

CRUSADE[®]

January/February 2004

ZINE

Fatima Home Visits

Bringing light and hope to countless souls across America



America Needs Fatima Progress Report inside!

TFP Decries Massachusetts Court's Decision as "Morally Irresponsible"



When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He made it clear in the fourth and ninth commandments that marriage was to be the union of a man and a woman. —Illustration by Gustave Doré.

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) registers its complete disapproval and repudiation of the November 18th Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision finding no constitutional impediments to same-sex “marriage” as a morally irresponsible ruling that ignores a wealth of sociological evidence proving how the homosexual relationship in no way provides the stability and support necessary to constitute a family.

“The 4-3 decision represents a redefinition of marriage which seeks to draw non-existent analogies between heterosexual couples and same-sex relationships. It rewards relationships that are of their nature sterile and victimizes children who have the right to be raised in a strong moral environment.

“In mandating the Massachusetts Legislature to enforce its decision, the Court clearly engages in judicial activism and renounces its duty imposed by natural law to uphold morality in favor of the common good.

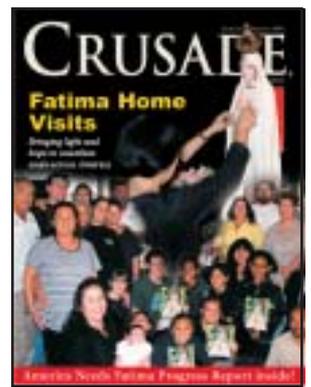
“Established in 1692, the Court prides itself as being the oldest appellate court in continuous existence in the Western Hemisphere. With this decision, it avowedly departs from the history of its own marriage law and forsakes its tradition. The ruling represents a major blow to America’s Christian roots, the institution of the family and the very foundations of morality in society.

“With this decision, the die is cast. It now obliges pro-family forces and especially American Catholics to take the initiative, and mobilize in defense of the family.”

The American TFP invites its members, friends and supporters to join all efforts to defeat same-sex “marriage” and offer prayers and acts of reparation to God for the offense caused by this tragic decision. To join the *Traditional Marriage Crusade*, call 1-877-661-0270.

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Page 4 *Crusade* interviews Fatima Custodian José Ferraz about his 6-years as an apostle of Fatima.



Page 17 His Excellency Juan R. Laise, Bishop Emeritus of Argentina, Prince Bertrand Orleans-Braganza and Ambassador Armando Valladares honor TFP Conference with their presence.

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CRUSADE

Editor: C. Preston Noell III
Associate Editors: Earl Appleby, Eugenia Guzman, John Horvat II, Thomas J. McKenna
Photography: Gary J. Isbell
Foreign Correspondents: Charles E. Schaffer, Austria; Jose Carlos Sepulveda, Brazil; Paul Foley, England; Benoit Bemelmans, France; Beno Hofschulte, Germany; Juan M. Montes, Italy; Felipe Barandiaran, Spain.

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 Magistrerium 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 Christ-

ian 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.



BACK TO
MANNERS

Cell Phones *and* Civilization

BY M. TAYLOR

When cell phones first came out, I thought it was yet another blow to civilization. I saw red the first time I heard one go off in a restaurant with its owner behind me carrying on a loud “monologue.” “This is the end of civilization” I thought, “the phone has invaded the last strongholds of peace and quiet.”

I remembered the story of a famous early twentieth century lawyer. When the telephone first appeared, someone convinced him to install one in his house. The first time it rang was during the family dinner. The intrusion so outraged him that he took a hatchet to it.

I simmered down. After all, I do own a telephone.

About a year ago, due to crime in my city, I broke down and bought a cell phone.

It is still irritating when it rings in restaurants and other public places especially when, in the middle of a conversation, someone stands up and disappears for a half an hour. Everyone tries awkwardly to pick

up the threads of the conversation again, but something is lost.

And what about church? Just the other day, at a benediction of the Blessed Sacrament—“brrrrrinnng!”

Certain places and occasions are sacred. These are the places and times we use to worship, reestablish relationships, or relax from the daily strife. Even certain business meetings that require the full “presence” of those participating may fall in that category. Those are the sacred moments when we turn from self to God and from self to one another. To have an electronic device interrupt such an atmosphere is akin to desecration.

Still, the cell phone can't be seen only as a useless, annoying tool. Like the telephone, it has enormous advantages. Wireless enables people to address emergencies. To give a supreme example, it was a lifeline on fateful September 11. For some it meant the painful yet priceless memory of a last “I love you.” For others it forestalled unspeakable agony, “I'm okay,” and for yet others it worked all sorts of connections.

And the benefits are great. No one needs lose his or her party on a tour or trip. People can now put their minds at ease about traveling spouses, children and relatives. Business transactions are more secure when time is a critical factor. Women feel safer with

help a call away in any given situation—and so on.

Yet, every new technical wonder introduces the priority challenge. The convenience factor is thrilling, and can easily rule our lives as we begin to disregard the lives of others. That should never happen. No matter how technological we become, this world will always, first and foremost, be made of human beings. To them goes the first consideration. We must rule the device, and not allow the device to rule us.

The cell phone issue has developed into a real controversy. Due to possible traffic hazards, several states have imposed fines on using cell phones while driving. Others are proposing to fine wireless users in movie houses, restaurants, libraries, art galleries and concert halls. While fines for traffic usage have been approved, the debate over fines for usage in social places rages on. One critic says: “We can't outlaw rude people, we can only hope to educate them.”

I agree with him, particularly as researchers affirm that approximately one billion people around the world use cell phones, that is, one in every six people. With the cat out of the bag, there is only one thing to be done, work harder on our manners.

Once I asked my mother, “Mom, what are manners, anyway?” She answered wisely, “Manners, is thinking of others.”

I saw red the first time I heard one go off in a restaurant with its owner behind me carrying on a loud “monologue.”



Here is where we should always keep in mind the principle that reads, "Love people. Use things."

The Internet abounds with tips on what is being termed, "cell phone etiquette." It all boils down to "thinking of others."

A few examples: When walking and talking or driving and talking, be aware of your surroundings so as not to infringe on anyone.

If expecting an urgent call, alert your companions beforehand, but do avoid making every call *urgent*. A helpful thought is *the world can very well continue spinning without me*. It did before the cell phone era.

When in a conversation, social gathering or business meeting, let voice mail take your calls or put it on "vibrate" if you must. Then, if unavoidable, excuse yourself politely. Still, remember that in answering that call you send the unmistakable message to the person or persons in your company, "I have something or someone more important than you to attend to at this time." There are no two ways about it. It feels like a slap in the face.

Here is where we should always keep in mind the principle that reads, "Love people. Use things." If we don't switch this maxim around, we will know how to govern our cell phone and not allow *it* to govern us.

Once the "thinking of others" rule—which in religious terms translates to "love your neighbor"—is in place, we may proceed to take full advantage of all the cell phone benefits. But if we are unable to reconcile our cell phone advantages with the welfare of our fellow human beings, it might be better to let it go.

After all, in the twilight of this life, we shall be judged according to how much we have loved. And every little bit counts. ■



Young Pro-life Americans showed great interest for traditional values at the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Conference in Scranton, last September. Above: The TFP booth sparked much interest at the conference.

Abortion Foes Expand Struggle to Defend Traditional Marriage

BY ANNE DRAKE

Determination marked participants' faces at the 2003 Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Conference September 27th and 28th. This determination stems from more than 30 years of struggle against abortion. It also stems from tragic personal scars left by abortion. But above all, it stems from a profound desire to ensure that America's children will inherit a country finally free of this affront to God and his Law.

About 800 activists young and old gathered in Scranton, Penn., to share their experience in the struggle against abortion. As one "veteran" anti-abortion campaigner said, "For the first time in this fight, I feel like my generation can pass on the torch to those who will take this fight to the end. Before abortion was legalized we were fighting against the contraceptive mentality and warning people that it would lead to legalized abortion. People were blind to the dangers. Then came abortion. Now we have euthanasia. The breakdown of the family is at an all-time high. Next they are trying to legalize homosexual unions and redefine marriage. God help us! We need to fight against all this and you, young people, have the conviction that it takes to see it to the end. God bless you!"

A wide range of topics in almost 40 workshops showed the amplitude of this struggle: abortion legislation,

political activism, crisis pregnancy support, media control, medical ethics and practice, the abortion mentality in educational institutions, euthanasia, outing the religious vote, college and high school programs, abstinence education, stem-cell research, human cloning, post-abortion trauma, and the whole Pandora's box of moral horrors unleashed since 1973.

The homosexual agenda was on everyone's mind due to the June Supreme Court decision legalizing sodomy. Sunday keynote speaker, Fr. John Trigilio, addressed this threat and convoked pro-lifers to a unified front supporting traditional marriage. "The undermining of traditional marriage gave rise to abortion," he said, and warned that if anti-abortion activists failed to uphold traditional marriage initiatives, they could not stop abortion in the long run.

Prominent among these initiatives is the *Traditional Marriage Crusade* just launched by The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (www.tfp.org). The crusade petitions the Catholic bishops to promote traditional marriage and openly oppose homosexual unions. It points to the recent declaration by Massachusetts bishops condemning such unions and calls for similar measures across the country. ■



THE “Queen’s Chauffeur”

All year round, ten members of America Needs Fatima travel from sea to shining sea bringing the message of Our Lady of Fatima to American homes. Each custodian carries a large statue of the Blessed Mother, and an audiovisual presentation of the Fatima story and message. Crusade interviewed Mr. José Walter Ferraz, a father of seven and dedicated Fatima Custodian who shares with us his life as the “Queen’s Chauffeur,” the title he proudly claims.



Crusade: How long have you been working as a Fatima Custodian?

Mr. Ferraz: I have been escorting the statue of Our Lady of Fatima and taking her message to homes across America for six years; covering about 250,000 miles and making a total of approximately three thousand visits.

Crusade: You do this full time?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes. Many people ask me at the visits if this is my job. I say that it is not only my job but I also consider it a calling. The work is hard on my family because I am away for several days at a time. But both my wife and I wanted to do this for

Our Lady. We wanted to help her save souls. I knew that if I took care of spreading her message, she would take care of our family.

After a year and a half of doing this, I had the rare opportunity to go to Fati-

ma, Portugal with my wife, thanks to a generous soul. We wanted to ask Our Lady for a sign that we should continue on this path. We were kneeling amidst the many thousand pilgrims when a man tapped me on the shoulder and asked, “Do you want to carry the statue?” I couldn’t believe it. He had singled me out of that multitude asking if I wanted the honor of carrying the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the candlelight procession. My wife began to cry. She explained to the man what I did back in the States and that she was at Fatima asking Our Lady for a sign whether I should continue carrying her statue to homes in America. The man looked at her and said, “You asked. Our Lady answered. You must continue doing what you are doing” (See photo on opposite page).

Crusade: Can you describe for us a typical Fatima visit?

Mr. Ferraz: Every appointment for a Fatima visit is made and coordinated from our Kansas office. I have visited the following states: Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Minnesota, Florida and Puerto Rico. When I arrive, people have already prepared a special table or console



Mr. José Ferraz, a happy father of seven, spends most of his time on the road as a Fatima Custodian. He asserts with great confidence, “I knew that if I took care of spreading her message, she would take care of our family.”



for the statue. The first thing I do is ask the owners of the house to place the golden crown on the statue's head, symbolic of inviting the Blessed Mother to be the queen of their household. People love this gesture. Many ladies comment that when they were young, they always dreamed of crowning Our Lady but never had the opportunity. After this, we say a Rosary. Following the Rosary, I give a small talk and show the slide presentation of the story and message of Fatima. We close with a questions-and-answers session, usually followed by cake and coffee provided by the family.

Crusade: How would you describe the reaction of people to the Fatima visits?

Mr. Ferraz: Generally, people accept the visit with open hearts. The reactions are many and varied. Some are so deeply touched that they make a full conversion, change their lives, and commit themselves anew in their Faith. Others are trying to live good lives but are discouraged by what they see all around them. These acquire new hope and zest from the Fatima presentations. You cannot imagine how Our Lady touches souls from all walks of life. I have been in every possible type of home in America, rich, middle and poor, including a variety of ethnic groups. I have visited Spanish, French, Philippino, English, Korean homes and many more. Her Grace touches all. It is amazing—and this is why I like to say that all I do is drive Our Lady around. I drive her, and she gives the graces.

In one Korean home, I was impressed by their devotion. The silence, the respect and the devotion were moving.

“I just want to let you know that this prayer group you see here exists because of your visit four years ago.”

They knelt motionless before the statue and recited the full Rosary and other prayers.

Once in a while I do come across a few individuals who are closed to the message. I even had a man threaten me once. But most people are very open and more than eager to listen.



For Fatima Custodian José Ferraz, the privilege of being chosen to carry Our Lady's statue while on a visit to Fatima, was an answer to prayers.

Crusade: Can you share a few stories with us?

Mr. Ferraz: Gladly. I will begin by relating a few experiences with people who were so touched by Our Lady that they changed their lives.

About a month ago I visited a house in Long Island. As I was leaving, a lady approached me.

“I met you six years ago,” she said.

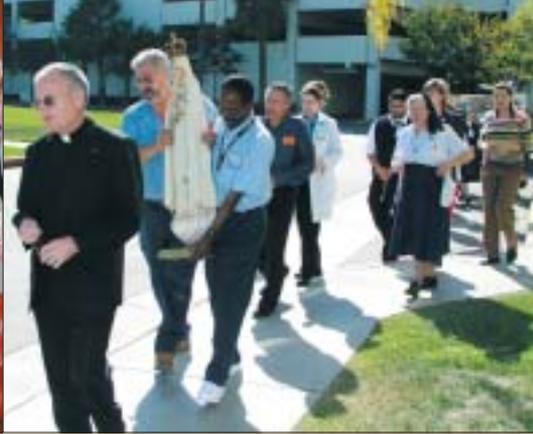
“I'm sorry, Ma'am,” I retorted, “I meet so many people that I don't seem to recall.”

“Yes, you brought the Fatima statue to my home. At that time, my family was a mess. My children were involved in drugs, my daughters were going down the wrong path, and so on. I only accepted to have a Fatima visit because I had built on to my house and it seemed a good opportunity to show off the addition. But when Our Lady came, I was surprised at how moved I felt.

“After you left, my husband and I decided to change our lives and to try to help our children as well. To date, only one child is still astray. All the others have returned. And I want to tell you that this prayer group you see here began with your visit. After that visit, we started to say the Rosary everyday, as well as meeting with this group of thirty to forty people every week to say the Rosary.”

Now, cases like this are very common. It happens all the time.

Another time a lady approached me at a visit in New Jersey and said, “Do you remember me?” I had to apologize again. She went on, “I just want to let you know that this prayer group you see here exists because of your visit four years ago. After the statue of Our Lady came to my home, my friends and I decided to meet



every Wednesday (about thirty of us) to say the Rosary as the Blessed Mother asked. We are very happy because after persevering at it for three and a half years, five of our husbands are coming too. And one of the intentions of our Rosary is for your family and your apostolate.”

At another visit in Philadelphia there were many people and children. At a certain point, one of the mothers stood up and asked about my wife by name. I was surprised but she said, “Some time ago you visited my home, and at that time your wife was expecting a baby, and was going to need an operation. We prayed for her then, but I want you to know that, since then, my family and I have prayed for her and for the success of your work every day in our Rosary. We now say the Rosary not only once a week, but every day, and my children have learned to pray it because of your visit to us.”

Another case that really impressed me was that of a gentleman in Pennsylvania. Last year I received a Christmas card from him. He thanked me for the visit and then added, “This day is the happiest of my life. I have been married for seventeen years but my wife has been out of the Church for fourteen of those. For the past ten years I have gone to Mass and Holy Communion every day asking for her conversion. We never talked about it. I just prayed. Then you brought the Blessed Mother and the Fatima presentation to our home.

“The next day, as I prepared to leave for Mass in the morning, I noticed she was dressed and ready. ‘I am coming to Church with you,’ she said. I was shocked but said nothing. On the second day, she came again, and then wanted to talk about it. On the third day she

wanted to come again and made a general Confession. For the past six months she has been coming with me to Mass and Holy Communion as well as saying three Rosaries every day. And now, whereas before I always went to Sunday Mass with only my children, we now attend as a family.”

Crusade: A true miracle.

Mr. Ferraz: Yes, a true miracle. But, there are many other such cases.

Crusade: Is there a case that stands out in your mind?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes. It was the case of a man who approached me at a visit in New Jersey on September 14, 2001, three days after 9/11. I made several visits in

that area and the atmosphere in every home was that of deep mourning. No one spoke; I only heard weeping. From one of the homes, I could see the smoke still rising from Ground Zero.

After the presentation at this home, I asked if anyone had any questions. A thirty-five year old man stood up and said, “I don’t have a question but I would like to witness to something. Two-and-a-half years ago, you were at my aunt’s house. I only went to please my aunt. I was not a good Catholic then. But after the audiovisual presentation, I was so struck by the message of Fatima that I decided to change my life. I went home and began to use this little booklet you gave me (at this, he pulled it out of his pocket) *I am the Lady of the Rosary*, which teaches you how to say the Rosary. I have used it every day since. That week I made a full Confession, began to say the Rosary every day, and taught it to my two daughters. I also began making a real effort to stop offending God.

Three days ago, I was on the 89th floor of the second building. When the first plane hit, I ran down the stairs, but when I came to the eighth floor, all the doors were shut. I realized I was a dead man. I could hear people screaming for help as they burned to death, and then no longer screamed. I saw a woman who had been decapitated. And now I knew it was my turn. I knelt on the floor, pulled my Rosary out of my pocket and began to say it aloud. A few moments later, a few firemen cranked open the doors and I made it to the street. Several of my co-workers with whom I had worked for ten years never made it home. I owe it to Our Lady that I am here to see my daughters grow. I came today to thank her for saving my



Fire Chief of Hoboken, New Jersey traveled from Cape May to help take the statue of Our Lady to Ground Zero.



life so I can witness to her goodness.”

Crusade: Did you ever visit Ground Zero with the statue?

Mr. Ferraz: I did take the statue of Our Lady to Ground Zero. The Fire Chief of Hoboken, New Jersey traveled from Cape May only to escort the statue to the spot. He and the others asked Our Lady’s blessing for Ground Zero.

Crusade: Have you seen any physical cures related to these visits?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes. I will tell you about one such case that really moved me. About five and a half years ago, I had an appointment at the home of a doctor in Florida. As I arrived, I saw an ambulance. I thought the visit was canceled. On inquiry, the lady of the house explained that the ambulance was bringing her husband who had had a stroke a year and a half before. He was in a nursing facility but she wanted him to be present as the head of the family at the visit of Our Lady’s statue. It was a heart-rending sight because the gentleman could neither move nor speak. Still, I had the strong impression that his mind was clear and that he was following every gesture and every word.

At the end of the presentation, the lady approached me asking if I could touch the statue to her husband. As I held the statue before him, the poor man made a tremendous effort to touch her but couldn’t. Taking both of his arms, his wife entwined them around the statue. At this, the man began to cry. He hugged

the statue for a long time as the room went silent.

After that, I left.

Two years later, I had a visit in New Jersey. As I knocked on the door, no one answered. I called the number and woke up the owner who was startled as well as apologetic because he had mistaken the date. He had wanted the visit for his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary which was the coming Saturday, and this was Monday. He had made the scheduling mistake because he had done it hastily



Many children and young people attend the Fatima visit. The children watch with admiration while teenagers ask most of the questions.

on an airplane returning from Florida.

As we talked, I realized he knew nothing about America Needs Fatima. I asked him if he would mind telling me how he came across us. He said, “Oh, in a very peculiar way. I was visiting my uncle and aunt in Florida. My uncle had had a stroke. After dinner, my uncle said, ‘Lets say the Rosary.’ I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. I knew he was Catholic but I also knew he was not

a Rosary-saying-type of Catholic. He saw my surprise and said, ‘you can say the Rosary with us if you want. If not, just sit with us until we finish, but in my house, even if the President of the United States is visiting, we say the Rosary after dinner. I’ll explain later.’

“I said it with them, and after we finished, he told me how his stroke had deprived him of movement and speech for a year and a half. He explained that a man had visited his home with a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and, after that, he had begun to recover, and here he was today. In thanksgiving, he promised Our Lady, that he would always gather those in his household to say a Rosary every day after dinner.”

I smiled and said, “Amazing. I was the one at your uncle’s house with the statue of Our Lady.” For me, it felt like a smile from the Blessed Mother.

Crusade: You say that many people are encouraged and “fired-up” by the Fatima message. Can you share anything with us?

Mr. Ferraz: I will tell you of an interesting case. At one visit, I noticed a man who was very serious. He was so serious that I thought he didn’t like what he was seeing and hearing. After the presentation, he approached me and said, “You know, today is one of the happiest days of my life. This is because not only did I have the opportunity to come and pray the Rosary, (I pray it everyday with my wife and son) but to meet your organization. We have been meeting weekly with our group for seven years for Bible Study. Still, I was to a



There was a large group of very “hungry” people, people who wanted to know the truth and how to lead their lives in it. We talked until three thirty in the morning.

point where I did not know what else to do. Just yesterday, as I learned of the *Lawrence vs. Texas* decision by the Supreme Court for the protection of homosexuality, I was saying to myself, ‘Until when will God allow this? Has God forsaken us?’ Today, as I heard your talk, I saw the solution. You gave me something I much needed—hope, and the certainty of victory.”

Next week I saw him at his sister’s house full of new zest and wanting to gather people to study, pray and act.

Like him, there are many cases of people who are discouraged, betrayed by the modern world, and who obtain new hope. I can see that it is a dual action of Our Lady’s grace and the audiovisual we present.

Crusade: Do you ever take the statue to the sick?

Mr. Ferraz: I have done so at the special request of some people, with moving results. Once, I took it to a good friend who was dying and in much spiritual distress. At the sight of her, he was enormously relieved and kept repeating, “She came, she came. She did not abandon me.” He died much consoled. After this, I made the resolution to take the statue to the sick whenever asked and whenever possible.

Another time a lady begged me to bring the statue to her twenty-one year old son at the hospital who was in critical condition both physically and spiri-

tually. Three days later I brought the statue to him, he asked to go to Confession and died soon after. That same day, I took the statue to fifteen other patients. Though only a representation of our Blessed Mother, the sight of her statue truly moves people.

Crusade: Do you visit schools?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes and those visits are very moving for me. For example, I spent four hours at a school in Philadelphia. The children, ages eleven to fourteen, had a flood of questions. I was amazed at how “hungry” they were for answers about their Faith. At the same time, I was saddened because many of the questions revealed appalling ignorance.

After one such visit, a good, zealous teacher sent me a pile of letters from the children. I can assure you that if you read them you would cry. They were not only deeply grateful for the visit of Our Lady to their school but they wanted to do something for her. So, they made a resolution for the summer. They each promised to distributing a hundred Fatima flyers. Some of them had already distributed more than that.

Crusade: At the Fatima visits, do people ask questions?

Mr. Ferraz: Again, it varies. At some houses people have only a few questions, and others have many. The best questions usually come from younger people. These are people forty and under who grew up with much more than their parents ever had, but who are looking for more to pass on to their children. They are looking for God. And, many times, they find many of those answers at a Fatima visit.

Once, I was at a beautiful house on the shore of Long Island. There were about eighty people. There was a group of about thirty people, 25 years and under who sat right in front. Many of the questions were coming from this group.

After the presentation, a girl in her early twenties approached me with a barrage of questions. Some of them were quite personal. Noticing I was a bit embarrassed, she said, “I don’t mean to embarrass you, but I want to know the truth. For about ten months now I have been looking for the truth. I went into a church, made a Confession and then asked the priest. He gave me some answers. At first, I was satisfied. But two or three weeks later I realized that wasn’t everything. I went to another church, and then another, and then another. It

Continued on page 12...



COVER STORY

Day-by-Day: The Life of a Fatima Custodian

BY ROGER L. VARGAS



The daily toil has a way of turning all the interesting details of life into routine. Thus, after a while, it doesn't occur to those immersed in it, that aspects of that same work may be of interest to others. But talking to a friend about our life as custodians of the Blessed Mother, I noticed he was impressed. He said, "Why don't you write an article describing the day-to-day life of a custodian of the Blessed Mother? I'm sure people would love to read about it."

He left me thinking. And I must confess that what we, the custodians, experience in this apostolate is truly impressive. So, to satisfy my friend's request and, hopefully the curiosity of our readers, I will try to briefly describe the day-to-day of a Fatima custodian.

It all starts at our Kansas office

The visit of the Blessed Mother to a home begins a month before at our Kansas office which is fully staffed with dedicated coordinators.

The coordinators first choose the area where Our Lady will be visiting, and set the time she will be touring the region. Then the preparations for the actual visits begin. Our coordinators choose the names who will receive invitations, and these names range from the oldest and most active to brand new names of people who have never had a Fatima visit at their homes. Then, beautiful postcards of the International Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima are mailed announcing that the Blessed Mother will be in their area.

A few days after the postcards are sent, our office begins receiving calls from families who want a Fatima visit. Those calling first get to choose the dates most convenient to them.

The second phase of the operation, involves calling those persons who received the invitation but did not reply and filling time slots still open.

Once an appointment is made, the office sends the family a packet with all the information necessary for the visit. As the actual date of

the visit approaches, the family receives a reminder postcard, followed by a last confirming phone call a couple days before. From then on, the visit is left to the custodians.

A custodian's daily routine

Custodians travel either alone or with another. Every night, we download the calendar of appointments for the next day to verify addresses and print street maps with exact directions. If there is no time to do it at night, we do this first thing in the morning.

Besides downloading addresses and maps, we also have a few office duties. The custodians prepare the prayer intentions collected that day to be sent to Fatima. They organize new names of people who have been inscribed as *Children of Mary*, and print out certificates for the next day's visits. They also reload the van with materials, and sometimes send emails to headquarters requesting more pamphlets, prayer cards, books



From left to right, Fatima Custodians: Joseph Ferrara, Marc Lascelle, Nicholas Mak, Byron Whitcraft, Fernando Nunes, Kevin Ritchie, Robert Ritchie (ANF Director), Norman Fulkerson, José Walter Ferraz and Roger Vargas.

and religious items as their stock dwindles.

When the area is new to the custodians, they must do a little more work than usual. In more familiar areas, families often offer to put them up for the night. But when this does not happen, they must look for suitable lodging, and hunting for a discount coupon or two can really help.

Always on the road going from appointment to appointment, the life of a custodian is tightly scheduled. Yet, at times, we must prioritize and just make sure everything is ready. Several times we have arrived at our first visit without having had a meal. But then, didn't Our Lady of Fatima ask for sacrifice for the conversion of sinners?

The custodians also try to contact the person to be visited either the day before or a few hours prior to the visit to confirm their arrival once more or, whenever necessary, to ask for additional directions to the home.

What happens at a Fatima visit

As we approach the house, the first thing we do is to say a prayer asking Our Lady to bless the upcoming visit. We say a "Memorare" and an ejaculation to Our Lady Help of Christians, who is the patroness of each particular team.

We first enter the house carrying the small box containing the crown of Our Lady. At times, people are disappointed thinking that all we have is a tiny statue in

screen and the table with items that people may wish to purchase after the presentation.

After everything is in place, we begin the ceremony of coronation of Our Lady. Everyone stands, and the owners of the house are invited to crown Our Lady and place the Rosary in her hands as all present sing *Immaculate Mary* or another hymn in honor of Our Lady.

After this, we say the Rosary led by the owner of the house. If a priest is present, we ask him to lead. The custodian is also an option.

The next step in the program is to introduce the America Needs Fatima campaign to the audience along with a small history of the origin of the statue, and a summary of the organization's most recent activities. If there are no questions, we proceed to the presentation of the audiovisual, a slide presentation of the story of Fatima with the message, prophecies and revelations of Our Lady to the three little shepherds, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. The slide presentation also shows how the message was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in our days.

Before closing the program, the custodian offers to all present the opportunity of sending their petitions to Fatima through a member of America Needs Fatima. At this time, those who are not as yet active members of the America Needs Fatima Campaign are invited to join. We then pass around the envelopes for the petitions along with a beautiful picture of Our Lady as a remembrance of her visit.

Lastly, before the presentation draws to a close, a beautiful certificate is presented to the owners of the house. When 13 persons or more attend a Fatima visit, the host receives a large poster of Our Lady of Fatima as a gift. (The number 13 was chosen to honor the date in which Our Lady appeared—the 13th of each month from May to October 1917).

Finally, the program is closed, and people have time to write their intentions, offer their own personal prayers before the statue, or take pictures.

At this time people also have the chance to look at our table of sellable items and purchase a book, a beautiful crucifix, or a religious statue. Generally, the lady of the house offers some refreshments, which occasions a lively conversation among neighbors, newfound friends and custodians.

The custodians then load everything up again and invite all present to take a group photo as a souvenir. A last prayer is said, along with good-byes, and the custodians head for the next visit.



Fatima Custodian Roger L. Vargas presents a poster of Our Lady of Fatima to the evening's hostess.

For those families who invite 13 or more friends, receive a poster of Our Lady of Fatima.

that 10 inch box. This is not a problem. It only makes the upcoming surprise better.

As we enter the house, we greet the owners and ask them to show us the table or console where the statue of Our Lady will be placed. Then, returning to the van, we bring in the 30 inch statue in her covering. Before the admiring eyes of all, we uncover her and set her in her appointed place.

Next, we begin to bring in all the necessities for the presentation from the van: projector, projection screen, tripod, CD player, and the boxes containing our own line of books and religious statues and items for sale. Sometimes we make up to five trips back and forth.

We then set up the projector and projection

A warm reception for the message of Our Lady

Since the America Needs Fatima Home Visit Program started in 1997, custodians have made over 17,000 visits to homes, churches, schools and hospitals, and personally reached 200,000 people.

At the visits, we marvel at the diversity of God's creation. No two visits are ever the same even if they are made in the same city, on the same street, in the same block or fifty miles apart. They are all different.

We are also impressed at how seriously people receive Our Lady in their homes. One gentleman said, "This is the fifth time that she has visited our home. Once you receive her the first time, it is impossible not to want her back every year."

Christian charity extended to custodians

I would like to give one example of the charity extended to us by those who open their homes to the visits. Once the owner of a home asked me, "How many miles a year do you put on the van?" "About, 30,000," I answered. He was impressed—and disappeared. We remained talking with his wife and the guests. After a while he came out of the garage saying, "I gave the van a full tune-up, and looked over the door and lock mechanism. It should all work well for you now. I'm also donating a special type of oil for all your vans. It's the same oil used for army helicopters and should last 30,000 miles."

The most important: by the fruits you shall know the tree

Wherever Christian charity is, Our Lord and Our Lady are also found. This article would not only be incomplete but short of reality if I were to omit saying something about the graces that the Blessed Mother grants daily, at each visit.

As custodians, we see it clearly. And for us, there is no greater reward than to witness souls open their hearts and minds to Our Lady's invitation to heed and follow her message. Our Lady touches each person in a unique way. This touch is silent, profound and transforming. And when she really wants a soul, she will not let go until she has it.

A lady told us that she was once at her daughter's house and saw one of our pamphlets with the beautiful face of Our Lady of Fatima on the cover. She asked her daughter if she could have it. "Oh no Mom," said the daughter, "I will order another one but I'm not giving you mine!"

It was a rainy day and her daughter took her

home. As she stepped out of the car, she saw the same beautiful face of her daughter's pamphlet looking at her from the wet, muddy curb. She picked it up, cleaned it, and it is now framed in her home.

There was the case of two sisters, eighty-five and eighty-seven respectively, who received the statue in their home. Before we started the Rosary, one of them approached me and said, "You know, today is the first time that my sister and I are saying a Rosary. I have cancer, but I am not worthy of asking Our Lady to cure me. What I will ask is that she grant me the strength to continue and to

Our Lady touches each person in a unique way. This touch is silent, profound, transforming.



do what she wishes of me."

One Jewish lady who had just moved, received a Fatima postcard in the name of the previous owner announcing that the statue would be visiting the area. She thought, "This must be a sign for me. I will call them." She called, and made an appointment for a Fatima visit. She invited her friends, many of whom were also Jewish. On the day of the visit they were all very respectful, asking several questions about the message, and even tried their best to follow the rosary.

As already seen on this issue in the interview with Mr. José Ferraz, the favors granted by Our Lady at the Fatima visits are innumerable and many times miraculous. I will therefore limit myself to describing the day-to-day routine of the Fatima visits. But, the stories and graces could go on and on.

All Custodians have the honor to witness the fruits that grace produces through these visits of the Blessed Mother to homes across America. If these fruits of grace are so perceptible, we should have no doubt that Our Lady will not abandon those who have Faith on their journey.

As grace never lies, we know that the victory prophesied by Our Lady at Fatima will come. This is the conviction that moves the Custodian forward in their program of thirteen visits, six days a week. We know that in one way or another we are helping Our Lady triumph in souls and thus helping to expand her coming reign.



...continued from page 8

was always the same. You see, if I go to a restaurant and ask for a glass of orange juice, I want 100% orange juice. I don't want 10% orange juice and 90% water; or 50% orange juice and 50% water; or 90% orange juice and 10% water. I want 100% orange juice. If you are not ready to give me 100%, you need not answer me."

At this particular house, people wanted to talk so much that they invited me back another day. There was a large group of very "hungry" people, people who wanted to know the truth and how to lead their lives in it. We talked until 3:30am.

Crusade: Do priests attend some of the presentations?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes, many times. When a priest is present, before I start, I always ask him to add anything he wishes. I also beg him to correct me if I am wrong. One time, I even had a bishop present. Several priests at different visits have asked to speak after the presentation and ended by delivering entire sermons manifesting not only their approval but also their enthusiasm for everything that was shown and said.

Once, I took the statue to Saint Augustine, the place where the first Mass was celebrated on American soil. An elderly priest who was with us gave a little talk and said some words I will never forget. He said, "Our Lady did not come to earth to make us feel good. She came to deliver a message to us. She came to help save our souls with her message. Now, a great problem is that the majority of Catholics do not know her message. Many times we don't do what Our Lady asked because we don't know the message." That was very encouraging to me because at our visits, there is a threefold action: we bring the statue, which has a

very beneficial effect on everyone; we pray the Rosary, which is what Our Lady asked; and then we show our audiovisual, which informs the public about Our Lady's requests.

Crusade: What is the average attendance at the Fatima visits?

Mr. Ferraz: I have had anywhere from a single person to one hundred fifty.

Crusade: Do you ever have a bad day? I mean, one of those days where everything goes wrong?

Mr. Ferraz: Ooooooh, yes. I will tell you of one such day. One morning, it began with my comb breaking. Then, two of the tires blew simultaneously on my car. After changing them, the car wouldn't start. The day before there was nothing wrong, but this day nothing sparked. Then, someone stole my projection screen. One store didn't have it, so they sent me to a store two hours away. When I arrived there, they told me they made a mistake; they didn't have it either. In the end, I bought a screen in enough time for the visit, but I was exhausted.

As I walked into the house, I found about fourteen people. They were polite but cold. So, it was one of those visits I couldn't wait to finish, and only thought of bed.

As I was leaving, a woman was waiting for me at the door. "Thank you," she said emphatically, "Thank you very much," and began to cry. "You have changed my life." I protested, "No, Ma'am, it was Our Lady who did it, remember I said I'm only her Chauffeur." She went on. "For the past ten years I haven't gone to Mass or received Communion. All I have done is enjoy my life. But you have changed all that. Tomorrow I will go to Confession and begin anew." I said, "Ma'am, I only don't give you a big hug because I have the statue in my arms. If you only knew the day I've had! Your words have made it all worthwhile. You made my day."

It is for such that I continue to drive Our Queen around the country. ■

Before the Fatima presentation begins, the statue of Our Lady is solemnly crowned.

We know that each visit, whether it is to one or five hundred persons, is one more step toward helping Our Lady triumph in hearts. We know that if we open our hearts and homes to her, she will work marvels in our souls.

We know that as Saint Louis de Montfort says, "if we give her something as small as an egg, she will give us something as big as an ox in return." She will not fail us.

This is why Fatima Custodians travel over thirty thousand miles every year in the cold, heat, rain or snow, like apostles looking for seven loaves and seven fish with which to present Our Lady at the moment of the fulfillment of her prophecy at Fatima. ■



America Needs Fati-

January ~ February 2004

PROGRESS REPORT

ABC Special: FICTION THAT OFFENDS

The BBC News reports that ABC reporter Elizabeth Vargas admits that her network's one-hour "exploration" of whether Jesus Christ had a wife is going to offend people. However, this will not stop the November 3rd screening.

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) and its American Needs Fatima campaign want ABC to know that such attacks on the Faith and the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ are considered insulting and blasphemous. The TFP has organized demonstrations in front of ABC offices in New York and Burbank and mounting a week long e-mail protest.

The ABC program, *Jesus, Mary and DaVinci*, is partially based on the best-selling novel, *The DaVinci Code*, which fantasizes that St. Mary Magdalene was married to Christ and fled Jerusalem with His child following His crucifixion.

The pseudo-intellectual program adds further injury by dressing up its story with commentary from liberal theologians like Richard McBrien. Elizabeth Vargas admitted that ABC found no proof as to whether Jesus had a wife or not.

In Burbank, the American TFP and



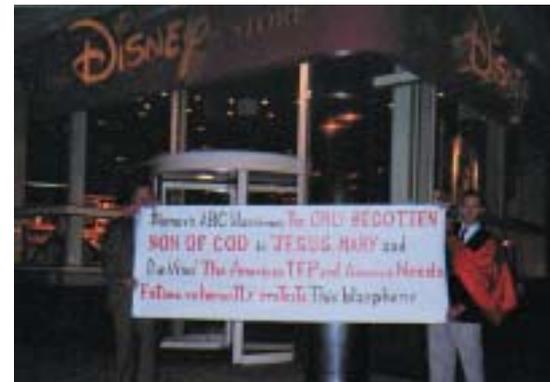
its America Needs Fatima campaign staged a lunch hour protest in front of ABC-Disney studios. Some members drove more than two hours to manifest reparation to Our Lord and indignation at ABC's program.

American TFP vice president, Thomas McKenna, led prayers, hymns and addressed the people. Large banners reading "Blasphemy Provokes God" or "Stop Catholic Bashing" were displayed for cars to see as they passed.

Blasphemy is a grave public sin against God. Members of America Needs Fatima do not stand by with arms crossed. Protest against Jesus, Mary and DaVinci in front of ABC-Disney studios in New York City (right) and Burbank, California (below).

A similar demonstration took place in front of ABC offices in New York City.

"Like the book, the special is fiction," said America Needs Fatima director Robert Ritchie. "I don't understand how ABC can air such preposterous theories that fly in the face of Catholic teaching and tradition, and have zero historical evidence. Vargas is reported to have said the program will offend. It will!" ■





Getting the MESSAGE OUT

BY ROBERT E. RITCHIE

ANF calendars to 365,000 families

By now, the 2004 America Needs Fatima calendar is already on the walls of 365,000 homes—that’s the number of calendars printed and distributed. We like to call our calendar the “silent missionary” because it is an effective way to get Our Lady into so many homes. As America crosses troubled times, Our Lady’s message opens our eyes to the gravity of today’s moral corruption, explains everything in light of God’s plans, and outlines what is necessary to prevent the chastisement. Our Lady is thus teaching about our epoch and our future. And her teaching hangs on the walls of more and more homes each year through the ANF calendar, our “silent missionary.”

The Secret of the Rosary

As a way to revive devotion to the most holy Rosary, America Needs Fatima has launched a national crusade to promote St. Louis de Monfort’s famous book *The Secret of the Rosary*. The first step of this crusade consisted in ANF Fatima Custodians and volunteers distrib-

uting 90,000 copies of this inspirational book free of cost. Funds permitting, a second edition of 500,000 copies will also be distributed. Reading *The Secret of the Rosary* can be a life-changing experience. St. Louis’ words burn deep into the heart of the reader. He writes, “It would hardly be possible for me to put into words how much Our Lady thinks of the Holy Rosary and of how she vastly prefers it to all other devotions. Neither can I sufficiently express how highly she rewards those who work to preach the devotion, to establish it and spread it, nor on the other hand how firmly does she punish those who work against it.”

Special Christmas CD

In opposition to the materialistic trend to take Jesus and Mary out of Christmas, America Needs Fatima has launched a new Christmas CD with stories of miracles and wonders performed by the Blessed Mother. Our Lady’s extraordinary mercy, as well as her power to convert sinners and stop the advance of evil is evident to everyone who hears this Christmas CD. This new

campaign aims to encourage families to play the Christmas CD often during the Christmas and New Year season, a time when many families gather to share quality time together.

Traditional Marriage Crusade

With homosexual “marriage” almost legal in our country, America Needs Fatima has launched a national petition drive asking the Catholic Bishops of America to lead an urgent moral crusade to stop the homosexual agenda and save the family. This special campaign is called the *Traditional Marriage Crusade*. It has received the enthusiastic support of the general public. Besides signing the petition, campaign participants are requested to consecrate their families to the Holy Family. In concrete terms, our petition asks the bishops to “launch a relentless national crusade to save the family and stop homosexual ‘marriage;’ and, when necessary, to apply canonical sanctions to lawmakers and judges who use the power of the State to promote homosexual ‘marriage.’” To order copies of the petition, please call 1-877-661-0270. ■



Our Readers Write...

✉ On behalf of our 300 children and their families, please accept my heartfelt thanks to America Needs Fatima. Your very gracious donation of Miraculous Medals were blessed at our Living Rosary Prayer service and are now proudly worn by the members of our faith community. Thank you for helping us to share love and devotion for Our Blessed Mother. You are a blessing to us and will be remembered in our prayers.

K.L., Whittier, Calif.

✉ I prayed the 9-day novena, and pinned the medal on my sister-in-law's gown at her hospital bed.

Only Our Blessed Mother knows the merits she gave her. After her sixth week of suffering, she was taken into heaven on October 8, very, very peacefully. Her younger daughter was in a Denver hospital awaiting a liver transplant, which Our Lady provided right on her birthday, October 17.

We are all getting back to normal, fighting our battle, and climbing each step with the Rosary.

L.B. Cedar Crest, N.Mex.

✉ I am writing this letter to thank you for sending me Our Lady's miraculous medal, and to report some graces received.

I placed the medal around my neck the day I received it and started the novena. On the third day my son went to the lake with some friends. I was worried, because when they go, they drink and go water skiing. I was afraid something bad would happen. So I prayed the novena for him and his friends. (...) My prayers were answered, he did come home, and was very sober.

There was another incident in the year 2000. My son had a girlfriend who had no religion at all. I told him that it was very important to have a girlfriend who had the same religion as he, especially when it comes time for raising a family. Well, he must have told her

because one day she told me she wanted to become Catholic. I told her about a program we have in our Church, and she began to attend.

When the custodians brought the Virgin Mary statue to my house, I invited her over. The next day she called me and told me that her cousin was going to classes also. On the following year, my son's girlfriend was baptized and she asked my husband and I to be her Godparents. On that day, four members of her family were baptized with her.

Z.N. Turlock, Calif.

✉ Recently I received the Miraculous Medal. I had been suffering from sharp pains in my left shoulder for months.

When I received the Medal, I immediately placed it around my neck, and promised the Virgin to say the novena. Each day I begged her to cure my shoulder.

The Miracle was granted to me because at the end of my novena the pain was gone, and now I can move my left arm and am back to my normal life and activities.

I wish to let the public know of my gratitude to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

I'm overwhelmed with joy and I am wearing my medal every day.

C.G. Dove Canyon, Calif.

✉ I read the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* many years ago, but I am only now finding how much of an effect it has had on me. Since I read it, I have married and have been blessed with two children (God willing only the first two of many more to come)! When one raises children, one sees clearly how dangerous the *Revolution* is and how it pushes and shoves its way into almost every aspect of human life.

D.O. e-mail

✉ I truly appreciate my 2004 Fatima Calendar. It was so beautiful I could not take my eyes off her. She's so mag-

nificently beautiful, and glowing like a diamond jewel. Thank you so much for sending it to me. It will be hung in a special place in my house where everyone will see it.

P.B. Killeen, TX

✉ I just found out about your organization via a forwarded email about the protest for the gay play. I am involved with Right to Decency, and am very impressed with your website and what you are doing! WOW! I would like to work with your group, to brainstorm a bit together about some important issues.

One of our goals is to stop the horrific infiltration of lewdness into the public consciousness via video rental stores that purport to be "family entertainment centers." Meanwhile, 90% of their new films include overt illicit sex, homosexuality, swearing, nudity, etc. It's getting worse all the time.

Besides this, just walking a child through these stores corrupts them because of all the overly suggestive pictures on the cover of movies.

Television, theater and movie houses are all targeting the morals and conscience of America as well.

I would like to stay in touch with you and, as I said, brainstorm together every so often about these things. We have a large group of Catholics here in Michigan, but are connected to some other big Catholic groups around the US.

M.Z. e-mail

✉ There have been so many changes in our Mass, in our Catholic Church, that I have to ask myself "Is this really the Catholic Church?" We don't sing songs to Mary. We sing songs that I never heard growing up. A friend of mine discussed the issue with me. She told me she inquired of the music coordinator from her church and was told, "If you want to hear Mary songs come to church on her day," as if Mary is only there on her feast day.

R.M., Hernando, Fla.



Standing Up for God's Law

BY JAMES BASCOM

On Monday, November 3rd, TFP Student Action visited Penn State University in State College, as part of its campaign to defend traditional marriage.

In less than five hours at the Allen Street gates, TFP volunteers distributed 3,000 flyers decrying the Supreme Court decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, and collected over 200 protest signatures addressed to the Court expressing outrage over its decision.

The flyer "Are We Still 'One Nation Under God?'" shows how the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision, granting legal protection to homosexual vice, creates alarming conditions for the destruction of what is still left of our country's moral structures. By favoring the homosexual agenda, the Court clearly broke away from 2,000 years of Western Christian civilization. The government has no right to surrender its duty of upholding morality and protecting the common good.

Insults are not arguments

With its huge American flag, red standard, and bagpipe music, TFP Student Action generated controversy, dividing the campus in two. Several pro-homosexual students, unable to argue in a logical way, simply shouted vile insults and mockeries. Others denied the existence of good, evil, absolute truth, morality and God.

Shortly after the campaign started, a student approached and shouted, "you have no right to be here doing this. I'm calling the police."

TFP volunteer Daniel Pribble calmly replied: "What about freedom of speech?"

The individual continued: "Freedom



There is nothing like visiting Penn State University to engage students in discussions such as the Supreme Court decision to protect homosexual rights in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case.

of speech? Freedom of speech is only for intelligent people... not you. If the administration knew you were here, they would kick you out."

The rampant lion is a TFP trademark. Apparently it was a big problem for one older man looking for trouble.

"Take that lion off. That's a Scottish lion. Take it off now," he repeatedly screamed. A TFP volunteer explained that the TFP lion is a design original to

the organization. Using insults and foul language, he insisted it was not. "You're here forcing your opinion on everybody else." The TFP volunteer's reply was "insults and filthy language are not arguments."

Students oppose sodomy

However, many students were enthusiastic and happy to join the TFP's effort to uphold God's law and defend morality. Their enthusiasm was even noticed by a Penn State associate professor Maryjo Oster. In her letter to the editor of *The Digital Collegian*, Penn State's student newspaper, she writes:

"... I saw student after student sign their petition and felt knots begin to develop in my stomach. Up until this point, I had been under the impression that the majority of college-aged students were open-minded and accepting of different cultures, opinions and lifestyles. I was truly disheartened to see how full of judgment and hate we are as a population.

"At what point did America's young people become so condemning, myopic and intolerant?"

Those pushing the homosexual agenda create the myth that most people are on their side. The TFP campaign proves just how false that myth is.

"I just wanted to thank you so much for what you are doing," one young woman said. "This issue is *the* hot topic now, and I'm glad someone is fighting it."

Due to the favorable response on campuses, TFP Student Action is planning to organize similar campaigns at other universities. ■

Joy in Being Together

TFP Conference Unites Catholics in Crusade



Was it the meetings, the lively conversations or the making of new friends? Was it the bishop's sermon, the prince's convocation or the hero's testimony? Was it the rosary procession or the final High Mass? It is hard to decide which parts of the weekend were best since it takes time to sort out the impressions.

However, for the over 200 TFP supporters, members and friends that attended the 2003 TFP National Conference at the organization's headquarters in Spring Grove, Penn., there was a consensus that the intense weekend went all too quickly.

Indeed, the conference ended, but the graces, memories, and friendships still remain. The joyous event was filled to capacity with friends and supporters from all across the nation. It boasted an impressive array of distinguished guests and speakers.

Participants thoroughly enjoyed the presentation, "For God's Sake, not Our Own."

First among them was Bishop Juan Rodolfo Laise, Bishop Emeritus of San Luis (Argentina) who celebrated Mass and also eloquently spoke at the Saturday luncheon. Prince Bertrand Orleans-Braganza delivered a powerful keynote speech—convocation on the need to embark on a Counter-revolution. Ambassador Armando Valladares reflected on his 21 years in Cuban prison camps. Col. John Ripley, USMC (Ret.) addressed the conference via a

video presentation with a stirring wartime testimony of his Catholic Faith.

Recharging batteries

To those in the daily struggle to persevere in a sinful and revolutionary world, the conference was an opportunity to "recharge" one's batteries and return refreshed. Talks centered on themes from the book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and sought to give participants the tools to understand something of today's crisis and elements to act efficiently in a crusade to defend Christian civilization.

Some of the talks were, "Our Challenge: Breaking the American Consensus" by TFP Director John Horvat who discussed liberal America's attack on a religious and moralistic America and how to oppose it. Mr. Luis Solimeo, a Brazilian TFP member, presented practical principles of how to act on public opinion in his talk, "Mastering the Counter-Revolution." Norman Fulkerson gave a masterful presentation on "Heaven, the Terminal Point of Our Journey." Participants thoroughly enjoyed the presentation, "For God's Sake, not Our Own" by Michael Whitcraft, which denounced a man-centered worship of God.

More than talks

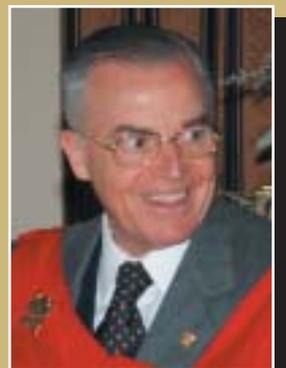
While such speakers gave depth and substance to the conference, a TFP National Conference is more than just talks.

It is the little things that make all the difference. This could be seen in how the participants besought God's blessing by praying before

Distinguished speakers and honored guests



Bishop Juan Rodolfo Laise, Bishop Emeritus of San Luis, Argentina



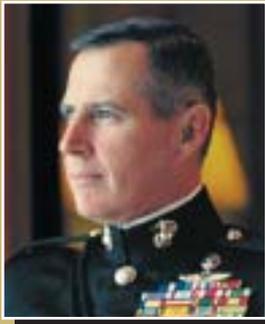
Prince Bertrand of Orleans-Braganza spoke on the indispensability of keeping up the spirit of fight against the evils of our time.



Ambassador Armando Valladares related his 21 years experience in Cuban prisons under the Communist regime of Fidel Castro.



Washington D.C. TFP Bureau Director Mario Navarro da Costa addressed the topic, "The Theology of History according to Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira."



Col. John W. Ripley, USMC Ret., recounted, via video, the demolition of the bridge at Dong Ha in Vietnam.



Michael Whitcraft, Conference Coordinator, titled his talk, "For God's Sake, Not Ours: Analyzing a Foundation of Religion."



The talks held all participants' attention (right), providing plenty of good topics for discussion during meals (left). The High Mass, celebrated by Bishop Juan Rodolfo Laise and accompanied by the TFP men's choir, was one of the highlights of the two-day event (above).



and after all the meetings. It was apparent in the care with which all sought to honor the presence of the bishop and prince. The organizing committee made every attempt to create a proper and beautifully decorated atmosphere for the meals and meetings.

A special joy was the presence of the students from the TFP-run St. Louis de Montfort Academy. Also reassuring were several university students from the work of TFP Student Action. Participants saw how the principles they studied during the meetings had a future in today's youth.

Between talks, participants had time to chat and share their impressions. The joy of being together was very apparent. New friends were soon talking as if they had known each other for years.

Honoring God

The conference did not neglect the spiritual side of any effective Catholic action.

As a special tribute to the Blessed Mother, attendees participated in a long candlelight rosary procession with an exact life-size replica of Seville's famous statue of Our Lady of Hope—La Macarena. Recalling the compatriots of Ambassador Valladares still under Castro's tyranny, the Rosary's intention was for all those suffering under communism in Cuba and around the world.

The ornate statue of Our Lady stood on a float carried by a troop of men as she presided at the end of the procession. As darkness descended over the crowd, the long lines of faithful extended far ahead, singing

songs and offering prayers.

Especially memorable was the Tridentine Rite High Mass celebrated Sunday afternoon at St. Patrick's Church in York, and sung by the TFP Choir. The Mass was attended by over 300 people. Bishop Laise celebrated the latin Mass with all the ceremonial due to his office. His sermon was exuberant and encouraging.

The high point of the ceremony was the recessional procession where a moving, spine-tingling rendition of the Papal Hymn with organ, trumpet and choir filled the church and left many wondering if they had not experienced a foretaste of heaven.

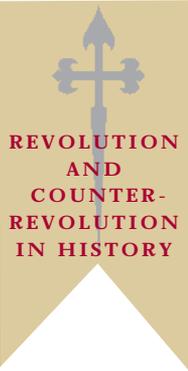
* * *

Alas, the end of the conference had to come. After Mass, the closing dinner was held at the grand ballroom of the nearby Yorktowne Hotel. Despite the varied backgrounds of those present, the atmosphere was that of a family reunion. Indeed, it was—a family of like-minded Catholics dedicated to defending Christian Civilization against so many threats. ■



Life-size statue of Our Lady of Hope (La Macarena), is carried during the Rosary procession on Saturday night.





Chapter IX

The English Reign of Terror

Part one: The Martyrs

BY JEREMIAS WELL

When calculating and enterprising men embark on a career of evil, they create a godless atmosphere in which to succeed, seek like-minded men in association, and ruthlessly crush any men of principle who may serve as a focal point of opposition. Thomas Cromwell provides an excellent case study of this historical phenomenon.

As mentioned before in this series,¹ Cromwell followed the political philosophies of Marsilius of Padua and Nicola Machiavelli, especially the former's claim that the Catholic Church should be subjected to lay control. He was also influenced by the latter's advice that in public life one may ignore the difference between right and wrong, but, nevertheless, always keep up the appearance of rectitude.

After Wolsey's fall, he adroitly changed sides and quickly rose in the King's service to become his Secretary. In that position he led Henry by degrees to accept his long-cherished agenda to suppress the monasteries and plunder the Church's wealth, but he had to be careful because of the greedy King's increasingly unbalanced and violent nature. As his disease corrupted both his body and mind, Henry turned his hatred against the most pious and influential men in his realm in proportion to their holiness because they stood as a rebuke against his sinfulness.

In 1534 Cromwell pushed through a compliant Parliament a series of Acts which culminated in the Act of Supremacy that removed direction of the English Church in all its aspects from Rome and gave it to the King along with the title "Supreme Head of the

Church of England." The carefully selected legislature also carried this coercion to its limit by demanding that every adult must take an oath to that effect under the pain of death. The King then appointed Cromwell his vicar general with complete jurisdiction to direct all religious activities of the bishops, priests and monks on the troubled island.

The Carthusians

The biblical scholar, Father Andrew Breen once commented in referring to the seemingly unreasonable hatred of the Scribes and the Pharisees towards Our Lord, "There are some natures so consumed with evil that the greater and nobler a man is, the more bitter becomes their opposition."² And so it was with Henry and Cromwell, who moved against the holiest and most admired men in the realm. As Henry's moral disorder increased, he turned his violent rage against any principled Catholics whom he saw or even suspected of opposing his extravagant claims, including once-beloved members of his own

family. Cromwell on the other hand in his cold, calculating way merely saw them as obstacles to be eliminated. In order to pursue his pernicious goals, the determined vicar general established an extensive network of spies and agents, the most repugnant scoundrels available.

The first martyrs to fall under the crown's outrageous tyranny were the Carthusians, always an early target for persecution because of their great austerity and piety. Their houses were destroyed in France during the French Revolution of 1789, then in Europe by Napoleon, in Italy during the nineteenth century revolutions, and in Spain during the civil war in the twentieth. Saint Ambrose's remark on holy virginity certainly applies to the holy monks of Chartreuse, "chastity deserves our praise, not because it is found in martyrs, but because it makes martyrs." The earliest atrocities revolved around the prior of the London Charterhouse, John Houghton, who was already considered a saint by his contemporaries because of



La Grande Chartreuse surrounded by mountains in Switzerland

his devotion to perfecting the community's prayer life. The prior did not enter into the controversy with a foolhardy bravado but tried to reconcile the teachings of the Church with the new laws without yielding on the essentials. However in his holy simplicity, he did not realize that Cromwell had already preordained the destruction of his order.

Houghton, two other priors, and two additional priests were tried for treason. When the jury saw that the three Carthusians and their companions were saintly, pious religious, they had great difficulty in pronouncing the desired sentence. Cromwell stormed into their chamber and with great wrath threatened the jurors with their own death. Sufficiently cowered, they sentenced the innocent victims to the most cruel death imaginable.

On the day of their execution they were placed on a wooden frame and dragged three or four miles by horses over rough roads, which scraped and cut their backsides, to the scaffold at Tyburn. John Houghton, the first to suffer, was strung up by a thick rope so as to avoid snapping the neck. After elevating the holy monk, the executioner immediately cut the rope, dropping him still alive to the ground. The blessed martyr was stripped of his clothes and violently thrown on the quartering block, where he was ripped up in the middle. His intestines were torn out and burned. He continued to pray during this most savage ordeal with incredible fervor and love. While watching his heart cut out, he cried, "Good Jesus what will ye do with my heart?" He was then hacked into quarters, parboiled and exposed on spikes in different parts of the city. After watching this brutal spectacle, the other four priests followed his holy example.

Six weeks later, their three replacements were dragged to Tyburn where they met the same fate. During the next two years, by relentless harassment and abuse, Cromwell's agents were able to break down all Carthusian resistance with the exception of ten monks who remained constant. They were sent to the hideous dungeon of Newgate where they were chained standing to posts by



Saint John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester was imprisoned and beheaded for refusing to take the oath rejecting Papal authority.

their ankles and neck with their hands tied behind them. In an atmosphere of foul air, little or no food, and their own filth, they became feverish and died—all except one. As a reward for his stamina, he was also sent to Tyburn to be butchered.

Profile: Saint John Fisher

An academician and eventually Chancellor at Cambridge University in his earlier days, Fisher became Bishop of Rochester through the patronage of the Countess of Richmond and her son King Henry VII. His elevation came not from political influence, but for his widespread reputation for learning, piety and diligence to his holy duties. Although Rochester was the smallest and poorest diocese in England, the ascetic bishop constantly resisted his transfer to one with more prestige and revenue.

Alone among the English bishops, he carried out his pastoral duties with exceptional zeal and thoroughness and maintained an austere private life, eating little, limiting his sleep to four hours, and using the discipline freely. He kept a skull before him while he ate his meals and said Mass to remind him of death. Books were his one earthly pleasure, inspiring him to form one of the finest libraries in Europe, but unfortunately his

great collection was destroyed during his imprisonment.

As the storm of repression fell over England, Fisher displayed a resistance and intransigence as far as his frail and aging body would allow (he was close to seventy years old). At every juncture, every confrontation, every crisis, he always made a decision based on the highest principles of his calling, which usually resulted in an increase of suffering. In the aforementioned Convocation of 1531 and in the same assembly two years later, the Bishop of Rochester resolutely fought against the king's encroachment, but to no avail. During the height of the divorce proceedings and Boleyn's coronation in 1533, the champion of the Church's prerogatives was arrested and held for three months, presumably to keep him silent and out of the way. At least one attempt to poison him had been made which resulted in the death of a servant, and a shot from a small piece of ordnance fired from the Boleyn residence penetrated the bishop's library.

Pope Clement VII finally pronounced in March of 1534 that the marriage between Henry and Catherine was valid and that the subsequent actions by Cranmer were null and void. Vengeance followed swiftly. While Parliament was increasing the penalties for those who defied the King's will but before the final Act of Supremacy, Cromwell demanded that Fisher take an oath denying papal authority. He absolutely refused and was placed in the Tower of London for the last fourteen years of his life. In the cold, inhospitable atmosphere of the ancient fortress without proper clothing and food, the suffering prelate endured long months of agony yet cheerfully composed several treatises.

Before Fisher's death the Pope announced that he would send a cardinal's hat to the valiant bishop. When Henry was informed of the honor, he went into a sadistic, impious rage and roared, "whenever it comes, he will have to wear it on his shoulders, for a head to put it on he shall have none."³ And so it was, the skeleton of a man was taken from his cruel confinement to Tower Hill and beheaded. The severed head of the

martyr was impaled on a spike on London Bridge, where day by day it took an appearance of one returning to a healthy life, which many took for a miracle. Finally it was removed and thrown into the river to make room for that of Saint Thomas More.

Profile: Saint Thomas More

The fame and attractiveness of Thomas More rests largely on the nobility of character which he displayed in his public life as a lawyer and jurist and his intransigent adherence to a principle that caused his death. His ability to rise above the temptations of youthful concupiscence, of venality, and the fame of royal approval came from the profound spiritual formation he experienced as a young man. He illustrated the necessity of spiritual combat in the many literary compositions which he produced throughout his life. During his early twenties, More, although he maintained a separate residence nearby, spent most of his day in the London Carthusian monastery (Charterhouse) where he participated in the monk's life of prayer and learned the ways of austere living. For four long years, these spiritual masters taught the future martyr not to rely on his talent or effort alone but on divine grace in order to understand and follow the will of God.

As a lawyer he acquired a widespread reputation for honesty and integrity, for he would never take a case unless he was satisfied of its justice, always looking to the interests of his clients rather than his own. His love for justice and truth became even more prominent when he served as a prosecutor for the city of London and eventually judge, at a loss of some revenue for his growing estate. Public service, then as now, paid considerably less than the private sector, especially since More scrupulously refused to take bribes. In 1522 More entered the service of the King as his private secretary, finally advancing to the position of Lord Chancellor of the realm, replacing Wolsey on October 25, 1529. However, the upright jurist (his duties were largely legal for he would not participate in the divorce) expressed his reluctance in a letter to his friend Bishop Fisher, "...I



Saint Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of the realm under Henry VIII, died as a martyr to the Faith on July 6, 1535.

keep my place there precariously as an unaccustomed rider in the saddle."

Cromwell's effort to bring about a revolutionary change through Parliament was opposed by More's artful and indirect tactics. In frustration, Cromwell adjourned Parliament for Easter (1532) and turned his attention to the Convocation of the Clergy where he was more successful, especially after Archbishop Warham of Canterbury died and Fisher became seriously ill. When the bishops gave Henry vast authority over spiritual matters, Fisher made his famous commentary, "The fort is betrayed even by those who should have defended it," and More complained that the capitulation sprang from an attitude "which despairs of God's help."⁴ The next day, More resigned by walking into the garden of the King's residence and handing him the white leather bag containing the great seal. As he left, More looked into the King's eyes with a piercing gaze and Henry, with his conscience still somewhat intact, glanced away.

In his retirement, More wrote several treatises successfully attacking the growing notion that state law has precedence over Church law and that the State itself has power over an individual's conscience. When More's writings rendered Cromwell's propaganda ineffective, the great jurist's doom was sealed.

If any man could evade the violent

King's fury and Cromwell's calculating terrorist agenda, More's deep spirituality and vast legal knowledge offered him a slight chance, but in the end, the force of evil proved to be too great. The eminent judge was arrested and when he refused to take an oath, which at that time had not been written into law, was remanded to the Tower where he spent the last fifteen months of his life. Four days later on April 21, 1534, Fisher was sent to the same wretched prison.

The seventh session of the Reformation Parliament sat between early November and the middle of December, 1534. Until then, the penalty for not recognizing the King's preposterous claims was imprisonment. The new legislation called for the death penalty for those who placed the love of God above all other considerations.

As the winter months rolled into spring, More occupied himself by continuing his writing. (Yale University Press has published his complete works in fourteen volumes.) For his last work, the serious writer chose the Passion of Christ for his topic. More noted that Christ was overwhelmed by sadness, fear, and weariness which only could be resisted through prayer as Our Lord constantly reminded the sleeping Apostles.

By then, all parties must have recognized that Henry and Cromwell were working towards More's execution, for imprisonment was no longer sufficient. In the middle of June, his writing materials and books were removed. He then closed the shutters on his cell windows and spent his last days meditating on the Four Last Things. After a sham trial of cruel injustice, More was beheaded on July 6. ■

Notes

1. for Marsilius see *Crusade*, Jan./Feb., 2002, p. 17 and for Machiavelli see Nov./Dec. 2003, p. 19.

2. Rev. Andrew A. Breen, *A Harmonized Exposition of the Four Gospels* (Milwaukee, 1928) vol. II, p.22.

3. Dom Bede Camm O.S.B., *Lives of the English Martyrs*, vol. I, p. 97

4. Both quotes Gerard B. Wegemer, *Thomas More*, (Princeton, 1995) p. 147

A Taste of HEROISM

BY PHILIP MORRIS

On a recent trip to Spain, I had the occasion to watch a *Rijoneo*, a bullfight on horseback. Although Portugal is better known for this type of bullfight, they also take place in Spain with one difference: in Spain the bullfighter actually kills the bull from the saddle; in Portugal, the bull's life is spared.

It was the feast of the Evangelist St. Matthew, patron of the historical city of Salamanca. In Spain, every city has a patron saint and when that patron's feast comes around, it is time to celebrate with good food, Flamenco music and bullfights.

It is difficult to put into words the enthusiasm felt at witnessing such an event. The mastery of the horseman, not only over the massive brutal strength of the bull but also over his own horse, is one of the highest tributes to the human intellect I have ever seen.

The bull is trained to charge his opponent, and in fact, he will demolish horse and man in one clash if he is clever enough to make contact. His horns are sharp and deadly. And believe me, the bull knows no pity.

But the bullfighter is agile, clever—almost delicate. As a result of extensive training, master and mount move as one, and the fight is a beautiful spectacle to behold.

Once the bull spots his enemy, he loses no time in charging. Spurred on, the horse stays ahead of the bull but so close that his tail caresses the bull's face during the chase. When the bull tires and finally stops, the

horseman turns his steed to face it at a relative distance.

Elegantly, the horse slowly advances towards the massive, angry, staring beast. As the bull charges, the bullfighter spurs his mount and both bull and horse close the distance at full speed.

As the gap between animals shrinks to ten feet, the bullfighter suddenly swerves the horse to one side. As the bull lowers his horns to gore the horse, the bullfighter masterfully redirects his mount to the other

side, and coming up to within a few inches of the bull plunges a *Banderilla* into its back. Astonished, the bull finds neither horse nor man at the end of his horns while the crowd breaks into a roar of applause.

I thought of this as I went over a catalogue of Hollywood movies. The provocation and indecency of it all was pathetic. This form of entertainment systematically appeals to the basest instincts of man. No wonder our youth is in so much trouble today.

In contrast, the bullfight in Salamanca was magnificent, challenging man to give his best in the exercise of agility, elegance, courage, tenacity and so much more.

As I walked out of the bullring that evening, my soul brimmed over and my heart swelled with a desire to attain, like the bullfighter, the highest degree of excellence that God has laid out for me in life for His greater honor and glory.

