

# The Remnant

(Est. in 1967)

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



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## A Christmas Word from the Editor's Desk

By Michael J. Matt

As I write this little greeting to friends and allies around the world at Christmastime, I must confess to a growing sense of unease at the thought of ghosts of Christmases yet to come. Even the joy of the Holy Feast cannot completely eclipse the hard realities of our weary world at war with everything true, good and beautiful. This would-be new world order has taken on all the trappings of a global refugee camp, where families are broken and separated, children are orphaned and aborted, and the desperate sadness of the homeless is everywhere in evidence. Broken and burning, the world seems to be waiting for a messiah of its own creation, to save it from itself, having long since lost interest in the *real* One.

I don't fear the future for myself anymore. For one thing, he's much smaller than he used to be. But I turned fifty this year, and have become increasingly aware of the years piling up behind me, far outnumbering those still to come. It's almost amusing, in fact, getting older, as age has a way of reinforcing reality. With nothing left to prove, one begins to take comfort in the diminished number of challenges that come with moving up the mountain, closer to the top. So it's not for myself that I fear, but for my children and for all children who may live to see a kind of hell on earth.

For me, “time is a gentleman” as the Italians say, bringing with him the

~ See *Editor's Desk*/Page 2



May the peace of the Child of Bethlehem be with all of the readers of The Remnant. We wish you a holy and happy Christmas and a blessed New Year.

— The Remnant Staff —

## The Remnant Interviews Raymond Cardinal Burke

By Michael J. Matt

**Editor's Note:** I was privileged to attend the first ever Pontifical High Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The Mass was offered on December 10 by His Eminence, Raymond Cardinal Burke, and the beautiful church was filled to capacity. I was so impressed with this event and with the Cardinal's decision to celebrate the Traditional Mass in such a public fashion that I requested an interview. His Eminence was kind enough to grant that request a week later. We're very grateful to Cardinal Burke for this interview, obviously, but especially for the strong stand he is taking in defense of the truth of Christ in this dark hour. I would ask all Remnant readers to please keep him in your prayers. **MJM**

**Michael J. Matt (MJM):** Your Eminence, I am told that recently, at your Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin, that in response to the recommendations of the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Robert Cardinal Sarah, you've announced that all Masses at the

~ See *Cardinal Burke*/Page 5

## And Thy Word Broke Their Swords:

### *The Empowering Depth of Christmas*

By Avellina Balestri

There is more to Christmas than just Christ's birth. It serves as the beginning of an epic, and Advent is the prologue whereby we prepare for the first spellbinding chapter. There's a thread running through Christmas that ties into so many other Christological elements, including Christ as Divine Lover, in concert with the poetry of St. John of the Cross, whose feast aptly coincides with the Advent season on December 14.

But I feel this depth and dimension often gets overlooked in the over-

sentimentalized secular seasonal hype. It is a 3-D sort of depth, set against the backdrop of darkness and death and a frozen landscape. It is brittle bleakness in the bleak midwinter, bearing up against the frosty wind, iron ground, and stone water. The elements have given up their ghosts, and seem to be suspended in a state of waiting, waiting for the light, the breath, the rush of some solitary stirring that speaks of life's return.

I think some of the lesser known Christmas carols can capture this stark

~ See *Broken Swords*/Page 7



# A Christmas Word from the Editor's Desk

## Continued from Page 1

pleasant surprises of the next stage, as life moves along. I'll be up late tomorrow night, for example, waiting for our two eldest children to come home from college for Christmas break, driving 12 hours through snow and subzero temperatures. I'm so eager to see them, though I still can't quite figure out how these "kids" will manage without me.

Our youngest son is five years old now, and seems to gain an inch every hour as if to taunt me that it won't be long before he too is heading off to college. Our happy home is filled less with the sounds of little ones playing house and more with those of home-schooled youngsters, working hard on growing up. I call them "our replacements", for soon enough they'll take over, and we'll retire into back seats and overstuffed chairs, bespectacled and gray, looking on from a place a bit farther away, but comfortably resigning ourselves to let them take the wheel.

I'm an 'orphan' for the first time this Christmas, too, my mother of such happy memory having gone to her eternal reward January last. But her passing, aside from leaving a gaping hole in our lives, also served as an important reminder that "we're next"—that ours is the next generation to board the train, that life is moving on, that Death is not quite as remote as he once seemed, and that God would have us be mindful of things to come.

Even as the back goes out more than I do these days, there is still such consolation in the awareness of the children running alongside now, making their own way, putting the things of children aside and growing into capable soldiers of Christ in their own right. I lean on them more and more, and am thankful for their shoulders, even if they're too big to ride on mine anymore.

People like to ask: What's the secret to a happy life? The answer? Children... lots of them. The horror of abortion and contraception is decidedly more pronounced at this time of year for those blessed with many children, especially when recalling all those broken, aborted and divorced families here in our age of 'progress'. What a waste! So much happiness washed away by the tsunami of the tears that results from turning against the source of all happiness—God and family.

When I think of so many mothers killing their sons every day, I thank God for my own mother and the unselfish blessing that she was. She never had two nickels to rub together, and yet she bitterly lamented the three miscarriages she had, which would have made her the proud mother of twelve, rather than nine.

Outnumbered and overworked, she was the one about which everything good and stable revolved. It was her words that disciplined, to be sure, but it was also her arms that embraced, her voice that consoled, her approval that was needed, her love that mattered, and her tears that caused the most anguish.

Christmas morning. What a flood of memories that evokes. Mother in her

housedress waging a kind of happy battle against time and deadlines, with clanging pots and pans as weapons, stubborn turkeys and hot stoves as adversaries... always moving, never standing still, dusted with flour -- it was happy maternity versus the baron specter of ugly modernity.

Christmas was her time. Advancing with spatula in hand, moving the troops and preparing the way for the birthday of the King. Tables were set, napkins folded, glasses filled, small children admonished, larger ones ordered into action, and lucky little boys sometimes overlooked in all the happy hubbub. Everything she did was everything that mattered.

In contrast, Christmas Eve the night before had seen nine children kneeling before the manger scene in the old living room. It was quiet, except for the sound of Mother's voice calling to mind deceased relatives for which we would pray, relating again the story of the First Christmas, and softly prompting Father to tell the old stories. She was teaching—always teaching—but never forgetting that children need to be loved and nurtured, protected and made to laugh. Children can have fun and love God, all at the same time.

Then there were the gifts, all carefully chosen over the course of the preceding year. We didn't have any money, but she bargained with every dime-store clerk in the county to give her children gifts that left their jaws on the floor. And what she couldn't buy for them, she made.

Then it was up again! An army on the move, the general at the helm—Midnight Mass waits for no man. Hair brushed, ties tied, toys stowed, chapel veils passed out and it was off to church over a frozen tundra in the old station wagon, not to return home again until the early morning hours of Christmas Day. Mother and God were working things out, to make Christ's birth the biggest day of the year.

A long time ago—seems like another life, in fact. And now it's our time, our turn, our responsibility to try to repeat the performance, to keep Christ in Christmas and to make it just as holy and happy for our children as she made it for hers.

It may be a cliché, but that doesn't make it any less true: Life's a funny thing—the more it changes, the more it stays the same. We're all just understudies, preparing to assume the bigger roles as the acts play out. Getting older, feeling uncertain, losing, loving, baptizing, burying and gaining anew—it's all part of the drama. And in the end, whether we're young or not so young, the central Character never changes. Always the same, He plays Himself, surrounded by the familiar extras, shepherds and kings, reaching out, beckoning, encouraging all who look on to never forget, to never doubt that He is the Star, the reason for it all.

The world of commerce and politics no

more recognizes Him today than it did two thousand years ago, and yet millions of "little people"—half the world, in fact—stop what they're doing every year to return to Bethlehem and pay homage to the King.

What an honor it is to call Him our own!

Let's think about that happy reality this Christmas, and not the advancing years or the troubles or the tears. He is Who He said He was—of that we can be sure. He was born to a virgin in a stable in Bethlehem. He lived, loved and died on this stage—no serious historian questions this. And He is still Emmanuel—God with us—just as He was when John the Baptist was a child, when Charlemagne reigned in holy Christendom, and when we were kids. And He will be with us still, when we're too old to remember.

Merry Christmas, dear friends. Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, in secula seculorum. Amen.

## Three Brief Editor's Notes

The next issue of The Remnant will be dated December 31, 2016 and will likely appear in your mailboxes in the first week of the New Year. After that there will be no mid-January issue, as we always take a Christmas break and publish only once in the month of January.

## Fatima in 2017

The Remnant will again be organizing the U.S. Chapter on the Pilgrimage to Chartres, France over Pentecost 2017. And since it is also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima's Miracle of the Sun, we'll be making a post-Chartres pilgrimage to Portugal to spend a couple of nights in Fatima. Please see our ad on Page 16 of this issue, and consider joining us on holy pilgrimage to what's left of Catholic Europe.

## The Remnant Needs Your Support

I'm pleased to announce that the little Remnant, founded 50 years ago this coming November, has survived yet another year, thanks be to God. At this point, there is just no way in the world that my wife, Carol, and I could continue this work without our dedicated writers, our generous volunteers around the country, our office personnel (most of whom I sired, by the way) and, of course, the most loyal subscribers in the history of newspapers.

I'm very happy to note that even though the "experts" told us it was doomed ten years ago, the print edition of The Remnant not only made through 2016 but also managed to pick up a healthy influx of new subscribers. I think,

perhaps, poor benighted Pope Francis had a hand in that. He's evidently frightened a fair number of Catholics back into the bunker of holy Tradition, and for that, at least, we can be grateful to His Holiness and pray for him. Tradition is on the rise, thanks to this disastrous pontificate.

On Christmases past, I've shared my concerns that we may have to scale back The Remnant's publishing schedule or, at the very least, decrease the number of pages per issue. Well, this Christmas no publishing changes are scheduled. We've managed to maintain the print-edition schedule, double the number of e-subscribers, and finally get Remnant TV into a position where it can produce a weekly program: The Remnant Underground. And we're going to try to do all of this *without* raising the cost of a subscription.

Some years ago, I made a promise to our print subscribers not to let the newspaper suffer in order to take the easy way out that is the Internet and the website. I'm happy to say that, with your help, I've made good on that promise. So thank you, and please consider giving subscriptions to The Remnant as Christmas gifts.

In your charity also, and if you are able, please consider making a financial contribution to The Remnant this year. I think it should be fairly obvious that your donation dollars are being poured directly back into this apostolate, as we pick up new writers, expand The Remnant's website (some of our online Remnant articles exceeded 100,000 views this past year) and continue to slowly build Remnant TV (which has nearly 1.5 million views, by the way, and is getting the message out far and beyond our newspaper subscriber base.)

All of this means lots of hard work on the part of a growing number of dedicated people. And all of this costs money. Although I've made every effort to keep the overhead lower than that of any other newspaper I know of, it is nevertheless impossible to continue this work without your generous help.

So, if you would, please consider donating to The Remnant this Christmas. 2017 is going to be turbulent on so many levels, not the least of which will be ongoing revolution inside the Vatican. We pledge to do our part to project the voice of Tradition as far as possible and to never back down, but we need your help:

## The Remnant Foundation

PO Box 1117

Forest Lake, MN 55025

Thank you for your prayers, letters of encouragement and constructive criticism. God bless you always, dear Remnant Family, and may the Child Jesus grant you abundant happiness this Christmas and a blessedly uneventful New Year. ■

# The Remnant Speaks

Letters to the Editor: The Remnant Speaks P.O. Box 1117, Forest Lake, MN 55025 ~ [Editor@RemnantNewspaper.com](mailto:Editor@RemnantNewspaper.com)

## Greeting from Ireland

Editor, *The Remnant*: I'm from Belfast in Ireland and I wanted to thank you all for the great work you guys do for the Church. You are in my prayers. I am not a Traditionalist Catholic, though both my parents were and we used to have Tridentine Mass every Sunday on our home. But I am of course very sympathetic. I go to mass everyday and pray constantly. I am grateful to you all for pointing the grave concerns so many of us have about our current Pontiff. We have been discussing this at my web site Mother of God Forum, but I decided to give it a break during Advent.

God bless you all from Ireland, I think what you are doing for the Church is wonderful.

Padraig Coughy  
Belfast, Ireland

## The Orthodox Teaching, from an Orthodox Priest

Editor, *The Remnant*: I am a Greek Orthodox priest who enjoys reading your publication and especially the writings of Ms. Hilary White. Obviously as an Orthodox Christian I disagree with positions of the Roman Catholic Church but I admire Roman Catholics such as Ms. White and yourselves who have the courage of their convictions.

Patriarch Bartholomew is the equivalent to genuine Eastern Orthodoxy as Pope Francis is to genuine Roman Catholicism. I applaud any justifiable criticism of the man. I know I have made my share. We Orthodox simply cease commemorating heretical bishops when they prove themselves publicly to be heretical.

Today I write to you to clarify a point that so far has not been made and which understandably till now would have been of little interest. Ms. White seems to be unaware that the Orthodox Church does not simply recognize a second marriage. Actually, in the case of adultery (as our Savior provided for in the gospel quote of Ms. White), an Orthodox spouse can first apply for an ecclesiastical trial to ascertain if the marriage has been destroyed by one of the partners. After a verdict (and a guilty party is recognized) the innocent party is free to remarry or not. If that party chooses marriage then there must be a Church, *sacramental marriage*. As a matter of fact, the Orthodox Church allows for a third marriage if the circumstances warrant it but even in the case of successive deaths, there can only be three marriages. I do not believe there is a number specified in Roman Catholicism. A civil divorce is not recognized as ending a sacramental marriage in the Orthodox Church.

*Amoris Laetitia* (since it is ostensibly Roman Catholic) obviously cannot admit to a second *sacramental* marriage in the cases of divorce so there is no recognition that the first marriage was ever terminated by the Church. Consequently, *Amoris Laetitia de facto* allows adulterers to receive Holy Communion in a curious state of nebulous bigamy – Orthodoxy definitely does not. Consequently,

Roman Catholicism is *not* adopting the Orthodox usage as was implied.

As faithful Roman Catholics I can only imagine at how all this affects you. We live in dark times. I hope that the four cardinals will manage to turn this situation around.

With best wishes,  
+Archimandrite Nikiforos

## If Luther was Right, then Catholics are Wrong: A Letter from Sweden

Editor, *The Remnant*: Every day I become more confused with Pope Francisco. I do not know if he is a religion leader of Christianity's first church - Jesus founded church - or something else. "For your fruits you get known," said Jesus, and Francisco shown hundreds of faces, as if he were a mythological God of the thousand appearances.

Francisco has surprised us by kissing criminals' and even Muslims' feet. An Anglo imam interpreted for me "this is proof that our religion is superior to any other". He declared himself incapable of judging homosexuals: who am I to judge? Who? Is he not the Pope, highest authority on Earth in representation of our God? Francisco has naively tried to unite all religions. He has declared in Argentina that the country is living in a social conflict. If there is one, of these hundreds of crises in Argentina, it is because the previous Government Kirchner ruled with populist measures, among others political rates on electricity and price control of food, which led to a non-realism economy. A chaotic situation very near the dictator Chavez left Venezuela.

In addition, here comes the other face of the Holy Father Francisco, the political. The Pope has actively acted to United States modified its hostile stance against single 54-årsdiktatur Castro Cuba. Francisco agreed that Cuba had suffered too much, I think. We know that Cuba has never been exposed to the "bloqueo" as Castrism has ventilated, without an embargo, i.e. forbidding us business contacts with Cuba. Vatican diplomatic gave fruit due to the opportunity thanks a soft-leftist president Obama. Raul Castro praised Pope Francisco with a large donation and an invitation to preach in Cuba, on the condition that he would not talk to opposition, enough revealing Francisco accepted. For a few days, Catholic dissidents, they were not Catholic, not even on the mass, Castro police blocked them to follow it.

Then, we have had Francisco as the main force-to-force Venezuela's opposition to negotiations with dictator Maduro of Venezuela non-stop rattling on the streets. At the last elections, the opposition won a majority in Parliament, which Maduro ignore and he now has taken the burden of not being only the Executive power but also the legislative. In addition, Maduro is to take over all independent press and media. Francisco's "compromise" with extreme left shown when suddenly, without warning our Pope accepted a non-announced Maduro visiting at the Vatican. Another donation to

Francisco's kitty for refugees? He did not require Maduro that he would release imprisoned opposition politicians he keeps locked up without trial and under repeated Human Rights transgression to relatives, as the organization Human Rights Watch impartially has documented and, at the same time criticized the Pope for his support to another leftist dictator.

Who is Francisco? Is he a politician? He is a leftist Messiah who has come here with the intention to unite us regardless of our differences, including those of the rich and the poor? We have Francisco Pope in Lund pricing the spirit and celebrating the Reformation. With all due respect to those who thought that a Son may not be at the same time the Father, and to the virgin Mary was no more than a human being, which contests the facts with her beloved gestalt and her miracles worldwide, I think that Reformation is nothing to celebrate. Reformation militarism was a social and religious movement that divided the Church and led to The Christian civil war for 30 years. Believe Francisco Calvin and Luther were right? If it is so, we Catholics are wrong, right? Who was wrong to appoint Francisco to Pope was for me obviously Cardinal College. Francisco Pope has declined that I personally telling him when and how I met our only God and followed his instructions. Francisco should ask the priests from San Giovanni in Rome what happened when I admitted to a priest on 23 December 2014 my divine approach. It should all agnostics had to testify! And that Francisco does not speak of God's will, I know because his naive believing, when we are getting closer to a global confrontation launched by the attack of Islam to Christianity and our Catholic church is sleeping its own dreams, ready to be carried as lam to the sacrifice altar.

Carlos Medina de Rebolledo  
Retired professor of journalism UNAN  
Södertälje, Sweden

## Pope Turns 80

Editor, *The Remnant*: Today, in an increasingly tense and fear-ridden Vatican, Pope Francis celebrated his 80th birthday. Eighty years ago today, Saint Faustina Kowalska, recipient of the Divine Mercy messages from our Lord and Saviour, wrote in her diary on 17 December 1936 that she had suffered terrible anguish that day – more than ever before. She knew not why. Well, on that day in far-off Argentina, an infant was born who was destined to become our present Bishop of Rome. Mere coincidence?

I was prompted to recall St. Faustina's mysterious suffering this morning, while celebrating in the Traditional Latin Rite the Mass for Ember Saturday of Advent, 17 December 2016. For the Epistle was II Thessalonians 2: 1-8. This text is a prophecy that foretells how, prior to the coming of the final Antichrist, whom Jesus will destroy in his Second Coming (v. 8), a forerunner will appear at the time of the final apostasy: "the man of sin" will be revealed, "the son of perdition, who



*opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God" (vv. 3-4).*

Could it be that this prophecy is to be fulfilled by one sitting in the temple of God dedicated to St. Peter who (although prevented by the Holy Spirit from using binding, *ex cathedra* language) utters contradictions of God's law as it has been expounded by all his predecessors and the Council of Trent? Presuming to contradict divine teaching - e.g., about divorce, adultery and access to Communion, inventing "exceptions" to God's law, blasphemously ascribing sin to the Son of God (cf. homily of 27/12/15, Feast of the Holy Family) and much more - might arguably be seen as "opposing and lifting [himself] up" above God and "shewing himself as if he were God".

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# Letters to the Editor Continued...

At any rate, a chill shot up my spine while reading this Epistle at Mass, when I remembered today's date, whose landmark (80th) birthday it was, and Sister Faustina's deeply troubled spirit on the day when, unbeknown to her, he came into the world.

Father Brian Harrison

## Erin Go Bad

Editor, *The Remnant*: One knows without any doubt that we in Ireland are living under a diabolical state-implemented system of tyranny when: on the one hand, abortion-industry organisations are not only allowed to continually break the law and Constitution, and the most fundamental laws of God and Nature, by systematically arranging for their partners in other states to kill babies in utero, but are protected and supported in their evil unlawful operations; and, on the other hand those who try to save these innocent, defenseless babies from being brutally murdered, bringing love and joy to mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and the world at large, are persecuted and unconstitutional and unlawful attempts made to stop them in their defense of fundamental God-given rights. Instead of being supported and lauded for their work in saving the most innocent and defenseless citizens from unlawful killing by organisations that exist for that purpose, they are unlawfully maligned and their basic rights and freedoms attacked even by the abuse of the state Legislature as evidenced by the Bill that is currently purporting to proceed through parliament. This, of course, is an unlawful and unconstitutional attack on the fundamental rights and freedoms (including the right to life) of all of us.

Furthermore, one knows without a doubt that Satan is now de facto served by Ireland, rather than God, Our Creator and Saviour as affirmed by the Constitution, when the leaders of the Catholic Church generally refuse to fight against such great evils being imposed by those abusing their temporal power but rather aid in it by act or omission. Yes, the Rule of Law is dead in this country. We are living under outright tyranny. I pray people will repent and return to serving God - only then will we be freed from the tyranny of these wicked men who hate God and His creation.

Yours faithfully,  
Lynda Finneran

## The Church of Accompaniment

Editor, *The Remnant*: I appreciate your Remnant TV videos in particular. I've been thinking that an illustrated little catechism of *Amoris Laetitia* may be in order. If you have an illustrator to show vignettes of a cleric "accompanying" folks throughout their life journey with its ups and downs. Perhaps it would be most illustrative to have a comparison of different persons and different clerics "accompanying" them according to traditional moral and pastoral norms and clerics doing the "fast and loose" accompaniment ala AL and its new wave of "discernment". Scenes of accompaniment through

divorce and cohabitation living (more soberly referred to as serial monogamy/ monogamist) culminating in the four last things. And will the clerics "accompany" these souls in the afterlife? Taking a cue from Michelangelo, perhaps one of the clerical characters could resemble one of the chief advocates of "accompaniment". I think this could be a poignant call to sanity.

John Trausch

## Ordaining Homosexuals

Editor, *The Remnant*: The Vatican has just issued a new pronouncement that officially Catholic bishops may not ordain homosexuals to the Catholic priesthood. This is the now standard pretense that Catholic doctrine has not changed under the 50 years of Modernist tyranny since Vatican Council II. The reality is different. In the United States of America, in Europe and elsewhere around the globe Modernist bishops pretend to be Catholics and in their day-to-day decisions govern as heretics, promoting homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, erotic seduction in the classroom, irenicism, and every form of disbelief. The Sex Abuse Case Against Father Anthony J. Cipolla by Mrs. Randy Engel has many attributes among which is its timeliness with respect to the legal awakening in the state of Pennsylvania regarding the clerical sex abuse of the Faithful. An additional attribute is that Mrs. Engel points out that the malignancy of homosexual infiltration of the Catholic clergy is never going to be routed out until the Catholic hierarchy definitively remove the homosexual bishops and cardinals who are keeping in place the trans-generational homosexual collective inside of the Catholic Church. Literally, one Catholic bishop seduces another who seduces more priests and religious *ad infinitum*.... Pretending that this clerical cesspool does not exist and is not a priority problem is precisely part of the problem. Please read Mrs. Engel's document, it's available online.

Doug Valenzuela  
Irving, Texas

## Slouching Towards Tradition

Editor, *The Remnant*: I am fed up with what is going on in the Church right now. I have been following Michael Matt & Christopher Ferrara online and pretty much agree with just about everything they say. I have recently started attending a TLM (75 mi RT from home) but it's an FSSP mission not a parish, so just Sunday Mass. It's a haven from the entertainment atmosphere at Mass in our area. I used to think all you were "out there" traddies, but I am now on your side. Unfortunately, in the Los Angeles area, other than schismatic or sedevacantist TLMs, there is not much to choose from. Question: I just signed up online for the free Remnant. I am not sure what that is. So there is no charge for online edition of the Remnant? Is it different than the E-Remnant? Thanks!

Shirley Amdisen  
West Hills, CA

**Editor's Note:** Yes, the e-edition is exactly the same as the print edition. You have signed up for our "free updates" only, but the actual e-edition of The

Remnant costs \$25 per year and includes an audio edition, full print and sharing capabilities as well as translations services into 10 different languages. The e-edition is also faster as there is no delivery time, obviously, since it is posted online instantly. For more information about The Remnant's state-of-the-art e-edition, please visit: <http://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/subscribe-today>



## Seeking Pilgrimage Partners

Dear Remnant Readers,

My name is Maria Walker and I am 18 years old. I come from a Traditional Catholic family of 9, and I was blessed with the opportunity to receive a Traditional Catholic education throughout my elementary and high school years. I am now a freshman at Northern Kentucky University. In addition to my studies, I also work two part-time jobs to fund my education.

Since graduating high school in June of 2016 and attending my first few months at college, I have now come to the stark realization of the battles that we, as Traditional Catholics, have been called to fight against the evils and immorality of the world we live in. As a young adult, I knew I wanted to make a difference in the lives of my peers in the college setting, so I made the firm resolution to try to be an active member of the Church Militant and fight against these insults to Christ and His Church. I have also realized how very grateful I am for my Traditional Catholic education, because I know that it gives me the foundation to defeat whatever challenges may come upon me.

At Northern Kentucky University, I quickly became involved with the Pro-Life club on campus and found myself elected president of the group. I have been involved with the Pro-Life movement throughout my life and I am extremely passionate about this fight for the protection of the unborn, and I decided, what better way to make a difference than to utilize my Pro-Life club to promote the dignity and respect of every human being than being active and going onto the battleground of college campuses where these atrocities are so very apparent and accepted. I also now mentor a group of 30 pro-life high school students to help ignite their passion for this movement and to utilize

it to promote a culture of life in whatever paths of life they may choose to take.

The pilgrimage to Chartres would provide me with an even stronger spiritual armory in my Faith which would be greatly beneficial in whatever challenges may lie ahead. My sister had the privilege of attending this pilgrimage in 2008, and I saw the profound effects it had on her spiritual life. From the 3-day walk between Paris and Chartres, to being able to attend daily Mass and pray with my fellow pilgrims, I believe this opportunity would be a great spiritual blessing for me. While on the pilgrimage, I would be sure to pray most especially for my sponsor and for their intentions.

I am hopeful that I can receive the privilege of being able to attend the Chartres Pilgrimage, and I thank you for your consideration in sponsoring me. May God bless you!

Sincerely,  
Maria Walker

## Remnant Tours' Youth Fund

As has been the case for the past 26 years, young pilgrims will walk the pilgrimage to Chartres in the name of their sponsors. 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. 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. **MJM**

## Waiting for Sponsors:

Genevieve Walsh, CA \$200 thus far  
Anna Conroy, Minnesota \$250 thus far  
Maria Walker, KY \$0 thus far

## Remnant Tours Youth Fund

PO Box 1117 Forest Lake, MN 55025

## Thanks, Daily Beast!

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**The Remnant**

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# The Remnant Interviews Cardinal Burke

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Shrine will be celebrated *ad orientem* from now on. And I'm wondering if you can confirm this, and what were your reasons for taking this dramatic step?

**Cardinal Burke:** The reason, as I explained in my homily, is that – as Cardinal Robert Sarah, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, has written and said on various occasions – that it expresses more perfectly the reality of the Holy Mass. In other words, all of us are facing the Lord, or facing the east, uniting ourselves to Him Who acts through the priest who by the Sacrament of Holy Orders is offering, in His person, the Eucharistic Sacrifice. And so I wanted to institute this practice at the Shrine, which as a place of pilgrimage should give the fullest expression to our Catholic faith. As I also explained, and as the Cardinal has explained, after the Second Vatican Council and the liturgical reforms that were instituted, the impression was given that the Council had ordered this, namely to abandon the celebration of the Mass *ad orientem* and to celebrate only *versus populum* or principally *versus populum*, when, in fact, there's nothing in the teaching of the Council that indicates the same. And it's simply according to the centuries-old practice of the Church, that the *ad orientem* posture more fully expresses the reality which is the Sacrifice of the Mass. And so that's why I instituted the change.

**MJM:** Would it be fair to say that this decision on your part suggests a personal desire to see the liturgy reformed in light of tradition in general, throughout the whole Church?

**Cardinal Burke:** Oh, yes. I'm fully convinced that the true reform of the Sacred Liturgy has not yet taken place. I was very much heartened during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI by his efforts to carry forward the reform of the Sacred Liturgy. And when Pope Francis visited with Cardinal Sarah, as Cardinal Sarah reported, he urged him to continue in the way of Pope Benedict XVI. And so I see this as just one step toward an ongoing reform, so that we can really achieve what the Holy Spirit wants with regard to the Sacred Liturgy.

**MJM:** I see. Well that's a wonderful step in the right direction. I attended your Mass at the Shrine last Saturday, the Extraordinary Pontifical High Mass, and it was so beautiful and heartening to see all those young people and young families in attendance.

**Cardinal Burke:** Oh yes it is. That's been my experience as I travel around to various places in the world. Those who invite me usually ask that I celebrate the Pontifical Mass according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite. And I have to say, it's always the case that there are people of all ages, but there are always many, many young people with families, and they are always so very happy to be able to participate in the Pontifical High Mass.

**MJM:** That's wonderful. Now, turning to something a little less positive. I want to address the 900-pound gorilla in the room – the controversy surrounding Pope Francis's post-Synodal exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (AL). The



Cardinal Burke Offers Traditional Latin Mass

document, especially Paragraph 305, has been described by various priests and theologians, you know on EWTN and elsewhere, as “dangerous,” “very disturbing,” “very problematic,” “a big mistake,” “a direct contradiction of Pope John Paul’s *Familiaris Consortio*,” and so forth. First of all, Your Eminence, how authoritative is AL, and are we talking merely about scandal here, or do these problematic paragraphs savor of heresy?

**Cardinal Burke:** Well first of all, as I stated from the beginning, the very form of *Amoris Laetitia*, and, actually, the words of the Pope within the document, indicate that it is not an exercise of the papal magisterium. And the way the document necessarily is read, as with every document, is in the light of the constant teaching and practice of the Church. And so the statements in AL which are in accord with the Church's constant teaching and practice certainly express the Magisterium. But there are a number of statements that are at best confusing, and they must be clarified. That is why four of us Cardinals posed, according to the classic practice of the Church, five questions to the Holy Father having to do with the very foundations of the moral life and the Church's constant teaching in that regard. And it's clear that we, in presenting the *dubia*, in asking those questions, believe that if they're not answered, there's great danger of a continued confusion in the Church, which is leading souls into error with regard to questions that have to do with their very salvation. So certainly, without the clarification of these questions, there is a potential of scandal. With regard to the question of heresy, one has to be very attentive to material heresy and to formal heresy. In other words, material heresy: are there actual statements in the text which are heretical in their content? Are they contradictory to the Catholic Faith? Formal heresy: did the person – namely the person of the Pope who wrote the document – intend to proclaim heretical teachings? Regarding formal heresy, I don't believe that at all regarding AL. And I think with regard to the material heresy, the language is confusing and that makes it difficult to say that the confusing statements are materially heretical. But they need to be clarified, and to refuse to clarify them could lead people into error, into heretical thinking with regard to some very serious questions.

**MJM:** If nothing does change and there is no clarification forthcoming,

and since we're talking about the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage – and given that marriage is already so embattled, with rampant divorce and now even gay marriage – what do you foresee as the ramifications of AL, especially paragraph 305 and footnote 351, if no clarification comes, not only for the Church but for the whole world?

**Cardinal Burke:** It would be very devastating. Recently I read a column by Ross Douthat in the *New York Times*, commenting on an application of AL in the Diocese of San Diego. He said, correctly, that if this interpretation of AL should be correct and acceptable, then the Church's teaching on marriage is finished. And we can't have that, of course, because it's the law which God wrote on the human heart from the very creation; it's the order, the law, which Christ confirmed in His teaching in a most clear way, as is recounted in Matthew Chapter 19 in which He makes clear that He is elevating marriage to the grace of a Christian sacrament. So the *dubia* must be answered. The questions have to be answered in accord with the Church's tradition in order that the Church may carry out her mission for the salvation of the world. If the Church were simply to accept the way of our culture, with regard to marriage, then she will have betrayed herself and betrayed her Lord and Master, and that we just simply can't permit.

**MJM:** Now, in a private letter of September 5th to the bishops of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis wrote: “There are no other interpretations of *Amoris Laetitia*,” other than one admitting divorced and remarried Catholics to Holy Communion in some cases. He is so adamant about this, Your Eminence. So, is it even possible for you to envision a scenario whereby you suddenly discover that you've missed something, that the Four Cardinals are misinterpreting it, and that you'd have to concede you were wrong? I mean if that's not possible, then what is the point of the *dubia*? Don't you already know the answers to your five questions?

**Cardinal Burke:** Certainly we do. But the important thing is that the pastor of the universal Church, in his office as guardian of the truths of the Faith and promoter of the truths of the faith – make clear that, yes, he answers these questions in the same way that the Church answers them. And so what he wrote in that letter simply means that this is his personal understanding of

the matter. But that letter hardly could be considered an exercise of the papal magisterium. And so, it's a painful situation in which to be involved but we simply have to press forward to clarify the matter.

**MJM:** Your Eminence, in this age of dialogue, Pope Francis himself has called for “open discussion of a number of doctrinal questions” and he said that the thinking of pastors and theologians if they're faithful and honest and realistic and creative “would actually help to achieve greater clarity.” So, what can be inferred from his decision not to dialogue with you in your quest for that very clarity on this most fundamental point of moral theology?

**Cardinal Burke:** Well I think, to put it plainly, people have accused us four Cardinals of a disrespect for the papal office, of an inimical attitude towards the Pope. This is not the case at all. We are Cardinals. We have a very serious responsibility to assist the Pope, and, for that reason, we brought to his attention these questions which remain in a document which bears his signature. And we can't do otherwise, and the Church can't do otherwise. And so the matter will have to be resolved certainly. We've initiated a conversation by raising the *dubia*. And when we were informed that there would be no response, then we knew we had to bring the conversation before the whole Church because so many faithful – so many priests and bishops – are expressing a great confusion in this matter. The pervasive confusions result in divisions in various parts of the Church between bishops and priests and lay faithful on fundamental teachings of the Faith. Well, that's the work of the devil. The Holy Spirit generates unity and the daily conversion of life to Christ that helps us to overcome our sins and to live in accord with the truth. And so this confusion with its fruit, division, has to be addressed and remedied. Does that make sense to you?

**MJM:** It absolutely does. And obviously, it seems to us, as lay faithful looking on, that that's your job – your duty before God.

**Cardinal Burke:** In fact, you know some people have said to me: “Well why did you publish these *dubia*? He's the Pope. You should have been satisfied.” But, no, that's not sufficient because everywhere I go – and I travel a lot now – people are saying: “What's wrong with you Cardinals? There are these serious questions, and yet you remain silent. You don't say anything.” And they're correct. If we were to remain silent it would most definitely give the idea to the faithful that everything is fine, but everything is not fine.

**MJM:** Now, the idea that this could even escalate to the point where you would lose your cardinal rank. Do you believe it could come to that?

**Cardinal Burke:** I don't even think about it. I mean, certainly, it's possible. It's happened, historically, that a cardinal has lost his title. But I don't think about it because I know what my duty is, and I can't be distracted from it by these kinds of thoughts – you know, worrying about whether I'm going to be in some

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# The Remnant Interviews Cardinal Burke

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way persecuted for defending the truth. As one person said to me: “Aren’t you afraid to insist on these matters?” And I said that what I’m afraid of is to have to appear before Our Lord at the Last Judgment and to say to Him: “No, I didn’t defend You when You were being attacked, the truth that You taught was being betrayed.” And so, I just don’t give it any thought.

**MJM:** Well what you just said, Your Eminence, is something I pray becomes contagious in the life of the Church and at the highest levels. But you know, you have a lot of support. In fact, in expressing their support for you and the other three Cardinals, a number of high profile pastors and academics and professors, both here and in Europe, signed a letter of support a few weeks ago in which they pointed out that, as a result of the widespread confusion and disunity following the promulgation of AL, the universal Church is now entering a “gravely critical moment in her history” that, according to them, has alarming similarities with the great Arian crisis of the Fourth Century. I’m curious to know: Do you agree with that? Do you think this has the potential to escalate into something similar to the Arian crisis?

**Cardinal Burke:** Well, it does in the sense that confusion is spreading more and more about a fundamental truth of the Faith. Now in the case of the Arian crisis, it had to do with the two natures in the one person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. But here we are also dealing with a very fundamental truth, two fundamental truths really: The truth about Holy Matrimony and the truth about the Holy Eucharist. And if this confusion doesn’t stop, we will have a situation where you will have within the Church large bodies of people who don’t believe the Catholic Faith, as, for instance, St. Ambrose encountered when he became Bishop in Milan. So you know, it’s a serious matter, and I don’t think that they’re being extreme by making that observation (a comparison to Arianism). I don’t think they’re being extreme at all.

**MJM:** Bishop Athanasius Schneider, who seems to be sort of your wing man at this point, supporting you, thanks be to God—in his letter of support for the Four Cardinals, he speaks of what he calls “intolerant reactions to your *dubia*”, and he points out that the Four Cardinals have been castigated as “witless, naïve, schismatic, heretical and even comparable to the Arian heretics.” So this has to be hurtful to you personally, obviously, Your Eminence. But what has gone wrong in the Church when a simple request for clarity on a matter of morality and doctrine is met with such a visceral reaction on the part of members of the hierarchy? What has gone wrong?

**Cardinal Burke:** I’ll tell you what I think has gone wrong, and that is a very worldly, a very mundane way of thinking has entered into the life of the Church. The Church is divided into political parties and so forth, instead of the unity of all Catholics and the unity in Christ. And this worldly way of thinking then permits people to engage in this kind of intemperate and ridiculous *ad hominem* approach in very serious matters. The



*dubia* are stated very respectfully; they’re very honest questions, and they merit an honest reply. And what I see in these intemperate reactions is a sign that the people who don’t want to answer our *dubia* in fact realize that they are not on solid ground. They can’t answer the *dubia* correctly and so they try to discredit the persons who raised the questions. It’s an old human reaction, but it’s mundane, it’s secular. It has no place in the Church.

**MJM:** So what’s next, Your Eminence? If Pope Francis fails to answer your *dubia*, what’s the next course of action? You’ve spoken of the possibility of elevating this to a formal correction. But what exactly does that look like?

**Cardinal Burke:** Well, it doesn’t look too much differently than the *dubia*. In other words, the truths that seem to be called into question by AL would simply be placed alongside what the Church has always taught and practiced and annunciated in her official teaching. And in this way these errors would be corrected. Does that make sense to you?

**MJM:** Yes, absolutely. This is a little off topic, when I was in Rome covering the Synod last year, I noticed this constant theme throughout – this idea of accompaniment, the ‘Church of accompaniment’, as though Holy Mother Church didn’t know how to accompany the sinner in the past. That confused me, but it also seemed to be going further. Cardinal Peter Turkson, for example, assured us in the Vatican Press Office that at the next Synod this ‘Church of accompaniment’ would address so-called ‘gay unions’. Do you foresee change coming even in the way this pontificate ‘accompanies’ those who are in gay unions? Is it possible that next year at this time, we might be discussing *dubia* on a post-Synodal exhortation that appears to approve the gay lifestyle?

**Cardinal Burke:** Well, this notion of accompaniment certainly has no classic theological or doctrinal meaning. And it certainly doesn’t justify calling into question the moral truths, especially regarding acts that are always and everywhere evil. And if accompaniment is understood in that way, you’re quite correct – it could lead us into all kinds of very damaging and very confusing discussions. But I think that this false notion of accompaniment as it has manifested its harmful effects in the discussion of the situation of those who are in irregular matrimonial unions,

will lead us to either clarify what accompaniment means or to abandon the use of that category. This goes back to the relationship of faith to the culture. We are called by our faith to encounter the culture, but we encounter the culture with the truths of the faith and call it to a transformation. In other words, to conform itself ever more to the truth which God has written in nature itself and in particular on the human heart. But if that notion of countering the culture is not theologically informed, not understood correctly, the Church begins to look like it’s running after the culture. In other words, that it’s trying to mimic the culture. Now if the culture were perfectly Christian, it still wouldn’t be correct, but the faith wouldn’t be harmed. But we’re living in a culture which is anti-life, anti-family, anti-religion. So to give any impression that the Church endorses such a culture—this is folly.

**MJM:** Yes, it seems like that. I mean, the Holy Father admonished priests against turning the confessional into a “torture chamber”; but it seems like now more than ever before, this culture, which is so Christophobic, if you will, needs to hear the voice of Mother Church in a way that’s corrective ... maybe not accompanying, but what I’m saying is that the act of trying to correct and help the sinner – isn’t that the ultimate way of accompanying the sinner?

**Cardinal Burke:** Exactly right! And that’s all done with charity. We don’t approach people shaking our finger, screaming at them, or acting hysterically. Our faith makes us serene, but it also makes us firm and steadfast. And so we address the culture with the truth of the moral law and the truth which Christ Himself teaches. And, actually, in truth, that’s what the culture really desires. The culture has no respect for a Church which simply says: “Oh, everything is just fine” and endorses it. This culture expects the Church to address it with a challenge. Oftentimes I’ve thought of it in terms of the relationship of parents with children. When children are misbehaving, children need to be corrected and guided. If parents simply coddle them – “oh, you’re just fine, that’s all right” – the children grow up in a very disordered way and have great problems. And the children don’t respect their parents for that.

**MJM** [chuckling]: I can tell you,

Your Eminence, as the father of seven children, I don’t accompany my children so much. I love them and correct them when it’s needed, but accompany them? What’s that mean?

**Cardinal Burke:** Exactly. Even as a teacher, I’ve corrected students and had them scream at me: *I hate you*. I’ve had parents tell me that the child, you know, runs out of the room saying: *I hate you*. But I think, ultimately, that child, that young person, will be so grateful for the correction received. It may not be immediate gratitude but what is important is that we have eternity and the eternal good of the child and even also the eternal destiny of the culture always in view, and act accordingly.

**MJM:** Right. You know, Your Eminence, Catholics have been through a lot over the past decade, with the priest scandal, the abdication of Pope Benedict and this rather unconventional pontificate of Pope Francis. And now this. I know we’re running a little low on time here, but what is your advice for faithful lay Catholics should Pope Francis continue to not answer your *dubia*?

**Cardinal Burke:** My advice is this, and it’s inspired by the truth, the reality that Christ is alive for us in the Church, in her teaching, in her Sacraments, her life of prayer and devotion, and in her discipline: Continue to steep yourself in the knowledge of the faith, in the knowledge of Christ as He is alive for us in the Church. Study the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other expressions of the Church’s constant teaching, for example, the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* of St. John Paul II and his Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*. And then continue to deepen your participation in the Sacred Liturgy and prayer and devotional life, especially at home. And at the same time, strive to conform your life evermore to the truths of our faith, following the Church’s moral teaching and the teaching of the moral law. Today, after the Post-Communion Prayer, we prayed in the Ordinary Form that we would be torches to welcome Christ by our prayer and witness to His truth, and that’s what we ought to be concerned about. And if we do that we will be encouraged and won’t let ourselves get worn down by these great difficulties through which we’re passing now.

**MJM:** Your Eminence, I was born in 1966, basically a child of the Second Vatican Council, and all my life it seems there has been a pattern of gradual diminishing of Sacred Tradition and replacing it with something new. You know, Communion in the hand or altar girls or easy annulments and all this. Pope Francis describes himself as one who is acting in faithful accord with the true spirit of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. And I’m wondering, is there any concern in your mind that what we’re seeing now is in fact a following of some sort of continuum of that spirit of Vatican II that has less to do with Francis and more to do with a new orientation of the Catholic Church altogether.

**Cardinal Burke:** That is a legitimate concern. And whenever I hear this language – the ‘spirit of Vatican II’—I

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am immediately alerted because there's no question – it has been demonstrated and can be demonstrated more – that a lot of what happened in the Church after the Second Vatican Council, which invoked the “spirit” of the Second Vatican Council, had nothing to do with what the Council Fathers taught. We saw it in the devastation of the Sacred Liturgy and in other aspects, as well. So I think that what we must do is return to the constant teaching of the Church as it's expressed in the Second Vatican Council, but in *all* of the ecumenical councils and in *all* of the authentic teachings of the Church down the centuries. Only when Catholics are well steeped in the teachings of the faith are they going to be prepared to give that witness which is needed today. They also will be prepared to be strong members of the Church and keep the Church strong. We're suffering today from decades of poor catechesis, or no catechesis at all. And all of that is reaping its effects. But we have the tools to address it, and we need to use them. And I see a lot of signs of people who really want now to know their faith and deepen their knowledge of the faith. And they want the Sacred Liturgy to be really what it is meant to be, an encounter with Heaven in all its beauty. These people are also deeply concerned to learn how to lead a good and moral life.

**MJM:** Last question, Eminence, if you could say something that would help me out. We're members of the Catholic press, and there are many members of the Catholic press who support you and the other three Cardinals. But we want to be part of your solution. We don't want to be part of the problem. What do you want us to do as this dramatic *dubia* situation unfolds? Is there something that you would rather we didn't say? In other words, what's the best thing that we can do to help you in this position that you're in?

**Cardinal Burke:** I think the best thing you can do to help, and a number of you have been doing it already, is simply to print the truth but in a serene way, in order to maintain absolute respect for the Church in all her aspects, including the petrine office, which is essential to our life in the Church. But at the same time to speak clearly the truth in a loving way. And if you do that, as a number of you have been doing, that will really be helpful. We don't want to contribute to the division by taking a very aggressive and outspoken approach, which will divide people and will cause people who don't understand all of what's going on to be scandalized. That we want to avoid. But I think if you express the truths of our faith in this serene and loving way that will help everybody, including those who may not yet understand the difficulty that we're in.

**MJM:** Your Eminence, I really appreciate your taking the time to answer these questions. I think it goes without saying that we're all praying for you and we're so grateful for the stand you've taken. And if there is anything, ever, at any point that we can do to help you out, please let us know. And please be assured of our support and prayers as you move forward.

**Cardinal Burke:** Thank you. Keep praying for me. I'm deeply grateful for your prayers. And I've really enjoyed talking with you this morning.

**MJM:** Thank you. Merry Christmas.

**Cardinal Burke:** Merry Christmas. ■

## And Thy Word Broke Their Swords: The Empowering Depth of Christmas

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freshness, like the sting of the winter air on our cheeks. For me, English carols hold the deepest resonance, seeming to rise from ancient mist, and rain, and soil, and sea. It is freshness of light piercing dark for the first time, of song piercing the silence, and the sky being rent by angel trumpets and an infant's wail. It is the town crier making his rounds: “Past 3 o'clock, and a cold frosty morning! Past 3 o'clock! Good morrow, masters, all!”

You get this feeling you are being called out of your comfort zone, and you could go out and sing it alone into the night, and into the moon, and challenge the dark. I've done that before, gone outside in the winter chill and sung out these carols at the top of my lungs, talking to the emptiness of the night. I feel compelled to say, “Darkness, you can't frighten me; I'll walk into the heart of you, and I'll sing because your reign is ending.”

We are stumbling along with our eyes seared by the sight of a star burning away the scales. We reach out and seek an immaculate maiden's hand to guide us through the night. “There was a star, lady, shone in the night...larger than Venus it was, and bright, so bright!” It brings us “comfort and joy” but also courage and strength, and a renewed willingness to dare the dark. We are given a path to follow.

There is an empowering aspect of the season. In our case, the cold has bothered us, and our fears are ever so real. But we are now given the means of grace, and the blaze of fire, to fight back against it. And so we light our Advent wreaths, one candle at a time, with longing licking at the stems and melting the wax of our hearts.

Christmas has an element of battle about it, actually, the pre-dawn whisperings of the conflict to come. Or perhaps those angel trumpets are very much a declaration of war, setting the stage as it were for the coming of the spring, and the final battle during the Triduum. It is like in C.S. Lewis' Narnia, when Father Christmas, who has not been seen for many years in the absence of Aslan, comes and gives the Pevensie children gifts of war: Peter's sword, Susan's bow and arrows, and Lucy's healing horn.

I am thinking also of the coming of Christianity into Pagan Europe. Already in place were generations of epic myths, of Beowulf and his monster-slaying, and all others like it. They are like foretastes of something much more epic, but also more paradoxical, demonstrating that a baby's cry can rend what a warrior's sword cannot.

This reminds me of a Jewish hymn for the Hanukah, the Celebration of Lights remembering the victories of Judas Maccabeus over the Greek invaders and the rededication of the Temple, called “Maotzor.” The loose English translation out of the original Hebrew text reads: “And Thy word broke their swords when our own strength failed us.” For Christians, the notion of the Word of God takes on a new meaning as the theological

“Logos” according to the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

This also makes Christmas a “festival of lights”, springing from the Jewish root of Jesse upon which the faith is built. From Judas Maccabeus and the miracle of the last flask of oil that burned for eight days, we are led to the Lion of Judah who comes to us as the Lamb of God by the light of a star, promising a conquest in which “a child shall lead.”

But Christ comes as more than a baby; He is the seed of so many symbols. In the old English carol *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*, Christ is portrayed as the great Lover of Humanity: “Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance to see the legend of my play, and call my true love to my dance...sing, oh, my love...my love...my love...this have I done for my true love.”

He is multifaceted and richly endowed as Lover, Warrior, Priest, King...and yes, as an Infant. It was these many descriptions that enabled early Christians to explain the unexplainable. The heroes of their epics, their royals, their romances...and coming forth through an infant who has started the adventure. They could only understand by the things they knew best, the stories they had told for generations. But Christmas holds within it the antithesis of some of their stories as well.

Often enough, their heroes would be born through bizarre sexual escapades between

flawed humans and the mischief-making gods. Christ is born of a Virgin by an overshadowing of the Holy Spirit not to cause mischief, but to save humanity. Indeed, Mary is the epitome of “the pure vessel” because she is conceived free from the stain of original sin, and submits herself as “the handmaid of the Lord”, recognizing that her soul “magnifies the Lord” who will fulfill His promises to the Children of Israel. She took up the mantle of her heritage, and all humanity, when she aligned her will to that of the Divine through that incarnate *Logos*: “Be it done unto me according to thy Word.”

But her child is not born to conquer, in an earthly sense. This Word will not shatter the swords, but will be rent by them. This savior is born to die, a Man of Sorrows, sending seven swords through his mother's heart. The cry of a firstborn precedes the cry rent by nails through flesh. He's born to challenge the dark and get swallowed up by it...and by submitting to it, shatter it into so many pieces.

All of this comes back to St. John of the Cross, and why his poetry applies to Christmas. He speaks of night not as a thing to fear, but as a place where union with the divine may be sought out: “O night, thou wast my guide! O night more loving than the rising sun! O night that joined the lover to the beloved one, transforming each of them into the other.”

Is this not the crux of the Incarnation, and that “silent night, holy night”, which lies not just in a cave in Bethlehem, but in the essence of our own souls, breathed into existence by a God who has deigned to share our mortal frailty? The Star of David heralds the Son of David, and glowing jewels in the scepter of salvation light up all the world. ■



# All Things Visible and Invisible: A Christmas Gift of Faith

By Susan Claire Potts

Alone in her apartment, blond, blue-eyed Sheila Coulter looked down at her desk. Papers were scattered everywhere. Books were piled in the corner, and a cup of cold coffee sat untouched beside her laptop. The screen was blank. She had a paper to write, but no words came. Flicking off the computer, Sheila pushed back her chair and walked over to the old upright piano across the room.

She sat down on the bench and ran her fingers over the keys. She hadn't played in months, not since August. It wasn't that she didn't love to play, she told herself. There simply wasn't time—not with work and grad school and trying to have some semblance of a social life.

But that wasn't why. She knew it wasn't. She didn't play because her mind was in turmoil; there was no peace in her soul. A summer seminar—*Legends and Customs of the Middle Ages*—had shattered her faith. Pulled the rug right out from under her.

*The people of that time were ignorant and superstitious, her professor had announced in his first lecture. Their culture reflects that. Obsessed with "mysteries," they developed bizarre constructs of belief to explain the unknowable. He stroked his beard and chuckled condescendingly. But there are no mysteries—only unexplored vistas of the human mind.*

And then, throughout the course, he had mocked and ridiculed the stupidity of Catholic Europe.

Sheila was caught in a dark net, a web where there was no music. But now, tonight, at six o'clock when the snow was falling gently and the quarter moon was hidden behind the clouds, she needed to play. It was almost Christmas. She flicked on the piano light and riffled through a box of sheet music until she found what she was looking for—the score of *O Holy Night* from her Christmas recital when she was eleven years old. Smoothing the frayed edges of the paper, she scanned the page. Her piano teacher's notes were still legible.

*Good technique, excellent expression, Mrs. Hanneghan had written. Your performance captures the wonder of that night and expresses a profound sense of mystery.*

Mystery. Right.

Sheila started to play. She couldn't believe how rusty she was. Her fingers were stiff, the harmony was off, and she left her foot too long on the pedal. The notes roared through the apartment, discordant as her thoughts. But she kept trying. An hour passed. She didn't hear the phone until it had rung four times. Startled, she jumped up and answered it.

It was Margot Kelly, a fellow doctoral student in medieval history. "Where are you?"

"Home, why?"

"I couldn't reach you. Tried your cell.



Sent a text..." Sheila sighed wearily. "Oh, sorry."

"We were supposed to meet for dinner. You, me, Patrice. Remember? Maurice salads at Macy's?"

"I forgot."

"You forgot? What are you doing? You sound funny. Is something wrong?"

"No..." Sheila paused. "I was playing the piano..."

"Well, we're here. Are you coming?"

"Sure. I'll be right there. Go ahead and order."

"We'll wait," Margot said. "Just hurry up."

Sheila lived close to the mall. Within ten minutes, she had parked her car, rushed across the slippery parking lot, and was on the escalator heading for the café at Macy's. When she got there, she spotted her friends—Margot Kelly, short, plump, and curly-haired and Patrice Kakenya, dark and tall as a Maasai princess. The two were sitting at a small table, sipping coffee. Sheila hurried over to them.

"I'm really sorry, you guys. I've been in a fog."

Margot and Patrice exchanged glances. "We noticed. What's up?"

Sheila shrugged. "Too much studying, I guess."

"Never bothered you before," Margot said.

"I know, but..." She hesitated. "What'd you think of Professor Sorenson?"

"From last summer?" Patrice asked. "Are you kidding? Why are you thinking about him?"

"Not him, exactly," Sheila answered slowly. "The things he said—about the Middle Ages."

Margot made a face and added more sugar to her coffee. "Why'd that bother you?"

"He just kind of ran roughshod over everything."

"So what?" Sheila laid her napkin across her lap. "I don't know," she said quietly. "He just kept attacking the Faith."

Patrice lifted an eyebrow. "Don't tell me you believe that stuff."

"I'm Catholic."

"So?"

Sheila smoothed her napkin. "I thought you were, too..."

"Once upon a time," Patrice said.

Margo laughed. "In a former life." She set down her coffee cup and signaled the waitress. "Come on, let's order. I'm starving."

Sheila bit her lip. While they waited for their salads, Margo brought up the seminar again.

"Couldn't we talk about something else?" Sheila asked.

"You started something, Sheila. Right, Patrice?"

Patrice glanced at Sheila, then looked away and adjusted her scarf. Margo rested her chin on her hands and gazed out dreamily. "I think Dr. Sorenson's awesome. I mean, his ideas are spot on—like how we have to know the past to get past it. Pretty clever."

"I agree," Patrice nodded. "I mean, really, all that bigotry and divisiveness back then. Remember how he called Catholicism nothing but *stultified ignorance*?" Her eyes widened. "That was powerful."

Sheila stared at the silverware. It wasn't arranged properly. She straightened the fork, then placed the spoon next to the knife where it belonged. When she looked up, she noticed an elderly woman a few tables away. The woman was tiny, small as a child, with short white hair and little gold glasses. A tartan shawl covered her shoulders. She was drinking tea. Sheila tried not to stare, but the woman looked familiar.

The waitress brought the Maurice salads and refilled their coffee cups. Patrice and Margot kept talking. They didn't notice that Sheila hadn't said a thing. The white-haired woman met Sheila's eyes, nodded, then rose to leave.

Sheila watched her go. *I know who she looks like!* she realized. *Mrs. Hanneghan!* But it wasn't her old piano teacher, of course. Anne Hanneghan had died while Sheila was at Interlochen Music Camp, the summer she was fifteen. Nine years ago. Sheila had grieved deeply and missed her still. Mrs. Hanneghan had taught her so much—she was like a mother to her.

Margot interrupted her thoughts. "You guys ready for dessert?" she asked. "I could go for some crême brulee."

"Sounds good," Patrice said. "How about you, Sheila?"

"I don't think so. I'm going to take off."

"We're heading over to the south mall," Margot said. "Don't you want to join us?"

Sheila shook her head. "I'm tired...got a lot of work to do." She stood up, put on her coat, and opened her purse. "What do I owe?"

"We'll get it."

"Thanks."

"Merry Christmas," Patrice said with a laugh.

When Sheila had gone, Patrice leaned forward and lowered her voice. "Do you believe her? I mean, you'd think Sorenson took away her toys or something."

"She'll get over it," Margot said. "Gotta grow up sometime."

Sheila took the escalator down and lingered for awhile at the jewelry counter. She was looking for a gift for her mother—even though she and her stepfather didn't celebrate Christmas. They were in Europe, trekking through France in jeans and backpacks as if they were the grad students, not Sheila.

But that didn't matter. Sheila would remember her mother even if her mother forgot. She spotted an opal on a silver chain and asked to see it. As she held it, an old memory crossed her mind, her grandmother's voice: *Opals are for tears*, she'd said. *Well, I have plenty of those*, Sheila thought. *Besides, it's beautiful.*

"I'll take it," she said and handed the necklace back to the saleslady. She paid for it, then slipped the box into her purse and headed out the door to the parking lot. The snow was falling harder, hiding the sheet of ice that covered the pavement.

As she walked to her car, slipping and sliding, Sheila thought back over the conversation with her friends. Her mind reeled at their cynicism, their supercilious mockery. *But I'm no better*, she said to herself. *I've got more doubt than conviction. What if they're right? What if*

Continued Next Page

**Continued...**

*none of it's real? Maybe there aren't any mysteries... What is faith anyway?*

Tears stung her eyes and streamed down her cheeks.

She didn't see the car that hit her.

She was thrown ten feet and landed face down on the concrete. The car skidded to a stop; a man jumped out and ran to her. "Somebody call an ambulance," he shouted.

A woman who had seen the accident rushed over. "Is she all right?"

"Don't think so." His voice choked. "She's not moving."

The woman took off her coat, covered Sheila, and made the sign of the cross. "God help her," she whispered.

Patrice and Margot were coming out of the mall just as the police and ambulance arrived. A crowd was gathering, huddling around someone. They hurried toward them to see what had happened.

"What's going on?" Margot asked a stocky bald man in a down jacket.

"Some girl got hit. Dummy. Wasn't paying attention." He shook his head. "Probably staring at her phone."

Patrice had moved closer. Peering over the heads of the people in front of her, she saw the young woman lying on the ground, her blond hair clumped with blood. Patrice screamed. "Margot! Dear God! It's Sheila!"

The EMTs jumped out of the ambulance and were kneeling over Sheila's still body. While one examined her injuries, the other picked up the coat covering her and handed it back to its owner. They lifted Sheila on the stretcher, covered her with a blanket, and strapped her in. A minute later, they took off, sirens blaring.

Patrice and Margot clutched each other, shocked and frightened. The policeman approached. "You know her?" he asked.

"Yes," Margot answered, then gave him Sheila's name and address.

"She got any family?"

"She lives alone. I think her mother's in Europe."

"They're taking her to Beaumont. Maybe you could come along, tell them what you know."

They followed the policeman to the hospital, spoke to the intake clerk, then waited. Hours later, a nurse approached. "She's out of surgery," she said.

"Will she be all right?"

"Too soon to tell. They've brought her up to ICU."

"Can we see her?"

"They might give you five minutes."

Badly shaken, Margot and Patrice went up to the ICU, got permission from the nurse, and hurried down the hall to Sheila's room. Her head was bandaged, her face, bruised and swollen. Tubes ran from her arm. Her eyes were closed.

Monitors blinked.

"Oh, my God," Margot said, then whispered, "I wish we hadn't been so mean."

Patrice reached over and touched Sheila's hand. "Sorry, girl, we're so sorry."

They left. Two days passed.

It was Christmas Eve and Sheila had not awakened. The coma was deep; there was little hope for her recovery. No one came to see her; the hospital couldn't reach her mother.

Sheila was alone in the darkness.

It was nearly midnight when a petite white-haired woman slipped into Sheila's room. The night nurse and an aide didn't see her. They were busy entering data into their computers.

The RN looked up from her screen. "Did you hear that?" she asked.

The aide stopped typing. "What?"

"Somebody's playing the piano. Christmas music."

The aide shrugged and went back to her work. "I don't hear nothing."

Meanwhile, down the hall, the mysterious visitor walked over to Sheila's bedside and touched her face. "Sheila," she said. "It's Christmas. The stars are shining, and we have somewhere to go."

Sheila recognized her voice. "Mrs. Hanneghan," she said. "It was you! I saw you at the mall."

"Yes, my dear."

"But...you're dead...how can it be?"

"It is the Night of Nights. Come, let's go."

In an instant, Sheila found herself with her piano teacher in Old St. Mary's Church, the church she loved in Greentown. Midnight Mass was over; the people were gone. Sheila stood in the center aisle, looking up at the altar. She saw the golden tabernacle, the sanctuary lamp, the statue of Our Lady above it all, gazing out over the church, like a mother watching her children.

Mrs. Hanneghan had lifted her shawl over her head like a veil and was walking toward the Nativity Scene. Sheila followed quickly. They knelt before the crèche.

Suddenly, the church was filled with music. Voices rang out; an invisible choir sang: *Do you see what I see?*

Sheila bowed her head. No, she whispered. *I don't, but I wish I did.* Her heart ached as she whispered the prayer of the blind man in the Gospel: *Ut videam!* Lord, that I may see!

She had no sooner said the words when the ceiling opened. Stars filled the sky. Sheila looked up, amazed. Silver light flooded the church. And then everywhere, throughout the nave, above the manger, around the altar, angels appeared. There were hundreds, thousands of them, moving with all grace and beauty through the air, harps

playing, voices raised in profound adoration.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Sheila watched in awe. Then the church walls dissolved and she saw, as if she were in the fields of Bethlehem, the stable, the shepherds, the warm and gentle animals. She looked at the Virgin Mother and then down at Baby Jesus. He seemed to look back at her. As she met His eyes, beauty filled her mind. She clasped her hands in prayer.

Mrs. Hanneghan leaned toward her and whispered, *Merry Christmas, child.*

"Is this real?" Sheila asked.

"It is."

"But...how..."

"It is the Kingdom of God. The Mystery of Faith. The veil has parted."

Sheila understood; her heart burst with joy. Trembling, she looked again at the Divine Child, the Maker of all things, visible and invisible. *My Lord and my God*, she whispered, and the words of the Creed came to her lips: *Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, Per quem omnia facta sunt.*

*Dear Jesus*, she said. *I believe. I do believe.*

A moment more and Mrs. Hanneghan was gone. The church was gone. Sheila was lying in her hospital bed, unmoving. Her eyes were closed, her breathing steady. And so she passed the night; she hadn't awakened.

At nine o'clock on Christmas Day, Patrice and Margot came to see her.

"We're here," Margot said, dropping to her knees beside the bed. Her voice caught in her throat. "Please get better!" she implored. "Please open your eyes!"

"We went to Midnight Mass," Patrice told Sheila. "We thought we should. We lit a candle."

"We went downtown, to Old St. Mary's that you're always talking about," Margot said, then hesitated. "Something strange happened as we were leaving. It had been snowing, but suddenly the clouds drew back, and the sky was filled with stars, millions of them. They seemed so close, like you could reach up and touch them."

"It was bright as day," Patrice said quietly. "Brighter, even." She knelt down beside Margot and stroked Sheila's hand. "Maybe we were wrong. Maybe there's something to it, the whole Catholic thing."

The room was still, heavy with unspoken thoughts and silent yearning.

And then Sheila smiled.

Patrice grabbed Margot's arm. "Margot! Did you see that? Do you think she understood?"

Margot nodded. "I did. And maybe we're starting to understand something, too..." Suddenly, there came the sound of a piano. Someone was playing *O Holy Night*. Patrice looked around. "What in the world? Where's that coming from?"

Sheila opened her eyes and spoke. Her voice was soft. "So you hear it?"

"You're awake!"

"I am," Sheila murmured. "More than you know."

"But who's playing?" Margot demanded. "There's nobody here!"

Sheila looked from one to the other, her eyes shining with deep wisdom. "Nobody you can see," she said.

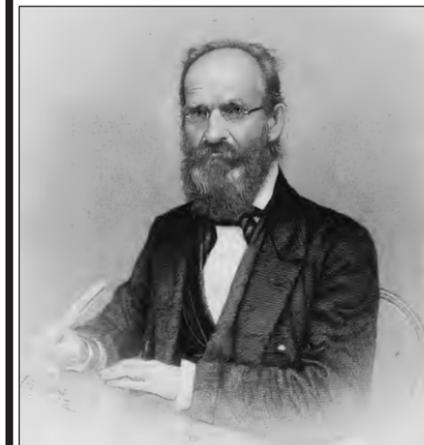
"But what? How?" Patrice stammered.

"Don't you know?" Sheila answered. "It's the mystery of faith."

The piano stopped.

Margot and Patrice bowed their heads and cried. ■

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# The Ghost of Christmas Future

By Timothy J Cullen

*“I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”* (E. Scrooge: *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, 1843)

The Ghost of Christmas Future never speaks in Dickens’ tale: he signs. It is Scrooge—whose name has become synonymous with miserliness and heartlessness—who speaks to the ghost, the spirit sent to him to mutely show him the portend of the error of his ways.

Scrooge’s declaration is one that encompasses time, but given that the story is about Christmas, curiously fails to make reference to eternity, the state of being beyond time that transcends the tomb so feared by Scrooge. It is eternity, after all, in which the past, the present and the future simultaneously *are*; time does not pass in eternity.

Be that as it may, Christmas stories are not meant to be dissertations on the nature of time, although time is very much in evidence in *A Christmas Carol*. Given that this is my seventieth Christmas, it is also present in my thoughts.

When first I made the acquaintance of Mr. Scrooge, it was in what we called “movies” back then in 1956, sixty years ago. The movie itself was from 1938 and was in black and white; the following year I would see a different version made in 1951, but it is the first version I saw that I remember, though I watch them both every year. I also read the book, one of five in a volume entitled *Dickens’s Christmas Books*, published in New York by Hurd & Houghton in 1877 with the original steel-plate Darley engravings included. My grandfather discussed it with me, as did my father. God willing, in a Christmas future, I will be present to discuss it with my grandsons as I did with my son, and in a more distant future they will do the same with their children and then their grandchildren and so on down through the generations until the treasured volume falls apart.

*A Christmas Carol* is not a “Catholic” Christmas story, given that its emphasis is not at all religious. Dickens’s novella is a secular tale, celebrating earthly pleasures and generosity rather than offering a reverent message with respect to the sacred as it applies to one of Christendom’s most holy days. Nevertheless, it has earned its place in the hearts and minds of readers and has never been out of print. There are even those who claim that “the entire novella may be classified as an allegory of the Christian concept of redemption,”<sup>1</sup> though this claim is questionable at best in the Catholic definition of redemption. One might argue that certain of the novella’s themes fit the exhortations of Isaiah cited by the late Fr. Urban Snyder in a 1978 *Remnant* essay recently reprinted: “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil

of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow...”<sup>2</sup> Such an argument, however, can only be described as, well, lacking.

The fact of the matter is that (to the best of my knowledge) no such Catholic Christmas classic exists, neither a novel nor a novella nor even a short story. As for movies...

A Catholic Christmas classic is not necessarily a Christmas story authored by a Catholic, but rather a story that presents a truly Catholic narrative embodying the meaning of Christmas as it is found in the Faith, devoid of most of the trappings we have come to associate with the holiday, or at least incorporating them as background elements—props, if you will—with respect to the sacred drama of the entire Christmas season.

Lacking a classic, let us make do for the moment with a simple tale told by a Catholic who fears the Ghost of Christmas Future not because of his own failings but because of the ongoing profanation of the holiday he has seen over seventy years of life.

The tale begins with you the reader in a moment of solitude in a darkened room. Beyond the door, the home has been made ready for Christmas, not far off now. You’re drowsy, been busy with this and that, all the Christmas rush, and speaking of... What’s that *sound*? You pause in your thoughts. Some thin, reedy sound, melodic, kind of like... What *is* that sound?

And... and... who is *that*? The spectral figure in a reversed sheepskin and rough-spun wool skullcap stopped playing his simple bamboo flute and spoke, not with his mouth, but mind to mind.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past,” he stated in his soundless voice. “He is coming. We must go!” A “mesh” of light formed and began moving in geometrical patterns. The shepherd takes hold of your arm and draws you through the dazzlement out into...

The night was chill. A week moon hung in the sky, but what drew the eye was a very bright star, brighter than any to be seen in the heavens of 2016, A.D. A small herd of sheep followed along, the only sounds in the still night the flat tinkling of the pot metal bell of the lead ram and the occasional bleat of the sheep following behind. The ground was stony and uneven, but the sandal-shod shepherd was sure footed, so when he pointed with his staff, it was simply a question of following in his footsteps to keep up with him.

The journey was one that seemed outside of space and time. One moment you took your first hesitant steps, the next you stand before a makeshift stable, a kind of cave carved from an outcropping of rock. Instinctively, you both kneel: HE has come! No gaily decorated tree here, no merrymakers, no hearth, no stockings hung, no gaily wrapped gifts, no wreathes, but Light... an unearthly

light illumines the interior in which a swaddled Babe lies in a manger atop a small pile of hay that the sheep do not approach. The Ghost of Christmas Past has guided you to the true meaning of Christmas Past, Present and Future: the greatest gift of God to humankind, the only earthly matter that *truly* matters, God Himself made flesh! In that flesh, God grants redemption and life eternal in paradise: follow His teachings and paradise is yours!

So much for Christmas Past: you have seen all you needed to see. You are no sooner back in the present than the Ghost of Christmas Present snatches you back into the sad reality of 2016 A.D. He shows you empty churches, full shopping malls and websites, then whisks you to an under-attended but reverential Christmas Eve Midnight Mass at which the struggling remnant of believers (of whom you are one, along with your family) leave the world behind to adore and worship God made man, celebrating God’s great gift to all His creatures. Listen to the sublime chant! Humble yourself and reflect upon God’s generosity toward His fallen creatures! Christmas is here and God is with you! Yes, it’s a time for celebration, yes, the time-honored customs of merriment and sharing and renewed promises of good intentions arise in your heart and soul, but above all, what arises within you is gratitude to the good God for granting you the possibility of redemption unto paradise. *This* is your Christmas present! The Holy Ghost has touched your soul! The secular reality ceases to mean anything at all.

Then arrives the Ghost of Christmas Future. If the Ghost of Christmas Future is planning to pay a visit to Pope Francis, one might dearly wish to be present. What might be the Holy Father’s wish? We cannot say. We simply and truly cannot say, so strange has been his pontificate up to now. What might the Ghost of Christmas Future reveal to him with respect to the future of the Church he heads and appears to wish to transform? We simply cannot say.

The Ghost of Christmas Future appears to you and me as a spectral but not grim figure, nothing like the ghost that appeared to Scrooge, because this ghost is none other than the Holy Ghost, Who is the Third Person of God. He points the way to the future to those who keep the Faith, among whom you are included. He points the way to a future that comes after our earthly pilgrimage has concluded, a future that *IS*, a future that encompasses all of humankind’s illusory time; a future that is eternity, a state of being beyond our imagination, a state of being obtainable by those who keep the Faith, who live not for yesterday or today but rather for that state of being promised us by the Redeemer.

This Redeemer was born of man on Christmas day; the humble human Babe Who is God incarnate, who was born to us not to make a paradise of our fallen world, but rather to point us to the path we must follow to join with Him. God willing, one day we shall join Him, His Father and His Presence among us—the Holy Spirit Who *IS* in a state that transcends time and space—Who

awaits us in paradise if only we follow His teachings and afford ourselves of the opportunity to share in the Sacraments proffered by His Church (which were granted us until the present time of trial profaned them and led many into doubt as to their true nature).

The “Ghost of Christmas Future” is *present* and awaits us all in the future promised in this vale of tears by none other than Christ: God Himself. The “Ghost of Christmas Future” is one of hope, not one of fear or much less one of despair: He summons you to eternal celebration, to the Beatific Vision, not to a cold tomb or an eternity of torment.

All the trappings of the joyful Dickens Christmas are seen as temporally delightful and heartwarming, but as dross when compared with the transcendent gift of God that we who *believe* celebrate on Christmas Day. This imaginary “vision” has shown you and me all we needed to see to celebrate Christmas as it should be celebrated: not only as a time of “peace on earth, good will toward men”, but as a reverential thanksgiving to God for a future after the mortal cord is shed and the Faithful ascend to their deserved reward for a life led according to the teachings of Christ; God made man, born among us to show us the way to *be* with God, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. *This* is why the “Ghost of Christmas Future” appears to you and me—to reassure us. Not to threaten, but to reassure.

God *Is*, was and ever shall be, and Christ was born on Christmas Day to erase all doubt as to whether or not we are alone in the universe: we are not. God is with us, just as He assured us on that Christmas Day of which we must be *every day* cognizant, not merely on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December.

Celebrate Christmas with all the trimmings of tradition for the pleasure of oneself and the family, but keep Christmas sacred as well, because when all is said and done, the true meaning of the holiday is a *holy* meaning, one that transcends the temporal and secular. Christmas is *God’s* holiday, not ours; we are the fortunate beneficiaries and our celebration of this most wonderful day is above and beyond all else an act of thanksgiving, not a celebration of material prosperity. Christmas trees and presents beneath it endure for a time easily measured and not particularly long: Christ was “born” as part of eternity, born to redeem you and me and our posterity and provide us the possibility of sharing that eternity with Him, His Father and their manifestation among us as the Holy Spirit.

“God bless us everyone” said Tiny Tim in Dickens’s novella. You need no “ghosts” to know that He did when He made Himself man to redeem us, then stayed with us as the Holy Spirit. We are blessed, if only we accept the blessing. All the rest is trimmings, enjoyable but inessential. Keep Christmas as the blessing that it is: never forget nor fail to teach your children that it is *this* that is the meaning of Christmas past, present and future: nothing more, nothing less.

God bless us all as He has done. Merry and *sacred*!

No other “Ghost of Christmas Future” is possible. ■

<sup>1</sup> Moore, Grace, Text Guide on Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, Insight Publications, 2001, p. 57, cited in [https://infogalactic.com/info/A\\_Christmas\\_Carol#cite\\_ref-59](https://infogalactic.com/info/A_Christmas_Carol#cite_ref-59).

<sup>2</sup> <http://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/articles/item/2903-first-sunday-of-advent-what-does-it-mean>

*On the Political Front...*

## Russia and the Moral Depravity of the Obama Administration

By Emmet Scott

**Editor's Note:** I'm happy to announce yet another addition to the Remnant stable of writers. Mr. Scott is the author of several books, including "Mohammed and Charlemagne Revisited" with New English Review Press, and "Guide to the Phantom Dark Age" with Algora Press. He's also had numerous articles published on various websites such as "Gates of Vienna" and "The Iconoclast". We're delighted to welcome him aboard as a political columnist for The Remnant. **MJM**

It is axiomatic that politics is the art of the possible, and that governments are guided by practical considerations rather than strictly moral ones. Nonetheless, until fairly recent times, the citizens of Western nations could be confident that their governments subscribed, at least in public, to culturally Christian concepts of right and wrong when it came to framing and interpreting legislation and that, by and large, the interests of the citizenry were considered of some importance to legislators and administrators.

That Western governments no longer even pretend to subscribe to Christian morality and that they no longer have the interests of their own citizens at heart is painfully obvious to all but the most blind or obtuse. A new "religion", namely radical secularism, is the belief system which now informs the thinking and actions of most Western politicians. It is not to be doubted that this radical secularism is every bit as hostile to traditional Christianity as was the Marxist secularism of Communist regimes, and we have already witnessed the beginnings of a low-key—and so far bloodless—persecution of Christians who insist on holding to their traditional beliefs, when these beliefs clash with the new secularist orthodoxy. A society which can fine a Christian family bakery \$135,000 for refusing to bake a lesbian "wedding" cake, and which can throw a public registrar into jail for refusing to officiate at a gay "wedding", is a society which has already travelled far down the road of Soviet totalitarianism.

The overturning of Christian ideas relating to sexual morality can only accomplish the complete destruction of the family and the normalization of the most depraved sexual activity imaginable. That the political and economic elites have gone far down that road is fairly obvious, though it would appear from the emerging evidence of the hacked Podesta emails that they have travelled much further even than most people hitherto realized. More on this presently.

If the radical secularism of the Western ruling elites is militant and proselytizing at home, it is equally so abroad. In pursuing the self-same agenda abroad, the Obama administration has stirred up wars and revolutions throughout the globe, transforming America into a real menace to the peace and stability of the world. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Syria.

The decision of the Obama and Cameron administrations in the US and UK to assist the anti-government insurrection in Syria in 2012 (even though they knew that the "opposition" was comprised entirely of Islamist extremists) illustrates, in the most graphic manner possible, the utter moral bankruptcy of the Western political class. From 2012 onwards, delegation after delegation of Christian prelates and lay-people arrived in Europe begging the West to cease helping the rebels. Even by that time we were already used to seeing images of ancient Christian communities massacred by the jihadists. Yet all such pleas fell on deaf ears, as Cameron and Obama ramped up hostility against the Syrian government. In this they were supported and even encouraged by the equally immoral Western media.

It was eventually left to Russia to save the Assad regime and prevent the country falling to ISIS, Al-Qaeda and their affiliates. Had it not been for Russian intervention at the end of 2015, the whole country would by now have been overrun and the Christian and Alawite communities exterminated. This, apparently, was a prospect which did not trouble Obama, Clinton, Kerry, or Cameron in the slightest.

America under Obama had effectively become an ally of fundamentalist Islam. Of course, neither Obama nor his backers see it that way. To them, the Holy Grail is democracy: If they can bring democracy to any society, they can transform it into a liberal/secularist paradise. They fail completely to understand that democracy only works in societies like Europe, where the civilizing influence of Christianity has, over the centuries, produced a climate where men can (to some extent at least) agree to disagree. As Christianity fades in the West that civilized modus operandi is breaking down even here. But the idea that democracy can be used as a tool to civilize people is utter idiocy.

Which brings us on to the question of Russia. The demonization of Russia and her leader, Vladimir Putin, has been a consistent feature of the Obama regime almost from the word go. Many theories have been proposed to explain this; and undoubtedly there is more than one cause. Yet we cannot doubt that Russia's refusal to go along with the secularist agenda is a major factor. Russia has been accused of initiating an ideologically-motivated war against the West, presenting herself as the defender of Christians and Christian morality in a world that is increasingly hostile to both; yet the evidence would suggest that it is the West which initiated hostilities.

In January 2014, long before the Ukraine crisis or Russia's intervention in Syria, a vocal campaign, supported by influential Western politicians, was launched to boycott the Sochi Winter Olympics, on the grounds that the Putin regime was "oppressive" to gays. In actual fact, there was no "oppression" whatsoever; Russia had simply banned "gay propaganda", namely the promotion of the homosexual



lifestyle to children. A couple of decades earlier, such attitudes would have been considered absolutely normal in the West. In this, as in so much else, it was the West, and not Russia, which had changed and which was promoting something radical and new, whilst at the same time attacking and demonizing anyone or any society which did not conform. The same attempts at secularist proselytism (often backed by Soros-funded NGOs) are also to be observed in the allocation of aid and even in trading relations with African, Asian, and Latin American countries. Those states which do not conform with regard to questions such as abortion and LGBT "rights" are punished financially.

But increasingly, sanctions against recalcitrant states do not stop at mere economic measures, and America under Obama has stirred up ideologically-motivated revolutions and insurrections in North Africa, the Middle East, eastern Europe and central Asia – much as the Soviet Union did during the second half of the twentieth century. In this regard, it's really no surprise that some of the keenest supporters of regime change in foreign parts have been the "Neoconservatives" – a group of mostly ex-Trotskyist intellectuals posing as "born-again" conservatives. But the so-called conservatism of the Neocons is a sham: their ideal society is a radically secularist social democracy, which has little or no place for Christianity. It is interesting to note that the recent Trump Revolution in America, which is at core a nationalist and traditionalist movement, has exposed the rift with the Neocons, who have in general returned to their natural home amongst the leftists of the Obama/Clinton camp.

And what a motley crew the latter are. The recent release of the Podesta emails by WikiLeaks has exposed a terrifyingly sinister dimension to the lives of the secularist elites. There can be no doubt whatsoever that high-ranking members of the Democrat Party have been involved in extensive paedophile activity, irrespective of what the code-words found throughout the Podesta emails really mean (and it is interesting that Podesta has made no attempt to explain them). Several of them, such as Anthony Weiner and Dennis Hastert (former Speaker of the House) have already done time in prison for their activities, but it is clear that these are merely the tip of a very large iceberg.

We know, for example, that Bill Clinton (and apparently also Hillary) were frequent visitors to Jeffrey Epstein's "Lolita Island" in the Caribbean, where sex-parties involving minors were the course de jour.

It is also interesting to note that, should the code-words in these emails actually refer to underage children, then Obama himself is deeply involved: we are told that he had spent \$65,000 dollars on "pizza" to be brought from Chicago (of all places) for a private party in the White House. We know too, from FBI insiders, that repeated attempts to investigate the paedophile activities of high-ranking Democrats have been continually blocked by the White House (i.e. the Justice Department).

That such activities are part of the private lives of the secularist elites should surprise no one. All ideas of sexual morals and restraints are religious in nature, and in the West, that means Christian. The rejection of Christian morality thus opens the way for a sexual free-for-all, where quite simply, anything goes. It should come as no surprise therefore that the liberal elites of various European societies, such as the UK, have already been exposed as harbouring massive networks of paedophiles and deviants of other hues. As in America, they have used (and still use) their positions of power to protect themselves. The recent revelations of horrific abuse by public figures such as the DJ Jimmy Savile and the MP Cyril Smith – as well as several others – are but the tip of an enormous iceberg, on which the Cameron (and presumably also now the May) administration succeeded in keeping a lid on. And the extent to which the secularist elites approve this behaviour may be judged from the fact that Harriet Harman, former Labour Party Deputy Prime Minister, and left-wing activist, once headed a body (the National Council for Civil Liberties) which had, as one of its affiliated associations, the notorious Paedophile Information Exchange.

Whether the elites in America will also continue to be able to suppress the truth, in view of the Trump victory, remains to be seen. Indeed, the exposure or non-exposure of the truth in this matter may be the litmus test for whether Trump is a genuine alternative or just another tool of the anti-Christian elite. Time will tell. ■

# A Spark from Poland

By Patrick Archbold

In the parable of the mustard seed, Our Lord taught us that even the tiniest little bit of faith can change the world. So too, a spark is but the tiniest thing, but it can ignite a fire that can change the world.

Sometimes the great events of history go largely unremarked upon and unrecognized at the time they occur. They seem like merely a mustard seed or a spark, a tiny, insignificant thing. Until history proves otherwise.

There is a famous prophecy contained in the diary of St. Faustina. In her diary, St. Faustina recorded the Lord's words as "I bear a special love for Poland, and if she will be obedient to My will, I will exalt her in might and holiness. From her will come forth the spark that will prepare the world for My final coming" (Diary, 1732).

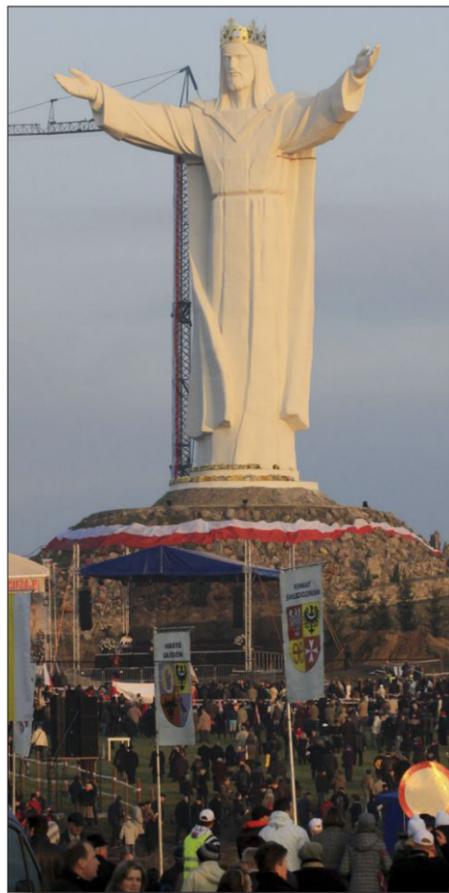
This prophecy occurred right before Poland's long nightmare of Nazi occupation and murderous oppression and the communist occupation and murderous oppression. So it is, that perhaps no country suffered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century quite the way that Poland has. Thus, no country on earth has preserved the faith like Poland has. Alone it stands in Europe as the last bastion of Christianity in the barren wasteland that was once Christendom.

When Karol Wojtyla became Pope in 1978, Poland understandably rejoiced and many people thought that Pope Saint John Paul II was the fulfillment of St. Faustina's prophecy, a saint that the Polish Pope himself canonized in A.D. 2000.

While understandable at the time, the notion that Pope St. John Paul II is the spark from Poland that prepares the world for the Lord's final coming is likely erroneous. Our Lord does not use words idly and this prophecy has a specific meaning. To understand this a little better, we need to consider what prepares the world for the Lord's final coming. The Church teaches us definitively that several things must occur before the Great and Terrible day of the Lord. And truth be told, most of them are bad. Wars, upheaval, apostasy, anti-Christian persecution, Antichrist.

But the context of Our Lord's prophecy to St. Faustina is clearly a positive one. There is one event that must occur prior to Jesus's return and even prior to Antichrist, specifically "The Gospel will have been preached to the whole world (Matthew 24:14)"

So did Pope St. John Paul II, in his call for a new evangelization, become the spark that would set the world on fire with faith? Alas, almost certainly the answer is no. For all his personal holiness and popularity, Pope St. John Paul II's papacy was a terrible time for the Church. During his tenure, we had the terrible abuse scandal and the great advance of the indifferentist ecumenical suicide pact that greatly diminished the Church and the faith. Suffice it to say that Pope St. John Paul II was not likely that spark, even as it is unlikely that Our Lord used the word 'spark' to refer to a person. It is worthwhile to note at this point that almost two millennia of



Polan's recently completed monument to Christ the King is located in Świebodzin, western Poland. It is the largest statue of Christ in the world.

private revelation and the teachings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church link the fulfillment of the Gospel being preached to the whole world to a future era of peace, a time of one flock and one shepherd. This 'era of peace' is likely

**Editor's Note:** In our continued quest for gold buried away in the archives of The Remnant and The Wanderer, I came across this one. It appeared in The Wanderer when my father was overseas fighting in the European theater of World War II. It's unsigned, and it touched me somehow...as I hope it will touch you. **MJM**

Big guns wheel into position. Maps are scanned. Objectives marked. The fortress Europe will be hammered from every side; death and desolation will hit the cities of the continent with planned precision against a timetable of terror, unparalleled in the history of man.

In this blackest hour, there will be born again a King who never wore a royal robe, save once, who never wielded sword or shield, or rode away to war; but still His name will flash across the battle fields on every front and commandeer the night on Christmas Eve.

It is heartening to know that history's darkest hour can still admit the light which streams from Bethlehem. There will be millions of fighting men who will pause beside their great machines of death and look, with wistful hearts, across the wastes which lead to Christ.

It is sad enough, these boys away from home, facing a dark unknown whereas in peace they could have sat about the blazing hearth, or made their way along

the very same one promised by Our Lady at Fatima if the Church and the faithful would heed her requests.

So what then might be this spark from Poland that could help fulfill Our Lord's and Our Lady's requests, help bring us to an era of peace in which the Gospel is preached to the whole world, and prepare the world for Our Lord's final coming?

Well, if you blinked, you might have just missed it.

On this past November 19<sup>th</sup>, at the end of the year of mercy and perhaps notable, the day before the potential fulfillment of the Revelation 12 sign that I wrote about last year, during the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Fatima, the Catholic Bishops of Poland together with President Andrzej Duda proclaimed Jesus Christ as King of Poland. They enthroned Our Lord as King of Poland. A truly remarkable event in this day and age.

What makes this event even more remarkable is not just its obvious link to the Divine Mercy revelations and prophecy of St. Faustina, but that the Polish Church and Governmental leadership performed this stunning act in direct response to another request of heaven through a Polish nurse. As reported at *Rorate Caeli* by Fr. Paul McDonald:

*"The providential and proximate origin of the act is to be found in revelations received, or said to be received, by the Servant of God Rosalia Zelkova. The Lord – she said – demanded that He be enthroned as King by the Polish Nation as such, and not just in the*

hearts of the Poles, in a particular manner, and this would have saved Poland in the war that was coming."

We have both the Church and Government of Poland, against all odds and opinion, courageously responding to a direct request of heaven and enthroning Our Lord as King. The specific request was:

*"If Poland wants to save herself, she must proclaim Jesus as her King through the Act of Enthronement. It must be carried out by the whole nation, and in particular by the state and church authorities, who should conduct the ceremony on behalf of the nation."*

What is more, this request was made in 1938, before Poland suffered unspeakably over the next 50 years. The request being fulfilled now by Poland demonstrates Poland's faith that it is never too late to fulfill the requests of heaven, and heaven keeps its promises.

The parallels with the unfulfilled requests of Fatima are striking. Could this barely noticed act in Poland be the spark that ultimately ignites the fire of faith that leads the Church and the faithful to fulfill the Fatima requests and brings us to the era of peace promised by Our Lady? Could this act of faith and courage of a people so chastised during the last century and its visible fulfillment of its promises during the terrible time to come, be the spark that ultimately spreads the gospel to the four corners of the earth and prepares it for Our Lord's return?

I pray that it may be so. It is never too late to have recourse to Our Lord and Our Lady. ■

## Christmas at the Front: December 23, 1943



the glancing snow to church, or gathered 'round the tree in gratitude, in mirth, in song, in friendliness.

No doubt this thought plays back and forth in every lad away from home this day. Perhaps it troubles up a tear, perhaps a prayer that the frightful plague of death will soon be passed.

And it makes his fight a greater fight because of this. It makes the reason of his sacrifice more clear. The things he misses cannot return unless he wins the right to know and love them once again.

This war does not now fall into a pattern of policy or politics or push for power. It has resolved itself into a desperate struggle to survive. It is idle to argue what conspiracy of events dragged us into the most tragic war in history. It only serves to cloud the valor of the men who stand with heads unbowed, who

knew that they must fight until the end, that we and all the things we love might live.

So Christmas comes with all these thoughts in mind. We wonder what to do, how to show our thanks, how to strike a shade from the loneliness they feel. A stalwart, somewhere in the far Pacific, wrote his sweetheart a request: "I'll receive Communion at midnight Mass for you. Please do the same for me. It will make me feel so close to home."

It seems the perfect clue to a happy Christmas, despite the vacant chairs and the heavy memories of days gone by. Christ can supply the common ground to draw all hearts together. His Body and Blood will find its way into Arctic wastes, the jungle trails, the burning desert sands, the deadly seas and sky and into the peaceful altars of our land, and make us one. ■

# If You Don't Like Nativity Scenes, Don't Have One!

By Anna Priore

It's that time of the year again for Salvation Army bell ringers, "holiday songs" on the radio and in every gas station you happen to patronize, and of course the annual griping from our atheist friends about those grotesque plastic representations of the Christmas story in public places. We've heard it all before: public nativities are offensive, exclusive to non-Christians, and a gross violation of Church and State. The few brave businesses who dare to display such an ignominious exhibition can face fines, lawsuits, boycotts, and property damage.

But just what is so offensive about those little plastic figures of a woman, a baby, and a few shepherds?

The first thing most opponents will cite is that public nativities are a violation of Church and State. However, this clause really only applies to the institutions funded by the US government, not private corporations. You will hardly ever see a Christian display outside a courthouse, a public school, a library, or any institution owned and operated by the government. "The State" refers to just that: any establishment that exclusively receives government funds, which most private businesses do not. Anyone outside the realm of "the State" is free to religiously express whatever they wish, as long as it doesn't violate public decency laws. But if the property is a public forum, such as a park, that is different. If the area is available for concerts, artistic displays, rallies, and the like, then the government cannot selectively deny religious expression.

Currently, there is a life-size nativity scene in New York City's Central Park, on the corner of 59th Street and 5th Avenue, courtesy of the Catholic League. The site is known as Grand Army Plaza, and the Catholic League receives a permit from the New York City Parks Department for its crèche. It will be up for 24 days, through the New Year 2017.

Of course, it gets a little tricky when we're talking about a large enough business or university to receive grant money or tax assistance from Uncle Sam. Then the hue and cry of the far-Left seems a bit more justified, at least to them, for they fear their tax dollars are funding Christian fundamentalist extremists. But this again brings me to my initial query: What, exactly, is so offensive about a few plastic figurines? They are not degrading any other religion: Mary isn't stepping on a menorah or sitting on a Buddha figurine. There isn't even a pig among the barn animals to gall the Muslims. Mary and Joseph are not inappropriately clothed, and the shepherds are not armed with AK-47s. There is no nudity, no sacrilege, no degradation of any culture or society. It's just a poor family with their newborn baby, homeless and unnoticed by all but a few shepherds. If anything, this scene of poverty and want should stir up those social justice warriors and champions of the homeless to further prevent what happened to Mary and Joseph over 2,000 years ago from happening to any impoverished family today.

However, most atheists still chomp at the bit, claiming that Christians are misinforming the public by perpetuating a "myth" that never happened. The

atheistic national society, "Freedom From Religion Foundation", does just that, and delights in erecting billboards all across the country with slogans such as "Don't believe in God? You are not alone" and "Dear Santa, all I want for Christmas is to skip church." A casual look at their website reveals that they are rather selective in the religions they wish to purge. There appears to be no mention of eradicating Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and especially not Islam. It's quite obvious that the main goal of their society is to erase Christianity from the earth, and to accomplish this by targeting each and every profession of the Christian faith, be it public or private. Christmas carols are replaced with bland "holiday songs" with no mention of Jesus or religion, and even the few religiously-themed carols that are allowed to exist have been trimmed to politically correct specifications.

Countless cases surface every year of public school students being suspended or even expelled for mentioning Jesus in class or wearing cross necklaces. And one has only to enter any public institution and utter a cheerful "Merry Christmas!" to experience the scowls and terse "Happy Holidays" to follow. Yes, those atheists have been as busy as Santa's elves, going out of their way to be a Grinch and to squash every heart filled with the joy of the Christmas season. But I digress. Not only are today's atheists so selective

about which religion they decide to extinguish, but they also seem to have no problem with statues of Greek and Roman gods, paintings of nymphs and centaurs, or novels outlining the deeds of Ulysses or Jason and the Argonauts. These are myths, and by the same logic should be eliminated and exposed for the fraudulent agendas they tout. But what is the main ambition of Christianity? Not to covert infidels by the sword or brainwash the populace by forced repetition of Bible verses. No, the only "agendas" to be found in the public display of the Nativity are love and humility, which are two virtues that almost everyone can find some degree of agreement with.

I find it rather amusing that an innocent little baby in a manger can be so disturbing to these people. Perhaps the display of humility and love pricks the consciences of the Herods still among us. After all, Christ came to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. But in our hypersensitive, perpetually offended society, we never stop to question why something might deflate our ego or wound our pride. Like Herod, rather than examine ourselves, we would prefer to destroy whatever makes us question the way we see it. We hide behind the excuse that "other groups" are offended by the ideals of Christianity, when in reality we are using them as a scapegoat for our own insecurities. To a guilty conscience,

the purity and innocence of the Holy Family are too much to bear. A barb that many pro-abortion advocates like to throw at pro-life folks is this: "If you don't like abortion, don't have one." Christians, therefore, should not be shy about using this to our own advantage: "If you don't like public nativities, don't look at them!" There are many things we encounter on a daily basis that we may not like to see: the scantily clad actress on the magazine in the checkout line, the yard sign for a political candidate, the vulgar bumper sticker on the car in front of you. More often than not, our only choice is to peacefully reject these things and move on with our day. This is the real world, and we are not toddlers who can throw tantrums whenever something makes us unhappy (though the students at Yale may claim otherwise, as they quiver with indignation in their safe spaces).

Of course, there are certain instances where we have every right to speak out against offensive things such as public indecency, degradation and sacrilege, and deliberate misinformation (one of Planned Parenthood's specialties). But there is nothing offensive about simple plastic figurines, often half-buried in snow, peacefully guarding a newborn babe. Our atheist brothers and sisters need to take a few lessons from the redeemed Scrooge and let the love and light of this Christmas season melt their icy hearts. Merry Christmas to all! ■

## Lost in the Fifties, Too

By Walter L. Matt (RIP)

(Penned by the founder of The Remnant on December 27, 1951)

### Christians Displaced in Israel and Yugoslavia

With each new Christmas I realize more strongly the debt I owe Almighty God, the debt I can never repay. For if there is one priceless treasure that I have and fewer and fewer of my generation have been blessed with, it is a home, a happy Christian home. And at Christmas time especially, when serious-minded columnists like George Sokolsky speak of the "decline of the home" as the root cause of the world crisis of our day, I cannot help but feel sorrow for the millions of victims of broken homes, for the youngsters without parental love and guidance, for the poor separated parents competing in the courts for their children, for the Franchot Tones and Tallulah Bankheads whose names appear in glittering lights even as their souls hunger for the warmth of love and they chase unhappily after the empty, the ephemeral and the meaningless. For such as these our minds and hearts must turn anew to Bethlehem, to that holy Father and Mother and Son who for the first time and for all time gave example to the world where its joy and its peace are to be found.

The Associated Press reported on Christmas Eve: "For several thousand persons in Bethlehem there is no room at the inn. There is not even a stable with a manger. These are the Arab refugees, who, until a little more than three years ago, lived in a part of Palestine which became Israel..."

It is a sad and disconcerting fact that even today in Bethlehem the same inhumanity to man which the Holy Family experienced two thousand years ago should be repeated on such a vast scale. The Arab refugees, the majority of whom are Christians, number approximately 600,000. Many of them are unemployed, their property has been taken away and they have precious little to eat. As a result, according to the Associated Press report, "they wander, like human driftwood, across the barren and rocky land so familiar to Bible readers." For them there is no home, no room at the inn. And for approximately 30,000,000 other refugees throughout this fear-ridden and war-torn world the situation is much the same—no home, no room at the inn. Heartlessness and tyranny and fear again rule the day. The glad tidings the angels sang long ago threaten to be drowned out anew in the mad race of the nation toward war.

And yet, the glad tidings can sometimes still be heard even above the all the din. This Christmas Eve there was an echo of it from the tiny village of Krasic in Yugoslavia. It filtered through from the 400-year-old church there which, according to an Associated Press report, "was not big enough to hold the crowd of peasants and their children who streamed to hear Archbishop Stepinac celebrate Christmas Mass"—his first Christmas since he was conditionally released from prison only a few weeks ago by the Communist Government of Marshal Tito. The Associated Press said that the church was jammed with more than two thousand people and that several hundred peasants knelt on the church steps outside.



**Aloysius Cardinal Stepinac** was Archbishop of Zagreb from 1937 until his death in 1960. He was tried by the communist Yugoslav government after the war and convicted of treason. He served a 16-year sentence, was made cardinal in 1953, and declared a martyr and beatified by Pope John Paul II.

Strange, that so many thousands of people wanted to be with the much maligned and victimized Archbishop on Christmas!—what was it the Yugoslav Ambassador, Mr. Popovic, was telling us here in St. Paul only last week—oh yes, he said the Yugoslav Catholics themselves have little sympathy for the Archbishop and they realized the enormity of his "crime"!

No doubt. And that explains why Krastic, a village of four hundred people, was the center of a gathering of many thousands this Christmas and why, according to the Associated Press, the village "was alive with the Christmas spirit, and children were singing carols before the small homes of the village, and villagers passing each other in the frosty evening gave the age-old Catholic greeting 'Christ be praised!'"

Ah, yes, Mr. Popovic, no doubt the Yugoslavs themselves were singing their carols to Tito! ■

## A Hopeful Sign...

## Sawing Off the Branch

By Hilary White

Two years ago, using the term “schism” in reference to the antics of the Vatican would have got you automatically labeled a sedevacantist or schismatic. Now it is used commonly by nearly everyone, including highly placed prelates in Rome. This is not because the Church is falling apart. It is not because Catholics are losing their Faith. It is because they are finding it. Because the realities have at last begun to overcome the false propaganda of the last five decades.

As the mayhem and destruction of the Bergoglian Wrecking Ball continues, and continues to escalate almost daily, we are seeing more and more examinations of canon law and theology around the question, “Is it possible for a reigning pope to be a schismatic?” Now, I’m not a canonist or a theological scholar. I’m really just someone who knows how to ask people questions. So I don’t pretend to have the answers to that question and all the other related questions that grow logically from it.

But I am a baptized and confirmed Catholic, and I know what the Faith is and what it isn’t. And I know what the Three Laws of Rational Thought are; I know that [a proposition and its opposite can’t both be true](#); I know that there can be [no third “middle” thing between a proposal and its opposite](#); and I know that a thing is the same as itself and [different from another thing](#), that  $A = A$  and not Non-A.

Together, these things make it easy to understand that when Our Lord says anyone who tries to divorce and marry again is an adulterer, and when the Church teaches based on this that such people cannot receive Holy Communion, anyone who says that they can is wrong. Whether he is honestly mistaken or actually a nefarious evildoer bent on destroying the very fabric of reality is of no concern to me. He’s wrong either way, and we cannot follow him, whether he is a priest, a bishop, a cardinal, a pope or an angel from highest Heaven. Yes and no cannot both be the same. Reality is the way it is.  $A = A$ .

So, I’m afraid I become somewhat impatient with people who are panicking. What is there to panic about? We know the Faith. We know what reality is. We know that God does not abandon those who remain faithful to Him, though all the world are against them. None of that matters.

Equally, it doesn’t matter what it will look like. What will it look like, this schism that Bergoglio and his friends are currently helping to bring to final fruition – the same that has been bubbling away for 50 years? What will the world say when a tiny group of recalcitrant “ultraconservatives” call a press conference to declare that Jorge Bergoglio has lost the charism of the papacy and that anyone who follows him is no longer in union with the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church? It will look very much like what it



OUT ON A LIMB

does now. The Bergoglian sect, as we must then call it, will continue to dress and look to the world like Catholic churchmen. They will continue to occupy all or nearly all of the properties, from the Vatican to the local parish. All the world and its institutions; the media, academia, international finance and law, organisations like the EU and the UN, all the nations that currently have diplomatic relations with the Holy See, will call the Bergoglian sect the Catholic Church.

None of that matters at all. A shell of a Church that looks Catholic on the outside but preaches a creed opposed to Christ cannot be the Catholic Church. The Real is what it is;  $A = A$ . A thing is the same as itself and not the same as some other thing. Two opposed things cannot both be true. Yes cannot be the same as no.

Many, many Catholics who will [refuse to jure](#), who will not pinch even a single grain to a false god, will have to find other places to go to Mass. They will have to find other convents and monasteries to live in, or will have to leave religious life altogether. Those who are unwilling to give up religious life will have to carry on without habits in rented houses. Seminarians will have to find other living and study arrangements. Many priests will have to find ways to make a living while carrying on their priestly duties.

These will be difficult things to do, they will be real privations and losses, no mistake. But for these losses we have already been promised eternal glory. And for every person in these kinds of difficulties, there is an opportunity

for grace for someone else. The more difficulties we all face, the more we can step in and help each other in real and concrete ways. And the more we will be drawn together in authentic Christian solidarity.

These things have all happened before. Many times and not that long ago. I know a man who was ordained in a Soviet state who did all his studies for the priesthood while operating a crane in a wire factory, hiding his books under his jacket. We know that Japanese believers held on to the Faith through centuries without any clergy whatever – they had the Rosary and remembered Our Lady. They had catechesis that was passed on orally. And they remembered their martyrs. We know there are Chinese martyrs, both white and red, doing these things right now.

The Faith cannot die, because the God who died has risen from the dead, has conquered death forever. The Church cannot be killed. The people currently trying to kill it don’t believe this, but that doesn’t matter either.

People have asked me how it can possibly make sense that a pope can “go into schism” or be “fomenting schism” or even be a formal heretic. And I agree, it seems outrageous, almost impossible. For many the thought has been almost logically excluded by the false syllogism of papal positivism: “The faith comes from the pope, and whatever the pope says is the faith, therefore...” But it is false.

I maintain that this pontificate of destruction is not destroying the Catholic Church. Of course it isn’t. But

it is destroying these false conceptions, these false syllogisms, that have grown up since the First Vatican Council and were corroding everyone’s faith. Papal positivism is a kind of theological illness in the modern Church, sadly fomented by the popes themselves since the catastrophe of the Second Vatican Council. We all looked to the “orthodox” John Paul II to pull us out of the Church’s tailspin. And for many, faced with blatantly heretical and often evil bishops, the pope became the first and last guarantor of the Faith. It is easy to see how this problem grew. But here it stops. And for the good of souls.

People are lamenting all over, “Bergoglio is destroying the Church!” But this indicates little more than the lamenter’s lack of faith. No, he isn’t. But he is doing a fine job of bringing down the false thing, that anti-Church that has all but subsumed the Church of Christ. And that is a fine thing to watch.

He and all his friends have chosen to sit on a rotting branch, a branch that has been dead for 50 years and was ready to fall off anyway. They are energetically sawing away at it, and it will come down soon, to be sure. Meantime, the Faith is still the Faith. The Real is still the Real. Yes does not mean the same thing as no.  $A = A$ .

St. Athanasius put it better than I ever could:

“May God console you! ... What saddens you ... is the fact that **others have occupied the churches by violence, while during this time you are on the outside.** It is a fact

Continued Next Page

# Unleashing Evil: Mission Accomplished, Modernists!

By Father Celatus

Since we are into the sacred season of Christmas this edition of *The Last Word* will start and end on a cheerful note: Merry Christmas! American citizens, Catholics included, have good reason to be merry of late, with the defeat of a horribly corrupt candidate for the highest political office who seemed all but certain to win the election and wage an infanticide war against infants, unlike any seen since the days of King Herod. And while her victorious opponent is not necessarily a savior he is a spoiler of sorts.

But let's go back in time four years to an election prior to our most recent one. Remember the reelection of the current lame duck President some four years ago; when a widely popular radio pundit said of the then newly reelected candidate, "I hope he fails"? Predictably the unprincipled mainstream media and political hacks charged the pundit with a personal attack upon the President as well as racism and hatred. But the rest of us understood correctly what his words meant; as he explained: "I want his agenda to fail."

I use this well-known example from the secular world of politics to illustrate an important distinction when it comes to the legitimacy of wishing something seemingly evil upon others. In this case the pundit did not will evil (failure) upon a person qua person but failure upon what he perceived—rightly in this case—to be an evil agenda that was manifestly contrary to both the US Constitution and Divine Law. We might say that the words and will of the radio pundit were imprecatory in nature.

The word imprecate comes from a Latin root meaning to pray or invoke and it typically refers to the invocation of some evil upon someone or something, as in a curse or an anathema. Traditional Catholics are familiar with imprecatory prayers; one in particular comes to mind, the Prayer to Saint Michael:

*...may God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, Oh Prince of the heavenly hosts, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls!*

In reciting this prayer, we are asking God to cast into the terrible torments of hell Satan and all evil spirits. Why? Not because we will directly to increase their suffering but because we will that they would cease to exercise their evil upon earth and drag more souls to hell. Our hatred is not directed at them—even as deserving of contempt as they are—but is directed at stopping the evil that they cause and occasion. It is the important principle of double effect which allows Christians, in charity, to recite imprecatory prayers. In the case of evil spirits, the intended effect is to stop their evil; a predictable secondary effect which would follow is that their own suffering will increase as a result of being cast into hell—deservedly so!

The principle of double effect is critical to human social behavior. It is the principle that allows a soldier or a sheriff or individual citizen under certain circumstances to willfully kill a human being with moral impunity when the intended effect is to protect innocent life, even though the probable secondary effect is the loss of life of someone: an enemy, a criminal or an unjust aggressor. Once the threat to innocent life is eliminated or subdued, the principle ceases to be operative. For example, if a sheriff wounds and arrests a criminal he does not have a right to kill the captive individual; likewise, in an act of personal self-defense.

Unfortunately, many Catholics are ignorant of this important principle and are also ignorant of the Prayer to Saint Michael as well as a number of other imprecatory prayers, including many psalms of the Bible. For the modernists of the sixties stripped the sacred liturgy of the imprecatory Prayer to Saint Michael and the breviary of the imprecatory psalms of Scripture. No wonder forces of evil have become so strong.

The widely respected non-Catholic author C.S. Lewis wrote, "The ferocious parts of the Psalms serve as a reminder that there is in the world such a thing as wickedness and that . . . is hateful to God." *The Last Word* agrees with this assessment and suggests that the elimination of imprecatory prayers has had the two-fold harmful effect of reducing the Catholic arsenal against forces of evil and dumbed down a sense among Catholics of the presence and ferocity of evil in the world. Mission accomplished, Modernists!

The following psalms are regarded as imprecatory (Douay Rheims numbering): 17, 34, 51, 58, 68, 108, and 136. Let's take a small sampling from among these psalms and apply them to some modern evils.

*Let their habitation be made desolate; and let there be none to dwell in their tabernacles. Add thou iniquity upon their*



Popule meus, quid feci tibi?

*iniquity: and let them not come into thy justice. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written. (Ps 68)*

Imagine that the enemy is the Democratic Party and the diabolical platform to which it is committed. We should will and pray that they would become desolate of any candidates and that there be no citizens who support them. While we should not will that individuals still living be blotted out of the book of the living prior to the divine judgement upon the soul, we should will that any who are now committed to the party platform would realize the eternal peril to their own soul so that they might repent and be saved from hell.

*Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem: Who say: Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, miserable: blessed shall he be who shall repay thee thy payment which thou hast paid us. Blessed be he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock. (Ps 136)*

Imagine that the miserable daughter of Babylon in this psalm is Planned Parenthood, which quite literally dashes and slashes infants to death in the slaughter of abortion. We should will and pray for the utter end of this diabolical organization as swiftly as possible. As to "taking and dashing thy little ones against the rock", this can be understood to mean that we are praying for an end of the ability of Planned Parenthood to corrupt future generations and coopt innocent girls as they currently do, such as with little Girl Scouts.

This small sampling should demonstrate that even the harshest of the imprecatory psalms can be prayed in Christian charity and applied to modern forces of evil in the world and within the Church. Speaking of which, regarding the evil agenda of Francis of Rome, **I hope he fails!**

Merry Christmas, Remnant readers! ■

## Sawing Off the Branch

H. White/Continued from Page 14

that they have the premises – but you have the Apostolic Faith. **They can occupy our churches, but they are outside the true Faith.** You remain outside the places of worship, but the Faith dwells within you. Let us consider: what is more important, the place or the Faith? The true Faith, obviously. Who has lost and who has won in the struggle – the one who keeps the premises or the one who keeps the Faith? True, the premises are good when the Apostolic Faith is preached there; they are holy if everything takes place there in a holy way ...

**"You are the ones who are happy; you who remain within the Church by your Faith,** who hold firmly to the foundations of the Faith which has come down to you from Apostolic Tradition. And if an execrable jealousy has tried to shake it on a number of occasions, it has not succeeded. **They are the ones who have broken away from it in the present crisis.** No one, ever, will prevail against your Faith, beloved Brothers. And we believe that God will give us our churches back some day.

"Thus, the more violently they try to occupy the places of worship, the more they separate themselves from the Church. **They claim that they represent the Church; but**

**in reality, they are the ones who are expelling themselves from it and going astray.** Even if Catholics faithful to Tradition are reduced to a handful, they are the ones who are the true Church of Jesus Christ."

So it only remains to ask, what must we do? And the Church has the same answer for us that she has always given: instruct the ignorant; counsel the doubtful; admonish sinners; bear wrongs patiently; forgive offenses; console the afflicted; pray for the living and the dead.

Is it as simple as that? Keep doing the thing we've always known we should?

Yes. It's as simple as that. If you aren't doing them now, start. If you are, do them a bit more. And help someone else to start doing them or to do them a bit more. Help someone you know to stop lamenting and give up papal positivism. Honestly, there has never been a more useful pontificate for finding teaching opportunities. People are upset; and we have the solution.

And there has never been a time in human history when the information we need has been more accessible. We all carry a device around with us that gives us access to all the teaching of the Church, the Fathers, Doctors, saints and popes. All of the Summa is in your pocket right now.

But most of all, remember to thank God for the Faith He has given you, and sustained in you. It could easily have been different. ■

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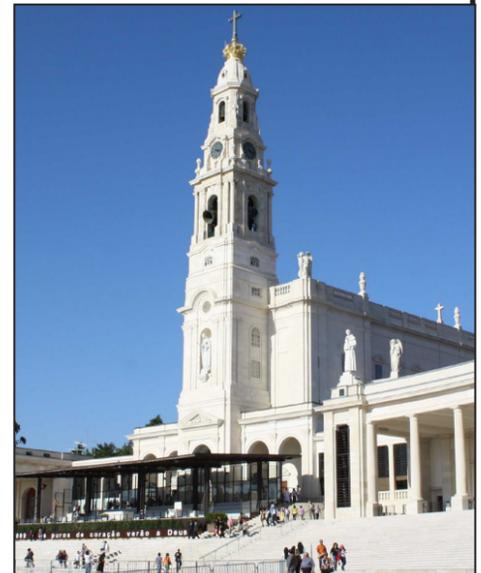


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