MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016





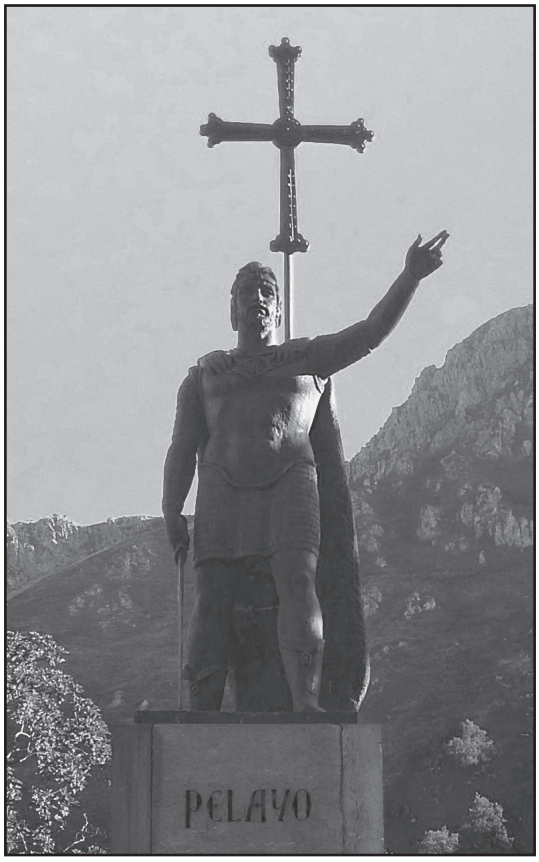
Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN
DON PELAYO STARTS THE RECONQUEST

In the year 711, the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain fell to the invading Umayyad Muslim forces. This was due to the fateful victory of the Berber commander Ṭāriq ibn Ziyad, over Visigothic forces in the Battle of Guadalete. Spain's monarch, King Rodrigo, was either killed in that battle or perhaps escaped to what is now Portugal. Either way, his tomb was found in Spain's Iberian neighbor some time later. It was fellow Visigoths who, motivated by a petty political rivalry, betrayed their own people to the Muslims by revealing the Kingdom's strategic vulnerabilities to the invader.

Soon, city after city of the Iberian Peninsula fell to the invading Mohammedans, comprised of North African Berbers with some Arabs, and aided by their traitorous Visigothic allies. Those who wanted to be free of alien dominion fled to the peninsula's northwest, to Asturias, where the enemy had not yet penetrated. Situated in the mountain range known as the Picos de Europa ("Peaks of Europe"), part of the larger Cantabrian Mountain Range of northwestern Spain, Asturias is a rocky and austere place — known for its eagles, bears, wolves, and violent weather — that did not much interest the invaders.

One of the noblemen who fought in and survived the Battle of Guadalete was our subject, Pelayo. (His Latin name, Pelagius, is identical to that of the heretic of three centuries earlier.) Pelayo was the son of the Duke of Fafila, who had been killed by one of those traitors who were in league with the Muslims, a low character named Vitiza. Pelayo led the survivors of King Rodrigo's army to Asturias, where they met with other refugees. Chosen by the Visigothic nobility to be their *princeps* (prince) some time in either 716 or 718, Pelayo assumed leadership of the army and began to resist the invaders, both by assaulting Umayyad military outposts and by refusing to pay the *Jizya* (tax on non-Muslims) to the new overlords of Spain.



Don Pelayo

Some time prior to the historic battle that made him worthy of our attention, Don Pelayo was chasing a criminal — apparently a member of his own army who had become unruly and fled — to bring him to justice. The fleeing man took refuge in one of the many caves of the area, which are among the deepest in the world. Pelayo caught up with him in the company of a hermit who had made the cave his oratory, having secreted there an image of the Blessed Virgin rescued from the iconoclast fury of the invaders. The hermit encouraged Pelayo to pardon the wayward soldier, and promised that he would be rewarded for his clemency by a great victory on that same spot, known as "Covadonga" — from the Latin *Cova Dominica,* "Cavern of the Lady."

The Umayyad conquerers wanted to rid themselves of this pocket of resistance to their hegemony over the peninsula. To accomplish this, in the summer of 722, they sent a large and well-trained army under the commander Al Qama. Warned of the fact, Don Pelayo gathered his men at Covadonga.

Accompanying the Moslem soldiers was a relative of the treacherous Vitiza, Don Oppas, the Bishop of Seville. This unworthy successor of the Apostles, who was a Muslim collaborator, went into the cave to encourage Pelayo to surrender: "Brother," he said, "I'm sure you labor uselessly. What good is it to put up resistance in this cave, when all Spain and her armies united under the power of the Goths could not resist the momentum of the Ishmaelites? Listen to my advice: Retreat to enjoy the many goods that were yours, at peace with the Arabs, as others do."

To this, Pelayo replied: "I want no friendship with the Saracens, nor to be subject to their empire. Do you not know that the Church of God is compared to the moon, which being eclipsed, returns again to its fullness? Trusting in the mercy of God, we know that from this mount will emerge the health of Spain. You and your brothers, along with Julian [treasonous Lord of Gibraltar], minister of Satan, determined to deliver to these people the kingdom of the Goths; but we, having by counsel before God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, despise this multitude of pagans, in whose name you come, and by the intercession of the Mother of God, who is the Mother of mercy, we believe that this people of the Goths, reduced to 105, must grow and increase as much as grains out of a tiny mustard seed."

Oppas then told his overlords, "March forth into the cave and fight, for without the sword, you will get nothing from him." (Cf. "Don Pelayo, el vencedor de Covadonga" by Luciano López y García Jové.)

By modern estimates, Al Qama's forces numbered from 800 to 1,400. Medieval accounts estimate Mohammedan numbers to be as high as 187,000. Against them, the Visigothic forces numbered 300. (Yes, the dialogue just related mentions 105. There are conflicting claims.) Placing a number of his men high up the cliffs, so that they had a strategic advantage, Don Pelayo and another group of his soldiers stayed in the cave, awaiting the arrival of the foe. A Spanish author tells us what happened next:

> They fought at the entrance to the cave with all sorts of weapons, and a shower of stones. Then it was that God's power was manifest, favorable to ours and contrary to the Muslims because the arrows and spears that the enemy launched returned to them causing great harm among them. The enemy was astounded at such a miracle. Heartened and on fire with the hope of victory, the Christians emerged from the hideout, few in number, soiled and ragged, and engaged in a melee. They fell fiercely upon the enemy who, thrown off balance, turned and ran. (From an article by José Maria dos Santos, published in Catolicismo (October, 2002), cited in *Don Pelayo and the Reconquista of Spain* by Felipe Barandiaran.)

"I want no friendship with the Saracens, nor to be subject to their empire."

The other Christian soldiers, still strategically placed in the mountains, sent down boulders and trees upon the invaders, who were trapped in the valleys. Add to this a storm that suddenly arose, and a rout was in the making. The Moslems retreated, to be pursued by local Christians emboldened to join the battle. According to one account, a mountain fell on them, sending many to their deaths in the Deva River.

Al Qama was killed and Don Opas was taken captive. With only eleven men left of Spain's fighters, including Pelayo, the cost of victory was a terrible one. Thus it was that Spain's long *Reconquest* was begun.

From the time of his victory in 722 till his death in 737, Pelayo fought in defense of the newly founded Kingdom of Asturias, which the Moslems never managed to subjugate. When he died peacefully, Pelayo was buried next to his wife, Gaudiosa (her name means "joyful"), in the Cave of Covadonga. The epitaph of his tomb reads:

"Here lies the holy king Don Pelayo, elected in the year 716, who in this miraculous cave began the restoration of Spain." ▪

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org

The Saint Augustine Institute of Wisdom (SAI) is the educational division of Saint Benedict Center. The Institute provides well-rounded and conveniently simple courses of instruction in Catholic thought.

Whether you want to fill in some gaps in your education or want to complete your SAI Diploma, we have the courses that will not only help but inspire and make you a more complete and well-equipped Catholic.

What is SAI like? See for yourself!
Visit us at: **www.SaintAugustineInstitute.org**

Contact Sister Maria Philomena at
(603)239-6485 or **smph@catholicism.org**



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M., Prioress

CONVENT CORNER
YELLOW LINES

Very Dear Reader,

Have you ever been to the New England states in the fall? Well, as you know the area is famous for its spectacular demonstration of color.

Driving down the highway on a bright, fall day provides a series of enrapturing scenes. "Oh! Beautiful!" It seems as though there could be nothing more beautiful than the golden flash of beech trees nestled among graceful, green pines! Then, around the next bend in the road, "Ah!," a richer gold in the oaks captivates us! "Look!" we thrust our whole body toward the car window that separates us from the maple fluorescence shimmered by a solitary tree in a drab marsh.

If you are the passenger that day, you are in a land of carefree beauty. Unless, of course, the driver can't resist the tempation to gaze with you out his side window to get a better view of that gorgeous luminescence in the marsh. As you, together, allow yourselves to be captivated by that folial radiance, the sobering sound of car horns from oncoming traffic may remind you of yellow lines.

Yes, yellow lines. The only physical barrier between two careening vehicles colliding in a fatal accident are two lines of yellow paint on the pavement. Can you tell me, Dear Reader, if that sounds safe to you? Yet, people do it every day.

Now, the lines really could be any color. There is no intrinsic meaning in yellow. The meaning is conventional — you go to driver's ed to learn what yellow lines mean.

But, along with folial distraction, there are many other weaknesses in the human condition which cause that potentially fatal swerve or gradual glide over the yellow lines. We try to take measures to guard against such calamities, even by imbibing coffee.

Now, that being said, Dear Reader, would you want to take a drive if you knew the driver in the oncoming vehicle had no idea what the yellow lines meant? Would you risk your life knowing that the person in that vehicle did know what the yellow lines meant, but preferred to ignore them? How about driving in the oncoming lane towards a driver who thought that yellow lines were "stupid" and would pass in no passing zones with reckless disregard? Perhaps this adolescent individual would be smiling or laughing hysterically as he caught sight of your horrified look and lunged back into his own lane at the last second?

Yes, "adolescent," or more aptly, "foolish." Mockery is the response that they give to our concern. Unfortunately, age may have little to do with the behavior of a person.

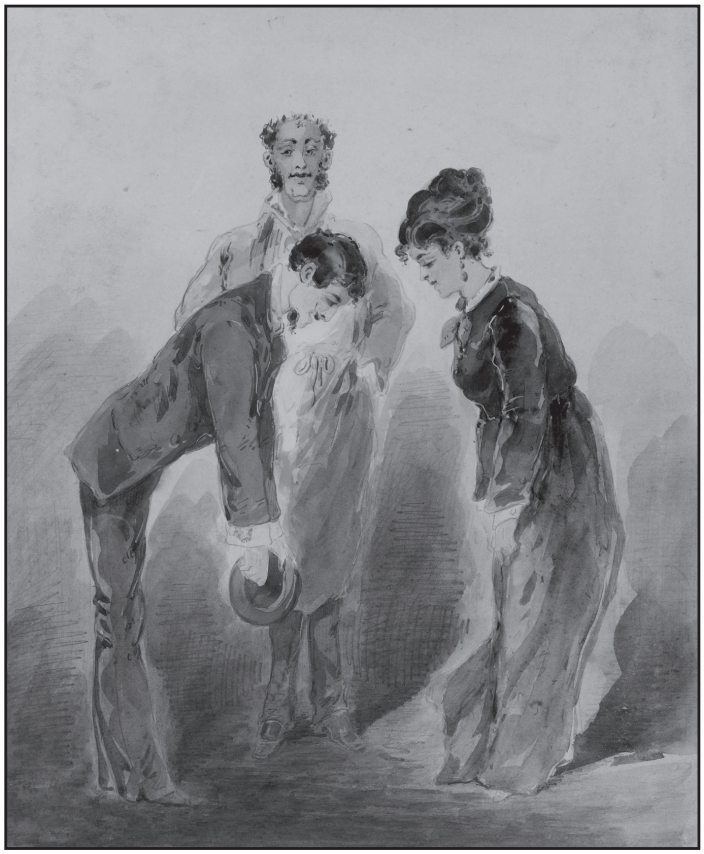
But, of course, we all have to die some day and that is one of the reasons we pray a driving prayer before each trip we take. The body will undergo destruction one day, leaving the soul free to fly to God. "Leaving the soul free to fly to God!" Hmmm. Doesn't sound so bad, does it?

There are other "yellow lines" in our lives. We need to be educated about them and we need to respect them just as we do the lines on the road. If we stray over these other lines, it could cost us not just our physical lives, but, more importantly, our Life of Grace as well. An oncoming collision on this "road" would not "leave the soul free to fly to God" but rather in a state of spiritual death — mortal sin.

What are these "yellow lines" which separate us from moral ruin? The conventions which prevent us from doing serious harm to ourselves and our neighbor are: manners. There will be no course in manners here. In general, the way a gentleman treats ladies; the way a lady treats gentlemen; the guidelines of courtship; the rules of propriety in conversation; the understanding of *"noblesse oblige;"* even good manners at table — all promote and protect the Faith and morals that we Catholics profess to love.

An adolescent response to manners is more foolish than an adolescent response to the yellow lines on a highway. Yes, truly "foolish:" a disregard or mockery of manners tends to the destruction of souls, not merely the destruction of bodies.

As one example, scorn for the traditional chaperone for young couples sets the stage for our Infernal Enemy to mar or destroy marriages before couples say, "I do."



And, here, Dear Reader, is a more considered example of how a violation of simple manners might affect souls. Bad manners could impede the conversion of a person. Imagine that a civilized non-Catholic is approached by a Catholic who doesn't know his sleeve from his napkin, his fork from his knife, or polite

> Bad manners could impede the conversion of a person.

table conversation from barnyard babble and sarcastic stupidity. Observing the menu being macerated in the Catholic's mouth, might even prevent the ingestion of the articles of Faith that are being presented simultaneously to the non-Catholic's ear. If this non-Catholic associate does not convert, he will not "be free to go to God." If God asked the uncouth Catholic why he thought the non-Catholic was deterred from converting, would he even suspect that it was his repulsive "manners?"

Manners have, by the way, nothing to do with financial status, as even the poorest families can possess the treasure of good manners. As Catholics, we are nobility: Children of God and Heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven, even if we are "poor" or "middle class." We are ambassadors for the King and Queen of Heaven as we are observed going about our daily duties, recreating, conversing with others, and especially when we speak to others about the Faith. Ambassadors are the epitome of good manners because they represent someone whom they deem worthy of respect and are sent to encourage others to respect their leader as well. Do we deem Christ the King and Mary the Queen worthy of respect? Do our manners show this?

As our growth in the spiritual life increases, so will our awareness and attention to manners. A young lady who is growing in love for the Sacred Heart knows that a flirtatious manner on her part could lead a man into a moral dilemma and she will avoid it. A gentleman who aspires to vie with Saint Louis Marie in *True Devotion* will sense that disregard on his part for his proximity to a young woman could affect the delicate flower of purity in her soul — even if it doesn't harm him — and will act accordingly. Growth in sanctity dispels the darkness of the intellect. Growth in sanctity increases a person's understanding of the need for good manners.

Yellow lines. Conventions. Life and death. Manners. My Dear Reader, would you please consider the state of your manners? Thank you! And, enjoy the colors! ▪

Email Sister Marie Thérèse, at convent@catholicism.org

2015 SBC CONFERENCE

Audio (Complete Set):

For your **computer/MP3 Player:** $30

For your **CD player:** $40

Video (Complete Set):

For your **computer:** $35

For your **DVD player:** $45



Order online or by phone
http://store.catholicism.org • (603) 239-6485

1. Dr. G.C. Dilsaver — The Heroic Freedom of Holy Slavery
2. Gary Potter — The Once and Future Queen
3. Charles Coulombe — Mary Queen of the Nations
4. Brother André Marie — Total Consecration to Mary: The Remedy for our Ills
5. C.J. Doyle — How The Rosary Rescued A Nation
7. Sr. Maria Philomena — The Consolation of Dying as a Slave
8. Sr. Marie Thérèse — Promises to Keep
9. Panel Discussion/ Q&A
10. Bonus Material included.



Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM
FAITH AND MIRACLES

What is faith? The Baltimore Catechism gives a very simple definition of faith as the first of the three theological virtues: "Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed on the authority of His revelation in the scriptures and the Church teaching."

Holy scripture and tradition are the two pillars that the Church uses to teach the truths necessary to be believed for salvation.

Saint Paul writes that "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Hebrews 11:1). And again that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (11:6).

The Saint Andrew's Missal gives the Act of Faith as follows: "O my God, I firmly believe that thou art one God in Three divine Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe that thy divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Catholic Church teaches because thou hast revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived."

New Catechism: #156: "What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe 'because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.' And, again, #157: "Faith is certain. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but 'the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives.'"

Saint Paul also says that "Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Here we have the essential note that defines evangelization; it is to preach the gospel by word and deed, that those who do not believe may hear the word of God and see our good deeds and believe. "Faith," the Council of Trent teaches, "is the beginning of salvation." It is, by its very nature, self-diffusive, as is "goodness." A gift received, it is meant to be given. That is why Saint James wrote that "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:2). Doctor Jozef Pieper in his masterpiece, *Leisure: the Basis of Culture,* puts it beautifully:

"We have only to think for a moment how much the Christian understanding of life depends upon the existence of Grace; let us recall that the Holy Spirit of God is himself called a 'gift' in a special sense; that the great teachers of Christianity say that the premise of God's justice is his love; that everything gained and everything claimed follows upon something given, and comes after something gratuitous and unearned; that in the beginning there is always a gift… (pp. 35-36)

The greatest work of charity is evangelization, which is the "ministry of the word." There is no action more beneficial — and therefore more charitable — to one's neighbor than to break the bread of the word of God, to share with him the Good News of salvation in Christ and His Church.

The greatest work of charity is evangelization, which is the "ministry of the word."

As Catholics we are all called to build up and nourish the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. This means that we must grow spiritually through the sacraments, the Mass, penance, prayer, and almsgiving, and we must strive, consonant with our situation and capabilities, to bring new members to the Church.

How did the Church grow throughout history and why is the Church suffering such a crisis of faith today?

In the early Church the faithful had tremendous enthusiasm. There was a zeal prompted by charity, among laity as well as clergy, to spread the Kingdom of God on earth, which is the Catholic Church. There was great holiness, of course, especially in the Church's missionaries. There were millions of martyrs as well over the centuries of persecution. The Church father, Tertullian (160-22), is most famous for saying, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

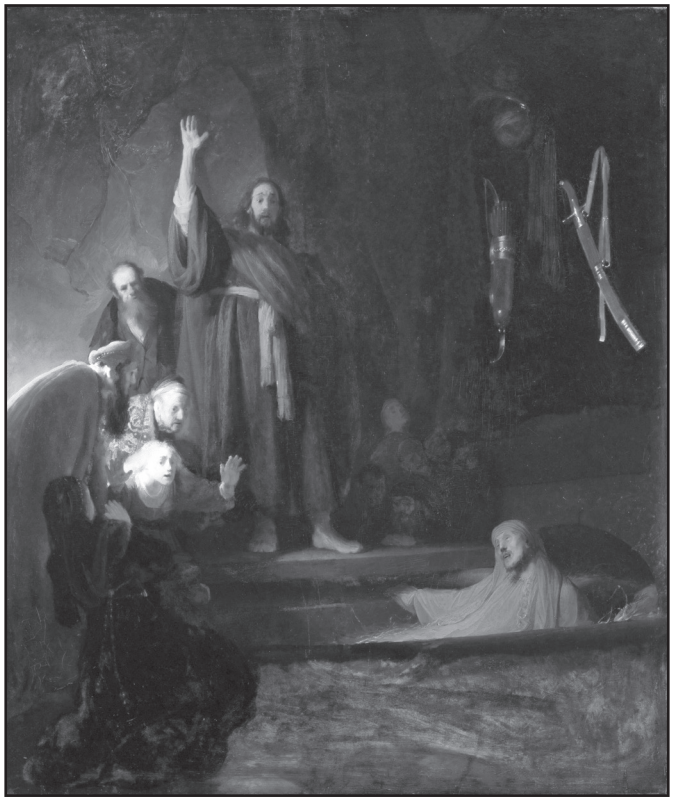
Divine and Catholic Faith is a supernatural virtue given by God, illuminating and elevating the soul, giving it the capacity to embrace divine truths that are above reason. The catechism tells us that Faith, Hope, and Charity are theological virtues, theological because their object is *THEOS* (God). They are supernatural powers, whose purpose is to be *in act* with God. "Pray always," Jesus said. In truth these acts are God's act in us. Not that God has faith or hope, but that He lets the intellect see His true Self in Faith, drawing the soul to hope in the eternal promises God had revealed to the soul through the Church. Charity, however, is even more: it is our participation in the Trinitarian Love, our Love for God is a breath, a sigh, from the indwelling Spirit whose temple we are.

The virtue of faith, possessed as a habit in the soul, can be weak or strong. "Lord, increase our faith," the apostles besought Our Lord. (Luke 17:5) "Lord, I do believe," said

the man with the son who had a demon that tormented him, "help my unbelief" (Mark 9:23). Jesus assured His Apostles, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." (Matt 17:19) Such did actually happen in the life of Saint Gregory the Wonder-Worker when his prayer moved a mountain so he could build a church on the site.

Why do people tend to be converted in the heart and mind when they were convinced that a miracle took place? What is a miracle? Does the miracle have to be performed by God?

We need to link faith and evangelization by reminding people that the countless miracles in the last 2000 years are the wonderful gifts from God to convince us that God is real and God is good. We need to publicize miracles, not just those in holy scripture but those performed throughout the life of the Church, especially those performed for the whole world by Our Lady. Miracles proved the word preached by the Apostles and they prove the word preached by the saints.



The Raising of Lazarus – Rembrandt

Miracles

New Catechism: So "that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit." Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability "are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all"; they are "motives of credibility", which show that the assent of faith is "by no means a blind impulse of the mind." #157.

Our Lord went so far as to promise His disciples that they would perform greater miracles than He. "Amen, amen I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, And greater than these shall he do." (John 14:12).

After Pentecost we encounter miracles immediately, the first being Saint Peter's speaking in tongues, or, to be more precise, being understood in many tongues while he was addressing the crowd of pilgrims in Aramaic. Then we have Saints Peter and John curing the lame man at the temple gate. Even the very shadow of Saint Peter cured those who, with faith, sought his intercession.

The Risen Christ, while hiding His identity from the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, opened for them the scriptures and their hearts were restored by renewed faith in the Crucified One and renewed hope in the Kingdom of God that would never end. Jesus then performed for them His greatest miracle. He blessed the bread and disappeared into His Eucharistic presence: "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight." And again, as they told the other Apostles when they returned to Jerusalem: "We knew him in the breaking of the bread."

The great apostles of the nations all performed miracles to authenticate the truth of the gospel.

Saint Patrick was sent as bishop to Ireland in 433 and the whole island converted. This would not have happened had not this holy man performed astounding miracles. The battles with the Druids were like Moses conquering the magicians of pharao. I know of no saint who raised so many people from the dead – thirty-three says Jocelyn his biographer – to give them Faith and baptism.

Other nations converted by holy miracle workers were:

> Some cynics are so steeped in their unbelief that they are not even moved by miracles.

the East Indies by Saint Francis Xavier, whose ten years on his mission were filled with miracles and millions of converts, and Mexico by the great miracle of Our Lady in 1531, a miracle that abides still in the holy tilma of Saint Juan Diego. By 1541, there were ten million Aztecs who had entered the Church.

Some cynics are so steeped in their unbelief that they are not even moved by miracles. Look at the "stiffed-necked" Jews who admitted that Christ had raised Lazarus and who heard the testimony of His resurrection from the temple guards stationed at the tomb. Jesus foretold it, "neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Normal people, however, would be moved to embrace the religion attended by undeniable miracles.

In connection with this I lifted this account of a miracle from Franz Werfel's book, *The Song of Bernadette.* Werfel, a Jew, came into the Church late, at the eleventh hour. His book, however, was written long before his conversion and baptism.



The Allegory of Faith – Vermeer

"In the face of death, unfaith is far unsurer of itself than faith. In his own arms Roger Lacassagne carried his son [Jules] to the grotto. A former army man, he was disinclined to stand for any nonsense. If miracles can happen, let them! Hence he had brought with him a bag of soft biscuits. After Jules, endlessly agonizing, had succeeded in getting down a glassful of the water drop by drop, the absurd father handed him one of the biscuits and gave an order in his military fashion: 'Now, then, eat!' And now an absurder thing happened: the boy ate. He bit off a piece, chewed it, and swallowed it like any ordinary mortal. The tall Lacassagne with his grey pompadour turned aside, reeling like a drunken man, and beat his breast and panted: 'Jules is eating…Jules is eating…' And the people around the grotto burst into tears." (pg. 437)

Normal people, however, would be moved to embrace the religion attended by undeniable miracles.

Infamous French naturalist, Emile Zola, on the other hand, was like the scribes and pharisees. He once said that he would believe if he saw a cut finger heal by dipping it in Lourdes water. He did end up going to Lourdes where he was a witness, not to that, but to a woman inexplicably healed of tuberculosis before his very eyes. What did he do? He called the press and declared for the papers "Even if I were to see all the sick at Lourdes healed, I would not believe."

Finally, we have the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima on October 13, 1917. In confirmation of her message to the three shepherding children, Our Lady promised to give a great sign to all the people gathered at the *Cova* that day, all the people, even the freemasons and atheists. It had been raining all morning that day when the Blessed Mother gave her final message to the children. At high noon, she pointed to the sun which had unexpectedly burst through the clouds. The sun was turning wildly and spinning off beautiful colors when, all a sudden, it appeared to be falling from the sky. People screamed in terror. Then, the fiery star resumed its normal position. People's clothes and the very mud on the ground were instantly dry.

Finally, share a book on the miracles of Padre Pio with anyone you think would benefit. It is a great way to evangelize. I wrote a biography of the saint detailing many miracles for our website. It can be read here: catholicism.org/saint-pio-of-pietrelcina.html. Needless to say, there are many books written about Saint Padre Pio. A good one is, *Padre Pio, the Stigmatist,* by Father Charles Mortimer Carty. You can order it from The Catholic Company. Padre Pio, who died in 1968, is a saint for our time. Perhaps he was the greatest miracle worker of all the saints; certainly he was for the last century. ▪

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org

RECONQUEST

SEEKING THAT WHICH WAS LOST... AND FIGHTING FOR IT.

Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M., has a new radio show on the Veritas Radio Network's "Crusade Channel." Each weekly one-hour episode will debut on **Wednesday night at 8:00 PM Eastern** (7:00 PM Central) then rebroadcast at that same hour on Thursday, and again on the following Monday. On Tuesdays and Fridays, random rotations of Reconquest episodes will also run at that time slot.

Reconquest is a militant, engaging, and informative Catholic radio program featuring interviews with interesting guests as well as commentary by your host. It is a radio-journalistic extension of the **Crusade of Saint Benedict Center.**

Veritas Radio Network is an Internet-based radio network founded by Mike Church, the SiriusXM radio personality with the longest-lived satellite radio show. To listen and for more details, please go to **VeritasRadioNetwork.com**.





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

PREFECT'S COLUMN
OUR LADY AND THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

Editor's Note: The Prefect began a series of talks on the "Virtues of Our Lady," in October 2015 at our First Saturday meetings. The following expands those comments.

In the *Treatise on True Devotion,* Saint Louis Marie de Montfort writes, "God the Holy Spirit wishes to fashion his chosen ones in and through Mary. He tells her, 'My well-beloved, my spouse, let all your virtues take root in my chosen ones that they may grow from strength to strength and from grace to grace. When you were living on earth, practising the most sublime virtues, I was so pleased with you that I still desire to find you on earth without your ceasing to be in heaven. Reproduce yourself then in my chosen ones, so that I may have the joy of seeing in them the roots of your invincible faith, **profound humility**, total mortification, sublime prayer, ardent charity, your firm hope and all your virtues. You are always my spouse, as faithful, pure, and fruitful as ever. May your faith give me believers; your purity, virgins; your fruitfulness, elect and living temples.'"

Let us contemplate the many, many virtues of Mary. Spiritual writers speak of the ten virtues of Our Lady. We will begin with humility.

And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her." (Luke Ch. 1, v. 38) The Haydock version of the Bible explains "Behold the handmaid. With all modesty and humility of heart and mind, the blessed Virgin consented to the divine will: and from that moment in her was conceived the Saviour and Redeemer of the world." (Witham) — "Thus ought the virgin, who brought forth meekness and humility itself, to shew forth an example of the most profound humility." (St. Ambrose)

Our Blessed Mother is humility *par excellence*. Her example is the one we should keep before us as we imitate our Mother. There is no better exemplar for a virtue. In fact, humility may be the most important virtue for this time in the history of the world.

Our Blessed Mother is humility *par excellence*.

What is the opposite of humility? Pride. Remember, "It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels." (Saint Augustine) The world is full of pride and also fear. One only need to glance at the headlines in the news: Planned Parenthood selling baby parts, wars all over the Mideast, disease appearing rampant throughout the world (even in first-world countries such as America), seriously bad weather, earthquakes, terrorism, confusion over the dogmas of the Church, violence everywhere — from the wombs of mothers to the hospital beds of the elderly where euthanasia has become decriminalized. What do pride and fear have to do with humility? When we are proud, we depend only on ourselves. When things go awry, we are fearful because we do not believe we should depend on God and, consequently, lose hope. But if we are truly to believe in Our Lord and His promises, we must be humble.

What is virtue? The perseverance (habit) and courage needed to remain good and to face the trials and troubles of life is known as virtue. And what is this virtue we call humility? Saint Augustine calls it the chief virtue upon which the spiritual life is to be built. He says, "If you ask me again what is the fundamental virtue of the spiritual life, I shall keep repeating: Humility, humility."

And more: "For the essence of humility is not low self-esteem but a true knowledge of one's self as one **stands** in the light of God's truth. It is also the virtue that compels its possessor **to walk in the light,** as Christ commands, to perform



The Annunciation

works of charity, which are selfless…Although (humility) can mean one of low estate, its first meaning is that of the virtue itself. When our Lord said, *learn of Me for I am meek* ***and*** ***humble*** *of heart,* the same Greek word *tapeinos* is used, where it can only mean the virtue." (*The Magnificat, Hymn of the Incarnation* by Brian Kelly catholicism.org/magnificat-kelly.html)

"My God, destroy this pride, which separates us so much from Thee!"

Saint Augustine, writing about the life of Jesus asked, "filled with abasement and ignominy, ought I to be afraid of humbling myself? A God seeks abasement. I, a worm, should exalt myself? My God, destroy this pride, which separates us so much from Thee!" Good Saint John Marie Vianney wrote, "What, then should we conclude from this, dear brethren? We should daily ask God with our whole hearts for humility, for the grace to know that we are nothing of ourselves, and that our corporal as well as our spiritual welfare proceeds from him alone. Let us, therefore, practice humility as much as we are able. There is no virtue more pleasing to God than that of humility, and in possessing it we shall possess all the other virtues. Even if we are great sinners, we still have the certainty that if we are humble, God will forgive us. Yes, dear brethren, let us hold fast to this beautiful virtue. It is that which will unite us to God, which will let us live at peace with our neighbors, which will make our crosses less heavy, which will give us the blessed hope of one day seeing God. He, himself, tells us this: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God!'" (*Magnificat*, Vol. 14, No. 6, pp. 62-63.)

An excellent analysis of Our Lady's humility is found in *How to Imitate the Virtues of Our Lady*:

"In humility above all the Blessed Virgin Mary copied the example of her Son. Not many of her words have been recorded in holy Scripture, but the few that have been preserved show her profound humility, which can also be seen in a study of her life.

1. "Humility is truth. To deny the gifts of God is pride; to acknowledge them and to glorify God as their author is genuine humility . . .

2. "True humility seeks humiliations. While not denying the hand of God in her life, instead of boasting about her gifts, Mary hid them in silence from others. For her, it was sufficient to remain in obscurity until God, in His own time and way, would fulfill the prophecy He had inspired — that all generations would call her blessed."

It was as an incentive for us to practice humility, that Our Lord promised: And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled: *and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted* (Matthew: 23:12).

In a homily on humility, Saint John Marie Vianney said, "I say that it is absolutely necessary for us to be humble if we wish to please God by our actions, and be rewarded in heaven. Jesus Christ himself has told us that we can as little expect to gain heaven without humility, as without Baptism. Saint Augustine tells us: 'If you ask me which is the first virtue for a Christian, I will tell you that it is humility. If you ask me again which is the second, I will say to you it is humility. If you again ask me which is the third, I will still say that it is humility, and as often as you ask me this question, I shall always give you the same answer.'"

In the same homily Saint John counseled people to remain humble, remain simple and the more one is so, the more good he will do. Your simplicity of soul and your uncluttered way of life led you to sanctity. This most humble saint also said: "Humility is to the various virtues what the chain is to the Rosary; take away the chain and the beads are scattered, remove humility and all virtues vanish."

Saint John Marie Vianney ends his homily with this:

"Let us, therefore, practice humility as much as we can. There is no virtue more pleasing to God than that of humility. If we possess it, we shall possess all the other virtues. Even if we are great sinners, we can be sure that, if we are humble, God will forgive us.

"Yes, dear brethren, let us practice this beautiful virtue. It will unite us to God; it will let us live at peace with our neighbors; it will make the cross less heavy; it will give us the blessed hope of seeing God in heaven. He, himself, tells us this: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God!' This it is that I wish you all. Amen."

And this is what I also wish all our readers. Humility is the *sine qua non* for every practicing Catholic, and most especially for all Slaves of the Immaculate Heart. Can we not love each other as true brothers and sisters? Can we not be truly devoted to each other since we have the same true mother as our mother, the Mother of all virtues?

Mary, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine! Our Lady of humility, pray for us! ▪

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

Footnote: Several books and articles were used in this article: *True Devotion, Mary – Our Mother, Our Model, and Our Queen* (by Emmanuel d'Alzon)

Total Consecration to Mary, How to Imitate the Virtues of Our Lady (by Fr. Raymond Spitzer)

Pray the Ten Virtues and Imitate Our Lady by Br. Andrew R. Maczynski, MIC and other sources.

MY MORNING CUP OF JOE, PART II
BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

It is early morning. I am in my favorite chair sipping coffee hoping that the morning fog enveloping my mind will soon wear off. My wife's whirlwind of activity continues but I can't stir until the life giving liquid I hold in my hands starts coursing through my body. I contemplate the coming day, the routine I will follow, the actions expected of me and know that I need to get moving. This day, like everyday, will have trials and blessings, and as I stare down at the floor, I spy laying next to my feet the beginning of my first trial of the day — my boots. There was a time in recent memory when I could easily put on my boots in every conceivable position; not so now, for I have to plan a mode of attack which results in the least bodily injury. I use to stand, then bend down to put them on and tie them, but lately, upon rising, I have noticed that every pint of blood I possess has settled in my head, leaving my face beet red and my head spinning from the effort.

Currently I utilize what I call the snatch-pull-and-jerk method. Briefly stated, while sitting, you situate your leg to the closest boot, quickly bend down, snatch it, pull it on, then jerk back up before the blood has a chance to race to your head. There are times when I need to repeat this procedure when the boot I put on belonged to the other foot. My task is only half complete for I still need to tie them, a job I can't do while sitting in the chair: the cranial blood would once more be an issue. I have several methods for this most challenging task, all requiring the use of household furniture. If I think I can get away with it without my wife discovering my treachery, I hobble over to the armrest of the sofa and plant one leg, then another, and try to tie my boots. For fear of being caught, I have to do this quickly, which usually results in an awkward series of events terminating in my losing balance landing in destinations unknown. I tried using the kitchen counter once, but that only resulted in kicking in the cabinet door because I couldn't raise my leg to the top of the counter. (I am normal height for a man, what most people would inappropriately call "short.") I now use the dining room chairs — they are an acceptable height, I can get the task completed without losing too much breath, and if I get them dirty, I can always blame the dog. And for all my concerned readers who would suggest remedies to alleviate my after-middle age morning boot crisis, please don't; my health is fine (although I do smoke) and I would not listen anyway. Not with a stubborn spirit, mind you, but with the same attitude I treat breakfast. You see, the so-called experts, such as doctors and nutritionists, consider breakfast the most important meal of the day, which is why I avoid it like the plague. This scenario doesn't happen every morning, but generally enough to consider it one of my morning trials.

Should I tell you about the shoelace on my right foot — the one that always comes undone several times during the day for no explicable reason? All right, if you insist. I have a theory for this, so bear with me. During the course of the day, I fully expect at some point that the laces on my right boot will come loose — it never happens to the left, just the right. Knowing this, in the morning I always pay special attention to tying it tightly; not too tightly, for once in exasperation I tied with such vehemence that I sent the blood rushing to my head again. Somehow, it always comes loose, so here is my theory. You know how in the northern hemisphere the water in a toilet bowl, once flushed, goes from right to left, but left to right in the southern? My boot, somehow, has become attuned to the gravitational pull of the planet. Crazy, isn't it, but there is no other possible explanation! And now I better get on with the second St. Joseph mystery before I get booted off this newsletter. (And if you're not reading this, I did.)

I call the second decade "Joseph, by Divine inspiration, is summoned to the Temple." I place myself in Joseph's workshop and notice that he is standing still staring at the corner of the room. There is no evidence of work activity, which puzzles me, because he always keeps his hands busy moving calmly but diligently from one project to the next. I recall there are times when there are no work orders from



Saint Joseph

his fellow villagers, and at these times he usually fashions walking staffs, which are always in need. He is staring at his collection of staffs leaning on the far wall, some of these plain, some ornate, and one in particular simply but more elegantly carved than the rest. I have always wondered about this particular staff for it has always stood apart from the rest, and has never been offered for sale and never been used by him. I now notice that his robe is his Sunday best — or "Sabbath best," I suppose. It being the middle of the week, I wonder what occasion would warrant this transformation from his work clothes. He walks to this singular staff, sighs a silent prayer, takes hold of it and leaves his workshop. I follow realizing that he is setting out for the Temple.

He enters the city through a gate, and along the walls are clusters of older men discussing business, politics and the Roman occupation. They pause as he passes by, some wag their heads, others snicker, and still others make rude comments because they know, as I do now, about his mission to the Temple. A proclamation has gone out summoning all eligible men to proceed to the Temple, for a young virgin of remarkable sanctity is to be betrothed to the man most worthy of this singular honor. Every year Joseph has participated in this ritual, and every year he has returned with his sacred vow of virginity intact. He has passed many of these men time and time again, and it has become a running joke with them in seeing him return empty handed. He says a silent prayer forgiving them their callousness, and proceeds to the Temple.

The proclamation has stipulated that the selection of the groom will be chosen by lot using the staffs that all the eligible suitors were required to bring. As he enters, he sees the High Priest, surrounded by the other priests, arranged at the front of the court, and behind them he spies a most delicate creature staring down at the ground seemingly rapt in prayer, cradled by Anna, her protectress. Arranged in front of the priests is a row of young men, some noble, others from the priestly cast, and still others of wealth, all vying for the hand of this most noble virgin. Joseph is thirty-three years of age, poor and unknown, and as he surveys the lot beside him, he assures himself that his unworthiness will negate his election. But this is a singular event, and it is uncommon for the High Priest to preside over this ritual, but he has been inspired by the Holy Ghost to take especial care in regards to this most singular virgin. And though the great and influential do not know the heroic sanctity of Joseph, it has not escaped the priests of the Temple and thus, his presence is commanded.

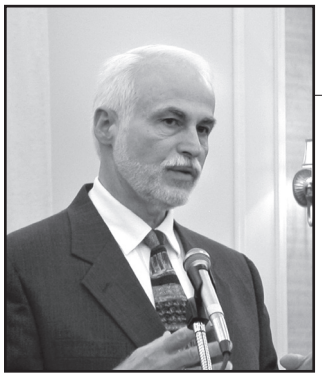
The High Priest is divinely inspired to pray silently the answer given to Moses concerning Aaron's priesthood, "Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom" (Num. 17:5). He steps aside, and motions for Anna to bring the virgin forth and stand before the men, all of the tribe of David. For a moment nothing happens, then the virgin ever so slightly raises her head, glances at Joseph's staff, and it blooms a riot of flowers crowned by the most beautiful lily ever created, a pale reflection of herself. It is her first Fiat, and the ancient prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root" (Isaias 11:1). For a moment there is stunned silence, then gradually all drift away, leaving Joseph standing before his bride, both thinking thoughts best left to the angels. There is a commotion outside and I leave the holy pair to themselves, and go outside the Temple court to ascertain the cause of the tumult. There is a young rejected suitor leaning against the outer wall, crying uncontrollably, seemingly in despair for not being chosen. He suddenly clutches his staff with both hands and breaks it in two across his legs. I am familiar with this young man, for it has been handed down in tradition that he immediately left the Temple and retired to solitude on Mt. Carmel living the remainder of his life in heroic sanctity; a parting gift, I am sure, from the bride and groom.

Joseph exits the Temple, and though it is common custom for the betrothed to celebrate their nuptials amongst relatives, in my meditation I have Joseph returning to his home, there to pray more intensely, for he is considering, as is Mary, what this betrothal means in light of their vows of virginity. He walks by and at first I do not follow, but as I see him recede into the distance with his flower-filled staff regally blowing in the breeze, I am overcome with emotion and try to pursue. I immediately stumble and fall, then realize that I have tripped over my untied shoelaces. Perhaps this is the reason they often come undone, as a subtle reminder that unless a man properly has his reins girt and his feet shod (Cf. Ex. 12:11), he will lack vigilance and stumble on the path of salvation. I give up the chase and leave Joseph to himself and his God, for I feel my presence will not be appreciated.

It is time to leave this meditation, but before I do, I turn once more and enter the Temple. There standing in small little groups are the priests discussing the incredible events of the day. The Virgin and Anna have retired, and as I turn to go, I notice two men huddled together, gesturing feverishly in their excited conversation. They are Annas and Caiphas, and despite what they have witnessed today, I know that during the course of their lives they will trip over their shoelaces frequently, and finally stumble for all eternity, over the Cornerstone they will reject in this very Temple.

To be continued… ▪

Email Russell LaPlume at rlp@catholicism.org



Brother Lawrence Mary, M.I.C.M., Tert.

GUEST COLUMN

HOW PHILOSOPHY HELPS US GET CLARITY IN OUR IDEAS

Most people would agree that our minds are amazing. Gorgeous paintings, stunning statues, uplifting music, complicated mathematical equations, towering skyscrapers, machines that fly, rockets that explore outer space, great literature, elegant philosophies, and computers that allow me to write these words are all the product of someone's mind. To be complete, the list would need to include every idea, practical or impractical, that ever emanated from a human mind.

Considering the astounding complexity and variety that has resulted from thought, it is rather humbling when the student of philosophy learns that the human mind is capable of only three actions: grasping ideas, forming judgments and making inferences. They are referred to as the "three acts of the mind." That is it. From one or more of these three acts has proceeded every product of human thought. In his course on Minor Logic, Brother Francis teaches us that each of these three acts of the mind has its own mark of excellence. Ideas are either clear or confused. Judgments are either true or false. Inferences are either correct or incorrect

When a mind grasps an idea, it has done just that — grasped an idea — but it has done nothing further with it. For example, when a child sees the moon for the first time he grasps an idea. There is no name for it yet, but the idea is in his mind. The grasping of the idea is called "simple apprehension" — meaning it is there in his mind, but the child has not made any judgments about it. As soon as he learns the name for it, he can refer to it by that name (in this case "moon").

Judgment is the second act of the mind. It is the relation of the original idea to something else, and this relationship can be either true or false. For example, the child notices that the moon is overhead. If he makes the connection that the moon is in the sky, his judgment is true. If he judges that the moon is underground, his judgment is false. Judgment is an act of the mind — the act in which truth resides.

The third act of the mind, inference, connects judgments together, from which is formed a conclusion. A conclusion is itself another judgment. "Reasoning" is the name for the process of connecting judgments together for the purpose of drawing a conclusion. For example, this process is what allows the mind to go step-by-step from the judgment that "steel is hard" to eventually conclude "therefore steel is a good material for the structure of a building." An inference follows certain rules and is called "correct" if it follows the rules or "incorrect" if it does not.

Although this essay will not be a comprehensive discussion of the topic, I want to expand upon the mark of excellence in ideas — that they are either clear or confused. Specifically, I will discuss some ways to obtain "clarity" in our ideas, which is the basis of our entire thought process. Without clear ideas, our judgments will not be true and our reasoning will not be correct.

Ideas are the genuine bedrock of thought. Brother Francis insisted that knowing how to get clarity in our ideas, including the ability to distinguish between ideas and phantasms, is absolutely essential to building a true philosophy — what we refer to as *philosophia perennis.*

When the idea is expressed as a word, it called a "term." The first way to gain clarity of a term is by defining it. We

Brother Francis insisted that knowing how to get clarity in our ideas, including the ability to distinguish between ideas and phantasms, is absolutely essential to building a true philosophy...

are all familiar with looking up the definition of a word in a dictionary. "Definition" is defined as an expression expounding the nature of a reality or the signification of a term. The process of defining takes a complex concept and places it in terms of simpler, meaning more abstract, concepts. For example, "man" is defined as a rational animal. "Philosophy" is defined as the love of wisdom. In both cases the terms used to describe the one we are defining are simpler but more abstract. In each instance, we know more about the term than we did before it was defined. The term has been clarified, though not totally; there is more that can be done to help us understand it better.

The second means we use to clarify terms is called "Division." Division is defined as an expression distributing a whole into its parts. In this process, we distribute and distinguish the different meanings of one and the same term. For example, we obtain further clarity of the concept "man" when we break it down into the smaller notes[1] of which it is composed, such as: living, animal, biped, has locomotion, uses tools, has an organic body, has various parts (head, neck, etc.), has free will, etc. For each of the notes we can say, "Man is living; man is a biped; man uses tools; man has free will;" etc. Every time we add a note, we increase our understanding of the concept "man." The notes of the Catholic Church are: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. Each note increases our understanding of what is meant by the "Catholic Church." (An example of clarifying an idea by

[1] A note is "a knowable attribute of an object."

listing its notes is the old cliche: "When I see a bird thatwalks like a duck and swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, I call that bird a duck.")

A third means of clarifying ideas is to investigate the word's etymology (the study of the history of the word). By discovering how the word was first used, from which language it originated, how the usage has changed over time, etc., we again increase our understanding of the idea. For example, "man" first appears in English about A.D. 900 and corresponds to the German "mann," the proto-Germanic "mannaz" or "manwaz," the Dutch "man," the Old Norse "mathr," and the Old English "mannian" which meant garrison. We can then trace its use through the centuries. It has meant "adult human male," "someone," "one," and humanity at large. It should be evident that, even after a short study of the etymology of the term, we have gained a good deal of clarity about it.



Aristotle – Rembrandt

A fourth way to clarify an idea is to see how it is used in books written by great thinkers and writers — the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the great philosophers, the popes, the Ecumenical Councils, even the great novelists and poets. For example, Saint Gregory of Nyssa discusses man, his creation, his status among created beings, his immortal soul, his intellect, his form, and his free will. Saint Thomas devotes large sections of the *Summa Theologica* expounding upon man's senses, his passions, his habits, his actions, his virtues, etc. Each time we read what one of these great thinkers has said about man, we gain greater clarity about the concept of "man."

"Ideas have consequences"

Fifth, we gain clarity when we compare and contrast ideas with one another. For example, for decades there has been an ongoing discussion of "Distributism" versus "Capitalism" and "Socialism." Every time Distributism is compared to another economic or political system, the idea is clarified. We are edified by the way great men such as Chesterton, Belloc and many others debated the notion. Comparing and contrasting ideas to gain clarity can be a long and painful process, as has been the case with Distributism. Though this can be difficult and frustrating at times, for the most important concepts, it is worth the effort.

Brother Francis was adamant that ideas are the building blocks of judgments and reasoning and, ultimately, everything that results in human acts (when the intellect and will are both engaged). Without clear ideas that have been defined, divided, compared and contrasted, their etymology investigated, and their use by great thinkers studied, good thinking can never progress — it can't even begin.

The philosopher Richard Weaver expressed it succinctly: "Ideas have consequences." In fact, it is the title of his book on ideas and what they generate in human affairs. There are countless examples of ideas producing real world consequences — everything from the chair I am sitting on as I write this, to atomic bombs, communist tyranny and Mohammedan butchery, to glorious symphonies, Catholic cathedrals and holy men and women who have given their lives to God. They are all the result of thought: and, because of this, the need to clarify our ideas can never be stressed enough.

For further information about ideas and how they are clarified and used in the processes of judgment and reasoning, the reader is encouraged to further investigate Brother Francis's philosophy courses which can be found at: **store.catholicism.org**. The complete course in Catholic Erudition from the Saint Augustine Institute is located here: **saintaugustineinstitute.org**. ▪

OUR CRUSADE:

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

A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen.
Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, Raccolta No. 579).

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).

Notes:

- Our 2015 Conference is over but you can still listen to the talks on CD or DVD. Visit our online store or call to order.
- A special thank you to Jacob Sullivan for his photograph found on page 5.
- Stay up-to-date with current issues concerning the Church at Catholicism.org.

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Saint Benedict Center
Post Office Box 627
Richmond, NH 03470

info@catholicism.org

(603) 239-6485

Online Donations:
catholicism.org/donations

For more information, visit:
catholicism.org

For our online bookstore:
store.catholicism.org

Immaculate Heart of Mary School



Thank You!

You are the reason we succeed!

Your support has affected the lives of all of our students and we are grateful.

God bless you for your generosity!

Immaculate Heart of Mary School

ihmsnh.org

P.O. Box 627
Richmond, NH 03470

Tel: 603-239-6495
ihmschool@catholicism.org