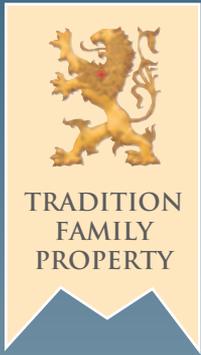
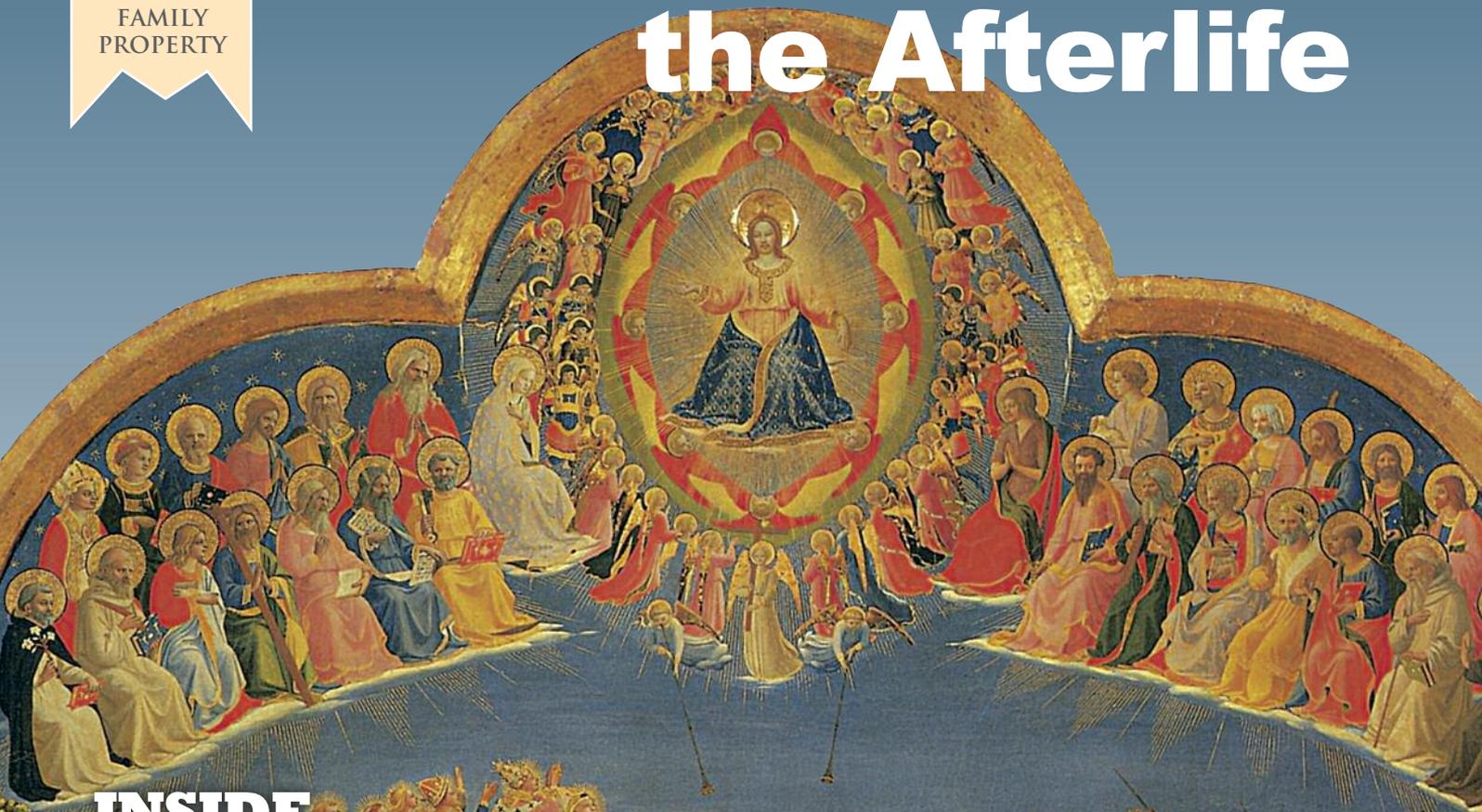


# CRUSADE<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE



## A Look Into the Afterlife



### INSIDE

- A Personal look at Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira
- The Experience Economy
- Why Celibacy?

# The Power of Music

BY MICHAEL GORRE

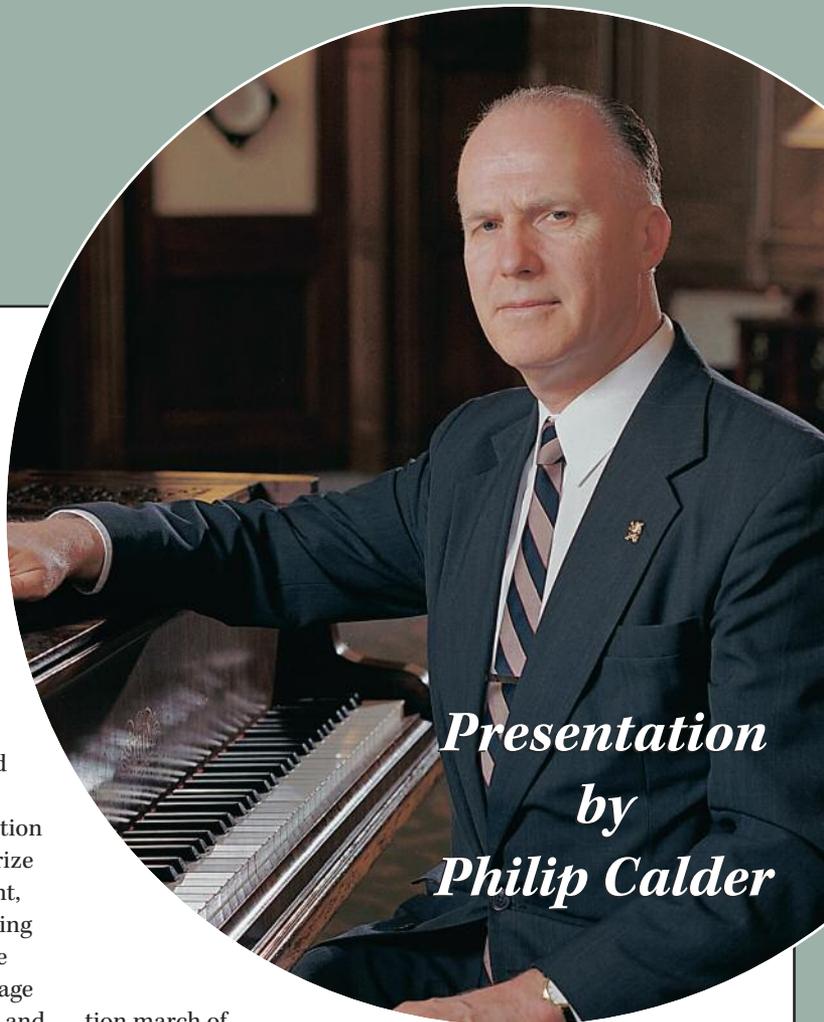
What is the power of music? How does music affect people's moods, lifestyles, and morality? What effect has music had on history? How does it influence us today? These were some of the questions dealt with by Mr. Philip Calder in his lecture/performance "The Power of Music" at the Washington Marriott Hotel last October 13.

Playing and speaking before a crowded auditorium in the American capital, Mr. Calder analyzed music and its history to explain an aspect of the revolutionary process in human souls. Looking at music from an often-ignored perspective, he interpreted the philosophies, both good and evil, that are relayed through music and showed how the very object and focus of music has shifted from God and loftier values to man and his disordered passions.

Mr. Calder went on to explain how music is often a reflection of a time, yet it can also influence people and thus characterize their epoch. He offered many examples to illustrate this point, such as the simplicity and elevation of Gregorian chant helping predispose medieval men to move towards God and practice virtue. The fruit of this spirit was the High Middle Ages, the age of the great Gothic cathedrals and castles, of saints, knights, and heroes.

On the other end of the spectrum, we find the intemperance and sensuality of pop-culture music, leading man away from God towards vice. It was all too easy for Mr. Calder to prove this point, given the immersion of our late twentieth-century youth in pop and rock music. Their fascination for this type of music leads them to adopt as role models, not saints or heroes, but rock and movie stars.

Mr. Calder exemplified his assertions with musical pieces played on a synthesizer, giving his audience an "ears-on" experience of theories brought down to reality. He played and sang musical pieces ranging from a Gregorian "Agnus Dei" and Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria" to Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" and Elvis Presley's "You Ain't Nothin' but a Hound Dog." Two trumpeters accompanied him as he played the magnificent corona-



*Presentation  
by  
Philip Calder*

tion march of Saint Louis IX of France.

Having demonstrated the beauty and hierarchy found in musical chords, he contrasted the jerking and rocking effects of 5-4 time in modern music rhythm and its unseemly use of dissonance. On a more theological note, he showed how Saint Thomas Aquinas' attributes of being (unity, goodness, truth, and beauty) as applied to music provide an objective guideline by which a musical layman can judge art.

An accomplished pianist, organist, and composer, Mr. Calder has been featured in Carnegie Hall and performed with the National Youth Orchestra of New York. With years of professional experience as a musician and a music history analyst, he has given lecture presentations on music across the nation. He pulls back the curtain for those less knowledgeable in music to see or, rather, hear what makes music so powerful.

Mr. Calder's vast and highly interesting topic defied the limits of time, and the two-hour presentation was extended to accommodate numerous questions from the audience.

**A set of two audio-cassette recordings of *The Power of Music* presentation is now available to *Crusade* readers for only \$9.97, plus \$0.97 S&H.**

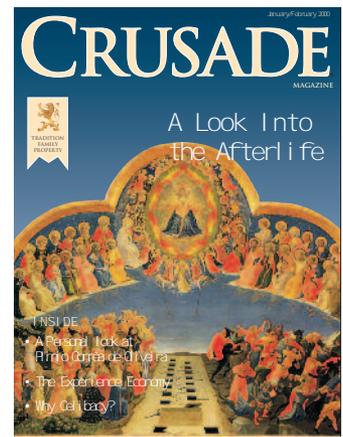


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# CONTENTS

January-February 2000



Cover: The Last Judgement, by Fra Angelico

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	2
Catholic Americans stand up to <i>Dogma</i>	
<b>IN BRIEF</b>	3
♦ Media Refuses to Expose Homosexual Killers	
♦ Blessed Katherine Drexel	
<b>INTERVIEW</b>	4
“Ardor, Courtesy, Unlimited Devotion to the Ideal...”	
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	8
Luther Thought He Was Divine	
<b>FORGOTTEN TRUTHS</b>	9
The Unity of Christians	
<b>CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS</b>	10
Why Celibacy?	
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	15
“I Shall Spend My Heaven Doing Good on Earth.”	
<b>INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION</b>	16
The Experience Economy	
<b>COVER STORY</b>	19
The Letter from Beyond	
<b>BASIC HISTORY COURSE</b>	29
The Empire of Charlemagne and the Papal States	
<b>TEACHING OUR CHILDREN</b>	33
The Meaning of the Name “Christian”	
<b>FAMILY SERIES</b>	35
“Come Infant Jesus!”	

## Page 19

A look into the afterlife



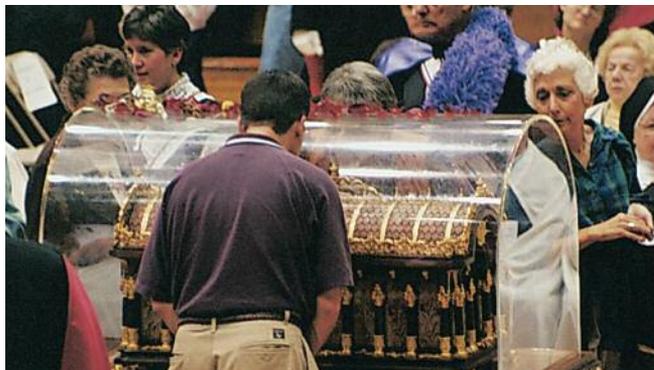
## Page 4



A personal look at Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

## Page 10

Why celibacy?



## Page 15

America showered with roses

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EDITOR'S  
CORNER

# Catholic Americans stand up to *Dogma*

**A**cross the United States, theater owners are finding that the Catholic Faith is very much alive. Producers have worked under the assumption of a year-round open season on Catholics, but with the latest Disney/Miramax onslaught, a new phenomenon has risen on the horizon, and it will not go away.

Thousands of Americans have realized that they must take a stand. *Dogma* is not an isolated action of an individual intent on making his mark by outraging Catholics, but part of an ongoing, expanding, and deepening attack on God and His Church.

Ridicule is a very seductive tool. It is so easy to join the crowd and laugh at a well-constructed joke. United with others around a common set of feelings, you feel relieved of the burdens of life and can let loose. Once you've laughed, you're in; you found it funny, you're part of the crowd.

But what have you gotten yourself into?

When you join the crowd in enjoying the ridicule, you are making a moral choice, and it is so easy to let things go. Many have slid down the slippery slope that starts with an amusing and apparently harmless insinuation here, a little coarse reference there, then ending up in full-blown obscenity directed at Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, it's just entertainment, they say. The crowd forms a consensus that it is acceptable to poke fun at someone for entertainment's sake. The crowd rules; it has supreme power. No one can protest. If they do, they suffer the scorn of the crowd and become a target themselves.

Such was the atmosphere that prevailed at the time of the crucifixion.

Where were the decent people? We know they existed. Many would soon convert. But they did not make themselves heard at the crucial moment. If the decent people had come together and protested, would the outcome have been the same?

Perhaps Pilate's cowardly decision would have been different had he felt the support of just a few decent people, but they offered no protest. If just a few had stood up, perhaps some wavering ones in the crowd would have joined them. Then, at least the prevailing consensus—that what was being undertaken was a moral and just act—would have been broken.

One wonders if there is in this an answer to the age-old question of why the good suffer along with the bad when God chastises the world. When evil reigned, the good did nothing, or not enough. Permitting evil to go unchallenged, they participated in it.

The recent outpouring of outrage at what Disney has done has thwarted the tide. The producers could not tolerate the moral censure. Hey, it might affect the sacred bottom line! Even Disney's subsidiary, Miramax, had to dump the film after making it.

What Catholics have done is not merely a protest, but an act of reparation. As such, it is an act of charity, of love for God.

That significant numbers of Americans, at the end of this tragic century, have repudiated this sin must invoke God's mercy on our country. All may not be lost. These are not just voices crying in the wilderness, but are much more numerous than might have been expected. The growing and almost spontaneous movement of protest and reparation fairly shouts, "It is beautiful to believe in the light at the darkest hour."

## The American TFP

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

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

One of the many protests against the film *Dogma* staged across the country.



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### **Media refuses to expose homosexual killers**

The shaping of the news—especially by those who promote a more amoral or even degenerate lifestyle—is becoming a news story itself.

In October, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a homosexual student at the University of Wyoming, was beaten to death by two young men who resented the romantic overtures aimed at one of them. Over the next week, media news outlets were deluged by a barrage of stories that made the student a martyr to some undefined noble cause. So inclusive was the subsequent coverage that the many legal problems of the killers received first-rate attention, which provided the opportunity to repeat the details of the killing over and over again.

In September of this year, in Arkansas, a 13-year-old boy was brutally and repeatedly raped by two homosexuals to the point where he died from the attack. In effect he was raped to death. What was the national



coverage from the media? SILENCE.

The local wires carried the story but refused to mention the vice-ridden background of the killers. Objective observers recognized that in our atmosphere of “political correctness,” reporters and analysts are afraid to say anything negative about homosexuality. There was a time

when one of the basic aims of the leaders of civilized society was to promote justice and virtue and to inculcate an understanding of the law of God. Upon what terrible principle is today’s society based?

### **Blessed Mary Katherine Drexel one step closer to sainthood**

October 7 marked a step forward for the canonization of Blessed Mary Katherine Drexel. The medical board of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints decreed that the cure from deafness of a 17-month-old boy had no natural cause.

The boy, born in Philadelphia in 1992, had nerve deafness. His parents prayed to Mother Drexel for a cure. Seventeen months later, he recovered his hearing. The next step in the canonization process is for a board of theologians to decide if the cure was the result of prayer to Mother Drexel. If so, another board of cardinals and bishops would decide whether or not to recommend her canonization. A prior miraculous cure, also from deafness, of Robert Gutherman made her beatification on November 20, 1998, possible.

Katherine Drexel was born into a wealthy Philadelphia family in 1858. At the age of 33, she dedicated her life and her twenty-million-dollar fortune to the spiritual and material care of Blacks and Indians. She founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for this work. At the time of her death, 63 years later, 500 members of her order taught in 63 schools around the country.

Mother Drexel’s canonization would be a great occasion for American Catholics. She would be the second canonized saint born within the United States.



# “Ardor, Courtesy, Unlimited Devotion to the Ideal...”

## A Personal Look at Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

**T**he cynic claims that no man is thought to be great by those closest to him. The following interview, granted by Mr. Fernando Antúnez Aldunate, gives the lie to that canard. For nearly two decades, Mr. Aldunate was privileged to work closely with one of the preeminent Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century, Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder and president of the National Council of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, and inspiration of its brother TFPs across the globe. For 15 of those years, Mr. Aldunate, a Chilean by birth, served as Prof. Corrêa de Oliveira’s personal secretary. He now resides at the seat of the French TFP in Paris, from which he graciously answered our questions.

**Crusade:** When did you begin your duties as Prof. Corrêa de Oliveira’s personal secretary?

**Mr. Aldunate:** It was only after having assisted him in other matters that I began to work as his personal secretary, near the end of 1977. About five years earlier, Dr. Plinio had asked me to organize his personal library, but, prior to being named his secretary, the occasion for serving him more closely arose in 1975 when he suffered a grave automobile accident, after which I was able to render him certain services.

In 1977, on returning from Europe where I had been assisting the Bureau Tradition Famille Propriété pour l’Europe, I discovered that Dr. Plinio was practically acting as his own secretary. Even for such simple clerical tasks as typing, he had to ask help from members of one sector or another of the TFP, and each time the service was performed by a different person. Needless to say, this situation belied the leftist media’s characterization of the “all powerful” leader of the TFP.

In those days, Dr. Plinio dealt with much of his correspondence in the early morning, when many of those who worked with him were still in bed. He would make notes on the papers he had to send off and leave them on the corner of his bureau.



Mr. Fernando Antúnez Aldunate in front of a painting of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

These “corner papers,” as he called them, would then be dispatched to one place or another.

The more recent growth of the TFP could well be measured in the passage from the time when Dr. Plinio was his own secretary to 1995, the year of his death, when the secretariat had grown to six persons who assisted him with correspondence.

**Crusade:** Was Dr. Plinio demanding

in what he asked his secretary to do?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Naturally, he wanted the work done accurately and punctually. However, while Dr. Plinio was intransigent toward evil and its cohorts, I have never known a more understanding and edifying gentleman. He desired not only the advance of the Counter-Revolution, but the development of a school of Counter-Revolution in which every blow against the enemies of the holy Catholic Church and of Christian civilization—the cause for which the TFP fights—would be executed with the greatest perfection and diligence. In this regard, his patience was that of a saint.

**Crusade:** And yet, returning for a moment to your earlier comment about the leftist media’s portrayal of an “all powerful” leader, there are those, apparently influenced by such fervid fantasies, who seem to imagine that Dr. Plinio disdained questions and was intolerant of views other than his own.

**Mr. Aldunate:** Nothing could be further from the truth! Gentle, affable, serene, and patient with all, Dr. Plinio was particularly pleased when people raised questions—including those that appeared inconvenient to others. Nor did he resent objections. On the contrary, he encouraged them. After every one of his meetings, he would ask if anyone present wanted to offer any observation, comment, or objection. While he hoped that all within the ranks of the TFP would share his desire to be in complete accord with Catholic doctrine and have a resolute heart for the counter-revolutionary fight as set forth in his seminal work *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, he never exacted an exclusionary “politically correct” way of thinking within the TFP.

**Crusade:** Did this openness apply to external as well as internal meetings?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Absolutely, and to the same degree. This was so habitual for Dr. Plinio that he would invite questions and critical comments even in the face of a hostile audience. He liked people to take advantage of the open floor in order to express any objections and clarify all doubts. The amiability he displayed toward his critics moved those in attendance to admiration.

Dr. Plinio frequently received visitors from across the globe, including journalists from the Brazilian and international media. Even those known for their hostility to the TFP would leave the interview convinced that the TFP was not the “den of fanatics” painted in the lurid pages of the tabloid press.

Dr. Plinio’s style of action reflected in contemporary terms the spirit of Christian chivalry of the Middle Ages: “In idealism, ardor; in treatment, courtesy; in action, unlimited devotion to the ideal; in the presence of the adversary, circumspection; in the fight, elevation and courage; and through courage, victory!”

**Crusade:** Did Dr. Plinio take breaks during the time he allocated for such work as his correspondence?

**Mr. Aldunate:** When it was time to work, it was work alone and without unnecessary interruptions. Dr. Plinio, however, was by no means a slave to the clock, and he had no difficulty in dealing with something unexpected that might suddenly arise, especially when it afforded him an opportunity to do good for a confrere working with him.

In a conference, Dr. Plinio once referred to work as an intense but calm activity. He worked with extraordinary serenity, in a manner quite distinct from that which dominates the contemporary workplace: frenzied bursts of agitated activity followed by intoxicated giddiness with the task’s completion.

**Crusade:** Did Dr. Plinio ever take a vacation?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Never. He occasionally said that one does not take a vacation in the service of Our Lady, nor does one take a vacation in the midst of a battle. He had a firm con-



Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira delivering a talk

*Dr. Plinio’s style of action reflected the spirit of Christian chivalry of the Middle Ages: “In idealism, ardor; in treatment, courtesy; in action, unlimited devotion to the ideal; in the presence of the adversary, circumspection; in the fight, elevation and courage; and through courage, victory!”*



viction that we are engaged in a great struggle—fighting with ideas rather than arms as our weapons, to be sure, but a combat nonetheless—in which quarter is neither asked nor given. His militant spirit, imbued with selfless dedication, inspires the members of the TFP to this day to follow the example he always gave. Wherever the battle was the most arduous, whenever the crisis was the most formidable, there you would find Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, the first to confront the enemy and the last to leave the field. Indeed, he would not rest until all was in order. He led—as do all true leaders—by the power of his example.

**Crusade:** But everyone needs to rest some time.

**Mr. Aldunate:** Of course, it is a law of nature, and, as I have already noted, Dr. Plinio had an exquisitely balanced personality. At the conclusion of some particularly prolonged and demanding enterprise, the writing of one of his momentous books, the direction of an extensive national or international campaign, or the like, he would customarily rest. Bear in mind that for Dr. Plinio a “great rest” comprised three to five days at most.

**Crusade:** And how would he spend those rare days of rest?

**Mr. Aldunate:** For one of his “great rests,” he would often go to a farm owned by friends near Amparo, in the countryside of São Paulo State. That farm later became a TFP center. On other occasions, he would stay at a hotel in Serra Negra, not far from Amparo. During the winter, in times past, he would customarily stay at the Parque Balneario, a comfortable hotel in Santos, whose coastal ambience he appreciated.

Even in these places of rest, however, Dr. Plinio would spend a good part of his time engaged in study, writing or reviewing books, planning campaigns, or other work, sometimes even conducting meetings. It was a “great rest” only because when he was away from São Paulo he was no longer constantly besieged on every side. So, he was able to sleep a little more—he slept with the peace and innocence of a child.

When dining, Dr. Plinio liked to talk with his friends at the table. He was a consummate conversationalist with a liking

for elegant conversation on elevated subjects, and wherever he went an animated circle of people soon formed. Eminently expressive, he found these “causeries” (social conversation on substantive matters) rejuvenating.

For Dr. Plinio, to rest meant to contemplate, and he would customarily analyze the world around him, rejecting all that was evil and ugly, while embracing that which was beautiful and good. An extraordinary teacher, he learned lessons from all whom he encountered, including the most ordinary of men. The eyes of his preeminently contemplative soul looked beyond material accidents to

see transcendental truths. Selective in the objects of his contemplation, he elevated everything to the highest principles, above all, to the First Principle, God.

Sometimes, I would find him sitting alone, utterly enchanted as an innocent child as he leafed through books illustrated with magnificent cathedrals, majestic castles, and marvelous panoramas. He also took advantage of these brief periods of leisure for reading, which he habitually commented on during his meals and, at times, after his afternoon automobile drive during

which he would pray his Rosary and other daily prayers.

**Crusade:** What types of books did he most like to read?

**Mr. Aldunate:** A great reader of history, Dr. Plinio was especially attracted to memoirs, as one might imagine in reading his own literary treasures of “Ambiances, Customs, and Civilizations” published in *Catholicismo*, *Crusade*, and other journals of the various TFPs. He especially liked to read memoirs from the times of the Ancien Regime and, of course, the lives of the saints.

I remember how enthusiastic he was in reading of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, a soul of fire burning within a fragile body; and with the history of Saint Louis IX, King of France, as told by his constable Joinville. As a slave of Mary, he greatly admired the life and writing of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, whose *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* is an incomparable spiritual classic. So many other saints, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, to name but one more, could be added to the list. The saintly always love the saints.

A favorite author was the Duke de Saint-Simon [1675-1755], the celebrated memoirist of the “Great

Century.” His memoirs fill eight volumes, nearly seven thousand bound pages, which Dr. Plinio read, rapt in admiration, regretting only that there were no further pages left to read.

**Crusade:** If I may be permitted to satisfy a personal curiosity, what were Dr. Plinio’s favorite foods?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Dr. Plinio would have been pleased with your question. His mind was brilliant, but his heart was loving.

A “*bom garfo*”—a “good fork”—by nature, he enjoyed various pastas and sauces. From 1967 on, unfortunately, he had to follow a very strict diet as the result of diabetes, but his physicians allowed him to break this diet once a week. He would set that day aside to go to a good restaurant, if possible, to dine on pasta. He also appreciated well-prepared meats. Regarding fish, he often commented that it was a good excuse for a sauce.

From the time he was but a boy, Plinio showed an inclination for a well-set table. Thus, his sister Rosée wrote jokingly under the letter “P” in the French encyclopedia Larousse: “Plinio, *fameux gastronome, il passa toute sa vie en mangeant*”—Plinio, a famous gastronome, who spent his entire life eating.

Dr. Plinio, of course, spent his life fighting the Revolution, as we have already discussed, but he knew how to appreciate the counter-revolutionary sustenance of good food, a noble Catholic tradition.

Indeed, as in every aspect of life, he elevated gastronomy to a higher spiritual plane. As he once advised a somewhat perplexed listener, “One eats more with the soul than the body.” It is a sad irony that today some sacrilegiously attempt to reduce the sacrality of the Holy Eucharist to the commonplace of the family meal. Dr. Plinio, on the other hand, sought to sanctify everyday life by placing it in the service of the Divine.

**Crusade:** Did Dr. Plinio ever think of retiring?

**Mr. Aldunate:** You will recall his observation that one does not take a vacation in the midst of a battle. There was no retirement for his crusader’s heart. At 86 years of age, he still spent his days—days whose long hours would daunt much younger men—devoting all his thoughts and efforts to leading the battle to defeat the Revolution and to restore Christian civilization, its only antidote.

He did, however, have a desire to be able to pass his final days as a contemplative hermit. He confided that he hoped one day to be able to go to the “Grotto of Cornelius,” where he would meditate on the commentaries on Sacred Scripture made by the great Jesuit exegete of the seventeenth century, Cornelius à Lapidé. That day, as he made abundantly clear, could



Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

only come to pass after the fulfillment of the tragic and glorious events foretold by Our Lady at Fatima, culminating in the promised triumph of her Immaculate Heart in the glorious Reign of Mary. Of course, he was entirely disposed, without any reservation, to the will of his beloved Heavenly Mother, who called him to her side before that triumphal day.

**Crusade:** Did Dr. Plinio ever designate a successor? Did he intend to do so?

**Mr. Aldunate:** He left the TFP well structured to carry on its historic mission or, better yet, its apostolate, even with the irreplaceable loss of his presence. It must be said that defenders of the Faith of the order of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira do not come along every day—any more than other Catholic champions like Ignatius, Francis, or Dominic, I dare say in all frankness. Inevitably, decisions must be made, directives issued, and so forth, to carry on their work once they have left this vale of tears but, in my judgment, “successor” is not quite the appropriate word in such cases.

I mentioned earlier Dr. Plinio’s kind and generous heart. He preferred to praise rather than criticize those who worked with him. Once I even presumed to ask him if, by means of such praise, he was indicating someone to succeed him. “To think this would be to know little of me, my son,” he replied.

As for the rest, he confided in Our Lady. He ended his last testament, “Our Lady will provide better than I.”

**Crusade:** Did you accompany him on that last trip to the farm in Amparo?

**Mr. Aldunate:** As I mentioned earlier, the farm was one of the places where Dr. Plinio would go for a few days of rest on completion of a particularly protracted and arduous endeavor. In 1995, he wanted to go there after having completed certain works that called for his attention. He did not want to go before finishing, even though he was already greatly weakened by the cancer—of which neither he nor we had any knowledge at the time. He, no doubt, could sense that his health was severely jeopardized, but like the warrior, bloodied yet unbowed on the field of battle, he never once complained. On the contrary, his customary affection and kindness toward others seemed intensified.

Unaware of the full gravity of his illness, we thought the trip would lead to his recuperation, but his condition worsened rapidly. I remember our last lunch at the farm. Dr. Plinio dined in his bed. It was a Wednesday—he was to enter the hospital the following Friday. He looked lovingly at a picture of Our Lady of Genazzano and, in a voice whose weakness seemed to amplify the power of his words, told us that the answer to every problem could be found in her. His humble heart confessed that he must support himself on those around him, as an aged eagle supports itself upon its progeny in order to fly.

**Crusade:** You were present in the hospital with Dr. Plinio during his

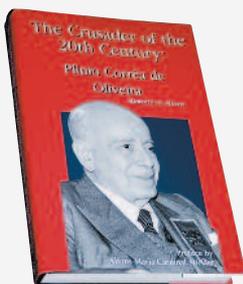
final days, weren’t you?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Yes. He entered the hospital in a light coma and never fully recovered, but as he had lived every moment of his life with his soul in the presence of Our Lady and honored her in every gesture—whether conscious or unconscious—one could not mistake the devotion of his heart or the nobility of his soul.

For example, while he was unable to recall the precise words, he did not neglect saying his prayers before or after meals. Suffering pains that God alone knows, he strove to pray his Rosary until the last. He treated everyone astoundingly well, however badly he must have felt. His patience was phenomenal, and everyone in the hospital ward, from the physicians to the orderlies, from the nurses to the patients, was captivated by his palpable goodness.

**Crusade:** Thank you for your patience in responding so graciously and openly to so many questions. One more, if I may, how do you feel looking back on those years spent in daily association with Dr. Plinio?

**Mr. Aldunate:** Being able to assist one of the greatest Catholic leaders of our age in some small measure in fulfilling his awesome responsibilities in the fight against the diabolic Revolution and in defense of holy Mother Church and of Christian civilization—responsibilities he met to the fullest degree possible—was for me an incomparable gift of Providence. ❧



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## The Crusader of the 20th Century Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

by Roberto de Mattei with a preface by Alfons Maria Cardinal Stickler

“With the integrity of his life as an authentic Catholic, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira offers us a confirmation of the Church’s fecundity,” writes Cardinal Stickler in his preface to Prof. Roberto de Mattei’s *The Crusader of the 20th Century: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*.

The life of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira spans the century from 1908 to 1995. His first and most prized title is “Roman Catholic,” and it was as a man of faith that he confronted the harrowing events of the twentieth century.

On the doctrinal field, in the field of action, and in his personal life he provided the substance for lighting the way ahead in a dark century.

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# Luther Thought He Was Divine!

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA

I do not understand how men of the Church today, including some of the most cultured, learned, and illustrious, mythicize the figure of Luther, the hierarch, in their zeal to favor an ecumenical rapprochement directly with Protestantism and indirectly with all the religions, schools of philosophy, and so forth.

Do they not perceive the danger that is lying in wait for all of us at the end of this road, that is, the formation on a world-wide scale of a sinister supermarket of religions, philosophies, and systems of all sorts, in which truth and error will be broken up in pieces, mixed together in a cacophonous confusion? The only thing missing from the world would be—if we could reach such a point—the whole truth, that is, the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Faith, with neither spot nor wrinkle.

Today I present some facts about Luther that clearly point up the odor that his revolted figure would spread in that supermarket, or rather, that morgue of religions, of philosophies, and of human thought itself. To him belongs, from a certain point of view, the role of being the point of departure in this march toward total confusion.



Luther, the leader of the Protestant revolution in the XVI's century, (Zeichnung nach Karl Bauer).

I have drawn these passages from the magnificent work of Fr. Leonel Franca, S.J., *A Igreja, a Reforma, e a Civilização* [The Church, the Reform, and Civilization] (Rio de Janeiro, 1934).

A uniquely characteristic element of Luther's teaching is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Put more simply, this means that the superabundant merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, alone and by themselves, without our cooperation, assure the eternal salvation of man, so that one may lead a life of sin in this world with neither remorse of conscience nor fear of God's justice.

For Luther, the voice of conscience was not that of grace, but rather that of the Devil!

For this reason, he wrote to a friend that a man vexed by the Devil should occasionally "drink more abundantly, gamble, entertain himself, and even commit some sin out of hatred and spite for the Devil so that we may not give him an opportunity to disturb our consciences with trifles. The whole Decalogue should be erased from our eyes and our souls, from us who are so persecuted and molested by the Devil" (M. Luther, *Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken*, Ed. De Wette [Berlin, 1825-1828]; Franca, pp. 199-200).

Along the same line he also wrote: "God only obliges you to believe and to confess (the faith). In all other things He leaves you free, lord and master to do whatever you will without any danger to your conscience; on the contrary, it is certain that, as far as He is concerned, it makes no difference whether you leave your wife, flee from your lord, or are unfaithful to every obligation. What is it to Him if you do or do not do such things?" (*Werke*, Weimar ed., XII, pp. 131 ff.; Franca, p. 446).

The incitement to sin given in a letter to Melancthon on August 1, 1521, is perhaps even more categorical: "Be a sinner, and sin



Papal Bull of Pope Leo X excommunicating Luther

strongly (*esto peccator et pecca fortiter*), but believe and rejoice even more firmly in Christ, the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the world. During this life, we have to sin. It is sufficient that, by the mercy of God, we know the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. Sin will not separate us from Him, even though we were to commit a thousand murders and a thousand adulteries per day" (*Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken*, II, p. 37; Franca, p. 439).

This doctrine is so bizarre that even Luther himself could scarcely manage to believe in it: "There is no religion in the whole world that teaches this doctrine of justification; I myself, even though I teach it publicly, have a great difficulty in believing it privately" (*Werke*, XXV, p. 330; Franca, p. 158).

Luther himself recognized the devastating effects of his admittedly insincere preaching: "The Gospel today finds adherents who are convinced that it is nothing but a doctrine that serves to fill their bellies and give free reign to all their impulses" (*Werke*, XXXIII, p. 2; Franca, p. 440).

And Luther added, regarding his evangelical henchmen, that "they are seven times worse than they were before. After the preaching of our doctrine men have given themselves up to robbery, lying, imposture, debauchery, drunkenness, and every kind of

vice. We have expelled one devil (the papacy), and seven worse ones have come in" (*Werke*, XXVIII, p. 763; Franca, p. 441).

"After we understood that good works are not necessary for justification, I became much more remiss and cold in doing good...and if we could return now to the old state of things and if the doctrine of the necessity of good works to be holy could be revived, our alacrity and promptness in doing good would be different" (*Werke*, XXVII, p. 443; Franca, p. 443).

All these insanities make it understandable how Luther reached a frenzy of satanic pride, saying of himself: "Does this Luther not appear to you to be eccentric? As far as I am concerned, I think he is God. Otherwise, how could his writings or his name have the power to transform beggars into lords, asses into doctors (of learning), falsifiers into saints, slime into pearls!" (*Werke*, Ed. Wittenberg, 1551, IV, pp. 378; Franca, p. 190).

At other times, Luther's opinion of himself was much more objective: "I am a man exposed to and involved in society, debauchery, carnal movements, in negligence and other disturbances, to which are added those of my own office" (*Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken*, I, p. 232; Franca, p. 232).

Excommunicated in Worms in 1521, Luther gave himself up to idleness and sloth. On July 13 of that year he wrote to Melancthon: "I find myself here insensate and hardened, established in idleness. Oh, woe! Praying little, and ceasing to moan for the Church of God, because my untamed flesh burns in great flames. In short, I, who ought to have the fervor of the spirit, have the fervor of the flesh, of licentiousness, sloth, idleness, and somnolence" (*Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken*, II, p. 22; Franca, p. 198).

In a sermon preached in 1532: "As for me I confess, and many others could undoubtedly make an equal confession, that I am careless of discipline and zeal. I am much more negligent now than under the papacy; no one has ardor for the Gospel now like that you used to see" (*Saemtliche Werke*, XVII, p. 353; Franca, p. 441).

What, then, can be found in common between this morality and that of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church? ❏

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This article originally appeared in the *Folha de São Paulo*, Jan. 10, 1984.

### Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

The author of 15 books and over 2,500 in-depth articles and essays, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira held the chair of Modern and Contemporary History at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil. He was also the founder of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property and served as its president since its inception in 1960 until his death in 1995.

Considered by many as one of the greatest Catholic figures of our time, Prof. de Oliveira traversed the century in defense of the Church, the Papacy, and Christian civilization.

Along the way he strenuously fought Nazism, communism, and other forms of socialism; described and denounced the revolution in human tendencies, and opposed the mysterious process of autodemolition within the Catholic Church.

His word and pen have always been at the service of Christian civilization. A statement of the Holy See regarding his most widely circulated book, *The Church in the Communist State: The Impossible Coexistence*, can fittingly be used to describe his entire life's intellectual work: "A most faithful echo of all the Documents of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church."

# The Unity of Christians

BY POPE PIUS XI

**T**he unity of Christians cannot be otherwise obtained than by securing the return of the separated to the one true Church of Christ from which they once unhappily withdrew. To the one true Church of Christ, We say, that stands forth before all and that by the will of its Founder will remain forever the same as when He Himself established it for the salvation of all mankind...

\* \* \*

They, therefore, who profess themselves Christians cannot, We think, but believe in Christ's establishment of one Church and only one. Yet when one asks what that church ought by the will of its Founder to be, then

not all agree. Indeed a great many deny, for example, that Christ's Church ought to be visible; at least in the sense that it should stand forth as one body of faithful united in one identical doctrine and under one authority and rule. On the contrary they understand by a visible Church nothing but a society formed by various Christian communities even though these adhere to different and even mutually contradictory doctrines.

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Excerpts from Encyclical *Mortalium Animos*, January 6, 1928



FORGOTTEN TRUTHS

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is increasing, and the number of people who are aged 65 and over is increasing rapidly. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are in need of health care services, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

Another reason for the increase is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector. The private sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector, as the public sector has had to take on more people to meet the demand for health care services.

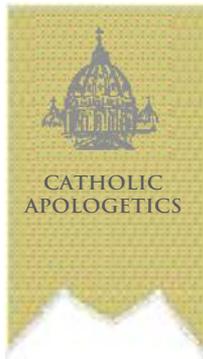
A third reason for the increase is the increasing demand for health care services from the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the voluntary sector. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector, as the public sector has had to take on more people to meet the demand for health care services.

There are a number of challenges that the public sector faces in meeting the demand for health care services. One of the main challenges is the increasing demand for health care services, which is putting pressure on the public sector to increase its resources. Another challenge is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector, which is putting pressure on the public sector to increase its resources.

A third challenge is the increasing demand for health care services from the voluntary sector, which is putting pressure on the public sector to increase its resources. There are a number of ways in which the public sector can meet these challenges. One way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the public sector. Another way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the private sector.

A third way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the voluntary sector. There are a number of ways in which the public sector can increase its resources. One way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the public sector. Another way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the private sector.

A third way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the voluntary sector. There are a number of ways in which the public sector can increase its resources. One way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the public sector. Another way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the private sector. A third way is to increase the number of people who are employed in the voluntary sector.



# Why Celibacy?

*On the biblical foundations of priestly and religious celibacy*

BY RAYMOND DE SOUZA

**H**ad my fundamentalist acquaintance known a little of the Church's early history, he could have spared himself an embarrassment. His customary anti-Catholic resentment, contained during most of our conversation at a social gathering after a right-to-life meeting, came alive when someone mentioned an instance of child molestation by a priest.

"That's the problem with celibacy," he snorted. "You can't stop nature. In fact, if you forcibly suppress it, it will explode," he concluded pontifically. "Paul warned us Christians against celibacy, every one knows that." Before I could object that child molestation is not committed exclusively by celibate men, since many married men, of many denominations, both clergy and laymen, have been guilty of it, he opened his Bible and read aloud from 1 Tim 4:1-5:

In the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful and by them that have known the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The poor chap, satisfied to explain virtually everything by his individual interpretation of Scripture, evidently knew nothing of Church history. Otherwise he would

have known that Saint Paul was speaking prophetically against the Gnostics, Marcionites, Manicheans, and other heretics who emerged in the early Church and taught that all flesh was evil.

No wonder the noted English convert John Henry Cardinal Newman could write that "To know history is to cease to be a Protestant."

There was no time to consult history books; I had to defend the Truth right then and there, between the visiting speaker's address and the final cup of tea at our right-to-life meeting.

*"There was no time to consult history books; I had to defend the Truth right then and there."*

"Priestly celibacy," I said, "is a counsel of perfection, which Our Lord encouraged in the New Testament after a long preparation in the Old. From Adam to Moses the people of God had a natural priesthood, in which every father of a family or tribal chieftain offered sacrifice. From Mount Sinai until the time of Jesus, the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood replaced natural priesthood. The Levitical gave way at the Last Supper and the sacrifice on the Cross to sacramental priesthood. Jesus did not destroy priest-

hood. Indeed, He is our High Priest. He offered sacrifice for us and commanded His apostles to 'Do this in memory of Me.' It was a command. The Apostles obeyed and instructed their successors to do likewise."

"But Jesus was not from the family of Aaron, nor the Levitical priesthood," my fundamentalist interlocutor affirmed in his usual pompous tone.

## **A priest forever according to the Order of Melchisedech**

"No," I answered, "He was of the priesthood of Melchisedech, as Psalm 109 affirms: 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.' The word *priest* first appears in the Bible (Gen. 14:18) in reference to Melchisedech.

"What's so special about Melchisedech?" he asked, as though hearing the name for the first time.

"He was a 'priest of the Most High.' He imparted a priestly blessing in God's name and offered bread and wine in sacrifice, the only such instance in the Old Testament. Melchisedech's sacrifice prefigured Our Lord's in the New Testament, His one single sacrifice of the Last Supper and Calvary."

"Sounds interesting from the archaeological point of view," he mused, avoiding the evident parallel. "But what has that got to do with celibacy?"

"Look in the Epistle to the Hebrews," I replied. "There you will learn that Melchisedech had no family records, no genealogy, no listing of wife or children—characteristic marks of celibacy for the sake of the

kingdom.”

“That must have been an exception in the Old Testament,” he jumped. “All priests of the Mosaic Law were married.”

“You confuse ideal with exception,” I answered. “When Moses took the Hebrews out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, they went there to sacrifice to God as a priestly nation (Exod. 19:3-6). In preparation for that priesthood, they were to be sanctified, as symbolized by the washing of garments; to observe the limits of the sanctuary; and to observe three days of marital abstinence. Most did not obey God’s injunction to remain continent for even three days, however, and committed spiritual adultery with the golden calf. Since only the Levites remained faithful, Moses gave them a special privilege in the service of God, and only Aaron’s family received the priesthood in perpetuity (Exod. 29:9).”

“What’s your point?” he asked impatiently.

“The point is that God was establishing a link between priesthood and celibacy, first with Melchisedech’s lack of a family, then the Hebrews’ temporary continence to receive the priesthood. Later, among the Prophets, Elias stands out as one of the greatest, even appearing with Our Lord and Moses on Mount Tabor. The great Elias was celibate, leading a hermit’s life in the desert. In the last Old Testament prophetic book, Malachias speaks of the clean oblation to be offered daily to God (1:11), which the early Church Fathers interpreted as being like Melchisedech’s sacrifice of bread and wine.”

Asking to borrow his Bible for a moment, I opened it to Hebrews, chapter seven:

For this Melchisedech was king of Salem, priest of the most high God.... Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, continues a priest forever.

“Here you have another sign of the great ideal of priestly celibacy for the New Testament. Melchisedech, the prefigure of Jesus the Son of God, as His Apostles after Him until the end of time, priests without father, without mother, without genealogy—celibates.”



*Jesus Christ, the perfect model of priesthood, led a life of perfect celibacy.*

#### **Celibacy lived in the New Testament**

“But this is of the Old Testament. Jesus abolished it. Everyone knows that!” he sneered.

“On the contrary, Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill, as everyone knows. Moreover, historically speaking, even in Our Lord’s time there were groups of people, men and women, practicing celibacy, such as the Essenes. Saint John the Baptist, the precursor of the Messiah, came in the spirit of Elias and was also celibate, leading a life in the desert like Elias. Jesus Himself called Saint John the greatest man on earth.

Before my fundamentalist acquaintance could reply, I completed the argument: “Have you forgotten that Jesus Christ, the perfect priestly model, led a life of perfect celibacy? Both the Messiah and

the precursor, the greatest man, were celibates!”

As my interlocutor’s mind rummaged for some plausible reply, more people gathered around with their cups of tea to listen in.

#### **Perfecting the law: moving towards greater chastity**

“The perfecting of the law that Jesus emphasized in the Sermon on the Mount was a necessary consequence of the perfecting of the priesthood,” I continued. “Our Lord considered the move towards continence and chastity as a perfection. Would you like a few examples?”

It was an unnecessary question, but it is always more polite to ask. “May I have your Bible again? Here we are, regarding adultery and impure thoughts.”

You have heard that it was said to them of old: thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

Our Lord not only confirmed the law against adultery, He perfected it by forbidding even impure thoughts—a move towards greater chastity. He did the same by abolishing divorce and remarriage (Matt. 5:31-32).”

“But this is about chastity within marriage, not outside it; everybody knows that!” our friend insisted.

“Not really. These teachings point in a definite direction—toward greater chastity, to the extent of His praising celibacy itself. Haven’t you read Matthew 19:12?

There are eunuchs who were born so from their mothers’ womb; and there are eunuchs who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can understand it, let him understand it.

That’s the beauty of celibacy, to abstain from holy matrimony for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. That’s another great ideal that Our Lord was preparing His disciples to understand. That’s why Melchisedech, Elias, and John the Baptist were celibates—for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”

The time to go was fast approaching, leaving time for just a few more passages.

“In Matthew 22:30 Jesus said to His

opponents: 'You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven.'

"Celibacy for the sake of God's kingdom begins here on earth in that state of total belonging to Him. Remember the rich young man in Matthew 19:21? Jesus told him, 'If you will be perfect, sell what you have...and follow Me.' Surely that fellow must have been a wealthy celibate; otherwise he could not in justice give everything to the poor, leaving his wife and children to beg in the streets."

"But Jesus didn't order the man to dispose of his possessions; He said 'If... If you will be perfect.' It was conditional, not mandatory," my friend said.

"Quite right," I agreed. "It was a counsel of perfection. 'If you will be perfect.' Voluntary poverty, celibacy, and obedience go hand in hand, as the Catholic Church recommends in the three vows. Did He not say in the Sermon of the Mount, 'Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect'? And did He not also say on another occasion, 'Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me'?"

"We are only scratching the surface of Jesus' ideal of perfection, because not everything He said and did is consigned to writing, as Saint John makes quite clear. The more explicit teaching on celibacy is found in Saint Paul.

### **Saint Paul explicitly recommends celibacy**

"Saint Paul well understood the distinction between commandment and counsel regarding celibacy, and he pulled no punches about it. Look here in 1 Corinthians:

Now concerning the things you wrote to me about: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (7:1-2).

Even within marriage, he encourages periodic abstinence.

Defraud not one another, except, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer. And return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency.... For I would that all men were even as myself, but everyone has his proper gift from God; one after this manner,

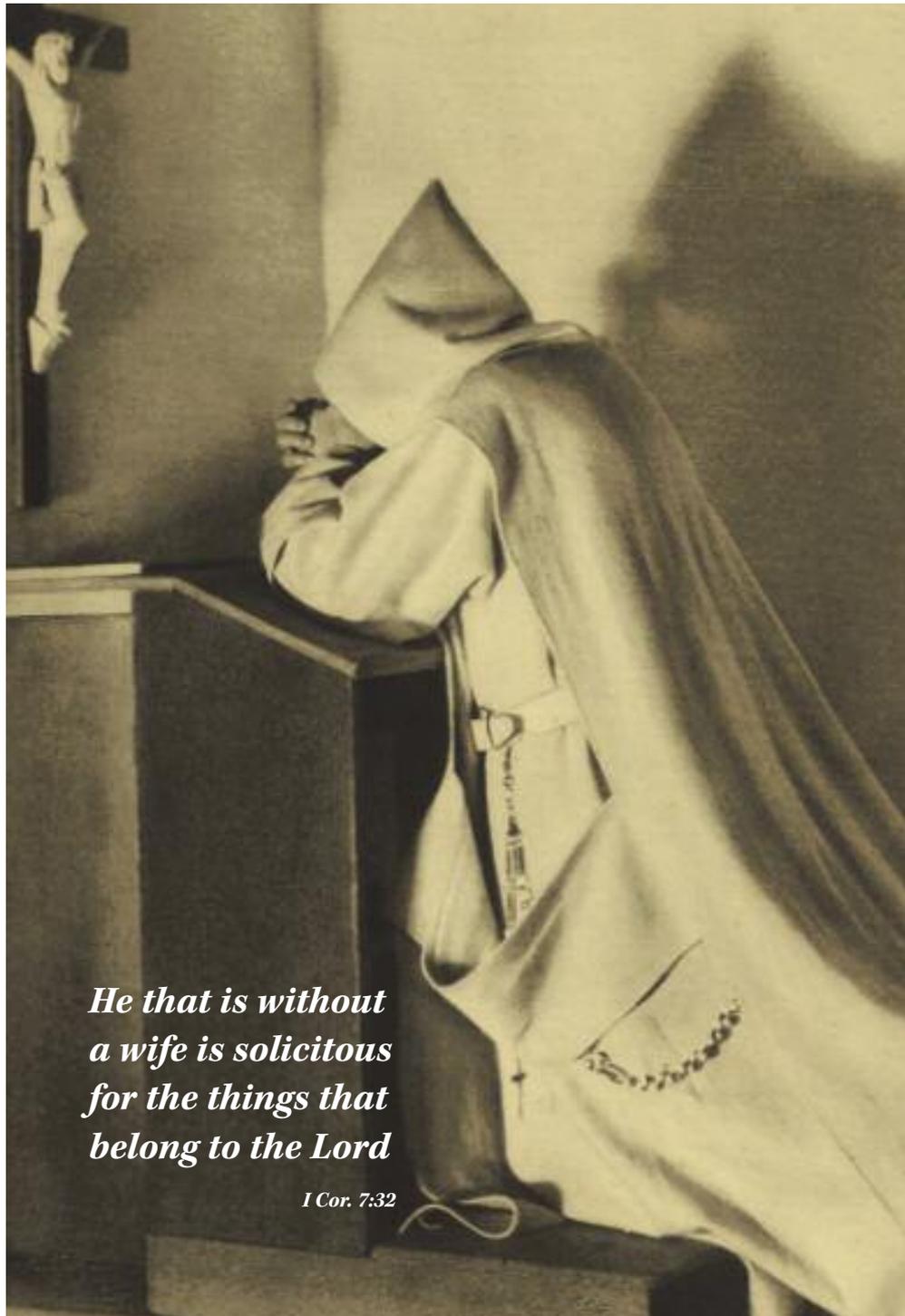
and another after that. But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I. But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to be burnt (7:5,7-9).

Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy from the Lord, to be faithful. I think therefore that it is good for the present necessity, that it is good for a man so to be. Are you bound

to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you take a wife, you have not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. But I spare you.(7:24-27).

He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin

Spanish Cartusian monk in prayer



*He that is without  
a wife is solicitous  
for the things that  
belong to the Lord*

*1 Cor. 7:32*



*These are they who are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were purchased from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*

*Apoc 14:1-5.*

think of the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married thinks of the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your profit: not to cast a snare upon you; but for that which is decent, and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord, without impediment. ... A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty: let her marry to whom she will; only in the Lord. But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain, according to my counsel; and I think that I also have the spirit of God (7:32-40).

Saint Paul also teaches that a bishop or deacon could be a married man, but not a remarried widower. Let them be “the husband of one wife,” he writes (1 Tim. 3:1,12).

### **The Apocalypse**

In the Apocalypse, Saint John reserves the highest praise for those followers of Our Lord who are virgins, and you know that virginity is the perfect flower of celibacy.

And I beheld, and lo! A lamb stood upon mount Zion, and with him 144,000, having his name, and the name of his father, written on their foreheads. ... And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients. And no man could say the canticle, but those 144,000, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were purchased from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. (Apoc 14:1-5).

With that high tribute to celibacy, I returned the Bible to its owner. Finishing my tea, now quite cold, I said good-night to the group of valiant crusaders against abortion and headed home to my family. Driving along the dark streets, I prayed that Our Lord would deign to bless our home with vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, to life and work dedicated to His kingdom in a life of perfect celibacy. ■

“Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters” from the Book, *Behold the Women*, by Daniel Thomas Paulos. Copyright, 1994. Used by permission.



COMMENTARY

# “I Shall Spend My Heaven Doing Good on Earth”

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR

Catholics have by long tradition followed Saint Thérèse’s “little way” with true piety and ardent love. More recently, they have shared the eager desire and then jubilation to see her at last proclaimed among the great Doctors of the Catholic Church.

But her American devotees in particular rejoiced this past October 5 when her venerated relics reached American soil for the first time to begin an extensive tour of the United States that will extend into the new millennium, until January 28. The rare honor has been reciprocated a thousandfold by the faithful crowds thronging to venerate her hallowed remains.

It was my privilege to visit them at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Middletown, New York.

I had been lucky enough to obtain a place directly in front of the gilded urn, a mere five feet away. As I sat in silence before her visiting relics, I watched in awe as the meaning of her promise “I shall spend my Heaven doing good on Earth,” suddenly materialized before me.

The lines were continuous as people from all walks of life and every age patiently awaited their turn to kneel by the reliquary containing the remains of the beloved saint.

Here was a humanity that gave the painful impression of having gone through a hecatomb. Not a physical hecatomb such as a war, a hurricane, or an earthquake, perhaps, but a spiritual hecatomb. It is a hecatomb brought about by this century’s attempted emancipation from its Creator and the wisdom-filled teaching of His Holy Catholic Church. It is an upheaval in the minds, hearts, and souls of this century’s inhabitants caused by every form of materialistic, sensu-

al, and atheistic propaganda.

Faces not just of the aged but also of the young seemed lined and tired, the signs of a humanity too long cut loose from its moorings and tossed about in stormy waves without a compass.

Yes, in one way or another, everyone seemed to be suffering. Here was a young struggling couple

will not refuse me anything because I have never refused Him anything.” This young woman’s power over souls was evident and marvelous!

Nationwide, wherever her relics go, there follow reports of similar phenomena: endless lines of faithful waiting their turn for a few moments before these holy remains.

Were these merely remains that we went to see? Or was it the tremendous magnetism of a person whose touch from heaven is so real that just the thought of being close to her, even if only to her bones,



The relics of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus exposed for veneration at the Stokes Athletic Building in Saint Francis College, Loretto, Pennsylvania.

with their child. The young father bowed low while the mother whispered in the child’s ear, pointing to the reliquary.

On the other side was a young businessman kneeling on the floor, hands folded and head lowered, praying with the fervor of an old man.

Then came a mother with her handicapped son. With the help of a sister or a friend, she touched her child to the urn.

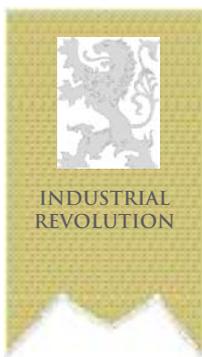
So, on and on flowed the stream of tired but, once again, faith-filled humanity before the remains of a twenty-four-year-old woman who said before she died, “God

is reassuring and inspiring? I tend to think the latter.

May Saint Therese, as she promised, continue to “come down” to assist us. May she continue to help us to place our feet once more on the straight path back to God and His Holy Catholic Church. May she lead us out of today’s confusion, into the light of pure and absolute Truth. May she ask of God, Whom she said would refuse her nothing, that this new millennium may see the fulfillment of Our Lady’s promise at Fatima: “Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” ■

# The Experience Economy

BY JOHN HORVAT



In today's vibrant, whirling economy, everything money or easy-credit can buy is almost instantly available. Abundant goods and services promise happiness. There seems to be no limit on what can be acquired—yet, consumer satisfaction is still illusive.

Today many economic observers are realizing the shortcomings of an economic system based on unrestrained materialism. They are predicting that consumer dissatisfaction is provoking a new economic era, which will herald a transformation as radical as the Industrial Revolution itself.

A new kind of economy is coming which will challenge the rationalist and materialistic premises now so woefully inadequate in an increasingly irrational and unreal world.

Authors B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore claim in their recent book *The Experience Economy*

that society is reaching the point where traditional goods and services now offered are not enough. They say the future economy will be driven by the selling of experiences.

## A revolutionary process

This "experience" economy is the latest step in the evolving economies spawned by the Industrial Revolution.

The first step was the Industrial Revolution itself, which ushered in an era of unprecedented production. Identical mass-produced goods and commodities flooded the markets. The consumer no longer shaped the product but adjusted his tastes to the products. Mass production gave rise to the amorphous masses.

During the Industrial era, the criterion of happiness was to acquire the greatest possible quantity of

material goods. However, the superabundance of goods (and later services) reached a point of satiation. The rebellion of the sixties was but an example of how possession of unlimited goods did not satisfy human nature. People wanted something more.

### **Enter the computer age**

That something else, transcending material goods, was information. The computer age opened horizons for twentieth-century man as broad as those the age of discovery opened for the fifteenth-century man.

The information age indeed transformed the world. The excitement of instant communication far surpasses that of staid material goods. Access to unlimited information and data seems to empower the individual beyond his wildest dreams.

The Internet literally puts the world at one's fingertips. Authors like Alvin Toffler and Tom Peters spoke enthusiastically of the "new wave" of an information-driven economy that would herald the ultimate in consumer experiences.

Many authors are now saying, however, that the flood of information is satiating consumers just as the flood of material goods did. Traffic on the information superhighways is congested and frustrating.

The Information Age is barely thirty years old, but a new age stands ready to supplant it at break-neck speed.

### **The experience solution**

The move to this new era comes from excessive information that lacks context and meaning. Downloading the whole Library of Congress would be worth little since the human mind is unable to digest, interpret, or focus on such vast amounts of data. The resulting experience is sterile and empty.

Many now claim the new commodity that will satisfy consumers is something that transcends both matter and information. In face of the insufficiency of information, the consumer will search for interior experiences as the only valid means for giving context and meaning to the monotony of life.

The experience economy will depart from the rational patterns of the past and be driven by a complex mixture of feelings, emotions, and dreams.

International business strategist Rolf Jensen in his 1999 book, *The Dream Society*, foresees a climate where "the market for dreams would gradually exceed the market for information-based reality. The market for feelings would eclipse the market for tangible products."<sup>1</sup>

### **Experience as product**

The new "experience" market is not some future event; it is already happening.

While there has always been the experience fac-

tor in marketing, the new element is the emphasis on the experience itself. Once a free extra, the experience is now the central item sold. Services provide a mere stage, and goods are but props to engage the individual.

Today, manufacturers are explicitly designing their goods not only to enhance the user's experience but to turn the product itself into an experience.

One no longer buys a car but a driving experience. A stereo is a listening experience; a meal a dining experience. Even the most insignificant things take on an experiential character. The manufacturer creates the imagery to support a reading, a sitting, a clothes-drying, or even a "briefcasing" experience.

Buyers of experiences will no longer buy the components of their events but whole events rich with sensations. Instead of buying a birthday cake, for example, they will buy the whole birthday party, in which the cake is a secondary element.

Indeed, Jensen predicts that in an emotionally defined market "the product itself will become secondary—the product will be an appendix, the main purpose of which is to embody whatever story is being sold."<sup>2</sup>

### **Engaging the senses**

Central to the task of making goods experiential is embedding elements that appeal to the customer's senses. Any good can be "sensorialized" by observing and accentuating the sensations engaged in its use. In this way the event becomes more memorable and effective.

"Automakers, for example, now spend millions of dollars on every model," write Pine and Gilmore, "to make sure that car doors sound just so when they close. Publishers greatly enhance the covers and interiors of books and magazines with a number of tactile innovations (embossed lettering; scratchy, bumpy or ultra-smooth surfaces) and sight sensations (translucent covers, funky fonts, clever photos)."<sup>3</sup>

### **All the world's a stage**

In the unreal world of the experience economy, work becomes theater and every business is but a stage for offering economic experiences.

Today's theme restaurants and parks are already staging artificial experiences around their well-defined themes. They immerse the consumer in another world, blending education, entertainment, nostalgia, and adventure. Virtual reality industries provide similar experiences.

Barnes and Noble, for example, engages people in a social experience of books with its reading cafes. Cracker Barrel sells the nostalgia of experiencing a past America that no longer exists.

Experience stagers (that is, manufacturers) will

*Experience is now the central item sold. Services provide a mere stage, and goods are but props to engage the individual.*



Holy week procession, Turégano, Spain.

*Life is not  
artificial theater  
but a reality  
in the shadow  
of the Cross.*

script their story with all the features of a Broadway performance. The idea of a story will move away from mere books, movies, and entertainment to actual consumer retail products. Nike, for instance, created Nikeland in Chicago “as a theater, where our customers are the audience participating in the production.”<sup>4</sup>

Pine and Gilmore foresee a time when shopping malls will be so experience-oriented that consumers will pay admission to shop. They claim this “Disneylandization” of commerce will make experiences the main driver of the future economy.

### The spiritual dimension

Past economies held stubbornly firm to their materialistic underpinnings, refusing to consider the spiritual. The experience economy departs from the past by affirming spiritual or even ideological realities.

By the mere fact that experiences are intangible, they take on a spiritual dimension. Moreover, lasting personal experiences often bring interior transformations. Thus, worldviews and ideologies will become a legitimate domain of business.

“Transformations,” write Pine and Gilmore, “turn aspirants into a new you with all the ethical, philosophical, and religious implications that phrase

implies. All commerce involves moral choice.... All economic offerings do more than effect an exchange of value in the present; they also, implicitly or explicitly, promote a certain worldview.”<sup>5</sup>

Such affirmations imply that the new experience economy is a dangerous tool of the cultural revolution now undermining the moral, cultural, and religious foundation of the nation. An economy based on emotions and feelings can promote a similar worldview where principles are all but ignored. Subjective “New Age” philosophies can find economic expression in the mystical experiences offered.

### The Catholic balance

In a Catholic society based on temperance, the intellect and reason govern feelings, emotions, and experiences. Christian virtue keeps the soul in order. Grace sanctifies and strengthens men in this vale of tears as they strive toward perfection and heaven.

Traditional Catholic society avoided the extremes of the modern economy and kept a most admirable balance. It neither affirmed a cold rationalized economic order nor adopted an emotional existentialism.

Medieval men took into account that human societies are living things that cannot be planned or explained as a machine. A proper society leaves much room for spontaneity and experience. However, the person’s intellect always governs and observes these experiences, takes lessons from them, and incorporates them into his thought. This splendid balance turned tradition, myth, and ceremony into experiences that provided a sense of purpose and ultimate meaning.

“Shared experiences and a sense of the past,” writes author Richard Stivers, “are a motivation to conserve what is the best and to avoid the harmful in creative ways that actually make history.”<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to the experience economy, traditional society created real and meaningful experiences. It did not need the empty and plastic experiences of a “Disneyized” world.

Men lived knowing that life is not artificial theater but a reality in the shadow of the Cross. There, medieval man found true happiness and anticipated the heavenly happiness that he would experience for all eternity. ■

### Notes

1. Rolf Jensen, *The Dream Society: How the Coming Shift from Information to Imagination Will Transform Your Business* (New York, 1999), p. 4.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
3. B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Boston,

1999), p. 18.

4. “Niketown Comes to Chicago,” Niketown Chicago press release, July 3, 1992

5. Pine and Gilmore, pp. 183 and 206.

6. Richard Stivers, *The Culture of Cynicism: American Morality in Decline* (Oxford 1994), p. 91.



COVER  
STORY



Detail of *The Last Judgement*, by Fra Angelico

# Why *Speak About* Hell?

BY GARY ISBELL

Many people today avoid mention of Hell and even declare that it should not be spoken about because the thought frightens people. Yet, in Fatima, Our Lady herself revealed a startling vision of Hell to the three young shepherd children. In so doing, she supports the saints, who have so often emphasized the benefit and even necessity of speaking about and meditating on Hell in this life as a way to avoid falling into it in the next.

Nevertheless, the subject of Hell has virtually disappeared from our pulpits and our perspectives. Meanwhile, the world slowly sinks into complete relativism, equating error with truth, evil with good, ugliness with beauty. What supreme folly, for eternity still lies ahead for all of us—eternity, with all its mystery; eternity, which in relation to this life is far more than Everest compared to a grain of sand, far more than the Pacific compared to a droplet of water.

Still, much as God builds Mount Everest with grains of sand, so our eter-

nal destiny will be determined by the fleeting moments of our earthly life.

Again and again one meets people who just “cannot understand how such a good God could condemn someone for eternity.” The answer is very simple: It is precisely because God is good that He sends evil people to Hell. What would one say of a judge who absolves every criminal he is called to pass judgement on, no matter what the criminal is guilty of?

Yes, God is good, and that is why He gives men every opportunity and every grace to do good and thus save themselves and earn eternal bliss. If these opportunities and graces are rejected, He is bound by His own laws to separate that creature from Himself for all eternity—“Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

The “Letter from Beyond” transcribed on the following pages recounts the tragic story of the eternal damnation of a young woman. At first sight, the letter seems to be something of a romance,

but given due consideration, the circumstances force one to the conclusion that the story has a historical value of moral and transcendental significance.

This letter was found among the papers of a deceased nun, who had been a friend of the condemned woman. The nun recounts the events of the life of her companion as known and verified historical facts as well as that the young woman’s eternal fate was made known to her in a dream. The diocesan curia of Treves (Germany) authorized its original publication as being highly instructive.

The letter first appeared in a book of revelations and prophecies, together with other narratives. Fr. Bernhardin Krempel, C.P., Doctor of Theology, published it separately and lent it more authority with his footnotes showing its absolute concordance with Catholic doctrine.

We trust that our readers will find in this “Letter from Beyond” a worthwhile meditation for these troubled times.

# The Letter from Beyond

*The following deposition was found among the papers left by a young lady, a nun, who died in a convent.*

I had a friend. That is, we shared a mutual closeness as friends and neighbors while the two of us worked in the same office.

Later, when Ani got married, I never saw her again. From the moment we met, what reigned between us, in its depth, was amiability more than friendship. Because of this, when she went to live in the elegant neighborhood of villas far from my home after her marriage, I didn't miss her very much.

In mid-September of 1937, while I was vacationing at Lake Garda, my mother wrote to me: "Imagine, Ani N. died. She lost her life in an automobile accident. She was buried yesterday in the cemetery of Woodstock."

The news shocked me. I knew that Ani had never been truly religious. Was she prepared when God called her suddenly? The next morning I attended Holy Mass, which was said for her, in the chapel of the nun's boarding house where I stayed. I prayed fervently for her eternal repose and also offered my Holy Communion for that intention.

I felt increasingly ill at ease throughout the day, and that night I slept restlessly. I awoke suddenly, hearing something like the door of my room being shaken. As I turned the light on, the clock on my nightstand showed ten minutes after midnight. I could see nothing. The house was silent. The waves of Lake Garda could be heard breaking monotonously on the wall of the boarding house garden. I did not hear the wind at all.

Nonetheless, upon awaking I had the impression of having heard another noise besides the shaking of the door. It was a

sound similar to one I used to hear when, in bad humor, my former office manager would toss a problem letter on my desk.

I considered for a moment whether or not I should get up. Ah! It was nothing but a figment of my imagination brought on by the news of her death, I assured myself. Rolling over, I prayed a few Our Fathers for the souls in Purgatory, and again fell asleep.



I then dreamed that I rose in the morning at six o'clock in order to go to the chapel. On opening the door to my room, I stepped on a parcel containing the pages of a letter. Picking it up and recognizing Ani's handwriting, I screamed.

Trembling as I held the pages in my hands, I was, I must confess, so shaken that I could not even utter an Our Father. I was almost suffocating. There was nothing better to do than flee that spot and go into the open air. I hastily arranged my hair, put the letter in my purse, and rushed from the house.

Outside, I followed a winding path up through the hills, passing olive and laurel trees and the neighboring farms, and going beyond the renowned "Gardesana" highway.

The morning broke radiantly. On other days, I would stop every hundred paces, enchanted by the magnificent view of the lake and Garda Island. The most suave blue of the water refreshed me and, like a child admiringly gazing at her grandfa-

ther, I would gaze upon ashen-colored Mount Baldo rising 7200 feet above the opposite shore of the lake. That day, however, I did not have eyes for any of that. After walking a quarter of an hour, I mechanically let myself sink to the bank and leaned against two cypress trees where the day before I had taken such pleasure in reading "The Damsel Teresa." For the first time I regarded the cypress trees as symbols of death, something I had taken no notice of in the south, where these trees are common.

I took up the letter. It lacked a signature, but it was, beyond a doubt, in Ani's handwriting. There was no mistaking the large, volute *S* nor the French *T* that used to irritate Mr. G. at the office.

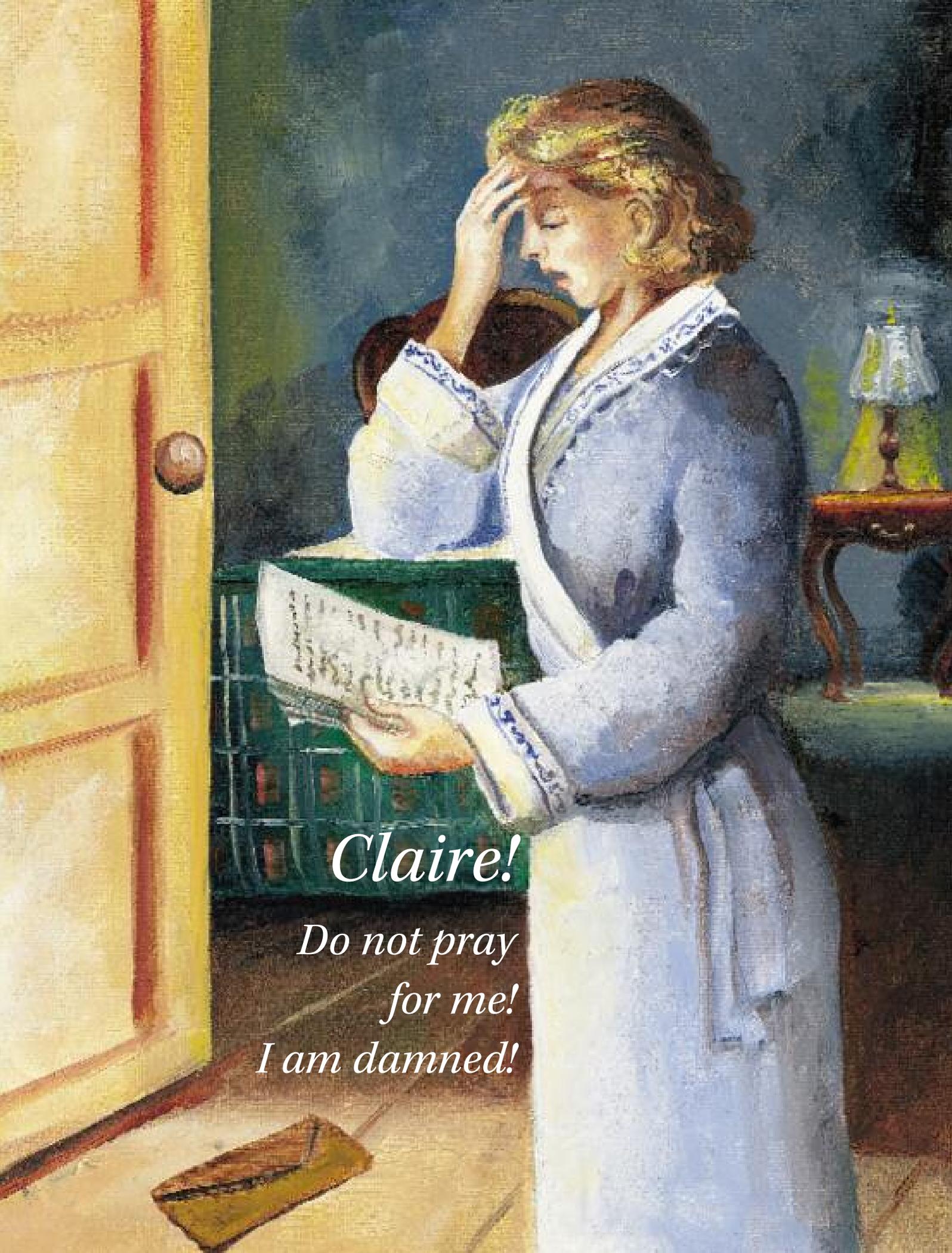
The style was not hers, at least not her usual style of speaking. She conversed and laughed so amiably, with her blue eyes and her graceful nose. Only when we discussed religious topics did she become sarcastic and fall into a rude tone like that in the letter, whose agitated cadence I now entered.

Here, word for word, is the "Letter from Beyond" of Ani V. as I read it in the dream.



Claire!

Do not pray for me. I am damned. As I tell you this and relate to you certain circumstances and details about my condemnation, do not think that I do so out of friendship. Here we no longer love anyone.



*Claire!*

*Do not pray  
for me!  
I am damned!*

I do it as “a part of that power that always desires evil but always produces good.”

In truth, I would like to see you here where I will remain forever.<sup>1</sup>

Do not be surprised at my intent. Here we all think the same way. Our will is petrified in evil—in what you call “evil.” Even when we do something “good,” as I do now in opening your eyes about Hell, we don’t do it with good intentions.<sup>2</sup>

Remember that we knew each other for four years in M. You were 23 and had already worked in the office for six months when I arrived. You kept me out of trouble many times, and frequently gave me good advice while I worked as your trainee. But, what is that which is referred to as “good”? At the time I praised your “charity.” Ridiculous! Your help arose from pure vainglory, as I had already suspected.

Here we don’t acknowledge good in anyone!

You knew me in my youth, but I will fill in certain details.



According to my parents’ plans, I should never have existed. In their carelessness, I was conceived in disgrace. When I came into the light, my two sisters were already 14 and 15 years of age.

I wish that I had never been born! I wish I could annihilate myself at this moment and escape these torments! There could be no pleasure comparable to being able to end my existence, like a piece of clothing reduced to ashes.<sup>3</sup> But I must exist; I must be as I have made myself, with the entire blame of my end upon my own shoulders.

When my parents, still unmarried, moved from the countryside to the city,



*“I put on the paper much information contrary to my will. I also have to choke down the torrent of insults I would like to spew forth.”*

they drifted away from the Church, and they kept company with people who had fallen away from religion. Having met each other at a dance, they were “obliged” to get married six months later. During the wedding ceremony a few drops of holy water fell upon them, just sufficient to draw my mother to Sunday Mass a few times a year. She never taught me to pray correctly. She wore herself out in daily concerns, even when our situation was not difficult.

It is only with deep repugnance and unspeakable disgust that I write words such as *pray, Mass, holy water, and church*. I profoundly detest those who go to church, as well as everyone and everything in general.

For us, everything is a torment. Everything we come to understand at

death, every recollection of life and of what we know, becomes a burning flame.<sup>4</sup>

And all of these memories serve to show us the horrible aspect of the graces we rejected. How this torments us! We do not eat, we do not sleep, nor do we walk with our legs. Being spiritually enchained, we reprobates gaze in terror at our mispent lives, howling and gnashing our teeth, tormented and filled with hatred.

Are you listening? Here we drink hatred as if it were water. We all hate one another.<sup>5</sup>

More than anything else, we hate God. I will try to make you understand how this is.

The blessed in Heaven must necessarily love God, for they constantly behold Him in His awe-inspiring beauty. That makes them ineffably happy. We know this, and the knowledge infuriates us.<sup>6</sup>

On earth, men know God through Creation and Revelation and are able to love Him, but they are not forced to do so.

The believer—I say this seething—who contemplates and meditates upon Christ stretched upon the Cross will love Him.

But the soul whom God approaches and surrounds, fulminating as one rejected, as Avenger and Judge, that soul hates God as we hate Him.<sup>7</sup> This soul hates Him with all the strength of its perverse will. It hates Him eternally, in virtue of the deliberate resolution to reject God in which it ended its earthly life. This perverse act of the will can never be rescinded, nor would we ever want to do so.

Do you now understand why Hell must be eternal? It is because our obstinacy never diminishes and never ends.

Being compelled to do so, I add that God is still merciful toward you. I say “compelled” because even though I write this letter, I cannot lie as I would like to do. I put on the paper much that goes against my will. I also have to choke down the torrent of insults I would like to spew forth.

1. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Supplement (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1948), Q. 98, art. 4—“Therefore, they [the damned] will wish all the good were damned.”

2. *Ibid.*, art. 1—The determined will “is in them always evil; and this because they are completely turned away from the last end of a right will.... Hence even though they will some good, they do not will it well so that one be able to call their will good on that account.”

3. *Ibid.*, art. 3, ad. 3—“Although not to be is very evil in so far as it removes being, it is very good in so far as it removes unhappiness, which is the greatest of evils, and thus it is preferred not to be.”

4. *Ibid.*, art. 7—“In the damned there will be actual consideration of the things

they knew heretofore as matters of sorrow, but not as a cause of pleasure. For they will consider both the evil they have done, and for which they were damned, and the delightful goods they have lost, and on both counts they will suffer torments.”

5. *Ibid.*, art. 4—“Even as in the blessed in heaven there will be most perfect charity, so in the damned there will be the most perfect hate.”

6. *Ibid.*, art. 9—“The damned, before the judgment day, will see the blessed in glory, in such a way as to know, not what that glory is like, but only that they are in a state of glory that surpasses all thought.”

7. *Ibid.*, art. 8—“The damned do not hate God except because He punishes and forbids what is agreeable to their evil will: and consequently they will think of Him only as punishing and forbidding.”

God showed mercy toward us in that He did not allow us to do all the evil we wanted to do while on earth. Had He permitted us to do so, we would have greatly added to our guilt and chastisement. He allowed us to die prematurely—as is my case—or permitted attenuating circumstances.

Even now He is merciful toward us, for He does not oblige us to draw near to Him. He allows us to remain in this distant place of Hell, thus diminishing our torment.<sup>8</sup> Every step closer to God would torment me more than every step you might take toward a fire.

You were astonished one day when I told you in passing what my father had told me some days prior to my First Communion: “Take care, little Ani, that you get a beautiful dress; the rest is nothing but a sham.” I was almost ashamed for having shocked you so, but now I laugh about it. The best part of this sham was that Communion was only allowed at twelve years of age. By then, I had already amply sampled the world’s pleasures and had easily left everything religious aside, so I didn’t take Communion seriously.

The new custom of allowing children to receive Holy Communion at seven years of age infuriates us. We strive in every possible way to frustrate this, making people believe that in order to receive Communion there must be comprehension, that it is necessary for children to have committed mortal sins before receiving. The “white God” [that is, the Sacred Host] will then be less prejudicial than if He were received with faith, hope, and love, the fruits of Baptism—I spit upon all this!—which are still alive in a child’s heart. Do you recall that I already had this same point of view on earth?



I return now to my father. He fought a lot with my mother. I rarely told you this because I was ashamed of it. Ah! What is shame? Something ridiculous! We are indifferent to everything.

My parents no longer slept in the same room. I slept in my mother’s room, and my father slept in the adjoining room, to which he would retire at any hour of the night. He drank heavily and exhausted all our wealth. My sisters were employed and

needed the money they made, so Mother began to work. In the last year of her bitter life, Father often beat her when she did not want to give him money.

He was always very kind to me. I told you about this one day and you were scandalized with my capriciousness—but what was there about me that didn’t scandalize you?—such as when I twice returned new pairs of shoes one day because the style of the heel wasn’t modern enough for me.

### *“What would happen if your father were to die?”*



On the night in which a mortal stroke took my father, something happened that I never told you, because I feared a disagreeable interpretation on your part. Today, however, you ought to know it. The fact is memorable, for it is the first time that my true spirit, like that of a cruel executioner, revealed itself.

I was asleep in my mother’s bedroom. She was sleeping deeply, as her regular breathing indicated. Suddenly, I heard someone utter my name. An unfamiliar voice murmured, “What would happen if your father were to die?”

I no longer loved my father, since he had begun to mistreat my mother. Properly speaking, I no longer loved anyone; I only clung to certain people who were still kind

to me. Love without a natural motive scarcely exists except in souls that live in the state of grace, which I did not.

I responded to that mysterious questioner, “Surely he is not dying.”

After a brief interval, I heard the same well-understood question, without troubling myself as to where it came from.

“Whatever! He’s not dying,” was the sullen reply that escaped me.

For the third time I was questioned: “What would happen were your father to die?”

In a flash it passed through my mind how Father often came home somewhat drunk, scolding and fighting with Mother, and how often he embarrassed us in front of our neighbors and acquaintances!

I then cried out stubbornly: “All right, then, it’s what he deserves. Let him die!”

Afterwards, everything became still.

The following morning, when mother went upstairs to tidy up Father’s room, she found the door locked. Around noon they forced it open. Father was lying half-dressed on his bed—dead, a corpse. He probably caught a cold while looking for a beer in the cellar. He had been sick for a long time.

[Could it be that God had depended upon the will of a child, to whom this man had shown some goodness, to grant him more time and an opportunity to convert?]



You and Marta made me enroll in the association of young ladies. I never told you that I found the instructions of the two directors to be quite conniving. I found the games amusing enough. As you know, I quickly came to hold a preponderant role in them, which flattered me. I also found the outings pleasant, sometimes even allowing myself to be taken to Confession and receive Holy Communion. I really had nothing to confess, for I never took account of my thoughts and sentiments. I was still not ready for worse things.

One day you admonished me: “Ani, you

8. *Summa*, I, Q. 21, art. 4, ad. 1—“Even in the damnation of the reprobate mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally remit, yet somewhat alleviates, in punishing short of what is deserved.”

*“Once you reprimanded me because in church, rather than genuflecting, I made only a hasty nod of my head. You thought it was laziness, not suspecting that I already no longer believed in the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.”*



will be lost if you don't pray more." In truth I prayed very little, and always reluctantly and with annoyance.

You were undoubtedly right. All those who burn in Hell either did not pray, or did not pray enough. Prayer is the first step toward God. It is always decisive, especially prayer to her who is the Mother of God, whose name we are not permitted to say. Devotion to her draws innumerable souls away from the devil, souls whose sins would otherwise have cast them into his hands.

I continue, furious, being obliged to do so...

Praying is the easiest thing on earth, and justly so, for God linked salvation to this simplest of actions.

To those who pray assiduously, God grants, bit by bit, so much light and strength that even a drowning sinner is able to raise himself up definitively through prayer, even though he be immersed in mud up to his chest.

In fact, in my last years of life I no longer prayed, and thus deprived myself of the graces without which no one can be saved.

Here we no longer receive any grace at all. Even if we did receive a grace, we would reject it with disdain. All the vacillations of earthly life end in the beyond.



In earthly life, man can pass from a state of sin to a state of grace. From grace he can fall into sin. I often fell out of weakness, rarely out of malice. With death, this inconstant "yes" and "no," this rising and falling, comes to an end. Through death, every individual enters into his final state, fixed and unalterable.

As one advances in age, these rises and falls become smaller. True, until one dies one can either convert or turn one's back upon God. In death, however, one decides mechanically, with the last tremors of his will, in the same way he did throughout his life.

A good or bad habit becomes second nature, and this is what moves a person one way or another in his final moments. So it was with me. For years I had lived apart from God. Consequently, when I received that final call of grace, I decided against Him. It was fatal not because I had

sinned so many times, but rather because I had so often refused to repent and amend my life.

You repeatedly admonished me to hear sermons and to read pious books, but I regularly excused myself, citing a lack of time. Could I have done anything more to increase my inner uncertainty?

By the time I reached this critical point, shortly before I left the association of young ladies, it would have been difficult for me to follow any other path. I felt unhappy and insecure. I had erected a huge wall impeding my conversion, which you must not have perceived. You must have thought my conversion easy when once you said to me: "Ani, make a good confession and everything will be all right."

I suspected that what you said was true, but the world, the flesh, and the devil already had me securely in their clutches.

I never believed in the action of the devil, but now I attest that the devil powerfully influences people such as I was then.<sup>9</sup> Only many prayers on the part of others and my own prayers, together with sacrifices and sufferings, would have managed to wrench me away from him. And this only slowly.

There are very few people who are physically possessed, but many who are possessed interiorly. The devil cannot suppress the free will of those who give themselves over to his influence, yet, as a chastisement for the person's almost total apostasy, God permits the person to be dominated by "evil."

Although I hate the devil, I like him because he and his helpers, the angels that fell with him at the beginning of time, strive to cause the loss of the people on earth. There are myriad demons. Uncountable numbers of them wander through the world, like a swarm of flies, without their presence even being suspected.

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<sup>9</sup> "Be sober and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Ephes. 6:11-12).

It does not fall to us who have been condemned to tempt you; this is left to the fallen spirits.<sup>10</sup> Our torments increase every time they bring another soul to Hell, but hatred is capable of anything!<sup>11</sup>

Even though I trod tortuous byways, God sought me out. I prepared the way for grace by means of works of natural charity I often did by the natural inclination of my character. At times, too, God beckoned me to a church. When, despite work at the office during the day, I took care of my sick mother, no small sacrifice for me, I strongly felt these attractions of God.

Once, in the hospital chapel where you used to take me during our free time at mid-day, I was so moved that I found myself but one step away from conversion. And I cried.

The pleasures of the world, however, flowed over this grace like a torrent. The thorns choked out the wheat. Rationalizing that religion is sentimentalism, according to the manner it was discussed in the office, I cast this grace, like so many others, to the ground.

Once you reprimanded me because in church, rather than genuflecting, I made only a hasty nod of my head. You thought it was laziness, not suspecting that I already no longer believed in the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. I now believe it, though only naturally, in the manner that one believes in a storm, the signs and effects of which one perceives.

In the interim, I had arranged a religion for myself. The general opinion in the office, that after death souls would return to this world in other beings and would pass through yet other beings in an endless succession, pleased me. With this, I banished the distressing problem of the hereafter to the point that it no longer troubled me.

Why did you not remind me of the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus, in which the narrator, Christ, immediately

10. *Summa*, Suppl., Q. 98, art. 6, ad. 2— "Men who are damned are not occupied in drawing other to damnation, as the demons are."

11. *Ibid.*, art. 4, ad. 3— "Although an increase in the number of the damned results in an increase of each one's punishment, so much the more will their hatred and envy increase that they will prefer to be more tormented with many rather than less tormented alone."



*"All those who burn in Hell either did not pray, or did not pray enough. Prayer is the first step toward God. It is always decisive, especially prayer to her who is the Mother of God, whose name we are not permitted to say."*

after their deaths, sent one to Hell and the other to Paradise? But, what would this reminder have accomplished? Nothing more than your pious advice.

Bit by bit I found a god, one privileged enough to be called a god, and distant enough that I didn't have to deal with him. I was even confused enough to make of myself, at will and without changing my religion, a pantheistic god or even a proud deity.

This "god" had neither a heaven to console me nor a hell to frighten me. I left him in peace. This is what my adoration of him consisted of.

One easily believes in what one loves. With the passing of years, I became sufficiently convinced of my religion. I lived well with it, without its causing me any inconvenience.

Only one thing would have been able to bring me to my senses: a profound and prolonged suffering. But this suffering

never came. Do you now understand that "Whom God loves, God chastises"?



The association of young ladies organized an outing one July day. Yes, I liked those outings, but not the sweetly pious women who went on them.

Recently, an image far different from that one of Our Lady of Grace had been placed upon the altar of my heart. Beside that of Our Lady there stood the gentlemanly figure of Max N., who worked in the warehouse. A short time prior to this we had conversed several times. On this occasion, he asked me out on the very Sunday of the ladies' outing. Another woman whom he had been dating was in the hospital.

He noticed, of course, that I had my eyes on him, but I had never thought of marrying him. He was well-to-do, but too friendly toward any and every young lady. Up to that time I had wanted a man who belonged to me alone, and I alone to him. Thus, I had always kept a certain distance.

[This is true. There was something noble about Ani, notwithstanding all her religious indifference. It astonishes me that "honest" people are also capable of falling into Hell if they are dishonest enough to flee from encountering God.]

Max heaped every kindness upon me on the day of that outing. Our conversation, of course, was certainly not that of your pious women.

On the following day in the office, you reprimanded me for not having gone with you. I then told you of my Sunday amusements.

Your first question was: "Did you go to Mass?" Crazy! How could I have gone to Mass when we had agreed to leave at six in the morning? Do you still remember that I added excitedly, "The good God is not so mean as your little priests!" Now it falls to me to confess to you that, His infinite goodness notwithstanding, God takes everything much more seriously than any priest.

After this first outing with Max, I attended just one more meeting of the young ladies' association. Certain things attracted me at Christmastime, but I had already dissociated myself from you interiorly.

Movies, dances, and outings followed.

At times Max and I argued, but I knew how to keep him interested in me.

My rival, upon being released from the hospital, was furious, and I found her very disagreeable. Her anger worked in my favor, though, for my discreet calm made a great impression upon Max and, ultimately, led him to choose me over her.

I knew just how to denigrate her. I would speak calmly, seeming to be entirely objective, but spewing venom from within. Sentiments and insinuations such as these rapidly lead one to Hell. They are diabolical, in the true sense of the word.

Why am I telling you this? To show you how I came to separate myself entirely from God.

To be so distant from God, it was not necessary to be entirely familiar with Max. I knew that if I lowered myself to that before the time, he would look down on me, so I restrained myself and refused. In truth, I was ready to do anything I thought useful. Determined to win Max, I would stop at nothing.

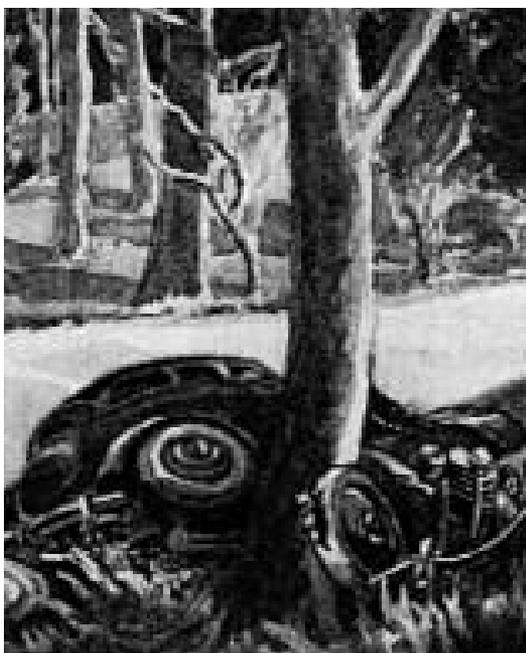
Little by little we fell in love, for both of us possessed estimable qualities that we could mutually appreciate. I was talented and made of myself an able conversationalist, and so I eventually had Max in my hands, assured that I alone possessed him, at least in those last months before our wedding.

This is what constituted my apostasy from God: I made a mere creature into my god. In no other way is this more fully realized than in the relationship between two creatures of the opposite sex; love is stifled in matter. This becomes the allure, the sting, and the venom of the object that is loved. The "adoration" I rendered Max became an ardent religion.



At this stage of my life I would hypocritically run off to church during the office lunch hour, to the good-for-nothing priests, the mumbling of the Rosary, and other foolishness.

You strove to encourage this, with some intelligence but apparently without suspecting that, in final analysis, I no



*Strange! On that very morning, the idea that I could, after all, go to Mass again came to me unexpectedly. It sounded to me like a supplication. Clear and determined, my "no!" nipped the thought in the bud. I must finish with this once and for all, and I assumed all the consequences.*

longer had anything to do with these things. I sought only to set my conscience at ease—I still needed that—in order to justify my apostasy.

In the depth of my soul I lived in revolt against God. You did not perceive that. You always thought I was still Catholic. I wanted to be seen as such, even going so far as giving a donation to the church, thinking that a little bit of "insurance" couldn't hurt.

As certain as you were about your answers, they always went in one ear and out the other. I was sure that you could not be right. Taking into consideration our strained relationship, when my marriage put some distance between us, the pain of our separation was slight.

I went to Confession and Holy Communion one more time before my wedding, but it was a mere formality. My husband felt the same way. But why not? We fulfilled those formalities just like any others.

You would call that "unworthy." But after that unworthy Communion I had greater peace of mind. It was the last of my life.

Our married life was generally harmonious. We had the same opinion on just about everything. That included our shared opinion regarding children: We didn't want the burden. Deep down, my husband wanted one, naturally, but no more. Ultimately, I was able to banish the idea. I preferred fine clothing and furniture, tea with the ladies, rides in our car, and like amusements.

There passed a year of earthly pleasure from our wedding day until my sudden death.

Every Sunday we went for a drive or visited my husband's relatives—I was ashamed of mine. My husband's relatives, like us, swam well on the surface of life.

Inside, however, I never felt truly happy. Something always gnawed at my soul. I hoped that death, certainly far in the future, would end everything.

When still a child, I once heard in a sermon that God rewards the good one does. If He cannot do this in the next life, He will do it on earth. Thus, without my expecting it, I received an inheritance from my Aunt, and my husband had the good fortune of seeing his salary raised considerably. With this, were we able to decorate our new house very well.



My religion was in its last agony, like daylight's last glimmer in the distant sky. The clubs and cafes of the city and the restaurants where we ate when traveling

did not draw us any closer to God. Everyone who frequented them lived as we did, concerned about externals, not essences or things of the soul

While on vacation we visited a famous cathedral, seeking only to savor the artistic value of the masterpieces it contained. I counteracted the religious air it radiated, chiefly that of the Middle Ages, seizing every opportunity for ridicule. Thus, I criticized a lay brother who served as our guide for being a bit unkempt and awkward; I criticized the trade of the pious monks who made and sold liqueur; I disparaged the eternal pealing of the bells calling people to churches that care only for money. I was thereby able to reject every grace that came knocking at my door.

In particular, I let my ill humor flow profusely over every old depiction of Hell in books, cemeteries, and elsewhere, showing devils roasting souls in red or yellow fire while their long-tailed associates continually bring more victims.

Claire, while Hell might be poorly drawn, it can never be exaggerated.

Above all, I always scoffed at the fire of Hell. Do you recall our conversation on the fire of Hell when I jokingly put a lit match under your nose and asked, "Does it smell like this?"

You quickly blew out the match, but here the fire is never extinguished. Moreover, the fire of which the Bible speaks is not the torment of conscience. Fire means fire. One must understand Our Lord's declaration in its literal sense: "Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire." Literally!

One might ask how it is that the spirit can be affected by material fire.

How then, on earth, does the soul suffer when one's finger is held in a fire? The soul itself does not burn, but what pain the man as a whole endures!

In like manner, here we are imprisoned by the fire in our beings and faculties. Our souls are deprived of their natural movements; we can neither think nor want what we want.<sup>12</sup>

Do not try to comprehend the mystery that, contrary to the laws of material nature, the fire of Hell burns without consuming.



Our greatest torment consists in knowing with certainty that we will never see God.

Oh, how that toward which we were indifferent while on earth tortures us here!—When the knife but lies on the table, it gives one only a cold feeling. One can see its keen edge, but not feel it. But the moment it enters one's flesh, he screams with pain.

Before, we only saw the loss of God; now we feel it.<sup>13</sup>

All souls do not suffer equally. The more frivolous, malicious, and determined someone was in sin, the more the loss of God weighs upon him, and the more torture he feels due to the creation he has abused.

Catholics who are damned suffer more than those of other beliefs because, in general, they received more lights and graces without taking advantage of them.

He who knows more suffers more than those who had lesser knowledge.

He who sinned out of malice suffers more than those who fell from weakness.

No one, however, suffers more than he deserves. Would that this were not true, so that I might have some reason to hate!

You once told me that no one falls into Hell without knowing that that is his destination, as was revealed to a saint. Though I laughed at that, I yet entrenched myself behind the thought that there was still time for me to convert—that is how I thought in my heart.

What you said is true. Certainly, before my sudden end, I did not know Hell as it truly is. No human being does. But of this I had no doubt: were I to die, I would enter into eternity in a state of revolt against God, and I will suffer the conse-



*"I had never felt such consolation in the Angelic Salutation as I did after this dream. Pausing, I prayed three Ave Marias. It then became clear, most clear to me: One must always cling to Our Lord's blessed Mother, to venerate her as her own child, if one does not want to suffer the fate related here."*

12. *Summa*, Suppl., Q.70, art. 3—"The fire of its nature is able to have an incorporeal spirit united to it as a thing placed is united to a place; that as the instrument of Divine justice it is enabled to detain it enchained as it were, and in this respect this fire is really hurtful to the spirit, and thus the soul seeing the fire as something hurtful to it is tormented by the fire."

13. "The separation from God is a torment as great as God." Phrase attributed to Saint Augustine.

quences.

As I already declared, I didn't turn back but persevered along the same path, impelled by habit, whereby people act with greater deliberation and regularity as they grow older.



My death occurred in the following way:

A week ago—I speak to you in terms of the way in which you measure time; judging by the pain I have endured, I should already have been burning in Hell for ten years—on a Sunday, my husband and I went for a drive, my last one.

The day broke radiantly. I felt well, as I rarely did, but a sinister feeling came over me.

On our way home my husband and I were unexpectedly blinded by the lights of a car rapidly approaching from the opposite direction. My husband lost control of our car.

“Jesus!” I shouted, not as a prayer, but as a scream. I felt a crushing pain—a trifle in comparison with my present pain. I then lost consciousness.

Strange! On that very morning, the idea that I could, after all, go to Mass again came to me unexpectedly. It sounded to me like a supplication. Clear and determined, my “No!” nipped the thought in the bud. I must finish with this once and for all, and I assumed all the consequences.

And now I endure them.



You know what happened after my death. The fate of my husband, my mother, of my body and burial, all of this you know down to the last details, as do I through a natural intuition we have here. We have only a confused knowledge of

what transpires in the world, but we know what closely concerned us.



At the moment of my death I awoke from darkness. I found myself suddenly enveloped by a blinding light. It was at the same place where my body lay. It seemed almost like a theater, where the lights suddenly go out, the curtain noisily opens, and a tragically illuminated scene appears: the scene of my life.

I saw my soul as if in a mirror. I saw the graces I had trampled underfoot from the time I was young until that final “No!” to God. I felt like an assassin brought to trial with my inanimate victim before me.—Repent? Never!<sup>14</sup> Was I ashamed of myself? Not at all!

Notwithstanding, it was impossible for me to remain in the presence of the God I had denied and rejected. Only one thing remained for me: the fire.

Thus, as Cain fled from the body of Abel, so did my soul flee far away from this overwhelming sight.

That was my private judgment.

The invisible Judge spoke: “Depart from Me!” and my soul swiftly fell, like a sul-furous shadow, into the place of eternal torment!<sup>15</sup>



#### Closing information from Claire

Thus ended the letter from Ani about Hell. The last words were so twisted as to be almost illegible. When I finished reading the

last word, the entire letter turned to ashes.

What is that I hear? Amidst the harsh tones of the lines I imagined reading there resounded the sweet sound of a bell. I awoke suddenly to find myself still in bed in my room. The morning light of daybreak found its way in. From the parish church came the sound of the bells ringing the *Angelus*.

Had it all been but a dream?

I had never felt such consolation in the Angelic Salutation as I did after this dream. Pausing, I prayed three *Ave Marias*. It then became clear, most clear to me: One must always cling to Our Lord's blessed Mother, venerate Mary as her own child, if one does not want to suffer the same fate told you—albeit in a dream—by a soul that will never see God.

Still frightened and shaking due to that night-time revelation, I got up, dressed myself hastily, and rushed to the chapel of the house.

My heart beat violently. The guests kneeling closest to me looked at me with concern. Perhaps they thought that I was so excited and flushed because I had run down the stairway.

That afternoon in the garden I encountered a kindly, nearsighted lady from Budapest, frail as a child, suffering greatly, yet of lofty spirit and fervent in the service of God. She said to me, “Miss, Our Lord does not want to be served in haste.” But she then perceived that something else had upset and preoccupied me. She added kindly: “Let nothing distress you—you know the advice of Saint Teresa—let nothing alarm you. Everything passes. He who possesses God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.”

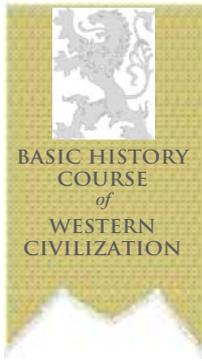
While she humbly whispered these words to me she seemed to be reading my soul.

“God alone suffices.” Yes, He has to be enough for me, in this life and in the next. I want to possess Him there one day, as numerous as may be the sacrifices I have to make here in order to triumph. I do not want to fall into Hell. ■

14. Q. 98, art. 2—“The wicked will not repent of their sins directly [that is, out of hatred of sin], because consent in the malice of sin will remain in them; but they will repent indirectly [that is, because of the consequent suffering].

15. That the punishment of Hell is eternal is a dogma, certainly the most terrible of all, rooted in Sacred Scripture. “Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was

prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). See also Judith 16:21; Matt. 25:46; II Thess. 1:9; Jude 1:13; Apoc. 14:11 and 20:10; and others. That the word eternal is not to be understood or interpreted as long is clear by such expressions as “unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:12; Mark 9:43) and “...the fire is not extinguished” (Mark 9:45). If illustration of this dogma were not appropriate, then Our Lord would not have told the parable of poor Lazarus and the rich man.



## Chapter XIX

# The Empire of Charlemagne and the Papal States

BY JEREMIAS WELLS

During the decades surrounding Charlemagne's birth (742), dynamic forces were pushing and pulling on the Papacy from several different directions. By their reactions to the enormous, almost crushing pressure, three sainted popes between 715 and 752 bravely repelled powerful enemies that threatened the independence of the Church. The interplay of the conflict between Rome and two of these enemies, the Byzantine Empire and the Lombards, and its alliance with the Kingdom of the Franks resulted in the formation of Christian Europe.

Rome included a large amount of the surrounding countryside and was often referred to as the Duchy of Rome. Technically it still lay within the Byzantine Empire but, because of the malignant and irresponsible treatment from Constantinople, that technicality would soon cease.

### Byzantine oppression

After a period of political instability when many imperial reigns ended after a few months or at most a couple of years and usually with violence, a brutal and unlettered soldier, Leo III, usurped the throne. He opened his reign auspiciously in 711 by soundly defeating the Moslems who had besieged Constantinople. But that was the last benefit Christianity gained from Leo.

Byzantine Italy had frequently suffered great hardship in the past from heavy taxation, but the popes usually succeeded in alleviating the more oppressive levies. Leo, with complete disregard for his Roman subjects, decided to double all previous rates. Pope Saint Gregory II (715-731), appalled by the injustice, absolutely refused to pay such an exorbitant increase. The emperor's Italian governor, the exarch of Ravenna, collected some troops and

marched on Rome, but the Roman militia with some help from the Lombards in Spoleto easily defended the Pope. Imperial authority in Rome had ceased.

Leo then embarked on another cruel and destructive persecution in a long line of such deprivations. On erroneous doctrinal grounds, he prohibited all veneration of pictures and images that represented Jesus Christ, His Virgin Mother, or the saints. Once again Our Lord's sacred humanity



The crown of Charlemagne.

was attacked. Resistance to this outrageous edict caused blood to flow all over the Empire, from Constantinople through Greece to the Italian Peninsula.

Both Gregory II and his successor, Saint Gregory III, condemned this heresy, known as Iconoclasm. The ruthless Emperor retaliated by confiscating all the patrimonies of the Pope in southern Italy and Sicily, lands that for two hundred years had fed the poor in Rome and had otherwise provided the funds for social welfare when Constantinople was incapable of doing so. He also transferred the diocese in

Sicily and Illyricum to the eastern patriarchate. Illyricum (modern Bosnia and Serbia), which was never returned to Roman authority, has had a long history of trouble. In practical terms, these actions began a rather swift decline of Byzantine rule in central Italy, thus creating a void that the Lombards tried to fill.

### The Lombards attack once again

Ever since the Lombards had invaded Italy, their conquered territory had been separated by a strip of imperial land that ran from the Byzantine capital of Ravenna on the Adriatic Sea through a series of towns known collectively as the Pentapolis, across the Apennines near Perugia and Assisi, and down past Rome to the Tyrrhenian Sea. This valuable strip of real estate constantly attracted the grasping eyes of the still rapacious Lombards, even though they had converted to Christianity, at least superficially. Bringing them into civilization was similar to taming a wolf, because, like the rapacious carnivore, there lay deep inside an irrepressible lawlessness.

Throughout the long years of his reign, the Lombard King Luitprand (712-744) was constantly torn between his devotion to the See of Saint Peter and the barbarian thirst to conquer more land. Numerous times he went on a rampage of slaughter and plunder. Pope Gregory III and his successor, Saint Zachary (742-752), would then soothe the agitated soul and, through brilliant and courageous diplomacy, repossess the stolen lands.

However, the papal charm and persuasiveness only postponed the inevitable Lombard attempt to conquer the entire peninsula. By 752 a new cast of principal players controlled the destiny of central Italy and the direction of Western



adept at intrigue. When violence broke out, he usually supported one of the factions through unscrupulous agents.

The Papacy was further jeopardized when the meddling queen mother arranged for a diplomatic marriage between her son, Charles, who was already married, and the daughter of Desiderius. As the Lombard aggression increased, however, Charlemagne packed up his new queen and sent her back to Lombardy.

At the beginning and end of Charles' marital life we witness some perplexing irregularities, especially for a man with a strong devotion to the See of Saint Peter and an obvious piety. While at his palace in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), Charlemagne went to the chapel three or four times a day, including for Mass and Vespers. However, he would occasionally lapse into barbarian custom and allow his tribal instincts to dominate his actions.

When the strong-willed Hadrian I became pope in 772, he put a stop to all the intrigue and internal discord and broke off friendly relations with the Lombard King. Desiderius, enraged at both Hadrian and Charlemagne, attacked the Papal States. Not only was a dangerous enemy attempting to destroy the capital of Christendom, but Frankish honor was at stake since Pepin had guaranteed the integrity of the Roman lands.

Charlemagne, a master at military planning, brought a large army through a main pass of the Alps and faced a strong Lombard fortification blocking the passage at the other end. Meanwhile, two additional units of Franks had outflanked the enemy by using adjacent, unguarded passes and were preparing to come up behind the fortifications. Desiderius, not wishing to be trapped, evacuated his troops to his capital at Pavia, and Charlemagne marched into Italy unopposed.

While he was laying siege to Pavia, Charlemagne stole away with an impressive retinue to pray during Eastertide at the tombs of the holy Apostles and to greet Pope Hadrian. The two powerful personalities at first indicated some suspicion of each other's intentions, but they quickly developed a warm and fruitful partnership.

Two months after Charlemagne's return to the siege, Desiderius surrendered. Like his father, Charlemagne had been motivated by a sense of duty to the Papacy, but

unlike his father he resolved the ongoing warfare more decisively. He could not and would not continually march over the Alps to deal with the traitorous Lombards. He deposed Desiderius, sent him to a Frankish monastery, and assumed the Lombard crown himself. However, the King of the Franks and Lombards had no time to rest, for another border crisis, one that was to last for over thirty years, called him home.

### The perfidious Saxons

Off the northeast corner of Frankland between the Rhine and the Elbe lived the Saxons, formidable barbarians and deep-seated pagans. Einhard, Charlemagne's famous contemporary biographer, acutely



Charlemagne by Dürer

observed, "No war was ever carried on with such persistence and bitterness...because the Saxons were a fierce people, given to worship of devils and hostile to our religion [and who transgressed] all law, human and divine." Typically, Saxon raiders would swoop down on Frankish settlements, burn the church, seize what goods and slaves they could carry, and disappear into the remote forests and marshlands. At the monastery of Fritzlar, founded by Saint Boniface, they stole relics and a silver cross and attempted to burn the place down, but "two youths in white garments appeared to protect it."

After the bloody raiding parties, Charlemagne would mount campaigns of conquest, construct fortresses, and establish churches and monasteries. At the first opportunity, when Charles was provoked elsewhere, the Saxons would go on another binge of destruction. Nevertheless, Charlemagne slowly pushed the boundaries between the two implacable foes further north and east, and the patient evangelization began to succeed. When the Saxon chieftains began to participate at the annual assemblies of all Frankish leaders, Charles felt the pendulum of success was swinging in his favor, but then it swung to the other side.

In 782, for the first time, Charles did not lead an army into the field, wanting instead to enjoy the burgeoning intellectual life at his court. During his absence, Widikund, a fearless, eloquent rebel, inspired a revolt against the Frankish occupation and also a class war by the peasants against their own nobles. This resulted in the slaughter of the Frankish army along with its most brave and trusted officers, all intimate associates of the King.

Charlemagne once again took personal charge of the campaign. Although Widikund fled back to his Danish in-laws, Charlemagne discovered and captured 4,500 of the leading agitators. He undoubtedly reached the conclusion that harsh punishment in its most severe form was the only proper chastisement for the oath-breaking Saxons. All were beheaded.

For three years Charles devastated Saxony, not for revenge nor love of oppression but because of his great vision of Christian unity and his historical sense, for he knew that if the Saxons ever united under a great leader, they would do to the growing Frankish Empire what the Franks had done centuries earlier to the Romans. Widikund, seeing his country falling into ruin, surrendered and, with Charlemagne as his sponsor, was baptized into the Catholic Church. Complete assimilation into the Christian kingdom took another ten years, but the worst was over.

At intervals in the war against Saxony, Charlemagne took territory from the Moslems in Spain, acquired Bavaria bloodlessly, and won a booty-laden victory against the Mongol Avars on the Hungarian plains. His son Pepin, King of Italy, eventually removed the Avars from Carinthia, part

of modern Austria, and incorporated it into the Carolingian Empire.

In 778, while Charlemagne was returning from the campaign against the Moors, he passed through a narrow defile in the Pyrenees. Basque mountaineers ambushed the rear guard, slaughtered all to the man, and made off with the baggage. From this tragic encounter, the death of Roland, one of the King's most trusted knights, rang through the Middle Ages in the "Song of Roland," the greatest epic poem between Virgil and Dante. Roland's obedience unto death symbolized the great medieval concepts of loyalty and sacrifice.

Throughout his campaigns, Charlemagne gave constant evidence of his unshakable determination, an enormous ability to solve logistical problems, and an awareness of the growing structure of Western Christendom. He was the greatest military commander of the millennium.

### The Carolingian Renaissance

As much as history applauds Charlemagne's military exploits and the unification of Gallo-Roman, Germanic, and Italian elements into one kingdom, the cultural and spiritual achievements during his long reign had a far more monumental effect. In Charlemagne's kingdom, the nascent Europe, we see the origin of medieval culture, a culture that was religious in character. Often called the Carolingian Renaissance, this process was comprised of two major components: a significant increase in learning and the diffusion of divine law into all aspects of society and government.

For Charlemagne the blueprint for governing the relationship of the temporal and spiritual orders was found in Saint Augustine's *City of God*. The great Church Doctor provided an understanding of our supernatural destiny and the obligation of rulers to assist in establishing a society based on the love of God. Charlemagne also followed in the tradition of Saint Gregory the Great in his view of the rights and duties of a Christian king as protector of the Holy See.

To embark on his ambitious cultural program and to Christianize the vast terri-

tories he had just conquered, Charles needed a large reservoir of educated clergy and trained teachers, which he simply did not have in the Frankish realm. He found the nucleus of literate and gifted men among the refugees from Spain, from the conquered land in Italy, and above all from the Anglo-Saxons. Emanating from the Palace School at the King's court under the direction of the Englishman Alcuin, the most cultured scholar in residence, the revival of learning spread to the monaster-

offer sacrifice, the other to rule and judge.

### The coronation

Pope Hadrian died in 795 and was succeeded by Saint Leo III who, although personally devout, lacked the talent and strength that guided his predecessor. Four years later factional dissensions in Rome once again erupted into violence. The Pontiff had begun a holy procession when a gang of thugs rushed from a nearby church, knocked him off his horse and smashed him to the ground, all the while inflicting terrible damage to his head in an attempt to put out his eyes and remove his tongue. After having left him alone and bleeding in the street, the vicious gang returned and dragged him into the church for a second round of bloody mutilations.

The horribly wounded Pope was subsequently rescued by the Duke of Spoleto and went to Charlemagne for safety. Contemporary accounts report, "by the will of God and the intercession of Blessed Peter, [Pope Leo] recovered his sight and received back the use of his tongue."<sup>4</sup> Leo returned some months later accompanied by a strong escort to a divided Rome to face false accusations.

Throughout the following year, Alcuin, now abbot of St. Martins at Tours, mounted a vigorous campaign of correspondence on behalf of Leo, reminding Charlemagne of his moral responsibility to restore peace in Rome. Implicit in these letters was the recognition that Charles was the representative of order in the world which had been violated by the vicious attack on the Pope.

Charlemagne traveled to Rome a year later (December, 800) to assist in the process that restored Leo to his full power as spiritual and temporal leader of the Papal States. At no time did Charles officiate at any hearings that investigated the conduct of Saint Leo, for Alcuin had already reminded the King that he lacked any jurisdiction over the Holy See and that no man on earth had the authority to judge the Pope. Two days before Christmas, a great assembly convened, composed of the highest ranking prelates and noblemen of both Romans and Franks who, while discussing other problems, encouraged Charlemagne to accept the title of emperor.

On the morning of Christmas Day in



ies and the cathedral schools. There the teachers and preachers were trained, and the books of classical Latin and patristic literature were copied in the elegant Carolingian Minuscule script which became the model for the first printed type centuries later.

Unlike the humanistic Renaissance of the fourteenth and subsequent centuries, the Renaissance of Charles transformed contemporary society in accordance with the doctrines of Christianity. The concept of Christendom emerges in Charlemagne's legislation, his famous capitularies, which covered all aspects of social activity both lay and clerical and were organized under the teachings of Christ. Both the priest and the king were consecrated by God for their office in guiding society: one to teach and

the great Vatican basilica of Saint Peter, Charles knelt in prayer before a memorial above the tomb of the first Pontiff. When he arose Pope Leo placed the imperial crown on his head. Immediately, there burst forth from the Roman congregation, "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by God, great and peaceful Emperor of the Romans."<sup>5</sup> Thus the Roman Pontiff, the Supreme Pastor of the Universal Church, in the interests of Christendom, initiated the legitimacy of the Holy Roman Empire. Anarchy, decay, and ignorance would again descend upon a Europe pressed between the new barbarians in the North, the Vikings, and the always predatory Mohammedans in the South, but Christian civilized order had advanced another step. ■

#### Bibliographical essay

Two biographies supplied most of the details of Charles's life: Richard Winston, *Charlemagne, From the Hammer to the Cross* (New York, 1954), an accurate and exciting account but with the tendency of viewing eighth century history through the liberal eyes of the twentieth; and Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire* (Amsterdam, 1977). For other biographical material see Eleanor S. Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne* (New York, 1951) and the appropriate volumes of Rev. Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1925).

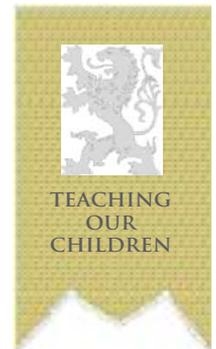
For the origin of the Papal States and its relationship with the Frankish monarchy, we relied mostly on Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter* (Philadelphia, 1984); Fritz Kern, *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1948); Robert Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne* (London, 1974); and lastly, a handy little volume from the Heath series, "Problems in European Civilization," Richard E. Sullivan, *The Coronation of Charlemagne* (Boston, 1959).

#### Notes

1. Until recently, the Stephen who ruled from 752-757 has been referred to as Stephen II because the first Stephen, who ruled only three days, never made the list.
2. Sullivan, *op.cit.*, p. viii.
3. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (New York, 1950).
4. Mann, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 23.

# The Meaning of the Name *Christian*

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR



"Mommy," asked Mary one day, "do I belong to God just like I belong to you and Daddy?"

"You mean, are you His child just like you are our child?"

"Yes, I guess that's what I mean."

"O, yes, not only you, but Mommy and Daddy are His children too. We are all His children by means of a very special adoption."

"Adoption? What do you mean?"

"Do you know what adoption is?"

"Not...really."

"Well, it's like this. Imagine a good-hearted couple who hear that a mother has died and left a little boy without anyone to care for him."

"What about his daddy?"

"Well, he had died, too. So, you see, this

child is all alone in the world. And the good couple hear of this and want the little boy to come to live with them—not only to live with them but to become their very own.

"So, they go to the authorities and promise to take care of the little boy as if they were his own parents. If the authorities approve, this good couple, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, let's say, receive the right to take the child home to care for him as if he were their son. From that moment on, the little boy is really theirs. They become his adoptive parents.

"To begin, he has the right to call himself by their last name. So if his name is Peter Clay, he will now be called Peter Smith. He will be cared for—fed and clothed and educated—and receive all the good things that children receive from their parents.

*And this we have received without ever having deserved it or done anything for it. Christ Our Lord takes us into His own family out of the goodness of His Divine Heart*

"But then, he must act toward Mr. and Mrs. Smith as every true child should toward his parents: He must love, obey, respect and help his parents.

"Now, also, all that belongs to his adoptive parents may also belong to him. He has the right to inherit."

"What's that?"

"That means that when his adoptive parents die, everything that they owned can belong to him."

"Now, with all of us God has done something similar, although much, much greater. When you were born you were just a simple creature of His. By His power and with the help of your parents He created you, something like what happens when an artist takes a piece of wood and carves a statue of a little girl. The artist can't very well call that statue his child, can he?"

"But I am more than a statue. I can talk and walk and...and..."

"Yes, of course, there is a big difference. You are alive, but you are still only a creature of His hands. But, in His goodness, God Our Lord wanted us as children and not just as mere creatures. So He adopts us."

"He adopts us? How?"

"Through Baptism."

"I was baptized... So, I'm God's child?"

"Absolutely. You see, when His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, came to this earth and died on the cross for us, He made it possible for us to be adopted by God as His own children. And this is done through holy Baptism, which He established. It is a much better adoption than the adoption of Peter by Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

"How is that?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith could give Peter all sorts of good things, but one thing they could not give him: their own life, their own blood. You see, you have the very blood of Mommy and Daddy running in your veins. That's why you have my hair and my nose and your father's eyes. Peter could have many things from his adoptive parents, but

never their very own life in him.

"Yet, God, Who can do all things, gives us His very own life. By dying for us, Our Lord Jesus bought for us the life of grace, which is God's own life. With this life of grace running all through us, we are truly His children and are able to know Him better, love Him, and to be happy with Him already here on earth and, much, much more, in Heaven some day."

"Wow! So I really can call God my... Father?"

"Absolutely. And He wants you to."

"And what name do I get?"

"What do you mean?"

"You said Peter Clay became Peter Smith. What do I become?"

"Oh, I see. That's a good question, Mary. Since we become part of God's family through Our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is He who gives us this great gift of adoption, we receive the name 'Christian.' That is why Christian means belonging to Christ's family, child of Christ, a person who belongs especially to Christ.

"And this we have received without ever having deserved it or done anything for it. Christ Our Lord takes us into His own family out of the goodness of His Divine Heart. It is the greatest honor anyone could ever wish for on this earth. If you belonged to a King and a Queen and were a little princess and carried their name, wouldn't you be proud?"

"O, yes! And how I would like to wear a crown!"

"Well, the name 'Christian' means that we belong to Christ Our Lord Himself, Who is the King of all kings. And because He is, as the Bible says, our Brother, His Mother, who is the Queen of Heaven and earth, is also our mother. So we belong to a royal family."

"So, I am a real princess?"

"A Christian princess, yes. But you must live up to your name and be a good, loving, and obedient child to such a good God. All your life you must strive to know, love, and

serve this God so that one day you may wear a crown with Him in heaven."

"So, I do get a crown too?!"

"Surely. Remember that part of adoption is the right to inherit? If we are good children of God and love, honor, and serve Him in this life, we will inherit His kingdom one day and reign with Him."

"So I must be very good?"

"Absolutely."

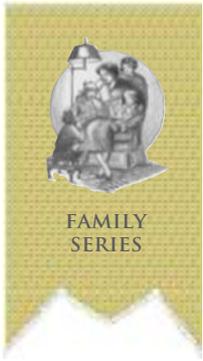
"Sometimes it's hard, Mommy."

"Yes, I know. By ourselves alone we can never be as good as God wishes us to be. But if we ask Him, as the good Father that He is, He will help us and never let us down. I'll teach you a prayer that a very good priest once taught me for you to say every morning:

"My God and Father, how can I return all Thou hast given me in Thine infinite goodness? I want to be a good child to Thee. I want to love Thee above all things, to serve Thee, and to do Thy will. I give Thee my whole heart and my whole self, O my Father!" ■



**"We must be careful about what we talk about in front of our children," admonishes Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the great educator and the founder of the Marist Brothers. He explains that parents should never have conversations in the presence of their children that describe sinful actions, because these may harmfully arouse the imagination of the children. Saint Marcellin writes that many boys lamented to him about having heard such conversations, which later caused them temptations and even falls.**



# Come, Infant Jesus!

BY EUGENIA GUZMAN

**T**he marvelous miracle we are about to recount took place in communist-controlled Hungary over 40 years ago, in December of the year 1956. Report of the prodigy, entirely true and widely-known there, reached the West through a Father Norbert who served as a parish priest in Budapest before fleeing to the West from the Marxist persecution against Catholics in his country.

Miss Gertrude, a militant atheist, was a teacher in the parish school. Everything she taught revolved around impiety and the denial of God. Her goal was very simple: to root out the faith from the souls of the children and attempt to form numerous little “godless ones.”

During her classes, she made every effort to dishonor and ridicule the Catholic Church. The children, although fearful of her, did not allow themselves to become convinced by mockeries.

In addition to her malicious methods and intentions, Miss Gertrude had a curious ability to guess which of the children received Communion. Such children became special targets of ill-treatment.

It happened one day that Angela, a little girl just ten years of age, looked for Father Norbert to ask him for permission to receive Communion every day. Angela, very intelligent and talented, was the best student in her class and in the school.

The priest warned her that she would expose herself to great risks, but she insisted: “Reverend Father, I assure you the schoolmistress will not be able to catch me in any fault, and I will work better. Please don’t refuse me what I ask of you. I feel stronger on the days I receive

Communion. You told me, Reverend Father, that I ought to set a good example. To do that, I need to feel strong.”

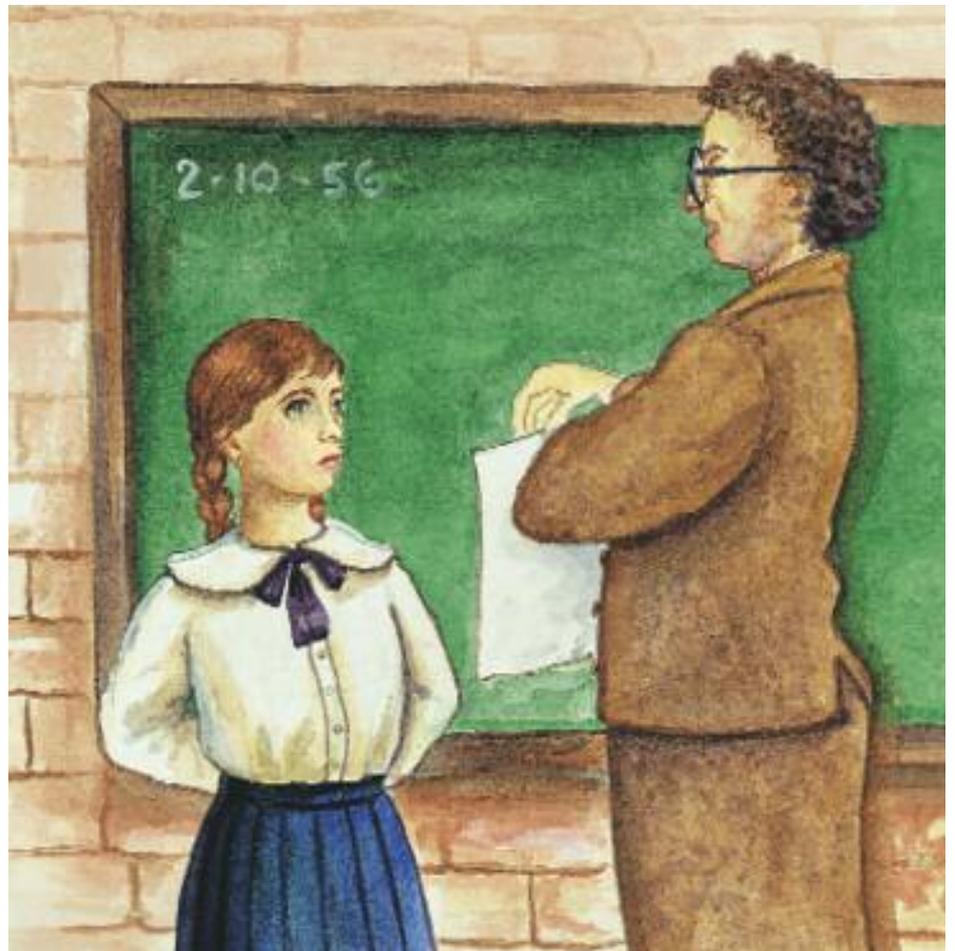
And so the priest consented.

From that day on the classroom became like a torture chamber for Angela. In spite of the fact that she always knew her lessons, Miss Gertrude harassed her continuously. The child resisted, but it was easy to see that she was feeling the strain.

The classes turned into duels between the atheistic teacher and the little follower

of Christ. Since the schoolmistress always had the last word, she appeared to be winning. Nevertheless, her irritation was so great that just Angela’s silence caused her to be beside herself with anger.

Terrified by all of this, the other little girls went to Father Norbert for help. But he could do nothing. Recalling the visit at a later date he remarked: “The only thing we could do was pray, praying with absolute confidence in the Divine Mercy. Thanks be to God, Angela continued firm



Based on a story by Maria Minovska in *Magnificent* Portugal.



*Suddenly, Angela rushed to the front of the classroom, her eyes gleaming with confidence and hope. She looked at her classmates and shouted: "Listen, we are going to call Him!"*

in her faith."

On December 17, the schoolmistress devised a cruel trick designed to strike a strong blow, a deadly one, at what she called the "ancient superstitions infesting the school." She prepared the scene with evil enthusiasm. Naturally, poor Angela was to be the principal target.

Miss Gertrude intended to prove to Angela and the rest of the class that living persons come when they are called, but that dead people (or the imaginary people who exist only in stories) do not come when they are called.

So, in a sweet voice, the teacher began asking the children many questions. Then she told Angela to step out of the classroom and wait in the hall by the door. Then she had all of the girls inside the classroom call out together, "Angela, come in!"

Angela entered, very intrigued, but suspecting a trap.

The schoolmistress declared: "Well, then, we all agree. When we call those who are living, those who exist, they come. When we call those who do not exist, they cannot come. Angela, who is here, alive, in flesh and blood, heard us when we called her and came in to join us.

"But let's suppose we were to call the Infant Jesus. It appears that among you there are some who believe in Him..." There was a moment of silence—perhaps a fearful silence—but then some timid voices answered, "Yes, we believe in Him."

"And you, Angela, do you believe that the Infant Jesus hears you when you call Him?"

Angela now knew what trick it was the teacher was plotting. She knew there was going to be one, but she did not imagine that it would be so terrible. But she answered with firm and ardent faith: "Yes! I believe that He hears me!"

"Very well," replied the teacher, "let's do an experiment. You children saw that Angela came immediately when we called her. If the Infant Jesus exists, He will hear you when you call Him. All of you cry out at the same time and strongly, 'Come, Infant Jesus!' Come on now, one, two, three! Call!"

Terrified, the little girls kept silent.

The arguments of the schoolmistress had really impressed them. Miss Gertrude

laughed loud and long and diabolically.

### **The Miracle**

Suddenly, Angela rushed to the front of the classroom, her eyes gleaming with confidence and hope. She looked at her classmates and shouted: "Listen, we are going to call Him! Let's all call out together, 'Come Infant Jesus!'"

All the children sprang to their feet in an instant, all shouting in vibrant unison, "Come, Infant Jesus!"

Miss Gertrude was startled, for she had not expected this reaction.

A supernatural aura gathered around the little girl who had proved herself the "chief" and firmly expected a miracle. The impulse which moved her was felt by the whole class.

When the anticipation was at its height, the classroom door opened without a sound. A very intense brightness appeared there, entering and steadily increasing like the light of an enormous but gentle fire. In the midst of this splendor, there was a globe full of clearer light.

The globe opened, disclosing a handsome Infant dressed in yet more light. The Infant did not speak. He simply smiled, and all the little girls smiled as well, tranquil and joyful. Then the globe closed very gently and slowly disappeared. The door swung shut without anyone touching it.

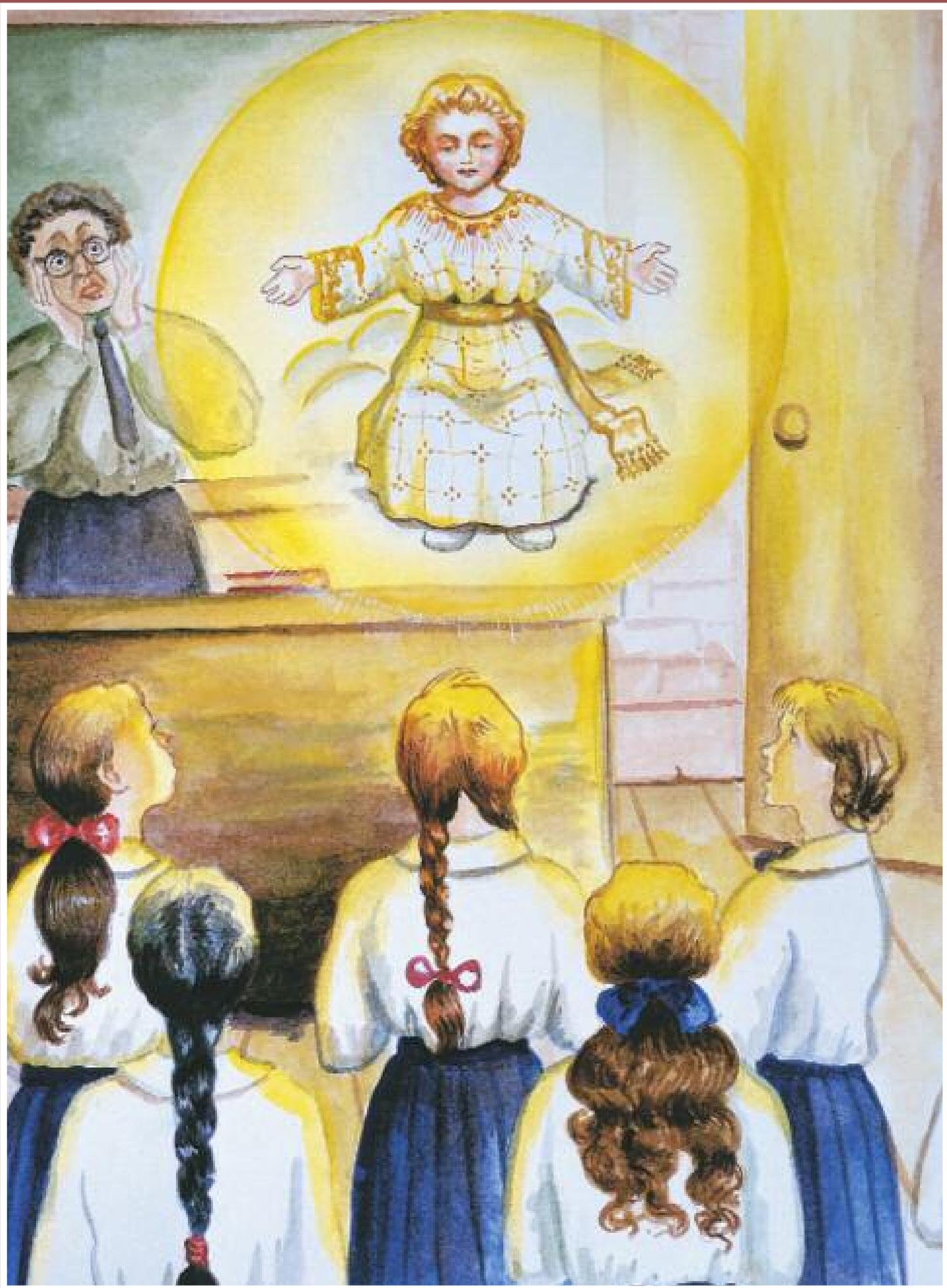
The children were still gazing toward the door when they were startled by a sharp scream. Turning around, they saw the terrified schoolmistress, with her eyes bulging and her arms outstretched, and gesturing like a madwoman.

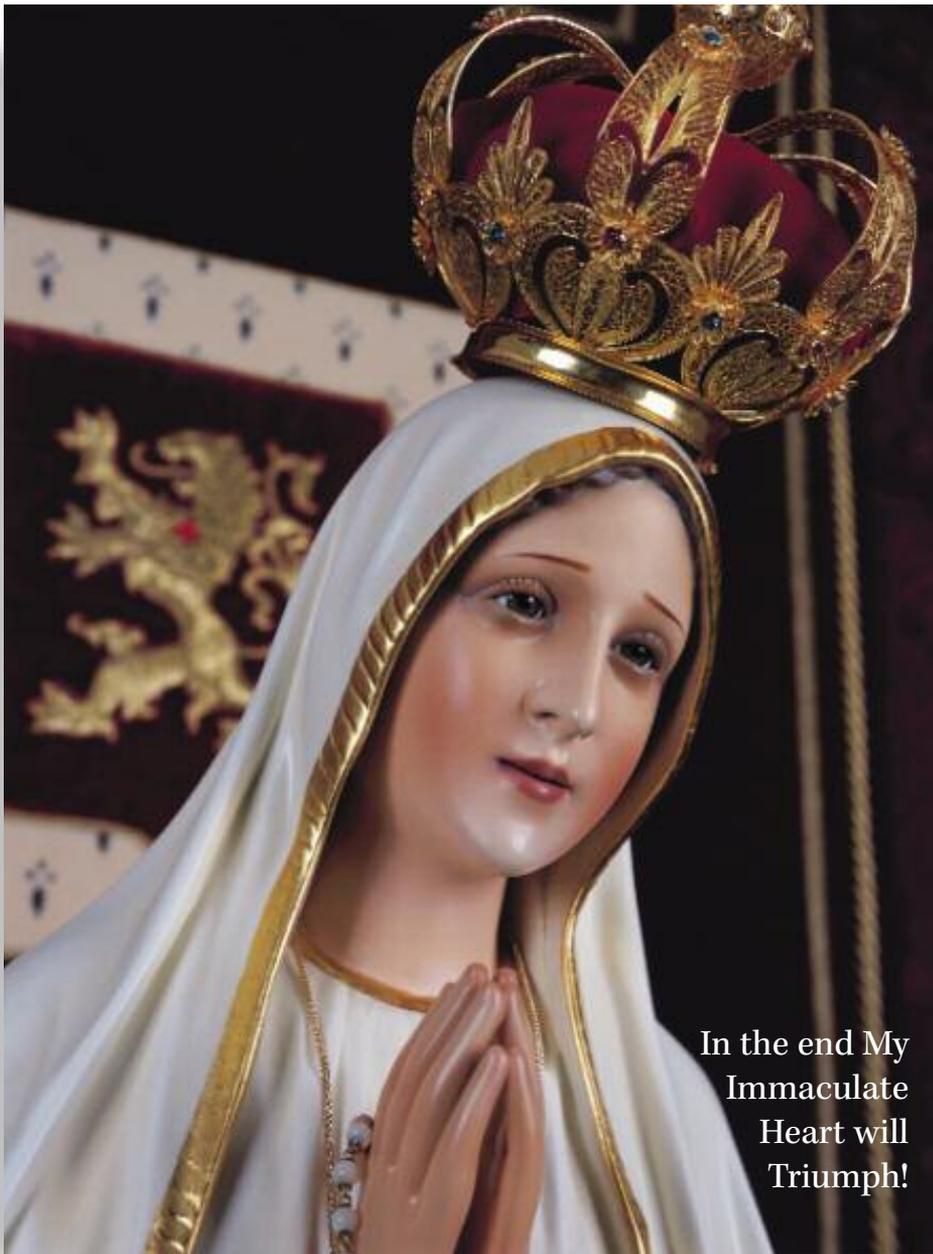
"He came! He appeared!" she screamed as she fled through the door, slamming it behind her.

\* \* \*

Father Norbert reports that he questioned the little girls one by one. He attests, under oath, that he did not find the least contradiction in their accounts.

As for Miss Gertrude, she was placed in an asylum. The tremendous shock had affected her godless mind, and she never stopped repeating, "He came! He came!" ■





In the end My  
Immaculate  
Heart will  
Triumph!

# Our Life, Our Sweetness

BY FATHER RAYMOND DE SAINT-LAURENT

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When the Blessed Virgin enters into the life of a soul, she causes a radiant springtime to blossom there. She chases away gloomy clouds of sadness, doubt, and discouragement. Hearts that give themselves sincerely to her are flooded with clarity, peace, and happiness.

Would you like to transform your life? Would you like to practice easily those virtues God asks of you and yet seem so inaccessible? Would you like to know the indescribable joys that only the love of Jesus can obtain, and which have caused the delight of saints? Would you like to experience these marvels yourself?

If you sincerely desire this, do not hesitate a second: Go to Mary. There is no more direct route to Our Lord.... Is your heart unsteady? Amid the violent temptations of the world, do you endure great difficulty in safeguarding the treasure of divine friendship within your heart? Despite good resolutions, do you repeatedly fail to follow God's graces? If so, do not hesitate. You are too far from the source of grace and have not called upon Mary's aid. Had you called upon her more readily, you would not have fallen.

Is your heart discouraged by the trials which trouble you? What do you do at the hour of tribulation? Do you give in to despair? In times of difficulty, do you forget to pray, or neglect your exercises of piety? You would be better off to throw yourself instinctively into the arms of your heavenly Mother and to pray to her at all cost. When you feel that you no longer have the strength to murmur a simple Hail Mary, call out to her by her blessed name. At that very moment, she will cover you with her mantle, console, and comfort you. Mary is the life of our souls because she gives us Jesus, the Author of all life.

Excerpts from "The Virgin Mary," *Crusade*, November-December, 1999 pp. 3,4.