

MANCIPIA

December 2006

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:

CHRISTMAS, THE ANTICHRIST, AND TRIUMPHALISM



Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

Would you believe me if I told you that, for almost 2,000 years, the Church has been defending Christmas against a concerted, diabolical attack?

No, it's not another "wacko conspiracy theory," it's a fact. Since the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, the truth

that God was born a Baby at Christmas has been assaulted with relentless demonic fury.

Saint John, the very Apostle of Love, tells us: "For many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a seducer and an Antichrist" (2 John 1:7).

What the Apostle was condemning in those strong words were the earliest of the gnostic heresies — those strange amalgamations of Christianity and pagan mystery religions — whose sectarians fancied that they were little sparks of divinity trapped in matter, who could only be liberated by the *gnosis*, the secret knowledge. Too, there was an early heresy, called docetism, which said that the Word did not assume real flesh, but took the *appearance* of a man (*dokein* in Greek, means "to appear"). Rebuked by St. Ignatius of Antioch and condemned by the Church, docetism would return in more subtle forms, admitting that our Lord was man, but denying that he had a real human soul (Apollinarianism), a true human nature (Monophysitism), or a human will and operation (Monothelitism). The last of these heresies was so repulsive to St. Maximus the Confessor (580-662), that he preferred to have his hand cut off, his tongue sliced out, and to die in exile rather than submit to a corrupt bishop who professed it.

Then there were the denials of our Lord's divinity in heresies like Arianism, which still persists in sects as divergent as Unitarianism and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Finally, there was Nestorianism, the heresy that denied the union of the two natures in the one Person of Christ. The heretical Patriarch Nestorius had it that there were two persons in Christ, the divine Person of the Word and the person of Jesus Christ the man. Consequently, in a sermon, he asserted that

Mary should not be called the Mother of God; she was only the mother of a human person.

The Fathers of the Church have left us heroic professions of truth against these blasphemies, and all of them impress upon us that the little Inhabitant of the Christmas Crib was Almighty God come in the flesh to save us. St. Athanasius made the point, against Arianism, that since Christ was supposed to *divinize* us by grace, He could not perform this mission if He were not Himself divine by nature. St. Gregory Nazianzen professed, against the Apollinarians, that "What has not been assumed has not been healed," i.e., our Lord did not *redeem* human nature unless he *possessed* a human nature. Far from being satisfied with artful turns of phrase in their polemics, these Fathers, like St. Maximus the Confessor, suffered for their confession at the hands of the antichrist heretics.

Father Feeney used to say that the entire Catholic Faith is summed up in the image of the Madonna and Child: She, the Immaculate Conception, was conceived full of grace to be Mother of God; and He is One of the Holy Trinity come down to take her Flesh as true Man in order to save us. So much do heretics hate this beautiful scene that the Iconoclasts, who inherited many of the earlier eastern heresies, cut off St. John Damascene's hand for painting it! That hand was miraculously restored to him by our Lady.

Orthodoxy has always been attacked by antichrists. (Yes, there will be one Antichrist at the end — "the man of sin" of 2 Thess 2:3 — but St. John speaks of many "antichrists" in 1 John 2:18.) Is it any wonder that certain nefarious elements in society "have issues" with Christmas? As the early heretics wished to "dissolve" Jesus by destroying the union of two natures in one divine Person, so too, modern antichrists wish to dissolve the divine Babe from our public square: "And

Would you believe me if I told you that for almost 2,000 years, the Church has been defending Christmas against a concerted, diabolical attack?

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FOUNDER'S COLUMN



Fr. Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.

BREAD OF LIFE

CHRISTMAS AND SALVATION

For those who are truly anxious to know and love Jesus and Mary at Christmas, let me touch on one little phase of the situation.

This is a child's world. And a child does not have too many successes. Have you ever watched a

child learn to walk? He finally achieves one step after five thousand failures!

A child does not have too many playmates. He does not have too many people at his birthday party. He does not have too many songs to sing him to sleep at night. If he is going to stay a child, he is a little bit lost in the world — a little bit alone. He is the most singular thing in a multitude. His one cry is, "Where is my mother" or "Where is my daddy?" as he looks into every other unsatisfactory face.

A child does not have too long a story to tell about himself. It is a simple tale. He can tell you his whole history in very short order. A child, when he has one sure friend, does not worry about the friends he does not have. A child does not go to sleep each night weirdly worrying about all the other children in the world who might be going to sleep, too; wondering, just as he is on the verge of slipping into slumber, if there is any insomnia on the rest of the street. A child is, in an innocent way (I will not call him selfish), a self-contained little thing.

A child's trust, and heart, and love, and footsteps, and eyes, and interest, are never frustrated by failure. He goes to the piano, which he fails to play, opens the book, which he does not succeed in reading, reaches for the moon, which does not come down to him, asks to go in an automobile that will not take him. Things are constantly being taken away from a child. "You cannot have this; you cannot have that."

A Child is given unto us!
A Child is born to us, Who is Christ the Lord! Our Lord's

whole life was, in its simplicity, the life of a child. He did not have too many friends. I do not think you would call seventy-two disciples too many followers — or twelve apostles too many close friends.

A child does not travel much. Neither did Jesus. Except for His excursion into Egypt, He never left the tiny territory of Palestine.

A child thinks his little mother is the greatest mother, in fact the only mother, in the world. He has to be taught that there are such things as other mothers.

A child is indignant, decisive, impetuous.

We all stay a child as we go through life — the best part of us does. We are a child when we eat, when we sleep, when we are sick, when we are old. When we are lonely, we are a child; when we are hurt, we are a child. If we only would let that child in us become interested in Jesus, you would be surprised how easily we could find Him!

Jesus of Bethlehem is given all over the world in the simple, complete value of Christmas, in all the traditions we know — in the kind of story one tells to a child. The inspired record of His life in Holy Scripture is there, in case a child is looking. If you are looking as a child this Christmas, it is child's play to find it.

If, while you are looking, you are not being a child, but are being very adult, grand, organizational, theoretical, proud, ideological, super-academic, and non-committal (there is nothing less non-committal than a child), you will not find Him. You will not find Him even when you see a First-Communion little girl come down the aisle and say to her father (as I once heard a little girl say), "Pick me up and kiss me because Jesus is in my heart." You will not find Him even when you see a little nun consecrated to God, whose face and eyes and hands show it. It will just miss you. You will not even know He is there. You will hear a lot of talk of a girl, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus — about whom there is a book in every library. You will not have time to read her autobiography — you will not even know it is obtainable. You will see her picture here in our room, which Ellen Maria Beneway painted, and you will dismiss it with a non-childlike dismissal; with an adult, supercilious grin, and a horrid academic face.

Depart from me, you cursed academic frauds! You Harvard hypocrites! You would not go over to Bethlehem if it were standing right in front of you! You would not want to know the truth of the Catholic Faith. That is why you do not find it!

A Child is given to you! A Child is born to you, Who is Christ, the Lord! Sometimes He takes the meanest instruments to tell you His message. I do not know any priest in the United States of America who could be called this Christmas (thanks to newspaper publicity) a meaner instrument than I am.

But I can still tell you the way of a Child.

If we only would let that child in us become interested in Jesus, you would be surprised how easily we could find Him!

Depart from me, you cursed academic frauds! You would not go over to Bethlehem if it were standing right in front of you!

SAINT BENEDICT CENTER NEWS

AURIESVILLE PILGRIMAGE 2006



Professor Brad Grinstead

On September 26, the brothers and sisters of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Richmond, NH, ventured west — to upstate New York — to lead their respective brigades, St. Joseph's and Immaculate Heart of Mary, on the eleventh annual Auriesville Pilgrimage for Restoration. "Restoration," according to Webster, is defined as "a state of being reinstated, re-constructed, or otherwise restored." So, you might ask, what was being restored in late September? According to the theme of the pilgrimage, "Restoring True Devotion to Mary" was the ultimate goal. To restore this devotion, pilgrims exercised penance by walking sixty-five miles in a little over three days, beginning from Lake George Village, passing through the Adirondack Mountains, and camping underneath the night sky. The fourth day included a short, seven-mile walk from Fonda, NY, to the Shrine of Our Lady of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville.

The first day began, as did all of the rest, with holy Mass, which was offered by Fr. Thomas Longua, F.S.S.P. However, this Mass was a bit more special in that it was celebrated outdoors under a magnificent statue of the martyr, St. Isaac Jogues. The fact that the statue of the saint had a missing index finger was a reminder of the brutal torture that the Jesuit missionary had once endured from his Iroquois captors. Although I realized that the possibility of losing my index finger, or any other body part for that matter, was minimal, I could not help conjuring up images of bleeding and callused feet, aching muscles, parching thirst, and a variety of other ailments, which veteran pilgrims were rather anxiously warning me, a first-timer, that I was about to endure. After holy Mass, the brigades offered prayers for the journey, ending with a recitation of the litany of the Jesuit Martyr Saints of North America. The first leg of the pilgrimage included processing two by two, at times singing and praying, for at least twenty miles through curious towns and neighborhoods, each of which was courteous enough to allow us so publicly to demonstrate our Faith.

The second day would make those hardships that I had contemplated on day one, come true. Almost immediately, the terrain changed from pave-

ment to rocky, uneven paths. Also, the topography changed from relatively flat to an intense slope. However, by focusing on the hymns and prayers of the pilgrimage the pain in my feet that throbbed with each step, was greatly reduced. Others, however, had their own way of overcoming the mental and physical challenge of the "mountain." My point in relaying this is to convey the **mental** challenge that the pilgrimage puts forth. Almost immediately, I realized that relying on the physical capabilities of my body would not help me successfully complete the journey. I had to rely on mental contemplation and prayer. As the second day came to an end, the brigades were quite elated to arrive in camp and give their feet a rest. The immediate forecast, however, was rain.

On the third day, not only had the pilgrims to endure a twenty-mile walk; but many had to do it in wet clothing due to the rainstorm the night before. Nevertheless, the spirit of the brigades was high due to the knowledge that they would be approaching the National Shrine of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha at the end of the day (not to mention, the end of any twenty-plus-miles-a-day ambulations for at least another year). Although exhaustion had long set in for most pilgrims, contemplation and

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I must borrow the words of another, "The pilgrimage may not be good for the soles but it is definitely good for the soul."



The Immaculate Heart of Mary Women's Brigade



Mr. Brian Kelly, Editor

COMMENTARY AND OTHER RELEVANT MORSELS

DECEMBER 25TH IS THE BIRTHDAY OF OUR LORD

The origin of the word, *Jul*, from which we get the word “Yule” for the Christmas season, is disputed by historical linguists. The more common theory is that the word is Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) and designated the “feast” of the winter solstice.

This solar event marks the terminus of the sun’s southernmost journey on the horizon (December 21) and the end of the lengthening nights. The daylight from that day forward grows longer until the summer solstice arrives on June 21.

It is a traditional belief that our Lord was born on the exact day of the winter solstice. Two thousand years ago that day was December 25. (I’ll explain why the solstice slipped back on the calendar in a moment.) When Saint John the Baptist was approached by his disciples over the fact that the apostles of Christ were baptizing, the Precursor replied: *He must increase: but I must decrease* (John 3:30). Even the sun gave testimony to this prophecy. For, as we are told in the Genesis account of creation, all the elements, the seasons, the sun, moon, and the stars are given to man as signs communicating the wisdom of their Creator. Astronomy aside, the formal reason that the days originally began to grow longer in the northern hemisphere (in which our Lord lived) on December 25 is because the Savior was going to be born on that day. *He must increase*. And the formal reason that the days originally began to grow shorter in the northern hemisphere on June 24 (now June 21) is because the greatest of the prophets, who [made] *straight the paths of the Lord*, was to be born on that day. *I must decrease*.

One of the bizarre doctrines that the Jehovah Witnesses arrogantly disseminate is that at the Council of Nicaea (325) the Catholic Church was forced by the Emperor Constantine to adopt a pagan festival day as the day on which to celebrate the birth of Christ. To wit, that was the Saturnalia festival days of debauchery, which went on for a week from December 17 to 23. With that artificial confidence, which supine ignorance begets in zealous dolts, their *Watchtower* publications continue to assert that Constantine was still a pagan in 325 and that, being such, he imposed on the Council fathers to make December 25 a common feast for Christ and Saturn. First of all, it is debatable whether or not Constantine (whose mother St. Helena discovered the true Cross) still worshiped the stars when he sat in on the opening session — and only the opening session — of the first ecumenical council. It is not even known for certain if he was unbaptized. His friend, the Christian historian, Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, who was a semi-Arian, claimed to have baptized him on his deathbed. But, Eusebius was also a

wet-finger-in-the-air sycophant. His flatulent panegyric of the golden-robed ruler’s august entry into the chambers of the Church’s first ecumenical synod read as if it were a rehearsal for the parousia. Secondly, in the early fourth century, the Saturnalia festivities ended on December 23, not 25. So, if there was (*per absurdum*) some kind of a syncretic “fellowship” going on, joining the Light of the world with darkness, the date for the Nativity would have been set for December 23. Thirdly, the Catholic fathers who attended the Council of Nicaea, had suffered intensely for the purity of the Faith. Some had been tortured and maimed for Christ under the persecutions. Imagine these champions of justice and truth accepting an imperial mandate, without protest, that *arbitrarily* established a Birth Day for the Savior! Then, imagine these holy men accepting the feast of a pagan god on which to commemorate that Blessed Nativity!!

Leaving these Dan Brown type absurdities aside, the emperor did issue many decrees in favor of the Christian religion, even forbidding public work on Sunday, and he did support celebrating the birth of Christ on December 25. The Council of Nicaea, however, did not introduce that date into the Church’s calendar at that time. The council did settle the date for the celebration of Easter Sunday in the West, but decreed nothing concerning Christmas. December 25 did not officially enter into the Church’s calendar until Pope Julius I sanctioned it in the year 350. This entry was prompted by an appeal from St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in whose diocese the feast coincided with the feast of Christ’s Baptism (January 6). What is interesting is that the eastern doctor informs the Pope that Rome ought to have the record of the Nativity date because the Roman general, Titus, brought all the imperial records (including the censuses) back to the Eternal City after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Long before Nicaea there were sub-apostolic western fathers who testified that Christ was born on December 25. They include Origen (d. 254), who opposed honoring any birthdays even our Lord’s, Tertullian (d. 230), and St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258). Although it is hard for us to understand today why, in the early Church, birthdays were not occasions for celebration. Only the emperor’s birthday was celebrated, the “divine” Pon-

Since there is no direct mention in the Bible of the exact date of Christ’s birth, how did December 25th come to be accepted? Tradition!

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KELLY'S FORUM

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tifex Maximus. The Epiphany was deemed a greater feast than the Nativity; in fact the former, along with Easter, were the only two major Incarnational feastdays of the early Church.

Since there is no direct mention in the Bible of the exact date of Christ's birth, how did December 25 come to be accepted? Tradition! Can you imagine the Mother of God not noting the day that she delivered her divine Son and communicating this information to her family, friends, and the Apostles? She and St. Joseph had to have known not only the Hebrew date but the Roman Julian date as well. After all, our Lady and Saint Joseph went to Bethlehem to register in the Roman census of Caesar Augustus, which they did during the day before the Holy Child's midnight birth. Furthermore, the Romans kept the records of their censuses, and many of the early patrician Christians in Rome could have had access to those records.

The reason that the solstice slipped behind four days by the year 325 was due to the inaccuracy of the Julian calendar (adopted by Julius Caesar in 50 B.C.), whose 365 1/4-day-year

(divided into twelve months) was a tad bit short of a solar year. On average, the astronomical solstices and the equinoxes advance by about eleven minutes per year against the Julian year, causing the calendar to gain a day about every 134 years. The Gregorian calendar of Pope Gregory XIII, issued in 1582, corrected this inaccuracy by certain adjustments that there is no space to explain here. This pope actually erased ten days from the calendar that year (October 5-14) to make up the difference. Point being: The date for Christmas had nothing to do with pagan feastdays, be it that of Saturn or Germanic yuletide celebrations. Whatever their customs were, good or bad, all pagan societies celebrated the end of the long nights and the return of the sun in late December. The Catholic Church did not choose December 25 for Christmas in order to more easily convert the pagans, nor to make their transition to Christianity less severing. She did not choose this day at all, except in the sense of verifying, by the authority of her liturgical calendar, that what traditionally and more commonly had been considered to be the date of Christ's birth, was indeed so.

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QUIP TO EQUIP:

Which was the first Catholic diocese established in North America? Greenland. In the year 1000, Leif Eriksson, son of the notorious Viking, Eric the Red, having been converted to the Faith by Saint King Olaf of Norway, followed his father's earlier expedition to Greenland in 986. Leif brought Catholic missionaries with him to preach to the three thousand settlers at Brattahlid. Soon after, the first Christian church on the North American continent was built in that settlement. In 1124-26, Rome established Greenland as a canonical diocese with a resident bishop.

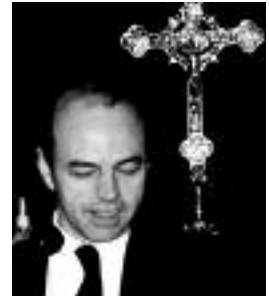
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Christology is the study of the nature and personality of the God-Man, His realization of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, and His life and teachings from the Gospels. This topic is covered thoroughly. In addition, all 24 Chapters of the Gospel of St. Luke are read and discussed briefly in this series. Both the theology and commentary are drawn from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church as taught to Br. Francis by Fr. Leonard Feeney, one of the best theologians the 20th century has produced. In addition to these two topics, Br. Francis continues the history course he began the previous year while he was teaching Eschatology. This history class evolves into a more specialized topic when he begins to study, in depth, all of the 21 Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church. This portion continues on into the next series of talks. Brother covers the heresies and controversies that had provoked these ecumenical synods as well as the popes, saints, kings, and heresiarchs of the time. These classes are lively, informative, and deeply Catholic in their outlook and their fiery spirit. You will love them!



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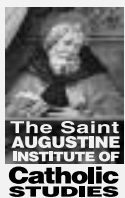


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CHRISTMAS, THE ANTICHRIST, AND TRIUMPHALISM

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every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world” (1 John 4:1).

According to St. Robert Bellarmine, the focus of the devil’s attack in the second millenium has moved away from the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Instead, the old goat has taken aim primarily at the Church, giving us the Greek Schism and the Protestant Revolt. And he has been refining his approach ever since. In our own day, he has given us the “slithering error” of *indifferentism* (to quote Pope Gregory XVI), the heresy that says one religion is as good as another. He has caused an even worse pandemonium: an identity crisis within the Church herself. *Some of our highest ecclesiastics do not*

know what the Church is. They have “dissolved Jesus” in his Mystical Body.

But even in the midst of such a crisis, we find consolation: “Behold, I make all things new!” (Apoc. 21:5). All the historical triumphs against error won by the martyrs and confessors will be renewed in grand style. The victories of the devil and his antichrists continue to mount, but the Triumph of the divine Babe will be all the sweeter because of it. It will mark the victory of our Lord, His Church, and His Vicar. What’s more, to the eternal confusion of Antichrist and Satan, Christ’s Triumph will be the Triumph of His Mother, the Woman who will crush the head of the ancient serpent!

And that should give us all a Merry Christmas.

AURIESVILLE PILGRIMAGE

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prayer were still everyone’s most soothing sedative as the night approached with its faithful assurance of recuperating slumber.

The fourth day was different from the other three days. First, the pilgrims had to walk only seven more miles. The organizers of the pilgrimage provide this less strenuous option for individuals or families who cannot participate in the “long” pilgrimage. This allows them to walk in the last leg of the pilgrimage, which leaves from the National Shrine of Blessed Kateri, in Fonda, NY, to arrive a few hours later in Auriesville, at the Shrine of Our Lady of the North American Martyrs. What was in the 1600s the Iroquois village of Ossernenon, is the place where Saints Isaac Jogues, René Goupil, and John de Lalande were martyred over 360 years ago. Before the pilgrims “pounded the pavement” for Auriesville, a designated priest gave a few encouraging words to the new pilgrims while also reminding them of the conditions for obtaining a plenary indulgence on the pilgrimage. A great blessing of the pilgrimage was that, throughout the four days, a priest was always available to hear confessions and give spiritual direction.

Upon our arrival, the beauty of the Shrine immediately struck me. I felt, even without knowing all the history of the place, that I was standing on holy ground. As we processed to the Coliseum church, my zeal for the Faith increased dramatically. To top off the day, a High Mass was celebrated and relics of the martyrs were offered for veneration.

I have briefly described my experience of the events of the four-day pilgrimage, and I do hope that anyone reading this account who is interested in

participating next year will write the Center for more information. To appreciate fully and savor the fruits of this American Pilgrimage, one must do the walk. Yes, “your feet **will** hurt,” as one wise veteran assured me before we set out. And, guess what? By the end, my feet did hurt. However, I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had participated in (to put it mildly) one of the most rewarding spiritual events of my life. To put the whole pious adventure into capsulized summation, I must borrow the words of another individual who said: “The pilgrimage may not be good for the soles but it is definitely good for the soul.” Hopefully, next year more people can come along to endure the penitential challenges that the pilgrimage has to offer. I’ll be back again. Hope to see you there, too.



The St. Joseph Men’s Brigade

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen.

Hail Mary, three times. (Pius IX, Raccolta No. 579.)

CALENDAR NOTES:

- Church Unity Octave, January 18 to 25, 2007.
- Saint Benedict Center Conference, August 17 to 19th, 2007, Nashua, New Hampshire. Please mark your calendars!

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MANCIPIA December 2006

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

Of interest:

Auriesville Pilgrimage: Seventy-two miles: A truly penitential pilgrimage in honor of the martyrs. A first-timers report from Professor Grinstead is on page 3.

For Christmas: In defense of the Baby Jesus, the Incarnate God. The One *Who* and the Two *Whats* in

Christ that make for the Catholic act of Faith in Him: See *To Friends of the Crusade*, Page 1.

In defense of December 25th, the Birthday of the Divine Child. *Kelly's Forum*, page 4.

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