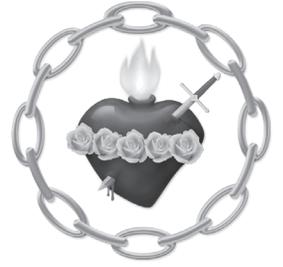


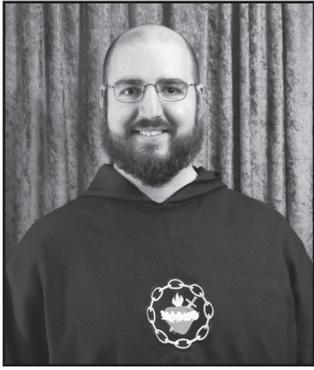
# MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

November/December 2019



*The Immaculate Conception* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo



Br. André Marie,  
M.I.C.M., Prior

## PRIOR'S COLUMN BUT ONLY ONE CHURCH IS 'ONE'

There are many Christian confessions that recite, as part of their official worship, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which professes faith in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.” But only one of those that confess this creed is, in reality, the Church so described by the fathers of the first two ecumenical councils.

These four marks — “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” — are attributes of the true Church of Jesus Christ. They are not mere external attributes, but intrinsic attributes. If, *per impossible*, the Church ceased having all four marks or even any one of them, she would cease being the Church. Moreover, in Catholic theology, the four marks are also considered to be “notes,” that is — in the parlance of scholasticism — *knowable attributes of an object*. To be a note, an attribute has to be clearly manifest, for it helps us to know the object itself. When we say, for instance, that man is a *rational, sentient, living, material substance*, each of these five italicized terms is a note that identifies man. Lacking any of these, the object under consideration would not be a man (for instance, if the object lacked “rational” but had the other four notes, it would be a beast), but we see clearly that an object possessed of all five notes is a man, regardless of its size, shape, sex, color, etc. The humanity of the object is made known by these five notes.

To what purpose does the Church have these notes of oneness, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity? It is so that she may be recognized for what she is, as Vatican I tells us in its decree “On Faith”:

Since, then, without faith it is impossible to please God and reach the fellowship of his sons and daughters, it follows that no one can ever achieve justification without it, neither can anyone attain eternal life unless he or she perseveres in it to the end. So that we could fulfil our duty of embracing the true faith and of persevering unwaveringly in it, God, through his only begotten Son, founded the church, and he endowed his institution with clear notes to the end that she might be recognised by all as the guardian and teacher of the revealed word. To the catholic church alone belong all those things, so many and so marvelous, which have been divinely ordained to make for the manifest credibility of the christian faith.

In this *Ad Rem*, I would like to consider the first of these marks, that of **oneness**, as a unique note of the Catholic Church. In these days when various new forms of unity are

aggressively propagated, it is necessary for us to understand in what the unity of the Church consists, and how it is sharply contrasted with any number of humanly contrived “unities” such as religious ecumenism or political globalism.

The first thing we should say, both to define the unity of the Church and to contrast it with these other unities, is that *it is divinely authored*. This unity is something that came to the Church not through human effort but by the grace of her Founder. Says Pope Leo XIII (*Satis cognitum*, 6):

But He, indeed, Who made this one Church, also gave it unity, that is, He made it such that all who are to belong to it must be united by the closest bonds, so as to form one society, one kingdom, one body — ‘one body and one spirit as you are called in one hope of your calling’ (Eph. iv., 4).

Here is how the BAC Sacrae *Theologiae Summa* treatise “On the Church of Christ” explains the note of oneness:

Unity is the property by which something is undivided in itself and divided from everything else. Therefore unity excludes the inner division of the thing and does not allow it to be a part of some other whole thing.

Social unity, which we are considering, is the working together of several persons for an end, under a supreme social power.

In the Church a threefold social unity is distinguished: of faith, government, and worship, “of minds, wills and things to do,” as Leo XIII says in the Encyclical “*Satis cognitum*”: D 3305.

Unity of faith is the agreement of minds in the same profession of faith under the supreme Magisterium of the Church.

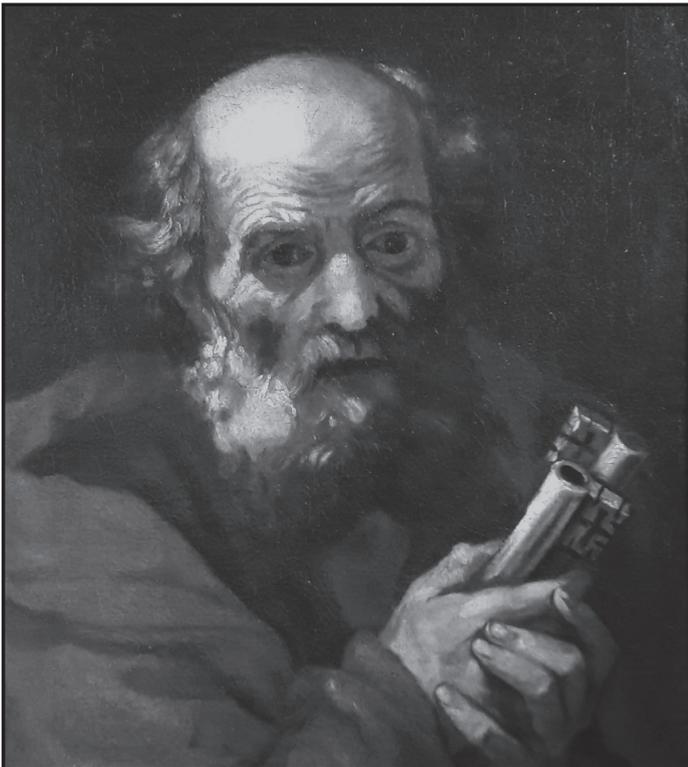
Unity of government is the agreement of wills working for the same social end under the supreme power of the Church of ruling.

Unity of worship is harmony in the celebration of sacrifice and in the use of the sacraments and of liturgical acts, under the supreme power of the Church of sanctifying.

Notice that the first paragraph of this excerpt says that unity constitutes something as undivided in itself yet divided from everything else. This unity is what I like to call “ontological one” as contrasted from “mathematical one.” Mathematical one is a number; it is divisible, and is so to a virtual infinity, for it can be divided by any number, producing long strings of numbers with a decimal point in front of them. By contrast, ontological unity is a oneness of being which is by its very nature *indivisible*.

The Jesuit author of that BAC treatise above cited, Rev. Joachim Salaverri, tells us that the note of unity also divides an object from everything else. This means that the Catholic Church must, by virtue of her unity, necessarily be divided from all Churches that are not her. Otherwise, she is not truly one in herself, but subsists as part of a larger whole: a crazy idea that has in fact entered into Modernist ecclesiology. From this “divisive” aspect of Church unity, which is not sufficiently taught in our day, we may conclude that those who engage in ecumenical endeavors to achieve a generic, non-Catholic “unity” of Christians are actually *obscuring* the oneness of the Church. That, of course, is simply evil.

Catholic unity embraces the threefold unity of faith, of government, and of worship that correspond to the three munera (offices) of the bishops: teaching, governing, and sanctifying. Taken together, these things keep the Church one in herself and divide her from all that is not the Catholic Church. I say “taken together” because it is possible for one to have the faith of the Church, and even the worship of the Church, while being in schism. An authentic schismatic, as distinguished from someone who is merely disobedient or even unjustly marginalized by the hierarchy, is one who rejects the governing authority of the pope or the bishops in communion with him. His is a sin not against faith, but against charity (cf. *The Contradiction of Core*).



If the kind of unity that we describe as ontological and also as divinely authored is something possessed by the Catholic Church, then it is necessarily lacking in every other Christian body claiming the name Church — whether Protestants, Anglicans, or the Eastern Orthodox. None of these have unity in themselves, as seen by their historical “multiplication by division,” giving us not only the various sects, but even distinct synodal confessions within those sects (e.g., the Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Baptists, each of which has multiple permutations with differing professions of faith). Moreover, many of these sects are only insufficiently distinguished from each other, hence the history of sectarian amalgamation among these bodies, so that new, hyphenated sects sometimes arise that combine the old ones (e.g., the Unitarian-Universalists, the United Church of Christ, and various “federated congregations”). The Orthodox, of course, aside from having the seven sacraments and adhering to a greater number of Catholic doctrines, also have a greater cohesiveness among themselves. Yet, the fact that they do not accept any ecumenical councils after the first seven and are constitutionally incapable of holding one (even though these bodies have undergone the kind of historical crises that would call for ecumenical councils) is a sufficient indicator that they, too, are essentially divided from one another. The symbolic respect shown to the Patriarch of Constantinople does not prevent Moscow from frequently opposing and upstaging the older yet much smaller Orthodox body. It seems that the Third Rome often still thinks she has superseded the Second Rome. (For a glimpse at the state of unity among the Orthodox Churches, consider the so-called Pan-Orthodox Council and recent events in Ukraine.) The only way they can come into a genuine unity is if they come together under the pope and bishop of the first Rome, or “elder Rome,” as the city on the Tiber has been called by at least one ecumenical council (Constantinople III, cf., Roberto de Mattei, “The Heretic Pope”).

One practical way the note of unity is manifested is the moral and political opposition that the Catholic Church suffers from all that is not Catholic. While we might not like being opposed, persecuted, or hated, this does serve to distinguish the one Church from what is not the one Church; it also fulfills the words of Our Lord about being hated like Him. For an interesting little study of this aspect of the Church’s oneness, see “Hatred Converted Me To Catholicism,” by the Catholic convert, Laramie Hirsch.

To remind ourselves of the supernatural character of the Church’s oneness, we should meditate on the Scriptural proofs of this doctrine, including these passages:

- Matthew 12:25: “Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

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- John 10:16: “And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”
  - I Cor. 12:12: “For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ.”

And we cannot omit to mention the High Priestly Prayer of Our Lord recorded in John 17, especially verse 21, or Saint Paul’s lengthy and deep encomium of Church unity in Ephesians 4:1-16.

This unity that Our Lord gave to His Church is found in our one faith taught by the Magisterium, our one government via the pope and the bishops in communion with him, and our unity of worship, which is manifested in the Church’s sacramental and liturgical rites, most especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the great Sacrament of Unity itself, the Holy Eucharist.

It is fitting if I close out these lines with a tribute to this great Mystery of the Altar; Saint Paul, in I Corinthians (10:16-17), explains the supernatural unity of the Church in terms of Its very matter:

The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, one body: all that partake of one bread.

And I will happily give the last word to Saint Augustine, who comments on this passage in his Sermon 272 (cited in Emile Mersch, S.J., *The Whole Christ*, pp. 426-427):

But why is this mystery accomplished with bread? Let us offer no reason of our own invention, but listen to the Apostle speak of this sacrament, ‘We are one br’ead, one body.’ Understand this and rejoice. Unity, truth, piety, charity. ‘One bread.’ What is this one bread? It is one body formed of many. Remember that bread is not made of one wheat; at baptism water was poured over you, as flour is mingled with water, and the Holy Spirit entered into you like the fire which bakes the bread. Be what you see, and receive what you are.

This is what the Apostle teaches concerning the bread. Though he does not say what we are to understand of the chalice, his meaning is easily seen. ... Recall, my brothers, how wine is made. Many grapes hang from the vine, but the juice of all the grapes is fused into unity.

Thus did the Lord Christ manifest us in Himself. He willed that we should belong to Him, and He has consecrated on His altar the mystery of our peace and unity. ■

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Sister Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.

## CONVENT CORNER

### HORSE SENSE

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**D**ear Reader, I have seen the warning a few times in my life: “Bridge out!” These days, with steel girders and multiple layers of protection, it is not too common that a bridge gets washed out or otherwise

becomes impassible. But, in the days of horse and buggy and dirt roads, it was more frequent.

So, just imagine clopping along a road on a rainy night. Suddenly, your horse stops unexpectedly in the dark. In fact, your horse absolutely refuses to go forward, no matter what you do to make him advance. Upon getting out of your buggy and examining the road, you find that it is simply not there! The waters from the storm have culminated in a raging tide and washed a bridge away. Good horse!!! It saved your carriage!...and your life.

Now that the mystery has been solved and you are at peace, you might review your emotional reactions. First, you were puzzled when your horse stopped. Then, you were, perhaps, frustrated as he showed himself immovable. You may even have gotten positively angry with your “disobedient” horse! Did your anger even cause you to become inhumane and whip him and verbally abuse him to try to get him to do your will?

When you finally dismounted and headed into the dark and rainy night to find out for yourself what was going on, you were probably feeling furious and intending to get your horse moving if it was the last thing you did.

Then, when you realized that the road had disappeared into a raging current, you probably were utterly shocked and struck with fear. You then drew back to absorb the reality of a bridge being out and the imminent death you just avoided. Then, turning to your horse, you regarded him with humility...and gratitude.

You might say that your horse was trying to communicate to you (firmly and gently) that there was a dangerous situation. And, you simply didn’t want to hear it. Poor horse!

On the road to Eternal Life (in Via), there are many exit ramps. Every heresy and immoral lifestyle has its own path veering from the path to Life (the Way of Truth). At the end of each of these detours, the bridge to Eternal Life is indeed out. We should know this with certitude as Catholics and so should do all in our power to warn and convince our neighbors on these dangerous paths to get back on the main

road — the Way of Truth — which is believing and living the Catholic Faith.

But don’t fool yourself into imagining that the persons you want to help will understand and accept the warnings (admonitions) you give. Certainly, don’t expect gratitude and respect from them! Remember what happened to the gentle horse.

“Wonder not if the world hates you” said Our Lord. If you admonish others correctly, it will hurt YOU, dear Reader. It will cause a bit (or more) of a martyrdom for you. In fact, it is this very fact that proves the charity of a good admonition. Yes, you are “willing good to another” by warning him, and are willing to take the painful repercussions of his wounded pride and blind frustration.

In the end, we can’t force others to change their course and avoid danger. We can, however, add other powerful means to convince them, such as prayer and sacrifice. Dear Reader, if we really want to help others, we won’t merely use words but will take on the burden of others’ sins by sacrificing ourselves.

Yes, in the end it will be very obvious what is what—either the person you are admonishing will see for himself that the bridge is out and will find his way back to the main road to Eternal Life. Or, the person will become obstinate, harm those around him (including you) and end up plunging over the edge of that precipice to Everlasting Death.

The gratitude that we so crave will certainly be ours if the person changes his ways. But, even if he doesn’t convert and save his soul, the Gratitude of God and His loving embrace awaits us in Eternity for our efforts. This will be more than sufficient to console and reward us.

A little hint: if you are a slave of Our Lady, ask Her to work through you before you attempt any admonitions. And then, be docile to Her. You will be amazed at the results!

And one more point, dear Reader! You will sometimes find yourself in the position of the driver of that carriage, with someone trying to admonish you (yes, even YOU). You could become inhumane like that driver...or you could START with gratitude and humility. It’s your choice! Knowing that correction is such a good thing to give to others, you should want it for yourself, dear Reader. That’s just a little horse sense! ■

*Email Sister Marie Thérèse, at [convent@catholicism.org](mailto:convent@catholicism.org)*

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cancelled. The only reason given was “editorial decisions.” In other words: Mike had become too Catholic for Sirius Radio.

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Mr. Brian Kelly

## KELLY FORUM SHE CAME, GOD SAW, SHE CONQUERED

*And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For*

*all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living. (Mark 12:42-44)*

**T**he account of the widow's mite is recorded by Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. The Holy Ghost, the First Author of the Scriptures, deemed the lesson to be learned by this particular commendation of Our Lord to be most salutary, having been twice highlighted in the Gospels.

Our Savior has just finished His temple discourses, first with a group of the pharisees by themselves, then some of the pharisees and Herodians together, then some of the Sadducees alone. The pharisees sought to lay hands on Him, for they understood well enough that Jesus' preceding parable of the wicked husbandmen who killed the landowner's servants (and even his "most dear" son) was directed at them. They refrained though, for at this time "they feared the people." That would change shortly after, on Good Friday.

Our Lord continued His teaching in the temple, again, using questions to educate the scribes concerning the Divinity of the Christ, the Son of David: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord, and whence is he then his son?" (Mark 12:36-37). To which the scribes had no answer. Then Jesus said to the multitude that were hearing His word "gladly": "Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and to be saluted in the marketplace, And to sit in the first chairs, in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers: Who devour the houses of widows under the pretense of long prayer: these shall receive greater judgment" (ibid., vss 39-40).

So many times, Our Savior, and the inspired writers of both Old and New Testaments, stressed the obligation to care for the widows and orphans. How He despised the hypocrisy of those pharisees! They flaunted long prayers in public while they stole the very houses from the hapless widows who had solicited their intercession with God by donating money and property.

Now, after these confrontations, the God-man was tired; so, too, His Apostles. They sat down, resting in the temple, in sight of the treasury, a large chest used as a donation box. The coins that were deposited in the treasury were used to support the priests and the poor. And, too, widows.



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Thus we read in Second Maccabees, when a Judas-like character revealed to a certain neighboring king that the treasury in the Jerusalem temple (over which the wretch had guardianship under the good high priest Onias) was loaded with treasures, Onias informed this king's spy that "these were sums deposited, and provisions for the subsistence of the widows and the fatherless" (2 Macc. 3:10).

Jesus watched. He who knows all things, who reads the heart of every man, was observing the almsgivers. He had just upbraided the pharisees for their abuse of poor widows, now He points a certain widow out to the Twelve. Let us read the account from Mark:

"[M]any that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living" (vss 42-44).

There is no mystery in the account. The words are straightforward and lucid. How is it that the two mites are deemed "more than" all that the others had cast into the treasury? Jesus tells us Himself: "They did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living."

How poor she was! A mite (*lepton* in Greek) was the smallest coin in circulation in Judea. Equal to, it is affirmed by those who know these things, about six minutes of a work wage at the time. Mark notes that two mites equal a "farthing." The smallest Roman coin was the *quadran*, and it took four mites, or two farthings, to equal a quadran. Forty mites equalled the Roman denarius. Another Hebrew coin was called a *shekel*, the Greek equivalent of which was called a stater. This latter word was used in only one verse in scripture, and that in Matthew's Gospel, on the rather humorous occasion of Our Lord sending Peter to the sea to catch a fish with a hook and pull a stater from its mouth. The stater was enough to pay the temple tax for two heads. A stater equaled two Greek silver coins called "didrachmas" in the Gospel. I think I have all that right. In any event, nothing in Holy Scripture is superfluous, even monetary terms.

The fathers teach that it is not the amount of the gift that pleases God but the dispositions of the heart. A rich man may give much, but if it is a small percentage of his wealth, then it is accounted for less than a poor man who, although he give a small amount, he gives a larger percentage of his earnings. The magnanimity of this woman surpasses all, in that she gave "all she had, even her whole living." Saint John Chrysostom says: "God does not appreciate the smallness of the gift, but the greatness of the affection with which it

is offered." (Homily on Hebrews) And Saint Bede (quoted by Cornelius a Lapide on this passage): "He weighs not the substance, but the conscience of the offerers."

Please note that a rich man who is generous in charity can certainly be magnanimous in spirit. He can be, indeed must be, "poor in spirit." Abraham was blessed by God with great possessions, but he was magnanimous. In fact, it was not a requirement of Our Lord's for an Apostle to be financially poor. Some of the Twelve were, no doubt. But, it may well be that Bartholomew, was wealthy; he did have a name of nobility, for Bartholomew means "son of Ptolomey". The Ptolomey were Macedonian kings who ruled in Egypt from 323-30 BC. Perhaps Matthew, the tax collector, was rich. He had, after all, lots of friends, even hosting a well-attended banquet for Christ after his calling. Zebedee, the father of the Apostles James and John, had a fishing business that seems to have had a good crew of employees. There is a tradition that he supplied the priests of the temple with his catches and that this is why Saint John was, as we read in the Gospel accounts of the passion, "known to the high-priest."

Nevertheless, the widow, singularly praised by Our Lord for her magnanimity, was *mightier* (pardon the pun) than all in her total detachment and confidence in God's providence. She believed that God would change the water of her two mites into wine.

Perhaps she was familiar with the Psalms wherein it is promised that the Almighty "is the father of orphans, and the judge of widows. God in his holy place" (Psalm 67:6). The Psalms were part of the daily prayer of pious Jews.

It is most certain that Jesus, whose most dear mother would nurture the infant Church for twenty-five years as a widow, left this obligation to care for widows as a legacy for all time, until the end of time.

"Religion," teaches Saint James the Less, "clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep one's self unspotted from this world" (James 1:27). And, too: Saint Paul "Honour widows, that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children, or grandchildren, let her learn first to govern her own house, and to make a return of duty to her parents: for this is acceptable before God. But she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, let her trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day" (1 Tim 5: 3-5).

She is anonymous on earth while in heaven her name is written in the Book of Life. She has no feast day. She purchased the Heart of Jesus with two mites. She is His exquisite *Treasure*, His secret. ■

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## GUEST COLUMN SARWAR DAR



Sister Mary Peter, M.I.C.M.

**O**n a busy corner in a Connecticut town is a 7-Eleven. There, one of our Sisters met, while doing our missionary work, a man who very quickly became a most dear friend of the Sisters. His name is Sarwar Dar (That was, according to our

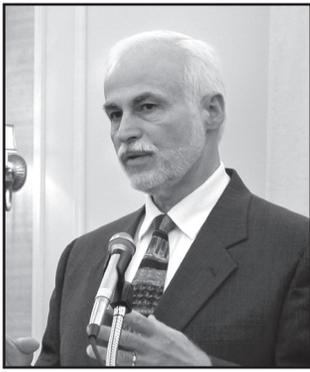
best calculations, back in the summer of 2011). We go back to that town every year and always make a point of going to see him. Sometimes we even stop while traveling to other missionary fields. When he was recently in the hospital after cancer surgery, some of the Sisters were able to visit him. If you could meet him, you could understand better why we love him so much.

Starting with that very first meeting, he is always happy to see us. He loves Catholic Sisters. He had been taught by Sisters back in Pakistan, and they obviously made a deep impression on his heart. (He is sending his granddaughter to a Catholic school now.) Sarwar always takes so gratefully whatever literature, holy cards or sacramentals we have for him. And he is so generous to us. He offers us drinks and food. Once, when one of the Sisters had a cold, he gave a box of tea so that all week long she could have hot drinks. He sends us donations in the mail and always sends a Christmas card. Yet this little explanation only superficially shows why he is so dear to us.

Now, here is the surprising thing: Sarwar Dar is not a Catholic. He is a Moslem. We were surprised when we found this out. Meeting him and talking with him, you would think he is a Catholic. He loves Jesus and Mary and seems to accept the truths of the Catholic Faith. Many things that are taught by the Moslems he disagrees with. "So, why hasn't he converted?" you ask. We ask him the same thing and have often spoken to him of his need for baptism and of all the treasures he will gain once he becomes a child of God.



It was Sarwar Dar's idea and request that this article be written. He wanted to be able to show his friends in Pakistan that he, a Moslem, is friends with Catholic Sisters. We are happy to oblige him, but ask that you join us in storming heaven, begging Almighty God and our Heavenly Mother to bring about his conversion — to bring him and his family safely into the One, True Church founded by Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Mary. Then, God willing, we can all be together in heaven for all eternity. ■



Br. Lawrence, M.I.C.M., Tert.

## GUEST COLUMN

### WHY PHILOSOPHY XVII—IT MAY BE POSSIBLE, BUT IS IT REAL?

A question that many modern biologists wrestle with is *abiogenesis*, a fancy word which means the theory that somehow life arose from non-life. The following statements were taken from an article about abiogenesis. I invite you to read them, note

the underlined words or phrases, and try to analyze what is the common thread.

1. “The biochemistry of life may have begun shortly after the Big Bang.”
2. “If life arose relatively quickly on Earth ... then it could be common in the universe.”
3. “The panspermia hypothesis suggests that microscopic life was distributed to the early Earth by space dust...”
4. “I was compelled to introduce a new word, in order to designate the process by which living matter is supposed to come into being.”
5. “Oparin proposed that the ‘spontaneous generation of life’...”

The article is filled with similar statements. “May have,” “could be,” “suggests that,” “is supposed to,” and “proposed that” have one thing in common. They are statements of *possibility* — that it is possible for something to exist, when, in fact, it does not exist. As you may have known already, there is not a shred of evidence for the existence of *abiogenesis* — that life arose from non-life. No matter how many different ways the possibility may be stated, it remains a mere possibility.

I have used *abiogenesis* as an example of a logical error that I heard or read countless times over the years. The error is this: The assertion or assumption that, in one way or another, to move from the possible to the real is a valid argument. The error is a violation of an iron-clad rule of logic: *A posse ad esse non valet illatio*, from the possible to the real is not a valid argument.

I have seen this error in almost every area of thought—theology, philosophy, biology, psychology, astronomy, politics, ethics, and the list goes on. A while ago I was having a friendly discussion about the so-called “Baptism of Desire.” My opponent was bright and loved to use, in his words, “strict logic.” He tried to show that the theory is a dogma of the Faith or a universally-held opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. When he was unable to demonstrate this, his final argument was: “Is it possible for God to give someone a baptism of desire?” Of course I agreed. His logical

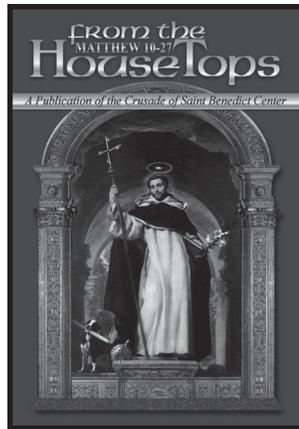
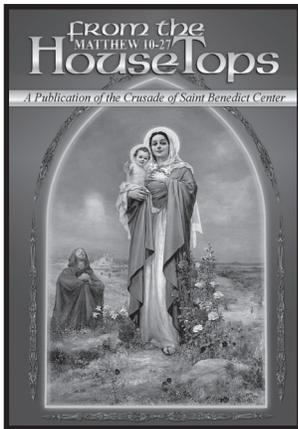
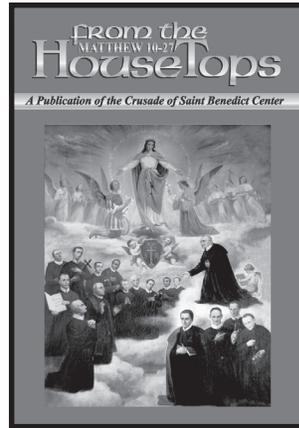
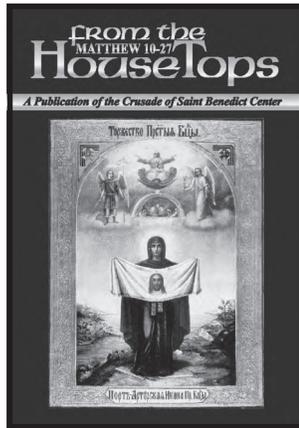
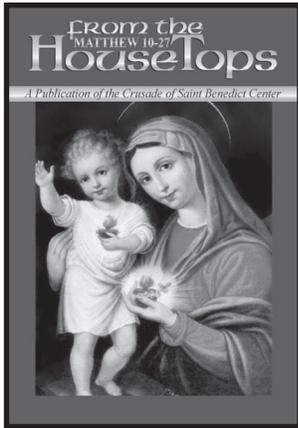
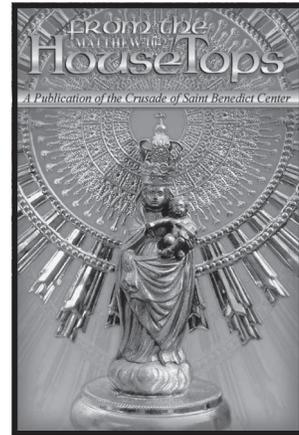
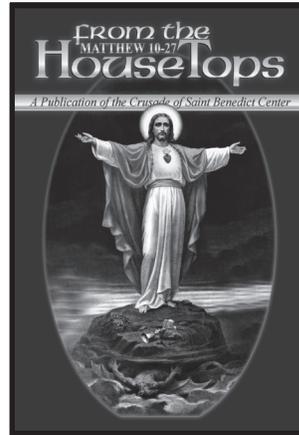
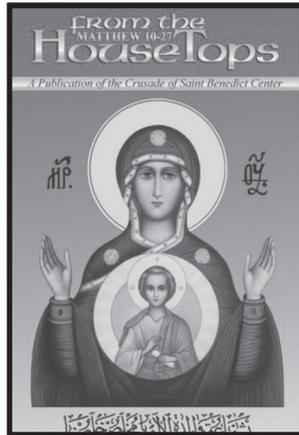
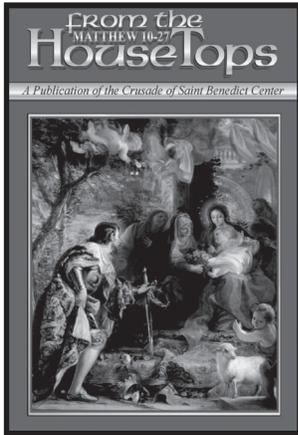
conclusion was, “Therefore, baptism of desire must exist!” Since that was the best he had to offer, we agreed it was pointless to continue the discussion.

This same logical error is behind, of all things, our national space exploration program. “Impossible!” you say. In fact it is not only possible, it is very real. The error is this: It is possible for intelligent life to exist somewhere else in the universe, therefore it must exist. Many years ago, I saw a talk given by the head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) who explained that the entire space exploration program is driven by the belief that it is possible that life might exist somewhere else in the universe. The goal of the program is to find evidence of this possible life. I am not making this up. From the possible to the real is not only an invalid argument, it is also costing taxpayers a huge amount of money.

This error is what drives the entire “space alien” and UFO (Unidentified Flying Objects) industry. “Is it possible there are space aliens?” Yes. “Is it possible that UFOs are actually alien space ships?” Yes. “Well then, what better proof do we have that aliens actually exist than unidentified objects sailing around in the sky! Roswell and Area 51, here we come!” While these folks sound a little over-the-top and are often characterized as fools, their basic logic is no different from the “experts” at NASA.

Where the proponents of “possibility thinking” have a particular field day is in biology when promoting the Theory of Evolution. Here, the experts have taken the error one step further. They are not content to merely commit an error, they wish to compound it until it can be passed off as a truth. The above quoted statements about *v* are also examples of this relatively new invention called the *Logic of Possibility*, which asserts that a string of Possibilities are considered to add up to a Probability. Basically, it means the more often I assert a possibility and the more ways I am able to express it, the better chance that the thing actually exists. If you read the writings of modern Evolutionists, you find them filled with possibility statements, all of which are building towards a grand Probability, which is eventually trundled out as Fact.

Such faulty thinking can become tragic when it affects family relationships. As Brother Francis said many times: Ideas have consequences, not just theoretical, but real, heart-breaking ones. Recently, within a certain society of Traditional priests, a group of several priests and a number of followers has risen up who call themselves the “resistance.” What they are resisting is the *possibility* that the organization may reconcile with the Modernists who are currently in



## FROM THE HOUSETOPS

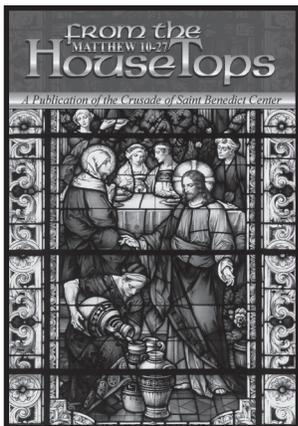
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charge of the Vatican. Instead of waiting for hard evidence of such capitulation, they have noisily separated themselves to avoid the possibility of contamination should such a reconciliation take place. Since they have no real evidence for their claims, they become more strident as they hunt fruitlessly for evidence to justify their suspicions. Family members have taken sides and bitter disputes have arisen as a result. This should be a time where the guides of one's actions are the virtue of prudence and having one's priorities in order. Instead of taking the prudent "wait and see" approach and recognizing that families are under attack on all sides and that preserving the family should be of great importance, families are literally being torn apart over a possibility.

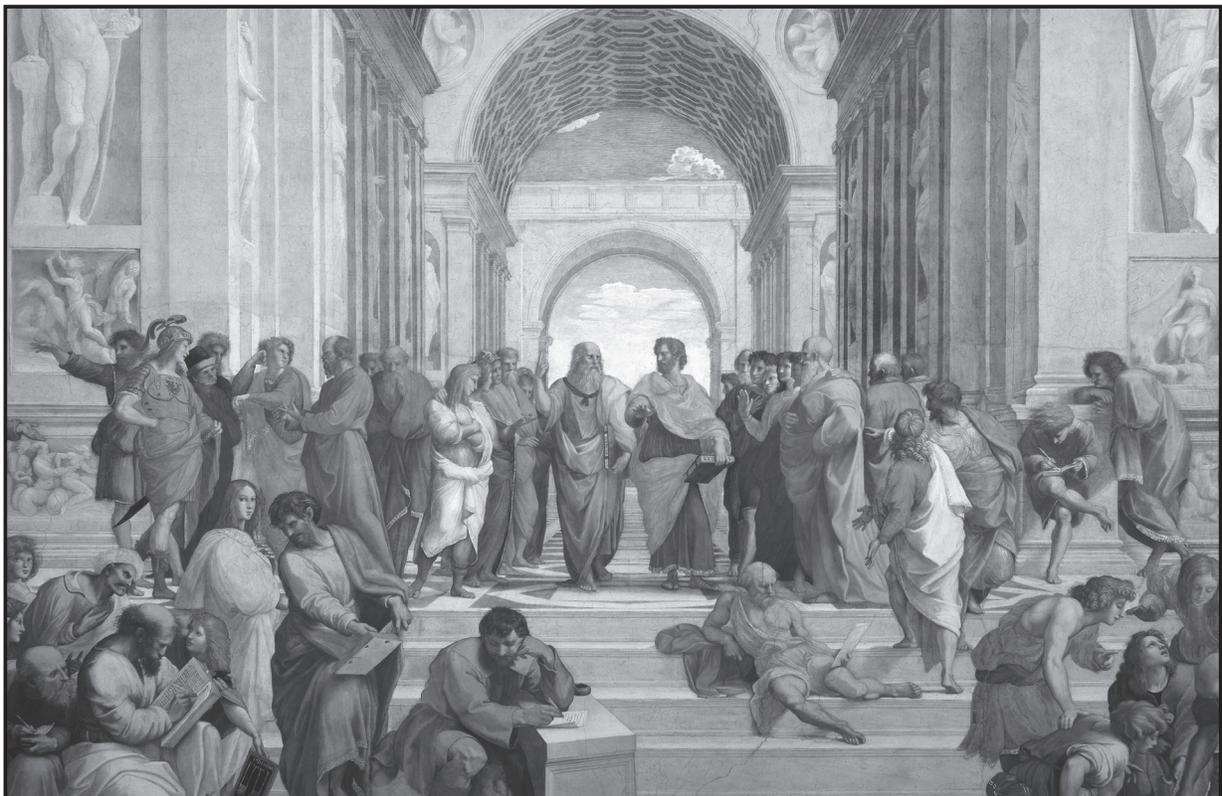
Are there exceptions to this? The error that something is real based only on its possibility will always be an error. However there are times where one may need or desire to act on the possibility that something is true. In the area of prudential judgments we often cannot be certain if something is a mere possibility because our knowledge is limited. For example, a cancer patient who has exhausted every available or affordable standard treatment chooses one that offers the mere possibility of a cure. A husband and wife find their marriage is plunged into a crisis when the husband tells his wife that he has never loved her. She stays with him because

of the possibility he may come to love her some day and to protect the children from the disaster of divorce. Do these actions violate the rules of logic?

Unlike the first cases cited above, we are not dealing with absolutes or the complete lack of evidence, thus we are not dealing with the strictly possible. It would be incorrect to say "It is possible that the treatment will cure me, therefore it will cure me" but we are not talking about strict logic here. If the treatment has shown any success at all, it has become more than a possibility. In the case of the wife who hopes for a rekindling of her husband's love, again, this is not a mere possibility. When dealing with human actions and attitudes which involve free will, the hope for her husband's love is justified.

In conclusion, the next time you encounter the argument-if something is possible, then it must be real — your "Spidey-senses" should be on high alert. Unless there is a valid reason for the thing to be more than a possibility, the error should be pointed out. If the person making the argument persists in the error, the discussion should be suspended or terminated simply because it will not be productive.

How to avoid this and other fallacies is an important part of Brother Francis's Philosophy lectures. The good news is that it is possible for you to take these classes and your decision to sign up for them will turn the possibility into reality. ■



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V. Let us pray for our pontiff, Pope Francis.

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, Francis, 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).

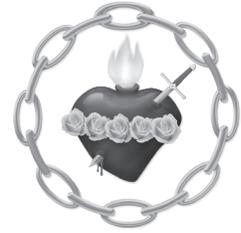
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*Ex Cathedra*: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

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