

MANCIPIA

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The Dream of St. Joseph • Anton Raphael Mengs



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PRIOR'S COLUMN NEAR OCCASIONS OF SANCTITY

On a dreary New Hampshire winter afternoon, as I was preparing myself for a philosophy discussion on the subject of Ontology by attentively taking in a recorded lecture by Brother Francis, I was given one of those moments

of joy that comes from relishing an uplifting truth. The subject might not immediately seem evocative of joy: Brother was discussing the “four causes” that Aristotle named, and distinguishing the concept of cause from the related concepts of *principle, reason, condition* and *occasion*.

But Brother’s delightful sense of humor came out as he was explaining *occasion*, which he did by referencing that phrase familiar to every even rudimentarily informed Catholic: *the near occasion of sin*. Once he invoked that consecrated phrase from the Catholic lexicon, Brother’s audience had a better grasp of the philosophical concept of occasion as distinguished from cause. Then, with an innocent irony that was typical of our beloved mentor, he asked, with a slight chuckle in his voice, “why don’t you ever hear about near occasions of holiness?”

Good question, right?

Brother Francis went on to explain what some examples would be: religious life, which does so much to occasion holiness, and holy friendships with people who are themselves pursuing sanctity, and who can provide mutual encouragement to one another in becoming saints.

What are the causes of holiness? And what are some occasions of it? These are the questions I will try to answer after a very brief philosophy lesson of five paragraphs. The lesson will be on the distinction between cause, *principle, reason, condition* and *occasion*.

A principle is that from which something proceeds in any way whatsoever. All causes are principles, but not all principles are causes, so the concept *principle* is at once both broader and higher than the concept *cause*. According to Aristotle, principles are those things through which something is, becomes, or is known. Aristotle’s concept of principle is useful when we consider the inner life of the Trinity, because God is the “Uncaused Cause,” and there can be no causality in God. In other words, no Divine Person can be caused, yet the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus, the Father is the Principle (not the cause) of the Son, and the Father and the Son (as one Principle) proceed forth the Holy Ghost.

Reason is that through which a thing is understood. To give the reason for anything, is, according to Father A.C. Cotter (*The ABC of Philosophy*), “to explain it, to make it intelligible.”

All that exists is somehow intelligible, even if we cannot know everything about it. Thus, in perennial philosophy, we have what is called the Principle of Sufficient Reason. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “The Principle of Sufficient Reason is a powerful and controversial philosophical principle stipulating that everything must have a reason, cause, or ground.” The “and controversial” part of that definition is due to the objections of modern philosophers, who deny creation its Creator, and therefore denigrate the *Logos* through which all that was made was made orderly and *reasonably*.

“A cause, in scholastic language, is a principle which by a positive influence determines something else to exist” (Father Cotter). The something else that comes to exist is, of course, known as the *effect*. Thus cause and effect are correlative terms. Without a cause, the effect simply does not happen, even if the conditions are present for the effect, it will not be effected without a cause. So, when scientists tell you that all the conditions for life are present on Mars, or on Titan (Saturn’s largest moon) *that does not mean* that life is actually present there. If the life has not been caused, it is not. Scientists, by the way, do this kind of thing all the time. They point to conditions as if they were causes. The really important words in Father Cotter’s definition are “positive influence.”

A condition “is something that is required for the operation of the cause, but exerts no positive influence on the effect” (again, Father Cotter). Light is a necessary condition for reading. But that does not mean that as soon as the light gets turned on in a room, reading happens. Now, in the case of an indispensable cause (a *causa sine qua non*), the effect is dependent both on the cause and on the condition, but the dependence is different.

by the practice of good works, the man in the State of Grace can increase in the State of Grace and therefore become holier.

Father Cotter explains this very well and concisely in his book we are quoting from, but this would get us into too much detail here.

Lastly, *an occasion is, according to Father Cotter, “any circumstance or set of circumstances favorable to the action of a free cause.”* And the examples given are that darkness is an occasion for the crime of theft and bad companionship is an occasion of sin. Note that the effect does not depend on an occasion as it depends radically on a cause or even on a necessary condition: theft can be committed in broad daylight (the government does it all the time!), and one can sin alone, or even among good companions. *But occasions are helpful.* That

thief is aided in doing his evil by the cloak of darkness, and bad company creates the climate or culture where sin will likely perpetuate and worsen. Hence, the obligation that we have to avoid near (or proximate) occasions of sin. If I get drunk as a skunk every time I go to happy hour with Billy, well, I ought to either avoid Billy outright, or perhaps go to the coffee bar with him instead.

The Council of Trent, in a beautiful and quite involved passage in the Decree on Justification, gives five causes of Justification, which are five causes for how a man gets into the state of Sanctifying Grace. This is the entrance to the life of holiness. Trent's list of five causes expands somewhat on the four causes of Aristotle and leaves off one of his causes (the "material cause," which is, presumably, man himself, who is justified). That passage is in a sidebar in this *Mancipia*, and can be relished all on its own separately from my column. All of these causes of man's being brought into the state of Sanctifying Grace, and thus being made holy, are things that either remain *in God* or come *from God* and are done *to man*. None of them are intrinsic to man (although some remain in him), but they are all given from above.

Later in that same decree, the Council discusses how, by "faith co-operating with good works," a justified man can grow in grace. That is to say, by the practice of good works (e.g., prayer, interior acts of virtue, the works of mercy), the man in the State of Grace can increase in the State of Grace and therefore become holier. In a later decree, on the sacraments, the same Council of Trent treats of "the most holy Sacraments of the Church, through which all true justice either begins, *or being begun is increased*, or being lost is repaired," which is to say that the sacraments also *cause* us to grow in Sanctifying Grace, in holiness.

So, having considered the causes of justification and therefore of human sanctity, let us consider *conditions* and *occasions* of human sanctity. Recall that a condition is "something that is required for the operation of the cause, but exerts no positive influence on the effect." The most important condition for holiness is a good will. Think of the Parable of the Sower as it is related by Saint Luke, where Our Lord explains that the "good ground" upon which some of the seeds fell, "are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience" (Luke 8:15).

Now, of course, one of the great mysteries of our Faith is that this "good ground" — the "good and perfect heart" — cannot be good without actual grace from God. So even this *condition* requires the grace of God. But if all we have is the condition, we do not get the effect of holiness, because the condition is not the cause.

And now we come to the moment that will justify the title of this column. An occasion, we remember, is "*any circumstance or set of circumstances favorable to the action of a*

From the Council of Trent's Decree on Justification
January 13, 1547 (Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord)

Of this Justification the causes are these: the **final cause** indeed is the glory of God and of Jesus Christ, and life everlasting; while **the efficient cause** is a merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, signing, and anointing with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance; but **the meritorious cause** is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, merited Justification for us by His most holy Passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father; **the instrumental cause** is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which (faith) no man was ever justified; lastly, the alone **formal cause** is the justice of God, not that whereby He Himself is just, but that whereby He maketh us just, that, to wit, with which we being endowed by Him, are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are not only reputed, but are truly called, and are, just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to every one as He wills, and according to each one's proper disposition and co-operation. For, although no one can be just, but he to whom the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet is this done in the said justification of the impious, when by the merit of that same most holy Passion, the charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those that are justified, and is inherent therein: whence, man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives, in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these (gifts) infused at once, faith, hope, and charity. For faith, unless hope and charity be added thereto, neither unites man perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of His body. For which reason it is most truly said, that Faith without works is dead and profitless; and, In Christ Jesus neither circumcision, availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by charity. This faith, Catechumens beg of the Church—agreeably to a tradition of the apostles—previously to the sacrament of Baptism; when they beg for the faith which bestows life everlasting, which, without hope and charity, faith cannot bestow: whence also do they immediately hear that word of Christ; If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Wherefore, when receiving true and Christian justice, they are bidden, immediately on being born again, to preserve it pure and spotless, as the first robe given them through Jesus Christ in lieu of that which Adam, by his disobedience, lost for himself and for us, that so they may bear it before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may have life everlasting. ■

free cause.” It’s not as necessary as a cause, or even a condition, but it is helpful. So just as occasions of sin give us that culture or climate that is favorable to our betraying God by sin, so, too, occasions of holiness make for a climate or culture that facilitates sanctity. Here is a small list of “occasions of sanctity” readers can consider:

- Holy images (icons, statues), in our home, school, or place of employment. Looking at them from time to time facilitates holy thoughts, helps us to lift up our minds to God, Mary, and the Saints.
- Good friends, who are also seeking holiness. These can offer us fraternal correction, give us encouragement, advice, or an opportunity to talk about our problems without getting wicked counsel. Just knowing we have such support is a boon to our perseverance.
- Holy conversation with other Catholics, including the friends mentioned above. Such conversation concerns divine things, not Church politics — “have you heard the latest about Cardinal so-and-so” — and other such things. I’m not saying there is no place for Church news, but what I am saying is that it does not constitute holy conversation. Holy conversation is speaking with, and listening to, others in matters concerning divine revelation, Jesus, Mary, the Divine Law, the means of salvation, how to grow in perfection, etc. It is said of Saint Dominic that when he spoke he always spoke either to God or about Him. To be with Saint Dominic was to be in a proximate occasion of holiness. So, too, with all the saints.
- The good example of our fellows who are seeking sanctity. If a bad example can occasion my fall, a good example can certainly help me to grow in virtue. It is written in the liturgical lesson for the life of Saint Anthony the Abbot that, “He was so fired with zeal for all virtues that, whenever he saw anyone praiseworthy for excelling in any virtue, he strove to imitate him.” Those praiseworthy people the saint observed were occasions of holiness for Saint Anthony.
- A robust family life where virtue is encouraged. In such an atmosphere, the virtuous love of mother and father for God and for one another radiates out to the other members of the family. The Epistle for the Feast of the Holy Family (Col 3:12-17) gives us a series of admonitions



on how to have a holy family life, which will occasion sanctity for all the members of the family.

- Good manners. In his book, *The Restoration of Christian Culture*, Dr. John Senior makes the point that manners are the custodian of the moral life just as the moral life is the custodian of the interior life. If I do not keep Catholic morals, I cannot live the spiritual life. If I do not have at least basic manners, I will not be able to keep good morals.
 - Religious life. By design, this institution provides numerous occasions for growth in holiness: the *horarium* (schedule), with its times set aside for private and liturgical prayer, work, study, and holy reading. Religious life generally provides freer access to the sacraments, good company, edifying examples presented to us in reading the martyrology, etc.
 - Crosses, contradictions, and trials. Not all occasions of grace are pleasant. Sometimes, God sends us “painful graces,” which can be persons, events, or circumstances that try our virtue. The cardinal virtue of fortitude is necessary for sanctity, and we do not grow in fortitude without having to deal with what is arduous and difficult. In such instances, we can be consoled by those concluding words that are part of the traditional Roman ritual for the sacrament of Penance: “May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints obtain for you that whatever good you do *or whatever evil you bear* might merit for you the remission of your sins, the increase of grace and the reward of everlasting life. Amen.”
- This list could be augmented, I am sure! One last point: Whatever we might do to be an occasion of sanctity for another, is a good work for ourselves, and thus — because it is a response to God’s grace — is a cause of our own increase in grace. This is in accord with the Council of Trent’s teaching, mentioned above, on how grace is increased in the soul. So, by willfully occasioning holiness in another, we cooperate with God in increasing it in ourselves.
- The world is full of occasions of sin. Let us each strive to be and to make occasions of holiness for others. In so doing, we can become saints. ■

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Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

CONVENT CORNER THE THOUGHTS OF A ROBIN

Dear Reader,
By the time you receive this newsletter, robins will just be arriving here in New Hampshire from their Southern retreat, creating a hopeful stir among survivors of the frozen North. But as I was thinking about an article almost a year

ago on a beautiful spring day, I was privileged to observe a pair of robins proudly building a nest right outside our window.

And now, for the sake of being vivid, let me write this in the present tense so that you can stand with me and observe our robins. Now, above our porch stretches a lovely grape arbor. There, where the great, gnarly vine meets the trellis and the leaves and future grapes begin, the robins have carefully begun weaving a handsome nest. A fine location for a nest of baby robins, it is safely more than ten feet off the ground. When the chicks hatch, they will benefit from the tempered sunshine as it filters through the grape leaves. Perfect! Bravo Mr. and Mrs. Robin!

In about a week, they will have finished their exquisite nest — complete with a soft lining. And, none-too-soon as Mrs. Robin will be ready to fill it with pretty blue eggs. She and Mr. Robin will take turns sitting on the nest to keep these little treasures warm until they hatch. And what finally will peck their way out of the shells will certainly be a surprise! Miniature Martians! With skinny, strangled necks surmounted by beaked-heads with bulging, unopened, purple eyes, atop bulbous, pink-skinned bodies that are encrusted with pin-feather protrusions — I am always surprised that Mr. and Mrs. Robin don't abandon their lovely nest when the first egg cracks open! Well, what follows will be a feathered procession of worms, grubs and insects for the next several weeks as the strange creatures morph into beautiful birds.

And, you will say, these baby robins will eventually tumble from their nest, flutter off and find freedom in flight with their parents! **WRONG!!!** These future baby robins will never take flight. In fact, mark my words, soon after they hatch — before they ever leave the nest — they will be torn apart and destroyed. Any one of them that manages to leave the nest alive will be dashed to death on the ground below.

Dear Reader, that was stark! I gave you no warning. Please forgive me for not preparing your thoughts. You couldn't have known. I know the history, and I haven't shared it with you, yet.

For me, our tragic robin family is the perfect illustration of the adage: He who knows not history, is bound to repeat it.

The history. About three years ago, this lovely robin couple came to nest in our grape arbor for the very first time. After the chicks hatched, our local falcon harvested them. Twice more that year, the robins produced a clutch of eggs and suffered the same horrendous catastrophe.

If only the poor robins had built their nest elsewhere! If only they had learned from the history! If only they had thought! But, sadly, this history repeated itself for two more years of heart-wrenching tragedy. My heart goes out to the parents, but even more to the little baby birds.

Okay, let's turn our thoughts from the "robin tragedy." Actually, we really should speak of things more worthy of our consideration. Like families. Being of a melancholic bent, I can pick up on problems with facility in any given situation. And so, I would like to have us consider the obvious: families are under attack these days.

In fact, families are being utterly ravaged, leaving children exposed to the blood-thirsty assaults of demons. It is a set of facts all too well known. Yes, Dear Reader, you probably could

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tell me many stories from your own personal experience of this heart-rending destruction. Families torn apart and children ripped to pieces spiritually — if not physically in an abortion. Yes, much like those baby robins. Ah! Don't you wish, with all of your heart, that you could prevent it?

Now, Dear Reader, we know the history, don't we? I mean, think about it. The day that Mr. and Mrs. N. showed up in court to file for divorce, leaving their children a prey to demons, was not the same day as their wedding, was it? And, the sweet, cooing babe in the crib didn't give a surly reply as its first words. Something came in the interlude. There is one word to describe the agent of change that came in the interlude: selfishness. But, then, there were many varied manifestations of that selfishness. Do I need to enumerate them, Dear Reader? Don't you know what they are? Of course you do! For your assignment, please sit down and list as many ways as you know that parents make their children vulnerable to the falcons (I mean, the demons). You can start your list with: lack of family prayer, unnecessary use of electronic devices and sarcasm. (Did I mention unnecessary use of electronic devices?)

The vision of those torn apart baby birds and their poor, grieved, robin parents, will forever haunt me — especially when I can foresee this horrendous tragedy happening **AGAIN**, before my very eyes, in our back yard! Alas! Robins can't help repeating history! After all, they are just birds, and aren't able to think. Robins will always be surprised when, in heartrending fashion, history repeats itself. Thanks be to God that they don't have immortal souls!

So, what do you think, Dear Reader? ■

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Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM CANDLES

Last month, on February 2, forty days after Christmas, the Latin Rite celebrated the feast of the Purification. It is also called Candlemas because on this day Christ, the Light of the World, entered the holy temple nestled

in the arms of His Immaculate Mother. Therefore, this is the day that candles are blessed and passed out at Holy Mass if the faithful have not brought their own to the ceremony. Blessed candles must be made from at least 51% beeswax.

The honey bee, traditionally, is said to symbolize Our Lady from whose virginal body issued the Light of the World. (The symbolism of the bee is drawn from the fact that the female worker bees do not mate, but they can lay infertile eggs, as can the queen bee, from which can issue male honey bees, drones [see <http://bit.ly/2krd11W>]). Mary gave Our Lord, from her virginal substance, His most pure Flesh and Blood. The Body of Our Lord is symbolized by the beeswax. The wick symbolizes His Soul. The flame, His Divinity. Dr. Robert Hickson pointed out to me that the bee also symbolizes Our Lady as the “pollinator” of souls in her role as Mediatrix of All Graces. In taking the pollen of God’s grace, she distributes it from flower to flower, which enables plants to produce seeds. Seeds grow into fruits and vegetables without which man (nor animals) can survive. Through Mary’s maternal mediation, we receive the “fruits” of the Holy Ghost and the “honey” of sweet yoke of Christ.

Our Lady submitted to the Mosaic law (Leviticus 12:2-8) and, although in no need of ritual purification, for her holy and virginal womb was never opened, she made the poor man’s offering of two turtledoves as the law required for mothers giving birth to their first-born. This feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the temple was kept from antiquity dating back to the first half of the fourth century — at least in Jerusalem. In the East, it was celebrated as a feast of Our Lord, in the West, after the seventh century, as a feast of Our Lady, that is, the feast of the Purification. The prophet Simeon, who received the Baby Jesus in the temple, referred to the Holy Child as “a light of revelation to the gentiles and a glory to His people Israel.” This “just man” had been waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promise to him that he would see with his eyes “the consolation of Israel” before departing this life.

The purpose of candles, of course, is to give light where there is darkness. It is hard for our electrified world to imagine a time when candles were necessary for illumination. The trees provide lumber for fireplaces, which provide a localized light and heat, but God even more wonderfully

gave man the bee so that man could carry light all around the house. Yes, I know, God also gave us oil for feeding the fire of torch-lamps, but for simple every day purposes the candle is more convenient. Fire, by the way, is part of God’s awesome creation. It fulfills more roles than we can count. Needing no fuel, it serves God’s justice in hell, His purifications of souls (justice and mercy) in purgatory, and even His glory in heaven. Perhaps no material element is more mysterious than fire. “Our God is a consuming fire” (Deuteronomy 4:24). That is a subject for another time. By the way, fire is not “the devil’s only friend”; Satan hates fire.

My article in this *Mancipia* deals with candles and light, so let me keep to that lest I digress and start writing about electricity.

“I am the light of the world,” Jesus said, “he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Divine Faith is a supernatural light to the soul. *Supernatural!* Father Feeney used to say that “God became man to show us what God looks like.” Father also said that divine Faith enables the mind “to think the thoughts of God.” The liturgical candle, lit, is a symbol of holy Faith. Until the coming of Christ, the world was in spiritual darkness. “The light shineth in the darkness,” Saint John writes in his Gospel, “and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

As faithful Catholics we, to a greater or lesser degree, are walking in this holy Light. To a greater or lesser degree, we “comprehend” it. Without the revelation of Christ, our soul would be in darkness concerning supernatural truth. With the gift of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, we can walk in the Light of God and see where we are going, step by step, living in hope and charity in our quest for union with God through His Son and in the Holy Ghost. This is not to say that those who have not yet been supernaturally illuminated have no light in their soul. They have the natural, God-given light of reason and the light of the natural law, by which all men are made in God’s image. If they cooperate with this light, God will give them the revelation of those truths necessary to be believed in in order to receive the supernatural light of justification by His grace, which elevates the soul to share in God’s “likeness.” Adam and Eve (and the angels, too) were created in grace, in God’s “image and likeness.”

Supernaturally speaking, however, without the light of Faith, the soul is in utter darkness. It is as if a man woke up during a blackout and, opening his eyes, shades drawn, he is unable to see a thing. We all have experienced this. Trying to feel one’s way to find something familiar for security may help until sunrise, but until then one is totally helpless. I remember falling down two flights of stairs once when I closed the door to my apartment and found the hall



lightbulb was out. What I thought would be the door handle was empty space and down I went.

I was speaking about candles.

Did you know that in liturgical law a priest is forbidden, under normal conditions, to say Mass if there are not two candles burning? Of course, this unessential obligation is not a divine law but the positive law of the Church. Both servers and candles can be dispensed with if there is an emergency situation. For example, we read many stories of priests in concentration camps, or in solitary confinement, to whom were smuggled bread and wine for a clandestine Mass. In such cases, canon law allows that it is better that a priest offer Mass with no one present than not to offer Mass at all. The Holy Mass is the greatest act of the Church (God, through His *alter Christus*, offering God to God, Father Feeney used to say) and, although it is intended to be a “public act” of worship, it does not lose its *publicity* (as in *visibility*) as a public Sacrifice and a consummating Communion when the priest offers it and communicates all alone. For a High Mass, however, there must be six lit candles on the altar. And for Benediction, at least twelve. For a Mass offered by a bishop, seven candles are required, as a norm. This last requirement is an ancient liturgical custom in the West that some liturgists think symbolizes the universal Church, which can also be seen as figured in the seven Churches of the Apocalypse. Too, lest I leave out an important and often neglected custom, a third candle should be lit after the Sanctus during a low Mass and placed near the tabernacle. It is extinguished after Communion.

Candles play a beautiful, symbolic role in the Church’s

liturgy. The *Tenebrae* service of Good Friday morning (pre-dawn) with its gradual extinction of the candles (except for one, symbolizing undying hope, which is hidden behind the altar) during the singing of the three Nocturns of Matins and the gradual lighting of the church leading up to the singing of the *Exultet* on the Holy Saturday night Easter Vigil are meant to move our soul from the dirgeful mourning of the Holy Week Matins’ chanting of the 22 Lamentations of Jeremias and the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* of the Stations of the Cross to the exultation of the Resurrection with the *Gloria* at the Mass of the Easter Vigil. Gradually, as just noted, the candles are extinguished, one by one, on Good Friday, until all is in darkness for the whole of Holy Saturday. In this way the liturgy represents for us the darkness that covered the earth during the three hours of the crucifixion and death of Our Lord on Calvary. Then, with the Easter Vigil Mass, the liturgy begins in darkness in the church’s vestibule. One by one the tapers of the faithful are lit from the Paschal Candle which has been ignited in the vestibule by the Easter fire. As this is done, the deacon (or priest) sings thrice “*Lumen Christi!*” before the Paschal candle as the procession of ministers and servers moves toward the altar. The procession with the Paschal Candle culminates with the deacon’s singing of the Easter Proclamation, the glorious *Exultet* of which the second stanza proclaims:

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

The Paschal Candle must be made of pure 100% beeswax.

It is lit at every Mass from Easter until Ascension Thursday when it extinguished after the reading of the Gospel.

Such material instruments as candles and incense, employed by the Church in her rituals, were originally mandated for divine worship in the temple of Jerusalem. They were mandated by God through the law given by Moses. There was the seven-branch candelabrum in the Holy Place next to the altar of incense. The fact that pagans used such elements in their idolatrous rituals only goes to prove that the devil is “the ape of God.”

The candle signifies not only the light of God’s revelation to His people but also the Holy Trinity: the Unbegotten Father is the flame, the Begotten Son is the light from the flame, and the Holy Ghost is the heat. Or, even more representative of the Inner Life of the Trinity, the flame is the Holy Ghost who proceeds from the candle and wick, the Father and the Son, as One Principle. Indeed the Holy Ghost appeared as “tongues of fire” upon the heads of the fearful disciples, strengthening them with fortitude at Pentecost. Candles and incense signify prayer. As prayer ascends up to God, so does the flame of the candle ascend and the “sweet savor” of burning incense: “And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with

the *fire of the altar*, and cast it on the earth, and there were thunders and voices and lightnings, and a great earthquake” (Apoc. 8:3-5).

“No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel,” Our Lord said, “but upon a candlestick, that they that come in, may see the light” (Luke 11:33). It is significant indeed that this simile of Our Lord is recorded in all three synoptic Gospels.

We are called, then, to illumine our neighbor and all with whom we come in contact by word and example. In His Light “who dwelleth in light inaccessible” (1 Timothy 6:16) we have light. Thus our own souls first should be lightsome and then we will be able to enlighten others. “So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

We are also warned by Jesus to keep our eyes pure. “But if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome. If then the light that is in thee, be darkness: the darkness itself how great shall it be!” (Matthew 6:23).

Finally, let us heed the words of Saint Paul: “For all you are the children of light, and children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess, 5:5).

If we are the children of Light we are indeed children of God. “Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God” (1 John 1:3). ■

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A Win For You Is A Win For IHM School!

In January, Brad Grinstead and I met with Sam Zahaykevitz and gave our enthusiastic approval to a plan that can help IHM School's educational mission while also helping you save tens of thousands of dollars or more.

Sam Zahaykevitz is a long time supporter of **Saint Benedict Center**. The Zahaykevitz family has been involved here since 2003, and became part of the local community about ten years ago. Sam has started and owned his own mortgage company, authored financial articles and a book, and has given countless seminars on financial topics.

He is also a fixture, with his wife, Sheila, at our daily Mass. And Sheila also teaches in our school.

Sam works as a debt reduction specialist and can possibly save you \$50,000 to \$350,000 in interest that would normally go to the banks. The system he uses is legal and ethical, and you will not need to refinance or change your spending in any way.

Here is where our school benefits: **Immaculate Heart of Mary School** will receive \$500 for all who sign up before Easter Sunday (April 16), and \$25 for all who fill out a profile and review it with Sam even if they don't take advantage of the program in any other way.* Our school wins either way!

Contact Sam either by email at samz@truthinequity.com or by phone at **603-585-9293** for more information (no texts; it's a landline). You can also sign up online by going to truthinequity.com/IHMS (please make sure you include the "/IHMS" in the address or the school will not be credited). Brad and I are very excited about the possibilities for both you and the school.

Please consider helping Our Lady's school by looking into this opportunity. Thank you for your time and continued support. God bless you.

God bless and Mary Keep you.
In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M.

* For Mancipia readers, this offer has been extended beyond the February 14th date initially posted to the IHM School email list.



Br. John Marie Vianney,
M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

PREFECT'S COLUMN THE ULTIMATE "BUCKET LIST"

A common thought, among some people today is to have a "Bucket List." This, according to the infallible *Wikipedia*, is a "list of activities someone wants to do before he or she dies (kicks the bucket)." I venture to say most of these lists today center on self. Our society and

culture today is often focused on "me," when it should be focused on "He," Our Lord and Savior.

One theory as to the origin of the phrase "bucket list" is that it comes from the Catholic custom of holy-water buckets (asperseries).

"After death, when a body had been laid out...the holy-water bucket was brought from the church and put at the feet of the corpse. When friends came to pray...they would sprinkle the body with holy water...it is easy to see how such a saying as 'kicking the bucket' came about. Many other explanations of this saying have been given by persons who are unacquainted with Catholic custom."

(The Right Reverend Ethelbert Horne, the Abbot of Downside Abbey and first parish priest of Stratton-on-the-Fosse, quoted from his *Relics of Poetry*.)

Returning to the idea of "bucket list," is there some guidance from Heaven for making one? Not only is there such guidance, but it can be translated into practical acts. Scripture enlightens us with: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt.16:26). The answer is obvious. It spiritually profits a man nothing. So what does profit a man? By what means does he save his soul? This is the year we should pay special attention to the answer given by Heaven. It is found in the Fatima message. It is not complicated. Its requests are for prayer, reparation, repentance, and sacrifice, and the abandonment of sin.

Permit me to offer a list that will be much more edifying than one centered around self. We could call this a Catholic's Check List for "Before the Bucket is Kicked" or the Ultimate Bucket List.

1. **Pray the Rosary daily.** Praying the "beads," i.e., five decades of the Rosary, would bring graces and exercise the great devotion we have to the Woman who gave us the Rosary, Our Lady. The promises attached to the recitation of the Rosary alone should encourage us to pray it often. It has been said one cannot attain Heaven without the Blessed Virgin Mary as one's ally.

2. **Complete the Five First Saturday devotions, as requested by Our Lady.**

3. **Make a daily sacrifice in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

4. **Become a daily Communicant if possible.** We cannot buy graces and, regarding God's freely given actual

"What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul?"

(helping or prevenient grace) and habitual grace, the latter is concomitant with the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul and the gift of the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. It is habitual, bestowing a "state of grace" that elevates our nature to divine sonship, a "partaking of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Through the reception of the sacraments, beginning of course with baptism, we receive and grow in sanctifying (habitual) grace. If we are to gain Heaven, becoming a daily communicant is a great aid to our salvation. It is something I sought as a young boy. My aunt Loretta was the first person I ever knew that fulfilled that part of the list.

5. **Make your Guardian Angel**



your best friend. Our All-Merciful God gave each human a Guardian Angel. We should ask his help every morning and evening — and even throughout the day. He is a pure spirit who is on our side. The very simple prayer will invoke him and he will do as he is asked: “Angel of God, my Guardian Dear, to whom God’s love commits me here, ever this day (or night) be at my side to light and guard to rule and guide.” I suggest you speak to your Guardian Angel often. Beginning

The wearing of these sacramentals is an exercise of love to Our Lady, the saints, and to Our Lord Himself.

such a daily conversation will, I assure you, protect and guide you. I cannot tell you how many times my Guardian Angel has saved me from harm and guided me to good.

6. Wear the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Miraculous Medal, the cords of Saint Joseph and Saint Philomena, and the chain of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. The wearing of sacramentals has promises attached. Praying the Rosary daily, wearing the Brown Scapular and the Miraculous Medal are duties of every Tertiary in our Order. Why not adopt this practice even if you are not a Tertiary? The wearing of these sacramentals is an exercise of love to Our Lady, the saints, and to Our Lord Himself. The mere kissing of the Brown Scapular is a little prayer. Each new Tertiary of our Order is given a medal with Our Lord on one side and Our Lady on the other side. Any Tertiary who does not have that medal may contact me for one. I’ve made it a practice to kiss my medal and scapular every morning as a small gesture of grateful acknowledgement for all the graces Our Lord and Our Lady have given me. Pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary every day.

7. Have a special devotion to your patron saints. You can have more than one patron saint. I chose Saint Jean-Marie Vianney as one of my patrons since I know my inclination to pride and he is a good example of the opposite — humility.

8. Spend fifteen minutes reading the Bible daily. After a time you will see how much you have learned in just those fifteen minutes per day.

9. Say Three Hail Marys daily. There are various methods to do this. You can ask Our Lady, “to preserve me from mortal sin, preserve me from venial sin and help me conform my will to thy Son’s Will.” Each Hail Mary can be for a Theological Virtue: for Faith, for Hope and for Charity. Virtues are gifts from God that lead us to live in a close relationship with Him. Virtues are habits. They need

to be practiced; they can be lost if they are neglected. The three most important virtues are called Theological Virtues because they come from God and lead to God. You can devote one Angelic Salutation to holiness, one to avoid mortal and deliberate venial sins and to overcome your imperfections, in other words to do only God’s Holy Will and to be the slave of Our Lady that She wants you to be, and finally you can offer the third for purity and chastity.

10. Pray five recommended novenas during the liturgical year. You may find them on our website at <http://catholicism.org/saint-benedict-center-novena-schedule.html>

11. Pray little prayers throughout the day. If you make this a practice it will become very easy for you. When you are about to begin a task, say a little prayer. When you get in the car to go somewhere, invoke your Guardian Angel and patron saints, et. al. Just saying the word Jesus is a prayer.

12. Pray morning and evening each day. These prayers need not be lengthy. They will begin and end your day giving praise to God.

13. Look for opportunities to convert people. God has given you the grace to be a Catholic. He wants you to convert others to the one true Faith outside of which there is no salvation. Believe me, He places you in certain situations, with certain people, so that you may be His instrument. Never pass up these opportunities as they bring graces to you and the person whom He has placed before you. And do not worry about what to say. The Holy Ghost will guide you.

14. Lead a holy life so that you may have a holy death. Our whole being should be preparing, in a spiritual manner, daily, for the moment of death. I would want to have a priest in attendance, to make my last confession, to receive the Holy Viaticum, to be anointed in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction (the Last Rites) and to receive the Apostolic Blessing. I would add that I hope for those Tertiaries who live nearby Saint Benedict Center that our good Sisters and Brothers would be at their deathbed to sing the beautiful hymns we know and love. I also pray they would be praying the Church’s “Prayers Before Death.” This blessing has been given to many of our local Tertiaries.

We have recently begun a new Liturgical and Calendar Year. These are times when resolutions are made. Will you make the resolution to adopt the things above as your Catholic Bucket List? ■

Email Brother John Marie Vianney, at toprefect@catholicism.org



Sr. Mary Peter, M.I.C.M.

GUEST COLUMN CAN WARRIORS BUILD?

Sometimes people ask why it is that we religious invest such time and energy into running a school when those resources could go more directly towards missionary activities. After all, we are fighting a crusade, which makes us spiritual warriors,

right? But for Brother Francis, our school was an integral part of the crusade.

Education in general has always been a fundamental part of Saint Benedict Center. The Center started as a library and student center — a place where Catholics who were attending Harvard and the other secular colleges could come and study their Faith. It rapidly expanded, hosting discussion groups and speakers, including the very famous Father Leonard Feeney. Eventually, Saint Benedict Center was able to offer certain degrees and post-graduate studies. Students who had resigned from the secular colleges because of the terrible things that were being taught there (and others even had to resign from the Catholic colleges because they were teaching some of the same errors) enrolled at Saint Benedict Center. As things “got hot” and the members of Saint Benedict Center started suffering great persecution, they were led to found the religious order of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When the Slaves moved to Still River, MA, education remained a very important part of their life and work. The evening lectures continued, and a school for the “Center children” was added. To this day, we still have those two important means, ongoing lectures and a school for educating.

Brother Francis and his community moved to New Hampshire in October, 1989. So important to Brother Francis was the school as part of the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center that, with the help of the sisters, work was immediately started in order to be able to open a school as soon as possible. Amazingly, they were able to open Immaculate Heart of Mary School the very next school year. Brother Francis, who was a teacher *par excellence*, taught in the school from that first year through 2004, five years before his death. He did this in addition to his many duties as Superior of the Slaves of the Immaculate

Heart of Mary and head of Saint Benedict Center, teaching classes to the religious, giving evening lectures, writing articles, and doing the on-the-road missionary work of our Order, which we call “bookselling.”

Brother Francis took very seriously the fourth vow that we make as Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (“to make the

“...to make the doctrinal crusade of Saint Benedict Center the first interest of my life”

doctrinal crusade of Saint Benedict Center the first interest of my life”). Being a very wise philosopher, he was a man of principle, not one to let secondary things get in the way or to waste Our Lady’s precious time. The fact that he not only allowed a school to be opened but taught in it all those years seems to clearly state that he considered the educating of students in our school part of our doctrinal crusade.

There are several reasons why education is such an important part of our work. My favorite explanation is taken from Saint Louis Marie de Montfort’s book *True Devotion to Mary*. He has just finished describing the necessity of devotion to Mary, and how especially necessary it will be for the saints of the latter times:

“These great souls, full of grace and zeal, shall be chosen to match themselves against the enemies of God, who shall rage on all sides; and they shall be singularly devout to our Blessed Lady, illuminated by her light, strengthened with her nourishment, led by her spirit, supported by her arm and sheltered under her protection, so that *they shall fight with one hand and build with the other*” (paragraph 48 – emphasis added).

The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are called to work for the defense of the dogmas of the Faith, especially the one most under attack in our day — the necessity of belonging to the Church to be saved, and to work for the conversion of America. However, what lasting good would be accomplished if we were only to “overthrow and crush the heretics with their heresies, the schismatics with their



schisms, the idolaters with their idolatries and the sinners with their impieties...."? (*True Devotion to Mary*, paragraph 48) To be truly successful, we must also build up the Body of Christ, which is the Church. We do this by helping to form the minds and hearts of individuals.

The Faith is not something negative, a long list of "thou shalt nots." It is a profoundly positive reality. By teaching the Good, the True and the Beautiful in our school, we do our best to give the children a solid foundation so they can grow to be good citizens in this world and saints in the next.

On a personal note, it is a joy for me to be part of this endeavor, this crusade. After having graduated from home-school in 1996, in California, I had the great blessing of coming out to the Center to attend classes at Immaculate Heart of Mary School with the seniors. In this way I had the privilege to be taught by Brother Francis. Once I entered the Order, I was also in the classes for the religious and attended



Brother's evening lectures. I consider it one of God's greatest gifts to me that I got to know Brother Francis personally.

In 1997, I was assigned to prepare a group of First Communicants. Since then, I have taught in the school at all levels. As hard as it is to choose a favorite, I think the class I enjoy teaching most is first and second grade religion. The little ones have given me a deep appreciation for Our Lord's words: "Unless you

be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"(Matt. 8:3). Children accept the Faith so eagerly and with so much generosity and joy. No wonder Our Lord loves them so much!

As long as Our Lady wants it, we will continue to run a school for Her children, and, with Her intercession and help, we will continue to fight and *build!* ■

Email Sister Mary Peter, at smp@catholicism.org

Our Crusade makes a difference because of you!

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- A **donation** to the Monastery and Convent helps our apostolate to reach as many souls as possible!
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- Are you interested in the **Religious life**, fulfilling your vocation? Schedule a visit with us so we can help you discern.
- Are you interested in joining our **3rd Order**? You can request information about it.

Saint Benedict Center

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Mr. Carl Phillips

GUEST COLUMN LOCAL NEWS

Carl was inducted into the Third Order while attending our 2016 SBC Conference. He took the name Brother Dismas Mary.

In invitation to a Crusade: These words wouldn't leave my mind, from the day that I first read them, and I wondered what it meant to me.

As a young altar boy in the 1950s, I had seen and been a part of what I believed was a strong, vibrant Catholic Church. I had no inkling at that time that the storm clouds had been gathering for many years as the heresies of Americanism and Modernism had gained strength. I had never heard of Father Feeney and Saint Benedict Center, and it never occurred to me that our Church was in trouble.

At some point during the 1960s, while in high school, I began to sense that something was amiss. The so called "Ecumenical Movement" began taking place, and eventually our Mass was replaced with a ceremony which, while continuing to attend, I understood was a protestantized version of what had been before. Communion under both species, the priest facing the people, the addition of a protestant add-on to the Lord's prayer, etc. Although this did not stop me from attending Mass, I remember wondering, "Was the Church right before or right now?" and thus the seeds of confusion were sown. I felt that the legs had been kicked out from under the laity.

I cannot blame the changes in the Church for the fact that I stopped attending Mass regularly in my twenties; that choice was mine, and I remained away approximately fifteen years. When I returned, in my early forties, the whole situation had changed.

Even though away from the sacraments, I still considered myself a Catholic, and knew that my eternal destiny rested upon my return to the Church. I eventually did, over twenty years ago. However, while I had been gone, serious damage had occurred.

Although over a period of time, I became aware of Saint Benedict Center, and after doing my own independent research, had come

to understand the dogma *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* was, indeed, a *de fide* Catholic dogma, a teaching of apostolic origin.

I never did any evangelism, however, until a few years ago; I guess I felt it was someone else's job. But at some point I began to realize that the Faith had been lost in my

"Was the Church right before or right now?"

family and in that of my wife. Babies were no longer being baptized or, if they were, no one seemed to know why. In an entirely secular culture, among our relatives, the Faith had almost completely been lost, and no one was going to set about restoring it unless I did. Even those few who still had some concept of Christianity alive in them, were members of heretical sects, and thus also lost. The souls of our loved ones were at stake.

That was when I realized that Saint Benedict Center's "Invitation to a Crusade," applied to me; I couldn't do this on my own; I began to work on it, but I realized that I needed more knowledge, and I needed the charisms of a religious

order to strengthen and assist me. I first enrolled in classes with the Saint Augustine Institute, (studying under Sister Maria Philomena was extremely helpful, and enjoyable) and then applied for membership in the Third Order. I was received into the Third Order in a ceremony at the conference on October 1, 2016.

I have never met such a welcoming group of people in my life. Although I had never met any one of them in person, I was made to feel part of a family. I stayed five days in the priory, was able to get to know the speakers, including Gary Potter and Charles Coulombe, the Brothers, Sisters and the other Tertiaries. The knowledge I picked up from the conference, along with other tapes and reading materials obtained from Saint Benedict Center over the years, are exactly



what I needed to be a part of this crusade and to commit myself to its goals.

I hope to be a productive member of the crusade of Saint Benedict Center, and to apply my efforts in helping friends,

The knowledge I picked up from...
Saint Benedict Center over the years,
(was) exactly what I needed to be
a part of this crusade.

relatives, and other persons with whom I come in contact, come into the Roman Catholic Church, for, to quote Saint Bede the Venerable, approximately thirteen hundred years ago:

“Blessed Peter so received the keys of the kingdom and the supremacy of judicial power, that all who believe throughout the world may understand that whosoever shall cut themselves off in any way...cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. Peter received the keys to heaven as a sign to all the children of the Church. So that if they separate from the one faith which he teaches, they give up all hope of being acquitted of their guilt and of entering the eternal portals. And I say unto you that Peter is the doorkeeper whom I will not contradict, but I will obey his decrees in everything, lest when I come to the gates of the kingdom of Heaven there should be no one to open them, since he will be my adversary who is proven to have possession of the keys.” ▪

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Ex Cathedra: “There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved” (Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215).

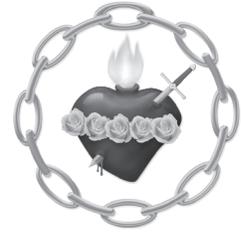
Ex Cathedra: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

Ex Cathedra: “The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes, and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church” (Pope Eugene IV, the Bull *Cantate Domino*, 1441).

Notes:

- Listen to Reconquest on internet radio: www.reconquest.net.
- The 2016 Conference is now available on our online store. For details, go to: store.catholicism.org

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



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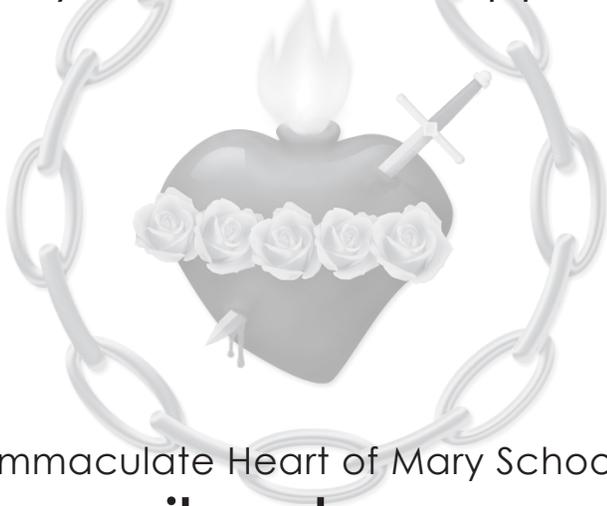
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