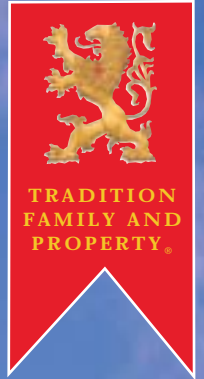


May/June 2003

CRUSADE[®]

MAGAZINE



"Bless me,
Father,
for I have
sinned..."

A Sacred Trust THREATENED

America Needs Fatima Progress Report

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BY FR. THOMAS DE SAINT-LAURENT
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Cover: Our Lady of Confidence

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'John Cardinal O'Connor'.

John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
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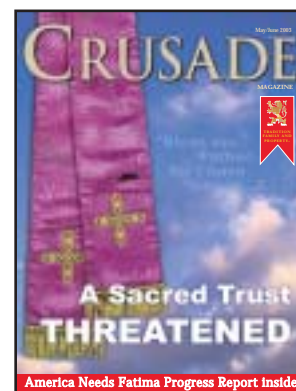
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CRUSADE

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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 nonpartisan organization which, inspired by the traditional teachings of the Supreme Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, works in a legal and peaceful manner in the realm of ideas to defend and promote the principles of private ownership, family and perennial Christian values with their

twofold function: individual and social. The TFP's words and efforts have always been faithfully at the service of Christian civilization. The first TFP was founded in Brazil by the famous intellectual and Catholic leader Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in 1960. His work inspired the formation of other autonomous TFPs across the globe, thus constituting the world's largest anticommunist and antisocialist network of Catholic inspiration.



If It Were Possible to Clone a Human Being...

Question: Much has been said lately regarding cloning. There was the case of the sheep Dolly, “cloned” in 1996 (and recently put to death because of incurable maladies); near the end of 2002 members of the Raelian UFO sect claimed to have cloned a human female, whom they provocatively named “Eve.” If it were possible to clone a human being, would the result of this cloning truly be a human being, that is, a rational creature endowed not only with a material body but also with an immortal soul? Or would it be but a “monster”?



Answer: Yes, much has been said regarding the possibility of cloning a human being, but there does not yet exist scientific evidence of this possibility. The claim made by members of the Raelian sect, which was received with skepticism by the scientific community, ultimately fell into discredit when they were unable to present the “cloned” baby.

In order to answer the question, it is important to know precisely of what cloning consists. From the biological point of view, cloning is an asexual method of reproduction, by means of the fusion of a somatic donor cell and an immature egg (oocyte) from which the nucleus (therefore, the maternal genetic code) has been removed. The result is a new being with a single genetic code, that of the donor. As was the case with “Dolly,” an exact reproduction of the animal cloned is obtained.

However, with human cloning—hypothetically admitting its viability—there would not be total identity between the clone and the donor, for admitting even material identity, their souls, the basis of human personality, would differ. Each soul is directly created and infused by God and gifted with such conditions of liberty and potentiality that even identical twins are different persons.

A further question concerns animation, that is, whether or not God would infuse a

soul into a being formed by means so artificial and contrary to the laws of nature.

The response to this is that from the philosophical or theological point of view there would be no difficulty. If the result of this artificial process were a new being different from the mother, with all the biological characteristics of a human being, all the conditions for this being to receive an immortal soul would exist.

The argument that this being is the product of an artificial process, contrary to the laws of nature, would not constitute an obstacle, for this is precisely what occurs in cases of *in vitro* reproduction, in which the male and female reproductive cells are collected and united artificially outside the maternal uterus and re-implanted afterwards, whether in the natural mother (that is, the donor of the female cell) or in a surrogate mother. Although formed by artificial means, a new human individual comes into existence; the soul is infused, of which practical evidence already exists.

The precarious nature of these artificial forms of reproduction also does not of itself impede the infusion of the soul into the new being by God. There are circumstances in which natural conception occurs in violation of other moral laws, as is the case with incest, adultery, or fornication, all outside the sacred

bonds of matrimony. In these cases, notwithstanding the sin committed, the new being generated possesses all the biological conditions required for the formation of the human soul and thus, normally, God acts in conformity and infuses the soul. In these cases, God does not take into account the sins by means of which these conditions arose, but rather their existence and the possibility of animation.

Cloning is the most radical form of genetic manipulation and shakes not only the foundations of matrimony and the family as God instituted them, but also the very concept of two sexes, since the new human being may be formed solely with the elements of the mother.

Catholic morals and simple natural ethics prohibit genetic experiments and manipulation of human beings.

It would be a terrible sin were we to come to the point of cloning a human being, and it would amount to yet another reason for the chastisement of God over humanity.

Happily, the House of Representatives passed a bill forbidding human cloning. If the Senate does likewise, this country might have the glory of being the first to condemn this abomination. ■

A Sacred Trust THREATENED

Breaking the Seal of Confession

BY JOHN HORVAT II

“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned...”

These opening words of confession constitute a sublime act of humility that marks the lives of so many Catholics.

In the wake of the sexual abuse scandals, a renewed emphasis on the Sacrament of Penance, the sacrament whereby the Church invites the sinner to reform his life and progress in virtue, would be a natural solution to a crisis that has put everything in disarray.

Dissident reformers, however, don't see it that way and are adding to the confusion. They appear intent upon changing the Church and see confession as a target rather than a solution. Ironically, some of the same critics who accuse the Church of having broken trust in the scandals now want to break the priest's most sacred trust, the Seal of Confession.

In an effort to stem the call for breaking the Confession Seal, the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property and its *The Church Shall Prevail* campaign is mobilizing its supporters to oppose this dangerous precedent.

States seek to change the Church

The growing cry for revealing confession secrets is taking the form of legislation heralded as a way to “protect the children.” In fact, Catholic activists

and victims' advocate groups are pressuring state legislatures to enact laws that will force priests to break the Seal of Confession in abuse cases.

In an atmosphere of intense media hype, legislators, many of whom are not Catholic, are accommodating these very vocal constituents and introducing an assortment of bills.

To their credit, legislatures in Maryland, Virginia, Connecticut, and Kentucky have rejected such attempts. Nevertheless, the effort continues. In early March, new anti-Seal bills were introduced in Nevada and Florida, and in New Hampshire a bill entered in January will soon be debated.

It should be noted that such measures have no precedent in American law. In the United States, the government has always considered what has been said between a priest and a penitent in confession as sacred and inviolable. It was part of the guarantee of religious freedom.

That guarantee now faces a grave threat.

A profound misunderstanding

The cry to remove the Seal of Confession shows a profound misunderstanding of the nature of the Sacrament of Penance. This is hardly surprising, since, from the beginning shoddy theology has plagued the sexual abuse scandals. All too often, those proposing solutions have only a superficial



knowledge of Catholic issues.

To many observers, confession is but glorified spiritual counseling much like any professional counseling. Yet, ironically, even secular professionals enjoy confidentiality with their patients. Many of the new bills now seek to strip clergy of this same right and turn them into "mandated reporters" of the State.

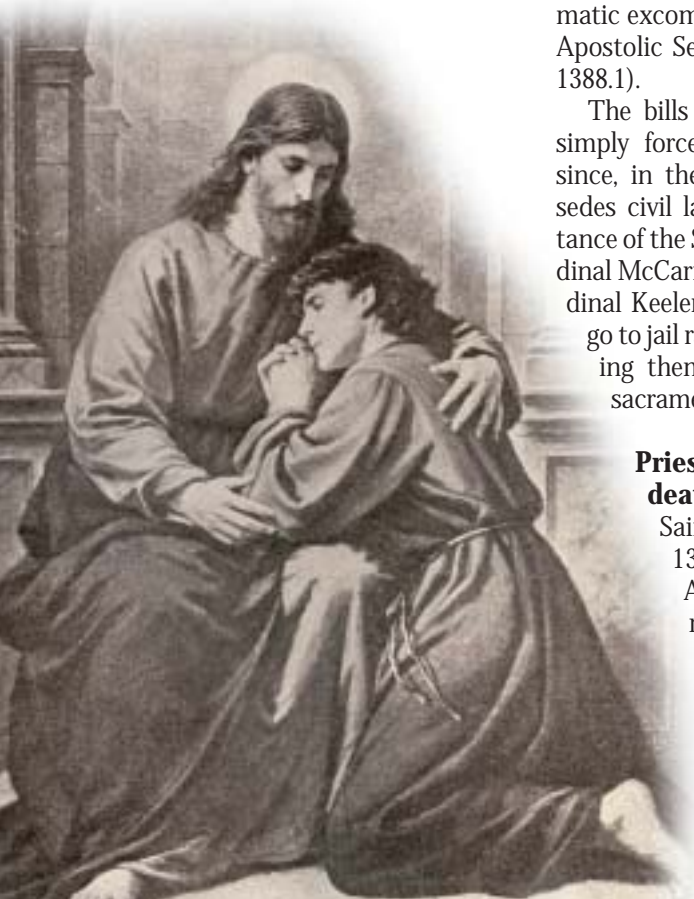
Confession with Christ

What opponents of confession fail to realize is that confession outweighs any form of professional confidentiality or secrecy. Confession is a supernatural affair. When a person confesses his sins, the priest is merely the minister, acting in the person of Christ. In reality, it is Christ who forgives the sins, and the priest has no right to reveal anything that is confessed to Christ.

Breaking the seal of confession would turn Christ into a "mandated reporter" of the State.

Sacred trust established

One condition for confession to be effective is the existence of a sacred trust between the priest and the penitent.



Sins that are forgiven are consigned to the person's past. They are only forgiven if the sinner is sorry for them and resolves to make amends. This can happen only in an atmosphere where the sinner fears nothing from the priest and has the certainty that his sins cannot be revealed. For this reason, confessionals traditionally had screens to protect the penitent's anonymity and lessen the possibility of the priest associating a "face" with a confession.

A serious obligation

The moral obligation of priests who hear confession is so great that the Church's Code of Canon Law qualifies it as "a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner or for any reason" (no. 2490).

A priest cannot use the knowledge he gains in the confession even to save his own life or reputation or to refute a false accusation. He cannot even say what he did *not* hear in confession.

To safeguard this sacred trust, the Church imposes the highest of sanctions. Should a confessor directly violate the Seal of Confession, he incurs automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See (Code of Canon Law, no. 1388.1).

The bills now being considered will simply force priests to break the law since, in these cases, God's law supersedes civil law. To illustrate the importance of the Seal of Confession, both Cardinal McCarrick of Washington and Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore "promised to go to jail rather than obey a law requiring them to break the seal of the sacrament" (CNS, March 7, 2003).

Priest prefer death to betrayal

Saint John Nepomucene (1340-1393), vicar general to the Archbishop of Prague, was a martyr for the Seal of Confession when he refused to reveal to King Wenceslaus

IV the contents of the queen's confession.

Confessors under Communism and Nazism suffered prison, torture, and execution rather than break the sacramental seal.

The threat within

The greatest threat to the Seal of Confessions comes not from media reporters or non-Catholic legislators. The greatest threat comes from within.

Many activists of the Catholic left, galvanized by the sexual abuse scandals, are proving to be major proponents of mandated reporting. Groups such as Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) are actively seeking such laws. These organizations seem to hold a vision of the Sacrament wherein the Seal of Confession is just another senseless rule instituted by a male hierarchy to control the faithful. "The Church uses the rule as yet another way to protect themselves and continue the great web of secrecy," said SNAP's Phil Saviano in an interview with *WorldNetDaily*.¹

While not speaking officially for the organization, Voice of the Faithful member Anne Coughlin is almost single-handedly responsible for pressuring for the New Hampshire bills against the Seal. She admits "she has no evidence whatsoever to show that priests in New Hampshire are being told in the confessional of crimes against children: 'I can't prove that ever happened. But I'm absolutely convinced that it has.'"²

No smoking gun

Perhaps that is the most disturbing aspect of the legal measures now being discussed. There is no evidence at all that eliminating the Seal of Confession will help protect children. There are no credible studies to indicate that turning priests into mandated reporters will stop child abuse.

Quite to the contrary, the very nature of the Sacrament leads one to believe that abusers who commit such

One condition for confession to be effective is the existence of a sacred trust between the priest and the penitent.

heinous crimes will simply stay away from Confession.

American TFP campaign

Responding to the efforts to violate the Seal of Confession, the American TFP's *The Church Shall Prevail* campaign is mobilizing friends and supporters.

The campaign focuses on present New Hampshire legislation. Campaign members are asked to send "Crusade for Confession" postcards to the State's speaker of the House and the Senate's president. The American TFP website is also coordinating email protests.

"We hope this campaign will mobilize all American Catholics," said Thomas McKenna, campaign director. "The plain truth is that New Hampshire is the battlefield where the future of the confessional is being decided."

Bishop Robert Vasa of Baker, Oregon, has invited Catholics to join the campaign. Recalling past attempts to break the Seal, Bishop Vasa encouraged members, stressing that "your assistance and participation now will assure that this unjust and short-sighted attack on one of our Sacraments will once again be repelled."

The American TFP's "Crusade for Confession" is yet one more step to respond to the scandals and the democratic reforms that threaten the Church. Structural and systemic changes like eliminating the Seal are exactly the kind of reforms foreseen in the TFP's latest book, *I Have Weathered Other Storms*.

Until today, the state had absolutely no say in what sins a priest must or must not report to civil authorities, because the Seal was absolute. It was between the priest, the penitent, and God. *The Church Shall Prevail* campaign hopes American Catholics will react to keep it that way. ■

Notes:

1. Paul Sperry, "Priest hiding behind confession seal," 6/13/02, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=27954

2. "Catholics Could Lose Seal of Confession", 1/25/03, <http://www.newsmax.com/archive/print.shtml?a=2003/1/25/141548>



Confession, the Sacrament of Divine Mercy

BY LUIS S. SOLIMEO

To better understand the great spiritual treasure contained in the Sacrament of Penance or Confession, let us turn the clock back two thousand years to Palestine, to a scene in the public life of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The majesty of His Person, the wisdom pouring forth from His mouth and the power manifested by His miracles attracted a multitude that followed Him everywhere.

Only God can forgive sins

One day, after curing the centurion's daughter as a reward for his faith, silencing the storm before the fearful apostles, and expelling the demons in Gerasa, he boarded Peter's boat for Capernaum.

Hearing that He was in a house in their city, the people gathered in such numbers that the door of the house was obstructed. But for faith there are no obstacles, so some charitable persons carrying a paralytic, unable to enter by the door, climbed to the roof and lowered the suffering man into the room, setting him at Our Lord's feet to be cured.

To everyone's surprise, instead of simply performing the expected miracle, Jesus said: "Courage, son, thy sins are forgiven."

This was something new. No prophet had dared pardon sins. Not even John the Baptist, the greatest of all, had dared so much, preaching only the baptism of penance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3). Nevertheless, this new Prophet declared, "thy sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees, always looking

for something with which to be scandalized, despite the Master's astounding miracles, thought to themselves: "How does this man speak this way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?"

Truly, only God can forgive sins. That is because sin is an offense against the divine Majesty and only the object of the offense can forgive the offender. No one can forgive an offense done to another, above all when this Other is of a superior nature, God Himself.

Still, the wisdom and the miracles showed that this Prophet possessed powers that no other prophet before Him had possessed. His was an unfathomable perfection. But the Pharisees had hardened their hearts, and their understanding was clouded



If secrecy were not obligatory, Confession would be odious if not impossible.

by passion. Within themselves, they uttered the same accusation that they were to renew at His passion: "He has blasphemed" (Matt. 26:65).

There was drama in the air. Everyone felt it. How would Jesus react before that mute accusation and ill-disguised surprise?

The answer came as a challenge. "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat, and walk?'"

As always, the Pharisees were speechless before the dilemma offered them by the Rabbi.

In answer to their silence, Jesus continued: "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, pick up your mat, and go home."

"And immediately," writes Saint Mark, the paralytic "rose, picked up his mat, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'"¹

The miracle performed by Our Lord on this occasion had an apologetic value. As Saint John Chrysostom explains, Jesus proved His divinity by a triple miracle: "First, declaring openly their

secret thoughts and murmurs against Him; second, healing the paralytic, third, performing the miracle with this end in view, that, by it, He might show that He had the power to forgive sins."²

Our Lord gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins

Here we have the explanation for Confession. As Jesus proved that He was God by means of an astounding miracle, He also proved that He could forgive sins. And, as God, He has not only the power to forgive sins but has also the power to confer this faculty on others.

Furthermore, as Jesus is the only priest of the new Law, the mediator between God and men, a simple "delegation" of the power to forgive sins would still not be enough. It was necessary that Christ unite His Eternal Priesthood to that of those that would continue His work on earth after His ascension into Heaven.³ For this reason, He instituted the ministerial priest as the visible instrument of His action.⁴

The power to forgive sins was bestowed on the Apostles on the evening of the day Our Lord resurrected from the dead and mysteriously appeared amidst the Apostles gathered in the Cenacle behind locked doors.

A Victim to the Seal of Confession

BY GARY ISBELL

Around the last decade of the nineteenth century, there occurred in the small French village of St. Victoire an event that was to catapult a simple village priest into the ranks of those who have suffered heroically for their Faith.

One first Sunday of Lent, wishing to prepare his parishioners for the season, young Fr. François Montmoulin,* pastor of St. Victoire, preached a moving sermon on the Sacrament of Penance, stressing the fact that Our Lord had made confession much easier by imposing strict secrecy as a solemn obligation on the priest who hears it. Little did he know how soon he would be called to seal that statement with his own sacrifice.

Before retiring that night, Father Montmoulin set down to count a large sum of money that had been collected for improvements to the local hospital. The next day he was to hand it over to Mrs. Blanchard, an influential and pious widow. As he counted, there came

a knock at the door. "Come in!" he called out absent-mindedly. As the sacristan stepped into the room, the pastor regretted not having asked the knocker to wait.

There was something shifty about this man. A newcomer to the village, Albert Loser was a war veteran but a man of irregular conduct, unable to hold a job. In his wanderings, he had come to St. Victoire and had ingratiated himself with the mayor, who happened to be looking for a sacristan. Despite the fact that he no longer practiced his Faith, Loser was hired.

At the sight of the money, Loser could not refrain from making certain comments that ill disguised his covetousness. Then he proceeded to ask Father Montmoulin for a week's leave to travel immediately to the port of Marseilles on personal business, which the pastor granted.

That night, Father Montmoulin had a sick call. He left the money with his

widowed mother, who was visiting him. She kept it with her in her room which she locked.

The sight of so much ready cash and gold changed Loser's plans. He went about town publicizing his departure and then hitched a ride to the next town as if going to Marseilles. Once there, he made his way back to St. Victoire on foot and hid in the convent that served as a rectory, awaiting his opportunity.

Exhausted after a full night's vigil by a sick bed, the pastor returned early next morning. Still, he offered Mass and then prepared to receive the Widow Blanchard. After the interview, the good lady left with the cash and the gold in the bottom of her basket. She never reached home.

Her body was found in a room adjacent to the church of St. Victoire. She had been throttled and stabbed with a kitchen knife bearing the initials *FM*. The money for the hospital fund had disappeared. Everything pointed to the pastor, whose cassock was stained with blood. Father Montmoulin protested his innocence but, for the rest, was

Saint John narrates:

Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you."

When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

He said therefore to them again, "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."

When He had said this, He breathed on them and He said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."⁵

The power to judge and to forgive

It is clear in the narrative above that Our Lord instituted not only the Sacrament of Penance, but also the mode in which it must be practiced. On declaring that the sins that a priest forgives are forgiven and those that he retains are retained, He is signifying that, before forgiving, the priest must become acquainted with the sins as well as with the dispositions of the sinner. Only then will he be in a position to judge if there are conditions for forgiveness or not.

Thus, in the tribunal of Confession, as in any other tribunal, it is necessary that there be an

accused, an accuser, and a judge. In Confession, the role of accuser is exercised by the penitent who accuses himself to the priest of the sins he has committed; hence the necessity of oral confession.⁶ The judge is the priest.

The absolute necessity for secrecy in Confession

Having established the Sacrament of Penance and the need for the penitent to declare his sins to the priest, Our Lord also established the secrecy of Confession. If secrecy were not obligatory, Confession would be odious if not impossible. This would render the sacrament ineffective, which is absurd.

Therefore, the secrecy of Confession is a divinely instituted right and cannot be abolished by any earthly authority. Any attempt in this respect is in direct opposition to God's will.

Besides being a divine right, this obligation of secrecy was also established by ecclesiastical law, which always imposed the severest penalty for its

What the priest hears in confession is between him, the penitent, and God.

strangely quiet.

Loser, after committing the crime, had been gripped by remorse and sought Father François for confession. He confessed his foul deed but, when asked to return the stolen property, refused and fled. Catching a train to Marseilles, he boarded a boat for South America. While the murderer knelt by the priest, some of the victim's blood on his clothes had stained the bottom of the priest's cassock.

Faced with the full implication of his situation, Father Montmoulin studied his theology books, looking for a possible loophole that would allow him to point to the real culprit. There had been no absolution given; the man lacked repentance for all his un-confessed sins of twenty years and refused to make restitution. So, was it really a confession? Yes, undoubtedly so. The man did not have the right dispositions, but he had the intention to confess and had accused himself of the hideous murder to him as Christ's representative. There was no doubt, Father Montmoulin concluded, he had acquired the knowledge *sub sigillo*, under secrecy, and he was

bound by the Seal of Confession whatever the consequences.

"My God!" moaned Father Montmoulin as the full horror of his situation dawned ever clearer upon him, "I dare not open my lips in self-defense, I must sacrifice my reputation and my life rather than utter a word as I declared only yesterday from the pulpit! O my God, let this chalice pass from me, not only for my sake but for that of my poor mother and the scandal to Your Church!"

In fact, Father Montmoulin was tried and sentenced to death in Holy Week. His mother also came under suspicion as to the disappearance of the money and was imprisoned for five weeks. Like his Master, he bore it all so nobly that his sentence was commuted to forced labor in New Caledonia. The virtuous man, who was actually looking forward to his martyrdom, almost fainted at the announcement.

After almost three years of exile and unspeakable sufferings for the priest-turned-convict, Loser, who had made a fortune and bought a hacienda in Chile, could not live any longer with the



reproaches of his conscience. Returning to St. Victoire, he gave himself up.

Father Montmoulin was brought back in triumph and fully reinstated in the exercise of his priesthood. He was offered a better position by his Archbishop but asked to remain pastor of small St. Victoire. His heroic dedication to the demands of his priesthood touched the very heart of his people and occasioned many conversions.

Even the mayor went to confession and returned to the sacraments. Then did Father Montmoulin thank God for His merciful disposal of events that caused the bitter wood of the cross

* This story is retold from the book *A Victim to the Seal of Confession* by Joseph Stillmann, S.J. (London: B. Herder Book Company, 1898). The author used a fictitious name for the priest, who

infractio.⁷ Current legislation continues to maintain the same, declaring that any confessor who violates the secrecy of Confession is automatically excommunicated and can only be absolved by the Holy See.⁸

Is it not too humiliating to confess to another man?

Is it not too humiliating to have to submit to another man, himself a sinner, at times possibly even a greater sinner than the one confessing his sins?

If we truly realized the scope of God's infinite grandeur and majesty and His immense perfection, we would be much more ashamed of telling our sins to Him (as if He did not already know them,) than to a man. The more perfect is the creature we address, the more miserable we appear and the more evident is the contrast between perfection and sin.

That is why theologians say that when a person dies in the terrible state of mortal sin and appears at his private judgment before the unspeakable perfection of God, he flees from God and hurls himself in Hell to hide his shame.

Thus if we analyze this well, this very humiliation of having to confess our sins to another man is a mercy of God. How much more humiliating it would be to kneel before the Divine Master Himself and tell Him all our sins! What is the humiliation before a man compared to the humiliation of recounting our sins before the infinite perfection of God?

In any case, this is the form in which Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of Confession, so we should submit in a spirit of obedience and love. In His infinite wisdom, He does everything to perfection. When men try to modify what He instituted, the result can only be deplorable.

The prideful attitude of saying, "I confess directly to God," is almost the same as saying: "I am so perfect that I go directly to God Himself. I have no need of those crutches that are the Sacraments and the advice or help of other men."

The priest is "taken from among men and made their representative before God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb 5:1). An angel cannot be a mediator. To refuse thus the mediation of another man is to refuse the priesthood, because the priest,

while a mediator, has to be of the same nature as those for whom he mediates. That is why Our Lord, the Supreme Priest, became flesh and took our nature onto Himself, as Saint Paul says: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

But can a sinner forgive sins?

To a priest applies, even more than to the common faithful, the general convocation to sanctity when Our Lord said: "So be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). But a priest is also subject to temptation and can not only sin but be, in certain cases, a sinner. Nevertheless, even when he sins, he does not forfeit the power that comes to him from the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

This was the objection raised at the beginning of the Church by the Donatist heretics as a result of a misunderstanding of the doctrine on the sacraments. But Saint Augustine made it very clear to these same heretics that the power of the sacraments does not come from the sanctity of its ministers but from the infinite sanctity and perfection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have no sins to confess...

Many people feel no need to go to Confession, thinking that they have no sins. They should consider what Scriptures says: "For the just man falls seven times" (Prov. 24:16). "Yet there is no man on earth so just as to do good and never sin" (Eccles. 7:21). "If we say, 'we have not sinned,' we make Him [God] a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:10).

In these times of extreme corruption, let us avail ourselves of this instrument of divine mercy that is Confession. Let us carefully examine our consciences and with the firm resolution of turning away from sin, confess our failings to the priest.

For this small effort, this small humiliation, the reward is immense. Our soul is washed clean, our sins are forgiven, and we return to God's friendship. As the Psalmist says: "Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure; wash me, make me whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:9). ■

Notes

1. Mark 2:5-11; cf. Matt. 8:1-34; 9:1-8.
2. Cornelius a Lapide, *St. Matthew's Gospel*, Chaps. I-IX, in *The Great Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide* (London: John Hodges, 1893), p. 353.
3. See 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 5:6; 7:24; Ps. 110:5.
4. Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders on Holy Thursday. After anticipating the sacrifice of the Cross in a sacramental form by the transformation of the bread and wine into His body and blood, He commanded the disciples: "Do

this in remembrance of Me." On giving this command, He also granted the necessary power to execute it, that is, the power to consecrate. (Luke, 22:19; 1Cor.11:24.)

5. John 20:19-23. Saint Cyril explains that Saint Thomas, despite being absent, also received the Holy Ghost and then the power to pardon sins eight days later when Our Lord appeared to him and converted him from his incredulity. (cf. Cornelius a Lapide, *The Great Commentary—St. John's Gospel* [Edinburgh: John Grant, 1908], p. 273).

6. Under special circumstances, the Church allows general absolution without oral confession, but oral confession must be made at the first opportunity. (See Canon 963.)

7. Cf. "Seal of Confession. ... Imposed by Christ in instituting the sacrament, this obligation has repeatedly been inculcated by ecclesiastical authority." Fr. Gregory Manise, O.S.B., s.v. "Seal of Confession," in *Dictionary of Moral Theology* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1962), p.1105.

8. Canon 1388, cf. Canon 983.



America Needs Fatima-

May ~ June 2003

PROGRESS REPORT

Rally of reparation in Cincinnati

BY ROBERT E. RITCHIE

On June 14, 2003, America Needs Fatima members will protest in front of the Know Theater in Cincinnati against the blasphemous play *Corpus Christi*, which portrays Jesus and the apostles as homosexuals.

This is what Congressman Mark Souder (R-Ind.) said about it: "It mocks Christ,... it mocks His mother Mary and father Joseph, it mocks His apostles, it mocks His miracles, it mocks His divinity, and it mocks the Catholic Church. It is not just about homosexuality: it is about blasphemy."

The Age, an Australian newspaper, described the plot this way: "Jesus Christ as a homosexual. Two of his apostles joined in a gay marriage. Two Christian men crucifying the said gay Messiah. Jesus kissing Judas on the lips."

This is an infamous attack on Jesus. To join our peaceful and prayerful act of reparation (**no violence permitted**) please call 1-888-317-5571. ■

After distributing millions of fliers against Terrence McNally's blasphemous play *Corpus Christi*, the American TFP and ANF held its first public protest against the performance. Below: Over 2,500 protesters gathered in front of the Manhattan Theater Club on September 26, 1998.

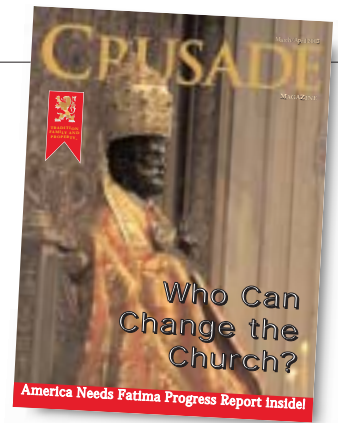
Around-the-Clock Rosary

For the protection of our country and our troops and for the fulfillment of Our Lady's prophecies at Fatima, America Needs Fatima has begun a nationwide effort among its members to pray the Rosary around the clock. To complete the roster, we're asking people to pray for 15 minutes each month at a specific time and day. If you would like to be one of Our Lady's current 2,822 prayer warriors around the country, please call Patty Gaskin at **661-336-0270** to sign up! ■





130,000 Catholics receive *Crusade* magazine



In a special effort to alert Catholics against dissident groups such as Call to Action and Voice of the Faithful, a special issue of *Crusade* magazine was prepared and mailed to over 130,000 Catholics, including every priest in America.

The website of the homosexual organization GLAAD posts an article by Marcos Villatory that illustrates the anti-Church agenda of radical

pressure groups: "What do we want? Anything that will bust down the doors of the good-old-boy Roman Catholic hierarchy. Married priests. Women priests. Women bishops. And of course, the abolition of mandated celibacy."

America Needs Fatima prepared and distributed this special issue of *Crusade* to defend Holy Mother Church from dissenters who attack

the Church's hierarchical structure, which is a way to attack the Church itself. **For more information on how to refute the errors of the pressure groups, please order a copy of our new book, *I Have Weathered Other Storms*, by calling 1-888-317-5571.**



Patty Gaskin from America Needs Fatima presents a St. Benedict medal to U.S. Marine Ramon Diaz, who later fought in Iraq.

Soldiers receive St. Benedict medals

For the spiritual and physical protection of our troops, America Needs Fatima is sending free St. Benedict medals to our soldiers in Iraq. Once blessed, the medals have many special powers, including that of warding off the devil, obtaining the grace of conversion, providing assistance at the hour of death, efficacious curing of bodily sufferings, protection against poison and contagious diseases, and protection against storms.

To sponsor medals for the troops, please call Pat Diaz at **661-336-0270.** ■

New CD a great success

America Needs Fatima's Lenten campaign offering a CD recording and booklet of *The Way of the Cross* by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was a great success.

Many readers and listeners were profoundly moved by these meditations. Some people even consider this *The Way of the Cross* the most inspiring version of Our Lord's Passion they have ever heard. A Benedictine nun from Pittsburgh wrote: "Profound insights into the Passion of Christ. Moving, soul teaching, great work. I will treasure and pray the Holy Passion with more love and sorrow for my sins."

Thanks are due to the generous support of America Needs Fatima members who made this inestimable work available to tens of thousands of people during Lent. Unfortunately, our supply of CDs is exhausted, but to receive a free *The Way of the Cross* booklet please call **1-888-317-5571.** ■



Our Readers Write...

☒ Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for *The Way of the Cross* CD. It is very beautiful and it has strengthened my faith in God.

You are doing God's work and as long as you don't lose Faith and hope, you will keep people like me from giving up and losing Faith when we are carrying our crosses or know someone or of someone who needs God in their life. By reaching us, we are also able to reach others.

I.A., Orange Cove, Cal.

☒ Profound insights into the Passion of Christ. Moving, soul teaching, great work. I will treasure and pray the Holy Passion with more love and sorrow for my sins.

Sr. H.S., Pittsburgh

☒ Praise the Lord! I received the *The Way of the Cross* CD in safe and good condition. Thank you very much, Mr. Ritchie, for sending me this beautiful and holy CD. You know, Mr. Ritchie, I am a cancer survivor 3rd degree and disabled person. I want to help America Needs Fatima, but I can't afford to send a big amount. The only amount that I can help is \$5.00.

Mr. Ritchie, I am very happy because you remember me and this is my happiness. I play my *Way of the Cross* CD and it helps with my loneliness.

M.J., Hayward, Cal.



☒ First of all, thank you dearly for the CD (*The Way of the Cross*). God Bless You. I enjoy it so much that I play it quite often. Oh yes, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the lovely pin "Child of Mary." It is definitely my favorite pin of all the many different ones I have. Thank you for sending it to me... There are so many of my Catholic friends who would love to have one!

R. V., Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

☒ Thank you so much for sending me the CD on the Way of the Cross.

When I opened it up and saw what it was I couldn't tell you what a wonderful feeling I got holding it in my hands.

By all means, do get this CD to as many devout people as you can. Once they listen to it I know they also will be touched like I was.

J.H., Cheektowaga, N.Y.

☒ Thank you so much for the CD—*The Way of the Cross*. I got it yesterday and today, Friday, at 3:00pm. I listened to it prayerfully and imagined myself among the crowd.

I felt so wonderful and so happy to get

this as it will not be possible for me to go to church and do the Way of the Cross.

A.O., Los Angeles

☒ This is the best gift I ever received. *The Way of the Cross* CD came safely and I have been playing it every day. One of my sons had just given me a new machine so I could listen to the CD.

B.T., San Jose, Cal.

☒ The C.D. arrived safely and my husband and I both appreciate it. Although we go to the stations every Friday at church, we are now taking Friday mornings at home with the booklet and play the stations as well.

D.A., Plantsville, Conn.

☒ It was an exceptional gift (*The Way of the Cross* CD) you sent me, Mr. Ritchie. Thank you very much.

I love it, and I have been putting it on. I really enjoy it. Thank you for the other gifts you sent me. They all arrived in good condition, and are so beautiful. That was a great blessing idea you did for everyone of us to send us the most valuable devotionals that take or guide us to follow His sufferings on the cross. You will be surprised how many graces you will receive through *The Way of the Cross*.

N.D., Whittier, Cal.



Personal touch: At America Needs Fatima headquarters we receive hundreds of letters every week from our members.

Above: Dedicated ANF members answer correspondence with handwritten notes every day.

☒ Just recently I wrote to you and asked to have my name removed from your mailing list due to my many financial problems that I could not afford to contribute to your every appeal. Now today, Saturday, in my mail I received an "Our Lady of Fatima" postcard written by Teresa, that my name has been removed from your mailing list as she honored my request and thanked me for all the sacrifices I had made in your behalf.

Now I am writing you, Mr. Ritchie, to send an apology to you all and to tell you how sorry I am for my name to have been removed from your mailing list and if I could put you all to the trouble of reinstating my name back into your mailing list files as before...

I do hope and pray you and your dedicated workers will forgive me and reinstate my name back on your mailing list.

M.C., Bloomfield, N.C.



The Cincinnati Enquirer gets it wrong

Our postcard protest against the blasphemous theater play *Corpus Christi*, scheduled to show at the Know Theater, sparked a response from a columnist for *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. The article, by Jackie Demaline, began thus: "Forget snow, Know Theater Tribe in Over-the-Rhine is being buried under a blizzard of angry postcards." The article goes on to discredit our protests by claiming that "the five-year campaign has not canceled any production." To set the record straight, America Needs Fatima director and TFP secretary Robert E. Ritchie sent the following letter to *The Enquirer*. ■

To the Editor:
A clarification is needed to your March 16th article about The American TFP's protest against the blasphemous play *Corpus Christi*, which portrays Jesus and the apostles as homosexuals.
You state that our "five-year campaign has not canceled any production." The fact is *Corpus Christi* has never made it to Broadway as originally intended, or to any major theater. Some colleges have indeed hosted it, as Grand Rapids Community College this January. The play was removed from the campus the day after our protest.
Other TFP successes include Kevin Smith's movie *Dogma*, canceled in his hometown of Red Bank, N.J. *Jesus Has Two Mommies* was canceled in Somerville, Mass. *The Crime of Father Amaro* was canceled in St. Louis, Phoenix, and Harrisburg.
Speakers at last year's American Association of Museums conference told curators to take our protests "very seriously" after we opposed a bikini-clad image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe. More information on this conference can be found in the report "Are Anti-Blasphemy Protests Effective?" at www.tfp.org.
Sincerely,
Robert E. Ritchie

Protest against play portraying Our Lady as a lesbian

America Needs Fatima is waging a nationwide protest against Paul Rudnick's grossly misnamed play *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, which refers to Our Lady as a lesbian and is scheduled to show at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) May 15-17.

Press reports affirm that *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* refers to Our Blessed Mother as a lesbian. The play presents a homosexual version of the Old Testament, with scenes of "Adam and Steve" in full frontal nudity. According to *The New York Times*, the playwright himself is a homosexual, and this is how he describes his play: "I wanted the

Garden of Eden in Central Park, and Mary as a lesbian mother, which would certainly help me comprehend immaculate conception" (*The New York Times*, Dec. 6, 1998)

TFP Student Action has joined America Needs Fatima in sending hundreds of thousands of postcards and emails to MIT to protest the play. ■

To join the protest, write, call, or e-mail MIT at:
77 Massachusetts Avenue / Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

"My Favorite Book Essay"

By: Monica Gutierrez
Jacinta's Story, by Andrea Phillips

My favorite book is *Jacinta's Story*, it is my favorite book because God's mother came to tell three children about how the earth could have world peace. She spoke to three shepherd children from Fatima, Portugal. The children were Jacinta, and her brother Francisco, and their cousin Lucia. The children saw God's mother several times but no one believed them! The Virgin told them several things. She told them that Francisco and Jacinta would be in heaven with her soon. She also told the children that if people would pray to her the world would be a better place to live in. That lady who spoke to the shepherd children is known as Our Lady of Fatima.

My Favorite Book



Monica Gutierrez was among 144 students in grades one through five who participated in an essay contest on "My Favorite Book" held in Laredo, Texas, by the Literacy Volunteers of America, a non-profit organization working to increase literacy in English. Monica won second place among the first graders for her essay about *Jacinta's Story*. She and other winners read their essays in a local mall before about 100 people gathered for the event. Her winning essay is reproduced at left. ■

To order your copy of the colorfully illustrated and vividly narrated *Jacinta's Story* for your child or grandchild, call 1-888-317-5571 TODAY. Hardcover, 60 pages



Why Are They Canceling?

BY ROBERT E. RITCHIE

The cover story for our January-February issue showed the effectiveness of protests against blasphemy by citing the testimony of the “other side,” a meeting of museum directors and curators that was dedicated precisely to the problem they face when their exhibits are the subject of protests. Here, ANF Director Robert E. Ritchie presents important reasons for protests and a partial list of successful cases.

The frequent claim that we should not protest public blasphemy because it attracts people to what is being protested is nonsensical. That the claim is often made by those who call themselves Catholic is scandalous. How can anyone who loves God remain silent when He is insulted so viciously?

In the end, the question is not so much whether we should protest as it is whether we truly love God.

There are other reasons why we must protest blasphemy, including:

1) The Church has always been in favor of speaking out against evil, particularly when it is public and notorious, as in the case of blasphemous movies, stage plays, museum displays, and so forth. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that resistance must be public if the evil is public and an object of scandal to souls. If this were not so, the Church would not have maintained the Index of Forbidden Books for so many centuries.

2) When good men do nothing to oppose evil, evil feels free to advance, gradually pushing the limits of sin to new extremes. The Church has always energetically opposed sin, thus following God’s example in establishing the Ten Commandments, most of which are written in negative form—“Thou shall not...”

3) When blasphemy spreads unopposed, the public becomes callous to it. Over a period of time, Catholics become indifferent to the insults hurled at the sacred Persons of Jesus and Mary, and as a result, slowly lose their Faith. The loss of Faith among our youngsters today is a direct consequence of society’s permissive attitude toward sin.

4) Protests against blasphemy are effective. In fact, they are very effective. Facts prove that protests shake the convictions of the blasphemers and many times get the offending party to apologize, retract, or remove the blasphemy in question altogether.

I will prove this. Here are several cases, past and present, of cancelled or banned performances that demonstrate how peaceful and prayerful protests can be highly effective.

1978
Planned Parenthood apologizes
Planned Parenthood published a brochure with an insulting image of the Blessed Mother on the back panel. After a huge TFP-organized protest in front of their New York office, Planned Parenthood directors apologized and withdrew the brochure.

1985
Hail Mary protested worldwide
Jean Luc Godard’s blasphemous movie

Hail Mary was protested in many cities across the globe and banned in others, including Rome, where Pope John Paul II officially condemned the film.

1986
Hail Mary banned in Brazil
Catholics in Brazil protested against *Hail Mary*, and the Brazilian government banned it from showing in that country.

1988
Last Temptation stopped in Denver
ANF members in Denver protested to the local cable company against the blasphemous movie *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which portrays Christ in a love affair with Saint Mary Magdalen. The showing was canceled there.

1988
Last Temptation banned in Argentina
Our sister organization in Argentina protested *The Last Temptation of Christ* with wonderful results. This movie was banned from being shown in that country.

1988
Today—Blockbuster Video bans Last Temptation video
Until today, videos of *The Last Temptation of Christ* are banned at Blockbuster Video stores because of the massive protest against the film.



1997

Where is Gober's blasphemous image?

The museum of Contemporary Art in downtown Los Angeles displayed Robert Gober's blasphemous statue of Our Lady with a sewer pipe through her stomach. After ANF protested the exhibit, it has not, to our knowledge, been seen again in any museum.

1998

Third-rate showings for Corpus Christi

Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* opened in New York City to the protests of thousands of Catholics. Since its debut in 1998, only a few third-rate theaters have agreed to present it. This is due to the unrelenting protests of Catholics everywhere it goes.

2001

Blasphemous exhibit disappears

Alma Lopez's blasphemous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in a bikini at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe met with countless protests. The exhibit has not been heard of since.



The municipal anti-blasphemy resolution adopted in Patillas, Puerto Rico

2002

Father Amaro banned in Puerto Rico

In response to ANF's campaign to protest against *The Crime of Father Amaro*, the municipal authorities of Patillas, Puerto Rico, passed an official resolution banning the blasphemous movie.

2002

Father Amaro canceled in St. Louis and Phoenix

We were successful in getting the blasphemous movie *The Crime of Father Amaro* canceled at the Landmark Plaza Theater at the Frontenac mall in St. Louis. Two theaters in Phoenix also canceled the film.

2002

Jesus Has Two Mommies canceled

The Friday night showing of the blasphemous production *Jesus Has Two Mommies* at the Somerville Theater in Massachusetts was canceled due—in large measure—to our unrelenting crusade and protest to stop it.

2003

Corpus Christi removed from campus

ANF protested the showing of *Corpus Christi* at the Community College of Grand Rapids, Mich. Because of our protest, the play was removed from the campus.

If protests are ineffective, as many mediocre Catholics claim, why are they canceling? ■

To join America Needs Fatima's anti-blasphemy network, call Pat Diaz (661) 336-0270

2003

Father Amaro canceled in Harrisburg

An America Needs Fatima member from Harrisburg, Penn., practically alone, protested the blasphemous movie *The Crime of Father Amaro* by calling the theater and the diocese, and writing the mayor. A few days later the movie was canceled at the Midtown Cinema. We publish her letter for the interest of our readers.

Dear Mayor Reed;

Several months ago you were notified about an offensive movie *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys* but chose "not to become involved" in advising the movie owner, Allen Brown, about what movies he chose to run.

This is indeed a very unfortunate stance that could now be rectified with you reconsidering your past position, because Mr. Brown has now chosen to bring to town an even more offensive, hate-filled movie to the Midtown Cinema.

In the present atmosphere in our free country, hate-filled words, actions, etc., directed to any particular culture, race or religion are not tolerated. I noted recently that a man who burned a cross on a lawn of a racially mixed couple could receive 7 years in prison. Movie theaters are no less offensive and culpable when they aggressively advertise and run movies that are nothing but hate crime speech directed at religion. You and I

know that religious persecution exists in Saudi Arabia against Christianity. This should never be allowed in our country, founded by those people seeking religious freedom...

Do you feel these ideals have been realized? With undue publicity about the cinema promoting blasphemy and hate-filled theater "art," will the goals of the "neighborhood theater" become a reality? I sincerely doubt it...

With these concerns as I have presented them to you, I am requesting that you in your position as Mayor of Harrisburg and signer of the \$250,000 loan granted to the Midtown Cinema, contact Mr. Allen Brown and request that he reconsider his choice of *The Crime of Father Amaro* and cancel the showing.

Gail Kephart (Mrs.)

Enclosure: Mode Weekly article cc: Todd J. Shill, Rhoads & Sinon, LLP



COMMENTARY

Where the Faithful Have No Voice

BY MICHAEL WHITCRAFT

Everyone assumes that when an organization is founded to promote an idea or cause, its members will remain faithful to that idea or cause. Thus, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) would never sponsor a fox hunt and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) would certainly never lobby for segregation.

Imagine the shock of an audience when Faithful St. Louis (an offshoot of Voice of the Faithful [VOTF]) shut off the microphones during the question and answer period of their recent conference titled, "See! I Make All Things New! Shared Authority and Co-Responsibility in Our Church."

As one who attended the conference, held on March 22 in St. Louis, I could not help but think: "Why would an organization formed to give the laity a voice and to democratize the Church not want to listen to the concerns of a large sector of the faithful? Do they really mean what they say, or do they have an agenda?"

I found some answers in recalling my arrival at the conference hall and seeing some tell-tale signs of fringe liberalism. Several cars in the parking lot were loaded with bumper stickers reading, "If you want peace, work for justice" and "No Jesus, No Peace: Know Jesus, Know peace."

The keynote speaker at the conference was Fr. Richard McBrien of Notre Dame University. Of all those who do not represent the average Catholic, he would have to rank high on the list. He questions papal infallibility and even the Blessed Mother's perpetual virginity, and his book *Catholicism* was censored by the National Council of Catholic Bishops. In his conference address he rallied the audience of 300 with the unorthodox ver-

biage for which he is known. Mimicking VOTF's slogan, he said, "You can keep the Faith, but it is time to change this Church!" which was received with rapturous applause.

The next speaker, Ann Garrido from St. Francis Xavier Parish, thanked Fr. McBrien for challenging a home-bodied, change-resistant St. Louis audience to push for Church restructuring.



If you are going to attend a Voice of the Faithful conference, you had better be prepared if you really want your voice to be heard.

Musheer Robinson of St. Augustine Parish then declared that the good of the early Church came not from the Apostles, but from Africa. His inflammatory speech, which would have been well received at a 1960s Black Panther rally, railed against the Church's supposed history of black oppression, including the white representation of African saints.

David Clohessy, Executive Director of Survivor Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), gave the last speech of the day. He claimed that SNAP is not pushing for Church

reform and has no agenda other than to support victims, an affirmation that his presence at the conference belied.

After such a barrage of speeches, it was only natural that there would be questions. The first questioner was TFP member Norman Fulkerson, who pointedly asked Fr. McBrien to elaborate on his theory that the Body of Christ is made up of all people and not just Catholics. "Were any other religions founded by Christ?" he asked.

Fr. McBrien's Irish blood began to boil and, while visibly shaken, he had to respond in the negative. When Mr. Fulkerson attempted to follow up on his question, Faithful St. Louis' response was to cut the power to his microphone.

When the power was restored, I had an opportunity to pose some questions. Having heard Phil Saviano, former New England SNAP Director, belittle the sacraments, calling them magic, I asked Mr. Clohessy if that sort of thinking was typical of SNAP representatives. Mr. Clohessy's only response was to affirm that SNAP has no desire to effect Church reform, that their only purpose is to support victims. When I pointed out that Phil Saviano's talk was directed to a VOTF group, whose purpose is to effect Church reform, he had no response.

I also addressed Fr. McBrien's speech. In the beginning of his talk, he had emphasized the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying that all must be sensitive to His action and not be afraid to follow it. He also said that the faithful must lose their attachment to the second millennium of the Church and reattach themselves to first-millennial Catholicism. My questions were, "Where was the Holy Spirit during the second millennium? Did He not also inspire His Church then?"

Abusus Non Tollit Usum

Abuse should not cancel use

BY M. TAYLOR

Shaken once again, Fr. McBrien's response was to change the subject and address the reasonableness of VOTF goals.

The next few questioners were more passive and less orthodox. Quite interesting, however, was a Cuban man of liberal bent who approached the microphone. He described all the leftist activities he had aided throughout the years, which included participation in leftist guerrilla activities in El Salvador. More faithful to his liberalism than the organizers were to theirs, he then castigated Faithful St. Louis for cutting the power to the microphone. "If we are who we say we are, we have to let everyone speak," he shouted.

The Master of Ceremonies conveniently decided that the time for questions and answers was over. The Cuban gentleman stood up again and shouted, "You must allow the rest of these people to speak. This is what we are all about... letting people speak. Even if we have to stay here until midnight, we have to let everyone speak!"

Hoping to ask a question, TFP supporter Mark Serafino leaned forward only to find that the microphone had been turned off once again. At this, the Cuban began repeating his request that all be heard, this time to the applause of half the audience.

The remainder of the audience voiced their objection to letting everyone speak. Pandemonium broke out and the MC could barely be heard over the din of arguing "voices of the faithful" that filled the auditorium.

The experience was an eye-opener for me. It seems you really cannot judge a book by its cover, nor an organization by its name. How can a pressure group within the Church say they are for Church democracy and giving everyone a voice while censoring those who want to speak?

I was also impressed at how vulnerable liberal Catholics are. Orthodox Catholics can be very effective when they proclaim their Faith in the face of adversity. At the Faithful St. Louis conference we were but a handful of faithful with an understanding of a few fundamental Catholic truths. Although greatly outnumbered, we definitely intimidated the organizers.

As for VOTF, if it is the mainstream group it claims to be, the organizers and members should stop attacking the hierarchical structure of the Church. They should at least invite speakers who reflect the teachings of the Church.

And if they are going to call themselves *Voice of the Faithful*, they should keep the microphones on. ■

My previous article, entitled *Where Are Their Crowns?* attempted to demonstrate the need for hierarchy, for a chain of command or proper leadership in society. Quoting Saint Paul: "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church" (Eph.5:22), I defended the same principle in the family.

One lady took the time to respond. She found it old-fashioned that *Crusade* would take up those words. She was brought up as a Catholic but resents the fact that the "Church has demonstrated a strong belief that men rule." She ascribes many of the problems of the Church today to this outlook.

As I read her e-mail, I thought, "Well, take it up with Saint Paul...talking about old-fashioned!" I was going to leave it at that, but musing over her words brought to mind many such women I have met whose eyes darted sparks at the mention of the phrase "leadership in the family." These were well-meaning women who gave their very lives for their families. Why did they contest Saint Paul? Could there be a misunderstanding of true leadership?

All of them echoed yet another comment from my reader, "a healthy



marriage is one of mutual respect and partnership, husband and wife being different, perhaps, but equal." I agree wholeheartedly and clearly stated so in my article, but Saint Paul's phrase has such a way of getting things sizzling that it may have been lost in smoke.

Just the same, I uphold the principle of leadership along with Saint Paul, because for a body to function properly it needs two main parts: a head and a heart. No body can live without a head and none can live without a heart. Both are equally essential to life. Yet, the heart does not resent that the head is placed above it and sends major signals throughout the body, including the heart. The heart "understands" that having a head is a benefit and not a detriment.

The God-given principle of authority and leadership is for our good and not for our harm, for our *improvement* and not our *diminishing*. Perhaps much misuse and abuse of this principle has generated misunderstanding and ill-feeling in American women. Still, abuse cannot cancel use, lest we have a continuous not-so-merry-go-round of dysfunctions. The necessity for leadership is written in the very nature of institutions. The family, being the first cell of society, the basis for all

institutions, cannot be any different.

I have certainly known cases where the husband, conscious that his role was that of "Lord of the Castle," as Jackie Gleason liked to put it in the *Honeymooners*, went about becoming a despot, a mini-Hitler. He was the lord! He was the commander in chief! He was the king! All well and good, except that he forgot that the woman who gave him a kingdom over which to rule was not his handmaid but his wife, the woman who chose him freely, the queen who sat side by side with him on her own throne. When, in my previous article, I mentioned that he must treat her as a queen, I stated this equality of dignities.

Yet, there is an inequality of effective command. This command is far from rigid inasmuch as husband and wife in a Christian marriage are truly partners. Still, the ultimate word, if ever needed, is his, and she owes him obedience, as Saint Paul states.

But here we run into a real problem because many men understand leadership as a lesser or greater form of despotism. They think that to be strong they must be imposing and demanding and that to be kind is to be weak. They are all steel and no velvet. Many a woman reacts either out of fear to succumb to such a situation or in response to situations she observed. Needless to say, the whole feminist propaganda thrives wonderfully in such an atmosphere.

For leadership to be true and effective, it must be made of two elements: steel and velvet. Dr. Aubrey Andelin put it masterfully in his book *Man of Steel and Velvet*, a book I highly recommend. Besides its own merit, it has contributed to making me a very happy woman, having been the bedside companion of the man I married.

Despotism and leadership are worlds apart. Despotism is only steel. Leadership is a blend of steel and velvet. God did not create despotism, but He certainly created leadership, writing it into our very natures.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who is Lord of lords with power over all created beings, gives us a moving lesson in the exercise of Christian authority: "The



A gentleman should be a man who has bent his pride and learned to bend to those who need him—a difficult thing to do, a manly thing to do.

Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20:28). With that statement He forever canceled the pagan idea of leadership, which is proud and loveless. Our Lord demonstrated over and over that he who conquers and leads effectively is he who first conquers the hearts of his people. To do so, he must first conquer himself. A gentleman is a man who has bent his pride and learned to bend to those who need him—a difficult thing to do, a manly thing to do.

A timely example is the present conflict in Iraq. Our president went out on a limb to remove a despot, a man with a pagan notion of leadership. Our brave troops are fighting, dying, and conquering. Is it to dominate? No. It is to give the Iraqi people that supreme good that is a chance for true leadership. Don't we all breathe a sigh of relief at the very thought that those poor, oppressed people are, hopefully, going to have a real leader? Isn't that a gift of gifts worth fighting and dying for?

Our American troops are giving the world a magnificent example of true steel and velvet. We see the steel in the resolve to succeed being carried out systematically. We see the velvet when we watch a marine bending down to a little

one giving him a thumbs-up. This is the combination that melts our hearts and chokes us up. This is leadership—a great good.

Now, if we want it for our country, our institutions, and our organizations, why don't we want it for our families? If the family is the first cell of society, where else will great leaders be made, forged first and foremost by example?

What woman won't die for a man who truly leads her and her children? What woman is not proud of a husband who wins the daily bread, who has the strength to make difficult decisions, who takes upon his shoulders the burden of leading so that she can give herself completely to the task of caring, rearing, and forming? Besides, she has command of his heart anyway. He may rule the kingdom, but she rules the king. Here is, as I mentioned in my previous article, the fair exchange of all things Christ-like. There is no competition. There is completion. But it does take humility on both sides.

My reader thinks that the problems of the Church stem from male dominance. I look at it differently. Perhaps our Church is suffering, in part, because modern motherhood developed a complex of inferiority and decided to "compete," denying children quality time. Where do popes, bishops, priests, and religious come from? Where is a good priest first made but in the home? Women have always been the very lifeblood of the Church. Maybe what we are suffering from is a lack of "mother" dominance.

A woman once told a famous writer: "Oh, Sir, what I would give to write a book and be known..." The writer answered: "Madam, do something infinitely more important than writing a book, have a child."

Again, let us differentiate between use and abuse and not misunderstand the benefits of true leadership. Failing to do so may find us throwing the baby out with the bath water. Literally. For those who suffer most from the multiple dysfunctions ensuing from lack of true leadership are our children. ■



The Universal Mediatrix

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA

On May 31, the Holy Church celebrates the feast of Our Lady, Universal Mediatrix of all Graces. In this age of afflictions and dangers, when all of mankind moans under the weight of misfortunes that increase at every moment, our needs grow and our prayers become more pressing. With this, it is also increasingly important that we know how to pray well. Few truths of the Faith contribute so powerfully to raise the value of our prayers as the Universal Mediation of Mary when studied seriously and made to penetrate deeply into our life of piety.

Of what does this truth consist? Theology teaches that all graces that come to us from God pass through Mary's hands. So, we obtain nothing from God if Mary is not joined to our prayer, and we owe all the graces we receive to her intercession. Thus, the Mother of God is the channel of all prayers that reach her Divine Son and the way of all graces that He bestows on mankind.

Evidently, this truth supposes that in all our prayers we explicitly ask Our Lady to help us. This practice would be highly praiseworthy. Even though we do not declaredly invoke Our Lady's intercession, we can be certain that we will be heard because she prays with us and for us.

A highly consoling conclusion follows from this. If we had to confide merely in our merits, how could we confide in the efficacy of our prayer?

It is said that Our Lord once appeared to Saint Teresa of Avila bearing marvelous grapes in His hands. The saint asked the Divine Master what the grapes signified, and He answered



that they were an image of her soul. The saint then looked carefully at the grapes. As she examined them, her first impression, which was grand, faded, giving way to an increasingly distressing impression. The grapes, now full of blemishes and defects, seemed repugnant to the great saint. She then

understood the lofty meaning of the vision: Even the most perfect souls reveal stains when attentively examined. And what stains can go unnoticed under God's penetrating gaze? Thus did the Psalmist exclaim with good reason: "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?"

If there is no one who does not present stains to the eyes of God, who can hope with full assurance to be heeded in his prayers?

On the other hand, God wants our prayers to be confident. He does not want us to present ourselves before His throne like slaves who fearfully approach a dreadful lord, but like children who gather around an infinitely generous and good father. Indeed, this confidence is one of the conditions for the efficacy of our prayers. But how can we have confidence if, examining ourselves, we feel lacking in reasons to confide? If we have no confidence, how can we hope to be heeded?

From the sadness of this reflection we triumphantly draw the doctrine of the Universal Mediation of Mary. In fact, our merits are minimal and our faults are great, but whatever we cannot attain by ourselves we have every right to hope that Our Lady's prayers will attain.

We must never doubt that she joins our prayers when they are suited to the greater glory of God and our sanctification. In fact, Our Lady has a love for each one of us that is

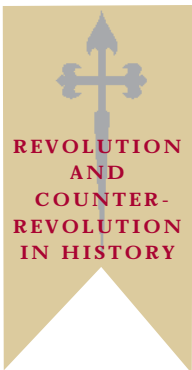


Madonna del Miracolo

only imperfectly comparable to the love that our earthly mothers have for us. Saint Louis de Montfort says that Our Lady has for the most wretched and miserable of men a love superior to that which would result from the sum of the love of all the mothers in the world for one child. Our authentic mother in the order of grace begot each of us to eternal life, and the passage that the Holy Ghost inscribed in Scripture—Even though your father and mother abandon you, I will not forget you—is faithfully applied to her. It is easier to be abandoned by our parents according to nature than by our mother according to grace.

However wretched we may be, then, we can confidently present our petitions to God. Whenever they are supported by Our Lady, they will have a priceless value in God's eyes, a value that will certainly obtain for us the requested favor.

It is fitting for us to meditate unendingly on this great truth. Catholics that we are, we must face in this life the struggles common to all mortals and, in addition, those that come from the reality of our being in God's service. Even though the horizon seems ready to pour down a new flood upon us; even though paths close before us, precipices open up, and the very earth moves under our feet, we should not lose heart. Our Lady will overcome all obstacles that exceed our strength. As long as this confidence does not desert our hearts, victory will be ours and the cunning of our adversaries will be worth nothing. We will walk upon asps and basilisks and will crush lions and dragons underfoot. ■



Chapter VII

Luther's Legacy of Disunity and Oppression

Part One: The Agitation

BY JEREMIAS WELLS

Discontent and revolutionary ferment were driving the German people into a rebellious reaction against authority that threatened to break out into armed insurrection. What was needed was a calming voice to call the Germans to higher principles and to observe the necessity of maintaining social order and traditional religious devotion. Instead, they were given an apostate monk whose inflammatory writings disturbed their passions all the more.

In 1520 on the advice of Ulrich von Hutten, himself a leading humanistic revolutionary, Luther began to turn out large polemical tracts that found an eager audience among the dissatisfied classes. He reiterated his principal heresies that good works, prayer, and the sacraments were useless for salvation, thus denying the necessity of sanctifying grace, the foundation of a Catholic's spiritual life. He also stressed his second basic heresy that the Bible is the only source of faith and could be interpreted according to each individual's own judgment. "Whoever issues from baptism," the heresiarch claimed, "may boast that he has been consecrated priest, bishop, and pope."¹ In several places he indulged in his contemptuous hatred for the Papacy: "I attack his Holiness mercilessly as though he were the Antichrist,"² and, "Why not attack the (Roman Sodom) with every sort of weapon and wash our hands in its blood."³

In saying that the Bible was the only source of faith, Luther ignored several basic historical facts. The first book of the New Testament was not written until approximately fifteen years after the crucifixion. Furthermore, the canon of the Scriptures was not established until shortly before 400 AD, by which time the Church had grown enormously due mainly to the missionary



The Elector Frederick III, called Frederick the Wise—Engraving by Albrecht Durer

work of the Apostles and the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers. The Church had gone through over 300 years of development before determining what books were to be included in the New Testament.

Luther's sacrilegious letters to his supporters and his violent diatribes against the Church and all traditional authority placed him in the forefront of the revolutionary party. Aided by the invention of the printing press a few decades before, his works went through several editions of thousands of copies which spread his inflammatory rhetoric all over Germany and beyond.

Finally, after ignoring the crisis for several years, Leo X in the papal Bull *Exurge Domine* condemned 41 Lutheran errors, ordered the offending works to be publicly burned and the rebellious monk to be excommunicated if he did not recant after sixty days, which of course he did not. Instead of publishing the Bull as ordered, many German bishops held back because of a lack of loyalty and others because they found it inconvenient. Their possessions and privileges would have been

endangered by the seditious attitude of their subjects. In those areas where the Bull was accepted, tumult and riots broke out, especially in the university towns.

The nuncio to the imperial court, Jerome Aleander, urged the youthful Emperor Charles V and Luther's immediate sovereign, the wily Elector of Saxony, Frederick III, to arrest the agitating heresiarch, deliver him up to Rome for punishment and proceed with severity against his followers many of whom were preaching sedition throughout the countryside after the manner of the Lollards and Hussites. Frederick, one of those proud, mischievous men who stand at the switch-points of history, agreed to fulfill his civic duty only after the obstinate heretic had been examined by learned and impartial judges. All sides looked to the upcoming Diet (an assembly of the German Estates) to be held at Worms for a solution.

The Diet of Worms

When Aleander arrived at Worms, he was horrified to learn that Charles had yielded to Frederick's request to give Luther a public hearing. The nuncio impressed upon Charles that the Papacy had already declared that Luther was condemned and that to submit the decision to lay arbitration was tantamount to a defiance of Church authority. The Catholic Emperor initially agreed, but then one of those temporizing councilors, who always seem to drift in from the dark shadows with compromising advice, prevailed upon him to give Luther a safe-conduct to come to the Diet and be heard. Charles took the middle ground, as he often did on controversial issues, by stating that the declared heretic was summoned not to be judged but to give an account of his books and to show a willingness to revoke his errors.



Wartburg castle



Luther standing before the Diet of Worms—Painting by G. Jacobs.

Luther on his part saw an opportunity to further spread his ideas and influence. He arrived at Worms in the middle of April 1521 at the head of an armed band of a hundred knights. Two days later he made his famous declaration: "I cannot and will not retract." That night the monk from Wittenberg celebrated his triumph with his sympathizers at a local tavern.

Much has been made of this dramatic statement in pro-Lutheran literature for representing "freedom of conscience." We should understand that the Catholic Church is a supernatural institution, both in its means and end, established by God. We do not violate freedom of conscience by submitting to a divinely appointed teaching authority which directs us to a truth revealed by Christ himself.

During the next two weeks several members of the Diet tried to arrange for some sort of reconciliation, but Luther remained defiant. Finally, Charles signed an edict written by Aleander that declared the heretic an outlaw throughout the Empire. Anybody who assisted him was to be arrested for high treason. After the Diet, Charles was forced to remain absent from Germany for the next nine years because of wars with Francis I; during this time no one had the strength of will to deal with the determined revolutionary.

On Frederick's return trip, according to a previous arrangement, knights in his service staged a mock abduction and carried the outlawed heretic to the Wartburg, a famous castle near Eisenach in central Germany, where he remained for ten months. Throughout this period Luther entered into bouts of mental anguish. He realized that he was changing all spiritual and human order that had been established by the Catholic Church for centuries. He wrote that he was disturbed, "when one sees that so many excel-

lent, intelligent, and learned people—indeed the best and largest part of the world—besides so many saintly people such as Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine have held and taught such doctrines."⁴ He feared that he was leading into error so many who would be damned forever. But he silenced these warnings of a troubled conscience by pretending that they were temptations from the devil. Also, on several occasions, by his own admission, he calmed his jangled nerves with copious amounts of wine.

Luther's supporters became alarmed at the intemperate brutality of his language. One wrote, "To judge by his unbridled, slanderous tongue one would think he had gone mad or was possessed by an evil spirit."⁵ Another feared "that the populace, inflamed to insurrection by [his] sort of preaching would plunge all Germany into unutterable misery."⁶ And this is exactly what happened.

Social unrest

The rise of free cities and commercialism brought with it a relaxation of business ethics. The advent of a money economy so

transformed society that the feudal loyalties no longer held it together.

Commercial and industrial activity in the medieval cities had been regulated by the guilds that brought Catholic teaching and charity to the simple object of making money. Spiritual welfare of the living and the dead, support of the needy, consolation of the sick, and performance of religious duties were all considered functions of the trade and craft guilds in a society where religion pervaded all aspects of life. The Jesuit Father Cahill provided an excellent summary of the sympathetic union between the different social classes during Catholic medieval times when he wrote "...justice and charity are practiced and co-operation and mutual help promoted; so that every member of the community is usually attached to some organized body from which he can, when the need requires, claim protection and assistance."⁷ When, early in the fourteenth century, God and religion were relegated to a secondary position and secularization invaded society, coldness of heart and greed entered the social equation.



Luther preaching his "reformation"

During the Diet of 1523, complaints were heard about the excessive profits of the large trading associations which were suppressing the small shopkeepers and gouging the people. Merchants of farm produce created an artificial scarcity which lowered the value of money and the wages of labor. Moving down the pecking order, grocers, butchers, and bakers could survive only through fraud and trickery, and by adulterating their products. As usual, this rolling chain of suffering piled up at the doorstep of the peasant, who then became vulnerable to communistic preaching. As he had been warned many times, Luther's venomous attack on papal and ecclesiastical authority would be carried to its logical conclusion: egalitarianism or a desire for total equality.

The Peasants' War

Two converging forces brought about a violent uprising of the discontented lower classes: the inflammatory writings of Luther and the socialistic preaching of those influenced by him. A multitude of agitators—defrocked priests, renegade monks, dissatisfied tradesmen, envious shopkeepers—incited the peasants to plunder the rich, to share in the property of the wealthy, to abolish class distinctions, and to rebel against all authority. When bands of peasants merged with city mobs, disreputable criminals took over the leadership and engulfed most of southern and eastern Germany and adjacent Austrian lands in a flaming sea of insurrection. In scenes to be repeated in subsequent years by the Calvinists, the French revolutionaries, and the communists, the mob plundered and burned churches and convents, stormed castles of nobles, and committed outrageous atrocities.

Initially, many of the princes, nobles, and civic authorities, seeing a possible advantage to themselves, offered little resistance as long as the Catholic clergy and monks were the chief targets. But when the towns and castles came under fire, they ruthlessly attacked the disorganized peasants, who were no match for the well-trained professionals employed by the princes. Luther, in what was perhaps the most ignoble tract of his life, treacherously turned against the peasants whom he had misled in the first place. The inconsistent heretic who denied the efficacy of good works nevertheless declared that "a prince may become worthy

of heaven through the shedding of blood, more easily than others through prayer. Stab, strike, slaughter whenever you can...just as one is compelled to kill a mad dog."⁸

His cruel advice was followed; as many as 100,000 peasants were slaughtered. After thousands of executions, thousands of hands chopped off in punishment, and hundreds of villages burned in revenge, the countryside was filled with beggars, widows, and orphans. While immersed in the blood of so many misguided souls, Luther took a wife, a Cistercian nun!

After the Peasants' War, the moral and religious deterioration increased. Luther himself recognized and lamented the lack of moral discipline. "Now we see the people becoming more infamous, more avaricious, more unmerciful, more unchaste, and in every way worse than under popery." In a letter written to the Elector of Saxony in 1526, he exclaimed, "There is no longer any fear of God, no discipline, because the jurisdiction of the Pope has ceased and now everyone does as he pleases...where youth is neglected and raised without discipline, the authorities are to blame and the land will be filled with

dissipated savages."⁹

Luther, who had neither administrative nor organizational skills, saw his influence wane during the last two decades of his life, although he continued his support by preaching and writing. Up until this point, the revolution had marched forward through the power of his explosive bombast, which appealed to the passions. After the peasants' revolt, the avaricious and dissolute territorial princes gained control of the movement, spurred on by an opportunity to loot the vast wealth of the Church. This will be the subject of part two. ■

Notes

1. Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People* (London, 1908), Vol. III, p. 119
2. *Ibid.* p. 117.
3. H.G. Ganss, s.v. "Martin Luther," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p.445.
4. Janssen, p.207.
5. *Ibid.* p. 212.
6. *Ibid.* p. 213.
7. Rev. E. Cahill, S.J., *The Framework of a Christian State* (Dublin, 1932), p. 82.
8. Janssen, Vol. IV, p. 312.
9. Hartmann Grisar, S.J., *Martin Luther* (Westminster, Md., 1953), p. 328.

Love Is Not Tolerance

BY BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

Christian love bears evil, but it does not tolerate it. It does penance for the sins of others, but it is not broadminded about sin. The cry for tolerance never induces it to quench its hatred of the evil philosophies that have entered into contest with the Truth. It forgives the sinner, and it hates the sin; it is unmerciful to the error in his mind. The sinner it will always take back into the bosom of the Mystical Body; but his lie will never be taken into the treasury of His Wisdom.



Real love involves real hatred: whoever has lost the power of moral indignation and the urge to drive the buyers and sellers from the temples has also lost a living, fervent love of Truth.

Charity, then, is not a mild philosophy of "live and let live"; it is not a species of sloppy sentiment. Charity is the infusion of the Spirit of God, which makes us love the beautiful and hate the morally ugly.

Catholic Educator's Resource Center



Paratrooper's Prayer

Give me, O Lord my God, what is left Thee, that which no one asks of Thee.

I do not ask Thee for rest or tranquillity, either of soul or body.

I do not ask Thee for riches, for success, or for health.

So many ask Thee for these, my God, that none must be left Thee.

Give me, Lord, what is left Thee.

Give me what the others refuse.

I want risk and anguish; I want fight and pain.

Give me these, my God, once and for all.

*Give me the certainty that these will always be my portion, for I will not
always have the courage to ask them of Thee.*

Give me, O Lord, what is left Thee.

Give me what others do not want.

But also give me courage, strength, and Faith.

(This prayer was found by a French general in the pocket of a soldier killed in
action at Dien-Bien-Phu, Vietnam)