

MANCIPIA

April 2007

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:

LET'S HEAR IT FOR SLAVERY!



Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

It's a name that shocks many people: "The *Slaves* of the Immaculate Heart of Mary." When folks ask us what Order we belong to, expecting to hear something monkish like "Benedictine" or meek like "Franciscan," the word "Slaves" falls rather harshly on the ear — a fact evidenced by the contortions that often replace the quizzical smiles on our interrogators' faces.

Harsh as it may sound, it is a great name, and one with deep meaning. In this usage, it is derived from the mystical doctrine of Saint Louis de Montfort (feast day: April 28), who promoted the devotion of Holy Slavery to Jesus through Mary. The rest of the name, ... "of the Immaculate Heart of Mary," comes from

the revelations of Fatima. It was providential that, when our Order was founded, everyone at the Center was reading two books: *Our Lady of Fatima*, by William Thomas Walsh, and *True Devotion to Mary*, by Saint Louis de Montfort. When the idea presented itself that Father Feeney's disciples would form a religious Congregation, the name followed as if naturally.

Holy Slavery is the handing over of your whole self, and all of your interior and

exterior possessions, to our Blessed Lady. She, who is our Mother, Mistress, Queen, Advocate, and Mediatrix, disposes of all we are and all we have as she sees fit.

The question sometimes arises, "Why 'slaves' and not something less demeaning, like 'servants'?" The reason is that the more abject name is a stronger expression of the *dependence* we have on the Blessed Virgin. There is a dogmatic foundation

to this, and it is that our blessed Lady is the "Mediatrice of All Graces." This means that every grace that comes to us from "the Father of Lights" comes to us through her hands. Therefore, when we make ourselves her slaves, we are humbly acknowledging the reality that we are totally dependent on her.

More than the acknowledging of our dependence on the Blessed Virgin is our voluntary donation of self. This is expressed by the term "consecration," St. Louis' name for the central act of his devotion: "Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary." To "consecrate" is to set something aside for a holy purpose. Church buildings are consecrated, and so are chalices, ciboria, and other sanctuary appurtenances. Because they are consecrated, they cannot be used for profane (i.e., non-religious) purposes. Certain people are also "consecrated": Bishops are not merely "ordained," but receive "Episcopal Consecration." Religious, when they take their vows, are spoken of as



Two young ladies entering the Postulancy, August, 2006.

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FOUNDER'S COLUMN

EASTER MEDITATION

(TAKEN FROM *THE CHALLENGE OF FAITH*)



Saint Paul saw in the Resurrection the Great Sign, the ground and foundation of faith in the divinity of Christ. Our Lord had already prophesied the same:

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights (Matt. 12:39-40).

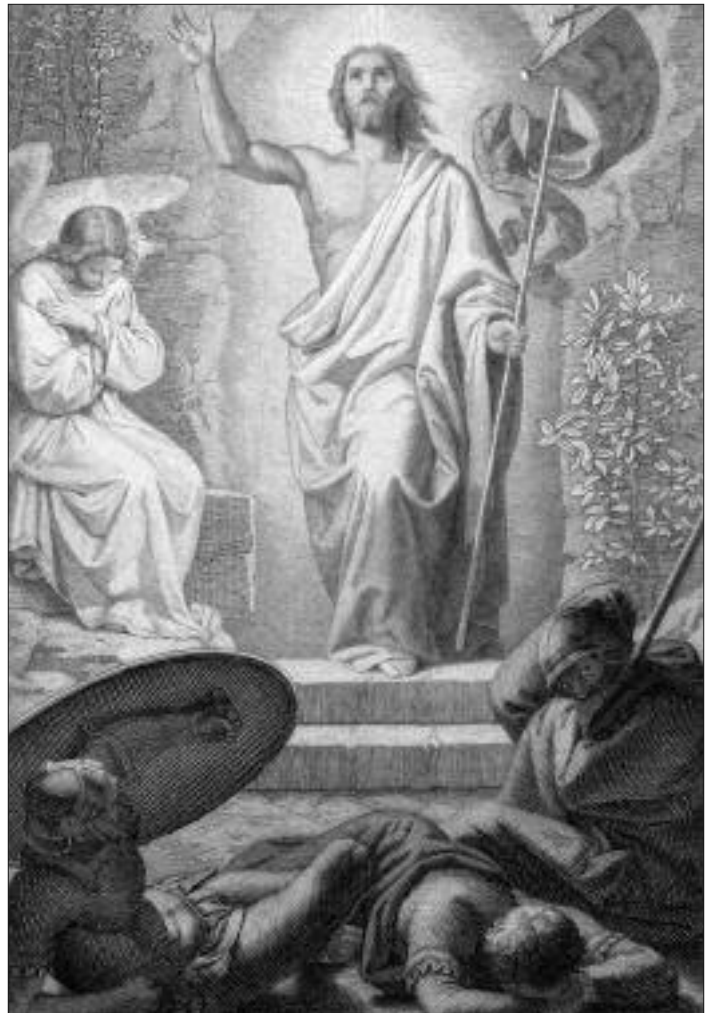
Fr. Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.

How many billions of times have Christians greeted one another during the Easter season with the stunning proclamation, "CHRIST HAS RISEN", to be answered with the response of faith, being as it were a triumph over our slow and heavy nature to accept what is almost too good to be true, "INDEED HE HAS!" And when the world grew skeptical under the excessive influence of material science, God brought to universal prominence the HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN to be, not a demonstration of the *fact* of the Resurrection, which transcends all demonstration, but an emphatic affirmation of an event that belongs to the concrete material reality, to the very atoms of the universe.

And what difference does the *material fact* of the Resurrection make to all we know and all we hope for! For did not Saint Paul say:

If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (1 Cor. 15:14).

In the Resurrection the whole economy of Redemption finds its crown of consummation. Through it is made manifest the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only one with the power to establish the true religion — the unique way to salvation. By it we



Resurrection of Christ



Eucharistic Adoration in IHM chapel during Eastertide.

see the point of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

What is the *point* of the Incarnation? Our Lord gave it simply in a brief message that He sent on the first Easter Sunday to the Apostles by way of Saint Mary Magdalene:

Go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God (John 20:17).

So, before the Incarnation, the Eternal Father was *His* Father and *our* God; after the Incarnation, He who was *His* Father is now also *our* Father, and He who was *our* God is now for Him, as Head of the Church, His Mystical Body, and in solidarity with us, also *His* God!

"Go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God."

SAINT BENEDICT CENTER NEWS



Evan Cormier

FRONT ROW SEATS

BY EVAN CORMIER

You have done well, good and faithful servant; go sit in the front row.” That’s what Brother André said to me after I passed my altar boy test, and I can think of few words in my life that I wanted to hear more. Due to the

apathetic nature of my first approach to the altar boy class, I was one of the last candidates to pass. One of the main things that kept me going was the example of my older brother, Adam. He was the first to get me interested, and he taught me my first response: *Et cum spiritu tuo*. It was his eleventh year of school then, and he would stay after school and wait for an extra hour so that I would have a ride home. I remember the first Mass I served; it was a 7:15 evening Mass on a Saturday. In spite of all efforts to calm myself ahead of time, I was nervous. My entire conscious effort was bent on not missing my cues. Brother André knelt at the rail in front to make sure I didn’t botch anything too completely. I honestly don’t remember how well or terribly I did, but it must have been good enough to pass because, up until recently, I was still serving.

“You have done well, good and faithful servant; go sit in the front row.”

For altar boys, it is a great privilege and honor to interact with the priest in performing the rubrics of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Originally, this office was reserved only to those aspiring to the priesthood. These were the acolytes, those in the fourth and last degree of the

minor orders of a cleric. Assuming the role once reserved for the acolyte, the altar server presents the wine that is to be changed into our Lord’s Blood, and he is permitted to hold the edge of the priest’s chasuble as he consecrates the bread and the wine into Jesus’ Body and Blood. This is tremendous; think about it: we are the second closest to the altar when our Lord descends upon it. He is there truly present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. With that in mind, I encourage every altar boy to take a few moments before each Mass to clear his mind and think seriously about what he is about to participate in.

When serving at the altar, the server has two basic purposes that he must fulfill, one by his presence, and the other by physical action. The first is to represent the congregation during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and that in itself is kind of a big responsibility because, although it does not depend on the altar boy, it’s sort of through the altar boy that the congregation unites their prayers to that of the priest. The second is to serve and as-

sist the priest in his celebration of the Mass. I remember one thing Brother André would always tell us: “The communion rail is a barrier that your eyes cannot see past. Keep your focus on the altar with the priest, and don’t make him wait for you.” And that, I think, is the main goal of the server. Why do I say this? Because the priest is bound under pain of mortal sin not to miss certain rubrics of the Mass. So it behooves the server to pay careful attention to what the priest is doing. By this I do not mean to say that it is the altar server’s job to remind the priest what to do, but that it just takes a lot of pressure off the priest when the altar server does his job well.

The patron saint of altar boys is the Society of Jesus’ John Berchmans. He died before ordination in 1621 at the age of twenty-two. He is known for many other things, but the reason the Jesuit received this honor was due to the excessive anxiety he had for seeing the Mass served properly. Even as a child he was known for his reverence on the altar. We may surmise that he probably never “spaced out” somewhere in the middle of Mass and forgot what he was doing for even an instant. I think it would be a good idea, before each Mass, for altar servers to invoke their patron saint.

On a personal level, serving at the altar has always meant a

“In spite of all efforts to calm myself ahead of time, I was nervous. My entire conscious effort was bent on not missing my cues.”



Br. Louis Marie teaching a new altar server.

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Mr. Brian Kelly, Editor

COMMENTARY AND OTHER RELEVANT MORSELS

CONSCIENCE

On February 20, *Catholic World News* posted a clip on their website concerning a two-day seminar in Rome on “Christian Conscience in Support of the Right to Life,” sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life. Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, Australia, addressed the press at a briefing. He made three important statements on the subject that I felt *Mancipia* readers would appreciate together with my own commentary. First, he said that “conscience must be both well-informed and well-formed if it is to be a reliable guide to action. Too often in recent years those desperate for moral education or advice have been fobbed off with ‘follow your conscience’ or indulged with ‘do what you think is best.’” Then, in a response to a challenge from a journalist who opined that conscience may require a Catholic to oppose Church teaching, he answered with confident translucence: “[T]he magisterium is not some external source of moral thinking with which private conscience must grapple; it informs conscience much like a soul informs a body, giving it its shape and direction from within.” In his own speech at the seminar he warned, “Talk of the ‘primacy of conscience’ is too often a cloak for raw will.”

The word “conscience” comes from the Latin *conscientia*, which means “with knowledge.” The better informed one’s moral conscience is, the easier it is for the will to choose the true good that conscience presents in the form of principles.

Before one reaches the age of reason, the conscience cannot operate. Ordinarily our behavior is based simply on pres-

ent reward and punishment, which builds those good habits in the child, habits that will aid it when the brain is fully developed to function organically with the informed intellect. There are saints, however, who had the use of reason from a very early age. God has no need of a fully developed brain to draw reasonable praise, as He did from the Immaculata from her very conception.

With the advent of modern psychology and its emphasis on environment, situation ethics, and abnormal influences in childhood development, we have been somewhat conditioned to believe that one’s behavior is determined solely by external factors. This is a very mechanistic view of a reality that, in its essence, has nothing to do with matter but with the liberty of a spiritual will and a spiritual intellect. At conception we were created in the image of God, even in our fallen state of original sin. Man is not created with a blank tablet (*tabula rasa*) of a soul, awaiting external stimuli to acquire a “conscience” solely from outside influences. The Word of God directly illumines every man born into this world: “That was the true light which enlightens every man coming into this world” (John 1:9). What this means is that, even though man has a fallen nature and is prone to evil, there is a moral law implanted in seed on his heart by God. “For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law; these, having not the law, are a law to themselves” (Romans 2:14). No matter where or when a man comes into this world, he has the natural law of justice written inchoately within his heart. This can be seen in the moral principles enunciated by the best thinkers of every civilization, not only those that have had and kept the true revelation, but even those in pagan societies that lost it: Roman, Greek, Persian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Chinese, just to name a few. I am not speaking here of the darker side of superstitious despotism, which almost always ended up ruling these civilizations, but of the natural wisdom of their wisest philosophers. Many of their moral teachings are consonant with our Lord’s teachings, although far less elevated. And, contrary to the prevalent heresy of our day, such purely natural wisdom is not sufficient for holiness or salvation.

Take the Savior’s maxim, “What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?” No man has put this truth so sublimely as our Lord, but the Persian *Zend-Avesta* had put forth a similar question some six

“There is a way that seemeth to a man right: and the ends thereof lead to death.”
(Proverbs 16:25)



St. Peter's Basilica

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LET'S HEAR IT FOR SLAVERY!

from page 1

“consecrated to God.” Saint Louis Marie would have all the faithful consecrate themselves entirely to Mary so that she would take possession of all that they are and have for her divine Son.

Consecration is the central idea of Holy Slavery. St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, in a spirit of holy competition, tried to outdo St. Louis Marie by calling himself, not our Lady's slave, but her “property and possession.” It seems that the holy Conventual Franciscan thought that property was more wholly possessed — more completely set aside for its owner's purposes — than a slave who could, after all, escape.

Besides these great Marian apostles, St. Pius X and America's own St. Katharine Drexel show us that Total Consecration is a recipe for sanctity that works. Not only that, but our Lord Himself has shown that consecration to the Blessed Virgin is pleasing to Him. Do not the Fatima revelations, with their emphasis on the consecration of Russia, vividly teach us the truth of the spiritual doctrine of St. Louis Marie and St. Maximilian Maria? If Russia, this instrument of punishment upon a sinful mankind, is promised the grace of conversion when she is consecrated to the Immaculate Heart, what benefits will come to

the soul of one already in God's grace if he lives a life of consecration to the Immaculate?

Fatima and Montfortian piety are complementary in many ways. Our Lady told the little children: “My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge, and the way that will lead you to God.” This beautiful utterance seems to be the Blessed Virgin's own paraphrase of Saint Louis de Montfort's motto: “To Jesus through Mary.”

Liberal and modernist churchmen scoff at the deep piety of Saint Louis de Montfort. They accuse him of a certain exaggeration of our Lady's importance. They assert that his writings are not fit for this enlightened, ecumenical age. In their doctrinal and devotional minimalism, they will warn that such Marian maximalism endangers fruitful dialogue with our separated brethren. These reactions are more a testament to the weak faith and sissified spirituality of these clerics than a show of priestly concern for the welfare of the Church or of souls. Aren't the ruinous effects of their watered-down Catholicism getting old?

This is precisely why our harsh-sounding name has to be heard more, and its robust spirit promoted far and wide, for in it is great strength, endurance, and virtue.

FRONT ROW SEATS

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great deal to me. My father and uncles were altar servers and I have served at the altar with several of my cousins, as well as my younger brother, Justin, and my older brother, Adam. Having been able to serve with these men for as long as I have has been a gift that I will never be able to fully appreciate. I see the large number of altar boys at Saint Benedict Center as a partic-

ular blessing because I know of some communities that have as few as one altar boy to serve all the Masses. I always pray that the crowd of servers will never grow too small. I also pray that every single one of the young men that I have seen at the altar will someday make it to the eternal altar where they may serve and love God forever in eternity.

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KELLY'S FORUM

from page 4

hundred years before Christ. "What is the worth of the whole creation displayed before us?"; followed by this reply: "The man therein who is delivered from evil in thought, word, and deed: he is the most valuable object on earth." Surely, here, we see the light of the Word illuminating the hearts and minds

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts (Isaias 55:8-9).

of a gentile who, although he may have had contact with the Hebrew scriptures, was still capable of seeing the principles of justice within his own heart. I am not saying that Zoroaster, the author of the *Avesta* books, was a good philosopher (his writings are replete with the religious errors of theistic dualism and a pantheon of lesser deities); what I am saying is that some of his ethical principles are based on the same natural law we read in the Ten Commandments.

In the history of the true religion, we always find that when a people deviated from the true Faith, "Thou shalt

not have strange gods before me," the corruption of morals quickly followed. Right conscience was altered (never completely annihilated) to justify self-gratification.

Contrary to the modern ambient of self-realization ("be true to yourself") and moral relativism, conscience does not have moral supremacy. Truth does. The measure of right and wrong is the divine law. "There is a way that seemeth to a man right: and the ends thereof lead to death" (Proverbs 16:25). And again: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts" (Isaias 55:8-9). As the natural law, written on the heart of every man, is knowable to all, so, too, is the true religion (although its supernatural truths must be communicated by another). Speaking to the participants of the International Congress on Natural Law (February 12), Pope Benedict XVI admitted no exceptions when he said that "The duty to seek the truth [is] the necessary presupposition of every authentic personal maturation." Just as there will be no excuses for those unrepentant transgressors of the natural law who appear before God on the day of judgment, so, too, will there be no excuses for those who could have known and loved Jesus Christ, had they followed God's lights, and who died in ignorance of Him.

How blessed we are as Catholics to be faithful members of the *ecclesia discens*, the Church learning. We are faithful to

the magisterial teaching of the one, true Church, the only religious and moral authority that God has given to man. Not that faithful Catholics need absolutely to hear the Church in *order to know the basics of what is morally right and wrong in the natural order*, but we need to hear the Church in *order to heal our moral illnesses*, for, without the Church and her sacraments, we would die in our sins. And for those Catholics who, sadly, have lost or unfixed their moral compass, the voice of the magisterium is absolutely necessary for their resuscitation in the Faith. Their conscience has become too dull to prick them into moral rectitude. These desperately need the strong and certain voice of the pope, bishops, and clergy teaching the right way on every moral issue. Even when they kick against the goad, such misguided souls are acknowledging a spark of conscience that pleads not to be extinguished by dissimulating tolerance.

How can the Church reestablish her moral authority in the wake of so many scandals and so much doctrinal ambivalence? Announcing a year of penitence among her members would help; the consecration of Russia would help; the restoration of the traditional liturgy would help; but most of all, the reaffirmation of the doctrine of salvation would help. After all, if one can be saved while denying the authority of the pope, then what is the purpose of a solemn magisterium? Our Lord did not give His vicar a lectern but a *cathedra*.



Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, Australia

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:

- Saint Benedict Center Conference, August 17 through 19, 2007, Nashua, New Hampshire. For more details, see www.catholicism.org/conferences. Please mark your calendars and note the new location!
- Auriesville Pilgrimage, Wednesday, September 27 to Saturday, September 30. If you are interested in joining one of our brigades, please call us at 603.239.6485 (men and boys) or 603.239.6495 (women and girls). Visit www.national-coalition.org/pilgrim for details.

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MANCIPIA April 2007

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

Of interest:

- More than a servant, what exactly is a *Slave* of the Immaculate Heart of Mary? In the spirit of our patron saint, Louis de Montfort, Brother André examines the most self-surrendering form of filial servitude to the Mother of God. See page 1.
- To serve at the altar of God, a boy's greatest honor. See page 3.
- "Think for yourself and question authority" is one of the more insidious platitudes floating around. *Conscience* is the subject of *Kelly's Forum*. See page 4.



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