

MANCIPIA

July/August 2012

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



Our two recent first Holy Communicants. They received Our Lord on May 20, the Sunday of the May Crownings.



Br. Andre Marié, M.I.C.M.,
Prior

TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE: LOVING THE LOST CAUSE

Within the last fortnight of this writing, I finished reading *The Pope's Legion*, Charles Coulombe's book on the *Papal Zouaves*. Besides being intelligently written and enjoyable, the book inspires, because the subject matter is itself edifying. The Pontifical Zouaves were Blessed Pius IX's foreign

legion, who fought to defend the Papal States from the anticlericals and revolutionaries that united the Italian peninsula along the lines of Freemasonic, Enlightenment thinking. Ultimately, of course, the Zouaves lost. Not only that, but the vast majority of causes that many of the Zouaves fought for after the "pope's legion" were disbanded also lost. These would include the causes of France's Henry V (supported by the Legitimists) and Spain's Carlos VII (whom the Carlists supported).

Moreover, "The Catholic political parties and organizations that the Zouaves had been instrumental in creating have either folded or were transformed into groups that would be unrecognizable to their founders. Indeed, the philosophies of government and humanity that they fought against in peace and war are completely triumphant; save for a few small counties and some relatively tiny groups, the views of the Zouaves are not merely frowned on but utterly foreign to most people today" (*The Pope's Legion* pg. 213).

All this would surely qualify the Zouaves for membership in the list of history's "lost causes."

As Americans, we love a winner. We may also love the underdog, but we love him *as a winner*. The underdog that perpetually remains a loser is, well... *a loser*. Few of us have the patience to hitch our wagon to a cause that does not look like it will win within our lifetime, so the vast majority of us go along with the dominant culture around us, which continues to trample on the world's great lost causes and ensures that they remain lost.

Before I finish these lines, I hope to give a list of convincing reasons why we Catholics should love lost causes, not for purely romantic or poetic reasons, but as a matter of prudence. First, though, I would like to make some general considerations on lost causes.

Naturally, I will restrict myself

to *good* lost causes. Some causes that lose are plainly evil, and simply ought to lose. It would not surprise me if some would give a romantic interpretation to the "lost cause" of Nazism, for instance, or of Mussolini's neo-pagan vision of Italy, or, for that matter, of the "good old days" of Druid England, all of which ought to remain in obscurity.

As Americans, we love a winner. We may also love the underdog, but we love him as a winner.

For my present purposes, I shall define a "lost cause" as a cause that, in some manner, promotes the true, the good, and the beautiful in society, but which has been defeated militarily (by conquest), politically (by governmental coercion), or popularly (in the minds of the majority of men). This defeat may be either permanent or only temporary. Note that this definition will embrace Catholic causes, and even natural-law causes, such as the pro-life movement.

The nobility of a genuine lost cause sets it apart from the



A Papal Zouave, one of Bl. Pius IX's foreign legion

things we tend to fight wars for nowadays. Modern war is prosecuted principally for the purposes of enriching oligarchs (on Mideast oil, African mineral wealth, etc.), or empowering unjust regimes that persecute the defenseless. When some veneer of nobility must be layered over these military exploits, the undefined abstraction "freedom" is generally the most useful. We Americans, for instance, attempt to inflict our way of life upon weaker nations in the name of "freedom" and "democracy," even while that way of life is evolving in generally the same direction as B.H. Obama's thinking about marriage. Hence, our government is presently using your tax money to coerce African and Asian nations to embrace abortion and homosexual "rights."

In considering lost causes, I am mindful of what J.R.R. Tolkien said of the "long defeat." The two concepts are related. "I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic," wrote Tolkien to a friend, "so that I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' — though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory."

In the legends that he crafted in his Middle-Earth lore, Tolkien put some of those words on the graceful lips of Lady Galadriel, the wife of Celeborn, Lord of the “Tree People” (Galadrim):

“For the Lord of the Galadrim is accounted the wisest of the Elves of Middle-earth, and a giver of gifts beyond the power of kings. He has dwelt in the West since the days of dawn, and I have dwelt with him years uncounted; for ere the fall of Nargothrond or Gondolin I passed over the mountains, *and together through ages of the world we have fought the long defeat.*”

The Elves had the advantage (or disadvantage) of a very long life, due to which they had witnessed folly after folly, defeat after defeat. (They could observe men somewhat like we can observe fruit flies.) Indeed, the victory in the *Return of the King* is part of a very long history, beginning with *The Silmarillion*, that is rife with tragedy, treachery, and doom. This is why there is a tinge of sadness in these mythical beings endowed with such wisdom. But note that in Tolkien’s own non-fictional words, he sees “some samples or glimpses of final victory” occasionally interrupting the “long defeat.” The genuine lost cause of which we speak may appear to most observers as a casualty in the long defeat of history, but the cause itself, inasmuch as it is the cause of the true, the good, and the beautiful, will be part of that “final victory.” What’s more, occasionally the defenders of a lost cause actually score a win. When they do, it is in fact a glimpse of the final victory.

But, for the generality of worthy lost causes, the final victory — as in “in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph” — will be their only success worthy of the name. For, given the influence wielded by the Prince of This World in the halls of power, the norm for this fallen world is expressed in the stark words of Brother Francis’ poem, “The Invisible Empire”:

Whatever you are
we can take you and make you,
And while you play ball
we need not forsake you.

But if you stand for Jesus
or battle for Mary,
We quickly will break you
and shall not tarry.

Besides the Zouaves and the Carlistas, already mentioned, we can count among the Catholic lost causes that of the Cristeros, the French Legitimists, the Jacobites of Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, Blessed Emperor Karl and the Austrian Hapsburg Empire, Catholic monarchy in general; more importantly, the apostolic causes of Catholic England (which were gloriously “lost” by such notables as Saint Edmund Campion, Saint Thomas More, and Saint John Fisher), the cause of a Catholic America, and — lest we forget — the Crusades. The pro-life cause in this nation is worthy of the name “lost,” and it appears that the cause for heterosexual marriage soon will be, too — God help us!

I promised to give some reasons why we should love lost

causes. Here are a few:

- Every martyr, inasmuch as he was killed, bore testimony to a lost cause. (Review our definition of lost causes to see how this does not contradict the promises we have of the Church’s ultimate victory.)

- Lost causes make for heroes, even if they are often “tragic” ones.

- By them, we can show God that we are not fair-weather friends, and we can practice such difficult Christian virtues as humility, meekness, and patience. Thus, if we are supernaturally dedicated to these causes, they are powerfully sanctifying.

- They remind the world of true Christian standards and unpopular Catholic — or even natural-law — truths.

- The devotees of these causes are often on the forefront of other efforts to secure the common good — like the Carlists who fought with Franco’s Falangists. Sometimes, as in the Spanish Civil War, they win.

- When the tide changes — perhaps generations later — the loyal paladins of the lost cause will be there.

- Even while their ideas are rejected by the vast majority, those who advocate for such causes can live their ideals in their homes, their families, their communities. In doing so, they can be a force for good.

- Lost causes can be, and often are, a literal fulfillment of Our Lord’s words from the Gospel: “In the world you will have distress, but have confidence, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). ■

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.



Blessed Emperor Karl von Hapsburg



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

CONVENT CORNER JOY AND DEATH

Would you ever think that death could be something to be looked forward to? That it could actually be an occasion for joy?

On March 25, in the year 33, Jesus Christ died on the Cross for love of us. It was the first Good Friday. On March 25, 2012, Sister Marie Gabrielle and Sister

Maria Rosaria died on the cross of religion for love of Jesus Christ. It was Passion Sunday.

The large black pall used in funeral Masses was laid on the floor before the sanctuary. Upon it were prostrated, side by side in the silence of death, two young women. The whole congregation was silent, awed. These young women were too young to die!

But the real cause of the speechlessness of the congregation was the unexplainable joy upon these two young faces in death. Joy and death! How do these two realities meet?

Not long ago, on December 16, we experienced the same paradoxical union of joy and death when our dear Sister Mary Bernadette was called out of this life into eternity. So, what is the connection?

The phrase, “until death do us part” at the wedding ceremony, is a foreboding of the sorrowful end of that joyful commitment. Who thinks of it? How different things are for the young woman who takes Christ for her Spouse! Instead of anticipating a separation at the moment of death from the One whom she loves, it is just the opposite! It could be rephrased for the spouse of Christ at her wedding vows, “until death are we united, face to Face, for all eternity.” Ah! And no disappointments with Him! In fact, no need for distance since He is everywhere and especially present in the heart of someone who loves Him.

Not only do the Sisters prostrate themselves on the pall as “dead to the world,” but they also receive a ring and a crown of flowers — signs of joy and life. Yes, they are dead to the world by voluntarily giving up “movement toward” the goods of this world. Just as a corpse would not show interest in food, pleasure, or honor, and you would be amazed (horrified) if a corpse showed interest or movement toward any of these goods of the world, so, too, these Sisters. Daily, they die to the world by the renewing and living of their vows. Ultimately, they hope to be as Sister Mary Bernadette, totally dead to the world and alive to Christ. So, in dying daily, the movement toward the goods of the world is limited more and more,

and the movement toward the goods of Christ is increased. Until, at that last moment of “life,” we may joyfully say, “Now I live, not I, but Christ lives in me.”

Most people in the world do not see the sorrow in the ceremony of holy matrimony. Most people in the world do not see the joy in the ceremony of religious vows. Why not? Because they don’t think, in their hearts, about the realities that we are immersed in! The holiness in the sacrament of holy matrimony and the holiness in the ceremony of religious vows ultimately consists in the union of the vow-maker with the vow-receiver: God.

Theologians say that the vows of religion are simply a more



Sister Mary Bernadette, may she rest in peace

intense living of the vows that every Christian makes at their baptism. And who even thinks about those vows today? Do you, Dear Reader? Are you keeping the vows that you made at your baptism? If you are, you can have joy now and at the hour of your departure from this world. If not, you have the difficult job

Joy and death! How do these two realities meet?

of trying not to think of death while you attempt to enjoy the passing things of this world. Not an easy task! At some point, you will want to get ready to die. When you finally are ready to die, you will know what it means to have real joy.

Joy and death. For a Christian, these thoughts are ultimately inseparable! For a religious, they are presently and voluntarily inseparable. ■

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org.

House for Rent Near Center

Right across the street from Saint Benedict Center sits a lovely home that is currently for rent. The owner is a traditional Catholic family man and a good friend of the Center.

Here is the description of the house:

- Three bedroom house with a detached two car garage
- Heat is Oil and Gas
- Water is well water and private septic
- House has a living room, eat-in kitchen, and an all-season room, with a finished basement
- Refrigerator, washer & dryer, and two ovens provided
- Home sits on 11 acres directly across from Saint Benedict Center

The renter is asking \$1200 per month, plus tenant pays utilities.

Anyone interested should contact Michael Kearney at (717) 979-1297. House is ready for occupancy.



Srs. Maria Rosaria and Marie Gabrielle prostrated at their professions



We had two first Holy Communicants in May



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

PREFECT'S COLUMN THE GREGORIAN THIRTY

One should not foray into an explanation of the Gregorian Masses without some reference to Pope Saint Gregory the Great. He was the sixty-sixth pope, Doctor of the Church, one of the greatest leaders of the Catholic Church ever, the pope who saved “the whole of Christendom.” The life

of this saint can be described as one that exemplified the power and beauty of supernatural grace. Born in a pious, but very wealthy, patrician family (his mother and two aunts are honored as saints) he felt spiritually unfulfilled as a youth until he gave his heart utterly to God, without reserve. In 570, he founded a monastery, which he named after Saint Andrew, on his estate in Rome. Here, he and several companions led an austere monastic life following the rule of Saint Benedict. Please read the chapter

[Saint Gregory the Great], out of compassion for his soul, offered up thirty consecutive Masses. On the thirtieth day, Brother Justus appeared to one of his brothers and told him that he was delivered from Purgatory.

written by Saint Benedict Center foundress Sister Catherine Goddard Clarke, M.I.C.M., on Saint Gregory from her book, *Our Glorious Popes*.

The Gregorian Thirty (Gregorian Masses) consist of thirty Masses said in unbroken succession for the release of a particular soul from purgatory. The Gregorian Masses tradition began during Pope Saint Gregory's life. In his *Dialogues*, our saint writes of a Brother Justus, a monk in his monastery. When Brother Justus became very ill, he revealed to another monk, Brother Copiosus, that years before he had hidden three gold pieces among his medications, even though he had taken the monastic vows. Both he and Copiosus were former physicians.

Saint Gregory, meanwhile, had been ordained and assigned by the pope to serve in his court as one of Rome's seven papal deacons. Learning of the shameful sin of Brother Justus against holy poverty, he told the abbot of his beloved monastery to impose the penalty according to the Rule: solitary confinement. Brother Justus, mind you, was dying. Saint Gregory also ordered that the monk's burial not be in the cemetery of the house, but in a dung heap. Copiosus told his woeful friend of the decision. On top of all this, the community was to recite over the grave of Justus the sentence passed upon Simon the Magician by Saint

Peter in the Acts of the Apostles: “May thy money perish with thee” (8:20).

The desired result of Gregory's severity was obtained: The sinning monk repented with true contrition. Then each of the monks in all the communities (Gregory had founded monasteries in Sicily as well) examined his own conscience. Justus died, but that did not end the episode. As Sister Catherine writes, “...[St. Gregory the Great], out of compassion for his soul, offered up thirty consecutive Masses. On the thirtieth day, Brother Justus appeared to one of his brothers (Copiosus) and told him that he was delivered from Purgatory. The joy of the chastened monastery knew no bounds. And God was so pleased with the discipline and charity of his servant Gregory that we find the story preserved down to our own time in the well known ‘Gregorian Masses,’ said on thirty consecutive days for the repose of the souls of the loved ones for whom we continue, to this day, to request them.”

The Gregorian Masses can be said any day of the year, save for Christmas, Easter, and the Holy Week Triduum. The Masses can be said for only one soul at a time. The Sacred Congregation of Divine Worship published a declaration on February 24, 1967, which eased some of the restrictions so that it is not required that the same priest celebrate all the Masses, nor on the same altar. Therefore, if a priest, who has accepted the obligation of celebrating the series, finds himself impeded on any particular day, he may ask another priest to take the intention for him. If a priest cannot find a substitute, and the thirty are interrupted because of an unforeseen impediment, e.g., illness of the priest, or a reasonable cause, e.g., the celebration of a funeral or a wedding, the priest retains the obligation to complete the thirty Masses as soon as possible, but need not begin the series anew.

May one arrange for Gregorian Masses to be said for himself? Yes. This, of course, presumes the Masses will not begin until the person is dead. Can one have thirty consecutive Masses said for himself before death or for another living person? Yes, but these Masses would not be the Gregorian Thirty and their graces would be applied to the person in this life, not held in a bank, so to speak, for use in shortening one's purgatory. ■

Regarding the Use of Tertiary Names

When one joins the Third Order of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary he takes the name of a saint. The use of this name is limited to the business of the Order and should not be used without the permission of the prefect or the prior of SBC. If you have any questions about this rule, please contact me at the email address below. May God bless all your good works and holy efforts.

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



Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Of all the dire consequences, foreseen and prophesied by Father Leonard Feeney, that have come upon the Catholic world as a result of disloyalty to Faith and Tradition, not the least has been the almost complete loss, by clergy and lay folk alike, of a

sense of nobility.

Nobility is the quality or state of being noble. And to be noble, as we use the word here, means to have or show high moral qualities or ideals, to have greatness of character. Some synonyms are: stately, majestic, grand, august, generous, gallant, magnanimous. Nobility also, of course, refers to the upper, or ruling, classes in a monarchy, to which classes are imputed, idealistically, all of these splendid characteristics.

That Our Lord intended His Church to be a monarchy, a kingdom, is undeniable. He rules His Church today as Christ, the King, through His Vicar on earth, just as He has for the past twenty centuries. But there is one great difference between His Kingdom and earthly kingdoms: In the Kingdom of God there are no serfs; all are of noble rank, for, by the Sacrament of Baptism, all are made *children of God* and *heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven*.

In the early centuries of the Church, the realizations of this great dignity, this nobility of each human person incorporated into the Church, stood in stark contrast to the prevailing attitude of contempt for other humans, and human life, found among the pagans and barbarians. No doubt, this had a great deal to do with the rapid conversion of the Roman Empire and the foundation of Christendom in Europe.

Once converted, Catholic Europe grew in wisdom and grace until it reached its pinnacle of spiritual ascent in the thirteenth century. During those "dark ages," as the cynical and hate-filled enemies of the Church call the period, part of the supernatural happiness enjoyed by families, in the countries where the Faith was strong, came from a deep understanding of this nobility. Men and women, even young boys and girls, not only felt it – they lived it. And even if, at times, they failed it in their actions, it remained always their ideal.

The effects of this truly Catholic culture were felt in ordinary life in such beautiful things, often taken for granted, as chivalry in the relations between the sexes, reverence for the elderly, courtesy in speech and manners, respect for authority, and on, and on.

While every one of the faithful reflected some rays of this heavenly *value*, so intimately connected with the Faith, men in authority – kings, princes, governors, priests – were expected to be, and often actually were, outstanding exemplars of nobility. *Noblesse oblige* (nobility obliges) was the secret of strength in Catholic institutions – universities, armies, governments, and especially the Church.

The effects of this truly Catholic culture were felt in such beautiful things as chivalry and reverence for the elderly.

In our recent controversies on doctrinal matters, apart from the merits of the arguments of some of our opponents, we were struck by the lack of nobility of so many of them. We can understand how a person, whether a priest or layman, may disagree with Father Feeney on points of theology, but the complete lack of nobility manifest in some of the attacks was truly shocking. This is a theme that deserves detailed and attentive scrutiny. It is a theme to which we shall return, over and again, in future issues. ■

From Crusader newsletter, Number 9, May, 1987



Showing Our Lord the worship that is His due in our Corpus Christi procession, 2012



Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM WHAT DID YOU GO OUT INTO THE DESERT TO SEE?

Holy Mother the Church celebrates only three birthdays on her liturgical calendar, Our Lord's, Our Lady's, and Saint John the Baptist's. These three were born without original sin. As we shall

see in the passage I will provide below from Jeremias, it appears that he, too, was born without original sin, having been sanctified in the womb. Some saints of our own Marian age held the same for Saint Joseph.

Our Lord, being God Incarnate, is the new Adam and, as Redeemer of the human race and Savior, He could never have been stained with the sin of the old Adam. What did the angel say of Jesus to Mary at His annunciation? "[T]he Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

In 1854, the Mother of God was declared by Blessed Pius IX to have been conceived without original sin. Complementing that *ex cathedra* definition, four years later, in 1858, Our Lady identified herself at Lourdes to Saint Mary Bernadette as "The Immaculate Conception." Pope Pius IX called Mary's Immaculate Conception a "singular privilege" granted by the Holy Ghost in anticipation of the merits of her Son, Jesus Christ. Scripture has something to say about this as well. In Genesis, the devil is cursed by God with these words: "Behold I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (3:15). Although the verse is not explicit in its affirmation of "the woman's" Immaculate Conception, it most certainly implicitly affirms it. If the devil must "lie in wait for her heel" then, clearly, she was never under his power — no, not for an instant.

That Saint John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb is implicit in Saint Luke's Gospel account of the Visitation. More convincing still, is that the Church has seen fit to incorporate the scriptural account of the cleansing of Jeremias in the womb to the vigil Mass of the feast of the Baptist, the greatest of all the prophets (June 24). Is this not the Holy Ghost telling us, through the Church, that what was done for Jeremias was certainly done for John? "Before I formed you in the bowels of your mother, I knew you: and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you, and made you a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5).

The coming of John, the Precursor of Christ, is announced in both Isaia (40:3) and Malachias (3:1) hundreds of years before his birth. He would be the greatest of the prophets, more than a prophet, because he would personally point his finger at the Christ and proclaim to his disciples and the crowd gathered for his baptism: "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who

takest away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

And if this were not enough to affirm his greatness, hear the praise before a multitude with which Jesus Himself lauds him when John's disciples came to ask if He were the Christ: "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God" (Matt. 11:7-11). Before whose face is John the "angel" sent? The holy face of Jesus who was speaking to them.

The desert had never seen such as
prodigy as this rugged little child who
lived in peace with the beasts and
reptiles.

The Church in her liturgy, both east and west, gives great honor to Saint John the Baptist. In the Latin Rite he is invoked in the *Confiteor* and the *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas* prayer before the Preface. And, Saint John the Apostle gives tribute to his exalted mission in the Last Gospel, which is recited at the end of Mass.

We first hear of Saint John the Baptist through the voice of the angel who announced his conception to the priest Zachary, his father, as he was performing the duties of his course in the holy place of the temple: "Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John: And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity. For he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias (Luke 1:13-17).

Six months later, the angel Gabriel informs the Blessed Virgin Mary of the same at the Annunciation of the Savior: "And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: Because no word shall be impossible with God" (Luke 1:36-37).

Mary immediately departs on a three-day journey, *with haste*, to be of service to her cousin who has miraculously conceived in her old age. Seeing Mary approach and hearing her greeting, Elizabeth "cried out *in a loud voice*: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this

to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:42-44, my emphasis).

Tradition has it that the Baptist was only three years old when he went to prepare for his mission with a life of solitude, prayer, and penance.

The desert had never seen such a prodigy as this rugged little child. He chose the most barren part where he grew in age, wisdom, and grace, at peace with the beasts and reptiles. For food, he ate locusts and wild-honey and drank only water. His garment was a tunic made of camel's hair with a leather girdle to tie it about his loins. Later, when he began to preach and baptize, he moved to the banks of the Jordan River to have access to its pools of water.

When asked by the scribes and pharisees who he was and why he baptized, he identified himself with the precursor of the Savior spoken of by Isaias: "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias" (John 1:23).

John the Baptist drew a lot of attention. Devout Jews who yearned for the kingdom of God and the restoration of Israel came to hear him by the thousands; so did sinners, the publicans, and the curious, and so did the unrepentant inquisitors: the scribes and the pharisees. John's baptism was one of penance; its efficacy depended on true faith and contrition for sin. Those who came to John's baptism had to confess their sins in order to be justified. "And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5). His was a preparation for the baptism of Christ to come, which, for believers in Christ, would wash away all sin, and punishment due to sin, and bring with it the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, which John's baptism could not do. And John said, "I indeed baptize you in the water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire" (Matt. 3:11). These same words are also recorded by Mark and Luke in their

Gospels, and nearly the same words by John.

Of the Twelve Apostles: Andrew was a disciple of John, and, no doubt, so was his brother Simon, who would be renamed Peter; Philip was a disciple and so, too, was his friend Nathanael, who is better known by his Greek name Bartholomew; and John, the beloved Apostle, most certainly was a disciple of John having been witness to the most revealing testimony concerning Christ as recorded in his Gospel. James, his brother, therefore, was surely a follower of the Baptist as well.

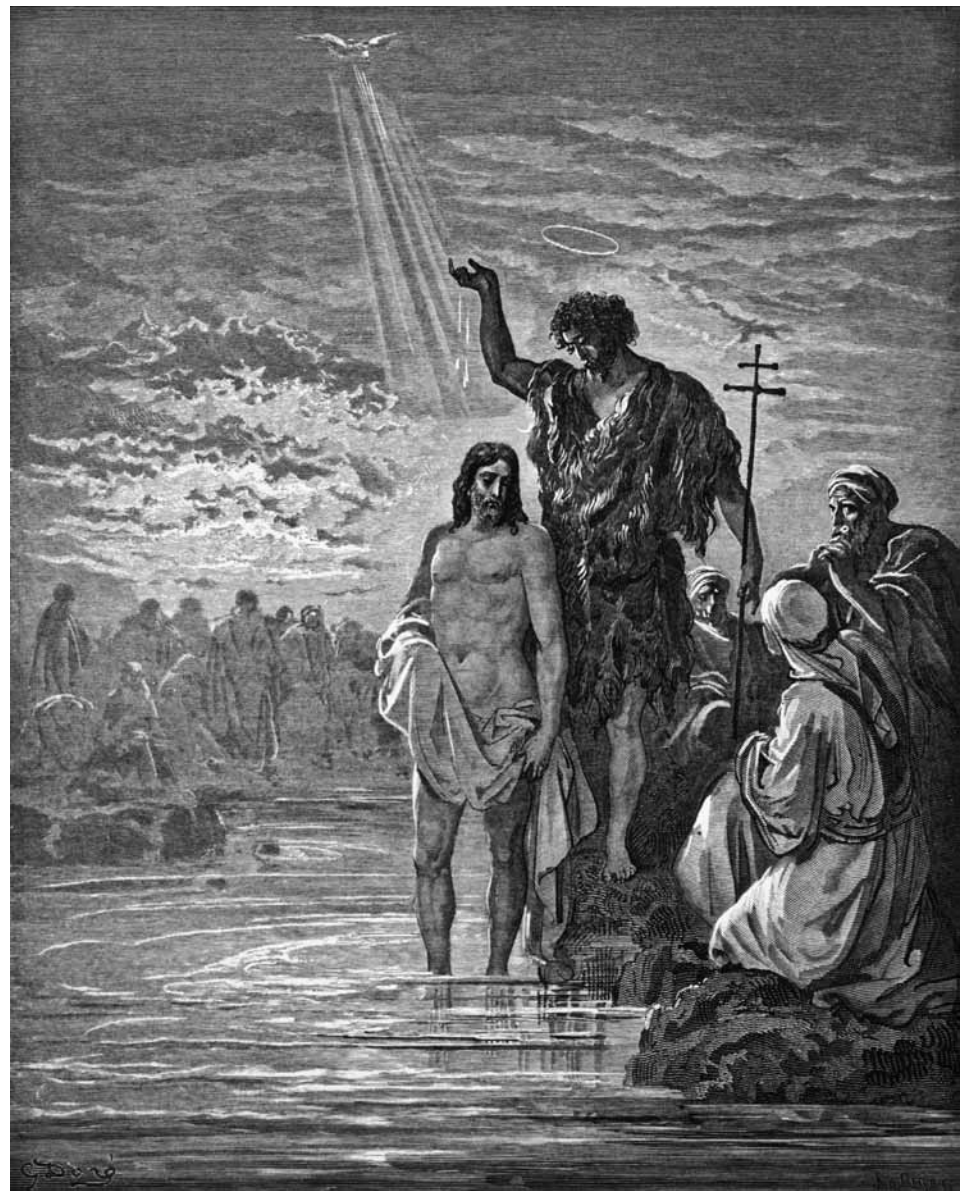
John could read souls. He waxed strong against the Sadducees, scribes and pharisees who would not be baptized, but, rather, came to spy on him, as they soon

would the Christ, and try to catch him in a false word so that they could denounce him before the people. But John would have none of that. He had been sent by God to prepare the way for the Messiah: "There was a man sent by God whose name was John. He came as a testimony, in order to give testimony of the Light" (John 1:7).

"And seeing many of the pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: Ye brood of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance" (Matt. 3:7-8).

"Do penance!" This was the heart of his message as precursor. Our Lord repeated this admonition twice to the hesitant Jews who, although admiring

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DOSTOYEVSKY CRACKS A SMILE: UNCLE'S DREAM – THE MOTHERLY MANIPULATIONS OF MARYA ALEXANDROVNA

BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

As mentioned in my previous article, I had always been bewildered by the enigma of the Russian soul; that soul of conflicting passions exercised sometimes individually, but more often, simultaneously, to the astonishment of the beholder. This curiosity first took hold in high school having, as required reading, the book by Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Communism was not in vogue at the time so it was easy to dislike the Russian oppressors, those beasts who tortured, maimed, and murdered their own people for specious reasons at best. It was all so pathologically insane and the impression never left my subconsciousness, so much so that it was a major factor in my decision to join the military and confront these animals in Vietnam. Ah, the idealism of youth. As I like to say, the trouble with wisdom is that it is wasted on the old. Many years later I read Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* and those old sentiments came to the forefront again; this time not as an avenging angel, but as one perplexed by the character of the Russian people. I did not pursue my curiosity and only by chance, years later, did the enigma finally take hold of my mind again when strolling

one day in our courtyard here at Saint Benedict Center. Brother André was passing by me carrying a book under his arm and I uttered those fateful words, "Hey, Brother, watcha reading"? The book was *The Brothers Karamazov*, and my literary world would change forever.

I must confess my complete inadequacy in writing about our featured author. He actually scares me. Reading books is my favorite hobby and I usually have several going at the same time. I have one by my easy chair, one by my bed, and, yes, even one in my bathroom. All that changed with Dostoyevsky; he became an addiction. At home, I would walk by his book lying on the table and purposely ignore it, sort of like a reformed alcoholic deliberately walking by a bar to test his mettle. I knew that once I started reading I would become completely absorbed and, once I finished, mentally fatigued. It is like that with Dostoyevsky: a masochistic feeling where the author inflicts pain on your brain and still you remain. I thought that I had had enough after reading *Notes from Underground*, but yet again I said, "just one more, and this will be my last." So I started his short novel,



Our Pilgrim Virgin statue on procession in the 2012 May Crowning



One of the four crownings done that day

Uncle's Dream, and was taken completely aback. In retrospect, I should not have been so surprised at this novelette. It only displays that Russian enigma again, for you see, *Uncle's Dream*, is a comedy, or more properly, a tragic comedy, and I thank the author for the respite from his normally grueling themes.

The main character is Marya Alexandrovna, a womanly combination of Irish matriarch, Italian coddler, French impassiveness, Russian conniver, and Jewish matchmaker. She is the leading lady in the town of Mordasov, not quite of nobility though she feigns that position, upper middle class, let's say, whose sole purpose in life is to gather all the gossip she can and use it as a weapon in ascending the social ladder. She is expert at using this weapon and, as Dostoyevsky states, "She is very reserved over these secrets – she confines herself to frightening people with hints at what she knows, and likes to keep a man or a lady in continual apprehension than to deal them a final blow. Now that is intelligence, that is diplomacy!" She can tear people apart with a single word, and at the same time have an air of not uttering that word. Her only child, Zina, is a renowned beauty who at twenty-three is still not married, a situation Marya constantly tries to remedy by arranging a perfect match; that is, one of upper class and wealth, love be damned. There is the father, Afanasy, who Marya has banished to their country home because he has lost his government job, pension, and, being somewhat of a fool, is an embarrassment to Marya when social

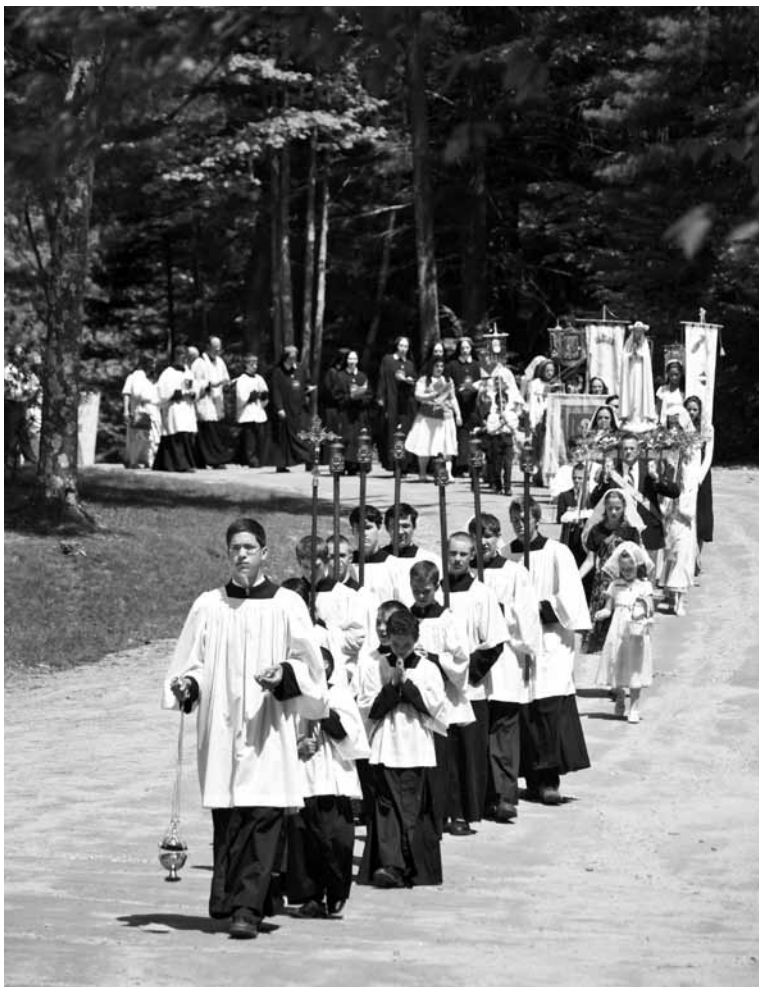
activities take place. He has a small role in this novel, but is hysterical when Marya eventually summons him to invite Prince K. to their country home. And this prince is a riot complete with wig, moustaches, whiskers, all of them false. His teeth are false, he wears a corset, and it is claimed that hidden in his facial hairs are little springs to smooth away the wrinkles in his face.

Brother André was passing by me carrying a book under his arm and I uttered those fateful words, "Hey, Brother, whatcha reading"? The book was *The Brothers Karamazov*, and my literary world would change forever.

In a word, the prince is a senile, dilapidated, extremely wealthy man of nobility, but above all a bachelor, and Marya sets her sights on him, not for herself, but for Zina, whom she wishes to become a princess (with Mommy in tow of course). Complicating matters for Marya is a young suitor of Zina's, Pavel, who is madly in love with her, and a distant nephew of the prince, but this love is not shared by Zina, who had loved before, lost that love, and still mourns. Thus the intricate scheme is hatched where Marya contrives to intoxicate the feeble prince into proposing to Zina (which he does), to convince Zina that to marry the prince would be a noble undertaking in the remaining years of his life, all the while warding off the village magpies who invade her house with the same intent for their daughters. This story is zany, hilarious, and refreshing, especially since one feels that for once you can be comfortable in the presence of Dostoyevsky.

Has the reader of this series articles read enough of Dostoyevsky? Is his interest piqued to the point of perusing this great author? Before you make that decision, let me share with you comments given by prominent writers and critics on this complex man; "he was a sick, cruel talent" – Mikhailovsky; "a prophet of God, a mystical seer" – Solvyov; "Russia's evil genius" – Gorky; "Dostoyevsky gives me more than any scientist" – Einstein; and my personal favorite by Melchior de Vogue, "He was the Shakespeare of the lunatic asylum." Let me conclude with one more quote, this from Nikolay Berdayev, "So great is the worth of Dostoyevsky that to have produced him is by itself sufficient justification for the existence of the Russian people in the world: and he will bear witness for his countrymen at the last judgment of the nations."

My book on Dostoyevsky looms on the table by my easy chair. I have decided that I have had enough and I must pass on to easier reading. But wait, I have not given him a proper farewell. Just one more, then — I will read just one more novelette. My farewell will wait for my next *Mancipia* article. ■



Part of the procession as we head back into our chapel for Benediction

Email Russell LaPlume at rlp@catholicism.org.

WHAT DID YOU GO OUT INTO THE DESERT TO SEE?

continued from page 9

His doctrine, questioned Him as to why God allows His people to perish by violence. "I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish. . . ." Again He repeated His warning: "except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5).

With what anticipation John looked forward to the fulfillment of this mission. "Behold there cometh after me," he told the crowds, "one whose sandal I am unworthy to loose. He it is that shall baptize in the Holy Ghost and fire." Finally, Jesus came to the Jordan. John's mission was about to end: "He who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33).

John knew that Jesus, his cousin, was the Savior, and that the Lord Himself was to be the "clean oblation" whose sacrifice would please God and redeem the world. But, it seems from the Gospels, that he did not know just how great this new baptism was to be. Nor did he know that Christ Himself would be the Baptizer in every sacramental baptism to come, no matter who be the minister.

So, when Jesus asked to be baptized, John was stunned. He had to be assured by Christ that, although He did not need baptism for Himself, being the source of all grace, but that as Head of the Church, His example in submitting to the ritual would "fulfill all justice."

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed him, saying: I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice. Then he suffered him. And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened to him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:13-17).

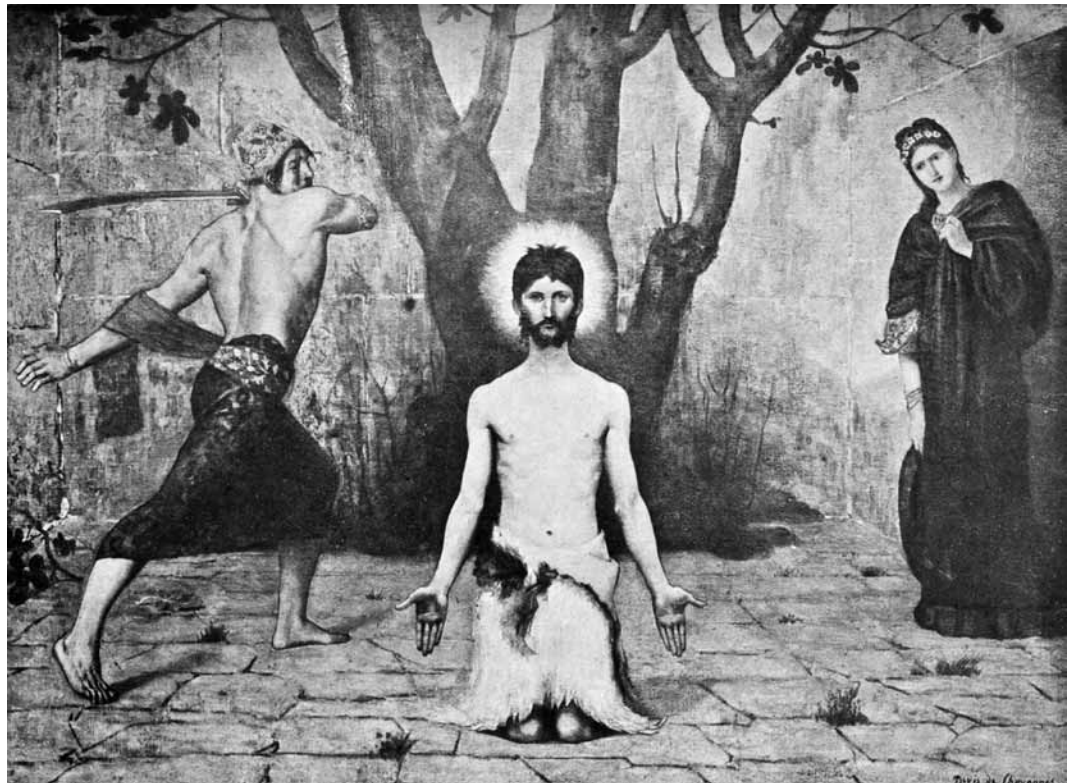
No Israelite who presumed to be just in his own eyes escaped the fiery sword of John the Baptist, for he even rebuked Herod the King for adultery and for taking the wife of his own brother. You all know the story as it is given in the Gospel of Saint Mark, chapter six. Herod

kept John for a year in his black castle dungeon by the Dead Sea. He feared the just prophet and was reluctant to put him to death. At last, the adulteress, Herodias, who was complicit in Herod's sin, asked for his execution. And Herod complied. And they brought the head of the great saint to her on a platter to satisfy her.

While in prison Herod allowed John to have visitors, among whom was Herod, himself, who came often and willingly to listen to the words of his prisoner. Before his execution John sent his disciples to Christ so that they could be assured by what they would see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears that this Jesus was the Christ whom they must henceforth follow. It took some time for them to get the message, even though John had given his testimony long before. And this is how he put it in his final words to them: "He [Christ] must increase and I must decrease." And so it was. John's head fell to the floor of a dungeon as he decreased in a martyr's sacrifice, and Christ was lifted up on His cross so to draw and increase all the faithful to Himself in that infinite sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world.

How fitting it is that the Church celebrates the birthday of John the Baptist on the longest day of the year (or close to it), after which the daylight hours begin to decrease (for the 90% of mankind who live in the northern hemisphere), while Christmas is celebrated on the shortest day of the year (or, again, close to it) followed by the slow increase of the light of day. ■

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.



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Fr. Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp.



Br. Maximilian Maria,
M.I.C.M.

SPECIAL FEATURE: BATTLEFIELD 1942 AND MANHOOD

About a year ago, our Boy Scout troop, ages twelve through fifteen, went on a camp-out (a camporee to be precise) and I was one of the two adult volunteer overseers; the other was a good friend that works as a high-level IT consultant. We were there to keep the peace, so to speak, and guide

them in teamwork operations and honing basic leadership skills, while offering help and advice when needed. I was excited about the camp-out — as I've always loved the outdoors and the brothers don't often get the chance to get away and enjoy the simpler things of nature.

And then something happened as we were driving to the site. The boys started talking about video games. And they continued talking about video games. And they talked about nothing other than video games. My good mood wore off, and after slowly seething for about a half-hour, I told them to change the subject. They switched to sports, which was fine by me. I secretly hoped that they would get the hint and not bring the subject up again (yes, I'm that naïve).

Later, the subject came up again (surprise, surprise!). Rather than sour the tone of the trip with overly harsh words I decided to give the two principal offenders challenges: For offender number one, I asked him never to again play the game he kept talking about (*Battlefield 1942*); and for offender number two, I requested that he say something clever that didn't come from a video game, movie, or pop song. Offender number one said "No," he wouldn't stop playing the game. He respectfully pointed out that his mother was okay with him playing the game and that his father plays it as well. I told him that I was going to go over his head and do my best to convince his parents to keep him away from it. Offender number two was flustered with my challenge and said, "That's harsh, Brother," and, after giving it some serious thought, was unable to come up with anything intelligent to say. Now, I know it is hard to perform on cue like that, but this boy is quite clever and very funny. I worry because he seems to have lost his ability to create, and now simply parrots what he has been spoon-fed by the entertainment industry.

After arriving at the camp site I noticed that there were a large number of fat, pasty, and, shall I say, unmanly-acting scouts (and overseers) who also attended the camporee from other troops. We watched another troop arrive in their new, clean SUV, towing a trailer full of the various gear they needed to "rough it" for all of part of two days. I didn't realize that that was going to be *in a neatly mowed field*, with a nice big parking area close by. Then, they spent two hours setting up their matching, fancy tents. Later, I noted that the boys didn't know how to throw a ball properly — right-handers threw like they had two left arms, and left-handers like they had two right arms.

No exaggeration, their attempts at "playing" with each other were painful to watch. Our troop, by the way, whipped every other troop willing to play them in Ultimate Frisbee.

My point in bringing this up is to highlight the fact that survival skills, including physical dexterity for the able-bodied (not to mention the manly moral virtues) are going extinct in America today. While I'm at it I might mention Christian chivalry and etiquette in respect to all women, young and old. (*Editor's note: Brother Francis considered this an indispensable part of Catholic manhood. See this issue's Founder's Column.*) Spending tons of time playing video games, or otherwise consuming mass-produced, virtual reality fantasy (it is called the entertainment industry for a reason) contributes to the fact that many men do not grow up until their late twenties, if at all. One would be blind not to see that each successive generation of this age of self-amusement is becoming more narcissistic and far more prone to hard-heartedness, lust, cruelty, and rage. Without the reawakening of the "sleeping giant" that is the Catholic Faith



Blessing the crowns for the May Crowning before the procession starts

— the only real hope to reverse society’s fast decline into despair and madness — the twin demons of hedonism and tyranny will become the gods that destroy mankind.

I was always fascinated with computers and, thank God, I had parents who put curbs on the use of the internet. Not that I didn’t waste a lot of time on useless games in my youth; I did, but I also had other interests that made for a healthy balance: I loved the outdoors, had a number of wholesome hobbies, and was involved in sports. As a religious, I’ve matured much and I now have a more nuanced attitude toward computers and technology.

I believe that it is very important to be in control of the technology you use, and not let it control you. It is important to use computers and cell phones as tools, as means to achieve a good end, and not just because everyone else is doing it. Most carpenters (the ones I know, anyway) don’t sleep with their tools; however, lots of people sleep with cell phones or other devices in their beds, or right next to them on a lamp-table.

Further, it is helpful to realize that the “free” service, Facebook, is a business, and the folks running it want you to spend as much time as possible using it. The more time you are on Facebook the more advertisements are served up to you (based

on what you self-report — “post,” that is), and the more the ad companies pay the fellows at headquarters. Facebook has a team of marketing gurus figuring out ways to keep people on the site as long as possible and to make it unlikely for them to close their accounts.

What we are attracted to, even if morally neutral, is not always the best thing for us. This is especially the case for children who are attracted to computers, video games, and cell phones and are often not aware of the associated dangers. Parental supervision is morally obligatory for a youngster using a computer.

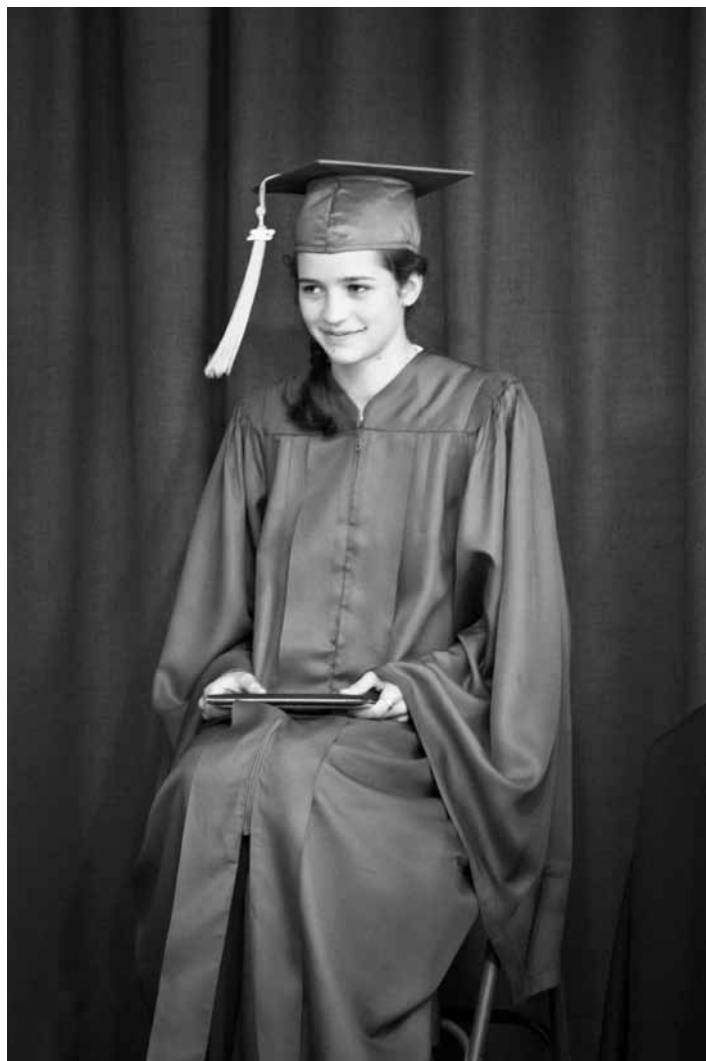
Does all the technology we have access to make us better people, even naturally speaking? How about holier Catholics? Does it help or hurt our chances at eternal salvation?

Just because you don’t have TV programs ruling the hearth, or objectionable video games, or degenerate music, doesn’t mean you’ve totally cut the electric line so heavily trafficked in our time by the demons whom Saint Paul calls “the powers of this air.” Please take it from one whose spoiled and victimized generation was drowned as no other in this deluge: “Be sober and *vigilant*, for the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.” ■

Email Brother Maximilian at brm@catholicism.org.



A manly tug of war at IHM School’s end of the school year field day



Miss Cecilia Bryan, our class of 2012 graduate

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).

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- Saint Benedict Center Conference: Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6, 2012. The theme is “Concerning Heroes and Heroines.” It will be held at SBC grounds in Richmond, New Hampshire. More details below.
- The 17th annual Auriesville Pilgrimage for Restoration is scheduled for Friday through Sunday, September 28–30 in upstate New York. Visit www.national-coalition.org/pilgrim/ for details.

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Slaves of the Immaculate
Heart of Mary
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Join us on Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6, 2012, for Saint Benedict Center’s annual conference.

What: This year’s conference theme is “Concerning Heroes and Heroines.”

Where: Saint Benedict Center, 95 Fay Martin Road, Richmond, New Hampshire, 03470.

When: Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6, 2012. Both will be full conference days.

How Much: \$135 per person with meals for both days, if you register before August 31, \$80 without meals. After August 31, \$160 with meals, \$90 without meals. Single days with meals are \$70, without meals, \$45. No early bird discount for single days.

Who: Speakers have not yet been lined up and will be announced shortly. Last year’s were: Mr. Gary Potter, Dr. Robert Hickson, Mr. Charles Coulombe, Dr. G.C. Dilsaver, Mr. C. Joseph Doyle, Sr. Maria Philomena, M.I.C.M., Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., and Mr. Brian Kelly.

More details will be posted on www.catholicism.org as they become available.

Please call Russell at (603) 239-6485 for more information or to register.

Also, registrations may be mailed to the address above.