions that are behind its goals and aspirations. The federal government in collusion with several private organizations and business corporations can be seen skirting the US Constitution's 10th Amendment prohibition of federal control of education policy. By using tax dollars as an incentive, the Obama administration, which supports Common Core, successfully "influenced" the states to adopt it. Negating any kind of public input from local communities in the states, the writers of Common Core managed to make their copyrighted work virtually unchangeable.

Millions of private business dollars can also be seen pouring into the Common Core initiative. Its implementation created a huge market for education materials, testing materials, training, private tutoring, technological upgrades such as computers, etc. Certainly a big business bonanza. Social engineering shaping views on sexuality and other moral issues can be seen in its reading materials, study guides and questionnaires designed to turn out "college and career ready" young people

with “real world” (i.e. politically and socially correct) beliefs. Student data collection is raising serious privacy concerns as states are required to maintain computerized databases of personal information, career tracking, and the like.

Resisting Control

Although most states are now committed to Common Core, growing opposition comes from both ends of the political spectrum and in between. The leftists and libertarians just don't want any kind of standards. They say that they inhibit the freedom of teachers and students to be creative and the emphasis on mathematics and language may take away interests in art and music. Others consider Common Core an overreach of the federal government. Many object to its astronomical costs, estimated at \$10 billion start up plus \$800 million per year for the next seven years per state. Teachers complain of unpreparedness which affect their performance and eventually their compensation. On the conservative side, many believe that Common Core is another part of the left's agenda of nationalization and standardization of education aimed at controlling our country's school children.

Catholic schools are in a dilemma. Those that are well funded can ignore the new standards, since their students perform high on state and national tests, with very high rates of graduation. But there are certain Catholic schools, especially parochial schools, that have limited funding and are constrained to use free public school textbooks. These schools have to adopt and align. So far, there are over 100 dioceses that have already adopted Common Core. In a letter to all the US bishops, 132 prominent Catholic scholars and professors from different disciplines and institutions outlined their strong opposition to the Common Core. The letter in part said that Catholic schools “should not give up on maximizing the intellectual potential of every student,” and that “every student deserves to be prepared for a life of the imagination, of the spirit, and of a deep appreciation for beauty, goodness, truth, and faith.” The letter described Common Core as a mere “recipe for standardized workforce preparation.”

Homeschooling parents who take their duties as primary educators seriously are adamantly against Common Core

standards. As the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), a strong advocate for the country's homeschoolers, says on its website, homeschoolers may be impacted in at least two areas: the massive data collection and the college admission standards. HSLDA warns that, “In the light of the growing revelations that the government is engaging in massive invasion of privacy in spheres other than education, it is utterly impossible to believe that these databases will not be mined and misused to serve the ulterior purposes of a centralized government intent on growing its own power.” For those who desire higher education, college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT would eventually be aligned with Common Core, affecting not only homeschools but private schools as well.

What's Going On Now and What to Expect in the Future

As Common Core continues to be implemented in schools across the country, moms and dads and ordinary citizens are seeing first hand the real effects of a standardized, mass education curricula. The headlines say it all: “Common Core Reading Comprehension Pushes Global Warming,” “Common Core Rooted in Math Class Social Justice Indoctrination,” “New York Common Core Website Sent Students to Sex Quiz Page,” “Pedophilia, Incest, and Graphic Sex: Excerpts from a Common Core Reading List Book for 11th Graders,” and the list goes on. Plans are now underway for Common Core standards in Science and History. Representatives from Planned Parenthood and the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network are reported to be among those advising the writing committee. We can just imagine more shocking headlines up ahead.

Returning to a Christian Organic Society

Crisis usually creates distrust and frustration, as John Horvat II writes in his timely book, *Return To Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society*. It is during these times that we, out of desperation, could easily embrace false and dangerous alternatives as solutions to our problems. The real solution to the education crisis, as in the economic crisis, is not found in a “one-size-fits-all” uniform set of study materials to produce career-ready young people able to compete in the global economy. This presupposes that profits and material success are the ultimate goals of education. This “rule of money” mentality creates what John Horvat calls “frenetic intemperance,” an unbalanced, unrestrained spirit in modern man that manifests itself in every facet of human activity. Without traditional education based on faith, family spirit and natural law, we will just be turning out children as efficient factory workers and functionaries for the “frenzied” global economic machine and not whole human beings. ■





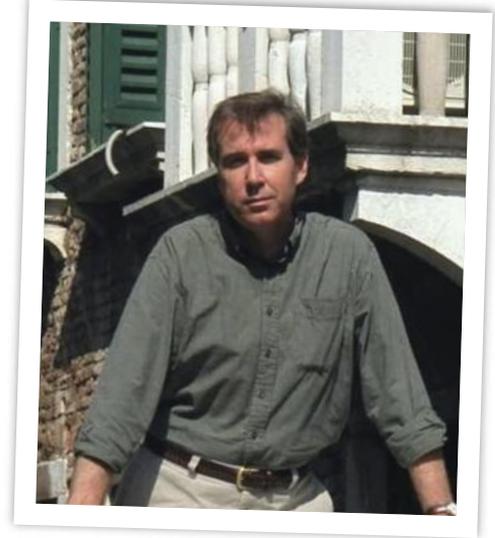
INTERVIEW

DISPELLING MYTHS *About the Crusades*

Thomas F. Madden is Professor of History and Director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Saint Louis University. As an author and historical consultant he has appeared in such venues as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The History Channel*.

Dr. Madden's most recent books include *Venice: A New History*, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, *Empires of Trust*, and the award-winning *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice*. He has also written and lectured extensively on the ancient and medieval Mediterranean as well as the history of Christianity and Islam.

Awards for his scholarship include the Medieval Academy of America's Charles Homer Haskins Medal and the Medieval Institute's Otto Grundler Prize. In 2012 he was named a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for exceptional scholarship in the field of Medieval and Renaissance History.



Professor Thomas F. Madden

Crusade: Some authors contend that the Crusades were wars of aggression against a peaceful Muslim world. What is your position in this matter?

Dr. Madden: It is difficult to see how anyone familiar with the sources could make such a claim. The original goal of the First Crusade, as it was announced in the papal call as well as numerous crusader charters, was to respond to Muslim aggression against Christians in the East and to restore those lands taken by Muslims to their Christian owners.

Crusade: Many adversaries of the Crusades claim that, although Crusaders wore crosses and religious symbols, their only goal was to gain riches and territories. What is your opinion on the matter?

Dr. Madden: This is a fairly old-fashioned view, now largely rejected by scholars. It was based on a Victorian experience with colonialism that has no relationship at all to the medieval Crusades. We

now know that crusading was almost never profitable. Crusaders often impoverished themselves and their families in order to pay for their expeditions. Whatever booty they received (and the Crusades were notoriously bad for plunder) was more than offset by their expenses. The vast majority of Crusaders had no interest in remaining in the East, but rather fulfilled their vows and returned home as soon as they were able.

Crusade: Some accuse the Crusades of being a sort of medieval colonialism disguised in religious trappings. Is this true and could you comment on this?

Dr. Madden: Colonialism, if it is to have any meaning at all, requires certain things: most importantly, a mother country that funds and directs the colonial expansion; a colonial government linked to a home government; and a policy of colonization or exploitation in the colony. The Crusades had none of these things. No mother country supported the Crusades. Rather, they were funded and undertaken by individuals across Christendom for the benefit of their souls and their co-religionists overseas. The governments in the Crusaders' states were independent, with no direct ties to any European countries. And the Europeans had no policy of colonization or exploitation in the East. Rather, the overriding

purpose of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was to safeguard the Holy Places and the lives of Christian pilgrims coming to visit them.

Crusade: Is the following thesis historically defensible: Although the West lost political control over the Holy Land and the near East after the Seventh and last Crusade, the effort Christians made from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries broke the impetus of the Muslim offensive against Europe and thus prevented the European continent from becoming Islamic back in medieval times.

Dr. Madden: No, on several counts. The Seventh Crusade was by no means the last Crusade. They continued well into the sixteenth century. The famous Battle of Lepanto in 1571 was a Crusade. Catholics did lose the mainland, but they held onto Cyprus and Rhodes for centuries. I believe it is fair to say, however, that the Crusades did slow the advance of Muslim Empires—namely the Ottoman Empire—into Europe just long enough to allow Europeans to effectively defend themselves. I have no doubt that had there been no Crusades at all, western Europe would have been conquered by Muslims in much the same fashion as southeastern Europe was.

Crusade: The Fourth Crusade is one of the most maligned of the Crusades. This is the Crusade you have studied in depth. Could you comment on some of the myths about the Fourth Crusade?

Dr. Madden: The biggest myth is that the Crusade was purposely diverted from its original goal—either by Pope Innocent III or Doge Enrico Dandolo—in order to conquer Constantinople. In fact, on several occasions the pope forbade the crusaders to go to Constantinople and once they were there, forbade them to attack the city. It is also not true that the Crusaders were led to Constantinople by a hatred of the Greeks or an envy of their empire. Instead, they came to Constantinople at the invitation of a Greek claimant to the throne, who promised to help them on their Crusade. The Crusaders only attacked Constantinople after their Greek friend double-crossed them, refusing to pay their reward or to join the Crusade. Even then, they only initiated hostilities when the Greeks murdered their former friend and ordered the Crusaders to leave immediately without reward, support, or even food. The Fourth Crusade was a tragedy, but one in which the Greeks and Latins both played important parts. ■



Richard the Lion-Heart at the Battle of Arsuf.
Engraving by Gustave Dore.

Silence, Prayer Contemplation the Best Beer in the World

BY LUIS DUFAUR

For many years, Westvleteren XII beer, produced at the Abbey of Saint Sixtus of Westvleteren in Belgium, has been chosen as the world's best by thousands of experts. In 2013, it was voted the "Best Beer in the World."¹

As a result of the beer's popularity, demand for this beer has skyrocketed while supply has been steady. Many customers are asking the abbey to increase production.

However, the abbey is unwilling to do so. "For us, life at the abbey comes first, not the brewery," explained Brother Mark Bode to the newspaper *De Morgen*. Increased production would disturb the lives of the thirty Trappist monks who lead a life of seclusion, prayer and manual labor.

It is amazing that such a small group of monks can compete with and excel in quality against the world's finest breweries. In addition, many micro-breweries try to imitate the abbey's procedures. But all in vain.

In fact, demand for Westvleteren is so high that stores can't keep up with demand. The Trappist monks are forced to limit the quantity sold per customer.

The monks follow none of the rules for good marketing. They are not used to giving interviews and the media feel slighted when refused. Nor do the friars advertise their beer. Furthermore, their monastic beer has been sold without a label since 1945.

The monks recently made an exception to their policy by granting an interview so as to put a stop to rumors about their plans. Brother Mark Bode confirmed to the media that the abbey has no intention of increasing production in spite of rising demand.

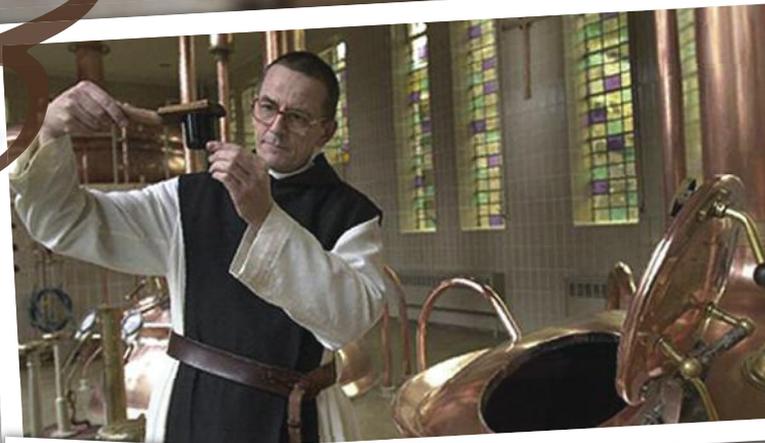
"We make beer for a living, but we do not live to make beer," he clarified. All extra proceeds go to charity. The monks want to produce only enough for the community to go on with its life of silence, prayer and contemplation.

The monks of Saint Sixtus shrug off the fame justly earned by their beers. Non-monastic visitors to the abbey are generally dissuaded from entering the abbey proper but can obtain information about the abbey and its beers at a visitors' center.

These are living remnants from the Middle Ages, an epoch when, according to the teachings of Pope Leo XIII,² the philosophy of the Gospel permeated institutions, and in which civilization produced fruits—and beers—above all expectations. ■

Notes:

1. http://www.ratebeer.com/RateBeerBest/bestbeers_012013x.asp
2. Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, November 1, 1885.



Top: A Trappist monk making the world's best beer.
Above: The Trappist Abbey of Saint Sixtus in Belgium.

TRAPP
STYLE