

The Remnant

(Est. in 1967)

“... At the present time there is a remnant left, selected out of grace.” - Romans 11:5



A National Catholic Bi-Weekly based in St. Paul, Minnesota USA

December 8, AD 2015
Volume 48, Number 20

From the Editor's Desk...

By Michael J. Matt

Please Help The Remnant this Christmas

My apologies for once again coming up a few dollars short and a few days late with the current issue of The Remnant. As readers now know, The Remnant struggled mightily this past year just to stay afloat, as we attempted to manage and finance a fairly significant growth spurt under the pontificate of Pope Francis. Publishing delays have been the direct result of inadequate funds to meet the demands of expansion.

In the middle of the year, we finally had to acknowledge the handwriting on the wall and for the first time in nearly ten years, we raised our subscription rate and, at the same time, my brother in arms, Chris Ferrara, took it upon himself to write a letter of appeal for assistance. Remnant readers were more than generous in responding to Chris's kind gesture, and I'm confident that we're now well on our way to getting The Remnant back on track.

At the conclusion of this "Editor's Desk" column we're including a simple Christmas gift offer, which if even half of our readers take advantage of, would in and of itself lift The Remnant out of its financial quicksand. Please take a look at that offer, and don't forget The Remnant this Christmas. We're struggling, yes, but with your help and God's blessings I know we can make it through and continue to fight for everything truly Catholic in a world at war with everything truly Catholic.

An Interesting Exchange on Charity and Sedevacantism

What follows is a slightly adapted
~ See Editor's Desk/ Page 2

The Year of Mercy Begins

An Urgent Appeal to Pope Francis to Either Change Course or Renounce the Petrine Office

Your Holiness:

Pope Celestine V (r. 1294), recognizing his incapacity for the office to which he had so unexpectedly been elected as the hermit Peter of Morrone, and seeing the grave harm his bad governance had caused, resigned the papacy after a reign of only five months. He was canonized in 1313 by Pope Clement V. Pope Boniface VIII, removing any doubt about the validity of such an extraordinary papal act, confirmed in perpetuity (*ad perpetuam rei memoriam*) that "the Roman Pontiff may freely resign."

A growing number of Catholics, including cardinals and bishops, are coming to recognize that your pontificate, also the result of an unexpected election, is likewise causing grave harm to the Church. It has become impossible to deny that you lack either the capacity or the will to do what your predecessor rightly observed a pope must do: "constantly bind himself and the Church to obedience to God's Word, *in the face of every attempt to adapt it or water it down, and every form of opportunism.*"

Quite the contrary, as shown in the annexed *libellus*, you have given many indications of an alarming hostility to the Church's traditional teaching, discipline and customs, and the faithful who try to defend them, while being

preoccupied with social and political questions beyond the competence of the Roman Pontiff. Consequently, the Church's enemies continually delight in your pontificate, exalting you above all your predecessors. This appalling situation has no parallel in Church history.

Last year, [speaking of Pope Benedict's resignation](#), Your Holiness declared that if you felt incapable of exercising the papacy "I would do the same." On the first anniversary of Benedict's resignation, [you called upon the faithful](#) to "join me in prayer for His Holiness Benedict XVI, a man of great courage and humility."

With no little trepidation, being under the gaze of the One who will judge us all on the Last Day, we your subjects respectfully petition Your Holiness to change course for the good of the Church and the welfare of souls. Failing this, would it not be better for Your Holiness to renounce the Petrine office than to preside over what threatens to be a catastrophic compromise of the Church's integrity?

In this regard we make our own the words of Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, in her famous [letter to Pope Gregory XI](#), urging him to steer the Church aright during one of

December 8, 2015

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

her greatest crises: "Since He has given you authority and you have assumed it, you should use your virtue and power: and if you are not willing to use it, it would be better for you to resign what you have assumed..."

Mary, Help of Christians, pray for us!

Your subjects in Christ,

Christopher A. Ferrara
Michael J. Matt
Dr. John Rao
Professor Brian McCall
Elizabeth Yore
Timothy J. Cullen
Chris Jackson
Eric Frankovitch
Michael Lofton
Father Celatus
Connie Bagnoli
Susan Claire Potts
Robert Siscoe
John Salza
Vincent Chiarello

Libellus

Your predecessor Benedict XVI, [sitting for the first time in the Chair of Peter](#), reminded the Catholic faithful that "[t]he Pope is not an absolute monarch whose thoughts and desires are law," but rather "the Pope's ministry is a guarantee of obedience to Christ and to

~ See *Petition to Pope Francis*/Page 8

A Grand Inversion at the Heart of Neo-Catholicism

By Patrick Archbold

I don't care for the term neo-Catholic, for it is too often used as pejorative. For this reason, you will not often find the term in my writing, not least for the reason that I was frequently accused of being one. The term neo-Catholicism actually has a meaning, even if that precise meaning is frequently ignored. Generally, the term refers to Catholics that take their faith seriously, but generally don't have a problem with the Church of the last 50 years, even embracing changes that have proven themselves disastrous.

Well, that wasn't me, not entirely. Prior to my traddification, I certainly recognized the significant problems in the Church. Further, I recognized the rupture that occurred during and after the council that gave rise to the neo-Catholic Olympic-level sport of hermeneutical gymnastics. But even as I recognized these things, it was hard for me to put my finger on the root cause. As it turns out, to some degree I too was infected by the same virus as many neo-Catholics. However, unsure of the proper diagnosis, my efforts at a self-cure were sometimes helpful and sometimes not.

~ See *Neo-Catholicism*/Page 7



From the Editor's Desk Cont...

version of an exchange that took place this week on The Remnant website (RemnantNewspaper.com). In response to the article, "A Blueprint for Returning to and Restoring Tradition" by Fr. Michael Rodriguez, which first appeared in the October issues of The Remnant, one of our website visitors left the following comment:

"With all due respect to Fr. Rodriguez, but I find his references to Sedevacantists too conciliatory and his stance basically contradicts what I thought to be the Remnant's position on this topic. After all, there are many articles written by John Salza for the Remnant that made the grave errors of sedevacantism abundantly clear. I too am highly sympathetic towards them, but, let's face it, they are objectively schismatic and one should not support them. One cannot at the same time support "FSSPX/ FSSP/ICRSS/ Diocesan apostolate/Sedevacantism", this is simply contradictory."

My (Michael Matt's) Response:

"What divides so many of the Catholic groups just now is pride, I fear—'I'm right, you're wrong. I've always been right, and you've always been wrong. I was right long before you were. Look at me, look at me, look at me now.' The merits (or lack thereof) of the various positions are lost in the spitting contest that goes on year after year after year. Father is encouraging us all to rise above it and, without giving in to false compromise, concentrate on what matters most. He's not a sedevacantist, and I'm certainly not. But I appreciate Father's gentle reminder that we're all broken and bruised and battle-weary, and

that no matter from which camp we hail, we must in all charity keep our eye on the prize—the pursuit of holiness and eternal life.

I think St. Augustine actually meant what he said, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." In all things CHARITY! If all sides could take St. Augustine at his word, perhaps more productive discussions could be had about serious issues that do, in fact, divide us and that absolutely must be resolved in a way that doesn't include a lot of chest-thumping and self-righteous condemnations.

I've got to admit that lately I see a terrible thing happening to so many of us in these difficult days of war and apostasy and fear and uncertainty—charity is growing cold. And if charity grows cold, doesn't faith follow suit?

Is the world still disposed to say of us: "See how these Christians love one another"? Too many of us seem to have been seduced by the eye-for-an-eye attitude of talk radio and cable news shows, where it all tends to boil down to one thing: "Who can shout the loudest." This must stop, as it's obviously not the right way for us to prepare for the martyrdom that is surely coming.

We run a very active website here at The Remnant, with comments' sections that allow people to share their opinions. For the most part these are constructive, but there is a certain element that gives cause for pause—an element that comes off as being so vicious and so self-righteous as to risk doing more damage than good to the holy cause of Catholic Tradition. On some days it gets so out of hand that I even consider closing down the comment boxes.

As my friend Hilary White noted to me recently, if these people behaved as boorishly at social functions as they do on Catholic websites, somebody would call the police.

It's not a massive problem, at least not yet, but I believe it is a growing problem and it certainly leads to greater polarization among us all, which is of the devil. I think Father Rodriguez is first and foremost taking a swipe at that and at pride—and I say, God bless him for trying!" **MJM**

A Further Retort

"'I'm right, you're wrong.' Michael, I think that is exactly the point. We have to say that sedevacantists are wrong, otherwise our Catholic Faith would be contradictory. My whole point is that I cannot simply say that sedevacantists are loyal children of the Church. What would make our stance different from those who engage in false ecumenism if we started to think this way? I acknowledge that Fr. Rodriguez is absolutely well-intentioned and of course the problem is division, but it is on their side, not on ours. After all, no sedevacantist representative was present at the conference; they don't really seem to be interested to engage in 'ecumenism' with us. From what I could gather Dr. Thomas Drolesky broke his ties with the Remnant over this issue. God bless you."

And My (Michael Matt's) Last Word:

"It makes no difference to me how someone reacts to my stumbling

attempts to do the right thing. I don't care if the sedevacantists aren't particularly interested in our efforts to reduce internecine squabbling in the ranks. I don't care if they continue to attack The Remnant or me personally, which, by the way, many of them do not do. Tom Droleskey and I disagree over this question, of course, but we don't hate one another and I certainly don't see him as a schismatic. I can passionately insist that sedevacantists are wrong without accusing them of being guilty of the mortal sin of schism. After all, they didn't start this fire. They didn't create the mess of scandal and corruption in the Church that has left millions of Catholics orphaned and disenfranchised. They are casualties of the civil war in the Church just as we all are. Many of them are bitter, sure; but as I see every day, sedevacantists do not have a corner on bitterness. And in any case, regardless of what some of them may say against me personally, I don't need to retaliate by confining all sedevacantists to the deepest bowels of hell just because they don't happen to agree with me or like my newspaper. I thought that was sort of the point and purpose of being a follower of Jesus Christ—do the right thing even if they hate you for it. I do my best, try to explain why I think their position is wrong (even though I can get pretty hot under the collar myself sometimes, which is why I appreciated Father Rodriguez' priestly words of wisdom and reminder), and I continue to encourage principled, public and passionate resistance against those who hate Christ and His Church. I've never met a sedevacantist, by the way, who hates Christ and His Church, though plenty of mainstream, "good-standing" Catholics seem to fit that bill just fine.

As I see it, nobody has a full and complete understanding of the full extent of the present crisis in the Church. Nobody! We're all sheep that've been scattered by a shepherd intent on striking himself. We're traumatized by that. We're struggling to find our way in a dark night, and we need to stick together wherever and whenever possible. And this is why the allies of The Remnant, for example, must include the SSPX, the FSSP, the ICK, and solid diocesan priests—anyone and everyone who loves Christ, reveres His Church and sees the restoration of Tradition (liturgy, theology, philosophy and culture) as of paramount importance for the good of souls, families, nations and the universal common good of the whole world.

And the sedevacantists? I wish them well and I wish they were right. That would make things so much easier. But as I see it, they're wrong, and that is precisely why the Church is in this unprecedented crisis. I do not hate them or sit in judgment of their souls. I simply disagree. **MJM**

The Remnant Returns to France for 25th Anniversary

The Remnant Tours' 2016 pilgrimage to France will mark the 25th anniversary of The Remnant having organized the U.S. Chapter of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the Notre-Dame de Chretiente Pentecost Pilgrimage from Paris to Chartres—a 3-day, 2-night walking pilgrimage. Where has the time gone? You tell me. Twenty-five years—it's unbelievable!

Our post-pilgrimage tour will likely be to the South of France, God willing, and will include La Salette and the sites of St. Mary Magdalen's last days on this earth (near Nice). Please look for the details in our next issue. The dates are May 11 thru May 23. Our package will include roundtrip airfare from either Minneapolis or New York, all hotels, ground transportation, two meals per day, and the walking pilgrimage itself.

Are we worried about terrorism? Mildly, I suppose, but not enough to forego joining our French brothers once again and letting Islam and the whole world know that not all Catholics have given up the old faith.

There will of course be daily Tridentine Masses, Confessions, and spiritual guidance from our chaplains.

I have no doubt that this pilgrimage will once again sell out over the next few months, so if you wish to take advantage of this life-changing opportunity, please note the Remnant Tours is now taking reservations. To reserve your place on the 2016 Remnant Pilgrimage, please send a \$400 non-refundable deposit. The cost of the package will be announced soon, but will be around the \$3200 mark.

Also, if you are considering donating to the Remnant Tours' Youth Fund this year, please do so sooner rather than later. We have many worthy applicants already.

Given the desperate state of the Church today, we are dedicating this year's Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Sorrows, and we will include an overnight way up in the French Alps at the mountain shrine of Our Lady of La Salette. And I know there's no need for me to explain to Remnant readers why La Salette. With Pope Francis on the throne of St. Peter, it should be abundantly obvious.

The Chartres pilgrimage is NOT a vacation, by the way. It is a classic medieval-styled walking pilgrimage across France, coupled with a Catholic immersion program designed to use historians (Dr. John Rao and Jamie Bogle), Catholic activists (Christopher Ferrara and myself) and priests (Fr. Gregory Pendergraft) to rekindle in the hearts of our pilgrims the fire of divine love for God and His Church. This pilgrimage is all about restoring Catholic identity and the sense of crusade in defense of all things Catholic.

If you decide to sponsor one of the young pilgrims, please understand that you are entering into a spiritual partnership in a tradition as old as Christendom—where Catholics pool their resources in order to send a young member of a parish or town on pilgrimage for the good of the whole community. I personally select only the worthiest young candidates, so that sponsors can be assured they will be prayed for each and every day (by name) and I will not allow our young pilgrims to forget that Remnant pilgrimages are all about the call to holiness, Catholic action and counterrevolution.

Your donations to the Youth Fund are tax deductible, of course, but the partnerships forged between pilgrim and sponsor are so much more important than that, and usually outlast a given pilgrimage by many years. And when it comes to gaining the graces of

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Michael J. Matt

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pilgrimage, sponsors are essentially non-walking pilgrims who are with the pilgrimage every step of the way. In fact, as the leader of the U.S. Chapter, one of my challenges each year as we walk the rough terrain, rain or shine, is to clearly read the long list of names of Remnant readers and their many intentions into a megaphone as the chapter listens and then prays the rosary for our sponsors. It is a beautiful thing, and the spiritual connection to the "pilgrims" back home is always very strong.

To help the young traditional Catholic pilgrims walk this pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows, please send your donations to:

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Archbishop Lefebvre and the SSPX

Editor, *The Remnant*: Michael Matt in his Sept. 25 2015 article (A Visit to the Top of the World) gave an eloquent discussion of a big crisis. Archbishop Lefebvre was a very holy man. The Traditionalist movement would not exist today if it was not for Archbishop Lefebvre. The order he founded (the SSPX) is at a crossroads. The liberalism of Pope Francis ironically makes him more open to the SSPX.

Nevertheless, we must be vigilant. This is the same Pope who is putting the indissolubility of Marriage into question with the quick annulment reforms and also the bad outcome of the recent synod which did not help the family as was its stated goal, but instead undermined it. I, a layman, am not competent to comment on the correct course of action the SSPX should undertake in the present circumstances. Prayers must be offered unceasingly for Bishop Fellay. The SSPX is a bastion of Tradition, proclaiming Truth in a Church and a world that has gone astray.

The Remnant is suffering for its stance visavis the SSPX. This is a sad reality which must be remedied by generous spiritual and material support. Nevertheless, it must never compromise for the sake of more money. The Truth is not up for compromise. We are in a battle against Principalities and Powers (cf. Eph 6:12).

Traditional Catholics must unite to bring about a genuine Restoration of Tradition to the Church. We must pray ardently for the Bishops of the SSPX and other faithful Bishops like Athanasius Schneider in the hierarchy that they never lose hope and to keep proclaiming the Truth. The present pontificate is proving to be an epic disaster that looks to be destroying the Church but it will never succeed. Christ promised that the gates of hell will never prevail.

Finally, we must pray to Our Lady of Fatima that she may protect the Church and move it to fulfill her requests to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

Jim Jones
Hoboken, NJ

The Pope's Carbon Footprint

Editor, *The Remnant*: Speaking as a traditionalist Catholic environmentalist (oh, we're out here, to be sure), I hypothesize that Pope Francis' "carbon footprint" (so far) is about 1000x larger than Pius X's. And I'm just counting the fossil fuel carbon from Francis' travel and air-conditioning use. Plus, I think St. Pius X employed more tradesman, craftsmen and artists than Francis does (yeah, I know, Francis hires all those bureaucrats).

The question is unavoidable: Discounting John Paul II—another jetsetter—has any pope in the Church's history ever traveled so much, given so many interviews, chaired so many collegial meetings, met so many heads of state or held court with the media as Pope Francis has done in his self-denial role as pontiff? (Did Pius IX ever, in fact, even leave the Papal States?)

My guess is Pope Francis—like his friends and fans across the globe—is going to find it far harder to be green than preach green.

In Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Nicolas Cisar
Lake Station, IN

Open Letter to Bill Donohue

Editor, *The Remnant*: I thought you might be interested in this letter I have sent to Bill Donohue in response to his recent column regarding Cardinal Wuerl. My letter deals only with the final paragraph:

"These crazies are mad at Wuerl because he doesn't believe in using the Eucharist as a weapon to smack liberal Catholic politicians. Wuerl has said that the refusal of Holy Communion "should be made only after clear efforts to persuade and convince the person that their actions are wrong and bear moral consequences." Exactly. Wuerl is a great gift to the Catholic Church. These critics are as ignorant as they are malicious."

... Bill Donohue, "RIGHT-WING NUTS RIP CARDINAL WUERL"

Rev. Vincent Fitzpatrick
Retired Diocesan Priest

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Dear Mr. Donohue:

You have publicly stumbled (I hope it was an unwitting stumble) into endorsing, quite explicitly, a mortal sin.

The mortal sin in question is: giving Communion to a person who is obstinately persisting in manifest grave sin. It is a grave sin of scandal because whenever a minister of Communion gives such a person Communion, he: 1) publicly collaborates, with knowledge, in the commission of a sacrilege; 2) gives public approval to the communicant's notorious grave sin.

You are, of course, aware that these are the precise reasons the Church has always required Denial of Communion to persons living publicly in a state of adultery.

The principle involved applies equally without any regard to the SPECIES of the sin that the would-be communicant is involved in.

Your blunder is in thinking that the moral principle demanding Denial of Communion has some specific connection with the Sacrament of Matrimony i.e., the divorced-and-remarried.

This is a bit of nonsense that the majority of American bishops have promoted, by approving the document "Catholics in Political Life," in which it

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Letters to the Editor Cont...

is said that a bishop may "legitimately" give Communion to pro-abortion politicians i.e., the bishops said (and say) that the moral principles that MANDATE Denial of Communion to the divorced-and-remarried do not mandate Denial of Communion to public promoters of abortion.

Cardinal Wuerl's many statements on this subject have been nothing but a concatenation of lies. (In the case of a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, one cannot attribute them to ignorance.)

A partial list:

He has persistently outlined the demands of Canon 916, and pretended he is talking about Canon 915, i.e., he has persistently pretended that ONLY the would-be communicant has anything to say about whether he will receive Communion. (Of course, the Cardinal is secure in the knowledge that Joe Lurchpail and Sally Housecoat are not familiar with the texts of Canons 915 and 916.)

+++++

He has persistently claimed that Denial of Communion is unjust unless the minister of Communion knows the "state of the soul" of the would-be communicant.

Since this is metaphysically impossible... well, you can finish this sentence.

+++++

Cardinal Wuerl has declared that he will never deny Communion to anyone other than an excommunicate. (And even then...only after lots and lots of "dialogue.")

Cardinal Wuerl has never offered a scintilla of explanation as to why Canon 915 MAY be obeyed in the case of excommunicates, but MUST NOT be obeyed in the case of persons who are "obstinately persisting in manifest grave sin."

+++++

Cardinal Wuerl claimed several years ago that, before he would consider obeying Canon 915, it was necessary to find out whether the canon was written for the precise purpose of "bringing politicians to heel."

The Cardinal had to know that NO canon was written for that precise purpose, ergo...you can finish this sentence, also.

+++++

He persistently calls Denial of Communion a "penalty."

It is not a penalty. Canon 915 is not a penal canon. It does not offer Denial of Communion as a penalty that a bishop MAY apply. It MANDATES Denial of Communion for the simplest of all possible reasons: Giving Communion to excommunicates and those obstinately persisting in manifest grave sin is always a mortal sin.

The reason for falsely calling Denial of Communion a "penalty" is to support the false claim that it is something that a bishop MAY "impose," but Cardinal Wuerl chooses not to "impose," for assorted "pastoral" reasons, such as "leading" pro-abortion politicians into closer union with Christ and the Church.

When asked not long ago in an interview to name a pro-abortion politician who

had become pro-life as a result of receiving Communion sacrilegiously in tandem with "dialogue" with Cardinal Wuerl, he could not name one. (It has been more than 43 years since the platform of "the natural home of Catholics" endorsed abortion, and nearly 43 years since Roe v. Wade.)

+++++

You, Mr. Donohue, have parroted Cardinal Wuerl's caricature of Denial of Communion as "using the Eucharist as a weapon" with which to "smack" pro-abortion politicians.

Well, then, you therefore accuse Pope St. John Paul II of "using the Eucharist as a weapon," with which to "smack" the divorced-and-remarried--in a Magisterial document! (Familiaris Consortio.)

I hope I need hardly elaborate on the grave scandal that is given, and the strict, grave obligation to correct it, when the President of the Catholic League has publicly, in writing, endorsed the commission of mortal sin.

Sincerely,

Rev. Vincent Fitzpatrick

A Warning for All in Authority

You know of the devil, the "Angel of Light."

But where is his dwelling? He dwells in the night.

He hides in the shadow of everyday things.

He lurks in the echo that every sound brings

A damnable creature whose heavenly fall Made illusion and darkness and evil of all

That God had created and destined to share

In a heavenly order no longer all there

This is Satan, this devil, this leader of Hell

Where do you find him and how can you tell?

He sits in high places he turns upside down

He wears regal clothing, but lies are his gown

So look for him simply where power is king;

You'll find him there shadowed but wearing a ring.

Escape, if you will, his presence at hand

But know well his mark and the sign of his brand

He woos the most righteous and promises kings

The flowers of pleasure and power wealth brings

Reducing the Order of God to his way

That results in disorder, despair and dismay.

And when you have found him, believe it or not,

He'll be giving the finest of things that are bought

By sin and deception, destruction and death,

Born from the sweetness of guile form his breath

Beware, then, O, Bishop or king, one and all,

Lest the power you wield bring you down in a fall

Treat humbly, with honor, the role that you play

For God is your Master whose rule you obey

In giving and taking, be honest and just;

With mercy and wisdom, carry the trust

That God gives you to render to all in His name,

For failure in virtue leads always to blame.

The Kingdom of heaven is open to all

But to enter hear wisely and follow his call

Either rule with compassion and justice and love or you

Rule by the devil and not God above.

by R. Ruscitto

Seeking Pilgrimage Partners

Dear Remnant Readers,

It is a great privilege of mine to have been born and educated in the traditional



Catholic Faith. My name is Sara Bischel and I am the second oldest in a family of ten children. Growing up, I was homeschooled until high school. I then attended a traditional Catholic

high school. Currently, I am a fulltime student at Miami University of Ohio and I am working two part-time jobs in order to fund my education. Last year, I started a pro-life group on my college campus. In doing this I hope to make a difference among my peers and help promote a culture of life. This new step of my life has made me so grateful for my previous opportunity of having been educated in the Catholic Faith, but it has thrown me into dealing with the true evils of this world. Now, more than ever, I am realizing the true value of my Catholic Faith.

This pilgrimage to Chartres would provide me with an invaluable opportunity to become a more integral part of carrying on the Faith. Having heard from my older brother who made the pilgrimage two years ago, this would be a great benefit to my spiritual life. Enduring the penitential three-day walk while praying with my fellow pilgrims would be a strengthening challenge. Furthermore, on this pilgrimage I would pray for my family, my country, and most importantly for the intentions of my sponsors.

Eight years ago there was a tragedy within my family, my little sister passed away at the age of one. Although this was a very difficult loss, we are fortunate to have a loved one in heaven and I would bring my little sister, Monica, with me to Chartres to intercede for all of the intentions.

Traveling to Chartres for this pilgrimage would be an extraordinary way to boost my spiritual growth and help to continue

spreading the true faith. I am so grateful for your consideration in sponsoring me. May God bless you. Sincerely,

Sara Bischel
Age: 19
Harrison, Ohio

Dear Remnant readers: My name is Jack Heape. I am seventeen years old,



a homeschooled senior in high school, and the third of eight children. My family and I attend the Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday, and have since I was very young. We are originally from Texas, but have

moved frequently because my father is in the military. Currently we live in Maryland.

This letter is to express my strong desire to make the Chartres Pilgrimage at Pentecost this year, and to request the assistance of sponsors, whom I would be honored to represent and pray for along the way.

Making this pilgrimage would allow me to visit the sacred shrines and beautiful cathedrals that grace the country of France and have inspired so many peasants, nobles, sinners, and saints before us. I would also welcome the opportunity to walk the arduous journey of prayer and penance alongside thousands of Traditional Catholics who are also serious about their faith.

Certainly the entire trip would be an unforgettable lesson in both faith and history, and especially the power of God's grace. On the pilgrimage, I would ask Our Lord and His Blessed Mother for a strengthening of faith as I prepare for college. I hope that, in growing closer to God, I may clearly discern my vocation in life. And in these very difficult times, surely all this year's pilgrims to Chartres will want to offer everything in reparation to Christ the King.

To any kind readers who may be willing to sponsor me, please know how thankful I would be and how gladly I would offer your petitions at each holy place.

Yours in Christ,
Jack Heape

Remnant Tours' Youth Fund

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As has been the case for the past 25 years, young pilgrims will walk the pilgrimage to Chartres in the name of their sponsors. The cost of the entire pilgrimage is \$3200. The names of sponsors and their special intentions will be carried to Chartres and read aloud each day on the Pilgrimage. Your donations to this effort are tax deductible. **MJM**

Waiting for Sponsors:

Sara Bischel, Ohio \$0 thus far
Jack Heape, Maryland \$0 thus far

“iCuriosity”

What Is the Internet Doing to Our Minds, Souls and Families?

by Hilary White

Psalm 131:

O Lord my heart is not proud
nor haughty my eyes
I have not gone after things too great
nor marvels beyond me.

Truly I have set my soul
in silence and peace;
a weaned child on his mother's breast,
even so is my soul.

O Israel, hope in the Lord
now and forever.

Hands up everyone who loves the internet! Me! I LOVE the internet! Without the 'net, my life would look nothing like what it does today. First, without the 'net I would not be able to make a living writing. I would also have simply lost dear friends I haven't seen in fifteen years, who would have slipped into my past like people standing on the bank while I kayak down a fast flowing river.

Without the 'net, I'd probably still be living in Halifax, Nova Scotia, working in a shop and grinding my teeth through the Novus Ordo Mass every week, not understanding why I disliked it so. I would never have been able to learn the things I needed to learn in order to become the fun-loving, mad, rad Trad I am today. I would not be a Benedictine Oblate and there's certainly no way I would live in this magnificent place.

I would also never have become involved in the pro-life movement, having never done the reading online that helped me to learn about it and hone my thoughts. I would never have known the magnificent people I have come to know both in the pro-life movement and in the Traditional end of the Catholic Church. And it was through these people that my faith, not only in God and the Church but in humanity, has grown and finally begun belatedly to flourish.

Taken together, I really just hate to think what my life, what my character and the state of my soul would have been had I not had the use of the internet to help me sort out the things I needed so desperately to sort out, starting in my early 30s. I know that, in some way, I owe most of my current extravagant

happiness to the easy and nearly universal availability of a high speed connection.

I just wanted to get that out of the way to make it clear that I do not think that the internet itself is entirely a bad thing. But all of that was the caveat for why I think it has been a nearly unqualified good thing that for the last two weeks I have had no internet at home.

How many hours have you spent on the internet this week? Do you carry it around in your pocket in the form of a smart phone? Do you feel a bit peculiar, at a loss, at loose ends, perhaps a tiny bit anxious, if your connection goes off for a while?

After fifteen years of steady and steadily increasing daily internet use, I can report that I have experienced actual withdrawal symptoms when I finally got fed up – mainly with myself – and cut it off in November. I had become accustomed to texting and chatting with my friends on Facebook and Skype, exchanging articles, information, witticisms and confidences every day, several times a day. Sometimes all day. Though I live by myself, I never felt alone.

Truthfully, I never really was alone. This was the reality of my daily life, especially so starting a few years ago when I stayed in constant contact with my friends who cared for me during cancer treatments. That was the period, when I really did not have the physical wherewithal to pursue most of my other activities, that the 'net really took over. That was when my books and hiking boots and paints really started gathering dust.

It was this constant state of being plugged in, connected, that started to alarm me. I could no longer deny that there was something disquieting about its effects on me. How ill at ease I felt when I was not gazing at the 'net, and the evident conflict between the growing spiritual need for silence and solitude, and this overwhelming urge to remain connected. But at the same time, how difficult I was starting to find it to concentrate, to read an entire article or even watch an hour's worth of a streaming TV show.

Since I cut it off in the last week of November, there have been moments when I have understood how a Star Trek Borg drone felt when severed from the Collective. Without the constant buzzing whisper of those voices, or the mental pressure to return to them if I were away for more than an hour, I was finally really on my own. I found myself often feeling bereft, aimless, with more time on my hands than I remembered what to do with. I even experienced brief periods of actual depression, where I felt strangely unable to emotionally apprehend my sense of life's meaning, a strange and unsettling blank feeling.

I only use the internet with a



laptop, and knew as soon as they started appearing a few years ago that it would be extremely unwise for me to get a smart phone and start carrying the internet around with me wherever I went. But it was really only this week that I finally faced up to what the constant contact, the buzz and whisper, was doing to me. I wanted to write something for The Remnant about this interesting experience, but to do so I had to reactivate the 'net at home, and sure as shooting, the distraction made it very difficult to get the writing done. The irony was not lost.

Indeed, there is more and more being written all the time about what the internet is doing to us as individuals. Of course, much of the Christian concern about the 'net is about the content, specifically pornography, and often the tone. We have all seen, and often experienced ourselves, what happens to an otherwise normal person's social common sense in comment boxes. But putting those more obvious concerns aside for the moment, I am starting to think about the effect of the 'net itself as medium.

What is the thing itself doing to us as individuals and as a culture? We observe the strange stupefying, hypnotic effect ordinary surfing and scrolling can have, even on perfectly innocuous websites, and frankly nearly always does have, to me at least. I have learned that I cannot use the internet at all, even for a short time, without that feeling of disconnectedness coming over me. That hypnotic, glazed-over feeling starts immediately, as soon as the browser is open.

How many times have you been on the 'net and glanced at the clock in the corner of the screen and seen that hours have passed while you have done nothing more than scroll up and down your Facebook feed? How many times have you sat, chin in hand, watching YouTube videos or flicking back and forth between tabs of articles you don't really care about, as the room slowly went dark?

The effect of the internet seems often to simply be to disconnect a person from his sense of reality, his "situational

awareness". What is on the screen grows to entirely fill the mind and seems somehow to shut down even peripheral awareness of one's surroundings. This effect, naturally, is even stronger on those of us who live alone.

There is now enough evidence that too much internet is harmful that it is starting to find its way into diagnostic materials for therapists. "Internet addiction disorder," "problematic Internet use," or "compulsive Internet use" or "problematic" or "pathological computer use." Some have simply nicknamed it "iDisorder," and the 'net itself is starting to abound in complaints and warnings as people stare at their little pocket screens instead of interacting with each other.

Studies of brain function of people who use the internet a lot show significant changes from those who do not. Researchers have found that internet users lose the ability to concentrate, are impatient with deep reading and complex subjects. Their minds have become trained to flit like butterflies from object to object, briefly tasting then moving on. Studies have found that the internet stimulates the part of the brain that gets a tiny thrill out of discovering something new. We surf, clicking aimlessly from site to site, because it jolts the brain for an instant only, then it's off to the next little jolt, and we can become literally addicted to the pleasant feeling of discovery.

In his 2010 book, "The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains," researcher Nicholas Carr recounts the tale of two sets of test subjects, frequent internet users and novice surfers, whose MRI scans showed "marked differences" after internet use.

"Brain activity of the experienced surfers was far more extensive than that of the newbies, particularly in areas of the prefrontal cortex associated with problem-solving and decision making," Carr writes. The experienced users had highly developed neural systems for making fast decisions, but the two groups showed no difference when it came to reading a large block of text.

And the change can be fast. Six days later, the same groups were tested again after the internet novices had spent an hour a day surfing. "The new scans

Continued Next Page

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What Is the Internet Doing to Our Minds, Souls and Families?

H. White/Continued from Page 5

revealed that their brain activity had changed dramatically; it now resembled that of the veteran surfers. **Five hours on the Internet and the naive subjects had already rewired their brains.** A second test with new subjects got the same results. Carr quotes UCLA professor of psychiatry, Gary Small, who said that the results of his tests showed that our constant internet use **“is rapidly and profoundly altering our brains.”**

Carr continues: “When we go online, we enter an environment that **promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning.** Even as the Internet grants us easy access to vast amounts of information, it is turning us into shallower thinkers, literally changing the structure of our brain.”

This concern is not new. Since the advent of televisions in every home, speculative fiction authors have been sounding a warning. One of the earliest and most memorable came from Ray Bradbury in 1951, perhaps one of the greatest short-story masters of all time. The story was titled, “The Pedestrian” and it merely chronicled the last evening stroll taken by an ordinary man through his ordinary town. In this near-future, 2053, no one walks outside, so much so that the roads are falling into disrepair. No one does much of anything, in fact, except watch the screens in their homes, all day, every day. Their screens have replaced their families, their work, their recreation, their worship.

This one man, poor Leonard Mead, is possibly the last in the world who does not have a screen in his house, who does not follow the shows and who prefers to stretch his legs and breathe the air outside every evening, to feel the real ground under his feet, to see the real sights and smell the real fragrances of the world.

His presence in the quiet streets goes unnoticed for years, but inevitably, one evening he meets the last patrolling police squad car. Glaring its lights into the eyes of this human anomaly, the officer demands to know why he isn't in his home. “I prefer to be outside.” Is his screen damaged, the officer asks. “I don't have a screen.” A moment's pause as the officer takes in this singular and shocking piece of data. A moment later the door of the squad car pops open and the man is ordered into the back seat. As he gets inside he learns to his complete lack of surprise that there is no officer; the last police car is controlled, through a screen, from a distance. He is to be taken to an asylum for the socially retrograde, for the insane, where he will be cured of his antisocial and anti-technological tendencies.

In fact, the soul-deadening effects of addiction to the internet, specifically of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, were predicted with astonishing precision by E.M. Forster, of *Howard's End* and *Room with a View* fame. In Forster's short story, “The Machine Stops,” following an apocalyptic cataclysm, all remaining human beings, live in one-person apartments in underground cities with their every physical need provided for by



Divorce and 'gay marriage' are not the only means of destroying the family

a global and omnipotent Machine.

Every day, all day, people lie on form-fitting couches in their sterile, climate controlled environments, and “chat” with each other, offering their “ideas” on a limited array of topics, through a system that almost perfectly parallels social messaging websites. With their needs taken care of and their social interactions limited to the ‘net, people no longer interact personally, and the family as a social unit has been eliminated. Personal experience and serious study, deep knowledge, are effectively obsolete and virtually forbidden, as is travel and living on the surface outside the cities.

People have forgotten that the Machine and the cities were created by men, and they have become imbued with religious significance. Failure to believe in the divinity of the Machine results in being labeled “unmechanical” and the unrepentant are expelled from the cities.

But, unknown to nearly all the inhabitants of the cities, the Machine is dead, and their automated existence is slowly breaking down. Soon, their life support systems will fail and the utterly ignorant and completely helpless citizens will be forced to leave their enclosures and attempt to survive in the real world.

Science fiction authors predicting such dystopic futures were working with nothing but the technology of their own times and an insight into our universal flaws. Since the fall, we have always held within ourselves at least the seed of a desire for the kind of lazy and superficial existence that the internet currently encourages. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the internet has been tailor made to fit exactly this particular niche of human weakness the way a virus is programmed to attach itself to a particular type of cell.

Then there is the issue of the content, and the effect it can have. I have worked on the internet, mostly as a news reporter, since 1999. I know what it can do to your soul to stick your head every day into the muck of human evil. Since leaving news reporting, I have had some space to think about what effect it can have even on our ability to distinguish between “truth” and mere “facts.” The internet has a tendency to conflate information with knowledge; and it entirely ignores wisdom and

understanding.

What do we really learn when we receive nearly all our information from this little square Palantir? Is it truth, are we apprehending reality? Or is it like seeing something at the bottom of a fast-flowing stream, a strictly limited and constantly shifting, distorted and untrustworthy view?

The internet has for most of the years I've used it reminded me of the madness of Denethor, the last Steward of Gondor, driven finally to despair by what he had seen every day gazing into the depths of his seeing stone, corrupted for precisely that purpose by Sauron.

After Denethor's appalling suicide, Gandalf explains:

“Though the Stewards deemed that it was a secret kept only by themselves, long ago I guessed that here in the White Tower, one at least of the Seven Seeing Stones was preserved. In the days of his wisdom Denethor would not presume to use it to challenge Sauron, knowing the limit of his own strength. But his wisdom failed, and I fear that as the peril of his realm grew he looked in the Stone and was deceived: far too often, I guess since Boromir departed. He was too great to be subdued to the will of the Dark Power, he saw nonetheless only those things which that Power permitted him to see. The knowledge which he obtained was, doubtless, often of service to him; yet the vision of the great might of Mordor that was shown to him fed the despair of his heart until it overthrew his mind...

“Thus the will of Sauron entered into Minas Tirith.”

We certainly see the horrors of the modern world very clearly and forcefully on the internet. But is what we are seeing all of the truth? And if it is only partial, how is our perception of reality becoming distorted?

But my more immediate question since cutting off the flow of the ‘net at home, is one that I think few are yet asking: how is this technology altering those faculties that we need to grow in holiness, arguably the entire purpose of human life in this world?

We understand that silence is of utmost importance in the spiritual life. No movement in prayer can be accomplished without learning this inner silence. But how can interior silence be achieved while the ‘net continues its constant mental racket? Either I am

looking at it and the mental noise it creates is deafening – deadening – or I am avoiding looking at it and the temptation to look at it creates almost as much mental noise. The necessary interior silence is, quite simply, impossible for me while the internet is present in the house.

And the spiritual writers have always understood this. As usual, the traditional Catholic faith knows all about every weakness, even the ones that seem uniquely modern. Some years ago, I was surprised to see the classical Catholic spiritual authors warning against “the vice of curiosity”. I was raised by a scientist; how can curiosity be bad?

A little book, “A Catholic Manual of Civility,” most of which is available online at Tradition in Action website, has been translated and republished by Marian T. Horvat.

It is an old [Catholic high school text](#) from Brazil from the 1950s, to help students understand and acquire solid virtues. Such moral manuals used to be common in Catholic schools, and they helped to summarize the writing of saints on the spiritual life and its pitfalls. It includes one of the most clear explanations of why the internet could be hurting us.

“**Curiosity is bad**, fourth, when it is idle. Idle curiosity consists in **the blinding desire for novelties of all types: from political news to the latest scandals** or romantic entanglements of neighbors or movie stars. It is idle because **the person obsessed by such things looks at everything without seeing anything, without fixing his attention on immediate, proximate things.**

The only aim of this curiosity is to offer new information to others who have the same defect. Their conversation always starts with the eager question: ‘Did you hear the latest?’ Then he pours his futile information into the ears of his companions.”

A more concise description of Facebook I have rarely seen.

One week after cancelling my home internet, I have suddenly rediscovered Doing Things. My floors and carpets were vacuumed, the book shelves dusted, the kitty box clean and all the laundry finished. The leaves in the garden are raked and the work started on next year's raised vegetable bed. I have put up a batch of beer, reorganized my painting room, finished one painting and started another. I have finished reading two novels.

This morning, because I didn't have my nose in the ‘net, I stood at my kitchen window while I drank my coffee watching the little tribe of goldfinches that lives in the garden, flitting around with obvious joy in the early morning sunshine. I even managed to snap a few good pictures of them. What will I do with those? Will I upload them onto the ‘net? No. They're going to be source material. Since having the distraction machine off at home, I've started drawing and painting again. A shop in town has offered to sell them for me for a small commission.

But the most important results have been interior. I have read the Divine Office nearly every morning and gone to Vespers in the evenings. I have begun to allow silence back into my life.

To Be Concluded Next Issue

A Grand Inversion at the Heart of Neo-Catholicism

P. Archbold/Continued from Page 1

So it is that I have spent much time pondering the questions of why I was able to see the problems of NuChurch, that I wanted nothing more than to be orthodox and faithful, but spent so much time in unhelpful pursuits.

Have you ever seen one of those images that at first glance seem like one thing, but after some time another image emerges? I remember one time I saw a knit image in someone's home that on first glance seemed like a blocky maze pattern. I saw it several times before I realized that the spaces between the maze walls formed the name JESUS. Once I saw Jesus in the maze, I couldn't un-see Jesus in the maze. From then on it seemed so obvious that it was all I could see when I looked at the image. I couldn't see the maze anymore.

In similar fashion, once I realized the true difference between the ways I saw things before and the way I see them now, I cannot un-see it. In fact, it seems so obvious now; I am chagrined that I missed it before. As it turns out, there is one simple cause to all the problems that we see in the Church and the promoters of those problems are not shy about telling us about it.

When people ask me about why and how I changed, I tell them about the grand inversion. It is the one thing that separates otherwise well-meaning neo-Catholics from understanding how they in some ways contribute to the problem.

Several wise traditional commenters have focused on the problem present in Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* #161 "...above all the new commandment, the first and the greatest of the commandments, and the one that best identifies us as Christ's disciples: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you'..."

It is easy for Catholics reared on and fed modernist Catholicism to look at the above and not see the problem. I mean, who is against loving your neighbor?

But contrast it with how Jesus actually answered the question and the problem starts to reveal itself.

Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."
—Matthew 22:36-40 (see also Mark 12:28-31)

See that? There are two separate commandments in order of importance. First "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."

As you can see, NuChurch has inverted the order. First, NuChurch put love of God on a par with love of neighbor, as if they were one command. Love of neighbor, they would have us believe, is equal to love of God. But as can be seen from EG161, even that is not

enough. Pope Francis, avoiding Jesus' direct answer to the question, answers the question with another quote entirely, purposely avoiding love of God, not just as the primary commandment, but dropping it altogether in favor of the love of man.

This simple, but pernicious change is at the heart of NuChurch. Any Catholic from a century ago would understand that the love of God comes first and that love of neighbor, which derives from the first, is secondary. But now man is first and the love of God is a secondary to loving man, instead of the other way around. This is the grand inversion that is at the heart of NuChurch.

But don't take my word on it. Listen to Pope Paul VI address this very question in [his closing remarks](#) from the Second Vatican Council:

"It might be said that all this and everything else we might say about the human values of the council have diverted the attention of the Church in council to the trend of modern culture, centered on humanity. We would say not diverted but rather directed."

It is right there from the beginning. This error, this inversion of the Truth of God's command is at the root of all of it including our man-centered liturgy, false ecumenism, indifferentism, and the false mercy of the current pontificate. They believe that the only love that matters is the love of man. Yet the Council of Trent takes a very different approach.

"Moreover, no honor, no piety, no devotion can be rendered to God sufficiently worthy of Him, since love of Him admits of infinite increase. Hence our charity should become every day more fervent towards Him, who commands us to love Him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and with all our strength. The love of our neighbor, on the contrary, has its limits, for the Lord commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves. To outstep these limits by loving our neighbor as we love God would be an enormous crime."

—Catechism of Trent, Part 3, Chapter 5, Question 5

So ingrained has this inversion become in NuChurch, that when a Catholic puts

the love of God and his commandments first as he always should, he is derided by no less than the Pope himself as a rigid and unmerciful Pharisee.

But once you see this inversion and understand it for what it is, your entire approach begins to change and your neo-Catholicism can no longer be sustained.

So what changed for me? I realized that love of God is the first and primary commandment and Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." And I realized that in order to love my neighbor, I must help them to keep God's commandments too.

So I saw it. I don't how or why, but I saw it. God's grace is everything. Then what do you do? Well you try to put God first in every aspect of your life and you try to do the same for the Church by shouting it from the rooftops. And you fight against the ongoing process of making man the center of our religion. You fight against a false mercy that rejects the first commandment. You fight, because you love God. And only when you love God first, can you truly love your neighbor, even if your neighbor hates you for it. ■

Lives of the Saints...

St. Anthony Mary Claret

Editor's Note: We've evidently misplaced the name of the Remnant reader who penned this meditation. If our mystery author would be kind enough to resend the by-line, we'll be happy to give proper credit in our next issue. **MJM**

With so many troubles afflicting Holy Mother Church in these desperate times it may help to call to mind the courageous apostleship of St. Anthony Mary Claret. St. Anthony is known as a patron of those who fight against liberal Bishops and as a bulwark against revolutionaries because of his holy militancy in Spain and Cuba and the Vatican. He is therefore a patron of traditional Catholicism, rejecting the novelties of liberal doctrines.

St. Anthony Mary's feast day is traditionally the 23rd of October; but has moved to the 24th in the modern calendar.

This almost forgotten saint was an indefatigable Spanish archbishop and the founding father of the missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; also known as the Claretians. He was famous for his passionate preaching and flourishing missionary work. He was a wonderful confessor for all those who flocked to hear him preach and celebrate Holy Mass.

As the confessor of Queen Isabel II of Spain he was able to influence the choosing of a number of good Bishops. St. Anthony Mary was also known as a man of miracles, of sublime intelligence, and as a champion against the evils of freemasonry. His ongoing opposition to the wicked whiles and destructive influences of the Freemasons in Spain,

the Canary Islands and Cuba made him a target for their hatred.

So determined was he to save the souls of people in his care that he became a very serious enemy of these wicked men who under the influence of Satan one day attacked him physically with a knife, inflicting terrible injuries to his face. They attempted to kill him on numerous occasions; the more powerful had him banished and eventually confined to a Cistercian monastery where he died on October 24th 1870.

From childhood St. Anthony Mary was consumed with the thoughts of poor sinners going to Hell forever and ever. This fearful insight was quite obvious when he performed his daily duties as a priest, bishop and archbishop. He would spend many long hours in the confessional, where he demonstrated an ability to read souls and would encourage the penitent to confess this or that forgotten sin. He consistently deprived himself of sleep, in fact he would only sleep for two hours a day or night, and practiced constant mortification of the flesh.

St Anthony was known for his soft-heart and compassionate, fatherly nature and spent most of his time helping the poor, building the foundation of vibrant missions, hospitals and schools. He was a true prelate of mercy. He would never divorce truth and justice from the understanding of mercy. His *raison d'être* was to simply save souls; nothing else was important for him.

On one occasion St. Anthony Mary saved the souls of four men (three were teenagers) who were awaiting execution. His tender and fatherly compassionate



pleas for their repentance softened their hearts and they repented and made their final confession. He was later told by our Blessed Savior, to his great joy, that their souls had been saved.

Towards the end of his life St. Anthony Mary was a participating father at the Vatican Council I in December 1869. He was so horrified to hear many liberal bishops arguing against the matter of papal infallibility that he stood up and strongly condemned their errors and lack of faith. St. Anthony Mary was so upset by their perfidious opinions that he had a stroke which afflicted him for the rest of his life.

St Anthony Mary Claret was canonized a saint by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

Saint Anthony Mary Claret, Apostle of Mercy, pray for us! ■

The Remnant Begs Pope Francis to Either Change Course or Renounce Petrine Office

Continued from Page 1

his Word.” Accordingly, said Benedict, a Pope “*must not proclaim his own ideas*, but rather constantly bind himself and the Church to obedience to God’s Word, *in the face of every attempt to adapt it or water it down*, and every form of opportunism.”

The course of your pontificate thus far has compelled us to declare publicly that you have failed to respect the nature of the Petrine office, abusing it in a manner the Church has never before witnessed. We hereby present to Your Holiness the main concerns that have aroused alarm in all ranks of the Church and have motivated this petition.

First, rather than the constant teaching of the Church concerning God’s word, you have consistently proclaimed your own ideas in homilies, press conferences, off-the-cuff remarks, [interviews with journalists](#), speeches of various kinds, and idiosyncratic [readings of Scripture](#). These ideas, ranging from the disturbing to the plainly heterodox, are well represented in your personal manifesto, [Evangelii Gaudium](#). This document contains a number of astonishing proclamations the likes of which no Roman Pontiff has ever dared to utter. Among these are your “dream... of *transforming everything*, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world *rather than for her self-preservation*.” It is incredible that a Roman Pontiff would posit a non-existent opposition between the self-preservation of the Holy Catholic Church and her mission in the world.

Second, rather than binding yourself and the Church to obedience to God’s word, you have repeatedly deprecated apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, along with the faithful who defend them. Here too [Evangelii Gaudium](#) sums up your line of thought: “More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: ‘Give them something to eat’ (Mk 6:37).”

The Catholic mind staggers at the spectacle of a Roman Pontiff belittling the Church’s constitution, doctrines and customs as mere “structures,” “rules” and “habits” that rob people of spiritual sustenance, leaving them to starve at the Church’s door. You dare to say this respecting the very Church that built and transformed entire civilizations, nurturing countless saints, religious orders, priestly and religious vocations and institutes of charity for the salvation of souls and incomparable works of corporal mercy.



Pope Francis and Archbishop Tagle "salute" the crowd in the Philippines.

At the same time, you have so frequently derided the faithful who defend the Church’s traditions that one observer has compiled a “[Little Book of Insults](#)” recording many examples of this unprecedented verbal assault by a Pope against his own subjects. Among the epithets you have hurled at observant Catholics with reckless abandon are these: “fundamentalists,” “Pharisees,” “Pelagians,” “triumphalists,” “Gnostics,” “nostalgists,” “superficial Christians,” “band of the chosen,” “peacocks,” “moralistic quibblers” “uniformists,” “proud, self-sufficient,” “intellectual aristocrats,” “Christian bats who prefer the shadows to the light of the presence of the Lord,” etc.

Yet, not a single harsh word have you uttered concerning open enemies of the doctrines of the Faith or the sexual deviants who infest the Catholic hierarchy. On the contrary, you declared “Who am I to judge?” respecting “gay persons” among the clergy, and in particular the notorious homosexual cleric [you have made the head of your very household](#), who shows [a revolting familiarity](#) with your person. You have granted widely publicized audiences to [sexual deviants](#), including transsexuals and homosexuals, arranging these encounters [personally by telephone](#). You have rehabilitated and even rewarded with prestigious appointments [liberation theologians silenced and suspended](#) by your two immediate predecessors, [promoters of homosexuality](#), and prelates who [covered up the sexual crimes](#) of homosexual priests.

[Evangelii Gaudium](#) aptly summarizes the open contempt—without precedent in the annals of the papacy—with which you view the defenders of doctrinal and liturgical rectitude. You ridicule “an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church’s prestige” and rashly accuse tradition-minded Catholics of being “without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time,” cruelly and unjustly

caricaturing them as people who would reduce the Church to “a museum piece or something which is the property of a select few.”

A moment deeply revealing of your contemptuous mentality in this regard was your humiliation of an altar boy, broadcast to the world and [memorialized on the Internet](#). As he stood in a prayerful posture, hands folded, at the entrance to the Vatican grottoes, which you were visiting, you pulled his hands apart, mocking him with the words: “Are your hands bound together? Ah, it seems they’re stuck!” To his credit, the boy put his hands back together immediately, resuming the comportment appropriate to the dignity of the occasion and in keeping with a sound spiritual formation. But one wonders what effect this public humiliation, now permanently accessible to the whole world, will have upon the spiritual life of an impressionable youngster.

In perhaps the most injurious of your insults of the faithful, [Evangelii Gaudium](#) denounces traditional Catholics for what you suppose to be “a self-absorbed promethean neopelagianism.” Presuming their interior dispositions, you declare that these Catholics “feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past”—as if our holy religion involved “styles” that become outmoded like fashions in clothing. You even go so far as to mock “a supposed soundness of doctrine or discipline” as “narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others...”

For the sake of truth and justice, Holy Father, we must say that it seems you yourself have spent a great deal of time analyzing, classifying and indeed [judging](#) others—to the growing dismay and embarrassment of your subjects, who have never seen such behavior from a Roman Pontiff. And this behavior shows no signs of abating.

Recently, [at a conference on priestly formation](#), you remarked—to laughter from your audience—that you are “scared of rigid priests... I keep away from them. They bite!” What purpose does such derisive rhetoric serve but to humiliate and marginalize those priests who still have the courage to defend the Church’s unpopular teachings without compromise in a world at war against God and His law? No wonder the mass media hail your pontificate!

But, more than words, Holy Father, you have directed the outright persecution of religious orders intent on restoring orthodoxy, sober piety, the interior life and liturgical tradition in the midst of what your own predecessor [described](#) as the “calamities” and “sufferings” the Church has endured in the name of Vatican II, including “closed seminaries, closed convents, banalized liturgy...” On your [specific orders](#), the flourishing Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate have been destroyed on account of what your apostolic commissioner (who later died of a stroke) called a “[definitely traditionalist drift](#).” The affiliated Sisters of the Immaculate have likewise been [placed under an apostolic commissioner](#) on account of “[deviations](#)” consisting of a supposed “pre-conciliar” formation—meaning the traditional liturgy and the traditional conventual life, as if these holy things were contagions to be expunged from the Church like some disease. These are the actions of a dictator motivated by an ideology, not a paternal guardian of the Church’s sacred patrimony.

Yet, following a years-long investigation and disciplinary process initiated by Pope Benedict, under your supervision the Leadership Conference of Women Religious has been [whitewashed and spared any discipline](#) despite its [support for abortion, euthanasia and “same-sex marriage”](#) and its [notorious promotion](#) of what Cardinal Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, [described](#) as “*fundamental errors regarding the omnipotence of God, the Incarnation of Christ, the reality of Original Sin, the necessity of salvation and the definitive nature of the salvific action of Christ in the Paschal Mystery.*”

Third, in keeping with your programmatic disparagement of the Church’s traditional doctrine and discipline and those who defend them, you presided over and controlled a “Synod on the Family” that amounted to a sustained attempt to water down or adapt the Church’s infallible teaching on marriage, procreation and sexuality in order to accommodate the rebellious spirit of the age and the immorality it has fostered throughout our post-Christian civilization.

In the name of “mercy,” the progressive prelates who dominate your circle of advisors, including the infamous Cardinal Kasper — whose views

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you have been promoting from [the beginning of your pontificate](#)—now proclaim a false disjunction between doctrine and its intrinsically related pastoral practice, as if the Church could forbid immoral behavior in principle while accommodating it in practice. As [one prominent cardinal](#) has put it, this “is a form of heresy, a dangerous schizophrenic pathology.” Yet it has become a theme of your pontificate, as you invoke “mercy” endlessly against the Church’s moral laws, which you demean as “[small-minded rules](#),” “[roadblocks](#),” “[closed doors](#),” and “[casuistry](#).”

The progressives you personally appointed to the Synod’s secretariat and drafting commission, and the 45 additional progressives you added to the voting membership, including Cardinal Kasper, combined to attack the indissolubility of marriage by advocating “case by case” admission of the divorced and “remarried” to Holy Communion. This would mean the overthrow of the Church’s bimillennial sacramental discipline, rooted in the words of Our Lord Himself: “Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery... (Lk. 16:18).” That discipline was reaffirmed by [Benedict XVI](#) and [John Paul II](#) in the face of challenges by dissenters from Catholic teaching—Cardinal Kasper being foremost among them. It is readily apparent that you wish to abandon that discipline, as you did when [you were Archbishop of Buenos Aires](#) and when, even as Pope, you personally telephoned a woman in Argentina, civilly married to a divorced man, to tell her that [she could receive Holy Communion](#) despite what her “rigid” parish priest had said to the contrary.

At the Synod’s first session in 2014, you personally approved and ordered published to the world, before the Synod Fathers had even seen it, a synodal “[midterm report](#)” which was never approved by them and was in fact a fabrication, apparently written in advance, that [did not even remotely represent their actual consensus](#). This disgraceful document called for a “case by case” abandonment of the discipline of the Church respecting the divorced and “remarried” and for “valuing” the homosexual “orientation.” [One courageous prelate](#) called it “a black mark which has stained the honour of the Apostolic See.” Yet, after the Synod majority rightly rejected it, you [denounced](#) “so-called... traditionalists” for “wanting to close [themselves] within the written word... and not allowing oneself to be surprised by God, by the God of surprises...” And then you ordered the same document to be circulated to the world’s bishops, along with three paragraphs in the final report that failed to receive the requisite majority but which you ordered included anyway, having “[torn up the rule book](#)” of a Synod that was “[rigged](#)” to achieve a preordained result, but by the grace of God failed to do so.

At the Synod’s second session in 2015, you required that all deliberations be based upon an [Instrumentum Laboris](#) so heterodox that an international coalition of clergy and laity warned that it “*threatens the entire structure of Catholic teaching on marriage, the*

family and human sexuality...” When that document was likewise rejected by the Synod majority and replaced at the last minute by a compromise document—which nonetheless [creates openings for the overthrow of the Church’s sacramental discipline](#)—you [denounced](#) “closed hearts which frequently hide even behind the Church’s teachings or good intentions, in order to sit in the chair of Moses and judge... difficult cases.” That is, you condemned the Synod Fathers who had defended the constant sacramental discipline of the Church.

In your evident determination to accommodate the divorced and civilly “remarried,” whom you inexplicably characterize as “[the poor](#),” just before Synod 2015 you devised in secret, without consulting any competent Vatican dicastery, a sudden and drastic “streamlining” of the annulment process. A world-renowned canonist, reflecting widespread alarm over this improvident “reform,” [described](#) it as “providing a path that looks like the Catholic version of no-fault divorce.” You yourself [freely acknowledged](#) that “it [has not escaped me](#) how an abbreviated judgment might put at risk the principle of indissolubility of marriage...”

[Fourth](#), in keeping with your astounding suggestion—promptly hailed by the mass media—that the Church has been “[obsessed](#)” with “abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods,” by [your own admission](#) you “have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that.” Yet these grave evils threaten the very survival of our civilization in the midst of what John Paul II called a “culture of death” and “silent apostasy.” While quite vocal concerning many [political issues](#), you were utterly silent when once Catholic Ireland legalized “gay marriage” by popular referendum and the United States Supreme Court imposed this abomination on all fifty states.

On the other hand, as the Western world descends into an abyss of depravity and Muslim fanatics are massacring Christians throughout the Middle East, in Africa and in the very heart of Europe, you are preoccupied with “climate change.” Your book length encyclical on a supposed “ecological crisis,” *Laudato si’*, the only encyclical you have produced, posits the existence of an “ecological crisis” and uncritically adopts the ideologically motivated, strongly contested claims of “climate change science,” which a Pope has absolutely no competence to assess, much less present to the faithful as indisputable facts.

The same encyclical laments “global warming,” the excessive use of air-conditioning, the loss of mangrove swamps, the supposed threat to plankton and worms, and the extinction of various plants and animals—denouncing this as an offense to God—before it even mentions abortion (while failing utterly to mention the supremely anti-natural practice of contraception). As to abortion, the encyclical speaks only of a failure “to protect a human embryo” when in fact abortion is the brutal mass murder of innocent human

beings, ripped limb from limb in the womb or stabbed to death with surgical scissors at the very moment of birth.

Not surprisingly, the [powers of the world](#) have [universally acclaimed](#) *Laudato si’* as part of “[the Francis revolution](#)” which the media, including the progressive “Catholic” press, have been lauding throughout your pontificate.

[Fifth](#), you have [consistently dismissed all doctrinal differences with Protestants](#) as [insignificant](#) and have repeatedly [declared](#), quite falsely, that “all the baptized are members of the same Body of Christ, *his Church*.” Here too you ignore the teaching of [John Paul II](#), [Benedict XVI](#), and [every Pope](#) before them, including [Pius XI](#), who taught quite to the contrary concerning the condition of Protestants: “For since the mystical body of Christ, in the same manner as His physical body, is one, compacted and fitly joined together, it were foolish and out of place to say that the mystical body is made up of members which are disunited and scattered abroad: whosoever therefore is not united with the body *is no member of it*, neither is he in communion with Christ its head.”

In this regard you seem heedless of the ever-worsening immorality and heresy of the same Protestant sects that engage in endless, pointless “ecumenical dialogue” with the Vatican. After fifty years of “dialogue” these sects condone divorce, contraception, abortion, homosexuality and “gay marriage,” purport to ordain women and practicing homosexuals as “priests” and “bishops,” and continue adamantly to reject fundamental dogmas of the one true religion revealed by Christ for the salvation of the world.

What of the truth that makes us free? (John 8:32) What of the witness of countless saints and martyrs who expended their substance and laid down their very lives to defend and pass on the Catholic Faith in opposition to the manifold errors and societal destruction spawned by the Protestant revolt, whose final consequences are playing out before your very eyes?

[Sixth](#), in recent days, your public statements seem to have become increasingly careless and disordered, causing even greater scandal and apprehension among the faithful:

On November 15, during your [Sunday participation in a Lutheran prayer service](#), you said that Catholic and Lutheran teachings concerning Christ are “the same,” being merely a matter of “Catholic language” versus “Lutheran language.” You characterized the defined dogma and ontological reality of transubstantiation as mere “explanations and interpretations,” declaring that “life is greater than explanations and interpretations”—as if “life” were “greater” than the Real Presence of God Incarnate in the Holy Eucharist, which Protestants deny.

On the same occasion you suggested that whether Protestants can receive Holy Communion is for theologians to determine, when the Church has already infallibly determined that

this is impossible without conversion and profession of the same faith as Catholics. Stating that the matter was beyond your “competence”—but it is precisely the Pope’s competence to uphold the Church’s teaching in this regard—you suggested that a Lutheran married to a Catholic might receive Holy Communion after “speaking to the Lord” but that you “dare not say more.” But you had already said far too much by publicly referring a matter of grave importance for salvation to the error-prone private conscience of the individual: “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:29).”

[On November 21](#), you declared to a worldwide conference of Catholic educators: “*Never proselytize in schools*. Christian education is bringing up the young in complete reality *with human values* and one of these is transcendence.” On the contrary, Catholic education is above all an inculcation in *divine* values: The Gospel and what it requires of Catholics, indeed the whole world, not merely human values or a vague “transcendence” bereft of its proper object, which is the God who has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate.

During your trip to Africa, November 25-30, you opined that the world is “[at the limits of suicide](#)” because of “climate change.” As you have throughout your pontificate, you failed to address the true threat of civilizational suicide in our time, remarked by your great predecessor, [Venerable Pope Pius XII](#): that “*almost the whole human race is today allowing itself to be driven into two opposing camps, for Christ or against Christ. The human race is involved today in a supreme crisis, which will issue in its salvation by Christ, or in its dire destruction.*” By constantly directing the attention of the entire Church to a worldly “ecological crisis,” you cause the faithful to lose sight of the *Christological* crisis that threatens the eternal welfare of countless souls in our time.

During the in-flight press conference on the return to Rome from Africa, [you denounced “fundamentalist” Catholics](#) yet again, mocking the absolute religious convictions of orthodox members of your flock, based on the revealed word of God and the infallible teaching of the Magisterium on faith and morals:

Fundamentalism is a sickness that is in *all religions*.... We Catholics have some—and *not some, many*, eh? —who believe they possess the absolute truth (*che si credonono con la verita assoluta*) and go ahead dirtying others with calumny, with disinformation, and they do evil.... Religious fundamentalism is not religious, because it lacks God and it is idolatrous, like the idolatry of money.

Having denounced “many” members of your own flock as godless idolaters, you later suggested a moral equivalence between Christians and the Muslim fanatics who are slaughtering, torturing, raping, enslaving and exiling Christians

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The Remnant Begs Pope Francis to Either Change Course or Renounce Petrine Office

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around the world: “You cannot wipe out a religion just because there are some or a number of groups of fundamentalists at one moment in history.... Think of all the wars *we Christians* have waged. It wasn’t the Muslims who were responsible for the Sack of Rome.”

Yet again you embarrass the Church—and yourself—with an ill-considered remark quite unbecoming the Roman Pontiff. The historical record demands correction of your blunder:

First of all, the Muslims [did sack Rome in 846](#), looting old Saint Peter’s and prompting Pope Leo IV to build the “Leonine walls” [“to defend the see of Peter from an Islamic jihad.”](#)

Secondly, if you were referring to [the sack of Rome in 1527](#) by the army of Emperor Charles V, this had nothing to do with religious “fundamentalism” but rather involved purely political retaliation against Clement VII, a weak and vacillating Pope, who had imprudently forged an alliance with the King of France (Francis I) with whom Charles was at war. In fact, the Emperor’s army included German mercenaries, [most of whom were Lutherans](#), and it was they who were principally responsible for the depredation of the Holy City and the violence done to its Catholic inhabitants.

Thirdly, during the same era, of course, Muslim marauders—who were indeed violent “fundamentalists”—were expanding the Ottoman Empire by the conquest of Christian lands until [the resounding and miraculous defeat](#) of the Muslim fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, which prevented a Muslim conquest of all of Europe and probably another Muslim sack of Rome.

Provoking still more scandal, in answer to a question concerning whether the Church should “change its position” on the immorality of contraception to permit the use of condoms as a method of limiting new HIV infections, you referred to this evil practice as “one of the methods,” thus appearing to legitimize it, [while suggesting](#) that it presents a moral dilemma for the Church, *even likening it to Our Lord healing on the Sabbath*:

The question seems too small to me, it also seems to me a partial question. Yes, *it is one of the methods*. And the morality of the Church, finds itself, I think, on this point before a perplexity. So, the Fifth or the Sixth Commandment? Defend life [with condoms!], or that sexual relations be open to life? But this is not the problem. The problem is bigger.

This question makes me think of one they once asked Jesus: “Tell me, teacher, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” *It is obligatory to heal....* [B]ut malnutrition, the development of the person, slave labor, the lack

of potable drinking water, *these* are the problems. Let’s not talk about if one can use this type of Band-Aid [*cerotto*] or that for a *small wound*, the *big wound* is social injustice, environmental injustice....

Thus, you appeared to accept that there is room for consideration of this “method,” although you view it as a rather trivial matter (a Band-Aid) even though it facilitates fornication and a culture of total sexual depravity. You then subordinated the moral law to concern for social and environmental justice! And so, once again, the Church is wounded by scandal and confusion on account of your habit of careless, off-the-cuff remarks to the press on weighty moral and theological questions concerning which a pope should speak or write with utmost prudence and deliberation, invoking the divine assistance.

Finally, there has just appeared on the Vatican website [an interview](#) of Your Holiness by the weekly *Credere* in which you [allude favorably](#) (yet again) to Cardinal Kasper’s false notion “mercy” and reveal that you intend to conduct a “revolution of tenderness”—an allusion to the title of Cardinal Kasper’s book lauding you: *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Love*. You declare that this “revolution of tenderness” will take place during your Jubilee of Mercy, which will involve “so many gestures,” including “a different gesture” on “a Friday of every month.”

Your stated motive for the “revolution of tenderness” is that, according to you, “the Church herself sometimes follows a hard line, she falls into the temptation of following a hard line, into the temptation of stressing only the moral rules, *many people are excluded.*” Affirming your interviewer’s suggestion that the Church must “discover” a “God who is moved and has compassion for man,” you reply: “To discover it will lead us to have a more tolerant, more patient, more tender attitude”—as if the Church were lacking in patience and compassion for sinners before your election.

What are these astounding affirmations if not an absolutely unprecedented threat by a Roman Pontiff to disregard “moral rules”—that is, the constant teaching of the infallible Magisterium—in the name of a false mercy, evidently with regard to the divorced and “remarried” and others you deem “excluded” in some manner? What are we to make of a pope who claims that the Church that Christ founded to teach infallibly on faith and morals has “fallen” into a *temptation* to take a “hard line” on morality? What besides horror should the faithful experience when a pope says such things, which have never been heard from the See of Peter in 2,000 years?

Catholics know that a true revolution

of tenderness occurs in every soul that undergoes Baptism or, corresponding to the grace of repentance, enters the confessional with a firm purpose of amendment and a contrite heart, unburdens the weight of sin, receives absolution by a priest acting *in persona Christi*, and emerges “white as snow,” [to quote your own predecessor](#), speaking of the Sacrament of Confession. The Catholic Church has always been an inexhaustible font of divine mercy through her Sacraments. What can your proposed “revolution” add to what Christ has already provided in His Church? Can you declare an amnesty on mortal sin? Can you pardon what is not pardonable without repentance and contrition? Can you outdo the mercy of God Himself?

The perception grows daily that although you are the Vicar of Christ, you simply have no interest in defending faith and morals, which are under attack as never before, nor any intention to call the wandering sheep into the sheepfold Our Lord established for their salvation. On the contrary, you appear to have devoted your pontificate to a veritable program of doctrinal and disciplinary laxity whose theme is the regular denunciation of orthodox Catholics combined with accusations that the Church lacks mercy. At the same time, you pursue social and political matters in which a pope has no competence or authority, such as “climate change,” environmentalism, and restoring diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

After being buffeted by one storm of controversy after another occasioned by your unprecedented words and deeds, the faithful feel increasingly as if [“the ship of the Church has lost its compass.”](#)

§

In sum, Holy Father, over the past two-and-a-half years you have earned the world’s unanimous praise while throwing the ecclesiastical commonwealth into a state of confusion and division. You have ridiculed, berated and condemned the orthodox, shown limitless tolerance for the heterodox and the sexually deviant, and contrived to subvert the sacramental discipline defended by the very Pope you declared a saint. Accompanied everywhere by the adulation of the media and the roar of crowds, you seem heedless of Our Lord’s admonition: “Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets.”

The situation has reached the point where a senior Vatican official, reflecting the concerns of Catholics of all ranks, was constrained [to warn a world-renowned Catholic journalist](#) that “This pontificate poses serious risks for the integrity of Catholic teaching in faith and morals.” In agreement with this prelate, we are compelled before

God publicly to declare in conscience that your pontificate can only be seen as a clear and present danger to the Church, a danger that seems to increase with each passing day. Indeed, the damaging effects of your pontificate are everywhere in evidence, with Catholics throughout the world now treating more and more dismissively the Church’s teachings on faith and morals, taking as their point of reference your own words and deeds—jubilantly trumpeted to the world by the media—rather than the infallible teaching of the Magisterium on faith and morals over the past 2,000 years.

Now, as you condemn the Church’s “hard line” on “moral rules” and proclaim a “revolution of tenderness,” we are faced with the imminent threat of unheard-of “gestures” of “mercy” that would undermine the moral edifice of the Church to the great harm of souls, whose salvation is at stake. Among these gestures would appear to be a post-synodal apostolic exhortation authorizing the admission of public adulterers to Holy Communion according to the judgment of individual bishops or episcopal conferences. This would mean nothing less than mass sacrilege, the practical destruction of the Church’s unity, the *de facto* abolition of the doctrine on mortal sin and the requirement of the state of grace for a sacramental life, the collapse of the Church’s moral teaching, and ultimately a surrender of her very claim to an infallible Magisterium. One has the sense of a nearly apocalyptic turn of events in the history of the Church.

We dare not judge your subjective motives or intentions concerning what you have said and done to the Church’s detriment in the course of a turbulent pontificate unlike any the Church has ever seen. But we cannot remain silent in the face of the objective harm the Church has already sustained, to the world’s endless praise for [“the people’s pope,”](#) or the further harm that now appears imminent.

To recall once again the words of your predecessor, a pope must exercise his power to “bind himself and the Church to obedience to God’s Word, in the face of every attempt to adapt it or water it down, and every form of opportunism.” When a pope is unable or unwilling to pursue that end, when in fact he seems determined to act against it, would the Church not be better served if he relinquished the most august office of Vicar of Christ? Better this than to risk a fatal compromise of the Church’s doctrine and discipline, subverting 2,000 years of apostolic and ecclesiastical tradition and incurring, to quote the famous formula employed by Pope Saint Pius V, [“the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.”](#)

December 8, 2015

Feast of the Immaculate Conception ■

A Letter from a Priest in Japan

To the Editor of *The Remnant*

by Peter Milward, SJ

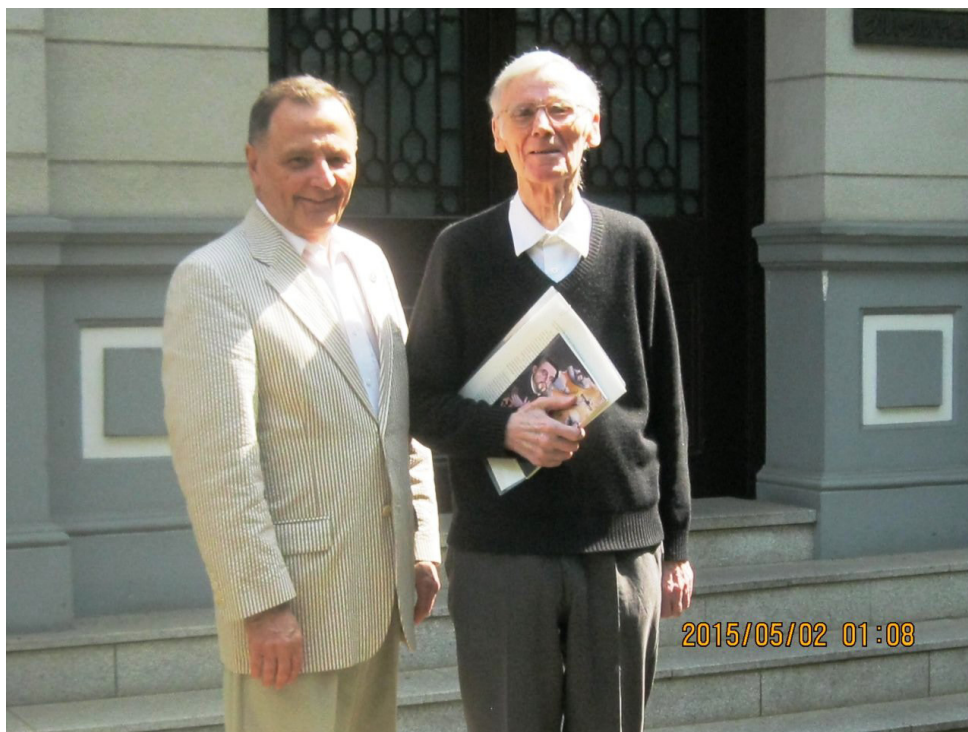
Let me begin by expressing my gratitude both in Vincent Chiarello for his kind interview of me in the garden of SJ House (see June 30, 2015 issue of *The Remnant*) and to you for devoting to it a full page of your publication. However, on reading through the published interview, of which I only received a copy in today's post after a long delay, I find there are certain general topics that call for clarifications.

1. When I arrived in Japan On September 2, 1954, as a young scholastic fresh from a degree in the Classics and English at Campion Hall, Oxford, I found myself subject to our new Vice-Provincial Fr Pedro Arrupe. He was always very kind and considerate to me, though I soon came to realize the contrast between his Spanish idealism, implied in his nickname Don Pedro (in association with Don Quixote), and my conservative, traditional English outlook on life.

Then, after five years as Vice-Provincial, he became the first Provincial of the newly erected Province of Japan, and after completing his term of six years, while still acting Provincial, he went to Rome in early 1965 with our two delegates for the General Congregation that elected him General in succession to Fr. John-Baptist Janssens, who had died the previous October. Knowing his quixotic disposition, those two delegates went to Rome with the declared intention to block his election, but he proved to be too popular with most of the other delegates, who respected him for his devotion to the Japanese mission.

Meanwhile, for the past two years a Visitor had been sent to Japan by Fr. Janssens to investigate the situation of this country, and after two years he had drawn up a document strongly critical of the Provincial. Only by the time it reached the General's desk, Fr. Janssens had died, and it came into the hands of Fr. Arrupe himself. That was early in 1965, towards the end of Vatican II, and from then onwards the new General regarded it as a main duty of his to go along with all the winds of change initiated not only by the Council but also "in the spirit" of the Council—forgetting that when the wind is blowing strongly from one direction it is necessary to lean in the other direction in order to keep one's balance. And so he ironically incurred the censure of both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II.

2. As for Vatican II, with so many bishops gathered from the four winds of the world, it seemed as if surely the finger of God was here, and I



Remnant Columnist, Vincent Chiarello and Father Peter Milward SJ, Japan

had barely completed my theological studies culminating in my ordination to the priesthood in 1960. The two most practical issues had been promulgated on the Liturgy and Ecumenism—the altar facing the people and the use of the vernacular, together with the cultivation of friendly relations with those of other Christian denominations (within the limits of due irenicism). And I found myself altogether in favor of them. But when all the documents of the Council were published in English translation (by an Oxford friend of mine, Walter Abbott), I found myself in two minds.

Naturally, it wasn't for me to dispute the doctrine proposed by the Council, but I couldn't help disputing the wisdom of imposing so much doctrine in so many documents, which were inevitably left for due clarification by theologians not always endowed with the gift of wisdom while appealing to "the spirit of Vatican II".

Till then I had never been aware of any discrepancy between conservative and liberal, or between traditional and modern (including modernist), but from then onwards it seemed as if the Catholic Church was divided between such opposing camps, with Archbishop Lefebvre standing for one side, and the theologian Hans Kung for the other side. Not only that, but the practical effect of so many documents, subject to so many varied interpretations, was one of mystification in the minds of the ordinary laity. In the intention of Pope John XXIII it was to have been a pastoral Council, but in effect, it became a theologians' Council, and the outcome was nothing short of disastrous, with so many priests and nuns leaving their religious commitments in droves. Interestingly, it was the reform-minded dioceses (in America) that suffered most from this lack of vocations, whereas those

more conservatively minded had fewer problems.

3. A turning point came with the publication of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* some three years after the end of the Council, but by then all too many Catholics had made up their own minds, according to the Jesuit moral theory of "probabilism", and they weren't willing to change their practice. Thus it came about that, all too ironically, it was the Muslims, rather than the Catholics who chiefly observed the requirements of the encyclical. It was also, ironically, from then onwards that all kinds of sexual abuse came to be revealed among the Catholic clergy—which may (in my opinion) be attributed in no small part to the "euphoria" that accompanied "the spirit of Vatican II." Such was also, I found, the opinion of Fr. Richard Neuhaus in his journal *First Things*.

4. Finally, I have to add a few words about the present Pope's new encyclical, *Laudato Si*. Not content with summaries pro and con, I perused the English translation carefully from beginning to end, remembering the Pauline ideal of *parrhesia*. Officially, to judge from comments in the *Osservatore Romano*, the Pope

seemed to have surrounded himself with yes-men, and so everyone was praising the encyclical to the skies. But not everything in it seemed to me worthy of praise, especially those parts of it he seemed to have entrusted to theological and scientific "experts".

From a historical and literary point of view, the problem of ecology and environmental change has to be traced back to the Baconian "new philosophy", or rather his materialistic approach to science, which came to prevail in England with the so-called "enlightenment" of the early eighteenth century and the rise of industrialism. This is offset by the traditionalism of Shakespeare, whose masterpiece, *King Lear*, was paradoxically composed in the same year as Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, namely 1605.

In Shakespeare I see a warm appreciation of the elements of earth, water, air and fire. As with the exiled duke in *As You Like It*, he finds "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything". In harmony with Shakespeare so many English poets evince that love of Nature, on which Pope Francis lays so much emphasis, if without recognizing any indebtedness to them. Above all, there is the English Jesuit poet GM Hopkins, who has a poem on the valley of the river Ribble, addressing the Earth as "sweet Earth, sweet landscape", yet admitting, "Thou can't but only be", while adding, "but that thou well dost." If only the Pope could have drawn on such statements of his fellow Jesuit, instead of relying on scientific experts!

In general, what any Pope needs, whether Pope Francis or Pope John Paul II, is informed criticism, not an array of yes-men of whom there are all too many in the Vatican. In any case, as a Jesuit, he should have been provided with an *admonitor*. And now it is for you to admonish me for adding so many comments to the kind interview afforded me by my good friend, Vincent Chiarello.

Peter Milward, SJ
August 5, 2015



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A Thankless Giving

By Timothy J Cullen

The popular family holiday known as “Thanksgiving” is primarily a North American tradition celebrated in Canada on the second Monday of October and in the USA on the fourth Thursday of November. It is generally agreed that the holiday has its origins in Protestantism; Calvinist Puritanism, to be precise. It does not appear on the Church calendar as a feast day; indeed, it is a holiday that to a certain extent arose as an English Protestant reaction to what was perceived as an excessive number of feast days in the Church calendar during the reign of Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547). “Reforms” enacted in 1536 reduced the number from 95 (plus 52 Sundays) to 27, although there were English Puritans who would have preferred the elimination of *all* Church holidays, Christmas and Easter included, preferring instead to institute ad hoc “Days of Fasting” and “Days of Thanksgiving” to be proclaimed based on unexpected natural events that according to them were brought about by what has come to be known as “special providence”.¹

Catholics, of course, have their own “thanksgiving” better known by its Greek name: *εὐχαριστία* (“eucharistia”). In modern Greek, the word that translates as “thank you” is *efcharistó* (ευχαριστώ), so... The Eucharist is Christ’s gift to the Faithful, a gift of life made freely by God to fallen humankind. No fixed day is set for *this* “thanksgiving”, no “special providence” is required to share in it: it is—or was, before the closing of so many churches and the growing infrequency of Masses offered—available on a daily basis throughout the Catholic world, a world that seems ever less grateful for this greatest of all gifts.

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child!” wrote Shakespeare (“King Lear”, Act 1 scene 4), a telling phrase when one takes into account the lack of gratitude and appreciation that God’s fallen children display with respect to Christ’s sacrifice of His life for those who down through the ages would claim to be His “friends”!

The autumn holiday “Thanksgiving” story as it is generally told to the young in the USA—that as the result of a good harvest in 1621, the Pilgrims (Puritans all) called for a “Day of Thanksgiving”—is open to debate although generally accepted. It should be noted that there is a good case to be made that the first autumnal “American Thanksgiving” was held in St. Augustine, Florida, on September 8, 1565, the feast day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It consisted of a Mass and Te Deum offered by Fr. Francisco López de Mendoza Grajales, followed by a feast attended by Native Americans and Spaniards alike.² Be that as it may, the Thanksgiving holiday as celebrated today is considered by Orthodox and Reform Judaism to be

a secular holiday, according to three sources cited in the Wikipedia entry on the holiday. One more victory for secularism, one more defeat for the Church, one might say. Long standing efforts to take Christ out of Christmas have been largely successful, and as for gratitude to God expressed as is done in the “Thanksgiving” holiday, well, aside from a possible prayer for the victory of a favorite football team and a quickly mumbled grace at the table, it’s a pretty thankless day for God, “For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting” (John 3:16). And the Son in turn gave His life through a cruel death on the Cross so that this would come to pass.

What thanks does God get? A day that does not celebrate the ultimate sacrifice but instead provides an excuse for overindulgence, one might think. A thankless giving indeed, judging by the prevailing norm of take “holy” out of “holiday” and switch its date so that the godless *really* have something to celebrate! What does eternity matter when compared with a long weekend! Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die and if you believe that you are nothing more than an animated flesh lump that perishes just as did the turkey, that you neither are nor have an immortal soul, that beyond the pleasure and pain experienced by the senses as interpreted by a mind that has never been adequately “explained” by “science” but is nothing more than a biological accident, then you have no hope beyond this fleshly vale of tears and precious little for which to be grateful in any case, save for what one might think of as the “luck of the draw” in having been born into a situation that allows for the acquisition of material comforts.

Harkening back to Tradition, one might do well to have a look at the 1905 Catholic Encyclopedia entry for “Eucharist”: “The Church honors the Eucharist as one of her most exalted mysteries, since for sublimity and incomprehensibility it yields in nothing to the allied mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. These three mysteries constitute a wonderful triad, which causes the essential characteristic of Christianity, as a religion of mysteries far transcending the capabilities of reason, to shine forth in all its brilliance and splendor, and elevates Catholicism, the most faithful guardian and keeper of our Christian heritage, far above all pagan and non-Christian religions.”³

Quite straightforward, no?

One places one’s faith in the “mystery” and adheres to the Faith, or one does not. If one does not, then one is *not* a Roman Catholic and by the standards of the West of 2015, A.D., one may carve the turkey, mutter a “Thanks, God, it’s all good Whoever or Whatever you are” and pass the cranberry sauce, please, and let’s get on with the show! The true “Thanksgiving” of the authentic Roman Catholic is a far cry from a turkey dinner with the

trimmings and this reality should be shouted from the house-tops rather than hidden in the humble dining rooms of the Faithful who “do not wish to offend” those who have no hesitation when it comes to offending them. Pardon me, but for Christ’s sake, you live in what was once part of Christendom if sadly not the (northern) sphere of what was once part of the Social Kingdom of Christ in which Roman Catholicism was the universal faith; South America still remains at least nominally Catholic and the North American (and Protestant Puritan) “holiday” is not on the calendar. Take note: the North American “holiday” is NOT by any way, shape or means a Catholic “holiday” and while Western Hemisphere Judaism may deign to celebrate it as a secular “holiday”, a believer in authentic Catholicism (i.e. the Faithful) might be better advised to ignore it or at the very least to “celebrate” it by receiving the Eucharist and thanking God for the privilege of being able to do so, assuming that is possible in the circumstances created by the post-Vatican II Church.

Realistically speaking, God’s gift to fallen man of His only Son is becoming an increasingly thankless gift, and Christ’s gift to us as the Second Person of God Who sacrificed Himself for our redemption has grown increasingly thankless as well. One does not dare to think that one can know or even presume to imagine the Mind of God, but the temptation to presume that He might find his fallen creatures increasingly and perhaps unacceptably ungrateful does not to this writer seem to be overly farfetched.

The 1905 *Catholic Encyclopedia* has this to say with respect to the Eucharist: “The Church honors the Eucharist as one of her most exalted mysteries, since for sublimity and incomprehensibility it yields in nothing to the allied mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. These three mysteries constitute a wonderful triad, which causes the essential characteristic of Christianity, as a religion of mysteries far transcending the capabilities of reason, to shine forth in all its brilliance and splendor, and elevates Catholicism, the most faithful guardian and keeper of our Christian heritage, far above all pagan and non-Christian religions”.⁴

Does the Church still honor this “most exalted” of mysteries? In theory, but in practice? “Exaltation” is certainly no longer a word that one would apply to Communion in the hand, and “honor” is a description that certainly could be called into question.

The “holiday” season is upon us, but for Catholics, Advent begins shortly after the Thanksgiving holiday described above with the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (30 November) being the first of four Sundays leading up to Christmas. It is not meant to be a time of giddy and greedy contemplation of gifts one may possibly give or receive. It is the beginning of the Church’s ecclesiastical year and a period during which the “the faithful are admonished to prepare themselves worthily to celebrate the anniversary of the Lord’s coming into the world as the incarnate God of love,

thus to make their souls fitting abodes for the Redeemer coming in Holy Communion and through grace, and thereby to make themselves ready for His final coming as judge, at death and at the end of the world.”⁵ It is less a time of merrymaking as per the secular “holiday season” tradition and more a time of penance. It is not surprising, therefore, that: “As Lessons for the first Nocturn [sic] she prescribes chapters from the prophet Isaias, who speaks in scathing terms of the ingratitude of the house of Israel, the chosen children who had forsaken and forgotten their Father”.

God gave His Only Begotten Son to fallen man in the Person of Christ, the Second Person of God Himself, made manifest as man. Advent is not the time of giving thanks; indeed, the Te Deum—perhaps the Church’s most joyous hymn of thanksgiving—is not sung during the Divine Office during Advent. The time for giving thanks comes when the Redeemer is at last among us.

God as the First Person of the Trinity gave us His Son. God as the Son gave us His sacrifice of His human person on the Cross. God in His Third Person came—as promised by Christ before His ascension—as the Holy Spirit to Christ’s disciples, infusing them with the Grace to carry out His final instruction to them: “Teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost [sic]. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matt 28: 19-20). No longer did God “choose” a people by ancestry; the people of the New Covenant choose God by Baptism and through their adherence to the Catholic Faith and their participation in the Sacraments become the People of God, for which they should be both temporally and eternally grateful.

Rarely, however, do we see societies that once were Christian displaying the gratitude owed, not even among those who at least nominally claim to be “Catholic”, a claim not restricted to a laity now far removed from the piety of my pre-V-II childhood, a period that now has an increasingly “once upon a time” aura surrounding it. These days, God is snubbed rather than thanked in His own house, never mind in the streets and homes of a once-grateful and pious people. It would appear that Christ as man rather than Christ as the Second Person of God is supposed to be the standard-bearer of the Faith given by God as His greatest gift.

One reads in the Bible how God responded to ingratitude in times previous to the New Covenant, God’s last gift to an ungrateful world of fallen creatures. One wonders if—or perhaps better said “when”—God will tire of the thankless giving with which He has graced those who have turned their faces from Him in favor of patting themselves on their collective backs.

Do penance during Advent and shout your thanks to God from the rooftops on Christmas! Pray that God will be gratified. True gratitude offered, true gratitude always due, is not simply beneficial: it is one’s duty, pure and simple, because *every* gift, but especially the *greatest* gift, should never be thankless. ■

⁵ *Ibid.*

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving>

² <http://taylormarshall.com/2013/11/6-interesting-catholic-thanksgiving.html>

³ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05572c.htm>

⁴ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05572c.htm>

Commemoration of the Living

Getting EVERYTHING Out of the Mass

By Father Ladis J. Cizik

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

One of the distressing complaints so often heard from those who attend the Novus Ordo Liturgy is: "I didn't get anything out of that Mass." Such persons should be reminded that Catholics traditionally did not come to Mass to be entertained; rather then, as now, the main focus for attending Mass is to worship Almighty God. The God-centered Traditional Latin Mass offers a remedy to those wayward souls in the form of the "Commemoration of the Living." For those who attend the Mass of the Ages, the Commemoration of the Living, at the beginning of the Canon of the Mass, makes it abundantly clear what we hope "to get" out of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Commemoration of the Living is considered to be a continuation of where the "*Te igitur*" left off; which offers up Sacrifices to Almighty God in the first place for the Holy Catholic Church, and then also for the Pope, our Bishop and "for all orthodox believers and all who profess the Catholic and Apostolic Faith" ("*...et omnibus orthodoxis, atque catholicis et apostolicis fidei cultoribus*"). Graces are thus heaped upon the Church Militant, in so far as they hold and profess the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith. To the degree that one deviates or dissents from the One True Faith founded by Christ, that is the extent to which one "will not get anything" out of the Mass. To the extent that the Mass is recognized as a Holy Sacrifice offered to Almighty God, as opposed to a mere man/community-centered memorial meal, that is the magnitude to which graces will be received for the Church, the Pope, our Bishop, and ourselves.

"*Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N...et N...*" (Be mindful O Lord of Thy servants and handmaids N... and N...) The Commemoration of the Living begins with the word *Memento* (Remember/Be mindful). The letters N. and N. are the place where the sacrificing Priest secretly and specifically calls to mind living persons for whom he will silently pray, with folded hands, to receive special graces. These special intentions of the Priest are made in addition to, and without prejudice to, the principal intention of the Mass. When a Priest says that he will remember you in his Mass, the *Memento for the Living* is that special place where the merits of the Cross will abound for you. In his classic work, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Gehr writes:

Since the prayer of the Church, especially in connection with the sacrifice, is exceedingly powerful and efficacious, the zealous Priest will not omit to render it profitable



All practicing Roman Catholic soldiers in WWII were "traditional Catholics," who attended the Traditional Latin Mass.

especially to all those to whom he is most closely bound, and to whom he is under obligations of justice, charity or gratitude. "*...et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio...*" (...and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee...) At this point, a special invocation is made for all those who are present at the Mass. For this reason, it is desirable to attend Mass every day, not just on Sundays and Holy Days. For those unable to physically attend the Holy Sacrifice, such as the sick and shut-ins, they can *spiritually* unite themselves to the Mass and receive these special graces. To the level that the attendee's faith and devotion are intense, sincere, pure and undefiled, that will be the measure by which they will receive Divine graces and blessings from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"*...pro quibus tibi offerimus: vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se, suisque omnibus...*" (...for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this Sacrifice of praise for themselves and all those dear to them...) This prayer indicates that attendance at Mass benefits not only the congregation, but those for whom they pray. From the pew, the attendee at Mass may procure tremendous graces and blessings from the Holy Sacrifice for family, friends and other persons, in addition to themselves. So to the point that the faithful offer up to God, in union with the Priest, the Holy Sacrifice for themselves and others, such will be the end to which the Holy Mass will be efficacious for them.

"*...pro redemptione animarum suarum...*" (...for the redemption of their

souls...) The needs of the soul take precedence over bodily needs. We are reminded here that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a help for us to avoid the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell. The Redeeming Blood of Christ is poured out upon those prayed for in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For the apostate who believes that everyone goes to Heaven and that no one goes to hell, they will not "get anything" out of these words from the Holy Sacrifice. To the proportion that one believes in the four last things (death, judgment, Heaven, and hell), that is the scope to which one will "get anything" of the supernatural consolation that this prayer offers.

"*...pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suae...*" (...and the hope of their safety and salvation...) The bodily needs of those prayed for are not neglected, but are connected with the ultimate goal of eternal salvation. Here, Gehr notes:

The word 'salvation' (*salus*) here comprises all spiritual supernatural gifts: grace in time and eternity; the word safety (*incolumitas*) designates not merely health of body, but generally success and happiness in temporal things, in the goods (immaterial and material) belonging to the natural order. They too may be obtained by sacrifice and prayer, in so far as they serve for the attainment of eternal happiness.

"*...tibi que reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo, vivo et vero.*" (...who now pay their vows to Thee, the everlasting, living and true God.) We renew here the vows of our Baptism; where we reject satan, and all his works, and all his allurements. Gehr adds:

These holy vows we pay at the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass, inasmuch as we offer not only the Eucharistic Victim, but in union with it we offer ourselves also, our body and our soul, our prayers and our homage, our labors and trials, our sufferings and our joys, as gifts due to the Lord.

In light of these vows, it is important to note that the official prayers of the Mass *cannot* include prayers for those outside the Holy Catholic Church. In ancient times, the names to be specifically said for the Commemoration of the Living were inscribed on a two-leaved tablet called a diptych. However, if a person lost the Faith or fell into heresy, his name was removed from the diptych. Although the diptych of the living is no longer used, Dom Prosper Gueranger explains in his book, *The Holy Mass*, that the principle remains the same:

The Priest cannot here pray either for Jews or for infidels, no more than he can for heretics, who by the very fact of heresy alone, are excommunicated, and consequently out of the pale of the Holy Catholic Church. Neither can he pray for such as, without being heretics, are excommunicated for other causes; it would be a profanation to utter the names of any such in the midst of the Holy Sacrifice. They may be prayed for in private, but not in official prayers. They are excluded from the Sacrifice, as they are out of the Church; consequently, it is impossible to mention them during the Sacred Celebration.

The *Memento for the Living* of the Traditional Latin Mass does provide a good rebuke for the impious person who dares to say: "I did not get anything out of that Mass." However, the ultimate answer that should drop the scales from their eyes is to refer to the reception of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, at Holy Communion. You cannot "get"/receive anything greater than that. If that was all that one "got out of Mass," that would be beyond all earthly gifts.

However, if the complaining person who received Holy Communion was not in a state of grace or did not possess the Catholic Faith in the Eucharist, then they would indeed have been left with that empty feeling – a feeling that comes from committing sacrilege. Saint Paul writes: "Therefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27). Then, at judgment day, what the impious will ultimately "get" for unworthily receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord will be worse than "anything" in this life. What we "get" out of Mass depends in large part upon what we put into it.

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

A Song for Nagasaki

by Paul Glynn, S.M.

(Ignatius Press 1988)

Reviewed by Vincent Chiarello

The Catholic Church canonizes or beatifies only those whose lives have been marked by the exercise of heroic virtue, and only after this has been proved by common repute for sanctity and by conclusive arguments. The chief difference (between beatification and canonization), however, lies in the meaning of the term canonization, the Church seeing in the saints nothing more than friends and servants of God whose holy lives have made them worthy of His special love. (Emphasis added) (Catholic Encyclopedia)

A visitor to Rome has no difficulty in finding a church to visit; indeed, it is difficult to walk down any street without passing one. One recent estimate of the number of churches, including Protestant denominations, approximates 1000. Some of the Catholic churches are open only for a particular ceremony such as a 40 Hour Devotion, wedding or funeral Mass. The magnificent Santa Maria dell'Orto in the area called Trastevere is open on all feast days devoted to Mary.

The same visitor walking along the Tiber near Trastevere, which adjoins Vatican City, would reach the *Isola Tiberina* (Tiber Island), a small parcel of land that connects two sections of Rome via walking bridges. On that small island are two buildings: Fatebenefratelli Hospital, which in Roman times was dedicated to the god of medicine, Aesculapius, and was later annexed by the Benedictines, whose monks named it "*Fatebenefratelli*", meaning "make a good thing, brothers". Opposite the hospital is the Basilica of San Bartolomeo, whose interior is dedicated to the martyrs of the Church.

In 1999, Pope John Paul II created a commission to study the lives and history of the Christian Martyrs of the 20th Century, and requested that the memory of these witnesses of faith be made visible in the Basilica of St. Bartholomew. Photos, objects, and accompanying stories belonging to other martyrs of centuries past, are also placed in the small side chapels, each dedicated to a specific historical period or circumstance.

Inside the church, the visitor finds a section devoted to the victims of the French Revolution, such as the 16 Carmelite nuns executed at Compiègne during the Reign of Terror, as well as a photo exhibit of Franz Jaegerstaetter, an Austrian, who refused on the basis of his Catholic principles to serve in the Nazi military, was executed for his act of faith, and was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007.



Takashi Nagai and his children

There is a large section devoted to the many clerical victims of the Spanish Civil War, as well as to those of Communist rule in both Europe and China. Off to the right of the nave is a small chapel, whose flickering blueish candlelight illuminates the face of St. Paul Miki, one of the 26 Japanese martyrs who were crucified in Nagasaki in 1597 by order of the Shogun, a story I have recounted in these pages. Yet there is another story about a Japanese Catholic convert, heroic in a different way, and whose face I hope to see someday in that chapel: Dr. Nagai Takashi, and therein lies the tale.

Dr. Nagai Takashi (Japanese custom renders the surname first), Dean of the Radiology Department at the medical school of the University of Nagasaki, was tending to the sick and wounded – civilian and military – when at 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, the second A-bomb detonated at 1800 feet above the city. The impact of the explosion sent glass flying, which cut his right carotid artery, and as a result of the loss of blood, combined with his weakened body, he went into a coma and was on the brink of death. But even before the bomb exploded, Dr. Nagai knew that his time on earth was limited: as a result of his radiological research, including extensive exposure to massive dosages of x-rays, he had been diagnosed with leukemia. But imminent death was not part of God's plan; Dr. Nagai recovered, and was to achieve a permanent place in the history of the Catholic Church in Japan.

The Bells of Nagasaki is an autobiographical account of this truly remarkable man's life. The bells in the title refer to those of the Catholic Cathedral in Nagasaki, at the time the largest in Asia, and whose peal, calling the people to prayer, could be heard throughout the valley surrounding

Nagasaki, the most Christian of all cities in Japan. The Cathedral, destroyed by the A-bomb, was rebuilt after the war, and the original bells are now in the Atomic Bomb Museum in Nagasaki.

Besides describing the immediate effects of the bomb, the book details the story of a conversion and transformation of one man who had lost so much, including his wife, but believed it was God's will for him to continue. Three days after the explosion, Dr. Nagai writes: "I returned to the site of my house. It was an expanse of ashes, but I found her (his wife, Midori) immediately... the burned remains of a pelvis and spine left by the all-consuming fire. Her charred rosary with a cross intact was lying nearby."

That rosary can also still be seen also at the Nagasaki Museum. Although he had previously written nothing but medical articles, this traumatic event transformed him into a writer, poet, artist, and possibly a mystic as well.

On his sickbed, often undergoing painful days and nights, with his writing pad suspended over his head, he wrote 20 books before his death in 1951. His poetry includes a touching memorial to the young girls at a Nagasaki Junshin ("pure heart") Catholic girls' school. Nine hundred out of eleven hundred of these girls died chanting psalms under the direction of one of their Japanese nuns, in a way similar to those 26 Martyrs from centuries before. Dr. Nagai wrote:

Virgins like lilies white;

Disappeared burning red;

In the flames of the holocaust

Chanting psalms to the Lord.

One of the more emotional chapters in the book describes the return from the war of two of Dr. Nagai's former students, both of whom insist that, despite the unconditional surrender of the Japanese government, "We must get our revenge." After patiently hearing the two students, who invoked a return to the Japanese Shinto gods of war, Dr. Nagai counseled, "There can be no victory in a way that is unjust in the eyes of God." Then he adds, "Listen to the word of God, 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay.' God has His own way of punishing those who are unjust in His sight. Revenge is not our business."

A Song for Nagasaki is a different kind of book, for it borders on what can accurately be called hagiography, the writing of the lives of the saints. Fr. Paul Glynn, the author, is an Australian Marist priest who spent 25 years as a missionary in Japan. During that period, he dedicated much of his clerical life to the reconciliation between Japan and Australia, especially in the effort to bring together Australian POWs held in Japanese prisons, with their captors. No easy task, I assure you: when the Japanese Emperor Hirohito visited Australia in the mid-1970s, former POWs lined the cortege route and when the Emperor passed, they, in unison, turned their backs on him to show their disrespect for the head of government whose soldiers had been barbaric in their treatment of captured Allies during World War II. But this book is about a beloved and revered man, a man of whom Shusako Endo, author a famous novel about the Japanese martyrs, *Silence*, writes in the Forward: "The citizens of Nagasaki came to venerate the bedridden doctor as a saint... Christians and non-Christians alike were deeply moved by Nagai's faith in Christ that made him like Job of the Scriptures: in the midst of the nuclear wilderness he kept his heart in tranquility and peace, neither bearing resentment against any man nor cursing God."

Fr. Glynn has set out a chronological account of the life of Dr. Nagai, one that explores the factors that turned his life toward Christ. Foremost among them was the influence of his wife, Midori, whom he compared to bamboo: graceful, gentle, sensitive and strong. Raised in a strongly Catholic household in Nagasaki, her ancestors and family had helped in the construction of the Urakami Cathedral, built on "the hill of the 26 Martyrs," and also the Franciscan monastery that was headed by Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Because of her, Dr. Nagai began attending Mass, for he knew that Midori's family would never accept a non-Catholic in their family.

In June of 1934, Dr. Nagai was brought into the Church and chose as his baptismal name that of the Jesuit martyr, Paul Miki. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Nagai married Midori Moriyama, but before

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he did, he explained that his medical research involved x-ray diagnosis, and “Many radiologists contracted cancer and died...Midori must understand that before she agrees to marry me.” That warning and diagnosis proved prophetic.

One aspect of Dr. Nagai’s life did not immediately sit well with his Japanese friends and associates at the conclusion of the Second World War. To the A-bomb mourners at the Nagasaki funeral Mass, Dr. Nagai called for the living to offer their dead to God as a burnt sacrifice, because in the end he believed that as his spiritual devotion and solace from Scripture had brought him great peace, it would to them, as well.

When, after five years of endless pain and discomfort, Dr. Nagai died, his parish priest could not be there to administer the Last Rites. Yet Fr. Glynn notes that the priest said, “Today is the first of May, the month of Mary. I don’t think it is just accidental. I think she came in person to take him home to the Lord.”

Dr. Nagai and his beloved wife, Midori, are buried in a garden plot maintained by the city of Nagasaki. Dr. Nagai selected the epitaphs for both gravestones. For Midori, he chose Mary’s reply to the angel Gabriel: “I am the handmaid of the Lord” For his own, he chose a short passage from the Gospel of Luke the physician: “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.”

Has this man’s extraordinary life, which became the basis of a popular movie in Japan, initiated a move toward identifying Dr. Nagai as a candidate for beatification? I have been informed by people who know and speak authoritatively on the subject, “...that there are no efforts at present in process for his beatification.” God works in wondrous ways, and it is still my hope that one day when I return to Isola Tiberina, in the small chapel to the right of the nave in the Basilica of St. Bartholomew, besides the face of St. Paul Miki, I will also see the face of another Japanese saint: Dr. Nagai Takashi.

Fr. Glynn’s book, published by Ignatius Press, is readily available; Dr. Nagai’s is out of print, and difficult to find. Both are well worth reading for a full picture of a truly amazing Catholic man, whose life should be an inspiration to all.

The Bells of Nagasaki, by Takashi Nagai, M.D. Translated by William Johnston, S.J., 1949 ■



Takashi Nagai

The Last Word...

“Bless Me, Father, For I Want Mercy. My Last Confession Was...hey, who are you to judge?”

The Last Word is boycotting the Year of Mercy, much as we have boycotted the Luminous Mysteries and other V2 novelties. I urge all pastors and the faithful as well to be very wary of this Jubilee Year Trojan Horse.

by Father Celatus

Many of you may remember listening to radio and television broadcasts by Archbishop Fulton Sheen. So popular was this American prelate that the famous comedian Milton Berle remarked that the only reason Sheen’s ratings were higher than his was that the bishop had God as a sponsor. Among many memorable quotes of Archbishop Sheen was this gem: “It used to be that we believed that only the Blessed Mother was conceived without Original Sin; now it seems that everyone thinks himself immaculately conceived!”

The Immaculate Conception is, of course, a dogma of the Church and a Holy Day Feast in December. How appropriate that during the Advent Season in which the Church is preparing for the birth of our Savior we are also celebrating the singular privilege granted to His Mother to have been immaculately conceived.

The mystic Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich described the Immaculate Conception of Mary by her parents Joachim and Anna as by a purely spiritual embrace which took place in the Jewish Temple:

Joachim came to a place in the midst of which stood a pillar in the form of a palm tree with hanging leaves and fruits. Here he was met by Anna, radiant with happiness. They embraced each other with holy joy, and each told the other their good tidings. They were in a state of ecstasy and enveloped in a cloud of light. I saw this light issuing from a great host of angels, who were carrying the appearance of a high shining tower and hovering above the heads of Anna and Joachim... I saw that this tower seemed to disappear between Anna and Joachim, who were enveloped in a glory of brightness. I understood that, as a result of the grace here given, the conception of Mary was as pure as all conceptions would have been but for the Fall. I had at the same time an indescribable vision. The heavens opened above them, and I saw the joy of the Holy Trinity and of the angels, and their participation in the mysterious blessing here bestowed on Mary’s parents (The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary part II.I)

For the rest of us, who are conceived in a fallen condition, Original Sin is removed by the sacrament of Baptism and subsequent personal sins are forgiven by the sacrament of Penance. Every Catholic second-grader properly prepared for his First Confession knows this (as well as the proper matter and form of Penance) but apparently not every cardinal accepts this—or even the Bishop of Rome. At least this would seem to be the case, given ongoing initiatives intended to fast-track adulterers back to Holy Communion.

What are the matter and form of Confession? According to the Catholic Church: contrition, confession, satisfaction and absolution. But the Kasperian compromise for restoring unrepentant sinners and granting them access to the Blessed Sacrament lacks an essential component of Confession: contrition.

Let’s imagine, for a moment, what a Kasperian confession might look like, with Father Bergoglio as confessor:

Penitent: “Hey Jorge!”

Confessor: “Buona sera!”

Penitent: “I am in an adulterous relationship and I have no intention of stopping my immoral behavior.”

Confessor: “Who am I to judge? For your penance read *Laudato Si* and turn down your thermostat three degrees. I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the *Mother* and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Penitent: “Amen.”

Even a seven-year-old — at least those who have so-called *Fundamentalist* Catholic parents — would spot the missing essential sacramental component in this example. Here is what the Baltimore Catechism teaches and cites by way of biblical support with regard to a truly Catholic understanding of *contrition*:

“Contrition is sincere sorrow for having offended God, and hatred for the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose of sinning no more. *Let the wicked man forsake his way and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord; and he will have mercy on him. (Isaiah 55:7)*”

Contrition is not simply sorrow over an undesirable situation the sinner has caused himself by his own sin. No, true contrition MUST include some degree of hatred for sin itself and a firm purpose of sinning no more. In his mercy God allows even imperfect contrition to



suffice for the sacrament of Confession but not an absence of essential elements of contrition, including a resolve to sin no more. This resolve is what is lacking in the Kasperian compromise for readmitting unrepentant sinners to Holy Communion.

The Last Word fears that essential components of contrition will be sadly lacking in the Jubilee *Year of Mercy* as well. This is far from an unfounded fear, based on the words and actions of Francis of Rome and the recently concluded *Sex and the Synod*. In fact, given how the Bishop of Rome initiated, coopted and manipulated the Synod on the Family for his own ungodly modernist purposes there is every reason to believe that the so-called *Year of Mercy* is simply another papal tactic to accomplish his personal Francis-Effects. Among these effects one can imagine a dumbing down of the stigma attached to the deadly sins of abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation and adultery. God save us from wandering *Apostles of Mercy!*

For this reason, namely, that there cannot be absolution without the prerequisite condition of contrition and that this essential component for mercy is sorely lacking in the theology of this pontificate, *The Last Word* is boycotting the *Year of Mercy*, much as we have boycotted the *Luminous Mysteries* and other V2 novelties. I urge all pastors and the faithful as well to be very wary of this Jubilee Year Trojan Horse.

If Francis of Rome wants a *Year of Mercy* then he should act in obedience to the Blessed Mother and consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That single act would usher in an entire era of divine mercy and peace for the Church and world. But short of that long overdue act of consecration we should not expect mercy but rather an ever intensifying application of divine wrath upon the V2 church and world. Regrettably, there is little hope for divine clemency under the pontificate of Francis, who continually proves to be an unprecedented chastisement and scourge upon the Church and world. ■

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