

# The Remnant

(Est. in 1967)

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

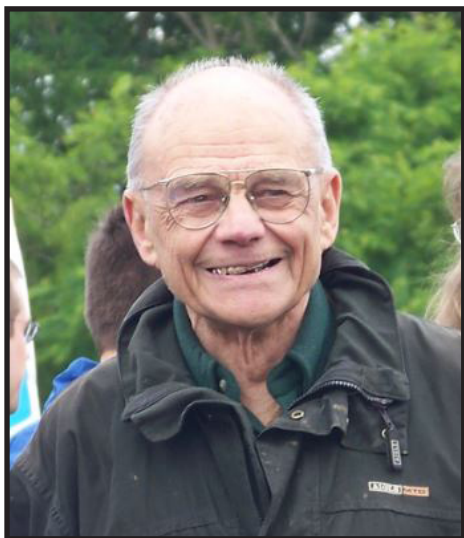


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## Pioneer French Traditionalist, Arnaud de Lassus, RIP

By Michael Matt



Arnaud de Lassus (Godfather of the U.S. Chapter on the Chartres Pilgrimage)

It is with no small degree of sadness that I hastily pen these few lines the day after the passing of my old friend and mentor, Baron Arnaud de Lassus, in my opinion the premier French traditionalist of the post-conciliar era.

The following obituary appeared earlier today in the French online journal, Le Salon Beige:

“Arnaud de Lassus, RIP. We announce the death of Arnaud de Lassus, who was a pillar of the former Cité Catholique,

~ See *de Lassus, RIP*/Page 2

## An Urgent Appeal to Prayer

(From Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Archbishops Lenga and Peta)

By Bishop Athanasius Schneider

*That Pope Francis may confirm the unchanging praxis of the Church with regard to the truth of the indissolubility of marriage.*

Following the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, in some particular churches there were published norms for its application and interpretations whereby the divorced who have attempted civil marriage with a new partner, notwithstanding the sacramental bond by which they are joined to their legitimate spouse, are admitted to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist without fulfilling the duty, established by God, of ceasing to violate the bond of their existing sacramental marriage.

Cohabitation *more uxorio* with a person who is not one's legitimate spouse represents, at the same time, an offense to the Covenant of Salvation, of which sacramental marriage is a sign (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2384), and an offense to the nuptial character of the Eucharistic mystery itself. Pope Benedict XVI revealed such a correlation when he wrote: “The Eucharist inexhaustibly strengthens the indissoluble unity and love of every



Bishop Athanasius Schneider

Christian marriage. By the power of the sacrament, the marriage bond is intrinsically linked to the Eucharistic unity of Christ the Bridegroom and his Bride, the Church (cf. Eph. 5:31-32)” (Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, 27).

Pastors of the Church who tolerate or authorize, even in individual or exceptional cases, the reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist by the divorced and so-called “remarried,” without their being clothed in the “wedding garment,” despite the fact that God himself has prescribed it in Sacred

Scripture (cf. Matt. 22:11 and 1 Cor. 11:28-29) as the necessary requirement for worthy participation in the nuptial Eucharistic supper, such pastors are complicit in this way with a continual offense against the sacramental bond of marriage, the nuptial bond between Christ and the Church and the nuptial bond between Christ and the individual soul who receives his Eucharistic Body.

Several particular Churches have issued or recommended pastoral guidelines with this or a similar formulation: “If then this choice [of living in continence] is difficult to practice for the stability of the couple, *Amoris laetitia* does not

~ See *Bishop Schneider*/Page 5

## A Vatican-Democratic Party Alliance? (The Remnant Asks Trump Administration to Investigate)

### Dear President Trump:

The campaign slogan “Make America Great Again,” resonated with millions of common Americans and your tenacity in pushing back against many of the most harmful recent trends has been most inspiring. We all look forward to seeing a continued reversal of the collectivist trends of recent decades.

Reversing recent collectivist trends will, by necessity, require a reversal of many of the actions taken by the previous administration. Among those actions we believe that there is one that remains

cloaked in secrecy. Specifically, we have reason to believe that a Vatican “regime change” was engineered by the Obama administration.

We were alarmed to discover that, during the third year of the first term of the Obama administration your previous opponent, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and other government officials with whom she associated proposed a Catholic “revolution” in which the final demise of what was left of the Catholic Church in America would be realized.[1] Approximately a year after this e-mail

~ See *Vatican-Democratic*/Page 7



“America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

- Alexis de Tocqueville

# Pioneer French Traditionalist, Arnaud de Lassus, RIP

M. Matt/Continued from Page 1

and of the “International Office for the Works of Civic Training and Doctrinal Action under the Natural and Christian Law”, founded by Jean Ousset. He was head of the traditional Catholic magazine ‘*Action Familiale et Scolaire*. He is also the father of Dom Dysmas de Lassus, Prior of the Grande Chartreuse and General Minister of the Order. The Funeral will take place in Versailles on Monday, 30 January, at 10:30”.

On a personal note and to posthumously pay the debt of gratitude I owe him, I’m eager to admit that, over the course of my life, I have learned so very much about questions of Catholic counterrevolution, the Kingship of Christ, Catholic Social Teaching, the work of the great Jean Ousset, the historical uprising of the “first traditional Catholics” in the Vendee, the pilgrimage to Chartres – from Arnaud de Lassus.

Generally speaking, the social Kingship of Christ and the true meaning of Catholic action was his forte, and, as a young man, I was truly honored to visit him in his home in Versailles before the pilgrimage to Chartres, and to sit and breathe in his extraordinary *sensus Catholicus*.

Arnaud worked closely with men such as the great Jean Ousset, Jean Madiran and Louis Salleron (co-founders of *Itinéraires*), his confreres at *Action Familiale et Scolaire* (sort of the French equivalent of The Remnant), Michael Davies, Fr. Harry Marchosky, my father,



**American Pilgrims, Honored To Stand With the Legendary, "Monsieur de Lassus", on the Road to Chartres** (From left to right: John Rao, Michael Matt, Fr. Paul McDonald, Arnaud de Lassus, Bob Hurt, Chris Ferrara)

Walter Matt, Hamish Fraser, Tony Fraser and many other traditionalists all over the world.

And now that he has gone to his eternal reward, perhaps he will forgive me for sharing one of my favorite stories about Arnaud de Lassus. Never one to brag or to speak of himself at all, it took years of me hinting and then coaxing before he would finally confirm the veracity of the event as recounted to me by an old friend of his, years earlier. You see, before his retirement he’d served as an engineer and an officer in the French Navy, developing missile technology. At some point, his *avant-garde* work in that field attracted the attention of the President of France, Charles de Gaulle. It was determined that Arnaud de Lassus and a handful of his fellow officers were to be honored by the French president personally.

Alas, Charles de Gaulle had made some political decisions in the post-war era, especially where Algeria was concerned, that had enraged many French patriots. It was believed at the time that de Gaulle had abandoned that country and left it susceptible to Communist takeover. As a testament to the man’s character, allow me to recount how that award ceremony played out.

When Arnaud was to be awarded his metal of commendation from the hand of the President on a parade ground, he made a difficult decision. With all the appropriate fanfare, Charles de Gaulle approached each man who was to be awarded, pinned a metal to his chest, saluted him, and then shook his hand. But when de Gaulle attached the metal to Arnaud’s chest and saluted him, he extended his hand in vain. Arnaud de Lassus honorably held his salute, but in front of all the people in attendance that day, refused to shake the hand of the President of France. This was many years ago, but it helps us understand something about the courage of this man.

Moving on to something to which all

international Catholic phenomenon it is today, packing out that same Cathedral with tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world every year. This is one of the most amazing success stories in the traditional Catholic world today, and I have often wondered if any of us on this side of the Atlantic would ever have heard of it had it not been for Arnaud de Lassus.

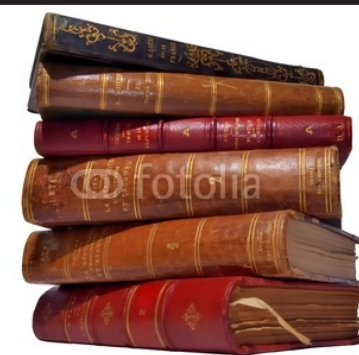
He spoke at several Remnant conferences stateside over the years, and contributed occasional articles to The Remnant. In fact, his last book was published by the Remnant Press, “*UNHOLY CRAFT: Freemasonry and the Roots of Christophobia*”.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Madame de Lassus, who dedicated much of her adult life to the promotion of the cult of the Infant Jesus. She spread word of the power of the Infant literally all over the world. It is no exaggeration to suggest that this extraordinarily Catholic couple lived lives of great holiness, virtue and sanctity—totally dedicated to the Catholic restoration, the Mother of God, and the Kinship of Christ.

That being said, this loyal soldier of Jesus Christ believed with all of his heart in the justice of Christ. He would thus admonish me if I failed to beg all English-speaking traditional Catholics to pray for the repose of the soul of Arnaud de Lassus—a quiet intellectual and spiritual giant. Please remember him in your rosaries and, of course, in your Masses. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude as one of the great traditionalist pioneers who refused to go along with the revolution in France, the ‘eldest daughter of the Church’.

I would also like to extend The Remnant’s deepest condolences to our allies at AFS, to Arnaud’s son, Yves de Lassus, and to the many children and grandchildren of this extraordinary Catholic warrior.

**Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace. ■**



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# The Remnant Speaks

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## The Women's March on Washington

Editor, *The Remnant*: JUDY...JUDY... JUDY! The future belongs to those who love children. To love is to will the good of another. "A life not lived for others is not a life." -Mother Teresa

The march of women for the right to kill their own babies destroys peace in our nation, and ultimately leads to its death by genocide. Viewing the march and listening to the words of hate being spewed against life, I must regard the abortionist or the advocates of abortion as an enemy and a tyrant, as a potential denier of every man's basic inalienable rights. The future belongs to posterity; the contribution of today's families to tomorrow's world cannot be made by canceling the options of future generations but, rather, by instilling in their children love of God and man, the habit of virtue, and hope in the future. This message is for all times.

Joan Solms  
Aurora

## Dale Ahlquist vs. GK Chesterton?

Editor, *The Remnant*: I watched the recent debate between Dale Ahlquist, Michael Matt, and Stephen Moore about whether *Amoris Laetitia* teaches sound doctrine or not.

I confess I was dismayed and disturbed to see Dale, of all people, opposing the firm, bimillennial teaching of the Church based on the Gospel (expressed recently and unambiguously by St. John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* #84) by arguing that adultery can occasionally be justified, and so, in such cases, be compatible with reception of sacramental absolution and Holy Communion.

I feel pretty sure that Dale himself, since becoming a Catholic, never dissented from this basic teaching of Christ and his Church until Pope Francis started doing so. No more than Chesterton ever did. But instead of recognizing that *AL* has put the Church in a rare and historically grave situation like that in the 1330s when Pope John XXII repeatedly taught false doctrine about the beatific vision and had to be corrected, Dale seems to be just 'going with the flow'.

GK (author of *The Superstition of Divorce*, among other things) must be turning in his grave at what his leading American champion is now saying.

Fr. Brian W. Harrison, OS, STD  
Oblates of Wisdom Study Center  
St. Louis, Missouri

## Did Jesus Give Holy Communion to Judas?

Editor, *The Remnant*: During the recent debate at the AOTM Club concerning the divorced and remarried, your opponent, Steve Moore, stated that Jesus offered communion to Judas. This statement is 100% in error and can be proven by a careful reading of the Gospels.

Matthew 26:21-26 and Mark 14:18-24 both describe the events of the Last Supper. The meal preceded the

institution of the Eucharist. It was during the meal when the dipping of the morsel (Matzah) took place. The Matzah was unleavened bread eaten with the paschal lamb.

Luke 22:17-20 has the Eucharist taking place prior to the dipping of the Matzah. However, Luke did not always write in chronological order as evidenced by 3:19-23. In verses 19-20 he wrote that John the Baptist was "shut up in prison" by Herod - at which time he was beheaded. In verses 21-23 he writes of Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist. This would have been after John was beheaded. Talk of a miracle!

John 13:26-30 does not mention the institution of the Eucharist. However, it does mention the dipping of the Matzah during the meal after which "Judas went out immediately". Therefore, Judas was not present for the institution of the Eucharist.

Please inform your opponent, Steve Moore, the AOTM Club, and the Remnant readers and viewers of your opponent's error for the good of the Faith. (Source and Quotations: Douay Rheims Bible)

Paul T. Schultz  
Pittsburgh, PA

## Soros Lost

Editor, *The Remnant*: From his fortress-like mansion in Katonah, Westchester County, 40 miles north of New York City, multi-billionaire money-manipulator George Soros (aka/Schwarz) is brooding over his \$1-billion dollar loss in his fruitless effort to promote Hillary Rodham Clinton to the U.S. Presidency. Dwelling on this unexpected setback to the Socialistic "One-World" plans of elite Bilderberg Globalists, Soros has falsely insinuated that our new President Donald J. Trump is "a con artist and would-be dictator, as was Adolf Hitler"!

President Trump is well aware of the Soros "Open Society" globalist agenda, which is diametrically opposed to his "America-First" patriotic populism, and restoration of American nationalism (not a mere "homeland" without borders). Soros' political contributions are routinely given, in many forms, to Democrat politicians; but occasionally to "RINO" Republican candidates, such as given to John McCain, Lindsey Graham, John Kasich (for instance).

Now perhaps even more interesting, regarding the election of President Trump, is another political globalist addict, who supports Soros-&-Company---from Buenos Aires and Vatican City---the Bishop of Rome, Pope Bergoglio (aka/Francis-1). This Pope is dead-silent on the five dubia of the famous four cardinals, but has time to answer questions put forth by the liberal Spanish newspaper "El Pais" concerning the election of U.S. President Donald J. Trump. The Pope observed that it is "too early to pass judgment on Trump"---but apparently not too early to cast innuendos that Trump somehow, somewhat, resembles Hitler. Yes, can

you believe it---Adolf Hitler is brought back from the grave!

Famous for off-the-cuff verdicts, this Pope warns against "populism" and "saviors like Hitler"! But after all, "who am I to judge"?---a mere rhetorical question asked for effect with no answer expected. But the effect is scandal. Where does the 1st Amendment of free speech and free press begin; where does libel law enter? And what of moral law as found in the Decalogue regarding false witness? In the end, God will not be mocked. "None are righteous, no, not one".

Robert Dahl

## Congrats from Canada

Editor, *The Remnant*: In 1990, Sister Lucy of Fatima warned Cardinal Caffarra that the final battle between Our Lord and the devil will be over marriage and the family. Perhaps not coincidentally, Cardinal Caffarra is one of the four cardinals who have submitted 5 doubts (dubia) to the Holy Father regarding the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

Congratulations, Americans, on this new President. Yes all of us must pray for his protection as he is giving God credit. Inaugural prayers by the strange Cardinal Dolan, the good ministers and rabbi actually not only acknowledged God the Father, but for the first time recognized Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Trump is already stopping sending blood money to countries to kill their babies! God bless America and God bless President Trump,

Penny Costin (I am Canadian, and believe you me, we are so far left that we are hanging over the ABYSS.)

## Remnant Schismatic?

Editor, *The Remnant*: I hope by now that you have received my donation to your foundation. Never in my life did I imagine that I would be giving money to the Remnant, but I simply felt compelled. Your analysis of the catastrophe that is the Francis Papacy is the most incisive and comprehensive I have seen anywhere. I am not quite prepared to become a subscriber, but I am a regular visitor to your website. I actually was a longtime subscriber to the other Matt family Catholic newspaper. It must also be said that, at least a few years ago still, to the extent they mentioned the Remnant or Rad Trads at all, they painted a somewhat misleading picture. My impression was that the Remnant was schismatic or close to it. I have read enough of you now to know that is certainly not the case. I disagree with some of your positions to be sure, but they are certainly legitimate.

One area in which we are in complete harmony regards the liturgy. The full restoration of the Latin Mass is essential to the recovery of the Church from crisis in which it has been mired and also the world. I remember thinking that this was a ridiculous notion when I first read it 20 or 25 years ago. Now I understand and concur entirely.

I am an avid reader of conservative political websites and magazines. Much of the Catholic commentariat has been coming around over the last year-and-a-half in the face of rather overwhelming evidence as concerns what has been happening in the Vatican. It is to your credit that you saw it first and continue to report it best. Best Regards,

Tony Wawrzynski  
Westlake, Ohio

Editor, *The Remnant*: I read the following on LifeSite News today. It's an excerpt of Pope Francis' Christmas speech. No doubt you have read this already.

In his Christmas address, he (Pope Francis) says that reforms can be approved as an experiment, but does not indicate what type of reform he has in mind. "Gradualism has to do with the necessary discernment entailed by historical processes, the passage of time and stages of development, assessment, correction, experimentation, and approvals ad

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# Letters to the Editor Continued...

experimentum. In these cases, it is not a matter of indecision, but of the flexibility needed to be able to achieve a true reform."

After Vatican II concluded, was there "gradualism" when bishops allowed their priests to face their congregations. Was there "gradualism" in 1967 when the bishops allowed their priests to quit celebrating and to begin "performing" the mass. (There's a huge difference between a celebration and a performance.)

Thanks to Pope Francis, my vocabulary has expanded: "accompaniment, ecumenism, proselytism gradualism."

So, Michael and Chris: Would you please email an updated list of Pope Francis' new words to me? I remain ever so belligerently yours,

Bill Richards  
Lafayette, LA

### The Pope's Still Catholic, Right?

Editor, *The Remnant*: The cartoon "The Pope's still Catholic, right?" is classic. I was bustin'! Still am. One thing I would add to it ... A.L. (Amoris Laetitia) on the toilet paper roll. I thought, perhaps, the TP stuck to the bear's foot might be Francis' next Apostolic Exhortation, or encyclical.

Also, I was wondering if the bear is a female that identifies as a male, and so, chose to use the men's room ... just thinkin'. You should project that cartoon on St. Peter's basilica. Certainly, I would send it to the Vatican.

Keep up the good work. We could use more good humor during these days of insanity.

Yours in the Infant King and the Virgin Queen,

David J. Kobza

### Seeking Pilgrimage Partners



Dear Remnant Readers: My name is Maria Bischel, the third child of ten in my family. I have been blessed to be brought up in a family faithful to the Traditional Latin mass and faith. Perhaps this influence is what has given me such a longing to make the Chartres pilgrimage. The stories of my two older siblings, who have experienced the journey, have also contributed to my desire. Currently, I am a sophomore at Miami University in Ohio, working toward a degree in Early Childhood Education.

My three part-time jobs enable me to finance my education. At Miami, I am fortunate to be part of a dedicated pro-life club. However, this present environment is entirely different from the Catholic school I was privileged to attend for most of my education. In such a hollow world, I have come to rely so much more upon the values and truths I have learned from my parents and my Catholic education.

To me, there seems such simplicity in the idea of a pilgrimage. It is a short time in which to forget the fears and worries of our modern lives. It may seem strange, but in addition to this simplicity,

I also long for the penance and sacrifice of a pilgrimage. It is a tangible way to offer some little reparation for my sins, and the great offences committed against God today. Such a journey is a special opportunity to obey the command of Our Lady at Fatima: "Pray! Pray a great deal and make sacrifices for sinners."

Besides these intentions, I would be honored to include yours as well. Not all aspiring pilgrims have the opportunity to participate; therefore, I hope to carry your prayers along with mine. One of my particular intentions would be for a reawakening of modesty and purity, especially in my parish. I have recently come to the realization of just how crucial and neglected is this issue. I am sure that modesty is a foundation on which all else rests, and that its erosion is the root of so many of our modern evils. I am sincerely grateful for your consideration in sponsoring me to join the pilgrimage. I also would commend your intentions to my little sister St. Monica, who entered heaven in 2007 after one year here with us. Surely the ancient Chartres pilgrimage would welcome this little saint along. The pilgrimage, a path trod by saints as far back as St. Joan of Arc and farther, has long been a comforting and encouraging witness of how Christendom endures. I hope to join these ranks of pilgrims and help show a world so indifferent, that we owe much penance, much gratitude and much adoration to our Creator and Savior. May God bless you.

A hopeful pilgrim,  
Maria Bischel (Harrison, OH)

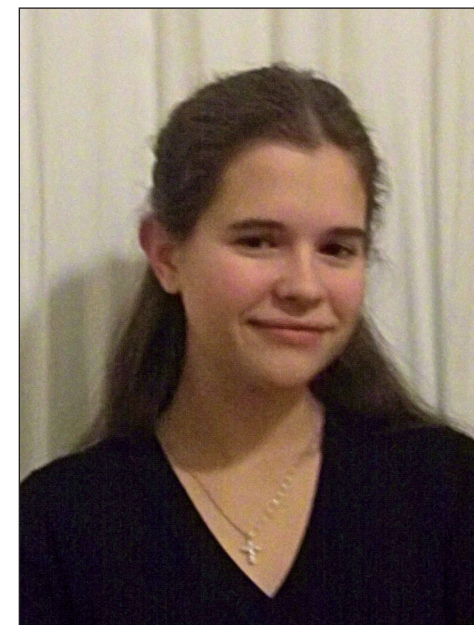
Dear Remnant Readers: My name is Olivia Rao, and I am currently a freshman at the Catholic University of America, in Washington DC. I walked the Chartres Pilgrimage for the first time in June of 2014, after having grown up hearing stories about it every year; but I was completely unprepared for the experience I had, which turned out to be the most incredible three days of my life.

I remember Mr. Michael Matt once

saying to me "There is no way I would be able do this physically if I wasn't devoted to this cause," and I soon found it to be the same for me. I have never – before or since – been in as much pain as I was during those seventy-two hours. Yet somehow, despite all the pain I was in, the understanding of my reasons for being there – my dedication to my Catholic faith and to the Latin Mass – helped me through what would otherwise have been an impossible walk.

The opportunity to walk a more than seventy-mile pilgrimage surrounded by fellow Catholics, singing, praying, and helping each other along the way, and to attend a daily traditional Latin mass, whether it be in the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris or in a field in the middle of the countryside, is something from which every Catholic would benefit greatly.

Needless to say, I have since 2014 wanted very much to walk this pilgrimage again, as it would be a lifeline for me as I strive to persevere in my faith through college and beyond. So I am writing this letter to request for financial aid in order to attend this coming Pentecost, 2017. In appreciation for your generosity, I will offer my pilgrimage for you and your intentions. Thank you, and may God bless you,



Olivia Rao  
New York, NY



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*We promise to walk this pilgrimage for you and your intentions.*

# An Urgent Appeal to Prayer

(From Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Archbishops Lenga and Peta)

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exclude the possibility of access to Penance and the Eucharist. That signifies something of an openness, as in the case where there is a moral certainty that the first marriage was null, but there are not the necessary proofs for demonstrating such in the judicial process. Therefore, there is no reason why the confessor, at a certain point, in his own conscience, after much prayer and reflection, should not assume the responsibility before God and the penitent asking that the sacraments be received in a discreet manner.”

The previously mentioned pastoral guidelines contradict the universal tradition of the Catholic Church, which by means of an uninterrupted Petrine Ministry of the Sovereign Pontiffs has always been faithfully kept, without any shadow of doubt or of ambiguity, either in its doctrine or its praxis, in that which concerns the indissolubility of marriage.

The norms mentioned and pastoral guidelines contradict moreover in practice the following truths and doctrines that the Catholic Church has continually taught as being sure:

· The observance of the Ten Commandments of God, and in particular the Sixth Commandment, binds every human person, without exception, always and in every situation. In this matter, one cannot admit individual or exceptional cases or speak of a fuller ideal. St Thomas Aquinas says: “The precepts of the Decalogue embody the intention of the legislator, that is God. Therefore, the precepts of the Decalogue permit no dispensation” (*Summa theol.* 1-2, q.100, a.8c).

· The moral and practical demands, which derive from the Ten Commandments of God, and in particular from the indissolubility of marriage, are not simple norms or positive laws of the Church, but an expression of the holy will of God. Consequently, one cannot speak in this respect of the primacy of the person over the norm or the law, but one must rather speak of the primacy of the will of God over the will of the sinful human person, in such a way that this person is saved, by fulfilling the will of God with the help of his grace.

· To believe in the indissolubility of marriage and to contradict it by one’s own actions while at the same time considering oneself even being free from grave sin and calming one’s conscience by trusting in God’s mercy alone, represents a self-deception against which Tertullian, a witness to the faith and practice of the Church of the first centuries warned: “Some say that for God it is sufficient that one accepts his will in one’s heart and soul, even if one’s actions do not correspond to this: in this manner they think themselves able to sin while maintaining the integrity of the principle of faith and

fear of God: in this way, it is absolutely the same as if one attempted to maintain the principle of chastity, while violating and breaking the holiness and integrity of the matrimonial bond” (Tertullian, *De poenitentia* 5,10).

· The observance of the Commandments of God and in particular of the indissolubility of marriage cannot be presented as a fuller expression of an ideal towards which one should strive in accordance with the criterion of the good which is possible or achievable. It is rather the case of an obligation which God himself has unequivocally commanded, the non-observance of which, in accordance with his Word, carries the penalty of eternal damnation. To say to the faithful the contrary would seem to signify misleading them or encouraging them to disobey the will of God, and in such way endangering their eternal salvation.

· God gives to every man assistance in the observance of his Commandments, when such a request is properly made, as the Church has infallibly taught: “God does not command that which is impossible, but in commanding he exhorts you to do that which you are able, and to ask for that which you cannot do, and so he assists you that you might be able to do it” (Council of Trent, session 6, chapter 11) and “and if someone says that even for the man who has been justified and established in grace the commandments of God are impossible to observe: let him be anathema” (Council of Trent, session 6, canon 18.) Following this infallible doctrine, St John Paul II

taught: “Keeping God’s law in particular situations can be difficult, extremely difficult, but it is never impossible. This is the constant teaching of the Church’s tradition” (Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, 102) and “All husbands and wives are called in marriage to holiness, and this lofty vocation is fulfilled to the extent that the human person is able to respond to God’s command with serene confidence in God’s grace and in his or her own will” (Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 34).

· The sexual act outside of a valid marriage, and in particular adultery, is always objectively gravely sinful and no circumstance and no reason can render it admissible or pleasing in the sight of God. St Thomas Aquinas says that the Sixth Commandment obliges even in the case where an act of adultery could save a country from tyranny (*De Malo*, q.15, a.1, ad. 5). St John Paul II taught this perennial truth of the Church: “The negative moral precepts, those prohibiting certain concrete actions or kinds of behaviour as intrinsically evil, do not allow for any legitimate exception. They do not leave room, in any morally acceptable way, for the “creativity” of any contrary determination whatsoever. Once the moral species of an action prohibited by a universal rule is concretely recognized, the only morally good act is that of obeying the moral law and of refraining from the action which it forbids” (Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, 67).

· The adulterous union of those who are civilly divorced and “remarried,” “consolidated,” as they

say, over time and characterized by a so-called “proven fidelity” in the sin of adultery, cannot change the moral quality of their act of violation of the sacramental bond of marriage, that is, of their adultery, which remains always an intrinsically evil act. A person who has the true faith and a filial fear of God can never be “understanding” towards acts which are intrinsically evil, as are sexual acts outside of a valid marriage, since these acts are offensive to God.

· The admission of the divorced and “remarried” to Holy Communion constitutes in practice an implicit dispensation from the observance of the Sixth Commandment. No ecclesiastical authority has the power to concede such an implicit dispensation in a single case, or in an exceptional or complex situation or with the goal of achieving a good end (as in example the education of the children born of an adulterous union) invoking for such a concession the principle of mercy, or the “via caritatis,” or the maternal care of the Church or affirming not to want to impose many conditions to mercy. St Thomas Aquinas said: “In no circumstances should a person commit adultery (pro nulla enim utilitate debet aliquis adulterium committere)” (*De Malo*, q.15, a.1, ad. 5).

· A norm which permits the violation of the Sixth Commandment of God and of the sacramental matrimonial bond only in a single case or in exceptional cases, presumably to avoid a general change to the canonical norm,

Continued Next Page



+ Tomash Peta, Metropolitan Archbishop of the archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana, + Jan Pawel Lenga, Archbishop-Bishop emeritus of Karaganda, + Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of the archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana (Photo Credit: LSN.com)

# An Urgent Appeal to Prayer

Bishop Schneider/**Continued from Page 5**

nonetheless always signifies a contradiction of the truth and of the will of God. Consequently, it is psychologically out of place and theologically erroneous to speak in this case of a restrictive norm or of a lesser evil in contrast with the general norm.

A valid marriage of the baptized is a sacrament of the Church and of its nature has a public character. A subjective judgment of the conscience in relation to the invalidity of one's own marriage, in contrast to the corresponding definitive judgment of an ecclesiastical tribunal, cannot bring consequences for sacramental discipline, since the sacramental discipline always has a public character.

The Church, and specifically the minister of the sacrament of Penance, does not have the faculty to judge on the state of conscience of an individual member of the faithful or on the rectitude of the intention of the conscience, since "ecclesia de occultis non iudicat" (Council of Trent, session 24, chapter 1). The minister of the sacrament of Penance is consequently not the vicar or representative of the Holy Spirit, able to enter with His light in the innermost recesses of the conscience, since God has reserved such access to the conscience strictly to himself: "sacrarium in quo homo solus est cum Deo" (Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, 16). The confessor cannot arrogate to himself the responsibility before God and before the penitent, of implicitly dispensing him from the observance of the Sixth Commandment and of the indissolubility of the matrimonial bond by admitting him to Holy Communion. The Church does not have the faculty to derive consequences for the external forum of sacramental discipline on the basis of a presumed conviction of conscience of the invalidity of one's own marriage in the internal forum.

A practice which permits to those who have a civil divorce, the so called "remarried," to receive the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, notwithstanding their intention to continue to violate the Sixth Commandment and their sacramental bond of matrimony in the future, would be contrary to Divine truth and alien to the perennial sense of the Catholic Church, to the proven custom, received and faithfully kept from the time of the Apostles and more recently confirmed in a sure manner by St John Paul II (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 84) and by Pope Benedict XVI (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, 29).

The practice mentioned would be for every rational and sensible person an evident rupture with the perennial and Apostolic practice of the Church and would therefore not

represent a development in continuity. In the face of such a fact, no argument would be valid: *contra factum non valet argumentum*. Such a pastoral practice would be a counter-witness to the indissolubility of marriage and a kind of collaboration on the part of the Church in the propagation of the "plague of divorce," which the Vatican Council II warned against (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 47).

The Church teaches by means of what she does, and she has to do what she teaches. With relation to the pastoral action concerning those in irregular unions, St John Paul II said: "The aim of pastoral action will be to make these people understand the need for consistency between their choice of life and the faith that they profess, and to try to do everything possible to induce them to regularize their situation in the light of Christian principle. While treating them with great charity and bringing them into the life of the respective communities, the pastors of the Church will regrettably not be able to admit them to the sacraments" (Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 82).

An authentic accompaniment of persons who find themselves in an objective state of grave sin and on a corresponding journey of pastoral discernment cannot fail to announce to such people, in all charity, the complete will of God, in such a way that they repent wholeheartedly of their sinful actions of living *more uxorio* with a person who is not their legitimate spouse. At the same time, an authentic accompaniment and pastoral discernment must encourage them, with the help of God's grace, not to commit such acts in the future. The Apostles and the entire Church throughout two millennia have always announced to mankind the whole truth concerning the Sixth Commandment and the indissolubility of marriage, following the admonition of St Paul the Apostle: "I did not shrink from the responsibility of announcing to you the complete will of God" (Acts 20:27).

The pastoral praxis of the Church concerning Marriage and the sacrament of the Eucharist has such an importance and such decisive consequences for the faith and the life of the faithful, that the Church, in order to remain faithful to the revealed Word of God, must avoid in this matter any shadow of doubt and confusion. St John Paul II formulated this perennial truth of the Church thus: "With this reminder of the doctrine and the law of the church I wish to instill into everyone the lively sense of responsibility which must guide us when we deal with sacred things like the sacraments, which are not our property, or like consciences, which have a right not to be left in uncertainty and confusion. The sacraments and consciences, I repeat, are sacred, and both require

that we serve them in truth. This is the reason for the Church's law" (Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 33).

Notwithstanding repeated declarations concerning the immutability of the teaching of the Church concerning divorce, several particular churches nowadays accept divorce in their sacramental practice, and the phenomenon is growing. Only the voice of the Supreme Pastor of the Church can definitively impede a situation where in the future, the Church of our time is described with the following expression: "All the world groaned and noticed with amazement that it has in practice accepted divorce" (*ingenuit totus orbis et divortium in praxi se accepisse miratus est*), evoking an analogous saying by which St Jerome described the Arian crisis.

Given this very real danger and the widespread plague of divorce within the life of the Church, which is implicitly legitimized by the mentioned norms and applications of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*; given that the aforementioned norms and guidelines from some particular churches as a result of today's global culture are in the public domain; given, furthermore, the ineffectiveness of numerous appeals made privately and in a discreet manner to Pope Francis both by many faithful and by some Shepherds of the Church, **we are forced to make this urgent appeal to prayer**. As successors of the Apostles, we are also moved by the obligation of raising our voices when the most sacred things of the Church and the matter of eternal salvation of souls are in question.

May the following words, with which St John Paul II described the unjust attacks against the faithfulness of the Church's Magisterium, be a light for all pastors of the Church in these difficult times and encourage them to act in an increasingly united manner: "The Church's Magisterium is often chided for being behind the times and closed to the promptings of the spirit of modern times, and for promoting a course of action which is harmful to humanity, and indeed to the Church herself. By obstinately holding to her own positions, it is said, the Church will end up losing popularity, and more and more believers will turn away from her" (Letter to families, *Gratissimam sane*, 12).

Considering that the admission of the divorced and so-called "remarried" to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, without requiring of them the obligation to live in continence, constitutes a danger for the faith and for the salvation of souls and furthermore constitutes an offense to the holy will of God; furthermore, taking into consideration that such pastoral practice can never be the expression of mercy, of the "via caritatis" or of the maternal sense of the Church towards souls that are sinning, **we make with profound pastoral solicitude this urgent appeal to prayer that Pope Francis may revoke in an unequivocal manner the aforementioned pastoral guidelines which are already introduced in several particular churches**. Such an act of the Visible Head of the Church

would comfort the shepherds and the faithful of the Church, according to the mandate which Christ, the Supreme Shepherd of souls, has given to the Apostle Peter, and through him to all his successors: "Confirm your brethren!" (Luke 22:32).

May the following words of a holy Pope and of St Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church, be a light and a comfort for all in the Church of our days:

"Error when not resisted, is accepted. Truth, which is not defended, is oppressed" (Pope St Felix III, +492). "Holy Father, God has elected you in the Church, so that you might be an instrument for the stamping out of heresy, the confounding of lies, the exaltation of the Truth, the dissipation of darkness and the manifestation of light" (St Catherine of Siena, +1380).

When Pope Honorius I (625 - 638) adopted an ambiguous attitude towards the spreading of the new heresy of Monothelism, Saint Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, sent a bishop from Palestine to Rome, saying to him the following words: "Go to the Apostolic See, where are the foundations of holy doctrine, and do not cease to pray till the Apostolic See condemn the new heresy." The condemnation occurred in 649 through the holy pope and martyr Martin I.

**We make this appeal to prayer** conscious that our failure to do so would have been a serious omission. Christ, the Truth and the Supreme Shepherd, will judge us when He appears. We ask Him, with humility and confidence, to reward all the shepherds and all the sheep with the imperishable crown of glory (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4).

In the spirit of faith and with filial and devout affection we raise our prayer for Pope Francis:

"Oremus pro Pontifice nostro Francisco: Dominus conservet eum, et vivificet eum, et beatum faciat eum in terra, et non tradat eum in animam inimicorum eius. Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam Meam, et portae inferi non praevallebunt adversus eam."

As a concrete means we recommend to recite every day this ancient prayer of the Church or a part of the holy rosary in the intention that Pope Francis may revoke in an unequivocal manner those pastoral guidelines, which permit the divorced and so-called "remarried" to receive the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist without asking them to fulfil the obligation of a life in continence.

18 January 2017, the ancient feast of the Chair of Saint Peter in Rome

+ Tomash Peta, Metropolitan Archbishop of the archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana  
+ Jan Pawel Lenga, Archbishop-Bishop emeritus of Karaganda  
+ Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of the archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana ■

# A Vatican-Democratic Party Alliance?

*(The Remnant Asks Trump Administration to Investigate)*

## Continued From Page 1

discussion, which was never intended to be made public, we find that Pope Benedict XVI abdicated under highly unusual circumstances and was replaced by a pope whose apparent mission is to provide a spiritual component to the radical ideological agenda of the international left. [2] The Pontificate of Pope Francis has subsequently called into question its own legitimacy on a multitude of occasions. [3]

During the 2016 presidential campaign we were astonished to witness Pope Francis actively campaigning against your proposed policies concerning the securing of our borders, and even going so far as to suggest that you are not a Christian [4]. We appreciated your prompt and pointed response to this disgraceful accusation [5].

We remain puzzled by the behavior of this ideologically charged Pope, whose mission seems to be one of advancing secular agendas of the left rather than guiding the Catholic Church in Her sacred mission. It is simply not the proper role of a Pope to be involved in politics to the point that he is considered to be the leader of the international left.

While we share your stated goal for America, we believe that the path to "greatness" is for America to be "good" again, to paraphrase de Tocqueville. We understand that good character cannot be forced on people, but the opportunity to live our lives as good Catholics has been made increasingly difficult by what appears to be a collusion between a hostile United States government and a pope who seems to hold as much ill will towards followers of perennial Catholic teachings as he seems to hold toward yourself.

With all of this in mind, and wishing the best for our country as well as for Catholics worldwide, we believe it to be the responsibility of loyal and informed United States Catholics to petition you to authorize an investigation into the following questions:

- To what end was the National Security Agency monitoring the conclave that elected Pope Francis? [6]

- What other covert operations were carried out by US government operatives concerning the resignation of Pope Benedict or the conclave that elected Pope Francis?

- Did US government operatives have contact with the "Cardinal Danneels Mafia"? [7]

- International monetary transactions with the Vatican were suspended during the last few days prior to the resignation of Pope Benedict. Were any U.S. Government agencies involved in this? [8]

- Why were international monetary transactions resumed on February 12, 2013, the day after Benedict XVI announced his resignation? Was this

pure coincidence? [9]

- What actions, if any, were actually taken by John Podesta, Hillary Clinton, and others tied to the Obama administration who were involved in the discussion proposing the fomenting of a "Catholic Spring"?

- What was the purpose and nature of the secret meeting between Vice President Joseph Biden and Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican on or about June 3, 2011?

- What roles were played by George Soros and other international financiers who may be currently residing in United States territory? [10]

We believe that the very existence of these unanswered questions provides sufficient evidence to warrant this request for an investigation.

Should such an investigation reveal that the U.S. government interfered inappropriately into the affairs of the Catholic Church, we further request the release of the results so that Catholics may request appropriate action from those elements of our hierarchy who remain loyal to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Please understand that we are not requesting an investigation into the Catholic Church; we are simply asking for an investigation into recent activities of the U.S. Government, of which you are now the chief executive.

Thank you again, and be assured of our most sincere prayers.

Respectfully,

David L. Sonnier, LTC US ARMY  
(Retired)

Michael J. Matt, Editor of The Remnant

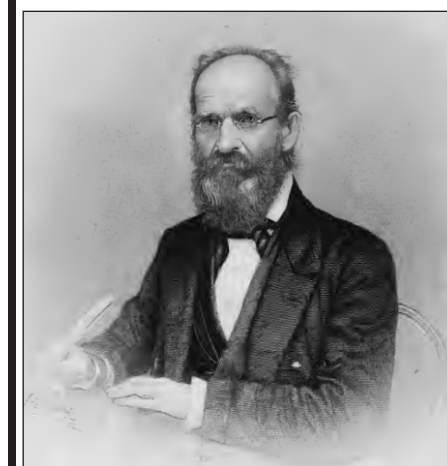


Christopher A. Ferrara (President of The American Catholic Lawyers Association, Inc.)

Chris Jackson, Catholics4Trump.com  
Elizabeth Yore, Esq., Founder of YoreChildren ■

1. <https://wikileaks.org/podesta-emails/emailid/6293>
2. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-pope-francis-became-the-leader-of-the-global-left-1482431940>
3. <http://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/articles/item/2198-the-year-of-mercy-begins>
4. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/18/politics/pope-francis-trump-christian-wall/>
5. <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/donald-j.-trump-response-to-the-pope>
6. <http://theeye-witness.blogspot.com/2013/10/a-compromised-conclave.html>
7. <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/cardinal-danneels-part-of-mafia-club-opposed-to-benedict-xvi>
8. <http://www.maurizioblondet.it/ratzinger-non-pote-ne-vendere-ne-comprare/>
9. <https://akacatholic.com/money-sex-and-modernism/>
10. <http://sorosfiles.com/soros/2013/03/soros-funded-catholic-groups-behind-african-socialist-as-next-pope.html>

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# Papal Politics: Playing the Nazi Card

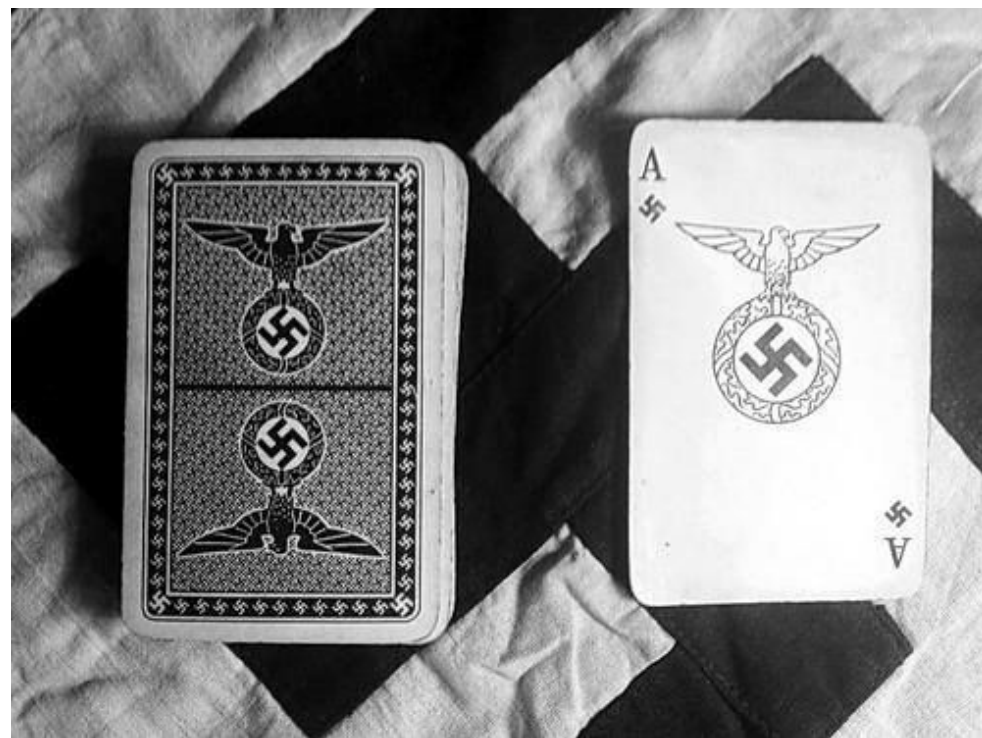
By Helen M. Weir

So, the inevitable has finally occurred: Pope Francis has speculated openly that President Donald Trump may turn out to be the next Adolph Hitler. I wish to note at the outset that I am not at all interested (at the moment) in defending the incoming American administration, or even in considering it directly. Let's wonder instead about the characteristic way in which this Holy Father consistently tries to demonize others who might conceivably stand in the way of the accomplishment of his agenda. Since he has brought it up, let's focus on this *particular* way--on Pope Francis playing the Nazi card, no less.

National Socialism was a specific, identifiable phenomenon; superabundantly documented, and not lost just yet in the mists of a distant past, either. It was what it was, not what anyone chooses to say it was. Nevertheless, the same individual who feels entitled to the creation *ex nihilo* of his own version of theology now wants to try his hand at some revisionist history, too. Still, a pope, *qua* pope, is no more of an authority on sociology than he is on climate change. So, here are just a few more points about which I would like to request some clarification from the reigning Roman pontiff:

1. Holy Father, was Nazism actually an effort—as you have recently alleged—to “guard national identity” in the same way that the present-day advocates of closing European and other borders wish to do; or was it, rather, the attempted warping of that identity by twisting it away from all Judeo-Christian grounding? Was not the notion of an Aryan ideal—derived from Nietzsche, but also from other occultish roots—superimposed upon Germany and the surrounding countries through the seizure of the reins of power by an elitist clique intent on infecting an entire culture with its totalitarian ideology? Hans and Sophie Scholl of the White Rose resistance group, among countless others, raised their voices at the cost of their lives *in favor* of national identity and *against* the Hitlerian superimposition; in their leaflets, the Scholls warned that Germany would forever be vilified as a nation of murderers and thugs unless their compatriots rose up and put down National Socialism as Cardinal von Galen, in the name of Jesus Christ, had been imploring everyone to do. So, is it really fair for you, Pope Francis, to imply that those of us who want to protect the authentic identities of our own countries and cultures are comparable to their destroyers, rather than to those who heroically resisted such destruction?

2. Are you inexcusably unaware that Adolph Hitler and his henchmen considered it their premier objective and duty to “break with the past”? They saw history as one long, forward march; in “doing the work of the Lord”—as the Fuehrer consistently insisted was his objective, throughout the entirety of *Mein Kampf*—the Nazis understood themselves to be called to usher in a new era. Not for them, the strictures of tradition; in place of the Christmas tree, the Yule Log; in place of the scouting groups, the Hitler Youth; in place of education, indoctrination; in place of ordered liberty, an automatic submission to the



unfiltered directives of an idiosyncratic dictator. And not only that; people were expected to pretend that all the Nazi introductions actually represented the real tradition in the first place; that the Yule Log *was* the original “German way” of celebrating the solstice, and so on. In fact, the entire scenario exactly parallels the methodology according to which you and your fellow Marxist-Kasperites have been trying to insinuate the “non-changes” of *Amoris Laetitia* throughout the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church lately—by claiming to be answering to a “god of surprises” while, simultaneously and contradictorily, asserting that things have really been like that all along. And we haven’t even gotten to the issue of your simmering *Schola Occurrentes* yet, evidently poised to airbrush away all memory of genuine Christendom after the last generation to know about it has conveniently died off. The Hitlerians once realized they had to try to cast a net around the worldview of the next generation, too. Do you honestly believe, Holy Father, that none of us knows, or cares, anything about all of this? Are you under the self-deception of the demagogue who considers the masses so captivated by his own persona and media presence that there remains no room in their brains for any thought of their own—that you personally wield the power of preventing not only your own contemporaries, but even the rest of humanity destined to replace us on the face of God’s green earth, from coming into the slightest contact with objective, factual reality, let alone the genuine and immutable revelation of Almighty God? I don’t speak Spanish, but in English we have the expression, “You can’t fool all of the people, all of the time.”

3. The National Socialist movement not only *came from* somewhere; it *went* somewhere as well. The fires of the mid-twentieth-century crematoria were originally fueled by the philosophy known as *eugenics*, but this philosophy *per se* did not necessarily die down when the camps were forcibly closed. Before the war, certain Germans had become big fans of all that Margaret Sanger was up to, but after they ascended into leadership positions in their own country, they were unwise enough to give civilization a sneak preview of where her

identity of the main group of “refugees” you most highly (percentagewise and rhetorically) favor, is based not only upon their radical ideological affinity, but also upon documented and extensive political collaboration between them. If you are looking to prevent some kind of posthumous victory on the part of the little man with the iconic mustache, how can you champion the cause of his closest allies? Even if you (however improbably) have adopted this stance inadvertently, because of a misguided belief that it is helping the helplessly innocent, it is long past time for you to wake up.

5. You are quite correct to point out that, in Donald Trump’s case as in Adolph Hitler’s as in your own, the mere fact of a leader’s *having been elected* offers him no final protection against turning out to be a tyrant in the final analysis. To rule in authenticity and nobility is to do so according to the nature and limits of one’s office, rather than trying to wring from it both privileges and outcomes which God Himself does not allow. No political figure, of course, had any right to herd innocent people into concentration camps from which only a fraction of them would ever emerge alive, no matter how effectively he managed to stack his own judiciary and corrupt his own constabulary into telling him and the rest of the world that he was legally authorized to do so. Numbers alone are no indicator of truth; neither numbers of votes, nor numbers of yes-men, nor numbers of those petrified into a culpable silence about what everybody knows is actually going on.

So yes, Holy Father, I absolutely agree that the fact that only a handful of courageous Cardinals, bloggers, bishops and priests are even attempting to hold your feet to the fire about *Amoris* Footnote 351 makes no moral difference at all. The inscription above the Cross in three human tongues cannot be erased by any human hand, not even the one wearing Peter’s own ring, because Jesus Christ *is* the King, both now and forever. Do you disagree? ■

type of thinking inexorably leads. That was the reason that, after the war, the organization advocating the creation of Nietzschean Superhumanity by either positive or negative means simply reinvented itself, publicly, as *Planned Parenthood* instead. So why, Holy Father, are you inviting the present-day advocates of totalitarian eugenics to speak at Vatican-sponsored events, and under the aegis of the Church’s own prestige? Your recent comments precipitated by the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States suggest that you are seriously concerned about preventing the possible resurgence of a form of Nazism in our own times, but then again, actions speak louder than words.

4. Are you familiar with the book *Icon of Evil*, by David G. Dalin and John F. Rothman (NY: Random House, 2008)? If not, you really should be. Its subtitle, *Hitler’s Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam*, says it all. The collaboration between the historical world leader you evidently deplore, and the demographic



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# How Great Thou Aren't: The Curse of Bad Liturgical Music

By Anna Priore

*“As a Catholic, I have abandoned hope for the liturgy, which, in the typical American church, is as ugly and as maladroit as if it had been composed by Robert Ingersoll and H.L. Menchen for the purpose of driving people away.” – William F. Buckley*

When I first moved to the area, I decided on a whim to join the parish choir. “St. Gregarious” is equipped with a music practice room, but the choir preferred to sprawl in the sanctuary and bawl along to the ignominious *Gather* hymnal while Our Lord remained ignored (and probably covering His ears) in the Tabernacle. Rather than using the choir loft built for the obvious purpose, the director took almost gleeful delight in herding her minions directly to the right of the altar, obscuring the view of the sanctuary and drawing the congregation’s attention to her show-stopping Marty Haugan hits rather than the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

A Mass with this choir was indeed Calvary continued. During the sole practice session that I attended, we spent the entire two hours hashing through heretical gems such as “All Are Welcome,” “We Are Marching,” and “Coming Together for Wine and For Bread.” There was no doubt: the Spirit of Vatican II was strong with this one. The lovely church organ sat idle and dusty while David Haas tinkled his way through the piano and bored into my brain like a satanic weevil. By the time we got to “And They’ll Know We Are Christians” I was breaking into an unholy sweat. The last straw was “No Wind at the Window” which drags around such tripe as “*No wind at the window / No knock on the door / No light from the lampstand / No foot on the floor / No dream born of tiredness / No ghost raised by fear / Just an angel and a woman / and a voice in her ear.*” This song is supposedly about the Annunciation, but instead makes one wonder what kind of mushrooms the composer was imbibing in.

The choir folks bade me to join them for refreshments after practice, but I felt the need for a comprehensive cleansing bath and politely declined. I spent the next four weeks visiting every Catholic church in the area, desperate for relief from the guitars and projection screens. I only encountered more of the same, occasionally with some hand clapping and a tambourine or two thrown in as a bonus. Even after a new priest came to “St. Gregarious,” his hands were tied, and the choir continued to bellow heresy at every Mass it could.

Unfortunately, these scenarios are all too common at Catholic churches around the country that are still suffering from the brambles of post-Vatican II theology. The priest may be excellent and orthodox, the sanctuary may be properly and beautifully adorned with tasteful



**Sing it for us, brother, because this is clearly NOT all about you!**

statues and candles, the preaching may be fantastic, but the choir can drag everything to the lowest level of hell. Even the boldest priests can be reduced to rubble when they dare to confront the choirmaster and their magnum opus. It seems the priest can do anything except make suggestions about the music, much less command the choir to disband completely and preserve the sanity of his congregation.

Perhaps you are one of the fortunate elect whose church music is sacred, appropriate, and free from all stains of the despicable *Gather* and *Glory and Praise* hymnals. But for the rest of us who cannot get to a Latin Mass on Sunday, attending Mass can become a torturous affair rather than an uplifting and spiritually nourishing experience. Bad music can embitter the heart, distract the soul, and damage the spiritual eardrums. We may be singing heresy without even realizing it, not to mention counting the minutes until Mass is over so the choir can finally shut up and leave us in peace.

A large percentage of the modern hymns disgracing our Church today were composed by a small group of self-styled liturgical composers who possess the typical left-leaning university education. They show little reverence for the tradition of their art, and would rather dream up some original hogwash than study the masters such as Bach, Hassler, and Crueger. The old, politically incorrect hymns have been around for centuries for a reason, if not for the plain fact that they are breathtakingly beautiful. No guitars or tambourines can begin to compare to the riveting glory of a tremulous organ ringing through the rafters of the church, stirring the soul, lifting the eyes and heart to Our Creator and Lord. Now more than ever, in our world overrun with violence and ugliness, do we desire to meditate and drink in that beauty that is God alone. Not to mention how much easier it is for a congregation with varying musical talent to follow the steady melody and harmony of an organ. Organs are loud enough to not be drowned out by an enthusiastic cantor, have beautiful, complex overtones of dominants and

subdominants, and play an audible melody line that even the most musically challenged person can follow. Contrast this with a guitar, which can only strum a chord and is easily overpowered by a choir—thus the need to place the musicians in the front of the sanctuary so the congregation can see what is going on. Thus the liturgy becomes the music of self-advertisement and narcissism, which most of us come to church to escape from.

Of course, we can’t just blame the choir directors. Most of them are good people who sincerely wish to serve the Lord with their musical talents. Unfortunately, many of them also lack the time or motivation to put together a program for every church service, and thus rely on the guidebooks that come with every hymnal set in order to choose music for each Mass. These guidebooks lay out music that often pulls from the readings and gospel, but still reeks of bad writing and even worse theology. The plodding “I am the Bread of Life” is just one example, forcing the congregation (whether they like it or not) into the role of Christ by the exclusive use of first-person pronouns throughout. We no longer celebrate Christ, who comes to us sinners as sustenance for our sinful souls; we celebrate ourselves, who become sustenance to others. We hug ourselves as givers of the Eucharist rather than receivers:

*I myself am the bread of life.  
You and I are the bread of life,  
taken and blessed, broken and shared  
by Christ  
that the world might live.  
 (“Bread of Life.”)*

“The narcissism of our hymns is a slow but deadly poison,” writes Anthony Esolen, “Coated with a little sickly sweetness and compounded into pills with some bleached and powdered scripture. I hate it because I hate its falsehood. I hate its sapping of the vigor of a Christian soul. I hate its turn away from Christ and towards myself and princes like me, in whom it is stupid and vain to trust.”

Perhaps when you were a child you learned your multiplication tables or the state capitals by singing a catchy little tune to help you remember them. The same logic can be said for church: if it’s in the music, people will remember it. Unfortunately, bad theology and sweetly packaged heresy is often what we end up humming. Music is a powerful tool that can inspire all ages. Why not use it for good? When we ditch the Haugan and Haas for Eucharistic classics such as “Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All,” we actually learn something about the Blessed Sacrament and how to properly approach Our Lord.

Yes, one could argue that many modern hymns are based on Scripture. “On Eagle’s Wings” and “I am the Bread of Life,” for all their kitsch, actually do follow this formula. But often the lyricists adapt scripture rather than quote it directly, thus sapping it of its refreshing power. Isaiah 40:31, which reads “they shall mount up with wings as eagles” is replaced with the limp “[I shall] bear you on the breath of dawn.” The choice of scripture is also often exclusive, focusing on the fluffy and feel-good rather than the penitent and contrite. “That saved a wretch like me” from “Amazing Grace” is now cleaned up to “that saved and set me free.” For our upbeat churches with empty crosses, low self-esteem will never do.

So exactly who are we trying to impress with these not-so-catchy modern songs anyway? Adults hate them, and the last time I looked there were only about 2 teenagers in the very last pews, both of them looking very bored and neither of them with a hymnal. The young people obviously aren’t coming to Church for the tunes, even though those habit-tossing nuns in the 70s promised that teenagers would flock to the altar if we would only make the Mass “more approachable and relatable.” So now, rather than a sacrifice, we have a “supper,” and the kids just aren’t buying it. Most of them have abandoned their faith altogether, while others (the horror!) have found solace and belonging in traditional Latin Masses. Sorry, Sister Daisy, you were wrong.

The main problem with modern liturgical music is that it tries to take something indescribably holy and sacred (the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass) and reduce it to a finger-snapping, toe-tapping performance where the congregation is entertained rather than sustained. It just doesn’t work, and both the clergy and the congregation suffer dearly for it. In the mundane dreariness of life, humanity needs—demands—a place set apart from the world and steeped in sanctity that can only be found in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Our modern hymns, with their gender-neutral pronouns and concern with social justice and racial equality, are only another echo of the vanity and narcissism we have been battling all week long and hope to escape from by entering the sanctuary of a church.

Let us at least keep the Lord’s Day holy. There is plenty of time to hold hands and sing Kumbaya outside of Church. ■

# Lost in the Fifties, Too

## Is America Awakening?

By Walter L. Matt (RIP)

(Written by the founder of The Remnant, Walter L. Matt, on September 7, 1950)

It's nearly ten p.m. and here I've been sitting for all of an hour picking my way through a somewhat wild and woolly pamphlet by George W. Armstrong, instead of continuing with my editorial routine. On the other hand, it's current literature of this sort which is the most widely read nowadays, and I suppose for that reason, if for none other, a journalist should include it in his "editorial routine."

At any rate, this particular pamphlet, though somewhat shopworn in its presentation of "facts," has a fascinating candor when it comes to airing Mr. Armstrong's views of New Deal foreign policies and their dismal consequences as we know them today. Not that Mr. Armstrong is very careful about supplying his readers with arguments substantiated by authoritative figures and facts, but, subjectively at least, he seems to me to be honest—though I cannot agree with his racial prejudices—and I am even forced to chuckle at his boldness when he declares with holy wrath: "Franklin D. Roosevelt was a traitor—Is Harry S. Truman also a traitor?"

Such language may at first blush appear to be rabble-rousing, vindictive, and cheap and in a sense no doubt it is; but from an old-line Texan American, from an obvious fighter, from a man of apparent influence who corresponded, among others, with celebrities like Tomas A. Edison, it represents to my way of thinking a straightforward though somewhat belligerent convictions which is of the very stuff of a forthright and free democracy.

But quite aside from a wide galaxy of somewhat dubious publications of this sort, there are other, perhaps more reliable, indications today that Americans have become awakened and alerted to the menacing dangers brought about in large measure by our own political ineptitude and shortsightedness in the field of foreign relations.

Take, for example, the recent discussions in the House of Representatives with regard to the State Department's Voice of America broadcasts. The manner in which the State Department presented its request for an additional \$97,000,000 for propaganda purposes abroad was severely criticized by Rep. Cliff Clevenger of Ohio, among others, who protested the fact that despite more than 200 million dollars already appropriated for these purposes, little has been done with the Voice of America broadcasts to slow down the Communist advance or to bring to the peoples abroad a true picture of ideal democracy, its principles, aims and objectives. The State Department, he said in effect, takes credit for important events where no credit is due. For example, he said "we hear long dissertations (by the State Department) on the (happy results of the

Italian elections—leaving the inference that our international information program singlehandedly achieved this desirable result. The facts are that the deep religious convictions of the Italian people forced this result against an ideology that is directly contrary to these very deep religious roots. The Department of State, however, will not even give credit for an assist to Divine Providence."

This statement, it seems to me, needed saying for long time. It ought to be repeated and repeated for the benefit of those vainglorious Liberals who, true to the fuzzy superstition that money can buy everything—even world peace and human security—are prone to reject or, to use a better word, "separate" spiritual and moral factors from their vaunted endeavors toward world reconstruction.

But to get back to the discussions in the House—there were other remarks well worth repeating. Thus, for instance, Rep. John Taber's remarks, that he would double the appropriations under consideration if a "real Voice of America, patriotic, competent and able to present America's picture to the world," were assured. But, he added, this is not the case. On the contrary, "I found out that a man named Hans Bruno Meyer was the first assistant to the man in charge of broadcasting in Germany for the United States."

Meyer, he explained, was formerly secretary of the German-American League for Culture, which has been described by the House Committee on Un-American Activities as "founded in 1935 to serve as a Communist front operating among German-speaking groups in the United States with the openly avowed policy of organizing refugees as a potential revolutionary force."

Meyer had also, he said, been listed as a speaker at a panel forum sponsored by the International Labor Defense in the magazine *Equal Justice*. Both the organization and the magazine have been cited as Communistic. Rep Taber concluded: "Frankly, I demand that the

so-called Voice of America become the Voice of America, become militant, become a fighting force designed to get the true picture of the United States across to the world. The situation is critical. Will Mr. Barrett in the State Department and Mr. Acheson face the situation, or will we have a continuance of a fraud upon the American people, the American taxpayer, and a double cross of our war effort?"

For my part all of this is good news—I mean, of course, these public discussions and questions which are finally and quite emphatically being asked in Washington. As our readers well know, THE WANDERER long ago had questioned certain dubious elements in the Voice of America set-up, particularly one arrogant Left-Winger who in January, 1946, had attacked our publications as "Fascist" and whatnot and who, despite his former connections with a New York pro-Communist publication, was put in charge of one of the Voice's important foreign departments. This same party, whose broadcasts showed such a dismaying disregard for Catholicism as a force in central Europe, has now been relieved of his post, according to private information we have received.

Could it be, as I hopefully mentioned before, that at least politically speaking the American people are beginning to rouse themselves from sleep? Could it be their anger has been particularly stirred by the clinching testimony of Lee Pressman—one of the most influential New Deal strategists—who last week calmly revealed he had been a Communist, a servant of the Soviet, a Red ideologist, and that he, John Abt, Nathan Witt and Charles Kramer had formed a Red cell to take over one of the great agencies of our Government?

Could it be that the Wood Bill, to restrict the activities of arch conspirators on our soil, was overwhelmingly passed last week in the House because the American people are sick and tired of termites and traitors, starry-eyed and self-glorified messiahs who wittingly or not have squandered this Nation's wealth, its resources, its blood, have betrayed what

was left of Christian civilization at Yalta and Teheran and Potsdam? Could it be that the national encampment of Veterans of Foreign Wars have demanded the removal of Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson for similar reasons, or because, in their own words, they are tired of "those disastrous and capricious policies...which have brought our nation's defenses to their present shameful and inadequate condition," and are sickened by an officialdom "who's ignorance, misfeasance and non-feasance have resulted in failure in the field of diplomatic relations"?

Personally I don't know whether these and similar recent developments are genuine indications of what some observers believe is a "grass roots" awakening in America. Nor do I think much of such an "awakening," unless it be motivated by something nobler, something more basic than a mere scramble for change in our national political machinery. But as a veteran of World War II, I know that if it were my lot today to be fighting Communism in Korea, I would be less than human not to expect my people at home to be justly indignant and determined to oust from office those who until a short time ago still spoke so glibly of "red-baiting" and "red herrings" and who climaxed their whitewash of the Communists and pro-Communists by using the Tydings Committee [a subcommittee on the Investigation of Loyalty of State Department Employees, authorized by S.Res. 231 in February 1950 to look into charges by Joseph R. McCarthy that he had a list of individuals who were known by the Secretary of State to be members of the Communist Party yet who were still working in the State Department State] not to investigate the Reds in our Government, but to smear those few intrepid souls who raised their voices in righteous protest. Let us hope that there will be an awakening—not only politically, however, but in the realm of the spirit and in the private and public domain of that Justice, that Charity and that Truth without which a nation must perish! ■



# The Legion of Indecency

By Timothy J. Cullen

*“My name is Legion, for we are many” (Mark 5:9)*

Older readers may remember the National Legion of Decency, later (1966) the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, an organization largely and then exclusively under Catholic auspices. The faithful were given the opportunity on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to take this pledge: “I condemn all indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.” It was a pledge taken seriously and acted upon by Catholics throughout the country.

The Legion slowly but surely became irrelevant to post-Vatican II Catholics, eventually disappearing as its functions were taken over by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office for Film and Broadcasting while movies and television sank into levels of moral depravity that seem bottomless. Movies once condemned by the League, e.g. *Psycho* (1960); *From Russia With Love* (1964); *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1968); *The Last Picture Show* (1971) and *The Exorcist* (1973), seem very tame indeed by today’s “standards”. This writer confesses to having seen them all.

Movies are no longer “condemned” but rather viewed as “morally objectionable” at their worst. During the past 100 days, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office for Film and Broadcasting placed eight movies in the “O” category<sup>1</sup>, none of which I have seen, none of which I plan to see, nearly none of which I had ever heard. A search of the USCCB’s site for the rating of what was without doubt the most vile, disturbing and pointless movie I have ever seen (scandalously titled *Martyrs*) turned up nothing, yet the 2008 French version was remade in 2015 for English-speaking audiences! “Legion” was present in the making of those films, but the Legion cited in the epigraph to this essay.

They are many indeed, those who comprise the “legion of indecency”, a legion that grows by leaps and bounds. At times, it appears there is a perverse sort of competition to destroy every last shred of human decency, to sink to ever-lower levels of depravity, to open the gates of Hell and drag every viewer of such demented “entertainment” down into the pit. The expression

“nothing is sacred” appears to have given way to “everything is profane”, but a degree of profanity that beggars the imagination of anyone who retains anything resembling a moral and ethical code, a humanity that recognizes that boundaries between the normal and the perverse must be maintained, never mind the retention of a sense of piety.

This essay results from what in social justice warrior parlance is known as a “triggering”. The “trigger” was a 4 Jan 2017 website article (“FOX Comedy Features 6yo ‘Trans’ Boy Wearing Bondage Gag”) that can be found here: <http://www.informationliberation.com/?id=56069>. Read it and weep.

The “Legion of Indecency” is overdue for a civil exorcism, but one sincerely doubts it will occur; the “entertainment” industry is simply too powerful, too well-connected, too entrenched to be purged, shunned, then dragged through the mud as they have dragged society. It is mind-boggling that at the very least decent folks (especially those with children) do not boycott and attempt to bankrupt the purveyors of filth that is nothing less than a slap in the face to all standards of decency and those who believe in it and practice it in their daily lives. The tens of millions of folks who profess a religion should be busily stirring the pot of tar and piling up the feathers for a march on Hollywood, torches and pitchforks held high, tumbrils the size of double-wides waiting to be filled, but no: that would be insensitive, censorious, retrograde, prudish, *hateful!* Except, of course, save for censorious, it is none of these things.

Parents who are not censorious with respect to what young and adolescent children see, read and hear with respect to matters involving sexual behavior fail in their duty to the young and would have been considered unfit until relatively recent times. Community standards were far stricter as well and there were legal penalties for violating them. Today, nearly no such standards exist in the secular societies that have replaced Christendom in the West. As for exposing the young to sexually-oriented material, it now begins in public school kindergartens in the USA; most of Europe is much the same. The content of such “education” should make even a mentally healthy atheist parent—never mind a Christian or Jew—cringe.

One can only conclude that there is an active and well-coordinated conspiracy—the “Legion of Indecency”—to debase the sexual attitudes, mores and behavior of *all* citizens of now-secular but formerly majority Christian societies to a degree that flies in the face of *any* reasonable standard; in fact upon further consideration, it would appear that the intent is to indoctrinate the innocent that *no* standards can be applied to sexual matters and that “decency” no longer applies to them. “Decency” is accepting



## We've come a long way, baby!

the satanic proposition that in matters sexual anything goes and “indecency” describes judgmental thoughts or acts: Who are *you* to judge?

The United States Supreme Court has judged obscenity in different ways at different times. The current standard is based upon what is known as the “Miller” test, a syllabus of which reads in part:

1. Obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment. *Roth v. United States*, 354 U. S. 476, reaffirmed. A work may be subject to state regulation where that work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex; portrays, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; and, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. Pp. 413 U. S. 23-24.

2. The basic guidelines for the trier of fact must be: (a) whether “the average person, applying contemporary community standards” would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, *Roth, supra*, at 354 U. S. 489, (b) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law, and (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. If a state obscenity law is thus limited, First Amendment values are adequately protected by ultimate independent appellate review of constitutional claims when necessary. Pp. 413 U. S. 24-25.

3. The test of “utterly without redeeming social value” articulated in *Memoirs, supra*, is rejected as a constitutional standard. Pp. 413 U. S. 24-25.

4. The jury may measure the essentially factual issues of prurient appeal and patent offensiveness by the standard that prevails in the forum community, and need not employ a “national standard.” Pp. 413 U. S. 30-34.<sup>2</sup>

This decision dates from before the widespread use of the internet, thus

<sup>2</sup> <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/413/15/>

making the all-important “community standards” criterion considerably harder to define. “The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has ruled in *United States v. Kilbride* [2009] that a ‘national community standard’ should be used for the internet, but this has yet to be upheld at the national level.”<sup>3</sup> As it happens, “[t]hrough the Ninth Circuit Court proposed new guidelines for judging internet obscenity, other Circuit Courts have chosen not to follow suit. In an unpublished opinion, the Eleventh Circuit Court rejected the idea of a national community standard, instead relying on a local one. This has been interpreted as proof that there is disagreement on whether the Ninth Circuit misinterpreted the Supreme Court’s opinion. The Supreme Court has not directly weighed in on the matter since.”<sup>4</sup>

The truth of the matter, however, is that legal decisions notwithstanding, the debasement of common decency continues unabated and very little is being done about it. What is the Church doing about it?

An internet search revealed this from a 4 November 2011 on-line article published by the UK’s left-leaning *Independent*: “Germany’s biggest Catholic-owned publishing house has been rocked by disclosures that it has been selling thousands of pornographic novels with titles such as *Sluts Boarding School* and *Lawyer’s Whore* with the full assent of the country’s leading bishops.”<sup>5</sup> The company (*Weltbild* Publishing Group) was wholly-owned by a consortium of German Catholic dioceses but has since (2014) gone into bankruptcy and the Church chose not to take part in its restructuring.<sup>6</sup> Sadly, the inference drawn from the

<sup>3</sup> [https://infogalactic.com/info/Miller\\_test#cite\\_ref-4](https://infogalactic.com/info/Miller_test#cite_ref-4)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/revealed-publisher-owned-by-the-catholic-church-sells-pornography-6257572.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/bookselling/article/60621-germany-girds-for-fallout-from-weltbild-insolvency.html>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.catholicnews.com/movies-listing.cfm>

## Catholic Heroes . . .

## The Priest Who 'Gave His Life for His Friends' at Pearl Harbor

Father Aloysius Schmitt was born on December 4, 1902, in St. Lucas, Iowa, studied at Columbia College (now Loras College), and graduated in 1932.

He then studied in Rome for the priesthood and was ordained on December 8, 1935. He served in both Iowa and Wyoming, but he felt that he had a different calling. And on June 28, 1939, he was appointed a chaplain in the Navy, and was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, stationed at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 7, 1941, he had just finished celebrating Mass when the call went out for general quarters and the men were told "this is no drill." The attack on Pearl Harbor had begun.

Father Schmitt immediately went to the ship's sick bay, and began administering aid and sacraments to the injured and the dying.

But soon, the Oklahoma itself was struck. The ship began to list, and eventually capsized. Chaplain Schmitt, along with a number of other sailors, had to find a way out from below decks. They found a small compartment where a porthole offered a means of escape. One by one, Chaplain Schmitt helped the sailors crawl out to safety. When it was his turn to escape, he started to crawl out, only to realize that other men had come into the compartment looking for an exit. So Chaplain Schmitt told the sailors he had helped escape to push him



Father Aloysius Schmitt

back into the compartment so that he could help other men get out. A survivor later said that the men protested, that they begged him to get out, that they tried to pull him out themselves. But Chaplain Schmitt refused, saying, "Please let go of me, and may God bless you all." In doing so, he willingly gave his own life, so that others could live. In all, he is credited with helping at least 12 men to escape.

He died while trying to help an injured

sailor get through the open hatch. Father Schmitt became the first military Chaplain killed in WWII, and the first Roman Catholic chaplain to be killed in action. He could have made it out, but Navy protocol dictates, "The senior man is the last to leave" and he was assisting junior sailors scrambling to safety when the ship rolled over." Father Schmitt was 32 years old when he died after helping those men get off the ship that day.

The bones of Lt. Aloysius H. Schmitt were identified by experts with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency as part of a project to put names with the remains of those who died on the ship December 7, 1941.

Father Schmitt's corroded chalice, with a cross etched in its base, and his waterlogged Latin prayer book, were recovered from the wreckage months after the attack. But his body and the bodies of most of the sailors and Marines recovered were too jumbled and decomposed to be identified at the time.

The Oklahoma's loss of life at Pearl Harbor — a total of 429 sailors and Marines — was second only to the 1,100 lost on the USS Arizona, which remains a hallowed historic site.

Father Schmitt, one of 10 children in a rural farm family, was buried October 8 at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. He was laid to rest inside Christ the King

chapel, which was built after the war as a memorial to him. (Then-Chief of Naval Operations and war hero Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz attended the chapel's dedication in 1947.)

"Just amazing," Steve Sloan of Dubuque, a great-nephew of Father Schmitt's, said over the phone on September 29, 2016. "December 7th it'll be 75 years. It's been a long time." Sloan continued, "The interest in his story, and the interest in the whole event, is far bigger than I ever anticipated... people are talking about it."

Father Schmitt posthumously received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for "distinguished heroism and sublime devotion to his fellow man." The citation noted his courage and self-sacrifice, and noted that "he gallantly gave up his life for his country." ■

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## The Legion of Indecency

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cited article and others is that the decision was largely based on financial reasons, though one would like to believe that a 2009 decision to sell the company had to do with getting out of the porn business, although "the bishops apparently abandoned the idea after they failed to get the price they were asking."<sup>7</sup> Note that even after the widely-publicized scandal, the decision to divest took an additional three years. The Church, then, cannot be said to be leading the charge against indecency, mores the pity.

Needless to say, the secular societies governments and political figures are not only not fighting the "league of indecency" but in some cases seem to have allied themselves with it, *videlicet* this 7 Jan 2017 headline on an internet news site: "A 57-year-old California transgender prisoner serving a life sentence for murder has become the first US inmate to receive state funded sex reassignment surgery"<sup>8</sup>. This is madness! Granted, the state in question is California, but even so...

There is, however, method in the madness: every time taxpaying citizens permit this sort of governmental policy

to go unchecked, the envelope of the permissible if pushed that much further while league of indecency members rejoice and prepare to put into play their next and more extreme outrage. Where is the outrage of the citizens? Are they now beyond outrage, or, worse still, willing collaborators?

And what of the recent revelation—popularly known as "Pizzagate"—of an alleged pedophile ring operating among highly-placed persons involved in politics? Similar allegations have been made against highly-placed persons in Hollywood and the entertainment industry in general, but that comes as no surprise, given the plainly indecent nature of the material produced by them.

What can be done by traditional Catholics—*any* Catholics! —to stop this now-very-open attack on morals and the mental health of secular societies? Could a revived League of Decency have an effect? It's doubtful, but it would be a worthwhile effort nevertheless, regardless of the inevitable ridicule that would be forthcoming from the usual quarters. Then again, one wonders how many traditional Catholics continue to watch nearly any television program or view nearly any movies these days. So much more information is readily available via the internet that perhaps a revived League of Decency

would be redundant, given the ease with which one can determine the content of visual "entertainment"; perhaps with respect to reading matter a League that *promoted* worthwhile literature would be of greater value.

Political action might be more in tune with the times, given the renewed popularity of more generally traditionally oriented political movements looking to return their societies to the morals and values that characterized the Christian societies of yore. After all, the decadence of an indecent society will eventually prove to be its undoing, something every

mentally healthy person knows on some level of consciousness.

Perhaps the best option of all is one that emphasizes the positive: tirelessly promote traditional Catholic, Judeo-Christian and the best of secular cultural values—both classical and modern—in the arts and learning in general. First, of course, one must familiarize oneself with the pertinent material, a rewarding task to be sure, but one that should be considered obligatory. The "league of indecency" is firmly in the saddle in Old Christendom: contemporary crusaders must unhorse it if there is to be any hope for our posterity. ■



Last year, TCM launched its March spotlight program, "Condemned," a 27-film series looking at the movies condemned by the Catholic Legion of Decency

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/revealed-publisher-owned-by-the-catholic-church-sells-pornography-6257572.html>

# Pope Francis Refuses to Answer the *Dubia* – What Happens Next?

By John F. Salza, Esq.

## Part II

In Part I of this feature, we saw that Pope Francis' refusal to respond to the *dubia* issued to him by the four Cardinals (Brandmüller, Burke, Caffarra and Meisner) on September 16, 2016, as extraordinary as it was, does not prove Francis is a "formal heretic." Rather, to be guilty of the crime of heresy, the Pope would have to refuse to correct his errors after *two* official warnings from the Cardinals, or as Cardinal Burke described it, a "formal act of correction of a serious error." In this Part II, we address what happens if such an unprecedented circumstance were to occur.

### A Declaration of the Crime of Heresy

If Pope Francis were to persevere in his heresy after the Church's issuance of the two necessary warnings, the common theological opinion is that the Church would then have to officially *declare* that the Pope is guilty of the crime of heresy before he would lose his office (and exactly *when* he would lose his office if that happens is subject to debate, as discussed below). The declaration would be necessary because the Pope's pertinacity may have been established only privately, and the crime of heresy is a public matter for the Church (and thus must be communicated to the Church). It also provides a "point of no return" for the heretical Pope, whose repentance after the declaration would not allow him to regain his office. Again, this is the common opinion among the theologians who have addressed the matter of a heretical Pope.

For example, Suarez says:

"I affirm: if he were a heretic and incorrigible the Pope would cease to be Pope just when a sentence was passed against him for his crime, by the legitimate jurisdiction of the Church. This is the common opinion among the doctors."<sup>1</sup>

John of St. Thomas also confirms the necessity of the declaration of the crime:

"By what power should a deposition happen with regard to the pope? The entire question hinges on two points, namely one, a declarative sentence, by which it is declared . . . that the pope has committed the crime. . . and two, the deposition itself, which must be done after the declarative judgment of the crime."<sup>2</sup>

And a little later he says:

"The Church is able to declare the crime of a Pontiff and, according to divine law, propose him to the faithful as a heretic that must be avoided. (...) the deposition of the

pope with respect to the declaration of the crime in no way pertains to the cardinals but to a general council."<sup>3</sup>

As we can see, the Church's formal sentence which officially declares the Pope is guilty of the crime of heresy is so important and necessary that John of St. Thomas says this declaration must come from a general council. The brilliant Dominican theologian also uses historical examples to prove his case:

"It must be said that the declaration of the crime does not come from the Cardinals, but from a general council.

This is evident, firstly, by the practice of the Church. For in the case of Pope Marcellinus, who offered incense to idols, a synod was gathered together for the purpose of discussing the case, as is recorded in Distinction 21, Chapter 7, ("*Nunc autem*")... Likewise, in the case of Pope Symmachus, a council was gathered in Rome to treat the case against him, as reported by Antione Augustine, in his *Epitome Juris Pontifice Veteris* (Title 13, Chapter 14); and the sections of Canon Law quoted above show that the Pontiffs who wanted to defend themselves against the crimes imputed to them, have done it before a Council. Second, it is commonly agreed that the power of treating the cases of popes, and that which pertains to his deposition, has not been entrusted to the cardinals. For the deposition belongs to the Church, whose authority is represented by a general council; indeed, only the election is entrusted to the cardinals and no more, as can be clearly shown by reading those things which we have drawn out from the law..."

The obvious question is: How can the Church convene a general council to oversee the deposition of a heretical Pope, when a general council must be *convened* and *overseen* by a Pope, either personally or through his legates? In answering this question, Cajetan makes the classical distinction between a *perfect* council and an *imperfect* council; or, as he puts it, an *absolutely* perfect council, and a perfect council *in relation to the present state of the Church*.

Cajetan explains that a perfect council *absolutely* is one in which the body is united to its head, and therefore consists of the Pope and the bishops.<sup>4</sup> Such a council has the authority to define dogmas and issue decrees that regulate the universal Church.<sup>5</sup> Cajetan then explains that "a perfect council according to the present state" of the Church (i.e., an "imperfect" council)

is composed only of those members who can be found when the Church is in a given condition (e.g., with several doubtful Popes, or with one apparently heretical Pope) and can only "involve itself with the universal Church up to a certain point."<sup>6</sup> Thus, an imperfect council cannot define doctrines or issue decrees that regulate the universal Church, but only possesses the authority to decide the matter that necessitated its convocation. Cajetan notes that there are only two cases that justify convoking such a council: "...when there is a single heretical pope to be deposed, and when there are several doubtful supreme pontiffs."

In such exceptional cases, a general council can be called without the approval of, or even against the will, of the Pope. Cajetan explains:

"A perfect council according to the present state of the Church [i.e., an imperfect council] can be summoned without the pope and against his will, if, although asked, he himself does not wish to summon it; but it does not have the authority to regulate the universal Church, but only to provide for the issue then at stake. Although human cases vary in infinite ways . . . there are only two cases that have occurred or can ever occur, in which, I declare, such a council should be summoned. The first is when the pope must be deposed on account of heresy; for then, if he refused, although asked, the cardinals, the emperor, or the prelates can cause a council to be assembled, which will not have for its scope the care of the universal Church, but only the power to *depose* the Pope."<sup>7</sup>

As we saw, John of St. Thomas referred to the Council of Sinuesso as an example of an "imperfect council" that was convened by the bishops to oversee the deposition of Pope Marcellinus (d. 304).<sup>8</sup> After Pope Marcellinus committed the grave public sin against the Faith by offering incense at the altar of Jupiter, a council was convened and the compromised Pope, through shame, *deposed himself*.<sup>9</sup> And although the council was initially called against the will of Pope Marcellinus, it produced great fruit because he repented of his sin. In fact, the bishops were so edified that they re-elected him to the papacy (following his resignation). Pope Marcellinus went on to die as a martyr for the Faith and is now a canonized saint. How different his end may have been if his fate were left to the private judgment of individual Catholics who

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70. Cajetan explains that the second case is when one or more Popes suffer uncertainty with regard to their election, and he uses the Council of Constance during the Great Western Schism as another historical example of an "imperfect council."

<sup>8</sup> In a letter to the Emperor Michael in 865, Pope Nicholas wrote: "In the reign of the sovereigns Diocletian and Maximian, Marcellinus, the Bishop of Rome, who afterwards became an illustrious martyr, was so persecuted by the pagans that he entered one of their temples and there offered incense." (Rev. Reuben Parsons, *Studies in Church History*, vol. II, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John Joseph McVey, 1900), p. 510.

<sup>9</sup> See Hidgen, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Hidgen maonachi Cestrensis*, vol. 5 (London: Longman, 1865), p. 107.



simply wrote him off as an antipope, or his actions were praised as a great act of "ecumenism" as many in today's modern Church would have done.

Another question on the minds of Catholics is how many Cardinals and bishops would be needed to convoke an imperfect general council that would declare Pope Francis' crime, given that many of them (e.g., the clerical mafiosi from the "St. Gallen" group who conspired to elect Francis) are staunch supporters of the Pope and would vigorously oppose his removal? Would a majority of the Cardinals and bishops be required to call such a council? Or would a minority suffice? And would the refusal to participate of those who support Pope Francis result in a formal schism in the Church?

These are troubling questions for troubling times. Indeed, it appears that a material schism is already developing within the Church among the Cardinals and bishops over Francis' attack on doctrine and morals, just as Our Lady of Akita prophesied.<sup>10</sup> There have been reports of high-ranking prelates publicly opposing each other, such as the recent exchange between U.S. Cardinal-designate Kevin Farrell and Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup> In a recent interview with *TV Libertes*, Bishop Athanasius Schneider plainly admitted that "we are witnessing today a strange form of schism," and that "a certain kind of schism already exists in the Church" over Pope Francis' teaching in *Amoris Laetitia*.<sup>12</sup>

However, it would not seem necessary that even a majority, much less all, of the Cardinals and bishops would be required to declare what the Pope's incorrigibility would have already proven, namely,

<sup>10</sup> "The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see Cardinals opposing Cardinals, bishops against bishops. The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their conferees...churches and altars sacked; the Church will be full of those who compromise and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord"(Our Lady of Akita, to Sr. Agnes Sasagawa, October 13, 1973).

<sup>11</sup> For example, the U.S. Cardinal-designate Kevin Farrell publicly reprimanded Archbishop Charles Chaput over his refusal to give Holy Communion to public adulterers (contrary to the Francis program). Chaput responded by saying the words of Jesus are clear and that Farrell did not understand the Philadelphia guidelines (NB: the revelation of Jesus Christ) he was questioning. See <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/bishops-need-shared-approach-to-amoris-laetitia-new-cardinal-says.cfm>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bishop-schneider-we-are-witnessing-today-a-strange-form-of-schism-within-th>.

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<sup>1</sup> *De Fide, disp. X*, sect. VI, nn. 3-10, p. 316 (emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> *Cursus Theologici II-II*, John of St. Thomas, *De Auctoritate Summi Pontificis, Disp. II*, Art. III, *De Depositione* (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> *De Comparatione Auctoritatis Papae et Concilii*, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

# What Happens Next?

Salza/Continued from Page 13

that he is guilty of the crime of heresy. Because a legitimate imperfect council has the authority to bind the faithful without the Pope's approval, it follows that it would also not require the approval or participation of every single bishop either, or even a majority of them. Remember that Cajetan describes this type of council as "summoned according to the present state of the Church." That means the council is composed of only those members who can be found in the current condition, who gather here "only to provide for the issue then at stake," to declare that the Pope is guilty of the crime of heresy.

To reiterate, because, at this stage in the proceedings, the Pope's pertinacity *would have already been established by the Cardinals*, it would not take a majority of the Cardinals or bishops to *declare* what has *already* been proven by the Church's authorities. Further, as Cajetan explains, this council "will not have for its scope the care of the universal Church," and thus would not have to be "universal" in its representation, as would an "absolutely perfect council." Thus, it does not matter whether a significant number of Cardinals and bishops would oppose the council; the Pope's public heresy would have already been established by the authority of the Church, and would simply need to be declared (officially recognized and communicated) by those authorities. Further, those prelates who would refuse to submit to the council's declaratory sentence and command to avoid the heretic Pope would separate themselves from the Church by *formal* schism, by remaining in communion with a heretic.

Further, it is quite possible that those who would ultimately support Francis and oppose his removal would be in the *minority*. That is because there are reports which indicate that there is currently an open revolt among the Curia and College of Cardinals over Francis' teaching in *Amoris Laetitia*. For example, in a recent explanation on the Society of St. Pius X's current relations with Rome, His Excellency Bernard Fellay revealed the following:

"The excesses of the present Pope have caused a startled reaction. It's open now. It's no longer hidden, or let's say for people like were hiding themselves, now you have cardinals, you have bishops who have openly contradicted these new tendency, this new tendency of hitting the morals and even the doctrine. We have counted that there are between 26 and 30 cardinals who have openly attacked these modern positions. And numerous bishops."<sup>13</sup>

Veteran Vatican reporter Edward Pentin also commented on the reaction to the Pope's refusal to respond to the *dubia*, speculating that the majority of the Cardinals and Curia *do not support Francis*:

"The reaction has been interesting so far: almost all the College of Cardinals and the Roman Curia have

remained silent, neither supporting the cardinals, nor, more importantly, coming out in support of the Pope and his decision not to respond. If silence is taken to mean consent for the *dubia*, then one could therefore argue that the vast majority are in favor of the four cardinals. That can only be speculative of course, but it could conceivably be true as for months one has heard from one significant part of the Curia that they feel great unease about what is happening. The phrases 'reign of terror' and 'Vatican martial law' are frequently bandied around."<sup>14</sup>

In a recent tweet, Pentin also said he learned from a reliable source that Pope Francis has been asking various allies to publicly support *Amoris Laetitia* and oppose the *dubia*, evidently frustrated by their silence.<sup>15</sup> What all this suggests is that Francis may not have the support of the majority of Cardinals and bishops. And, thus, if and when the four Cardinals issue the formal warning of correction to Francis as Cardinal Burke has threatened, they may be joined by other brother Cardinals and bishops, which will put more pressure on the Pope. If the Pope would ignore the first warning as he did the *dubia*, it seems likely that the process would gain momentum, and he could find himself facing a second warning supported by many more prelates. And if he would ignore the second warning or refuse to recant his heresies, it is possible that even a majority of Cardinals and bishops would then take the next step and declare his crime, at a general (imperfect) council. Time will tell. God knows.

## What Happens if the Church Declares Francis a Heretic?

What should be obvious by now is that we have a way to go before Pope Francis is considered a public heretic according to the Church's judgment, although Cardinal Burke has said the process is upon us. Nevertheless, until it is completed, Francis still remains Pope, and no Catholic can claim otherwise without sinning against the Faith. Moreover, even if the Church were to ultimately declare Francis guilty of the crime of heresy after his refusal to correct his errors, exactly *when* he would lose the papacy *after* such a declaration is subject to a complex theological debate, although it's largely academic for all intents and purposes. In our book *True or False Pope?*, we explain the two major opinions on this question, which we call the Jesuit Opinion (held by Bellarmine and Suarez), and the Dominican Opinion (held by Cajetan and John of St. Thomas).

Both opinions agree that: (1) the Church must declare the Pope guilty of the crime of heresy before he loses his office; and, (2) Christ deposes the Pope as *Efficient Cause* (because the Church has no coercive power over a Pope), with the Church being only the *dispositive cause* of the loss of office (but whose actions necessarily *precede* Christ's deposition as Efficient Cause). The opinions differ *only* on when Christ actually deposes the Pope.<sup>16</sup> What act of the Church

serves as the dispositive cause for the deposition? Is it the Church's declaration of the crime? Or is the additional act of the Church commanding the faithful to avoid the heretic required, as St. Paul instructs Titus? After affirming that both schools require at least a declaration of the crime, John of St. Thomas notes precisely the heart of this debate:

"It cannot be held that the Pope, very fact of being a heretic, would cease to be pope antecedently to a declaration of the Church. (...) What is truly a matter of debate, is whether the Pope, after he is declared by the Church to be a heretic, is *deposed ipso facto* by Christ the Lord [*Jesuit Opinion*], or if the Church out to depose him [*Dominican Opinion*]. In any case, as long as the Church has not issued a juridical declaration, he must always be considered the Pope."<sup>17</sup>

To further explain, the Jesuit Opinion held by Bellarmine and Suarez maintains that the heretical Pope falls *ipso facto* (immediately and "by the fact") from the pontificate upon the Church's declaration of the crime (which serves as the dispositive cause).<sup>18</sup> For example, Suarez says:

"If he is a heretic and incorrigible, the Pope ceases to be Pope as soon as a declarative sentence of his crime is pronounced against him by the legitimate jurisdiction of the Church. This is the common position held by the doctors." And again: "Therefore on deposing a heretical Pope, the Church would not act as superior to him, but juridically and by the consent of Christ she would declare him a heretic and therefore unworthy of Pontifical honors; he would then ipso facto and immediately be deposed by Christ."<sup>19</sup>

John of St. Thomas affirms that Bellarmine and Suarez believe the Pope immediately falls from office after the Church declares the crime:

"Bellarmine and Suarez, however, believe that the Pope, by the very fact that he is a manifest heretic and has been declared incorrigible [crime of heresy], is deposed immediately by Christ the Lord and not by any authority of the Church."<sup>20</sup>

The Dominican Opinion held by Cajetan and John of St. Thomas maintains that the Pope falls from office, not when the Church establishes and declares the

that Christ, as Efficient Cause, severs the bond that joins the man (the matter) to the papacy (the form).

17 John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tome 6. Questions 1-7 on Faith. Disputation 8., Article 2.

18 Regarding the declaratory sentence, some theologians who hold to the variation of the Jesuit Opinion teach that the fall from the pontificate would occur *after* the Church established the crime, but *before* the crime was declared by the Church. This position is intended to avoid any issues with the Church inappropriately judging the Pope. The more common opinion, however, is that the Church is not only able to establish the crime of heresy, but also able to issue a declaratory sentence, since a merely declaratory sentence does not involve coercion or punishment. See, for example, Wernz-Vidal, *Ius Canonium*. Rome: Gregorian 1943. 2:453; and, Cajetan, *De Comparatione Auctoritatis Papae et Concilii*, ch. XXI.

19 *De Fide*, disp. X, sect. VI, nn. 3-10, pp. 316-317. This is why Bellarmine wrote: "Jurisdiction is certainly given to the Pontiff by God, but with the agreement of men [i.e., the election] as is obvious; because this man, who beforehand was not Pope, has from men that he would begin to be Pope, therefore, he is not removed by God unless it is through men ... in the case of heresy, a Roman Pontiff can be judged." *De Romano Pontifice*, bk. 2 ch. 30.

20 *Cursus Theologici* (Theological Courses), II-II, *De Auctoritate Summi Pontificis, Disputatio*, Disp. II, Art. III, *De Depositione Papae*, p. 138.

crime, but after an additional step. This extra step occurs when the Church, after declaring the crime, *also* commands the faithful, by the authority of a council, to *avoid* the heretic (*vitandus*), according to St. Paul's instruction to Titus (Titus 3:10). This command, which is rooted in Divine law, is a juridical act (the dispositive cause of the deposition) which has coercive power over the faithful. Just as the Church (the *ecclesia docens*) necessarily tells the faithful (the *ecclesia discens*) who to *receive* as Pope, it must also necessarily tell the faithful who to *avoid* as Pope (a heretical Pope, judged as such by the Church). In the words of John of St. Thomas:

"It is necessary that, just as the Church designates the man and proposes him to the faithful as being elected Pope, so too is it necessary that the Church declares him a heretic and proposes him as one to be avoided. Hence, we see from the practice of the Church that this is how it has been done; for, in the case of the deposition of a Pope, his cause was handled in a general Council before he was considered not to be Pope, as we have related above. Therefore, it is not because the Pope is a heretic, even publicly, that he will *ipso facto* cease to be Pope, before the declaration of the Church and before she proclaims him as 'to be avoided' by the faithful."<sup>21</sup>

In a nutshell, then, according to the Jesuit Opinion, the Pope separates from the Church by the Church's declaration of the crime, and according to the Dominican Opinion, the Church separates from the Pope by the Church's command to the faithful to avoid him as a *vitandus*, after the declaration of the crime. But these differences regard questions of speculative theology; *both* opinions require the Church *to judge and declare* the Pope guilty of the crime of heresy before Christ would remove him from office. And, as a practical matter, it seems clear that the Church could accomplish everything at once, that is, a council could issue a single document that: 1) declares that the Pope is guilty of the crime of heresy; 2) commands the Church that he must be avoided (*vitandus*); and, 3) declares the See to be vacant, and publicly excommunicates the former Pope. Of course, the exact procedure would be determined by the authorities of the Church, who will no doubt draw upon the wisdom of some of her greatest theologians.

What this means is that we have a way to go before Francis can be considered a public heretic who has lost his office. How long? As long as it takes for the Church to issue the two warnings and then convoke a council to declare his crime and command the faithful to avoid him if he refuses correction. We obviously pray that Pope Francis either renounces his heresies or resigns his office before it goes that far. However, as we now enter the centenary of the Fatima apparitions with Our Lady's commands still unheeded, it is likely that the greatest confusion, division and suffering of the post-Vatican II Church, is still to come. ■

21 John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologici* II-II, On the Authority of the Supreme Pontiff, Disp. 2, Art. 3.

13 See video and transcription of talk at <https://sarmaticusblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/03/satanic-council-the-end-game/>.

14 See <https://sarmaticusblog.wordpress.com/2016/12/09/state-of-play-rise-of-the-coprophagians/>.

15 Ibid.

16 Theologically, as used here, the term "deposition" means

# Wisdom and Innocence: The Life of Gilbert Keith Chesterton

By Joseph Pearce

(Ignatius Press 1996)

Reviewed for The Remnant,  
by Vincent Chiarello

“Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man - the biography of the man himself cannot be written.”

- Mark Twain -

In seeking to write a biography, how should the author proceed? Does it suffice to render only a chronological account of the person's life? Should the author seek to find “the inner soul” and “mindset” of the personality of the intended subject, or is this extraneous to the task of the author? Ironically, in writing the biography of George Bernard Shaw, Chesterton was criticized for attempting to “analyze” his subject. Does it suffice to claim that the author's work reflects the feelings and sentiments of the subject in question, along with an accurate and chronological exposition of the major events in the person's life? If that is the case, then where do we begin to do this reckoning? During childhood? Youth? As the King of Siam in the Broadway production of *The King and I* states: “Tis a puzzlement.”

Joseph Pearce has written a thorough and incisive account of the life of Gilbert Keith Chesterton. By my count, there are more than 1,300 footnotes in the 31 chapters in *Wisdom and Innocence*, including a lengthy discussion of the important role and impact of Chesterton's (hereafter: GKC) childhood on his later development. That upbringing, Pearce believes, had an on-going and salutary influence on GKC's later life: “A criticism often leveled against GKC is that he never grew up. He was hopelessly romantic and helpfully naive...That innocence GKC called the “paradox of childhood: ‘a mystery we know exists but cannot explain,’ and it stayed with GKC for the rest of his life.” Father Ronald Knox, a friend of GKC, put it this way: “Mr. Chesterton...entered with tremendous gravity, into the tremendous gravity of the child.” In his later years GKC would look back at his childhood this way: “The romance of reality was hidden in the innocence of childhood.”

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born on May 29, 1874 in Kensington (London) and was subsequently baptized “according to the formularies of the Church of England.” Strangely enough, neither of his parents was Anglican; they were “Freethinkers,” which was closely aligned with the Unitarian church. Why, then, an Anglican baptism? Pearce believes, “...that the parents consented to their son's baptism from a position more of social standing than a spiritual standpoint.”

The Chesterton household suffered a devastating blow when Beatrice, GKC's older sister, died when she was 8; he was 3. Aside from that tragedy, GKC's



childhood “appears almost idyllic.” Brother Cecil would be born in 1879.

Pearce makes an important point about GKC's spiritual development: GKC claimed to be an agnostic in his early years, but, then, so were most of his friends and teachers at St. Paul's, his public (private) school. GKC was to identify the “real religion” of the English: “...the truth is that for most men about this time, Imperialism, or at least, patriotism, was a substitute for religion.” Yet, in this absence, GKC would recall an incident a half century later in which was his first encounter with Catholicism.

When he was 6 years old, while walking with his father on the major street in Kensington, he described his encountering a crowd that behaved rather strangely; they went down on their knees when a carriage pulled up, and a “ghost clad in flames lifted his long fingers over the crowd in a blessing.” The scarlet ghost was Cardinal Manning.

For those Remnant readers of a certain age - mine - you may recall that years ago when report cards were given out to show a student's progress, aside from the letter or numerical designation, there was often a column that said: Could do better. Those words could easily describe GKC's academic progress through his secondary school, St. Paul's, where his indolence caused him to be the butt of practical jokes. One Master (Principal) of the school went further: “You know Chesterton, if we could open your head, we should not find any brain, but only a lump of white fat.” In his *Autobiography*, GKC explained his attitude toward education: “...being instructed by someone I did not know about something I did not want to know.” As his classmates went “down to Oxford” or to Cambridge to pursue their studies, GKC entered the Slade School of Art - but left without a degree. In that failure arose the discovery of the key to his future. His friend, Eric Bentley, claimed that GKC, “...had learned nothing while he was there.” That criticism was premature. Pearce: “...his failure had at least convinced him that his vocation was not art, but writing...”

Throughout the book's 489 pages, a cavalcade of characters is noted, but four, more so than any others, are the most significant in the life of GKC: They are: his wife, Frances; his brother, Cecil; his friend, Hilaire Belloc,

and his religious inspiration, Father John O'Connor. All the many others described in the book have passing importance, some more than others, but they were not key to GKC's life and development.

Frances Blogg (Anglicized from the French, de Blogue), the daughter of a diamond merchant, was to be the most influential woman in GKC's life. After a brief, but whirlwind, romance in which GKC wrote Frances love poems, the couple was married in June, 1901. Throughout their married life, Frances chose to remain in the background; still, he believed women were the “fairer sex,” and in an article he once penned entitled, “The Heroines of Shakespeare,” GKC reiterated the Elizabethan belief that man was natural, but woman supernatural. Pearce: “One could almost envisage his believing that God created man only as an excuse to create woman.” Pearce also mentions that Frances's influence would extend to another aspect of GKC's life: “his slow, but steady, acceptance of organized religion.” Following their marriage, all of GKC's anti-clerical poems, including those criticizing priests, ceased. Perhaps that change was paramount in GKC's mind when, ten years after marrying, and upon the publishing of his epic poem, *The Ballad of the White Horse*, a deeply religious work, he dedicated it to Frances: “Therefore I bring these rhymes to you; Who brought the cross to me.” GKC's Chesterton's path to Rome had started.

I have previously chronicled in these pages the friendship between Hilaire Belloc and GKC. It was a relationship that grew as each man developed as a writer, and each tended to complement the other. It was GKC who used his artistic talent to sketch some of the illustrations in Belloc's early books; it was Belloc, who would write the introduction of several of his friend's published works. Where they differed, and Pearce will emphasize this, was their approach to life. Pearce: “Chesterton is a gentleman and perfect host; Belloc is the noisy gatecrasher.” Or, as the publisher of Catholic books, Frank Ward, would remark: “Belloc went around as if he owned the earth; Chesterton as if he didn't care who owned it.”

However, in one way, “Chesterbelloc,” the sobriquet given to Belloc and GKC by George Bernard Shaw, the two men were in total synch with each other: their

deep commitment to the Church. Pearce: “At the heart of both men was their Christian faith. It was the pearl of great price which neither would sacrifice for anything the world had to offer.”

GKC met Fr. John O'Connor, an Irish Catholic priest, while vacationing in Yorkshire. That meeting would mature into a friendship one author called, “... perhaps the closest of Gilbert's life.” It was this parish priest who would not only be the primary agent of GKC's conversion to Catholicism, but also in a much more mundane manner, Fr. O'Connor would serve as “the original model and inspiration” for Fr. Brown, GKC's fictional priest detective, and whose published series established GKC as a “man of letters” in England. As Pearce notes, in a bizarre way an Irish priest made GKC into an English hero.

Chesterton said of his relationship with his brother that they were always arguing, but they never quarreled. This sums up Chesterton's relationship not only with his brother, but with everyone. Cecil, on the other hand, would develop along the lines of a “radical journalist,” and eventually be sued for libel, a criminal offense in England at the time. Found guilty, he was fined, but not given a jail sentence. Following the declaration of war in 1914, Cecil was to volunteer and serve in France, where he died of disease and was buried in a French cemetery after the Armistice ended the war. GKC would note that his brother, having been an Anglo-Catholic, joined the Roman Catholic Church because of “its lucidity and love of truth.” The time for GKC's similar move was nigh, but one concern remained: how his wife, Frances, would take the news. She told Fr. O'Connor that she welcomed the conversion, but, “...up to now He has not made it clear enough to me to justify such a step.”

On September 30, 1922, Fr. John O'Connor and Fr. Ignatius Rice, OSB, met GKC at the Railway Hotel in Beaconsfield (their home village in Buckinghamshire), where the dance floor had been converted into a makeshift chapel for one part of the process. There they encountered GKC, “pulling faces and making noises in an armchair reading his catechism.” After his baptism and confession at the local church, Fr. O'Connor re-entered the church to find Frances weeping. Pearce: “In the practice of their faith, the most important thing in their lives, she and her husband were now separated.” That “separation” would last four years.

June of 1926 saw the publication of GKC's newest book, *The Incredulity of Father Brown*, which was not only well received, but also further consolidated GKC's position as “a man of letters.” It also was the silver anniversary of his and Frances's marriage. In letters to Fr. O'Connor, who had almost become a member of their family, Frances mentioned that she had visited the parish priest in Beaconsfield, Fr. Walker, and “after having seen him and had a talk I

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# The Francis Fiction Sense of Scripture

By Fr. Celatus

According to longstanding Christian tradition there are four senses to Sacred Scripture that can be discerned and interpreted in many biblical texts. The first of these is the *literal sense*, by which words and events are understood in their usual or most basic sense without allegory or attention to some deeper significance. It is the starting point of biblical interpretation. The other senses of Sacred Scripture, which are spiritual and often symbolic in nature, presume the historical and literal veracity of the biblical texts.

Among the spiritual senses of Scripture there is a threefold division into the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical senses. The *allegorical sense* leads to a deeper understanding of some biblical reality when it is understood in light of Christ, such as the crossing of the Red Sea as a symbol of Christian baptism.

The *moral sense* applies to biblical texts which govern and guide our moral decisions and actions. And the *anagogical sense* interprets biblical events in terms of their eternal significance, such as associations of the earthly city of Jerusalem with the Heavenly Jerusalem. A simple way to distinguish the senses is this: the *literal* speaks of deeds; *allegory* to faith; the *moral* how to act; and *anagogy* to our eternal destiny.

Are there other senses of Sacred Scripture? Well, there is a fifth sense which has no basis in tradition and is nothing short of nonsense, reflected in many of the sermons of *Pope Dubius Maximus*. Let's call this baseless and faithless interpretation of Sacred Scripture the *Francis Fiction sense*. Not that Francis of Rome is the innovator of this nonsensical approach to biblical interpretation, but he certainly personifies it. How should we describe the *Francis*

*Fiction sense* of Sacred Scripture? It is a composite of a number of unorthodox and heretical approaches to biblical interpretation—a veritable spiritually poisonous cocktail. Within this poisonous brew is rationalism, which reduces supernatural realities to the purely natural realm. A classic case of rationalist misinterpretation regards the miracles of the *Multiplication of the Loaves*; rationalists deny it was a miracle and claim it was merely sharing of bread. According to Francis:

The hands Jesus raises to bless the God of heaven are the same hands that distribute bread to the hungry multitude. And we can imagine this now: we can imagine how they kept passing the loaves and fishes from hand to hand until the food reached those who were farthest away. Jesus managed to generate a current among his followers: they all went on **sharing what was their own**, turning it into a gift for the others; **and that is how they all got to eat their fill...**

Rationalists also deny true prophetic knowledge, not only for the prophets but for our Lord Himself. Hence is it no surprise that the *Francis Fiction sense* denies the prophetic knowledge of John the Baptist:

The great can afford to doubt, and this is beautiful. They are certain of their vocation but each time the Lord makes them see a new street of the journey, they enter into doubt. 'But this is not orthodox, this is heretical, this is not the Messiah I expected!' The devil does this work, and some friend also helps, no? **This is the greatness of John**, a great one, the last of that band of believers that began with Abraham, that one that preaches conversion, that one that does not use half-words to condemn the proud, **that one that at the end of his life is allowed to doubt. And this is a good program of Christian life.**

Another nasty ingredient within the *Francis Fiction* concoction is eisegesis, by which *Pope Dubius* reads into a biblical text whatever he wants, to serve his own agenda. In this irreverent example Francis alleged:

The Gospel tells us nothing: if she said a word or not ... She was quiet, but in her heart - how much she said to the Lord! 'You told me then - that's what we have read - that He will be great. You told me that You would give him the throne of his father David, that he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And now I see Him there!' The Blessed Mother was human! And perhaps she would have wanted to say, 'Lies! I have been cheated!'

Yet another poisonous portion can be found in *Francis Fiction* allegories, by which biblical figures and events are allegorically misinterpreted and often applied insultingly to groups that Francis

dislikes. A common example is the *Francis Fiction* allegorically associating Pharisees with traditional Catholics. During the Christmas season *Pope Grinch* even implied allegorically that solid Catholics are like Herod:

As the Magi made their way, Jerusalem slept. It slept in collusion with a Herod who, rather than seeking, also slept. He slept, anesthetized by a cauterized conscience. He was bewildered, afraid. It is the bewilderment which, when faced with the newness that revolutionizes history, closes in on itself and its own achievements, its knowledge, its successes... The bewilderment lodged in the hearts of those who want to control everything and everyone... A bewilderment born of fear and foreboding before anything that challenges us, calls into question our certainties and our truths, our ways of clinging to the world and this life.

First of all, it is highly unlikely that Herod slept at all after the visit of the Magi. It was of Herod that Caesar quipped, "It is better to be Herod's pig than son," knowing that Herod had murdered multiple sons in his paranoia to retain power. Augustus knew that as a Jew he would not touch a pig but as for sons...

But more to the point, there is an allegorical interpretation of King Herod that does not do violence to the biblical sense or to traditional Catholics; namely, Herod represents the heretical component of Judaism in the time of Christ which went into apostasy when it formally rejected the Messiah. Herod prefigured at the Birth of Christ the wicked and apostate Jewish leadership some thirty-three years later which orchestrated the Crucifixion of Christ. Accusations and implications that figures such as King Herod and the Pharisees represent devout Catholics who are firmly committed to the truth are bogus and absurd.

In reality, if any modern allegory and application is to be made regarding the figures of the Epiphany, traditional Catholics might be said to be reflected in the Magi, whereas Francis and his Vatican colluders bear resemblance to Herod and company. After all, the Magi were true to divine revelation as found in biblical prophecies and to natural revelation as manifested in the Star of Bethlehem. So too, Traditional Catholics insist upon adherence to both divine and natural revelation. As for a comparison between Herod and Francis; well, the stubborn silence of *Pope Dubius Maximus* in the face of five *dubia* speaks volumes.

As we come to the close of Christmastide with the Purification of Mary and Presentation of Christ, one last thought for the Season: I would no more have trusted Herod to lead the Magi to Christ in ancient times than I now trust Francis to lead the Catholic faithful in the way of Christ in these modernist times! ■

## The Life of Chesterton

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shall know what I ought to do." On All Saints Day, November 1, 1926 Frances Chesterton was received into the Catholic Church. An author who knew Frances well, wrote: "One would say that she had been in the Church all her life." The "separation" between GKC and Frances no longer existed.

With the growing popularity of the Father Brown detective stories and other published works, some of which were now criticized "for dragging Catholic propaganda into his books," but fervently defended by Belloc, GKC was invited to various countries to give talks, but also traveled more extensively on his own. In Rome, in addition to a personal audience with Pope Pius XI, he was in St. Peter's when The English Martyrs were beatified. GKC was also given an interview with the Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, who received him graciously, but whose political philosophy GKC rejected.

Similar to a voyage taken by Belloc, following WWII, GKC (and Frances) went to the US, where he was to be a guest lecturer at Notre Dame University over a period of six weeks. There, he came to enjoy watching American football that he described as, "hateless war and harmless mirth." He was also made an Honorary Doctor of Law, and whose citation described him as "...a man of letters,...defender of the Christian tradition, and whose keen mind, right heart, and versatile literary genius have been valiantly devoted to eternal truth, goodness, and beauty, in literature and in life..."

Back in England, the tell-tale signs of deteriorating health were becoming evident. A trip to Lourdes, where countless crutches were evidence of miraculous cures, did not improve his health. At Mass in Clermont-Ferrand France on Ascension Day, he could not remain in church; the dark clouds

were becoming darker. He and Frances returned to Beaconsfield, but his symptoms worsened, especially those of a cardiac nature. GKC died in his sleep on June 14, 1936, after he had received the Last Sacraments and Extreme Unction. He was 62 years old.

At this point, it might be useful to examine the circumstances in which one convert, the author Joseph Pearce, is writing about another convert, GKC. *Wisdom and Innocence* is, I believe, Pearce's examination of the life of someone he believed to have had a major influence on his own conversion, as Fr. John O'Connor had on Chesterton's. In short, there is something in this biography that, for all intents and purposes, mirrors something in the subject's life that had a dramatic effect on the author's.

Shortly after the publication of Pearce's other book about converts to the Church, entitled *Literary Converts* (2006), Pearce was interviewed by a Spanish magazine about his background and motives in writing the book. As to the background, Pearce stated: "G. K. Chesterton was the biggest single influence, under grace, on my personal path to Rome. The first of his books that I read was **The Well and the Shadows**, one of his last books. It had a profound effect upon me, undermining my anti-Catholic prejudices." Then this: "I read a great deal of Chesterton on my path to Rome and my first published book, **Wisdom and Innocence: A Life of G. K. Chesterton, was an act of thanksgiving to Chesterton for giving me the truth, and to God for giving me Chesterton.** (Emphasis mine)

To end at the beginning: does Pearce's biography "capture" him between the covers of the book? I will leave that to the reader, but I believe that he clearly described the "meaning" of the man. In the meantime, let us pursue that objective further by examining what Chesterton wrote. The saga continues. ■