

# MANCIPIA

February/March 2008

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



## TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:



Br. André Marie M.I.C.M., Prior

### MYSTICISM AND CONTROVERSY

It is a wonderful sign that the study of serious mystical theology is gaining momentum in Catholic circles. One subject that all of the sound authors in this area touch upon — and something generally accepted today — is what is called the “universal call to holiness.”

#### Beginning with the End

Many scriptural commentators take notice of the fact that the Sermon on the Mount, wherein Our Lord introduces the gospel, presents a description of the apex of sanctity. This is accomplished in the eight beatitudes. The beatitudes pertain not only to the life of Heaven (our final end) but to the life of perfection here on earth (our proximate preparation for that end). St. Thomas: “[T]hose things which are set down as merits in the beatitudes are a kind of preparation for, or disposition to, happiness, either perfect or inchoate: while those that are assigned as rewards may be either perfect happiness, so as to refer to the future life, or some beginning of happiness, such as is found in those who have attained perfection, in which case they refer to the present life. Because when a man begins to make progress in the acts of the virtues and gifts, it is to be hoped that he will arrive at perfection, both as a wayfarer, and as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.”

If the blessings of the beatitudes apply to this life as a prelude to the life of Heaven, then those who have them now, “those who have attained perfection,” are ready for their final end. For these all-too-rare souls, death will be little more than the opening of the veils separating them from the Beatific Vision. For the rest of us who die in the state of grace, there is Purgatory — God’s summer school for the ill prepared.

#### Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange

The Dominican Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877-1964), masterfully explained the theology of the spiritual life in his two-volume *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*. He is most insistent that the perfection required for this immediate entry into Heaven is the full plenitude of the theological

virtue of Charity, elevated in its operation by the highest of the gifts of the Holy Ghost: Wisdom. After citing St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales in support of his assertions, he makes this summation: “We have thus found a confirmation of what we believe to be the truth about *the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, which seems to us more and more to be in the normal way of sanctity* and to be morally necessary to the full perfection of Christian life.... [Indeed] *the normal prelude of the vision of heaven, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, is, by docility to the Holy Ghost, prayer, and the cross, accessible to all fervent interior souls*” (my emphasis in italics).

#### Dom Prosper Guéranger

Let us go back earlier, to a man who died about two years before Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange was born: Abbot Guéranger, O.S.B. He was a product — nay, an inspiration — of that “reactionary,” anti-revolutionary, nineteenth-century movement known as ultramontanism (see his robust *Papal Monarchy*, which has only recently been Englished). In his magisterial fifteen-volume work, *The Liturgical Year*, we find a relevant passage among his meditations for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

“But, if holiness is requisite in order to obtain the full development of the divine life spoken of by the apostle, let us also take notice how the desire and the prayer of

St. Paul *are for all men; and how, therefore, no one is excluded from that divine vocation....* [F]or he gives them rules of conduct with regard to each point. The saints of Ephesus, as of all other places, are no others than the faithful of Christ Jesus, that is to say, they are those who faithfully follow the divine pre-



Dom Prosper Guéranger

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## FOUNDER'S COLUMN



Father Leonard Feeney

### FROM *A PRELUDE TO FAITH*

If God wishes to share with me both the what and the how of His Divine knowledge — in other words, if He wishes not merely to affirm what it is that He knows, but to impart to my mind a vision of the truth as He himself knows it — that will not be revelation. That will be rather lifting my mind to the plane of His own beatific life

and letting me partake of His own Divine nature by direct vision. One does not need to go to the bother of proving that man does not possess God by direct vision in this life.

If, however, God wishes to tell me what He knows, but not to lend me as yet the mode and perfection of His own Divine mind in knowing it, three things must follow: 1) I shall never be physically necessitated to accept a truth on His authority, because every intelligence, whether human or divine, can be forced to assent only to what it apprehends by intuitive experience; 2) I shall be capable, in the event of a discovered Divine Revelation, of offering God a supreme act of tribute and worship with my mind, by humbly accepting a truth on His say-so; and 3) Since my mind can be at peace about a truth completely only when it knows both what is true and how it

is true as well, unless God wants to proclaim mysteries merely for the sake of being mysterious, and torture the human mind with false bait and vain urges to a superior life, in the event of His making a revelation at all, He is conditioned by His own goodness to see to it that my loving and obedient acceptance of a mystery through faith, will be ultimately my passport to an understanding of the mystery itself through vision. His willingness to share with me the facts of

If, therefore, my acts are ever to have any value on a Divine plane, God must come and dwell within me and share directly in the causality of my acts.

His own proper knowledge must be an indication of His willingness to share with me ultimately an intuitive perception of them. The promise of vision, therefore, is implicitly contained in the overture of faith, and is the only just and adequate fulfillment thereof.

But to know by vision what God Himself knows is to be God. It is an intimate participation in Divine Life, unto which reward I can put no meritorious act by virtue of any natural power. If any creature could appropriate Divine Life to himself

by his own natural resources, all distinction between God and man would cease, and Pantheism would be nature's own law.

If, therefore, my acts are ever to have any value on a Divine plane, God must come and dwell within me and share directly in the causality of my acts. God must join forces with me, and my intellect must operate as a vital instrument in His hands. This gratuitous dispensation of the Deity, Catholic theology aptly describes when it calls it: Supernatural Grace. It is supernatural because it is an especial and extraordinary operation of God above the routine of natural law; and it is grace because it is a sublime favor.

It is not accurate, therefore, to make an adequate division between faith and reason, for faith is an act of reason. It is an assent of my reasoning faculty, motivated by God's authority and elicited with God's assistance. The distinction were better made between faith and ordinary reason, that is to say, between reason unassisted by grace and revelation, and reason equipped with this assistance.

Faith is an intellectual assent to a Divine truth on the authority of God revealing it and assisted by direct Divine cooperation. Faith is distinctively and residentially an act of the human mind subscribing to a proposition of the authority of God. Faith is set in motion by three principles: first, by previous acts of the mind in the field of direct evidence, which tell me that the God, whom I know to exist, has made a Divine revelation, that it has been discovered, and that it is logical and rational to assent to it because a Divine mind is going to bail for the truth of what is being stated; second, by the free will of man wishing to pay tribute to the intelligence and veracity of its Creator by accepting a fact on His say-so; and third, by the influx of Divine grace cooperating with man in this double performance of intellect and will, and rendering the act — because of God's collaboration in it — a supernatural thing and worthy to be coined in terms of an eternal reward. It is my mind which assents; it is my will which chooses to assent; and it is God's grace that flows into this operation of my spirit and makes its effort Divinely fruitful.

I believe in a revealed truth (a) because I ought to, (b) because I want to, and (c) because God helps me.

Faith is a gift. It is a gift in many ways. It is a gift to mankind that God should choose to make a revelation to it at all. It is due to God's providence and beneficence that He has put my

“Sloth is the inertia of nature resisting supernatural life. Therefore, some extremely active people are yet truly slothful.”

Brother Francis

mind in touch with the credentials offered to establish the authenticity of His revelation, and has cleared it of the irrational prejudices and emotional complications that would prevent my affording Him the tribute of intellectual adoration. And finally, it is a sublime gift that He should cooperate with me in the act of believing and give my poor effort such Divine importance by sharing the causality of what I do and informing my act with His own Divine life and excellence. But it is I who freely and willingly appropriate this gift to myself when it has been presented, for faith is always free: God's freely to give, and mine freely to accept. He will not adopt my nature into the life of the Godhead and work in it for His own all-perfect, beautiful, and eternal purposes, unless I am willing that it should be so. Faith is no physical tyranny of God over man. Once received, it does not work automatically till the hour of death. It is a constant warfare to preserve it. Faith is a free, intelligent, and grace-informed surrender of the human mind to the Divine mind, seeking to be tyrannized of its own accord by the One Beautiful Mind, which can teach it all truth. Is it intelligent of me to make this free and un-necessitated surrender? If it is not intelligent for a finite mind to surrender itself to an infinitely knowing and truthful mind so that all knowledge and all truth shall be its portion, then in God's name, how shall we define intelligence?

The last question to be decided by the human mind before it undertakes to make an act of faith, obviously, is this: Has a Divine Revelation been made, and where with certainty shall I find it?

In solving this problem I cannot escape the role of special pleader, for no mind can decide *a priori* the whereabouts of a Divine revelation, except to be fairly certain that it does not reside in the possession of those who cannot make up their minds what it is.

I might begin looking for it in Mohammedanism. That "there is no God but God" I know, and it might be profitable to determine whether or not Mohammed is His prophet and with right to speak in His name. Unfortunately, however, Mohammed is dead, and a prophecy without a prophet becomes an undecipherable code when there is no living voice to interpret it.

If I am sincerely in search of a Divine Revelation, might it not be profitable to inquire if there are any traces of its having occurred right within the religious culture in which I find myself, rather than first searching for it in territories alien and strange to me? Would it not be intelligent of me, not to speak of its being loyal, first to look within the area of my own religious tradition, preferably to going into pagan lands, so as to discover — no matter what confusions, misunderstandings, and mistakes have been made by groups of Christians here and there within the orbit of our Western Civilization — to see if there is amongst us: a) an evidence of a prophet sent by God and with right to speak a Revelation in His Holy Name, and b) an evidence of a living and infallible voice set up by Him to keep the prophecy intact and free from error?

## Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

### WISH LIST

#### OUR NEEDS INCLUDE:

\$400,000 – needed for repairs and maintenance on our buildings.

\$38,000 – for an upgrade and overhaul of Catholicism.org and FromTheHousetops.com. The two sites are going to be combined and made much easier to use.

\$24,000 – Conversion/remodeling project to enlarge bookstore to allow for increased inventory both online and in the physical store.

\$10,000 – to reprint 25,000 copies of the Saint John Neumann catechism for distribution in our door-to-door apostolate.

\$9,875 – for duplicating, editing, and recording equipment for the religious to take over the SAI audio production and distribution tasks.

\$1,300 – for the purchase of a digital camera and flash. This would be used for our publications and web sites and could increase their quality.

\$1,200 – needed to upgrade our page layout, photo editing, and file management software. This is used for all our publications and many other day-to-day tasks in our apostolate.

\$200 – for the printing of 5,000 Spanish How to Pray the Rosary pamphlets, which are used for our bookselling apostolate. We distribute these in our missionary work.

Please note that you do not have to cover an item totally, you can donate toward it.

*You make the difference! We depend upon God's providence through you for all these works and many more. Thank you for your help!*

Please contact Brother Maximilian Maria if you would like more information on helping with these items. Phone him at (603) 239-6485 or email him at [brm@catholicism.org](mailto:brm@catholicism.org).

## KELLY FORUM



Mr. Brian Kelly

### SOME SUPERLATIVE NEWS

In the spirit of the gospel, which word in Latin and Greek means “good news,” I thought I would share with our readers three inspiring stories that I have come across on Catholic news websites in the past few months. In doing so I do not mean to distract from the attention that is due to the thousands who are suffering for the true Faith in such countries as China, Rwanda, Lebanon, North Korea, Cuba, Pakistan, Iraq, and India (the list is growing), for these are the lands of today’s martyrs, but only to eulogize a few of the more hidden apostles whose virtues are more accessible to the un-persecuted.

Perhaps the most astounding of the three, considering the collapse of Catholic culture in the West, is the heroic story of an Italian teenager, Carlo Acutis. A daily communicant since his First Holy Communion, this devout and outgoing youngster, who was a whiz with computers, died less than two years ago of leukemia, at the age of fifteen. Throughout his illness he



Carlo Acutis

offered all of his pain, all of his life, for the Church and the Holy Father. “As a little boy, especially after his First Communion, he never missed his daily appointment with the Holy Mass and the Rosary, followed by a moment of Eucharistic adoration,” recalls his mother, Antonia. In addition to his interior life of union with God, his mother also highlighted the works of char-

ity that flowed with habitual ease from his pure and generous heart: “His immense generosity made him interested in everyone: the foreigners, the handicapped, children, beggars. To be close to Carlo was to be close to a fountain of fresh water.”

When questioned by his doctor about the intensity of his pain during the worst days, he meekly responded, “There are people who suffer much more than me.” Carlo died in 2006, and, from the information I have from Catholic News Agency,

it appears that the month of his death was October. No exact day was given.

A biography of the saintly young man, written in Italian by Nicola Gori, a writer for *L’Osservatore Romano*, has already been published by *Ediciones San Pablo*. It is entitled *Eucaristia. La mia autostrada per il cielo. Biografia di Carlo Acutis*. (The Eucharist: My Road to Heaven.) It can be purchased online at [www.Libreriauniversitaria.it](http://www.Libreriauniversitaria.it).

With certain of India’s twenty-eight states either already passing, or considering to pass, anti-conversion laws (Hindu to Christianity, that is) the story of Lingareddy Johannes Reddy, a layman in the Archdiocese of Hyderabad, is an astounding tribute to the victory of grace over all obstacles. This one lay apostle is responsible for the conversion of six hundred Hindus. Reddy, now a seventy-seven-year-old father of eight, moved as a teen, along with two other Catholic families, to a remote area of northwestern India to work the soil. They were the only Catholics for miles. Together, they bought some land and called it Mariapuram, which means “Mary’s Village.” Because of its remoteness, a priest could only bring them the sacraments twice a year.

As a youngster, Reddy absorbed the Catholic Faith with great enthusiasm from the lessons given to him by his father. Local Hindus living nearby Mariapuram would come to learn many things from the Reddy family, but, most especially, religion. The young farmer soon had a catechetical class going strong with two hundred catechumens. Because their farm was very productive, the Reddys were able to provide jobs for many of the unemployed, and to feed many poor families. With the medical knowledge that he acquired by his own study and experience, this zealous teacher was also called upon to minister to the physically disabled and the sick. Even domestic disputes, including monetary and real-estate problems, found their way to his door for arbitration. In 1968, one hundred and seventy of his catechumens were baptized by a visiting priest. Ten years later, the Archbishop of Hyderabad sent a priest to open a mission in Mariapuram. Lingareddy was to instruct more than four hundred more converts, about six hundred in all, during his fifty years of apostolic work in the area. One of his sons is now a Jesuit priest, and another is a medical doctor servicing his father’s village, which today numbers twelve hundred Catholics.

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The third inspiring story I relate for you occurred during the Spanish Civil War in 1936. It is in the form of a couple of excerpts from two letters that a twenty-two-year-old martyr, the youngest of the 498 martyrs beatified by Pope Benedict XVI last October, wrote to his girlfriend and his family respectively

Bartolomé refused to be shot from behind.... As the rifles were raised he had one last word to add — loudly — for Spain: “¡Viva Cristo Rey!”

from prison. His name is Bartolomé Blanco Márquez and he was shot by a firing squad on October 2. The message of Christian fortitude, charity, forgiveness, and zeal for the conversion of his enemies that exudes from these letters surely issued from a heart that was of the same spirit as his crucified Exemplar’s.

Just hours before his death Blessed Bartolomé wrote these sublime words to his girlfriend, Maruja: “Your memory will go with

me to the tomb, and as long as my heart is beating, it will beat with love for you. God has desired to exalt these earthly affections, ennobling them when we love each other in Him. Therefore, although in my last days God is my light and my longing, this does not keep the memory of the person I most love from accompanying me until the hour of my death.”

And, on the eve of his death, he penned the following to his relatives: “May this be my last will: forgiveness, forgiveness; but indulgence, which I wish to be accompanied by doing them as much good as possible. Therefore, I ask you to avenge

me with the vengeance of a Christian: returning much good to those that have tried to do me evil.”

Orphaned as a child, Bartolomé was raised by his aunt and uncle and worked as a chair maker. He was an outstanding student at the Salesian school in Pozoblanco, where he also helped out as a catechist. It was because of his previous service

in the proscribed Catholic Action group in that city that he was arrested by the revolutionary republicans while on leave from military service. On September 24 he was moved to a prison in Jaen, where he was held with fifteen priests and other laymen. There he was judged an enemy of “the people” and condemned to death. In imitation of His Savior he went to his execution barefoot, surprising his guard by kissing the cuffs that bound his hands. The firing squad, preferring not to look at the faces of the innocent men, women, and religious they killed, set the young martyr with his face to the wall. Bartolomé refused to be shot from behind. “Whoever dies for Christ should do so facing forward and standing straight,” he protested. As the rifles were raised he had one last word to add — loudly — for Spain: ¡Viva Cristo Rey!



## HOW SERIOUSLY DO YOU TAKE THE FAITH?

Please plan on joining us for our Twelfth Annual Saint Benedict Center Conference in Nashua, New Hampshire, July 18 to 20, 2008. You are also invited to our free Open House at the monastery in Richmond on July 17.

We have nine speakers confirmed so far, with an additional four to be selected. This conference is shaping up to be our best yet.

In addition to being an opportunity to learn about the Faith, this event is a great chance to make friends and network with like-minded Catholics.

Please visit the newly redesigned Conference website or call us toll free, Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 5:00 Eastern Time for details. Please call to register. We would like to see you again, or meet you for the first time.

(877) 773-1773

[www.SbcConference.com](http://www.SbcConference.com)

## INTERVIEW WITH SCOUTMASTER BROTHER LOUIS MARIE



Br. Louis Marie, M.I.C.M.

**Mr. Kelly:** What inspired you to start a troop of Boy Scouts?

**Brother:** The Spirit blows where He will. Brother André Marie had been lamenting the fact for years that there is little opportunity for young men to approach the older and more

experienced men of the community here with questions regarding life's problems. This prefab program is a wonderful vehicle to employ in obtaining that end. So, I resolved to consecrate the endeavor to Our Lady's care.

**Mr. Kelly:** When did you begin organizing?

**Brother:** I called all the boys who were interested, and we had our first meeting at the priory this past August.

**Mr. Kelly:** Is the program the same as that followed by the Boy Scouts of America? The same ranks?

**Brother:** It is exactly the same program, and the boys advance through the same levels. There is this difference, however. Whereas the BSA has the goal of forming good citizens for this world, our focus is to elevate that good higher, and form great saints for the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven.

**Mr. Kelly:** How many lads have joined?

**Brother:** At the start we had twelve "apostles"; two more joined in November.

**Mr. Kelly:** How often do you meet, and what do the meetings entail?

**Brother:** On the average we meet once a week, on Saturday mornings. Occasionally we have a special event, such as swimming or camp-outs. We have had astronomy classes, which actually were very popular. We also held a ping-pong

tournament as a fundraiser for the scouts. Anyone could enter who gave a donation. That was a huge success and a ton of fun. Scouts are encouraged to attend Mass and have breakfast together on Saturday, before our meetings. There are ceremonies, technical instructions about surviving in the outdoors, character training in both leadership and teamwork, and other social skills — even in the art of governing. Since we stress the formation of all the Catholic virtues, we give the young men all the encouragement they need to recognize their God-given talents and develop them. An idle mind is, after all, the devil's workshop. It's not just keeping boys busy that's important; it's helping them to develop their talents and character, which builds enthusiasm and joy.

**Mr. Kelly:** What are the ranks?

**Brother:** They are seven: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout. Advancement up the ranks involves achieving camping skills, fire building and cooking, compass work, proper use of knives and knife safety, swimming safety, first aid, developing a true patriotism and respect for others and one's elders (stressed during the various ceremonies), leadership skills, and — very important — preparedness at all times for all necessities.

**Mr. Kelly:** That's great! Seems like it is no easy thing to climb the ranks.

**Brother:** It depends on many things, individual drive being foremost. Scouts also have to learn how to interact with, assist, and show charity to fellow troopers. Funds are also a factor because, in order for the boys to climb the ranks, we need to purchase the materials and resources that go with the training.

**Mr. Kelly:** Will you receive official recognition from the national BSA organization?

**Brother:** Yes, we already have. Now all that we need to do is to play by the rules.



Some of the Center Boy Scout Troop raising the flag



Our Scouts are learning many things, patriotism included.

cepts, in the condition of life proper to each. Now, it depends on us to follow God's grace; *nothing else but our own resistance prevents the Holy Ghost from making saints of us*" (*The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 11, pp. 359-360, my italics).

**Beginner, Proficient, Perfect**

Those who tread the three ways we call beginners (purgative way), proficient (illuminative way), and perfect (unitive way). Abbot Guéranger, whose focus in *The Liturgical Year* is to draw all his doctrine and devotion from the Church's liturgy, explains the annual cycle in terms of the three ways:

"We have shown elsewhere how the time of Advent belongs to that period of the spiritual life which is called, in Mystic Theology, the *Purgative Life*, during which the soul cleanses herself from sin and the occasions of sin, by the fear of God's judgements, and by combating against every evil concupiscence. We are taking it for granted that every faithful soul has journeyed through these rugged paths, which must be gone through before she could be admitted to the Feast to which the Church invites all mankind... [T]he Church sees, amongst



Father Garrigou-Lagrange

the countless throng who receive the Bread of Life, a great variety of sentiments and dispositions. Some were dead, and the graces given during the holy Season of Advent have restored them to life: others, whose spiritual life had long been healthy, have so spent their Advent that its holy exercises have redoubled their love of their Lord, and their entrance into Bethlehem has been to them a renewal of their soul's life.

"Now every soul that has been admitted to Bethlehem, that is to say, into the *House of Bread*, and has been united with him who is the Light of the World — that soul no longer walks in darkness. The mystery of Christmas is one of Illumination; and the grace it produces in the soul that corresponds with it, places her in the *Illuminative Life*. Henceforward, then, we need no longer weary ourselves watching for our Savior's arrival; he has come, he has shone upon us, and we are resolved to keep up the light, nay, to cherish its growth within us, in proportion as the Liturgical Year unfolds its successive seasons of mysteries and graces." (*The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 2, pp. 20-21.)

Pentecost is the season of the unitive way. The season dedicated to the Holy Ghost in the liturgical year corresponds to that highest plane of the interior life, wherein the gifts of the Holy

Ghost are most operative and their effects most sustained.

The Church's Doctor of Mystical Theology, St. John of the Cross, tells us that what distinguishes these three phases are the so-called "passive purifications." The old Catholic Encyclopedia summarizes the Spanish Carmelite succinctly in the matter of purifications:

"What mystical writers describe as the active and passive purifications of the spiritual life may be brought under, and arranged according to, their three states of perfection, though not confined to any one of them. The active purification consists of all the holy efforts, mortifications, labors, and sufferings by which the soul, aided by the grace of God, endeavors to reform the mind, heart, and the sensitive appetite. This is the characteristic work of the purgative way. The passive purifications are the means which God employs to purify the soul from its stains and vices, and to prepare it for the exceptional graces of the supernatural life. In the works of St. John of the Cross these purifications are called nights,... the night of the senses and the night of the spirit."

Father Garrigou-Lagrange follows St. Thomas in likening the three ways to the ages of corporeal life: childhood, adolescence, and maturity. He compares the passive purifications to certain crises of physical growth and maturation. Thus, the crisis of puberty corresponds to the dark night of the senses. As the former brings the child into adolescence, the latter brings the beginner to illumination. The passive purification of the spirit, more harrowing and arduous, is like the often perilous age of liberty that bridges adolescence and adulthood.

**Ascetical and Mystical**

Those who have read a modicum of spiritual theology have doubtless run into the terms "ascetical" and "mystical." While the terms are used differently by authors, ascetical (coming from the same Greek word giving us "athlete") corresponds to the purgative way, while mystical corresponds to the two higher ways. Very important for the theology of Father Garrigou-Lagrange is the fact that the ascetical life is ordered to the mystical life. Asceticism, he says, consists in "the active purification of the external and internal senses, of the passions, of the intellect and the will, by mortification, meditation, and prayer" — all under the influence of actual grace. The soul's powers are very active, while the gifts of the Holy Ghost are more or less latent. The mystical life involves the more frequent, intense, and direct activity of the Holy Ghost.

A great deal more can be said on our subject. I pray that the great spiritual giants will become further appreciated and their rich works more deeply savored. More than that, I hope that the fuller life of grace will be lived in great abundance in the Church of our day, for Our Lord did say, "I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

*(excerpted from a larger article on our website)*

# NEWS FROM THE CRUSADE

## A PATRON SAINT FOR BOY SCOUTS?



Mr. Brian Kelly

Richmond, Virginia, October 10. Raised in a devout Catholic family (his mother was a convert), Frank attended Mass daily after his First Holy Communion, serving as an altar boy at the convent of the Visitation Sisters. A rugged lad, who loved the outdoors, Frank joined the Boy Scouts, eventually earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Discerning a call to religious life, he first thought about joining the order that educated him, the Benedictines. Later, he opted for the diocesan priesthood and was sent to the “Eternal City” for studies. He had drawn up for

Yes, there is such a candidate whose cause has been introduced for canonization. He is Servant of God, Francis J. Parater, a seminarian who died at the age of twenty-two while studying in Rome at the North American College. Francis, “Frank” as his friends (he had many) called him, was born in 1897 in

himself a Rule of Life in which he obliged upon himself: *Be large minded. Don't be a bluffer. Be frank, but be gentle. Love the poor. Make every minute count. Strive to be a man of your ideals. Let your charity be unbounded. Don't be disheartened at failures.* He was only in Rome for a few months before he became ill with rheumatic fever.

Our seminarian did not survive this illness. He died with the last sacraments and with great piety and joy just eleven days after being admitted to the hospital run by the Blue Nuns (Handmaids of the House of God). With today's irreverence toward the Blessed Sacrament, it is richly inspiring to read about how this seminarian approached His Eucharistic Lord when the Viaticum was brought to his bedside in

the hospital. The racked and debilitated young man had to be restrained from climbing out of bed to his knees. He actually did manage to kneel up, however, on the mattress, to receive his King and Savior for the last time in Holy Communion.

It was after his death that his fellow seminarians came to know just how holy Francis was. Going through the belongings left behind in his cubicle, a seminarian friend found a sealed envelope with the notation that it be opened in the event of his death. He gave it to the Rector. The Rector was stunned by what he read. It was an Act of Oblation to the Sacred Heart. Calling all the seminarians together he read the letter to them. It said in part:

*I have nothing to leave or give but my life and this I have consecrated to the Sacred Heart to be used as He wills. I have offered my all for the conversion of the non-Catholics in Virginia. This is what I live for and in case of death what I die for . . . Since my childhood, I have wanted to die for God and my neighbor. Shall I have this grace? I do not know, but if I go on living, I shall live for this same purpose; every action of my life here is offered to God for the spread and success of the Catholic Church in Virginia. . . . I shall be of more service to my diocese in Heaven than I can ever be on earth.*

This letter was written a year before Francis Parater became sick.

There was another letter in his room that was addressed to the Boy Scouts back in Virginia.

*Dear Old Scouts:*

*You may never see this letter, but if you do, it is to tell you*

Don't be a bluffer.  
Be frank, but be gentle.... Make every minute count. Strive to be a man of your ideals. Let your charity be unbounded. Don't be disheartened at failures.



Francis Parater in his Eagle Scout days

that God has granted me the greatest desire of my life — to die for love of Him and of my fellow-man. Never fear death — it is the most beautiful thing in life, for it is the great portal to the real life. . . . Ever since I was a little fellow I have wanted to be like the martyrs of old, and give my life to God.

I have loved each of you, boys, and, now that God has called me to Himself, don't think that I shall forget you; nor shall I leave you — but will be much nearer to you than I could ever be in this life.

And now, old scouts, I must say 'so long for a time.' But occasionally think of your old friend and camp director; and when the time comes for you to hit the trail for home, I'll promise to be near and to welcome you to the camp-fire of eternal life. God's blessing be with you all.

Sincerely,  
Your friend,  
Francis Parater



The first-ever IHM School Benefit Concert was on December 8, 2007.



Brother Francis in his geometry class, back when he was teaching



Our Sisters climbed a local mountain, Mt. Monadnock, last summer.



A recent baptism in our chapel



An act in our Christmas program, a sketch of international Nativities

## LOCAL NEWS



Mrs. Eleonore Villarrubia

### THE SAINT PHOTINA PROJECT – SAINT BENEDICT CENTER'S PRISON OUTREACH

Long before St. Benedict Center's relocation to Richmond, NH, the St. Photina Project was formed in response to the many requests from prisoners, foreigners, and interested others for information about the Catholic Faith. Most of these requested books, rosaries, or sacramentals. This "little" project became so involved that the brothers called on the Third Order to assist them with it. Eventually, it became the exclusive project of the Third Order, with individual members "adopting" particular correspondents. One long-time correspondent began his association with St. Benedict Center when he became ill after he served in Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War in 1991. Another correspondent from Africa eventually became a Capuchin priest, and he still remembers his SBC contact, Mrs. Barbara Bersaw, and her family, in his prayers and Masses.

The project was given the name of St. Photina, the Samaritan "woman at the well," because she was the first Gentile to whom Our Lord spoke directly in the Gospels. The project was intended to function as an outreach to strangers and the forgotten.



Eugene, James, and Kathy DeLalla

In addition to letters received via snail mail, Internet email requests also began to deluge the office staff. People were curious about the Catholic Faith in general and St. Benedict Center in particular. Each St. Photina volunteer was responsible

for handling all correspondence from his or her inquiring new friend. Some of the questions coming in were deeply theological and required much research on the part of the volunteers.

Since the summer of 2003, Bob and Joan Wolfe have administered the project. Although a backlog of requests from before that date still exists, all new requests coming in have been assigned to a Third Order correspondent.



Bob and Joan Wolfe

One of the recent volunteer correspondents, Gene DeLalla, at one time wrote to three prisoners for a period of four years. Gene has some interesting and edifying stories regarding these men. All three prisoners were convicted of felonies, one with a life sentence for manslaughter. Gene is amazed at the thirst these men have for the Catholic Faith and at their levels of intelligence. Their militancy regarding keeping the Faith pure and unadulterated; their commitment to Traditional Catholicism; and their zeal for spreading the Faith within the walls of their prisons are most inspiring. All three of Gene's "friends" voluntarily told him the crimes they were convicted of, admitted "messing up," and placed no blame on anyone but themselves for their plight. According to Gene, he was constantly challenged by the questions they asked, causing him to hit the books, consult priests and other experts, and formulate very thoughtful answers that were theologically correct. The zeal of the "lifer" is so strong that he filed lawsuits in attempts to keep anti-Catholic and pro-Muslim movies from coming into the prison. Another of Gene's correspondents wrote beautiful and profound commentaries on the mysteries of the Rosary and began Bible study classes for his fellow Catholic prisoners. Not only do these men defend the Faith in the most difficult

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## SAINT BENEDICT CENTER TO HOLD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

of circumstances, they also make use of every opportunity to evangelize and convert fellow prisoners to the one true religion. They firmly believe in the Church's doctrine on salvation!

One example of a "forgotten" one, whom the St. Photina project benefited, was a convict who converted to the Faith while in a state prison. Having no religious convictions in the early years of his incarceration, he received a special grace from God, cooperated fervently with it, and embraced the one true religion. It was as a Catholic that he learned of Saint Benedict Center through the letters he received from the late Ron Cormier, Sr. That seed found rich soil, and with a seemingly unquenchable thirst for knowledge of the Faith, our animated prisoner began corresponding with several of our tertiaries, joining the Third Order himself a short time later. Soon he interested a friend (whom he knew through *Mensa*, an organization for people of extraordinarily high IQ) in the Center crusade. His friend also became a Third Order member, and, eventually, she married the prisoner. Nine years later, this penitent and long-suffering man, who had patiently endured a mortal illness without being allowed proper medical treatment, passed away in peace. He is buried in our cemetery here at the monastery. His widow, who lives nearby, is an active associate of our St. Benedict Center community.

One of Bob Wolfe's correspondents, a Third Order member since 2006, is the previously mentioned gentleman who served in the first Gulf War as a civilian employee. Let's call him Brother John. When he returned to the States a few months after the end of the war, he became critically ill with multiple ailments: the flesh of his legs began to rot and putrefy; he is in constant pain and has sleep disorders, short-term memory loss, and serious diabetes. Confined to bed, Brother John has no hope of recovery. By all medical odds, this modern-day Job should have died years ago. Instead, he lives the life of a hermit, in a tiny cell, surrounded by machines that help alleviate a small part of his suffering. He structures his day according to an horarium – an hourly religious schedule of devotion, writing, and study. Brother John earned his St. Augustine Institute certificate in a few months. Incredibly, he has also earned two doctorates, two master's degrees, two bachelor's degrees, and a host of certificates in various areas of study. In addition, he holds several honorary degrees. This extraordinary man offers all his sufferings to Our Lady as a member of the Knights at the Foot of the Cross. The Knights are part of the Militia of the Immaculata, the worldwide organization founded in 1922 by St. Maximilian Kolbe. God be with you, Brother John!

Currently, there are twelve active communicators, most of them prisoners; others are looking for a tertiary who will adopt them as correspondents. If any readers would like to participate in the St. Photina Project, please contact Bob Wolfe (Brother Paul Marie, M.I.C.M., Tert.) at St. Benedict Center and let him know of your interest.

The Saint Benedict Center, administered by the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary — America's oldest and foremost religious order of traditional Catholics — will hold its twelfth annual Saint Benedict Center Conference from Thursday, July 17, to Sunday, July 20, 2008. The conference, the largest gathering of Catholic traditionalists in the United States, will begin with an Open House at the order's monastery in Richmond, New Hampshire, on July 17, and will reconvene on July 18 for three days of talks by guest speakers, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nashua, NH. The conference will conclude Sunday, July 20, with Mass, a brunch, and final speaker presentations. Call 877-773-1773 or visit [www.SbcConference.com](http://www.SbcConference.com) for registration information.

The theme of this year's conference will be "The Light of Our Faith in the Darkest of Times." The list of speakers includes retired U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Beret) officer, Dr. Robert Hickson, a former professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Defense Intelligence College, and former Chairman of the Literature and Latin Department at Christendom College. Joining Dr. Hickson will be the celebrated Catholic writer and chronicler of the traditionalist movement in the Church, Gary Potter, the founding editor of *Triumph* magazine and the author of *After the Boston Heresy Case*.

The conference will also feature Lieutenant Commander John Sharpe, USN, the Silent Service (submarine) officer who has become a one-man powerhouse in Catholic publishing. Sharpe's IHS Press is the only publishing company dedicated exclusively to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and it has made available to the modern reader the classic works of such Catholic luminaries as Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, and Fr. Vincent McNabb.

Other speakers include Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior of the Saint Benedict Center since 2002, and a distinguished lecturer in the fields of apologetics, ecclesiology, church history, and devotional practices; Boston's veteran culture warrior and noted defender of the Faith, C.J. Doyle, Executive Director of the Catholic Action League of Massachusetts; and prominent conservative journalist R. Cort Kirkwood, author of the important new book, *Real Men: Ten Courageous Men to Know and Admire*. Brother André Marie made the following comment: "Although the condition of our society remains perilous, and the challenges facing the Church are daunting, this Conference will also be marked by hope and confidence. Pope Benedict's restoration of the traditional Mass is a turning point in the history of the Church and a source of great joy and consolation for us, which shows that after decades of struggle, our concerns and our aspirations are now resonating in the very corridors of the Holy See itself."

## PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY FATHER

V. Let us pray for our Pontiff, Pope Benedict.

R. The Lord preserve him, and give him life, and make him to be blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies. (Roman Breviary)

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. Let us pray.

R. Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Benedict, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen. (Roman Ritual)

## CALENDAR NOTES:

- The Novena to the Holy Ghost is the Friday after Ascension Thursday through Saturday, the Vigil of Pentecost. Please contact us if you would like the prayers.
- The 2008 Saint Benedict Center Conference will be July 18 to 20 at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Nashua, New Hampshire. The Open House will be July 17 at Saint Benedict Center. We are now taking registrations at (877) 773-1773. You can find more information at [www.SbcConference.com](http://www.SbcConference.com).
- Our sixth annual Richmond Blueberry Fiddle Festival will be Friday and Saturday, August 8 and 9, 2008, at the Cheshire County Fairgrounds, in Swanzey, New Hampshire. Please visit [www.BlueberryFiddleFestival.com](http://www.BlueberryFiddleFestival.com) or call us at (603) 239-6495 for more information.

## OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

For more information:

Our congregation website:  
[www.catholicism.org](http://www.catholicism.org)

Our bookstore website:  
[www.FromTheHousetops.com](http://www.FromTheHousetops.com)

And our conference website:  
[www.SbcConference.com](http://www.SbcConference.com)

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## MANCIPIA February/March 2008

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

### OF INTEREST:

- In "Mysticism and Controversy" Brother André Marie uses the wisdom of two great masters, Dom Guéranger and Father Garrigou-Lagrange, to demonstrate that spiritual perfection is accessible to all the faithful. Prior's Column, page 1.
- Part of "Prelude to Faith," an early article of Father Feeney wherein he explains the nature of the act of Faith, the matter of the act, the Cause of the act, and the role of the elevated will and the intellect under the impulse of sanctifying grace. Founder's Column, page 2.



Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

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