

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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From the Editor's Desk...

By Michael J. Matt

Five Seats Left

Remnant Tours' pilgrimage to France and Fatima is so close to being sold out that I've decided not to run the ad again. If you're interested in joining Chris Ferrara, John Rao and me on pilgrimage to Chartres, the Holy Face apparition site, Fatima, etc., --please contact The Remnant office as soon as possible. Or email: Admin@RemnantNewspaper.com

Social Media's Fascist Agenda

Social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, and Google are playing a sick game, and it seems to include blackballing The Remnant. TownHall.com explains:

If Facebook killed every conservative page overnight, there would be a huge outcry. On the other hand, if Facebook slowly strangled us to death, we'd fade away and would people even notice? In addition to that, as someone who has been working for a living in this business since 2005, let me drop a little truth bomb on you. We are now in a very oversaturated, corporation-dominated media environment. If you don't already have a legacy website that captured traffic years ago and held onto it, huge traffic you can bring in from elsewhere, or millions of dollars to spend, your chances of getting a political website off the ground today are infinitesimal.

That gets to the heart of the biggest problem conservatives don't realize that they have. Social media IS

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A Special Report...

The Canonization Crisis

Would the Bergoglian Juggernaut Undermine the Case for the Infallibility of Canonizations by Raising Paul VI to the altars?

By Christopher A. Ferrara

Introduction: A Perennially Smoldering Debate Reignited

Pope Bergoglio's rapid-fire canonizations of John Paul II and John XXIII have understandably contributed to growing concerns among the faithful about the reliability of the “[saint factory](#)” put into operation during the reign of John Paul II. John Paul canonized more saints, including large

batch canonizations, than the previous seventeen Popes combined, going all the way back to 1588, [when Sixtus V founded](#) the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. While Benedict XVI made some effort to [slow the output](#) of the factory, it has ramped up production again under Bergoglio, who in five years has cranked out [885 saints](#), including a batch of [800 Italian martyrs](#), as compared with 483 saints during John Paul's entire 27-year reign. [Five of these](#) Bergoglian additions have been declared saints without even one verified miracle being attributed to them.

It is not only traditionalist commentators who observe that the sheer number of recently proclaimed saints threatens a radical devaluation of the very concept of sainthood. [Even Cardinal Ratzinger suggested as much as early as 1989.](#)

But now the seemingly imminent canonization of Paul VI, following approval of two purported miracles which, based on the information published, seem decidedly less than miraculous (to be discussed in Part II of this series), has provoked widespread incredulity, going even beyond the

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The Calvary of Nikolas Cruz

By Timothy J Cullen

“The more I looked at people, the more I hated them.”
(Charles Starkweather)¹

St. Valentine's Day, 14 February 2018, will be remembered in the USA if not worldwide, not for a saint's day celebration, not for a deformed holiday dedicated to “romance”, but rather for a horrific “slaughter of the innocents” that took place in a Broward County, Florida high school: the mass murder of 17 persons, many of them children under the age of 18.

Their killer is 19 years of age, an expelled student of the high school killing ground, quickly detained after the murder spree, but not before he'd made a pit stop at “a Subway and McDonald's”, according to a story posted on an alternative news website.²

He committed the murders using the controversial-for-civilian-ownership semi-automatic AR-15 long rifle, the military combat version of which is fully automatic. He was prepared with

² <https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2018-02-15/florida-school-shooter-linked-white-supremacist-group>

¹ http://www.azquotes.com/author/25550-Charles_Starkweather, https://infogalactic.com/info/Charles_Starkweather

~ See Nikolas Cruz/ Page 12



From the Editor's Desk continued....

the new public square. It's the place you go when you want to reach out and find an audience. . . . Except Facebook has for all intents and purposes announced that it's killing off pages. So much for having a conservative voice there. . . . YouTube is also doing that to conservatives. . . . It's easy to say, "Build your own social media website and compete with them," but we're talking about companies with billions of dollars and monopolistic control of their markets. The obvious solution would be to break these companies up or to at least acknowledge their importance to modern society and regulate them heavily, but conservatives don't seem to be interested enough in either solution to even THREATEN to do this.

The Remnant is. As readers of this newspaper know, we've been beating this drum for years. It's the very reason we've kept and maintained our physical, newsprint newspaper when all the experts were telling us to shut it down.

Things have been getting interesting in Oceania lately. The Remnant's Facebook numbers have plummeted over the past few months, during the very same period when other Remnant numbers were on dramatic upswing.

Liberal social media apparently reward conservative success with the blackball.

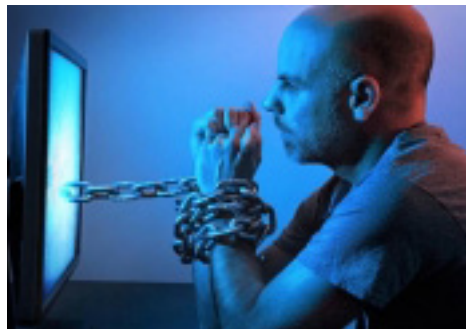
True, it could just be bad press. There are traditional Catholic bloggers out there which hardly let a day go by without blasting The Remnant. But somehow I don't think that's it. A recent RTV video hit the half-million view mark in record time (for us) and is still climbing. But the same video shows negligible interest on Facebook. The sniping of petty bloggers could hardly account for that.

What's the solution? What it's always been for us: Don't put all the Remnant eggs in one basket; keep the Print-edition alive; promote the E-edition; build up RTV's own non-YouTube platform. Do not allow the gods of the Internet to have total access to and control over the traditional Catholic press. Why not? Because it's their ball and it's their playground—and they will fix it to win every time.

You can help us fight back against these Christophobes by spreading the word to family and friends that we're here and that we're building alternatives. The Remnant is one of the few traditional Catholic organizations in the world that is not at all web dependent.

I really don't care what the "experts" say about newsprint having joined the dinosaurs—The Remnant will not give it up. We're putting more time and money into it, and what we're finding is a growing appreciation for that effort. No one can track your movements when you're sitting in your favorite chair, right there next to your fire, reading a newspaper, and more and more folks are glad to have that peace of mind. Big Brother Fatigue is giving newsprint an assist, I think.

My 20-year-old is off in college. The other day he told me he'd taken a nine iron to his smart phone and went out and bought the oldest flip phone he could find. He tells me it was the most liberating thing he's done in a long time. He also tells me lots of kids his age are growing sick and tired of being chained to their devices.



This reminded me of the rather satanic-sounding scenario that plays out in the old Eagles' song, Hotel California: "We are all just prisoners here, of our

own device." Indeed, we are, with the difference being we can check out anytime we like and, if we want, we can actually leave.

The Remnant can help by offering an alternative to the online prison: the old newspaper, folded in half on the coffee table, unplugged, non-surveilled. Quiet. Peaceful. No popups. No ads. No gimmicks. No dark side. Please consider subscribing to our newspaper if you're not already.

As postage and paper costs have gone up once again this year, we're going to have to raise our domestic subscription cost from \$40 to \$45. We're going to be offering a package deal, however, which includes the E-edition as well, for just \$60 total. This production cost increase was announced just after the New Year, but I was hoping to avoid having to pass it along to you. My hopes were in vain.

The increase will take place on March 15, so if you'd like to subscribe or renew

between now and then, you can save some money and help make me feel better about having to do this. We're working harder than ever to improve and expand The Remnant, and you can help us build up a safe and Christocentric online alternative to Facebook and YouTube and all the rest by visiting our website—www.RemnantNewspaper.com—every day and on your own, i.e., without having to be reminded by our social media "partners" which are, it would seem, actively working against us and against everything for which we stand, especially the Social Kingship of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As always, if you wish to help keep The Remnant strong and in the fight, your tax-deductible donations can be sent to:

The Remnant Foundation
PO Box 1117
Forest Lake, MN 55025

Or Donate @RemnantNewspaper.com

Anti-Christian Southern Poverty Law Center at It Again

A recent Family Research Council (FRC) press release asks the question:

What do actor George Clooney, Apple, and the Washington Post all have in common? They support the radical agenda of the \$320 million Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The media, big corporations, and Hollywood are pouring millions into the coffers of the SPLC for one express purpose: to marginalize and ultimately silence the voice of Christians. If they succeed, the consequences will be devastating to your family, your children, the church, local schools, and our country. That's why I am writing with so much urgency today! FRC's work, in addition to your financial assistance, will help us fight back with our own dedicated campaign calling out the SPLC's radical initiatives. . .

The SPLC's campaign also targets FRC and many other Christian, Catholic, and Pentecostal organizations as "hate groups" – lumping us in with the KKK and Neo-Nazis. Exposing the SPLC's radical agenda is one of the highest priorities we have here at FRC in 2018. Part of the resources we raise are dedicated to continue our tracking and researching the ins and outs of the SPLC's radical agenda, exposing it online at sites like SPLCexposed.com, monitoring their activities, and alerting families, Christians, and other concerned citizens about their destructive activities.

Supporting such non-Catholic organizations' attempts to expose the fundamentally Christophobic Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has to be one of the more legit ecumenical endeavors I can think of. The Remnant is listed as a hate group by the SPLC too, of course—something of a badge of honor at this point—but we're just one on a growing list of Christian groups targeted by the SPLC—one of the largest and richest ACTUAL hate groups in America. What they want is to shut us all down.

Over the years, we've considered the legal option; but the SPLC is gaggle of cunning Far-Left lawyers—experts in the exploitation of laws protecting free speech. The same laws that protect our freedoms of speech and the press also provide inadvertent cover for the SPLC.

Here in America, victims of this kind of slander have little legal recourse. They say we're a "hate group", but what does that mean? How is "hate" legally defined

or definable? It's just the opinion of the SPLC, and anyone is free to make of that what he will. It's not technically against the law, since the SPLC is very careful NOT to accuse of us advocating violence. It's a classic smear campaign, based on guilt by association.

There is an alternative strategy for Christians, however, which is gaining plenty of traction. I'm referring to the organized effort--such as this one by the FRC--to defeat the SPLC in the court of public opinion. Christian groups, pro-life organizations, libertarians and a wide variety of different conservative groups have united in an effort to raise awareness about the radical agenda to silence Christian America.

We wish Godspeed to the FRC, and we pledge to continue to do what we can to support the effort. When even the Vatican begins to move in the ideological direction of the SPLC, it's time for all Christian groups to take this threat seriously. ■

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The Remnant Speaks

Letters to the Editor: The Remnant Speaks P.O. Box 1117, Forest Lake, MN 55025 ~ Editor@RemnantNewspaper.



Hello from Slovenia

Editor, *The Remnant*: I thank you for your work and fight. We are all the same everywhere in the world. I thank you for your answer. Keep the Catacombs and I would like to meet you one day. Also excuse my English, but I hope you understand me. Wish you and your crew all the best in the future. We are together in Holly Spirit. God bless you.

Pax Tibi.
Zoran Anthony More.

Editor's Note: God bless you, my friend, and all of our allies in Slovenia. Keep the old Faith. **MJM**

A Recent Convert's Comment on Remnant TV

Editor, *The Remnant*: Today, I received the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time in 48 years. I had attended a wonderful Roman Catholic church until 8th grade, but stopped attending after my parents divorced. My return to the Roman Catholic Church has been a long journey that began 5 years ago during a Sunday School class on the Gospel of St. John. For the past 31 of my 63 years, I've been regularly attending conservative Presbyterian churches (OPC and ARPC), as well as weekly Sunday School. For the past 7 years I've served there as a Ruling Elder as well as an adult Sunday School teacher. During a study of St John's gospel about 5 years ago, we discussed John 6:55, "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." I commented to the teacher that maybe Jesus actually meant what he said. I was met with a blank stare and no response, but this planted a seed that led me to learn about the Eucharist.

Since apologetics is my avocation in the church, I had to explore this apparent discrepancy between our view of the Lord's Table and the Eucharist. Consequently, after removing my "reformed" eyeglasses I began further study which led me to view many videos on YouTube where I discovered Remnant TV. Despite the problems in the church, your videos reminded me of my time in the Catholic church-pre-Vatican II, Latin Mass, actual Confession, priest facing the altar, etc. I missed that part of my life in the church.

Over time I also began reading St. Thomas Aquinas, Peter Kreeft, Trent Horn, as well as other videos on YouTube. With everything I'd learned over the past few years, I felt I could no longer remain in the Reformed faith. Thanks to the Holy Spirit and others, I found a relatively faithful Catholic Church. After discussions with some lay personnel, I met with the head pastor and received the sacrament of Reconciliation and received the

Eucharist (on the tongue) last Saturday (will attend Saturday Mass for the time being and for family's sake I attend my old church with them on Sunday). I also enjoy the content of your publication which I've subscribed to. I pray for many blessing to Remnant TV.

In His Name,
Mike Masztal

The Halo Awards

Editor, *The Remnant*: Oh my word! I don't know where your catacomb is but I hope it is big. Some of us would like to join you. Your presentations from this underground stage are so well done and your sense of humor in the midst of such incredible travesty makes one laugh and cry at the same time. It is nothing short of insane what is happening; beyond belief the devastation that is occurring to our beloved Church. The dishing out of halos to those who have brought us to this precipice seems to be the ultimate slap in the face. Not only are we not to question these recent perverse pontificates but are expected to be on board this saint ship and do homage to those who have torn asunder the barque of Peter. Lord help us, nutters that we may be. Keep up the great work Michael. Can't wait for your next report.

Joan Longjohn

Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican

Editor, *The Remnant*: Thank you for publishing the stirring words of Archbishop Lefebvre from 1976. They are in some ways even more prophetic than his sermon at the time of the Consecrations in 1988. Together these two, twelve years apart, make a perfect set of bookends, between which one can see very clearly exactly what he thought and why he acted as he did. It is distinctly obvious that he never favored any rapprochement with the Conciliar Church or Revolutionary Rome. He says plainly and poignantly that he will have nothing to with them, until and unless they return to the Faith. There is not a trace of any thought of some kind of partial obedience, or some

practical, prudential arrangement. He explicitly says that they are modernists, and that he must remain outside of their sphere to continue to keep the traditions of the Faith alive and intact. **He would never rest in the confused comfort of compromise, he demanded adamant, cold-chiseled clarity.** There is no question that things are much worse now. We are better off in the catacombs than we would be if we were "on the inside" of the new Pantheon of the Conciliar Church.

In Christo Rege,
Andrew Senior

Memories of the Catholic Past

Editor, *The Remnant*: Michael Matt's memory of the Church of his youth and childhood, described in the current edition of *The Remnant Newspaper*, was almost enough to move me to tears. I'm only a few years older than Michael Matt, I think, so my memory of that Church is quite similar. Especially his description of the priests of that time: "I remember genuine and unaffected Catholic men. I remember how the parish house, or rectory, was located just a few feet from the church itself, and how Father was always there, working, praying, seeing to the needs of his flock." And the Church now? God help us. What keeps me going, though, is an idea that I keep thinking about all the time. It's an idea that I've written about and tweeted elsewhere: Christ never said the Gates of Hell would not infiltrate and undermine the Church; He said only that the Gates of Hell **WOULD NOT PREVAIL**. And I also think often of His Mother's promise: that in the end Her Immaculate Heart would triumph.

With a prayer,
Robert John Bennett

How Many Pilgrims Need Help?

Editor, *The Remnant*: I am a subscriber and supporter of *The Remnant* and all that you do for our Lord. My family was wondering how many young applicants you have for the pilgrimage and what is the total cost of sponsorship? We would like to help as much as we can and if

you could provide some information, we would be better able to prayerfully consider what we can do to help. Thank you and your family for all that you do for the Faith! As a side note, I am truly thankful for the Remnant.

You provide an island to hold onto in the sea of our terrible culture, which unfortunately has taken over most of Holy Mother Church as well. Unfortunately, we do not have a particularly traditional parish, nor school, so I am trying to guide my family as best I can within the confines of the current state of our Diocese (Cleveland). The Remnant provides me with that rock of Tradition that is not readily available around us. Thank you again,

Adam Stearns
Medina, Ohio

Editor's Response: Many thanks, Mr. Stearns. Let's pray for each other, asking God to help us all keep the old Faith in a bizarre and dangerous new world. At this point, there are six young pilgrims still seeking sponsors. See Page 4. God bless you, **MJM**

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Remnant Speaks, Continued...

Seeking Pilgrimage Sponsors

Dear Remnant Readers: My name is Samuel Ratner. I am a 21-year-old philosophy and theology major from the Catholic University of America who will be taking a gap year after college to focus on my spiritual growth. I am



writing to ask for your financial assistance so that I may participate in the 2018 pilgrimage. I am prepared to cover as much as \$750 of my expenses, but I am seeking sponsorship from the readers of the Remnant so that I can raise

the rest (or, God willing, receive a full sponsorship if I am so blessed).

The Latin Mass has always attracted me because of its tradition, mystery, and beauty, but my exposure to it is unfortunately very limited. I grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago and attended Mass at a Novus Ordo parish. It wasn't until college that I attended my first Latin Mass at Old St. Mary's in Washington DC. I was pleasantly surprised at what I experienced there. Old St. Mary's and other Extraordinary Form parishes have a rich sense of community, piety, and Catholicity that satisfies the spiritual longings I've always had. That said, as I graduate college and discern God's plan for the next step of my life, I am prayerfully searching for a Latin Mass parish to

anchor myself in so I can grow closer to God in traditional prayer and spirituality.

The Chartres pilgrimage appeals to me for a few reasons. First, I believe it will be an excellent opportunity to retreat from the world after my graduation so that I can discern how God wills for me to serve Him in the future. Second, I believe that being exposed to rich, traditional Catholic piety outside of the Mass itself will transform my interior spiritual life and help me to further embrace and promote traditional Catholic devotion. Finally, I believe that the pilgrimage will offer me the opportunity to make positive spiritual connections and feel like a part of the traditionalist community in a way that I've never been able to before.

I would appreciate any help I can get to participate in this pilgrimage. I would be delighted to present the intentions of any potential sponsors to the Blessed Mother when I arrive in Chartres. God bless!

Samuel Ratner (\$1000 thus far)

Dear Remnant Readers: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to introduce myself and to share about my desire to make this pilgrimage from Paris to the Chartres cathedral. My name is Margaret Perpetua Bresee. I am eighteen years old and the eldest daughter of Paul and Elena Bresee originally from the Seattle area (Blessed Sacrament Parish). My father had the great privilege of working to return the traditional Latin Mass to his own parish starting in the early 1990s and then in his diocese. He has desired to go on this pilgrimage since those

early days. It is his great love for the Faith which sparked my interest in this pilgrimage. Since he is unable to go due to his daily responsibilities, I wish to go on his behalf and on behalf of all my family.

I have attended the Latin Mass regularly my entire life. We are parishioners of St. Joan of Arc FSSP parish in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. We moved here to be close to a fraternity parish. From the traditional Roman Rite, I learn to offer to God my first and highest devotion. I feel connected with all the Catholics in the past who attended the Latin Mass. I study music and sing in our church choir. So the music at the Latin Mass,



both the Gregorian chant and Polyphony are very important in my life.

I come from a large family and am working to save for the pilgrimage. I would greatly appreciate any sponsorship offered and I will take the intentions of my benefactors with me. Sincerely,

Margaret Bresee (\$2,000 thus far)

The Chaplain Fund

The Remnant Tours is deeply committed to the moral, spiritual and physical wellbeing of each of our pilgrims. We engage Chaplains and Chaperones to ensure a safe and spiritually productive

environment at every step of the way. Our main chaperone, Mrs. Joan Mahar, has been with us for many years and is very much loved and respected by the young pilgrims. Each year, of course, she needs assistants, and this year we have found two. All of our chaplains and chaperones are volunteers. They ask not one penny for their services, but are fully committed to this Catholic action. However, The Remnant must still find a way to finance their transportation and accommodation. Anyone wishing to help out, under the same terms as the Youth Fund—your name will be added to the Pilgrimage Prayer List and your intentions will be remembered every day—please send your tax-deductible donations to:

The Remnant Chaplain and Chaperones Fund
PO Box 1117
Forest Lake, MN 55025

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Testimonials from Remnant Underground Viewers:

Dear Remnant TV: I do not remember how I discovered the Remnant Underground videos, but am so glad I did. You are very informative and have helped me realize I wasn't wrong in thinking something with the Catholic Church is getting too liberal. Thank you. Praying for everybody at the Remnant.

Sandra Hollingshead

Dear Remnant TV: I'm a lifelong protestant. Was born into the Missouri synod Lutheran church in 1943 so I am about to be 75 years old. I watch on YouTube what is going on in Catholicism and am saddened to see what this current pope is doing. Although I disagree with the Catholic Church in many areas, we were all still Christians first of all. Now I see what many of us have expected to see for years, but hoped it would not happen in our lifetime. We always knew that in the last days there would be an apostasy, a great falling away, but did not expect to see it started and directed by the pope. I feel as you do - How do I tell a homosexual that they must repent and confess their sin if they expect to be forgiven; when the pope and cardinals won't say it! We are indeed in the last days when evil will be called good and good evil. There can be no doubt about it! Keep up the good work even if it doesn't produce any change in your lifetime. God is watching! We are called to be His witnesses.

Paul Meyer



Dear Remnant TV: Hey I'm Lutheran and I approve this video. God bless!
[\[LUTHER'S POPE: Vatican Stamp of Approval of Protestant Revolt?\]](#)

GamingGerman 420

Dear Remnant TV: I watch all your videos on YouTube. You have provided me with strong answers when someone questions why I was a Traditional Catholic. But now I'm being asked why am I Catholic. With what Cardinal Marx

is now spewing, a long with Dr. Martin. If I wasn't already Catholic I sure wouldn't become one. Now seem to be no better than the Lutherans or Baptists. We have a Pope that sows confusion as to what the Church teaches.

My wife is a fallen away Catholic (I almost had her back) and she now says she will never come back. She asks me why do I want to belong to a church who doesn't know it's own faith. I told her I know my faith, her reply is what good is

it if the Church teaches what you do not believe?

You might as well join the Orthodox Church they have a valid Eucharist and they are more inline with your beliefs and now more inline with Christ's teaching. I had no answer. Could keeping the faith mean leaving the Church? I hope not. I'm not there yet.

Bob Rusinko

Dear Remnant TV: I converted to Catholicism 5 years ago. I am ready to leave the Catholic Church because of Pope Francis. But then I found a video done by Catholics that don't agree with Pope Francis and are trying to do something about it. I just need any help I can find.

Marty Hopkins

Dear Remnant TV: I have often thought of leaving the Catholic Church and joining the Russian Orthodox Church ever since this false prophet was elected.

Now I thank God for having guided me to this message (SCHISM RISING? 7 Bishops Resist Pope's Revolution – a Remnant Underground video). I heard it and made up my mind. I must stay and hold on fast and help my Church resist this satanic attack. Let us stand for our Faith.

Cerliezio

The Canonization Crisis, A Remnant Special Report...

C. Ferrara/Continued from Page 1

skepticism that greeted the canonizations of John XXIII and John Paul II. How could the very Pope who unleashed what



he himself lamented—too little too late—as a “spirit of auto-demolition” in the Church, including a “liturgical reform” that led to what Cardinal Ratzinger called “[the collapse of the liturgy](#),” the same Pope who wondered how “the smoke of Satan”¹ had entered the Church during his tumultuous reign, be raised to the altars as a model of Catholic virtue for veneration and *imitation* by all the faithful?

[To quote The Washington Post](#): “But for better or worse, Francis’s tendency to bypass the normal channels for certifying miracles is generating friction inside the ancient Vatican walls even as it reignites an age-old debate over the nature of Catholic saints.”² That age-old debate is over two questions yet to be answered definitively by the Magisterium: First, is the infallibility of papal canonizations *de fide* or merely a probable opinion? Second, if canonizations are infallible *de fide*, under what conditions are they such, given the strict conditions for papal infallibility laid down by the First Vatican Council respecting dogmatic definitions as opposed to acts of canonization regarding particular people in specific historical circumstances?

The two questions can be summarized as one: Are we required to believe that someone is a saint simply and only because the Pope has declared him to be so by recitation of the canonization formula, or must the Pope base his decision on the prior investigation of verifiable facts, just as dogmatic definitions must be founded on verification of the constant teaching of the Church preceding the definition?

On What is the Claim of Infallible Canonization Based?

It seems clear that the Vatican I definition of the dogma of papal infallibility respecting dogmatic definitions cannot be stretched to cover canonizations. The dogmatic definitions of the Extraordinary Magisterium place beyond any possible dispute and thus establish as an article of the Faith only what was already a constant teaching of the Church, not some doctrine newly enunciated by a given Pope. But canonizations by their very nature do announce something new respecting a duty of universal veneration for a particular person. [To quote John Paul II himself](#) in this regard:

[The Apostolic See] proposes to

the faithful for their imitation, veneration and invocation, men and women *who are outstanding in the splendor of charity and other evangelical virtues* and, *after due*

investigations, she declares them, in the solemn act of canonization, to be Saints.

Thus, John Paul himself preconditions canonization on a prior investigation, even though it was he who, in 1983, issued the Apostolic Constitution [Divinus Perfectionis Magister](#), which largely dismantled the centuries-old investigative machinery for canonization. The result was a “streamlined” process that (a) returns to the local bishop the bulk of the investigation of the candidate, including claimed miracles, without prior permission from Rome; (b) eliminates the fixed adversarial role of the Promoter of the Faith, commonly known as the “Devil’s Advocate”; (c) reduces the perennial requirement of miracles from four (two for beatification and two more for canonization) to two (one each for beatification and canonization); and (d) converts the entire process from the traditional and quite rigorous canonical trial on the merits of the candidate into a committee-style review and discussion practically devoid of adversarial character.³

In any case, canonization must be preceded by *some* form of reliable investigation of contingent historical facts. That investigation is either by the “ordinary” process, involving the systematic verification of miracles and virtues, or by the “extraordinary” process of confirming the existence of a longstanding legitimate cult surrounding a particular person and an “[uninterrupted reputation for wonders](#)” (the so-called “equivalent” canonization) even if the more exacting ordinary process is not applied. Were it otherwise, we would have to believe the absurdity that someone is to be revered as a saint without any prior investigation whatsoever, simply because the Pope says so by means of a recited formula.

Donald S. Prudlo, a highly reputable scholar on the history of canonizations, is clearly vexed by the hastiness and waning quality of pre-canonization investigations since the “saint factory” began its operation. He [writes](#):

As an historian of sainthood, my greatest hesitation with the current process stems from the canonizations done by John Paul II himself. While his laudable intention was to provide models of holiness drawn from all cultures and states in life, *he tended to divorce canonization from its*

original and fundamental purpose.

This was to have an official, public, and formal recognition of an existing cult of the Christian faithful, one that had been *confirmed by the divine testimony of miracles. Cult precedes canonization; it was not meant to be the other way around.* We are in danger then of using canonization as *a tool to promote interests and movements, rather than being a recognition and approval of an extant cultus*.⁴

Exactly so. But, confronted with patent abuses of the canonization process since 1983, reducing it to a “halo award” for favored persons or movements—a trend that has accelerated during this pontificate—Prudlo [opts for the view](#) that the process is, in essence, superfluous to the infallibility of canonizations. In responding to [the concerns of Roberto de Mattei](#) over Pope Bergoglio the canonization of John Paul II and John XXIII, he [concludes](#):

It is the *act* of canonization that is the infallible act of the pope since, as Thomas argues, it is no mere disciplinary decision, but the quasi-profession of faith in the glory of a saint. *It is not the investigation, but the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that certifies this reality for us* (Quod. 9, q. 16, ad 1). Popes are not infallible because of the quality of investigations that precede the definition, they are infallible precisely because of the act they perform in the liturgical setting of canonization.

But if the investigation has no part in “certifying this reality for us,” what is the point of the investigation? If the cult of a candidate for sainthood must be confirmed, as Prudlo says, by “the divine testimony of miracles,” doesn’t there have to be a reliable investigation of the miracles attributed to the candidate, ending in the certainty that they are in fact miracles? In fact, it was reported that during Benedict XVI’s slowdown of the “saint factory” he “reads every file page by page, according to the archbishop [Michele di Ruberto, secretary of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints], and *until he is personally satisfied with the miracles accredited to a candidate, no progress is possible.*”

Quite simply, if the quality of the investigation has no bearing on the veracity of a canonization, why waste time with an investigation? A Pope could simply implore the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and proceed infallibly even when an investigation is clearly flawed or completely absent. But that sounds more like the work of a gnostic Oracle of Rome than a Roman Pontiff acting according to both faith and reason.

The Infallible Definition of Dogma Compared

The idea that an inspiration of the Holy Ghost is the real guarantee of canonization is certainly not consistent with the way Popes have defined dogmas of the Faith. Of course, the Holy Ghost guides the Church in the matter of dogma, but that guidance has taken place over time as a function of preserving and enunciating the revelation of Christ and the Apostles

handed down from century to century, not by momentary *ad hoc* inspirations. Thus, for example, in defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Blessed Pius IX certainly invoked the Holy Ghost, but he also made absolutely certain that “Holy Scripture, venerable Tradition, [and] the constant mind of the Church” supported the definition.⁵ His investigation included the findings of a special commission, consultation with the world’s bishops—who “with one voice... entreated us to define our supreme judgment and authority the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin”—and a consistory of the College of Cardinals called to address the subject. Pius probably would have laughed at the suggestion that only the inspiration of the Holy Ghost (to which he referred at the moment of the definition) and the recitation of the traditional formula ensured the infallibility of his definition, not *also* the objective and verifiable content of the Faith as confirmed by an exhaustive prior investigation. If such immense investigative care is required for defining as a dogma what the Church has clearly always believed anyway, then how can an adequate investigation of a particular person’s alleged sanctity and miracles, which may be hotly contested, not be crucial to a Pope’s decision to raise him to the altars?

The “Solution” of Saint Thomas

In his masterful study of this subject, Prudlo cites the solution proposed by Saint Thomas: that the Holy Ghost insures the reliability of canonizations despite the potential for human error or even outright mendacity on the part of investigators and witnesses. But Thomas argues only that “we must piously believe” the Pope cannot err in canonizing and that “Divine Providence preserves the Church assuredly in such things as may be deceived by fallible human testimony.”⁶ He does not argue, nor has the Church ever taught, that this pious belief is an article of faith not to be questioned or doubted under any circumstances whatsoever.

Furthermore, Prudlo himself explains that there are *three* reasons Thomas concludes that the Pope is unable to err in canonizations: “(1) he makes a thorough *investigation* into holiness of life; (2) this is confirmed by the testimony of *miracles*, and (3) the Holy Spirit leads him (for Thomas, the clincher).”⁷ But if the guidance of the Holy Spirit is “the clincher,” there must be something to clinch in the first place. And that can only be the case for canonization based on *verified* holiness of life and miracles following an investigation into both. Absent that investigation into holiness and miracles, sole reliance on the inspiration of the Holy Ghost would appear to be the rashest of presumptions, at least in the ordinary case. Indeed, the same presumption would justify enunciation of new doctrines not shown *by investigation* to be “the constant mind of the Church,” to recall the words of Blessed Pius IX.

In any case, Saint Thomas is not infallible even if he does provide weighty authority for the majority opinion of theologians, at least since the 15th century, that papal canonizations are infallible. Indeed,

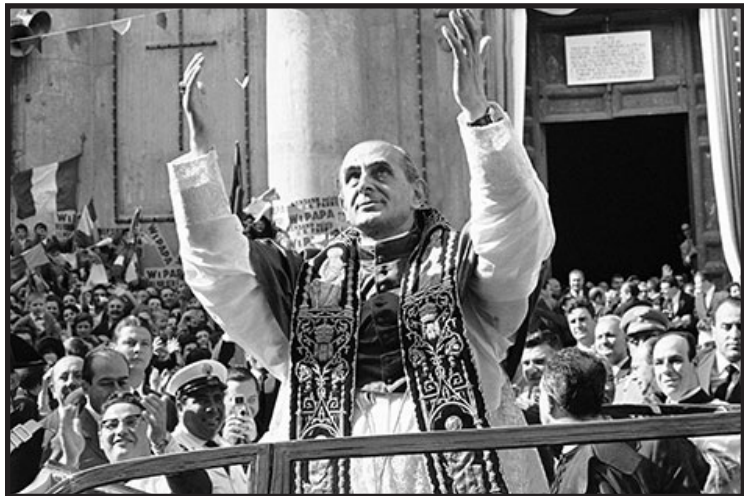
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The Canonization Crisis, A Remnant Special Report...

C. Ferrara/Continued...

it is not easy to see how formal papal canonization could be subject to error, as this would undermine the entire canon of saints raised to the altars by pontifical act, expose the Church to the charge that

but beyond this assertion of a strong probability we must not venture to go, especially seeing such great names for the negative opinion.



It is safer to conclude with the wise and learned Lambertini, that *each opinion should be left in its own probability, until a judgment shall issue from the Holy See*; for when we are treating of setting up a dogma of faith, says the same careful

theologian in another place, we must wait for the judgment of the Apostolic See the mother and mistress of the other Churches, and of the chief pontiff, to whom it exclusively belongs to make definitions of faith, *before we venture to brand with the infamous note of heresy those who follow an opposite opinion.*⁸

Likewise, in his own study of the evolution of the papal canonization process and the correlative view of the infallibility of papal canonizations, Prudlo concludes: “Claims of infallibility do not appear until relatively late in the Middle Ages, usually after the... period of the acquisition of papal hegemony over such cases.”⁹ But, he notes, “the seemingly inexhaustible supply of candidates so honored by John Paul II and the rapidity of advancement advocated by Pope Francis for some recent figures have also stimulated current arguments.” To say the least! And that is precisely the point: *Current arguments are permissible* in keeping with the “origins of the theological and historical debate” Prudlo traces to the Middle Ages. Those arguments will undoubtedly continue on some level unless and until the infallibility of papal canonizations is removed from the realm of probable theological opinion by either an *ex cathedra* definition or a decisively worded encyclical dedicated to the question.

On the subject of current arguments—and quite tellingly in view of the drive by Pope Bergoglio to canonize with utmost haste every Pope associated with the Second Vatican Council, including even Pope John Paul I (whom he has already declared Venerable)—we have a 2014 [interview](#), published by *Inside the Vatican*, with Bishop Giuseppe Sciacca. Sciacca is a renowned canonist who in 2016 was promoted to the office of no less than Secretary of the Apostolic Signatura by Bergoglio himself. When asked by the interviewer “Is the Pope infallible when he proclaims a new saint?”, Bishop Sciacca hedged his reply:

According to the prevailing doctrine of the Church, when the Pope canonizes a saint his judgment is infallible. As is known, canonization is the decree with which the Pope solemnly proclaims that the heavenly glory shines upon

the Blessed and extends the cult of the new saint to the universal Church in a binding and definitive manner. There is no question then that canonization is an act carried out by the Petrine primate. At the same time, however, *it should not be considered infallible* according to the infallibility criteria set out in the First Vatican Council’s dogmatic constitution “*Pastor aeternus*.”

When next asked whether “the Pope can make a mistake when he proclaims someone a saint?”, Bishop Sciacca offered this nuanced explanation:

That’s not what I said. I am not denying that the decree issued for a canonization cause is definitive, so it would be rash and indeed unholy to state that the Pope can make a mistake. What I am saying, is that the proclamation of a person’s sainthood *is not a truth of faith because it is not a dogmatic definition and is not directly or explicitly linked to a truth of faith or a moral truth contained in the revelation*, but is only indirectly linked to this. It is no coincidence that neither the Code of Canon Law of 1917 nor the one currently in force, nor the Catechism of the Catholic Church present the Church’s doctrine regarding canonizations.

When queried about the opinion of Saint Thomas on the matter, Bishop Sciacca cautioned that it must be viewed in the context of the Church’s much later infallible definition of the strict limits of papal infallibility:

Of course, I am well aware of that. Thomas Aquinas is the most prestigious author supporting this theory. But it should be said that the use of the concept of infallibility and of language relating to it, in a context that is so far from that of the 19th century when the First Vatican Council was held, *risks being anachronistic*.

St. Thomas placed canonization half way between things that pertain to the faith and judgments on *certain factors that can be contaminated by false testimonies*, concluding that the Church could not make mistakes: in fact, he claimed that: “thinking that judgment is infallible, is holy.”

As I said before and I repeat again, the “*Pastor aeternus*” rigorously defines and restricts the concept of papal infallibility which could previously also encompass and contain or be likened to the concepts of “inerrancy” and “indefectibility” in relation to the Church. Canonization is like a doctrine which cannot be contested *but which cannot be defined as a doctrine of faith as all faithful must necessarily believe in it*. [paragraph breaks added]

In other words, while a papal canonization cannot be contested outright as error, questioning the infallibility of canonizations, or even arguing against it according to the minority view, does not place one outside the communion of the Church

on account of heresy. Indeed, Bishop Sciacca—Secretary of the Church’s highest canonical tribunal—rejects the claim that the Church teaches that it is heresy to question the infallibility of canonization:

And what about the words which Pope Benedict XIV, born Prospero Lambertini, used in the “*De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione*”, about the non-infallibility theory “smelling of heresy”?

His theory *is not binding as it forms part of the work he did as a great canonist, but as part of his private studies*. It has nothing to do with his pontifical magisterium.

But there was a doctrinal text issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in May 1998 which also mentions infallibility in canonizations.

It is patently clear that the purpose of the passage in question is *purely illustrative and is not intended as a definition*. The recurring argument according to which the Church

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she has imposed error in her universal discipline, and favor the opinion of heretics that the Church demands the vain and blasphemous idolatry of sinners.

Is there Room for Doubt?

Nevertheless, the infallibility of papal canonizations has never been defined as a dogma, nor can one find it clearly stated as an explicit doctrine of the universal ordinary Magisterium. For example, as Prof. de Mattei notes in the article cited above, there is no mention of the infallibility of canonizations, nor even a discussion of the prevailing theological view, in the 1917 Code of Canon Law, the 1983 Code of Canon Law or the Catechism of John Paul II.

In an [essay on the subject](#) published in 1848, Father Fredrick William Faber, [the famous Anglican convert](#) renowned for his scholarship, “unswerving loyalty to the Holy See” and Marian devotion, who authored the definitive “*Lives of the Modern Saints*,” defended the probable theological opinion in favor of infallibility and argued for the rashness and impiety of attributing error to papal canonizations. But he was also at pains to hedge his discussion with caveats in view of weighty minority views against the probable opinion:

Is it de fide that the Church is infallible in the decree of canonization? *This is an open question* in the Catholic schools....

St. Thomas places the judgment of the Church in canonization as something between a judgment in matters of faith and a judgment on particular facts, and therefore it would follow that the infallibility of the decree is *a pious belief, but nothing more*, inasmuch as it only pertains to the faith reductive....

It is de fide that the Church is infallible in the common doctrine of morals; but *it is not so certain* that the canonization of Saints pertains to the common doctrine of morals.... The Church has never defined her infallibility in this matter to be de fide, *neither can we collect it from her practice*....

It seems then *probable* that it is de fide that the judgment of the Church in canonization is infallible;

The Canonization Crisis, Concluded.

cannot teach or accept mistakes *is intrinsically weak in this case*. But saying that an act is not infallible does not mean to say that the act is wrong or deceiving. Indeed, *the mistake may have been made either rarely or never*. Canonization, which everyone admits does not derive directly from faith, *is never an actual definition relating to faith or tradition...*

Sorry, what exactly is canonization then?

It is the definitive and immutable conclusion of a process; it is the final decree issued at the end of a historical and canonic process which relates to a real historical question. *To incorporate it in infallibility means extending the concept of infallibility itself way beyond the limits defined by the First Vatican Council.*

The reader will notice that both Father Faber and Bishop Sciacca, given the still unsettled state of the Magisterium, leave room for a measure of doubt on the infallibility of canonizations as a minority view—a view that would constitute theological error at worst, but not heresy, should the Church ever formally reprobate it by way of a dogmatic definition (after which it *would* constitute heresy). But they also hold that it would be “rash and indeed unholly” to declare that a canonization is simply erroneous.

Papal Reliance on Pre-Canonization Investigations: A Conundrum

So, what exactly inhabits the slim *lacuna* between the permissibility of questioning the infallibility of canonizations and the impermissibility of contesting particular examples as outright papal blunders? This zone of uncertainty seems to arise from the very nature of canonization as the outcome of a prior investigation to determine the existence of historical facts about a particular person, without which canonization cannot occur, as opposed to enunciating doctrinal formulae for the universal Church.

Given the fact-dependency of canonizations, there is no escaping what Prudlo admits is a true and proper “conundrum” with which canonists and theologians, including St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, had to grapple as the papacy gradually consolidated its authority over a canonization process that for centuries had been a local affair involving, in not a few cases, very dubious “saints”:

Foremost in their minds was the possibility of error as a result of false human testimony. *This constantly checked canonists and some theologians from assigning papal infallibility in canonization as a dogma of the faith, especially in the thirteenth century*. The problem of canonizing unworthy figures came up repeatedly, causing the papacy to institute *all manner of safeguards to ensure veracity and holiness*, such as lengthy investigations of life and miracles. In addition to all of

these, the possibility of human frailty remained very much in the forefront of theological writings. It was the central argument *against* the doctrine in the medieval period. How Church thinkers overcame *this conundrum* is a central key to understanding the creation of *general consensus*.¹⁰

But what necessity is there for “all manner of safeguards to ensure veracity and holiness,” including “lengthy investigations of life and miracles,” if, as Prudlo argues against de Mattei, “It is not the investigation, but the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that certifies this reality for us” and “Popes are not infallible because of the quality of investigations that precede the definition, they are infallible precisely because of the act they perform in the liturgical setting of canonization”?

Moreover, Prudlo’s own scholarship tends to undermine his position *contra* de Mattei. As his study notes, Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) declared

Are we required to believe that someone is a saint simply and only because the Pope has declared him to be so by recitation of the canonization formula?

in his Bull canonizing Homobonus of Cremona that “Two things *are necessary* for one who is publicly venerated as a saint in the Church militant: the power of signs, namely *works of piety* in life and *the sign of miracles* after death.”¹¹ Innocent also made clear that the papal precept of universal veneration involved in canonization must be supported by more than the bare conviction that a candidate has achieved the beatific vision, as some now argue in a minimalist defense of Francis’s canonizations of John Paul II and John XXIII: “While Innocent avers that only final perseverance is absolutely necessary for sainthood simply considered, he maintains that the public veneration of such a person *requires divine testimonies*. Both are required for sanctity, ‘for neither are works sufficient by themselves, nor signs alone.’”¹²

It is highly significant that, as Prudlo shows, Innocent III is the very Pope who “laid down the pattern that would be critical for the elucidation of the qualitative difference in papal canonizations that would arise after his death”—that is, their infallibility—by “reorienting the canonization process from the papal perspective.” Part of that reorientation is “the *necessity* of signs and wonders as a *signal precondition for sainthood*, along with the testimony of a life lived according to the virtues.”¹³ Is it really temerarious to suggest that absent proof of true signs and wonders there cannot be a true canonization?

It would appear, then, that Prudlo himself has demonstrated that according to papal teaching some reliable form of factual investigation of the candidate for sainthood, confirming both miracles and virtues, is a prerequisite to papal canonization—that is, the Pope’s imposition of mandatory veneration of a saint by the whole Church. Although Prudlo concludes that as the process of

papal canonization developed “[t]he Popes clearly believed they were exercising personal infallibility in their decrees of canonization,”¹⁴ the question remains: On what grounds did they base that belief? Surely, the investigations on which they relied must have had something to do with it.

That being so, how can the quality of the pre-canonization investigation not emerge as an issue? If the quality of the investigation were irrelevant, would not the investigation itself be irrelevant? In which case, we would be left only with the bare assertion that an inspiration of the Holy Ghost guarantees that no papal canonization will ever be in error so long as the Pope recites the canonization formula “in the liturgical setting of canonization” (to recall Prudlo’s argument *contra* de Mattei). But that kind of infallibility would have to be distinct from the Vatican I definition, which is strictly limited to the Pope’s solemn proclamation that what the Church has always believed is *de fide*. Thus, a further

definition of papal infallibility, embracing the canonizations of particular individuals based on historical facts, would appear to be necessary to end legitimate debate over the matter.

Conclusion: Four *Dubia*

In the meantime, I do not see why the following specific *dubia*—which of course I have no competence to answer—are not “on the table” respecting canonization:

- Could the validity of a canonization, even if it cannot be called an error as such, be doubted if it could be shown that the investigation of the candidate has been compromised by human error, bias or mendacity?
- Would a papal act of canonization by way of recitation of the canonization formula during the canonization rite be infallible *ex sese* (of or from itself) even if there were no prior investigation of the candidate?
- If the papal act of canonization is infallible *ex sese*, is there any necessity for the investigatory process preceding canonization—developed by the Popes themselves to provide safeguards to ensure the veracity of miracles and the holiness of a candidate; and if it is necessary, why is it necessary?
- If a papal act of canonization is not infallible *ex sese*, then is integrity of the investigatory process preceding it not essential to the claim of infallibility, and if not, why not?

These questions can be answered definitively only by the Magisterium. And the need for that answer is urgent. The accelerating operation of the “saint factory” and the clearly expedient move to canonize every Pope since the Second Vatican Council on the basis of increasingly slim evidence, while neglecting or completely forgetting the causes of great pre-conciliar Popes renowned for their heroic virtue and plenitude of undeniable miracles—for example, the cause of [Blessed Pius IX](#)—has induced a kind of “canonization crisis” in the minds of millions of the faithful.

Is the answer to the crisis blind faith in the infallibility of canonizations, which has never been defined as an article of faith? Or are the faithful permitted to raise today, with greater urgency than ever before, the sorts of questions that have been presented without a definitive answer from the Magisterium since the development of the papal canonization process began?

This series should be understood as an appeal for magisterial clarity by a mere layman who, along with Catholics the world over, is struggling to understand how the infallibility of canonizations can be reconciled with a process that seems increasingly, as Prudlo so rightly observes, to be subject to abuse in order “to promote interests and movements, rather than being a recognition and approval of an extant *cultus*.”

With all of these concerns in view, Part II of this series will consider the problematic character of the alleged miracles attributed to Paul VI as a prime example of why it is reasonable to consider whether the integrity of the investigative process affects the integrity of a canonization, all prior attempts to solve this conundrum notwithstanding. ■

(Endnotes)

1. Contrary to the scoffing of neo-Catholic commentators who have not troubled themselves with serious research, this reference is not “apocryphal.” It has been cited by no less than [Monsignor Guido Pozzo](#), Secretary of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, and is found in Paul VI, *Insegnamenti*, Ed Vaticana, vol. X, 1972, p. 707.
2. Anthony Faiola, “As two more popes are canonized, a question emerges: How miraculous should saints be?,” *Washington Post*, April 25, 2014; accessed on February 19, 2018 @ <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.
3. See, e.g., Jason Gray, *The Evolution of the Promoter of the Faith in Causes of Beatification and Canonization: Study of the Law of 1917 and 1983* (Roma 2015, Pontificia Università Lateranense).
4. Donald S. Prudlo, “Are Canonizations Based on Papal Infallibility?,” *Crisis*, April 25, 2014; accessed February 19, 2018 @ www.crisismagazine.com. Emphasis added.
5. Pius IX, *Apostolic Constitution Ineffabilis Deus* (1854). Incredibly, this monumental papal document is not to be found among the 76 documents of Pius IX archived on the Vatican website.
6. Donald S. Prudlo, *Certain Sainthood, Canonization and the Origins of Papal Infallibility in the Medieval Church* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 141; citing *Quodlibet*, IX, q. 8; Resp. & Ad. 2 (Appendix).
7. *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
8. F.W. Faber, *Essay on Beatification and Canonization* (London: Richardson & Son, 1848) 127, 128 (paragraph breaks added).
9. Prudlo, *op. cit.*, 16.
10. *Ibid.*, 20-21. Emphasis added.
11. In Prudlo, 76.
12. Prudlo, *op. cit.*, 141.
13. *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

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Ye Shall Know the Truth

By Susan Claire Potts, M.A.,
Ph.D., M.F.T.

Author's Note: This is the first of three articles dealing with the Alteration of Sacred Scripture. Part One is an Overview of Exegetical History and Method. Part Two is Textual Comparison and Analysis. Part Three deals with the Psychological Ramifications of the New Translations. SP

We are in a dreadful situation. It feels like apostasy. *Truths are decayed from among the children of men*, the Psalmist sings,¹ and the words pierce the heart. What happens when Truth is abandoned? What becomes of the world?

I am a psychologist, trained in languages and literature as well as psychodynamic processes, but it doesn't take professional degrees to see that there is something terribly wrong with people's minds. Nobody seems to think straight anymore. There is confusion everywhere. Everyone is affected. The disorder is not some esoteric psychopathology caused by the stresses of modern life. It is far more sinister. The Mystery of Iniquity has risen up, billowing like a toxic cloud, blotting out the Light. Minds are darkened. Preternatural forces are in play.

Invited? It sure seems like it.

People can't seem to carry on a decent conversation anymore, much less a deep discussion. Not even Catholics. How can they? There are all kinds of Catholics

now: *Traditional. Conservative. Novus Ordo. Liberal. Progressive.* Everybody has a label. It's hard to find a *regular* Catholic anymore. People are sorted (and judged) by assumed orientation. No discussion is necessary or possible. Their identity will be known, their *belief system* understood before they say a word. There is no meeting of the minds, no shared principles. People are expected to formulate their own "truth," forge their own path. To where? They don't know. They have no destination point, no supernatural end goal. They've lost their way.

The truth will make you free, Our Lord promised, but how are people supposed to find that precious thing, that binding Truth? How are they to know what to think and do? A thousand voices clamor in their ears.

It shouldn't be so difficult. The Church—which speaks the Word of the Master—lays it out clearly and infallibly: *Quicumque vult...* begins the Athanasian Creed, *Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith.* The words roar like thunder: *Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*

So there it is. Keep the Faith and live; lose it and die.

From ancient times, the path to Heaven

was clearly marked. People knew which way to go, what to think, how to behave. They could be rescued if they willed; they need not be lost forever. They could avoid being plunged into the Abyss with those who turn their back on God. They could hold the Deposit of Faith, that treasure kept inviolate in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture—two channels like streams of truth, singing water flowing from Truth Himself. They could drink from them. Drink deeply and know.

Not now. Something terrible has happened. Nothing is clear. The streams are clogged with muck.

How Did This Happen?

This was no accident. It is the work of human hands, the product of disordered human minds. Faithless and arrogant, false teachers have laid their hands on holy things and profaned sacred words. Those in high places bear the responsibility for the blindness, confusion, and disorientation that are ravaging the faith (and sanity) of the Catholic people.

Let's take a look at what they've done.

First, they did away with Tradition. *Oh, no*, they say. Tradition is upheld. They scold us like we're a bunch of kindergarteners. *You must differentiate between Tradition with a capital T and the lesser, lower case, traditions.* Lesser

things can be changed or abolished, cast off like outgrown clothes. Disciplines, customs, rituals, *all non-essential*, they say. No problem, get rid of them, and then tell people nothing has changed because there are the *sacraments*.

But they changed the Mass! we protest. *Oh, no*, they assure us. *The Mass cannot change; liturgy can change.* And then we get a lecture about development and accretions and all sorts of gobbledygook that has no substance or meaning. What about Extreme Unction? Oh, that--it's the Sacrament of the Sick. It doesn't have to be given *in extremis*. Any sick person can receive it. It's a holy anointing, after all. But what about the dying? They look at you like you're an idiot. *It's not necessary. Everybody is received in the arms of the Father.*

I could go on, but I need not. It's obvious. Tradition has been trampled. Now what about the other sacred channel of truth? Sacred Scripture?

It's been unraveled. They've laid their lying hands on it. We've been subjected to one idiotic translation after another. Words and phrases have been tossed about like juggling balls. It's not just the vernacular, either. Latin, too, has been subjected to the renovators. First, they changed the Psalter. Ripped the music right out of the psalms. And now there's

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Catholic Heroes...

St. Columba Tames Nessy

Did you know that the story of the Loch Ness Monster is at least 1,300 years old? In the seventh century (c. 697) Adomnán, ninth abbot of Iona, wrote the *Life of St. Columba*, within which he tells the story of how a water beast in River Ness was driven off by "the power of the blessed man's prayer":

"Once, on another occasion, when the blessed man [St. Columba] stayed for some days in the land of the Picts, he had to cross the River Ness. When he reached its bank, he saw some of the local people burying a poor fellow.

They said they had seen a water beast snatch him and maul him savagely as he was swimming not long before. Although some men had put out in a little boat, they were too late, but, reaching out with hooks, they had hauled in his wretched corpse. The blessed man, having been told all this, astonished them by sending one of his companions to swim across the river and sail back to him in a dinghy that was on the further bank. At the command of the holy and praiseworthy man, Luigne moccu Min obeyed without hesitation. He took off his clothes except for a tunic and dived into the water.

But the beast was lying low on the riverbed, its appetite not so much sated as whetted for prey. It could sense that the water above was stirred by the swimmer, and suddenly swam up to the surface, rushing open-mouthed with a great roar towards the man

as he was swimming midstream. All the bystanders, both the heathen and the brethren, froze in terror, but the blessed man looking on raised his holy hand and made the sign of the cross in the air, and invoking the name of God, he commanded the fierce beast, saying:

"Go no further. Do not touch the man. Go back at once."

At the sound of the saint's voice, the beast fled in terror so fast one might have thought it was pulled back with ropes. But it had got so close to Luigne swimming that there was no more than the length of a pole between man and beast. The brethren were amazed to see that the beast had gone and that their fellow-soldier Luigne returned to them untouched and sage in the dinghy, and they glorified God in the blessed man. Even the heathen natives who were present at the time were so moved by the greatness of the miracle they had witnessed that they too magnified the God of the Christians" (*Life of St. Columba* II.27).

Events like the one described above were regular occurrences for Saint Columba (Columbkille, to the Scots), who lived between 521 and 597AD.



He was an Irish abbot and missionary credited with spreading Christianity in what is today Scotland. He founded the important abbey of Iona, which became a dominant religious and political institution in the region for centuries. He was highly regarded by both the Gaels of Dál Riata and the Picts, and is remembered today as one of the Apostles of Ireland, along with St. Patrick and St. Brigid. ■



S. Potts/Continued...

even a New Vulgate--a fatuous recasting of Sacred Scripture into neo-Latin.

St. Jerome's work has been *updated*. By tone-deaf *scholars*. In committee, of course. It's too shocking for words. I couldn't make this up. Get a copy of the modern version and compare it to the true Vulgate. Latin is a dead language. It cannot change. That's why it was so perfect a vehicle for religious truth. But they changed it. They simplified the Latin, changed the spelling, changed the rhythms, altered the song of the words so that the *Nova Vulgata* reads like a reference manual for technocrats. Would you believe that this manufactured *thing* is now the official Catholic Bible?²

Sacred Scripture? Hardly. It's like the very Breath of God has been snuffed out of it.

How dare they? And how can we accept their revised Bible without insulting Almighty God and calling down His wrath upon us? Do people think He doesn't care? That He doesn't know what they're up to? That there are no consequences, no penalties for intellectual sin? Everyone knows that God is Love, God is Mercy, but is He not also Justice Itself?

We dare not fall away. We must stand against these perfidious reformers, reject their lying work, and affirm, not just what we *believe*, but what we *know*. Here it is: We know that God has revealed Himself in the Sacred Scriptures, inspiring writers from the time of Moses to the end of His work, the mysterious Apocalypse of St. John the Evangelist. Filling the writers' minds and guiding their work, He tells us about Himself, about us, about our world and the world to come. The Bible is true. There is no other Book like it. It is of divine origin.

This is what the ersatz scholars with all their degrees and certifications and exalted positions reject. Their attack is not new. This assault on the Holy Word of God started long before Vatican II, long before the *New American Bible* was foisted on us, laid like concrete over the sacred words we knew so well, crushing them.

The betrayal was born in the minds of pedants, Germans mostly, who invented a revolutionary method of biblical exegesis--the historico-critical method of higher criticism.

Gone was the traditional layered way of approaching the Scriptures. Remember how it used to be done? First one considered the *manifest* meaning of the words, the clear and obvious fact that words meant *at least* what they said. From there, one could go deeper, ponder the historical, allegorical, and mystical meaning of what was written. But one did not deviate from the text. One plunged into it, immersed oneself, allowed the Truth to penetrate the soul.

Not so for the scholars. *Non sic impii, non sic.*³ The underlying principle of modern exegesis is that *truth lies in the historical context, not in the words*. That's the hidden deceit behind all the

² Pope Paul VI established a commission to expand the revision to cover the entire Bible. The revised Psalter was completed and published in 1969, followed by the New Testament in 1971. The entire Vulgate was completed in 1979. A second edition was published in 1986.

³ Ps 1,4. *Not so the wicked, not so.*

Pope's Advisor Wants Raymond Arroyo Fired

By Michael J. Matt

Uh-oh. Sounds like Fr. Spadaro's been @triggered...

February 20, 2018 ([LifeSiteNews](#))
– Papal confidante Father Antonio Spadaro retweeted a call for EWTN to be severely censured “until they get rid of Raymond Arroyo.”

The call for an “interdict” to be imposed on the Catholic media empire started by Mother Angelica came from Anthony Annett, Assistant to the Director at the International Monetary Fund's Communications Department.

An interdict is essentially one step short of excommunication. It bans a person or people from accessing most Church Sacraments.

Annett called for an interdict to be imposed on EWTN because of a February 15 *World Over* segment.

“Make no mistake,” tweeted Annett, the show's discussion of a recent Spadaro speech and ultra-liberal Cardinal Blase Cupich “represent ‘total war’ on the papacy of Pope Francis.”

...Arroyo was a close friend of Mother Angelica. He is the author of numerous books. As confusion has mounted during Pope Francis' reign,

his signature show, *The World Over*, has [analyzed](#) troubling [developments](#) in the Church. Arroyo often does this with the help of Father Gerald Murray and Robert Royal (the “papal posse”).

[Spadaro](#), a Jesuit who is [often called](#) the pope's “mouthpiece,” frequently criticizes critics of *Amoris Laetitia*'s ambiguity or the Francis pontificate. He is the editor-in-chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Read the full report [HERE](#)

REMNANT COMMENT: Good for Raymond Arroyo! What Father Spadaro--the “Pope's Mouthpiece”--doesn't realize is that the shark has been jumped. The jig is up. The cat's out of the Vatican's bag. The world is onto them. Get rid of Raymond Arroyo and he'll become an even more outspoken critic of the Vatican dog and pony show. Consign him to the Gulag and a dozen others will step up and take his place. Nobody is falling for it anymore, Father Tony... nobody!

Pope Francis has awakened the sleeping giant. All glory and honor to God.

(**Note to Raymond Arroyo:** If worse comes to worst and you find yourself living under a bridge somewhere, eating out of dumpster and hiding from Vatican hitmen--well, you're always welcome at our fire.) ■



Pope and Fr. Spadaro conspiring against faithful Catholic?

strange translations, transliterations, and explanations of the Word of God. They destroy what is right in front of their eyes. For them, *words don't necessarily mean what they say*.

Beware!

Their work is poison; once imbibed, it is death to the soul. Let's break down the method they use to destroy all sense and reason.

1) They reject the true, formal sense of words and call their “translations” an expression of “dynamic equivalence.” That's a fancy way of saying, the translation need not be exact.⁴ The words must be re-interpreted in a more relevant context.

2) Using fragments of historical documents, they attempt to reconstruct the past in an effort to “understand the world behind the words”—as if now, centuries later, these specialists know more than those who lived and wrote in those times.

3) Through the application of literary critical methods, they assert they can discover the original meaning of the Bible in its “historical context.” They've coined an erudite phrase for this discovery: the *sensus literalis historicus*. Sounds impressive, but all it means is the “literal historical sense”—as if that is something real.

4) They attempt to reimagine the “historical situation of the author (!) and the person who reads or hears the text.” They have no problem twisting the plain sense of the words of Sacred Scripture,

using various “ancient documents” as source material in reinventing the past.

Most people have no idea that this is going on, being stuck as they are, with puerile translations and tortured exegesis. What is absolutely outrageous is that the experts take the method even further. They use the tools of literary criticism (an abominable way of studying literature) and archeology to determine the authorship of the various books of the Bible.

Thus, Moses didn't actually write the Torah, they say. David didn't compose the psalms. The Book of Isaiah was done in two different historical periods—so, of course, Isaiah didn't write them—if he even existed. They treat the Bible like it is solely the work of man, not recognizing how absurd that is. For them, the Scriptures are myths that must be reinterpreted by experts. Even the miracles of Our Lord become metaphors, literary constructions, the stuff of legend.

These scholars, disdainful of truth, have sidestepped actual translation and substituted “equivalent” words that they believe better fit the “historical context” of the Sacred Scriptures. They bastardize the text, scrutinizing the dates, events, historical accounts of the times, substituting trite modern expressions for the revealed Word of God. They claim their work is not new—that the method of examining texts for greater historicity and authenticity goes all the way back to the Church Fathers, to the medieval period, and to the Renaissance. They call it their “search for the historical Jesus.”

But the blasphemy doesn't stop there. From the historico-critical method, they moved on to “form criticism,” which--get this--maintains that the gospels were compiled of small “units” which were

handed down through oral tradition and then pieced together by someone, according, they say, “to the needs of the community.” Of course, they have no evidence for this. They simply imagine it.

But it doesn't end there. Following “Form Criticism” is “Redaction Criticism.” This nefarious method purports to emphasize the “theological implications” of the narrative. In plain English, this means that the Evangelists picked and chose material that substantiated their claims for the “Messiahship of Jesus.” The proponents of this method assert that the Gospels were written—not to teach of the Kingdom of God, but to teach Christians how to live in the “continuing future.”

Who can swallow this stuff?

This is the New Era, the Era of Man Come of Age, the Apotheosis of Humanity. False teachers have abandoned the Catholic religion. The New Translations are not the Word of God. They are not divinely inspired. No pope or bishop or council can alter the Sacred Scriptures with impunity. Recall the words of the Psalm:⁵

May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.

Who have said: We will magnify our tongue;

Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?

There is punishment for what they have done. I shudder to think of it. ■

⁵ Psalm 11: 2-6

MORE PAPAL "REFORMS": Last Trappist Monastery in Germany Closes

By Hilary White

In 2015, the pope's close collaborator, the Honduran cardinal Oscar Maradiaga, whom Francis chose as the head of his "C9" privy council of cardinals, said in an interview that this pope intends "deep and total" and "irreversible," "renovation." Like a red-hatted Grinch, this outspoken socialist cardinal confirmed that it is the intention of the Bergoglian regime to steal the Church specifically to make sure no one ever gets to have it anymore – perhaps, like any secularist materialist, failing to really understand what he was saying.

"[We walk as Church](#) towards a deep and global renovation. For this renovation to be sincerely Catholic, it must encompass all of the historical dimensions of the Church," the notoriously open socialist Maradiaga said. Indeed, "[irreversible](#)" seems to be the Bergoglians' favourite adjective.

While those who understand how the Church works have rightly pointed out that this really isn't how the Church works – that anything that is changed can be changed back again given sufficient will – the one area where the secularist Vatican seems bent on doing as much damage as possible [is the religious life](#). In fact, their attitude toward anything that smells of traditional [contemplative monastic life](#) is proving to be indistinguishable from that of their 19th century anti-clerical forerunners who made a point of closing "useless" contemplative monasteries all over Europe. This past month we have seen again the implementing of the "irreversible" Bergoglian New Paradigm against any contemplatives who might be daring to look wistfully back to the recent past with a mind to restore it.

Little Mariawald Abbey, the last Trappist monastery in Germany, was closed last month after a period of "visitation" that began shortly after the community attempted to return to the traditional monastic rites of Mass and the Divine Office. Before this attempt at an eleventh-hour reprieve in 2008, the abbey was headed for the Novusordoist cliff, having about 15 monks with an average age of 81.

The [German press announced](#) that the abbey, first founded in the 15th century near the little village of Heimbach, has been forcibly closed on orders of the Vatican. Its properties will be given to the diocese and its ten monks dispersed to other monasteries, an abrupt and premature halt to a hopeful Ratzingerian experiment.

After the promulgation of *Summorum Pontificum*, the monks of the abbey issued [a press release](#) announcing that they would be returning, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, to the pre-conciliar liturgical rites and monastic practices. The monks spoke of a letter received from the Commission for *Ecclesia Dei* in which Pope Benedict confirmed his "personal decision" to grant the abbey's request for a "complete

return of the abbey to the Old Usus in liturgy and monastic life." Their express aim was to help reverse the decline of the religious life that has become an accepted part of the Catholic landscape since Vatican II.



Who's Next?

The abbey's return to the traditional rites, they said, "can be considered a fruit of the efforts of Pope Benedict XVI to be viewed in the spirit of tradition for the renewal of the Church."

"After the various post-conciliar reforms for the monastery did not bring the hoped-for flowering in liturgy and in the life of the convent, the return to tradition is now linked to the centuries-old tradition of the Order."¹

In hindsight and given developments in Rome since 2013, the next paragraph could perhaps have been seen as baiting the tiger:

It is palpable worldwide that monastic communities, which cultivate the pre-Conciliar Latin liturgy, can show considerable numbers of newcomers. Especially in France, in the context of a traditional interpretation of the Benedictine Rule and the Gregorian Liturgy, flowering abbeys exist in Mass and Hour Prayer. In Germany, it has not been possible to call for monastic life in its traditional form to join a corresponding community. For the first time in Germany, the papal privilege opened up the possibility for young people to live the ancient tradition of contemplative life in the sublime forms of classical liturgy and in the strict observance of the Rule of St. Benedict.

... The Abbey is playing a pioneering role worldwide, to renew the monastic life from the spirit of the tradition and to counteract the decline of monastic life, which had to experience especially some Trappist abbeys in recent years.

Put in simple language, "It was the reforms of Vatican II that caused the decline in monastic life, therefore we are going to give those up and return to tradition in an effort to save it." While this might have gone over better in

2009, forthright statements of blindingly obvious truth are not the ecclesiastical fashion in Rome these days.

It was not long after the resignation of the abbey's protector, Pope Benedict,

that trouble started. Inside information is difficult to nail down, but it is easy enough to guess. The usual method seems to be a campaign of complaints and discontent from those in the monastery – the "older monks," apparently, who were determined to cling to the New Paradigm until extinction. Given the [all-but-open apostasy](#) of [much of the German episcopate](#) it was not hard to see the writing on the wall once the abbey's pontifical protector was out of the picture.

The upshot was that [in October 2016](#) the pioneering traditionalist abbot, Josef Vollberg, was placed on some kind of probation, under which the abbey would be visited and supervised by the abbot of the Trappist monastery Koningshoeven in the Netherlands (that follow the new rite). Vollberg was allowed to retain the title of abbot, but was in effect reduced to prior under the Dutch superior. This odd situation lasted until the end of October when it was announced that Vollberg would resign as abbot. [In his letter of resignation](#), Vollberg said that the "younger monks" had received permission "to continue in the way of tradition" with himself as prior.

"I offered to resign because, in cooperation with Dom Bernardus, we are currently able to decide for ourselves on the well-being and future of Mariawald. Without this cooperation, there would have been a danger that a foreseeable change in the statutes next year could have closed the abbey even against the will of the Convention."

It is arguable that a resignation obtained through threat of closure of the abbey, and a false promise of continuance, could not be described as being "at my own discretion". In any case, the abbot's sacrifices were for nothing. On January 23rd, Abbot Peeters of Koningshoeven announced it was over. Locals – of whom 30 were the abbey's lay employees – are hoping that an investor can be found to turn

the buildings into a hotel. [According to one report](#), the situation was strained with the abbot and a number of younger monks celebrating the Mass and Office in the old rite, with a group of older monks refusing to give up the Vatican II practices. The Dutch visitor considered this "an unsustainable situation." Instead of insisting that the recalcitrants obey, however, the problem was identified as the effort to return to tradition. Ironically, the official reason given for the closure of the monastery was the abbey's inability to attract younger vocations. Some monks left voluntarily and there were a few deaths. This brought the number of monks to ten, two less than the canonical requirement for a monastic house to be an abbey. Rather than removing the older monks and allowing time for the situation to stabilise – and for word to get out into the Catholic world that a traditional monastery was available – the announcement came that the 500 year old abbey was finished.

Giuseppe Nardi, writing for the German outlet, *Katholisches*, said, "The aversion to the tradition is so great and so massive in some, currently influential church circles, that one did not settle for Vollberg's head. The altruistic abbey is perceived as a 'foreign body' in the Trappist order and above all by the [Vatican] religious congregation, which must be eliminated."

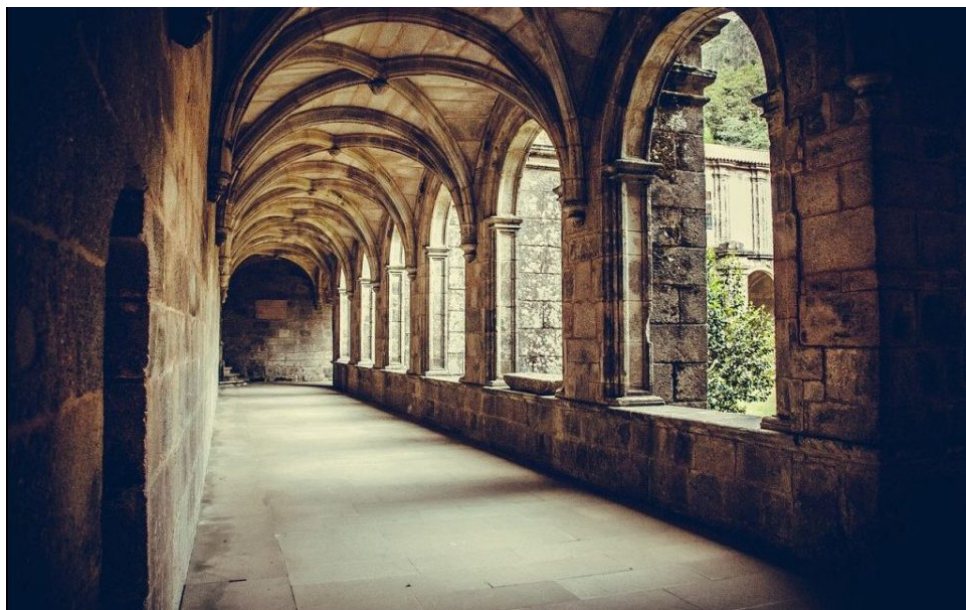
Nardi quotes the Spanish columnist Francisco Fernandez de la Cigoña, addressing the officials of the Congregation for Religious, prefect Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz and secretary Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, asking, "Would not it have been better, instead of closing the monastery, leaving the majority of the monks in the monastery and moving the minority to other monasteries? But in this case, the 'Trads' were the majority and you do not even give them water." Once again, he said, the Vatican's office for oversight of religious orders has "issued an interdict," adding, "What kind of hands are we in?"

Of course, Fernandez refers to the infamous destruction of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, until the advent of the Bergoglians one of the most flourishing and "tradition-minded" religious communities in the Church who also made the mistake of trying to return to the traditional liturgical rites. Very little solid information was ever given as to the cause of the near-dissolution of the FFIs, but what little we have seen show the Vatican's officials accusing the order of a "Lefebvrist drift" – that is, a desire to return to tradition.

But it does not take such an overt rejection of the post-conciliar liturgy to attract the wrecking ball. In Florence, one of the great treasures of Christendom is under attack. The Dominican order in Italy is under fire for its determination to close the historic Convent of San Marco, held by the Dominican order since 1436 and called a "cradle of the Renaissance." San Marco is famous as the home of the great

¹ auto-translated from German.

Mariawald Abbey, RIP, Continued...



preacher Savonarola and the painter Fra Angelico, and is in possession of one of the great theological libraries of Europe. [A petition](#) garnered 13,000 signatures from Italians of all walks of life, Catholic and not, demanding that the order maintain its community of friars at San Marco – now reduced to three.

The Provincial superior, however, Aldo Tarquini, has petitioned the Master General of the Order of Preachers to close the Convent, saying that the small number in the community has left it “unsustainable” and “does not allow the implementation of fundamental aspects of our life...” [Tarquini added](#), that it was decided by the Rome Province of the order that “there is a single Dominican community based in Santa Maria Novella.”

The conflict over San Marco has deep roots, dating to the 15th century when the community of San Marco adopted a more rigorous form of ascetic life, in opposition to its rival at Santa Maria Novella across the city. In 1866, the secularist government of Italy appropriated the complex and turned the section containing Fra Angelico’s famous frescoes into a museum, leaving a portion, including the church, for the diocese, which gave it back to the Dominicans. The Italian state considered contemplative monks to be useless, but saw some social benefit in parishes. Now it seems that the order itself is going to complete the work of the 19th century Italian Freemasons.

Despite interventions by the archbishop of Florence, Cardinal Betori, who reached an agreement with the order in 2015 not to close the convent, the new superior of the Province of Rome has again asked the Master General for an end to the remaining small community of friars, claiming without explanation that closure of San Marco will give them “greater freedom for preaching.”

In reality the conflict is over San Marco’s position as an intellectual centre of studies generally opposed to the secularising trends of the Italian Church since Vatican II. As Professor Pietro de Marco of the University of Florence [wrote in L’Espresso](#) early this month:

“It may in fact escape one who does not know the recent history of the Florentine and Italian Church that **San Marco appeared to become**

the focus, in the second half of the twentieth century, of a resistance of high intellectual and spiritual quality, as of an incisive polemical and critical ‘vis,’ against the direction taken by the Catholic Church after the council, markedly in Florence but everywhere else as well.”

This was particularly focused on the study of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and on “the history of spiritual and mystical forms.” This multifaceted and powerful intellectual resistance to trendy post-conciliar theology were “reasons more than sufficient, in the current climate of the Church, to finally decree the extinction of the ‘conventus,’ meaning both the house and community of San Marco, and the obliteration of its memory.”

Professor De Marco continues:

“One must recall that the crisis of the Catholic religious orders, in particular the crisis of vocations, has taken place not only under the objective pressure of latter-day ‘secularization’ – a society imbued with agnosticism, worldly self-fulfillment, skepticism, and resentment – but as **an effect of a tendency within the Church, starting from the years of Vatican Council II**, to disqualify the ideal of the ‘regular life,’ meaning the life of perfection entirely conducted in community under the discipline and inspirational power of a rule and of various models of holiness.

The order has justified its dissolution of San Marco saying the “restructuring” will lend itself to “living itinerancy² in concrete way, with greater dynamism of the communities,” trendy turns of phrase that come across as positively Orwellian, given the near-collapse of nearly all religious orders since 1965.

Catholics are only too familiar by now with the dismal statistics on the religious life.

In every measurable area, the numbers fell like a stone at exactly the same point in time. There has never been the slightest doubt – numbers do not lie – that the total collapse of the religious life coincided precisely with the implementation of the new liturgy [from 1965 to 1969](#). The timing meets so

² “itinerancy” is a reference to the fact that Dominicans are technically “mendicants,” travelling preachers, as opposed to true monastics with a vow of stability.

precisely and the results are so universal as to render absurd the usual retort often heard from defenders of Vatican II, “Correlation doesn’t prove causation.”

In the case of just the Trappists – until Vatican II, famed for being one of the “strictest” orders in the Church – the numbers for the global order are a case in point. The post-War population of Trappists around the world were rising steadily. In 1954 there were 1713 male Trappists. By 1967 there were 1,889. By 1971 the climb had already ceased and the numbers were falling; 1705. In 1990 there were 1261. By 2009, 851. In 2014, there were 756 Trappists in monasteries praying for the world.

The same graph can be created for every religious order that existed at the time of Vatican II. The numbers climb steadily from the post-war recovery period until it’s as though someone took an invisible axe to the stairs. In all the years of the pontificate of the “conservative” John Paul II nothing was done by Rome to stop this nosedive, or even to openly acknowledge it was happening.

One Rome-based expert I spoke to about Mariawald said whatever the details of this or that case, “the basic problem remains, that these people will actively grind every single part of the Church’s institutional life into dust rather than admit that their policies and their actions have been grinding the Church’s institutional life into dust.”

Of course, in the backwards, Alice-in-Wonderland mind of Pope Francis, an order that attracts a lot of young, eager vocations is automatically suspect and consequently the imminent demise of nearly all religious orders is something to be applauded. [A year ago](#), Bergoglio all but denounced “rigid” and “Pelagian” religious communities, saying that although the “decline of religious life in the West worries me,” “restorationist” communities were even more worrisome. “When they tell me that there is a congregation that draws so many vocations, I must confess that I worry,” the Pope said, particularly over those who “want to go back to asceticism.”

Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, the man who has served as Francis’ Lord High Executioner of the Franciscans of the Immaculate, was even more explicit: any community that tried to turn away from Vatican II is bringing “death” upon itself. La Stampa quoted him saying that religious – and he specified this includes monastic contemplatives – must live “inserted” into the world, “not closing themselves off to new things but open to changes of modern life.”

In an address to a conference of religious order formation directors, the Brazilian said, “Those that are distancing themselves from the council to make another path are killing themselves.” Given that nearly all the communities who have either returned to or maintained traditional forms of life are flourishing with many young vocations, the cardinal could easily be understood not to be making a mere prediction of failure on general principles, but a straight-up threat.

La Stampa hinted that these religious

formation directors had, in fact, been specifically summoned to Rome to hear the threat, saying the conference is “the first of its kind.”

“In fact, those that are distancing themselves from the council to make another path are killing themselves – sooner or later, they will die,” Braz de Aviz said. “They will not have sense. They will be outside the church. We need to build, using the Gospel and the council as a departure point.”

The Congregation’s secretary, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo,³ was equally adamant that only Vatican II could be a “point of reference” for religious life. “With this explicit reference to the Second Vatican Council, we point to our profound conviction that the council is the point of reference, non-negotiable, in the formation to the consecrated life,” Carballo said.

Carballo is known for his loathing of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, the order he was tasked by Francis to dismantle. He accused them of a training that was “not only pre-conciliar, but also anti-conciliar.” Speaking to a conference of the religious of Catalonia he called Conciliarism “a non-negotiable point” and warned that mere criticism of any controversial points of the Council would mean denying that the Holy Spirit is in the Church, and to be “outside of history.”

Given our current troubles, it’s hard to say what the long-term outcome of any of this will be. The one thing that seems clear, however, is that it cannot last. The Church was not established to be perpetually undermined by its own shepherds in this way, and we know that it will never completely fail.

We also know that the traditional forms of religious life that the Church observed for nearly 2000 years are those ordained by Christ Himself for the sanctification of those who pursue it and for the whole world. These are not merely matters of politics or even financial scandals, but issues, literally, of cosmic significance. Will religious life survive the Bergoglian Age? Of course, though as with the spiritual life of faithful lay Catholics it may be forced underground for a while.

Whatever Francis, Carballo, Braz de Aviz and Maradiaga imagine, it is not possible for men to undo what God has made. ■

³ It’s noteworthy that Carballo was Francis’ very first new appointment to the Curia, just weeks after the Conclave. The new pope swept him out of a sticky situation in which his leadership of the Friars Minor was under investigation after it was revealed that tens of millions of Euros of the order’s assets had been misappropriated, leaving it on the verge of bankruptcy. Nothing about this was forthcoming from the Vatican, but the financial disaster was not revealed until December 1014. His replacement as minister general of the order, Fr. Michael Perry, wrote in a letter to the friars that after a thorough investigation into the order’s finances, “The General Curia finds itself in grave, and I underscore ‘grave’ financial difficulty, with a significant burden of debt.” Carballo was Minister General of the Friars Minor from 2003. Perry also posted the letter to the order’s website. “There appears to have taken place a number of questionable financial activities that were conducted by friars...” Edward Pentin [wrote the following month](#), “Informed sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, have also said Brother Perry’s predecessor, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, must share some of the blame. Most of the financial mismanagement occurred under his watch, before he was made Secretary at the Congregation for Religious in 2013.” It is not known whether Carballo is being protected by the Vatican’s status as an independent state, but reports in Italian at the time said that the Swiss the Swiss prosecutor’s office had seized accounts of the Franciscan Order, suspecting its financial officers of money laundering, a criminal offence.

The Calvary of Nikolas Cruz, Continued...

T. Cullen/Continued from Page 1

with extra magazines for the weapon and had the clear and premeditated intention to commit mass murder just as he'd previously informed the world through his social media accounts: "One of the warnings came in September, from a bail bondsman in Mississippi who alerted the feds about an alarming online message Cruz wrote saying he was 'going to be a professional school shooter'."; "photos released so far depict Cruz with an arsenal of weapons - a common sign among school shooters."¹

The never-ending debate about so-called "gun control" has been renewed in intensity, but what goes largely and sadly ignored is the questioning of what on God's earth makes a 19-year-old wish to *commit* such a soulless act, never mind the means used to commit it. Yes, if this boy were Catholic, he could confess his sin to a priest (he has already done so in public), receive a penance and repent of his sins to avoid eternal damnation through absolution and the living out the rest of his life in the State of Grace. But he will *not* be freed from a long and painful purgation of a sin that cries out for vengeance. This assumes, of course, that this poor creature could somehow become an authentic Catholic before his soul is eternally damned, an assumption that is highly unlikely.

Why is it "highly unlikely"? That is a nearly rhetorical question. Had he been or been inclined to be an authentic Catholic, regardless of his apparently sad and empty upbringing, he would *never* have contemplated an atrocity such as he blithely committed. *Never!*

This *fact* is what needs to be understood by those who equally blithely and with malice aforethought are busily destroying the foundations of Western Culture and Civilization, creating the Dr Frankenstein laboratory that is "progressivism" as elaborated by "intellectuals" such as those of the Frankfurt School and its latter-day disciples. This tragic, deranged boy, Nikolas Cruz by (adoptive) name is a product of his times, not of the firearms industry. "Deranged" is perhaps a loaded word, given that it implies insanity. Legally speaking, this lad is *not* insane; he is morally and ethically deracinated, the end result of a social engineering process directed against Christendom that has succeeded beyond its wildest expectations.

That the West is largely de-Christianized and therefore deracinated this not even open to debate. Catholicism provided the *raison d'être* for the Culture and Civilization now identified as "Western"; that longstanding root has been damaged if not totally uprooted, thus deracination. Ain't no getting' around it as pure and simple fact, folks, as one might put it in a more "folksy" form.

The aberration of Nikolas Cruz is nothing new under the sun, but it has begun to appear with alarming frequency. The epigraph to this essay

is a quote from another deracinated soul, a mass murderer remembered from this writer's youth. The end-1957, early 1958 murder spree of 18-year-old Charles Starkweather was a national sensation, given that such a deracinated course of action (with a 13-year-old girl in perhaps-willing tow) shocked and horrified a nation that was still at the time part of Christendom. Authentic Catholic morals, ethics and simple daily behavior had already been greatly weakened thanks to the onslaught of secular materialist intellectuals, and among the first crops of their assiduous cultivation of moral nihilism had born fruit in a spectacularly horrendous fashion, briefly waking from their slumber an already religiously stupefied population.

Sixty years have passed since Charlie and Caril Ann Fugate² allegedly decided of their own free will to kill a bunch (11) of folks for the hell of it, shall we say. Yes, we shall say, because whispers from Hell are the proximate cause of atrocities such as these, from Starkweather to Cruz and to those yet to come. If a society decides it's quite alright to slay life in the womb, what else can be expected from the most extreme of those who have consciously decided that life is meaningless?

A rhetorical question if ever there were one, but it leads to another question:

what forces create such extremism? This writer believes that the answer lies in the failure of the Church to have effectively fought the nefarious and destructive influence of the atheistic secular materialist social engineers who have taken control of the acculturation, education and value formation of the young of a Christendom in open and visible retreat.

The West is in essence a "world turned upside down", well described in the long-ago (mid-seventeenth-century) English ballad: "Listen to me and you shall hear, news hath not been this thousand year:/Since Herod, Caesar, and many more, you never heard the like before./ Holy-dayes are despis'd, new fashions are devis'd./Old Christmas is kicked out of Town/ Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turn'd upside down."³

This writer finds himself dizzy from the turning, but likes to believe he's come to his senses; he hopes this process is contagious. The Church has failed Nikolas Cruz, has failed *us!* It is not for this writer to say that Nikolas was demonically possessed, but what he *can* say is that murderous and on-the-surface-soulless Nikolas was never

given the proper religious instruction that would have *convinced* him that resentment and "revenge" *cannot* be considered "solutions" to what is clearly a disturbance originating in the *soul* of each living creature.

Nikolas Cruz is a lost soul, a soul that needed instruction and didn't receive it. He is not "soulless" but rather not merely lost but a soul that never had the formation the Church *owes* him as one of God's fallen creatures. Let us wait and see if the Church will now take charge of the spiritual formation of this self-confessed mass murderer. This young man committed an atrocity and in secular terms it is unforgiveable. He should now prepare himself per the Four Last Things for a death that is his due; he can still save his *soul* if he has the good fortune to be attended by an authentic Catholic priest.

Nikolas could not bear his cross during his brief lifetime, given that he was never prepared to have done so. The resulting murderous rampage belongs to Nikolas and his free will, but one could almost consider as a mitigating circumstance the utter failure of the Church and civil society to have provided him with sound religious and religiously-based civil guidance. Unless and until the Catholic Faith and the Church whose charge it is to promulgate and defend it insist upon its observance,

this tragedy will be repeated again and again.

Meditate a bit on the words of the deracinated words of the thrill-killer of sixty years ago: "The more I looked at people, the more I hated them." No authentic Catholic, well-catechized, devout and in possession of reason could possibly feel, much less speak, as did a nihilistic,

resentful and abandoned soul such as that of Charles Starkweather. It is simply impossible to imagine.

The life of Nikolas Cruz is forfeit, or perhaps should be; his immortal soul, however, is another matter. The State will determine the civil fate of Nikolas Cruz, but it up to the Church to attempt an intervention before the soul of Nikolas Cruz is forfeit as may well be his life; our Faith teaches us that the soul can be saved until the final moment of earthly life, so long as the repentance is genuine, that willingness exists to accept the conditions of penance both here and in the hereafter; that the attending priest grants absolution and that the soul saved from eternal damnation sincerely, humbly and gratefully accepts all conditions of penance and purgation required.

When will old Christendom finally awaken to the fact that the abandonment of its ancient and eternal Teachings—the *only* possible teachings that can guide the West—has been for Western

civil society an extremely destructive error? When will old Christendom finally awaken to the fact that if the secular materialists are not stopped in their soulless social engineering project, the resulting social chaos will destroy Christendom, leaving behind an embattled but obdurate remnant that will be driven into the catacombs and hold fast to the Faith along the lines of Irish monks during what have come to be called the "Dark Ages", although in many ways they were anything but: read *The Church in the Dark Ages*, by Daniel Trevor-Rops.⁴

This writer believes that authentic Catholics must now double-down on their defense of the Faith, because it apparently has been well-nigh totally lost in civil society and openly deformed by the legitimately-constituted hierarchy of the Church, a sad but inescapable fact. This cannot be allowed to continue if the West and its vast number of immortal souls are to be saved from the abyss into which Nikolas Cruz willfully dove. The secular materialists rant about one thing or another as the panacea—or perhaps better said chewing-gum-and-bailing-wire "solution"—for the problem of youth so alienated from all that is holy that they see no soul-based harm in murder, simply because they have no belief in an immortal soul for *any* living being; for them, murder is antisocial behavior, probably caused by failure to follow the party line, however hypocritical it may appear to an authentic Catholic or indeed anyone with a tattered remnant of an immortal soul afflicted with nihilistic disbelief.

The Church has chosen to appease the secular materialist enemy rather than engage in battle to restore the standards of Old Christendom. Enemies such as Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Fidel Castro, Abimael Guzmán, *et. al.*, along with their theorists and followers have given us ample proof of to what that leads: murderous lunacy in the name of some misguided earthly utopia that simply cannot exist in the secular realm of fallen man. Without God, expectations can only be the secular creation of others such as Charles Starkweather, Richard Speck, Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, Dylan Roof and now Nikolas Cruz. None of these murderous monsters understood that fallen man must bear his cross, much less made any attempt to do so. A militant and actively-evangelizing Church might have done better, but alas the Church of St Francis de Sales is in full retreat from reality and is unlikely to do anything that can arrest secular degeneracy. Perhaps if some deracinated gunman decides to carry out a massacre at World Youth Day, someone within the Vatican might take the time and trouble to address the truth of the matter, but one wonders why they simply don't do so now. "Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turn'd upside down".

Let's not. ■

⁴ <https://infogalactic.com/info/Daniel-Rops>

² https://infogalactic.com/info/Caril_Ann

³ https://infogalactic.com/info/The_World_Turned_Upside_Down

¹ *Ibid.*

Illegal Immigration: The American Bishops vs St. Augustine

By Jesse Russell, Ph. D.

One of the most absurdly painful revelations for an American child raised on the spiritually noxious diet of late twentieth century American pop culture, is the realization that his or her favorite stars of the admittedly vulgar, immodest and occult-saturated world of professional wrestling are not really enemies of one another, but rather (usually) are chums, who are merely paid to pretend to be loud-mouthed, taunting foes.

As the scales fall from his eyes, this poor child learns that all of the great rivalries of pro wrestling are scripted scams: the blasphemy-spouting king of the ring in the 90s, Stone Cold Steve Austin, was not really enemies of the Rock. The Reagan Era hero Hulk Hogan got a check (or maybe a bag of cash) for his taunting of “Macho Man” Randy Savage and Andre the Giant.

It is a fake world of illusory propaganda crafted for money and the effective debasement of American culture, and it would have been better for the poor child’s soul to never have watched such absurd filth.

Many have compared American politics to World Wrestling Entertainment. In fact, former pro wrestler and erstwhile governor of Minnesota, Jesse “the Body” Ventura, has repeatedly said the American political theatre is just as fake as the wild antics of the Hulkster and Rick Flair—if not more so.

Democrats may pretend to be anti-war, but in the end, they’re just as happy as Republicans to receive money from AIPAC to vote for sending American boys and girls to fight in the Middle East. Republicans will wave the “pro-life” card in front of Christians but will only vote for moderate restrictions on the horrendous act before going out for, in President Jimmy Carter’s famous phrase, a “three martini lunch,” with their pro-choice pals in the ghoulish, openly eugenic Democratic Party.

However, American Catholics, especially those of us who grew up as the “JPII Generation,” have always assumed that, unlike pro wrestling and politics, Catholic leadership is safely split into liberal and conservative factions.

According to this thinking, there are liberal bishops like Cardinal Cupich who hold heretical ideas, do not believe the Bible is literally true, support degeneracy, and say a wishy-washy low-church Novus Ordo Missae. Across the theological aisle, there are conservative prelates like Archbishop Charles Cupich, who is pro-life, basically orthodox, nay even “traditional” in his theology, says a high-churchy Novus Ordo and tolerates the traditional mass.

There are “conservative” schools like Steubenville and liberal schools like Marquette. There are “conservative” religious orders like the late Fr. Benedict Groeschel’s Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and liberal orders like the Jesuits.

The readers of *The Remnant* already know that this divide is largely a false dialect, and despite notable and praiseworthy qualities among “conservative”

American Catholic institutions, liberal and conservative (aka neoconservative) Catholics are basically two sides of the same grimy modernist coin.

Like American politicians of both parties, liberal and neoconservative Catholics agree on a lot, in fact.

Both factions agree that Vatican II was the greatest council in the history of the Church, and Vatican II’s pronouncements overturn every single bit of Catholic doctrine that existed before the council—including Sacred Scripture itself. Both neoconservative and liberal Catholics further hold that, not only are the writings of post-Vatican II popes part of a supermagisterium that transcends the writings of every previous pontiff, but that, as an added bonus, the modern, perpetually grinning post-World War II popes are way cooler than the stern-faced grouches and fuddy duddies that served as Bishop of Rome since St. Peter Himself.

While they may clash (at least ostensibly) over abortion and LGBT issues (although the “conservative” Archbishop of Philadelphia is not above defending Fr. James Martin, SJ), there is one issue over which we can count liberal and neocon Catholics to sing in perfect two-part harmony: illegal immigration.

Recently, liberal and neoconservative Catholic leaders have engaged in joint tactical assault on the American people, crafting a propaganda campaign to convince American Catholics that it is their Christian duty to call their politicians and demand that they not only allow the children of illegal immigrants, known as DREAMers, to stay, but that Americans reject a border wall and allow chain migration to continue until the American people become a timid and quivering minority in their own country.

As our friends at Catholic News Service [report](#), two bishops from the (thanks to an inundation of immigrants) soon-to-be-blue state of Arizona, His Excellency, Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger and his predecessor in Tucson, Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, co-wrote the following gem on Facebook:

“While all would agree that reasonable border protection is needed and while clearly countries have a right to protect their borders, it is wrong to barter the lives of these young people by making their protection contingent on a wall or stringent border protection that is unreasonable and a waste of taxpayer’s money. Congress should pass the DREAM Act as a stand-alone bill.”

US Catholic bishops have been presenting this line for nearly forty years, arguing that, in principle, countries have the right to secure their borders, but *this* round of immigrants must be allowed to stay. Getting the message, more illegal immigrants enter the country and, with the help and encouragement of left wing immigration advocate groups, petition Catholic leaders for help, who, again, demand these immigrants be legalized and that “in the future” the border be secure. This process has been repeated every few years since the 1980s.

Thus, “reasonable border protection” means no border protection at all—at least for Western countries.

Furthermore, bishops Weisenburger and Kicanas’s attempt to appeal to “fiscal conservatives” is laughable. Overwhelmingly, illegal immigrants cost Americans much more than they contribute to the American economy. As the (relatively tame) immigration watchdog group FAIR [reports](#), illegal immigrants cost taxpayers \$134.9 billion dollars a year.

So, our good bishops in the Sunbelt are either being dishonest, or they have no idea what they are talking about.

Their excellencies further state, with unintentional irony, how grave the immigration crisis has become:

“We are at a moment in our nation’s history that could define who we are as a people. Traditional American values of fairness and compassion are in conflict. This is a situation that is a moral test for our society; we must not fail.”

Much of America has already been redefined as a nation. In the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it has been transformed from a prosperous Protestant (albeit liberal Masonic) Western country into a multi religious, crime-ridden, third world nation.

In fact, any hope of stabilizing what is left of our country is contingent on our ability to halt, immediately, most immigration into our country and to work at a peaceful resolution to the increasing tension among the various tribes of people who live here.

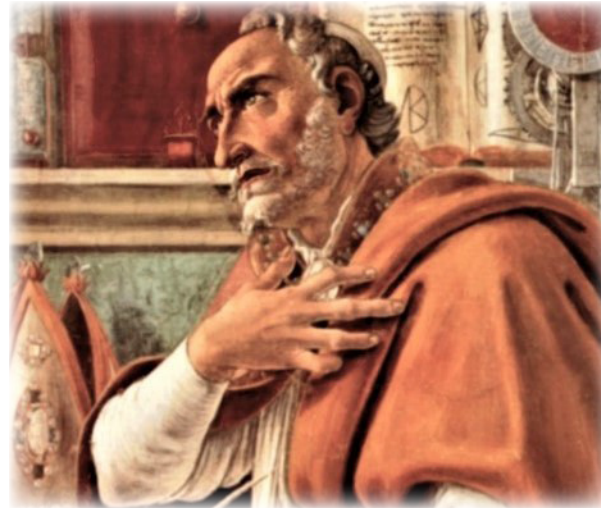
This is not merely a moral test, as bishops Weisenburger and Kicanas suggest, it is a matter of survival.

However, the bishops are not alone. Our man in South Bend, Fr. John Jenkins, the president of what should be the most prestigious Catholic university in America, Notre Dame, [has given](#) his two cents on the DREAMer immigration issue, arguing:

“These young women and men have done nothing wrong and have known life only in the United States. The Dreamers who are enrolled at Notre Dame are also poised to make lasting contributions to the United States. We pray that our leaders will end the cruel uncertainty for these talented and dedicated young people who have so much to offer our nation.”

Perhaps.

But one might wonder if these same illegal immigrants who currently wear the blue and gold of Notre Dame were given priority treatment in the application



process ahead of native born Americans who had applied to Notre Dame with better applications, but who were rejected because they checked the wrong box under “Race/ethnicity” or “legal status.”

After acceptance, were these blue and gold DREAMers given diversity scholarships while native born Americans were forced to take out students loans they never will be able to pay back?

Upon their graduation, will Notre Dame, home of the Fighting Irish, ensure that, after being tossed an American citizenship as a reward for breaking the law, these DREAMers be given diversity hires at good paying jobs ahead of better qualified American applicants?

Why are the hopes and dreams of illegal immigrants being placed above those of the American people?

As President Trump [has said](#), Americans are dreamers, too.

But, then again, Donald J. Trump is a rough-around-the-edges real estate tycoon known for coarse language and extravagant tastes, we are told.

Moreover, after all, if the bulk of the American Catholic leadership says that we should not be able to protect our country with a wall and the entire world has a right to migrate to our nation, and those who enter our country illegally should be rewarded with citizenship for themselves and their entire extended family, surely they must be right.

But, just in case, let’s be cautious and ask ourselves a few questions using the guiding light of Catholic tradition.

Do American Catholics really have a moral obligation to allow DACA recipients to stay in the country?

Must we accept demographic displacement and the destruction of America as a Western Christian nation as a Gospel mandate?

In answering these questions, let’s take as our guide the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo, a towering theologian who is rightly venerated by most Catholics and whose writings and life are a deeply moving inspiration to many in and outside of the Church.

As is commonly known, St. Augustine lived at the hinge of the ancient world and the Middle Ages. He is often included as the last writer in anthologies of classical literature and the first thinker in medieval

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Illegal Immigration

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philosophy tomes. Living in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, Augustine witnessed the destruction of the Roman Empire by hordes of Germanic barbarians. In fact, as the good North African prelate was dying, the barbarian Vandals literally were banging on the doors of Augustine's bishopric of Hippo.

However, what is less commonly known, is that these barbarian armies were a most violent epiphenomena of large scale Germanic migration of men women and children into the Empire, which was not only allowed but encouraged by the Romans themselves.

In fact, there are tremendous, eerie parallels between the history of the German-Roman relationship and the history of migration into the West in the twentieth century.

Like Western racist depictions of Africans and the indigenous of the New World during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, the Romans initially depicted northern Europeans as enormous, gluttonous savages, who despite their beauty, were incapable of civilization and who, when they got out of line, deserved to be exterminated--the number of Gauls killed by Julius Caesar possibly numbers in the millions.

However, similar to how Westerners fetishized and now adore non-Westerners as being nobler and perhaps even superior people, so too, did the Romans over time begin to see the non-Roman world as being superior to their own decadent empire. The Roman historian Tacitus, for example, in his *Germania*, depicted the Germans as a majestic, simple people of virtue who were untainted by the extravagance of the Neronian era.

As the empire further decayed, like some facets of the American military today, the Romans outsourced to the barbarians to fill the ranks of the legions while Roman Italians took the brainier jobs of combat engineers.

Interestingly, like many patriotic immigrants today, as is evidenced by archeological excavations of barbarian graves, the Germanic barbarian recruits were, in fact, very proud at having assimilated in the Roman Empire.

However, barbarians did not simply serve as mercenaries to the Romans. Over time, immigrants from the East flooded to the city of Rome, and Germans were given grants of land in the Empire for their service.

Like many self-loathing Westerners today, as they grew weaker, the Romans began to imitate the people they had previously conquered. At the end of the Empire, Eastern cults and dress became popular,

and Romans even took to giving their children German names, which sounded tougher and "cooler" than boring old Roman ones.

The invading barbarians themselves were impelled as much by the desire to become



Roman as by the desire for treasure and conquest.

Even when the Germans, who were welcomed as economic migrants into the Roman Empire, turned on the Romans, it was not merely to destroy Rome or other Roman cities; rather, the Germans wanted to become Roman.

Alaric the Goth, who sacked Rome in 410, was himself a DREAMER who dreamt of becoming a Caesar and ruling Rome.

Ironically (or perhaps not), it was the Roman Christians who were among the strongest resisters of the degeneration of Roman culture and fiercest critics of the Roman fascination with the diverse cultures that lay at the Empire's borders--in his *Confessions*, St. Augustine derides the Romans for dressing like the Egyptians they once fought at the battle of Actium.

In fact, some of the greatest calls to arms against barbarian invasion are found in the writings of Christians like St. Augustine of Hippo.

In a number of oft forgotten sermons and letters, St. Augustine laments the fall of Rome and calls Roman citizens to arms to combat the savage terror of barbarian invasion.

In his 410 AD Sermon, "The Sacking of Rome," Augustine notes the terrible actions of the *Germani* upon the Roman citizens:

"The most awful things have been reported to us: slaughter, arson, looting, murder, human torture have taken place. It is true; we have heard many reports, we have grieved about it all, we have often been in tears; it is hard for us to be comforted. I deny none of this; I accept that we have heard many reports and that many such things have been done in the city."

Such acts of migrant violence sound remarkably familiar to us today.

One wonders if St. Augustine would have

his Twitter and Facebook rights revoked for hate speech toward the poor Northern European migrants who simply were looking for a better life in sunny Italy.

St. Augustine further writes to a Christian Roman tribune named Boniface who had fought barbarian Goths much of his life throughout the Roman Empire, eventually being stationed as *comes* in St. Augustine's Africa to hold off the Vandals and the African Berbers who were, like the Germans, invading the desiccated Empire.

In his letter to his spiritual son, St. Augustine not only assuages Boniface's worries that war is not fitting for a Christian, he also tells him that it is his job to project other Roman Christians who are praying for his spiritual wellbeing: "Others are fighting invisible barbarians on your behalf by praying, while you struggle against visible barbarians on their behalf by fighting."

This would be like if Bishop Blase Cupich told a Catholic in ICE or the Border Patrol that he and the religious of Chicago are praying that they keep out illegal immigrants and are successful in fighting the human traffickers and other criminals who murder both Mexicans and Americans along the border.

Don't expect this to happen anytime soon, by the way.

In a second letter, St. Augustine informs Boniface that his personal immorality and laziness are eroding his ability to defend St. Augustine's own North African homeland from being plundered by barbarians: "The barbarians of Africa are succeeding here without meeting any resistance so long as you are in your present state, preoccupied with your own needs, and are organizing nothing to prevent this disaster." The great Church father further describes the destruction the barbarians have wrought on Africa in a satirically rhetorical question posed to Boniface: "Would anyone have feared that by now the barbarians would have become so bold, have advanced so far, have caused so much devastation, have plundered so widely, have made deserts of so many places that were full of people?"

This chilling image of destruction wrought by invaders sounds eerily familiar to us in the West today.

How much of America and the West has been ravaged by migrants in even the past several years?

How much of our country is an economic and spiritual desert due to social and immigration policies deliberately intended to gut and destroy American communities?

Finally, St. Augustine

even invokes God's help in resisting barbarian invasion. To another Roman official named Darius, Augustine writes that warriors are obligated to be "very brave and very faithful" in defense of Rome against an "untamed enemy" who can only be defeated "with the help of God who gives protection and assistance."

There are of course many other examples of Augustine and other Church Fathers arguing that Christians have a patriotic duty to defend their homeland from invasion.

But we should not even be having this contentious and unnerving conversation.

The people who live south of the American border, who, despite the tremendously successful efforts of Evangelical Protestants and secular liberals (as if Christian liberals are any better), are still overwhelmingly Catholic, and should be the natural allies of traditional Catholics living in Los Estados Unidos.

Furthermore, in the end, the real enemies and barbarians are not the DREAMers or any other legal or illegal immigrants.

Rather, the true barbarians are the liberal and neoconservative politicians, clergymen, academics, and journalists who make up the "elite" of the West and who have advocated for economic policies such as NAFTA, which destroyed Mexican farming and American industry, as well as radical social policies which have destroyed the rootedness of both North and South American families and communities and sent us into a collision course with one another.

Catholics of every race and ethnicity have our back up against the wall in a fight against the forces of revolution and degeneracy that seek to use worldwide migration as a weapon against us to rob us of our wealth and fracture our communities.

It is truly depressing that both "conservative" and liberal Catholic leaders are united together with the "American" establishment in an effort to eradicate whatever cohesion and stability is left in America.

We must pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the titles of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, as well as to the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States. But we must also, as St. Augustine advised his spiritual sons so long ago, take just, peaceful, and charitable political action to nurture and protect our communities. ■



Providence, Politics, and Prudence

By Clare Wilson

A year and a half ago, on the evening of November 8, 2016, I drove to my future college campus. I had arranged to attend a single class there, as a way of introducing myself to the program, in case I should be accepted. That morning at 7 AM, I had also cast my ballot for Donald Trump, reasoning that, despite his many apparent flaws as a presidential candidate, he was certainly better than a progressive, liberal feminist who is likely also an outright criminal. After the voting process was complete, however, I had mostly put the event out of my mind, focused as I was on the workday and arriving at the class on time.

Then I found myself seated in a classroom with fifteen peers and a professor. Every few minutes, someone pulled out a phone and checked the election map. Groans arose every time another state turned red. The tension in the room was palpable. Occasionally someone made a nervous joke about Trump winning, as if acknowledging the possibility might jinx it, keep it from occurring. Eventually the professor released the whole class an hour early. No one could focus, and she herself wanted to be at home, staring at the television as if her gaze alone might prevent Trump from becoming the next president.

I climbed into my car after I had extended my goodbyes and thanks to these new acquaintances—many of whom I now see every day in my program and would even consider tentative friends. I leaned back against the seat and heaved a sigh. Trump was ahead in the electoral race. Somehow I had no doubt that he would win; ever since he became the Republican candidate, I had guessed it would happen. I did not know whether this would be a good thing for our country. Trump is not any sort of model for Christian charity or courtesy. However, as American ethics spiral out of control and into more and more bizarre forms of depravity, it seemed obvious to me that electing Hillary Clinton would accelerate the downward trend to the point of insanity. As a Catholic, therefore, I voted for Trump and prayed for God's Providence to handle the rest. Every Catholic person that I knew did the same. Every person in my future program had done the opposite. I realized at that moment, sitting in my car in the dark parking lot, while far away the tally of votes ticked onward, that in many ways going to graduate school would plunge me into enemy territory.

Fast-forward to the present moment. Tuesday, January 30, 2018: Trump gives the state of the union address, and every one of the eleven other people in my classroom has something disparaging to say about it. I keep my mouth shut. A

month or two earlier, I had been out for a drink to celebrate the end of quarter, and the three classmates with me had spent a good half of the conversation exclaiming that they could not imagine how a person might justify voting for Trump. Outnumbered three to one, I felt that again my best option was to keep my mouth shut. Over winter break at the university, one of my classmates posted on social media that she had spent two and a half hours with a new date before she discovered that the young man had voted for Trump. Immediately she paid for her drink and left. She congratulated herself for the decision. I read her words and sighed. This is enemy territory indeed—and yet these peers of mine are by nature kind, thoughtful, intelligent human beings who try first and foremost to be fair and open-minded to all (even myself, weird Catholic girl that I doubtless seem to them!).



Sometimes when I return home after these interactions, I stand at my kitchen sink, washing dishes, and think about Providence. As someone who believes in the overarching plan of God, which steadily guides history toward the fulfillment of His will, I have never felt any intense emotional involvement in the cycle of political events. My personal reaction has always been based on my conviction that every political turn of events is first of all something to be accepted with humility and trust. Yes, to fulfill my Catholic and patriotic duty, I vote in both presidential and local elections. On the other hand, though, I look at politics from the point of view that anyone in a place of power in our country has for inscrutable reasons, known only to God, been raised there by His hand. Hypothesizing for a moment that Hillary Clinton had been elected, I would not have arbitrarily decided that this was a cosmic mistake and refused to acknowledge her position. God would have chosen to invest her with authority, and I would have accepted that, while at the same time doing everything I could in my own small sphere to counteract whatever anti-Catholic effects resulted.

Similarly, I have accepted that, strange as it may seem, Donald Trump is God's current instrument in administering secular authority in my country. I do not expect him to usher in a golden age of social acceptance of the kingship of Christ. On the other hand, I have been agreeably surprised by certain decisions he has made, such as acknowledging and addressing the participants at March for Life in January, 2018. Such actions

may not instantly effect great change, but they at least bolster the fortitude and hope of Catholics and other well-meaning citizens who value human life, respect the mother's role, and honor her unique privilege of bringing new souls into the world for God. For the moment, Providence seems aligned with politics. Perhaps our next president will lash back at this brief conservative surge and take our country to new depths of degradation, but that too will be in the hands of Providence—a trial by fire, if nothing else. In the meantime, I can offer gratitude to God for giving my country a window of reprieve and perhaps moral improvement. I can do all in my power to encourage and support the swing of the political pendulum toward truth and goodness.

The typical progressive liberal's understanding is entirely at odds with this idea of submission to and

immediately close almost everyone's mind against me.

However, with many of my classmates, I have had interesting—and perhaps in the long-run, depending on God's grace and their openness, fruitful—religious discussions. Just two days ago, I spent a half hour talking to one about the deposit of revelation, and why it was closed with the death of St. John. We also discussed the nature of divine inspiration for the writers of Sacred Scripture. It was an open, unbiased, and above all courteous conversation, in which my classmate (a former Protestant who has embraced agnosticism) seriously considered my words, and I did the same for his.

However, I know perfectly well that this classmate loathes Trump. Certainly, I could take a political stand and confront him with my own opinions on the subject, but if I did so, would

he ever again initiate another conversation about religion? Is it worth sacrificing the possibility of evangelization, and hopefully conversion, for mere political righteousness? Granted, a Catholic should always vote for the candidate who most aligns with Catholic morality, and so

in some ways, taking a political stand acts as a way of defending true ethical beliefs. If, on the other hand, my conservative ethics and tenets of belief are irrevocably tarnished by association with the name of Donald Trump, maybe by connecting myself to him I am damaging the Catholic cause in the minds of these individuals.

I am the only practicing representative of the true Faith that many of my classmates have ever encountered. The fact that I am open about my beliefs, slow to take offense if others make inaccurate assumptions, and permanently available to talk about God, religion, and spirituality, means that they are reasonably comfortable asking me questions and opening discussions. On the other hand, if I argued with their wholesale rejection of Trump, I might very well cause them to dismiss the Catholic Faith permanently.

The standards of fortitude might seem to indicate that all Catholics who voted for Trump should boldly lay this fact on the table, ready to fight to the death for their principals. Certainly, if any of my classmates ever challenge me, noticing perhaps that I always remain strictly silent when they discuss Trump, I will admit that I voted for him and attempt to explain the body of theological and philosophical thinking that backed up my decision to do so. Should this come to pass, I will not be surprised by coldness, disdain, suspicion—perhaps the loss of friendships. After all, these

cooperation with Providence. When I listen to my classmates' complaints and exclamations of horror—at the moment, mostly focused on immigration—I realize that in their eyes anyone who voted for Trump is by that very act transformed into a bigot. Because our current president has strong (and unfortunately, often crass) opinions that are more concerned with the safety and security of the United States than with universal acceptance and assistance for others, the globalist, liberal intellectual assumes that anyone who voted for him must by default espouse the exact same opinions, crassness, and discrimination. The seemingly insignificant sentence, "I voted for Trump," thus indicates to them that a gauntlet has been thrown down. Their worldview is challenged. The core principles upon which they base their lives are under direct, immediate attack. Hence my classmate, who instantly ended a date with some unsuspecting young man, because he had the temerity to vote for Trump.

Ensnared in a program with only forty members, every single one of whom besides myself voted for Hillary Clinton, where all the professors also regularly vocalize their dislike of Trump, I have had to examine my duty as a Catholic. Support of Trump is not a doctrinal matter, of course, and observation has informed me that I would become a pariah by admitting that I voted for him. No matter how I might explain my reservations about Trump himself, or point out Hillary's often questionably legal behavior in the political arena, the very admission of my final choice would

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Pope Stars in New Film, All About Him

By Father Celatus

On Ash Wednesday, just days after Jorge Bergoglio was publicly exposed as a boldfaced liar with regard to the protection of minors and the faithful from predator priests and bishops, it was formally announced that in cooperation with the Vatican a documentary film will soon be released titled *Pope Francis: A Man of his Word*. I nearly gaged on my Lenten gruel as I read the announcement online. Given the steady betrayal of the Mystical Body of Christ by Francis of Rome, the movie should rather be titled *Bergoglio: Bombast and Balderdash* and the announcement should be released on Spy Wednesday.

It has taken five years for the façade of Francis to be unmasked and for the world and Neo-Catholics to finally question the word and integrity of Jorge Bergoglio. Many of us were skeptical from the start, even from his first appearance and greeting overlooking Saint Peter's Square and upon learning that the newly elected pope was a Jesuit. Among the Jesuits I have known or know of, it is typically those which are reviled by and ostracized from the Society that are solidly Catholic. Bergoglio was not such a Jesuit.

Now that we know that Jorge Bergoglio is a militant Modernist—at least traditional Catholics know and acknowledge this—it should be no surprise to us that he is quite capable of lies and deception. After all, for Modernists truth is not immutable but rather changeable and words can have a variety of meanings that are determined by the subject. I am reminded of Pontius Pilate's question to Christ: "What is truth?"

Speaking of which, like Pilate who was blind to Truth Himself standing before him, Jorge Bergoglio is clearly blind to that same Truth, as expressed in the Holy Word of God and by Jesus Christ Himself. A big difference, of course, is that Pilate sat in a procurator's chair whereas Jorge sits in the Chair of Peter.

Examples of this blindness to truth abound. Consider the manner in which Francis continually compares the obstinate Jewish enemies of Christ with present day conservative Catholics, who rightly adhere to the binding validity of moral and religious laws of God and the Church. For example, Francis cited the case of a priest who was willing to baptize a child but without the adulterous father present for the ceremony:

Three months ago, in a country, in a city, a mother wanted to baptize her newly born son, but she was married civilly to a divorced man. The priest said, 'Yes, yes. Baptize the baby. But your husband is divorced, so he cannot be present at the ceremony.'

This is happening today. The Pharisees, or Doctors of the Law, are not people of the past; even today there are many of them.

This was the pastoral prerogative of the pastor as minister of the sacrament but God help anyone who dares stand in the way of the Bergoglian agenda to complete the modernist revolution started with V2.

Much more serious abuses by Bergoglio against the truth of Sacred Scripture are reflected in his daily homilies and addresses, wherein he shows himself to be a true disciple of Modernism. Consider his own interpretation of the miracle of the *Multiplication of the Loaves* as something purely natural:

The hands which Jesus lifts to bless God in heaven are the same hands which gave bread to the hungry crowd. We can imagine how those people passed the loaves of bread and the fish from hand to hand, until they came to those farthest away. Jesus generated a kind of electrical current among His followers, **as they shared what they had, made it a gift for others, and so ate their fill.**

Along these lines we can include his eisegesis, by which Francis reads into Sacred Scripture whatever meaning he wants, even to the point of committing sacrilege against the integrity of the Blessed Mother:

The Gospel does not tell us anything: if she spoke a word or not... She was silent, but in her heart, how many things told the Lord! 'You, that day, this and the other that we read, you had told me that he would be great, you had told me that you would have given him the throne of David, his forefather, that he would have reigned forever and now I see him there!' Our Lady was human! **And perhaps she even had the desire to say: 'Lies! I was deceived!'**

But by far the most egregious attack of Bergoglio against Sacred Scripture and Truth Himself are his recent remarks regarding the *Pater Noster*. In an interview, Francis said the common rendering of one line in the prayer — "lead us not into temptation" — was "not a good translation" of ancient texts. "Do not let us fall into temptation," might be better because God does not lead people into temptation; Satan does.

We do not intend here to make a lengthy defense of what Christ Himself intended when He taught his disciples how to pray. We would note, however, that just days ago in the Gospel reading of the First Sunday of Lent in the traditional form of the Mass we read: "Jesus was **led by the Spirit** into the desert, **to be tempted by the devil.**" So we know that the Son of Man Himself was led by



Pope takes stage direction from acclaimed director, Wim Wenders

God into temptation. But more to the point, Bergoglio certainly knows that most translations of the Lord's Prayer accurately render the ancient Greek text of the Gospel of Saint Matthew. Even the infamous Father James Martin, spoke piece for the Vatican, acknowledges this fact but then goes on to attack the accuracy of the ancient canonical biblical text itself; in other words, maybe Matthew didn't get it right when he wrote his Gospel.

For that matter, perhaps Jesus Christ Himself did not get it right—so say the Modernists. Consider this: whereas the notorious Martin Luther altered a

single text of Saint Paul to support his heresy, not even that arch heretic dared to change the words of Christ Himself. What does this suggest about Jorge Bergoglio?

It suggests that nothing is sacred to Modernists and nothing is beyond their manipulation. There is very little of tradition and truth that they have not attacked, cast aside or modified in the life of the Church. And now Francis has targeted the words of Christ Himself and the prayer which He taught the Church. We can only hope for a swift end to this *pontificate* and a chilly reception to Francis' fictional movie. ■

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progressive liberals, despite their attitude of universal acceptance to any lifestyle, cannot see how their intense disapproval of anyone who voted for Trump is logically incompatible with their own position. In their desperate determination to avoid any shade of bigotry, they have become particularly violent bigots against conservatives who dare take a different stance. They vociferate constantly about the latent discrimination that minorities suffer, but do not notice that at least one representative of a 'minority' in their midst (a conservative, Catholic woman) feels that raising her voice would result in complete ostracization.

Since I am not, however, likely to convince anyone of the logical fallacy in their position by complaint or argument, discretion seems the better part of valor. If by connecting my Catholicism with my vote for Trump, the forty people in my program are scandalized (i.e., come to the conclusion that the Catholic Church is evil due to my personal political choice), is it prudent to broadcast my politics? Of course I admit that silence may seem cowardly, but my motivation is not fear. Rather I hope that my classmates will be able to examine whatever I tell them of the true Faith for itself, without having the cloud of prejudice or political mania obscuring its light. Other Catholics may find

themselves in positions where they can open reasonable discussions with others about religion and politics. For myself, though, I have determined that Faith comes before politics; in my particular, extremely liberal environment, if I want to bear witness to God's truth and goodness, I must ensure that the Catholic Church remains above the sphere of Donald Trump.

My hope is that in a few weeks or months or years, some of these people will be good enough friends that they can listen to me discuss Trump (or whatever our political differences may be at the time) without violent negative reactions to my Faith. In the meantime, though, prudence seems to indicate that peaceful silence and prayer is my best attitude until I am either directly challenged or otherwise prompted to stand up for my political choices as a Catholic. In this I take as my example the Catholics of the Roman Empire, who by quiet good example, which under challenge became the strong spirit of martyrdom, eventually claimed the pagan world for their own. Doubtless when my moment of challenge arrives, Providence will have ordained it, as it ordains all things, and I will find the right words supplied so that I may speak without compromising the Faith or impeding the action of grace in another's soul. ■