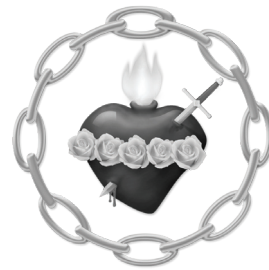


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



March/April 2021



Last Supper by Daniele Crespi



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN TO HEAVEN WITH YOU

Catholics should always have some good spiritual book that they are reading. “Spiritual reading,” and its more ancient cousin, *Lectio Divina*, are staples of the Catholic spiritual diet.¹ The need for devout reading has always

been a reality for the faithful; but, the more surrounded we are by lies, filth, and ugliness, so much the more do we need to arrange scheduled encounters with the true, the good, and the beautiful so that we can “touch base,” so to speak, with our heavenly homeland.

Happily, I am reading a book now that I can highly recommend to my readers, be they lay, religious, or clerical. The book is *To Heaven with Diana*, by Father Gerald Vann, O.P. It was published in 1960, but has been reprinted by the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary in Summit, New Jersey. The book’s subtitle adequately summarizes its subject matter, even if it cannot possibly do justice to the treasures one will find between its covers: “A Study of [Blessed] Jordan of Saxony and [Blessed] Diana d’Andalò with a Translation of the Letters of Jordan.”

There is a tendency in many modern spiritual writers to be highly introspective and “psychological.” Saint Augustine was both of those, to be sure, and he wrote insightfully and movingly in this vein; it is an undeniable part of the charm of his writing. But he also balanced these aspects with something absolutely essential if our introspection is not to become cramped, narcissistic, childish, or self-serving: He combined it with what we might call *looking at Our Lord*.

Some of the more modern writers who venture into the interior landscape of the soul, even the good ones, are deficient in this area. Self-knowledge is important, indispensable even, but this pursuit can become harmful if it is not joined to something else that is absolutely indispensable to the spiritual life, the knowledge of God.

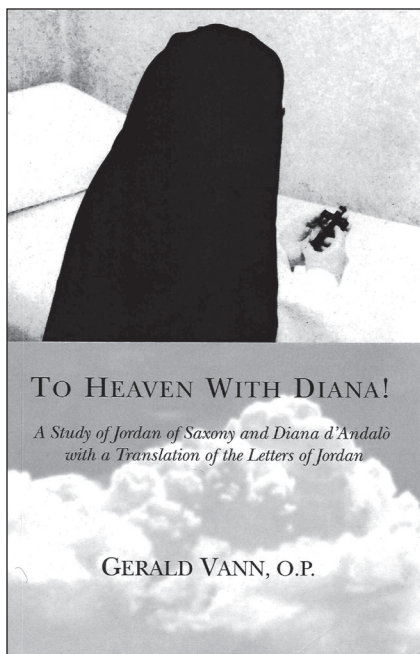
The second Master General of the Order of Preachers and consequently Saint Dominic’s immediate successor, Blessed Jordan of Saxony (c. 1190-1237) oversaw an immense expansion of the Dominican Order. While he was attentive to the recruiting and formation of numerous men as friars, he did not neglect the cloistered

nuns who were — in Saint Dominic’s vision of this great spiritual family — the contemplative “prayer engine” of the Order of Preachers. If the friars could not give themselves as much to prayer as they would like, owing to their pressing duties of preaching and lecturing, the good nuns could participate in the Dominican “Holy Preaching” by their beautiful life of contemplation and penance in the cloister. Because Master Jordan was as convinced as his Holy Father Dominic of the sagacity of this arrangement, he fought for the nuns and saw to their spiritual formation.

Modern readers who have been infected to one degree or another of a spirit of Jansenism or of modern sensualism may be scandalized to discover how tenderly and lovingly this holy friar addresses his “beloved” Sister Diana (1200-1236), a noble woman of keen intelligence and strong will, ten years his junior, and described by her contemporaries as beautiful in appearance. If it is true that modern man, in his weakness, has so sensualized the very notion of love that even the masculine love of friendship cannot be imagined by many of our contemporaries in terms other than the homoerotic, so, too, have we made it that all love between men and women *must be sexual*.

That is a pity, a grotesque falsehood, and a standing condemnation of our age. Granted that Saints Benedict and Scholastica were biological brother and sister (twins, in fact), and therefore less likely to raise pharisaical or prurient eyebrows, there remain a large number of saintly pairings of men and women who enjoyed a friendship that was not only close and mutually beneficial to the two friends, but also “charismatic” in the proper theological sense of that word, i.e., their friendship was not only for the good of the two

individuals in question but also for the *common good*. A partial list would include Saints Francis and Clare, Saints Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal, Saints Margaret Mary Alacoque and Claude Colombiere, Saints Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Saints Patrick and Brigid of Kildare, Saint Catherine of Siena and Blessed Raymond of Capua. These friendships sanctified the friends named here, but they also sanctified others, in some cases, *many* others. The evangelism of Ireland and its highly developed male and female monasticism, the Carmelite reform, the founding of the Poor Clares and the Daughters of the Visitation, and other such works were more or less directly the products of these chaste and holy friendships. The many thousands of canonized saints produced by some of their common



undertakings bear witness to the spiritual fecundity of these friendships.

What is impressive about the way Blessed Jordan writes is the fact that Holy Scripture drips off his pen because his mind has been so completely soaked in it. He does not merely quote from the Bible; he has so interiorized it that Biblical language and images become his own. It was the task of Father Vann — for which we are grateful — to annotate these letters so that modern readers can know the passages being cited. Specially deserving of mention here is the frequency with which Old-Testament allusions are made, mostly in their allegorical or tropological senses. Speaking of which, Blessed Jordan's letters are wonderfully suffused with the fourfold way of reading Holy Scripture so common in the Middle Ages, the *quadriga*. Along with Scripture, the fonts of Jordan's thoughts and expressions are the Church's liturgy and the *Rule* of Saint Augustine (common to both the friars and nuns of the Order of Preachers).

Blessed Jordan of Saxony would have Blessed Diana d'Andalò look at *Our Lord* frequently. Speaking of Jesus Christ in the spousal terms that have long been standard in the lexicon of consecrated women, he constantly reminds her of the presence of her divine Bridegroom. When he thought that she was too given to bodily austerities, Brother Jordan urged Sister Diana to moderation and reminded her that what matters is loving God, desiring Him, contemplating Him, and loving her sisters in the monastery with "one mind and one heart in God" (Augustinian *Rule*).

For the edification of my readers, I will include one complete but short letter of Blessed Jordan's here. It was sent to Blessed Diana in her monastery at Bologna from Magdeburg, Germany, where he found himself in September of 1225 (pg. 70-71):

Brother Jordan, useless servant of the Order of Preachers, to his beloved daughter Diana: may she be brought by Jesus Christ her Bridegroom into his cellar of wine [Cant. 2:4].

Since I know that your love makes you anxious about me, I wanted to let you know that after leaving Verona, the God of our salvation making my journey prosperous for me [Ps. 67:20], and giving new strength to my weak body, on the third day after the feast of St. Matthew I arrived here at Magdeburg safe and in good health and was given a very joyful welcome by our brethren, who had long been anxious about me, and by a great number of other people. I was much consoled to find everything in our convent here [a house of friars] in good order, and the recent reception of several novices rejoiced me greatly. Give thanks then to God, whose mercy looks so kindly upon us in all things [Ps. 68:17], and gives us so much more than we deserve.

For the rest, beloved, preserve a due measure in your labours and apply the curb of discretion to all

that you do; so that as you run after your Bridegroom, drawn by the fragrance of his ointments [Cant. 1:3], and longing to offer him myrrh, which is the chastening of the flesh, you may yet leave place for an offering of gold, following the example of the three holy Wise Men who, opening their treasure-chests, offered to Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh [Mt. 2:11]. Thus your treasure chest must not be so filled with myrrh as to leave no room for the gold of wisdom and discretion. You must be able to say with the bride in the Song of Songs, A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me [Cant. 1:12]; she does not liken her beloved to a great weight or load of myrrh, but to a little bundle, as showing that a due measure is to be observed in all things. Often I have told you this when I was with you, and now that I am far away I say it again: you must go forward on your way with such prudence as to be able to climb up, without stumbling, to your goal which is the land of heaven, led thither by the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who is blessed for ever and ever [2 Cor. 11:31], Amen.

Commend me to the prayers of your sisters and greet them for me; and may the Spirit of truth be with you in all things [Jn. 15:26].

The next letter he sends her is a tour de force of both mourning and consolation. Brother Henry, a priest of the Order and the Prior of Cologne, has just died and Blessed Jordan is weeping for his beloved brother, son, and friend, whose death he has felt very tenderly. At the same time, Blessed Diana is mourning the death of a biological brother and sister of her own. Jordan gives full vent to his sorrow while rejoicing for the joy of the elect in heaven — without falling into presumption on behalf of their beloved deceased: "Yet, let us pray for them, so that if in death they were still burdened with some small failings, they may be the more swiftly loosed therefrom and receive their crowns" (pg. 73).

The image we get here is of two very holy people who were a man and a woman of flesh and blood, of profound intellect and subtle feeling. Their religion did not make them insouciant to human suffering, but all the more sympathetic to it. It did not make them love each other or their friends and family less, but more. In short, their religion did not dehumanize them; it made them all the more human because it made them what humanity was meant to be: supernaturally united to God in grace, in faith, in hope, and in charity. Together, Blessed Jordan and Blessed Diana formed a powerful nexus of charity in the Mystical Body of Christ.

Reading the letters of holy people has a certain advantage over reading their systematic treatises. In the systematic treatise, one encounters the author's spiritual doctrine more or less well illuminated and fully developed, but in reading their letters, the doctrine is presented alongside its practical application amid the joys, sorrows, and glories of daily life.

We encounter tears and smiles, longing and aching, triumph and tragedy — and all that turned to the glory of God and the sanctifying of their souls. In the letters of Blessed Jordan to Blessed Diana, we see a union of holy hearts both panting for God “as the hart panteth after the fountains of water” (Ps. 41:2).

While the inmates running the asylum keep gaslighting us, we need to purify and nourish our minds with wholesome draughts of supernatural truth such as we can imbibe here. I cannot recommend this book more highly.

If readers are interested in procuring this fine volume, *To Heaven with Diana*, let me encourage you not to purchase

it from the Big Tech madman that runs Amazon. Please! Get it directly from the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary in Summit, New Jersey. Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary 543 Springfield Ave. Summit, NJ 07901- 4498 / 908-273-1228 And tell them, if you like, that Brother André Marie sent you. It won't get you a discount, but it may get me some much needed prayers from the spiritual daughters of Saint Dominic, of Blessed Jordan, and of Blessed Diana — and that would be very good. ■

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.
1. Cf. “Seeking Christ in Reading,” from Dom Mary Eugene Boylan's excellent book, *This Tremendous Lover*.



NAILS

By Father Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.

Whenever the bright blue nails would drop
Down on the floor of his carpenter shop
Saint Joseph Prince of carpenter men
Would stoop to gather them up again
For he feared for two little sandals sweet
And very easy to pierce they were
As they pattered over the lumber there.
And rode on two little sacred feet
But alas on a hill between earth and heaven
One day two nails on a cross were driven
And fastened it firm to the sacred feet
Where rode two little sandals sweet
And Christ and His Mother looked off in death
Afar to the valley of Nazareth
Where the carpenter's shop lay spread with dust
And the little blue nails all packed in rust
Slept in a box on the window sill . . .
And Joseph lie sleeping under the hill.



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

CONVENT CORNER

ARE YOU BECOMING A SAINT?

Well, Dear Reader, I have an anecdote from my postulant days I want to share with you. Yes, I was a zealous new postulant and I presented the fruits of my deep, new-Sister contemplations to my

superiors one day. Thanks be to God — and the long-suffering of my superiors — I am still here some thirty-five years later!

Back in time a bit then ... after many long weeks (ha!) of striving for sanctity in religious life — growing in love of God and hatred of sin, I realized that I was speedily headed for a serious situation. Yes, if something didn't change, I would soon be uttering a bold-faced falsehood during my prayers! I knew keenly that God would not want that, nor would His Immaculate Mother. So, I went to my superiors and explained my dilemma to them

Before I continue my story, Dear Reader, let me share some thoughts with you. As you know, we are bound to strive for sanctity, fighting against the evil of sin. We want to totally eradicate sin from our lives, beginning with mortal sin, then addressing venial sin and finally willful faults. In its negative essence, this is what becoming “holy” (a “saint”) means — the consequent positive being union with Almighty God and doing His Will. So, I reasoned, a person who is so striving should totally stop sinning at a certain point. And, at that point, I concluded, he would graduate from being a “sinner” to being a “saint”. Logical?

And now to continue my story. My problem was actually with the Hail Mary. Every time I prayed it, I was struck with the contradiction. My postulant dilemma: a “sinner” (I puzzled) can pray the Hail Mary when it says “pray for us sinners” — but a “saint” could not honestly say that he was a “sinner”. Therefore, at some point a person striving for sanctity couldn't pray the second half of the Hail Mary (“pray for us sinners”). Yes, this young postulant was piously sighing for the time that she could graduate from praying the second half of the Hail Mary — you know, the time when she would be a “saint”. (Aren't

you grateful, Dear Reader, that you weren't one of my superiors? Leaving other details aside, I will only mention that my presentation met with a particular pause from my otherwise imperturbable superior.)

The truth of the matter is that the categories of “sinner” and “saint” are not mutually exclusive. Those who may have sinned but are currently not sinning (by the grace of God) are still capable of sinning. Therefore, even saints are still sinners in this world.

You may recall that Saint Bernadette “defined” a sinner as someone who “loves sin” — not someone who “commits sin”, but someone who “loves” sin. So, when a person gets to the point where they truly hate sin, they will be making progress in the spiritual life — but, there is no guarantee that they won't again fall into the sin that they hate.

The State of Grace is the beginning of Sanctity and is precisely the continued essence of it. Anyone in the State of Grace could be referred to as a “saint” — even as Saint

Therefore, even saints are still sinners
in this world.

Paul so referred to the first Christians. Canonization is merely the public acknowledgement by the Church of a person's heroic practice of virtue while in the State of Grace and an encouragement to the rest of us to imitate this virtue.

Dear Reader, you will have to come to the realization that even though you have been making progress in your spiritual life, and even though you really want to become a saint, and even though you have actually made progress toward becoming a saint, you will never (I repeat, never) while you are still in this valley of tears, stop being in the category called “sinner”.

And that is why, thanks be to God, there is no “graduation” from the second half of the Hail Mary in this world...even if you truly are, Dear Reader, becoming a saint. ■ *Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org*



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

PREFECT'S COLUMN BACK TO BASICS

Do you have the feeling that things are speeding up, faster than in the past? One day we are in our usual, daily, normal routine, and then, suddenly you can no longer see the faces of your relatives, friends, strangers, enemies, et al; you find faceless people wherever you go; no longer can

you shake hands with — anyone; you are to be cordoned off by an imaginary six-foot barrier, especially when you are at public places; you shall not hug — anyone; thou shalt not go to thy church; you can no longer go to your neighbor's, friend's or relative's home; you can no longer go to your favorite restaurant, or any restaurant, they are closed or only open for take-out; you shalt not visit your spouse, child, father, mother, or anyone else in a hospital; even if they are dying ... you will die alone; often you cannot get a priest to visit you in the hospital.

And why? It's due to "the rules." These things all happened within a very short period of time. The given reason was a new illness had struck and only through these measures could we be protected, could we be saved. In a sense, we were, and to a large extent still are, imprisoned.

Our use of language has changed. We now hear phrases and words repeated to the point we no longer wish to hear them. These buzz words are a sign of the times and presage more changes:

Abundance of Caution; Flatten the Curve; Face Mask (The word mask connotes hiding something, disguise, concealing something, e.g., our identity); **Wash Your Hands; Uncharted** (It means there is some mystery about where we are headed).

Let's take some of the mystery away.

We are in an era that announces itself as the New Normal. The word "normal" is misused, at least in this point in time. Normal means "conforming to a type, standard, or regular pattern, characterized by that which is considered usual, typical, or routine, e.g., normal working hours, under normal circumstances, just a normal, average day, etc."¹ It means regular; natural, average.² We are told the current state of affairs is the New Normal; go into a supermarket, however, and tell the cashier you hope for things to get back to normal and she does not say, "This is the New Normal." We all know what normal is and trying to change the language does not change reality. This is not a usual matter, and God forbid it becomes so.

And what does all this have to do with our faith? Everything. These events have caused fear, worry, stress, angst, a

feeling of anxiety, agitation, etc. That is NOT normal. It certainly does not engender calm. While, at this moment, our "normal" life may not contain the spiritual tenets the saints adhered to, those things should be, in fact **must** become normal, if we are to survive the onslaught of this evil. We must get back to what should have been normal, i.e., back to basics. So exactly what does that mean and how can we achieve it now, during this ungodly, fearful, evil time?

Trust In God

The three wise men brought gifts to the Most High: gold, which "signifies charity, which unites us to God; frankincense, prayer, which brings God into man's heart; and myrrh self-abnegation (self-denial or self-sacrifice), suffering and mortification, whereby we are delivered from the slavery of (our) corrupt nature. Find a heart that loves God, that raises herself up to Him by prayer, that understands and relishes the power of the cross — and you have in that heart the worthiest offering that can be made to God and one which He always accepts."³ These were **basic gifts** given to Jesus by wise men who traveled far to worship Him. Each gift had a message, so to speak. It is these messages that we must focus on, not the latest news or opinion. To cast out the worry of these times, keep recalling this God who will never abandon us, no matter how bad things seem to be. We should **never** "repent of having trusted in God, for He cannot fail those who lean on Him; nor shall we ever trust in ourselves without being deceived."⁴

Carpe Diem!

But can we stay calm in these times? "The soul cannot truly serve God while it is involved in the distractions and pleasures of the world. St. Honoratus knew this, and chose to be a servant of Christ, his Lord. Resolve, in whatever state you are, to live absolutely detached from the world, and to separate yourself as much as possible from it."⁵

How do we layfolk do this? *Carpe diem!* Seize the day! Start immediately! Take your day and make room for God. Put time aside for spiritual reading, meditation, prayer (a single Rosary can take all of 15 minutes), a weekday Mass (if at all possible), read the Bible, deny yourself something you like, embrace equally whatever good or bad that happens, and place yourself in the presence of God at all times. Our Lord Himself taught us to "pray always". Be patient and start small; start slowly, but keep at it.

The Will Of God

Remember that "Christ will guard His own", said St. Agnes, the 13-year old martyr. The fidelity of this young girl was so strong that when threatened with death, she responded, "Christ is my Spouse: He chose me first, and His I will be."⁶

We can imitate this kind of faith by relying completely on the Holy Will of God. It is **Holy** and it is **His** Will. Believing this, can we ever deny Him? God is with us; who can be against us? Fortitude is a gift of the Holy Ghost that must be prayed for.

If you are uncertain what to do at a certain time, you are not alone. There is, however, an answer for you. Remember, “Lord, what will Thou have me do? Behold the true sign of a totally perfect soul: when one has reached the point of giving up his will so completely that he no longer seeks, expects, or desires to do ought but that which God wills.” — St. Bernard.⁷

These were Saint Paul’s first words when he was struck down on the road to Damascus, “Lord, what will Thou have me do?” He uttered these words with “such sincere affection and such submission of his will, that from then on he had no other desire than to fulfill the divine will”.⁸

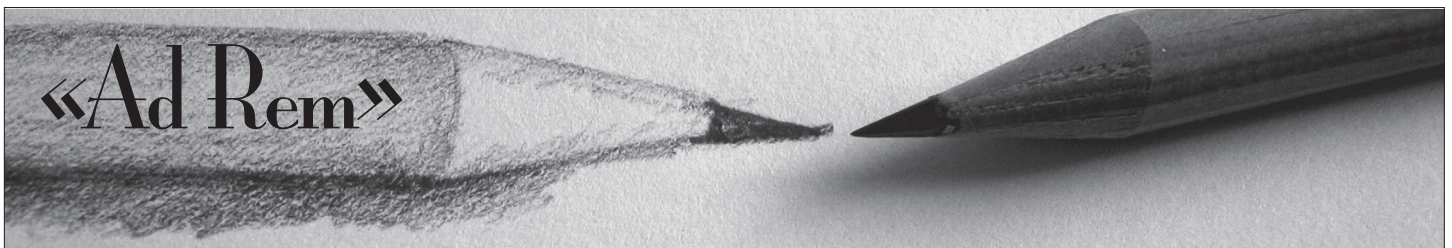
Face It

In this time when many people hide their faces in a misinformed attempt at safety, there is but one Face that is the antidote to this fear. There is but one face to seek. Look at that Face. The Face that suffered for you, to save your soul. “The Face that was crushed with blows, slapped, punched, spit upon, jeered at, veiled and buffeted. A Head that was crowned with thorns. The Face that was overwhelmed with affronts and outrages. The Face that had no desire, but to

be among men, even assuming human nature for the love of men. The Face that suffered fear and anguish and pain before the Body received the torment of His Crucifixion. We should long to go to that heavenly country where He is seen **face to face** and enjoyed without danger of ever losing Him.” — (Butler’s, St. Bridget).⁹

“By this Precious Death, I beg of Thee, O King of Saints, to comfort me and help me to resist the devil, the flesh and the world, so that being dead to the world I may live for Thee alone. I beg of Thee, at the hour of my death to receive me, a pilgrim and an exile returning to Thee. Amen.”¹⁰. ■
Email Brother John Marie Vianney at toprefect@catholicism.org.

1. Merriam-Webster Dictionary www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/normal
2. Dictionary.com www.dictionary.com/browse/normal
3. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 3, pg. 198.
4. *Butler’s* the Reflection on St. Paul, the First Hermit, pg. 37.
5. *Butler’s* the Reflection on St. Honoratus, pg. 37.
6. *Butler’s* St. Agnes pg. 43.
7. *Daily Meditation*, Winter, page 43.
8. *Daily Meditation*, Winter, page 43.
9. *The Original Pieta Prayer Book*, pp. 8-9.
10. *The Original Pieta Prayer Book*, Fourteenth Prayer pg. 13.



«Ad Rem» is our Prior’s biweekly email message offering news and commentary regarding the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center, and issues affecting the universal Church. Each number offers brief, ad rem (to the point) commentary on timely or otherwise important matters.

A note on the name: The Latin word *res*, (from which we get the word *rem* in our title) means more than just “thing.” The little monosyllable is pregnant with a whole host of concepts. From it we get *ad rem*, meaning (to the point); *res sacramenti* meaning (the grace of the sacrament); *res publica*, which gives us the word *republic* (the public thing). We even get the words *real* and *reality* from it.

Join at: www.catholicism.org/ad-rem-subscribe.html



Br. Andre Marié,
M.I.C.M., Prior

THE BATTLE RAGES ON!

After Damien Fisher published a tawdry piece of yellow journalism in the pages of the *New Hampshire Union Leader* on February 2, I had to respond in defense of our community with the following “Response to Press Inquiries.”

The journalist’s wife, Simcha Fisher, who is a contributor to the arch-liberal Jesuit publication, *America Magazine*, has a professional relationship with the Diocese of Manchester, writing a regular column in the diocese’s magazine, *Parable*. Yet, in none of his ***eight tendentiously hostile stories*** on our community since 2019, has Damien Fisher notified his readers of this substantive conflict of interest. This is a serious breach of journalistic ethics.

The article states as a fact *what is clearly not true*, namely, that the Holy See has rejected an appeal of ours. It further implies, falsely, that an official judgment was made against our doctrinal or theological position by the CDF.

Our case is very far from over. The battle rages on!

RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES

In response to a misleading article that appeared in the *New Hampshire Union Leader* on 2 February 2021 (“Vatican rejects Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary appeal”), the Members of Saint Benedict Center clarify that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (“CDF”) neither adjudicated nor rejected the substantive merits of the administrative recourse that the Members filed in the spring of 2019.

In its decision, the CDF wrote very clearly that “recent jurisprudence” concerning a disputed point of procedural law changed for the Congregation, and that because of that, our recourse *as filed at that time* could not be accepted. The CDF issued no judgment against our Doctrinal Beliefs, no judgment as to whether any statute of limitations for the prosecution of a violation had passed (there is no such thing as a statute of limitations in canon law), and no judgment on the merits of the injurious decree issued by Father Georges de Laire on 7 January 2019 imposing multiple precepts and prohibitions upon the Members of the Saint Benedict Center and its “associates.” No judicial appeal was ever filed by the Members of the Center, because there was no trial held. Consequently,

there were no judges of the CDF who rejected an appeal, contrary to what Father de Laire misstates as fact.

Last August, I renewed contact with Father de Laire. On 7 January of this year, my canonical procurator and I met with him at the Chancery to discuss how the Diocese and the Center can move forward. At that meeting, Father de Laire requested that I submit to him in writing some of the *many* questions that we presented on the occasion regarding his decree, questions that remain to this date *unanswered* by him.

Fulfilling the request made of me, I submitted to Father de Laire a letter dated 23 January, wherein I asked fifteen questions regarding just the *preamble* of the 2019 decree. This limitation was at his request, for he wanted the discussion to proceed in a “manageable” way. It was my impression that there would ensue good-faith correspondence on the pressing issues addressed by Father de Laire’s 2019 decree. Yet, without answering my letter, Father de Laire has once again chosen to go to the secular press to mischaracterize what has actually transpired.

Father de Laire has known since 10 August of last year that the CDF rejected our recourse. This is hardly new information. Father de Laire and I have been engaged in a process of dialogue on these matters since shortly after that, and only now — as I await a reply to the important questions he received from me on 26 January — does he present this news to a journalist who has a record of biased reporting against us. A reasonable question needs to be asked: Why would Father de Laire not simply answer my questions as he agreed to do and thus patiently continue the dialogue we agreed on, rather than appeal to the court of public opinion by utilizing the services of a biased journalist?

The Members of Saint Benedict Center will not attempt to press their doctrinal and canonical case against him in the court of public opinion. Rather, with the guidance of expert canonical and civil legal counsel, they remain fixed on the course charted over two years ago: to pursue justice for the community of Saint Benedict Center by utilizing all means at their disposal in ecclesiastical and civil law. This includes patient, charitable, and truthful dialogue on our part.

None of those avenues have been exhausted.

***In The Immaculate Heart Of Mary,
Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.***

Degenerate Moderns

Written by E. Michael Jones. In this ground breaking book, Jones shows how major determining leaders in modern thought and culture have rationalized their own immoral behavior and projected it onto a universal canvas. The main thesis of this book is that, in the intellectual life, there are only two ultimate alternatives: either the thinker conforms desire to truth or he conforms truth to desire. *Degenerate Moderns* is a marvelous tour de force. Required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the intellectual fashions of the Twentieth century.

Reviews:

“... brilliant new book ...” — Patrick J. Buchanan

“... well researched, highly provocative ... impressive documentation ...”
—Religion & Society Report

“Jones efficiently dissects Margaret Mead, Freud, Kinsey, Picasso, and others, and even draws his sights on Martin Luther ...” — The Christian Sociological Society Newsletter

“*Degenerate Moderns* is a fascinating look at the lives of the men and women who have sought to transform the contemporary world into a spiritual wasteland and whose relentless onslaughts against traditional morals, values, ethics, and patterns of life have pushed our culture and civilization to the very brink of catastrophe.” — Fr. James Thornton, Citizens Inform-er.

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Br. Francis' Commentary on the Book of Psalms

\$70.00 for downloadable MP3's / \$85 for MP3's on a flash drive

After having spent the better portion of his lifetime meditating upon Holy Scripture, most especially the Psalms, Brother Francis is well equipped to utilize the Fathers and the Doctors, as well as his own experiences, to give us some solid direction as to how to read and understand the book with the mind of the Church. The Psalms have always been the primary source for the prayers and liturgy of the Church, being not only the most important of the

wisdom books, but also the preeminent book of prophecy of the Old Testament.

The Psalms are prayed daily all around the world in monasteries, convents, and rectories as a part of the Divine Office. It is difficult to find a saint who has not spent lots of time meditating on the Psalms. The Book of Psalms is quoted more than any other Old Testament book by Our Lord and the Apostles in the New Testament.

Brother began his course on the Psalms in May of 1998. These tapes were not professionally recorded and the quality of some of the recordings is not always that good. Brother's words, however, are always intelligible. We are listing this item at a lower price to reflect the quality.

Out of the 150 Psalms, only 11 are not covered in this course due to technical difficulties: Psalms 61,62,73,74,99-104,143,144

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King David



Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM

THE SWORD REVEALETH THE HEART

And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed (Luke 2:35).

The four Gospels are not without passages that need explanation. If I find a verse, primarily in the Gospels, to be troublesome or too enigmatic for my literal reading, I know where to go to get an answer. First, I go to Cornelius à Lapide, who has the best of all commentaries on the Gospels, and, if I am not satisfied there I go to another scholar's commentary, Reverend George Leo Haydock's, whose Douay English translation of the Vulgate is the best in our language.

À Lapide has a good collection of patristic exegesis for the enigmatic verse I introduced above. As is always the case with à Lapide he begins with commentators whose opinions, although pious, are somewhat stretched and ends with the more acceptable and easily understood interpretations.

And thy own soul a sword shall pierce . . .

Right away we learn that "sword," in the Arabic text and the Greek, can mean *lance* as well as *sword*. Hence, when Our Savior was already dead on the Cross, the centurion came and pierced His side with a lance. Who felt the pain of this lance thrust into the Heart of the Son of God but His holy mother Mary? Her soul, which was continually being pierced on Calvary by the mocking blasphemies of the Jews and the pagan executioners, was now, after Jesus had expired, pierced unto death. Only by the Will of God did she not expire then and there. "The sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword" (Psalm 56:5).

What is this sword?

À Lapide tells us that Saint Eucherius of Lyons (*Hom. in Dominicam*), understands the sword of the Spirit to be the word of God, i.e., the spirit of prophecy, to Mary, he says, was revealed the secrets of Holy Scripture and the hidden thoughts of men. Even the hidden thoughts of her divine Son as we see at the wedding of Cana when the Mother with authority told the waiters: "Whatsoever He telleth you, do it." Perhaps, too, we can apply this to the message of Saint Paul to the Hebrews: "The word of the Lord is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (4:12).

A more literal interpretation of "sword" here is with reference to the sufferings inflicted on Christ, that is the sign of

contradiction spoken of above; for the contradiction of the tongue is a kind of sword, as in Psalm 56:5, "The sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword"; and Psalm 63:4, "Who whetted their tongues like a sword." This sword, à Lapide notes, is twofold. (1) The sword of the tongue. For the Blessed Virgin, hearing the insults, calumnies, and blasphemies with which Christ was assailed by the Jews, even when He was crucified, suffered intense tortures, just as though a sword had been struck through her soul. (2) The sword of iron — the nails and other torments which not only pierced the body and soul of Christ, but also pierced the soul of the Virgin. "They humbled his feet in fetters: the iron pierced his soul" (Psalm 104:18). Such is the interpretation of Saint Augustine (*Ep. 59, ad Paulinum*).

How great was the torture inflicted by this sword we may gather, with Franciscus Toletus, S.J., from the fact that it was her Son who suffered, whom the Mother of God loved more than herself, so that she would far rather have suffered and been crucified herself. For, though the Blessed Virgin stood by Him and suffered with Him, yet did the Mother's anguish but add a new pang to the Son's torments, and this grief again had its echo in the Mother's soul. Knowing His Heart perfectly, this too, was a sword piercing her Immaculate Heart.

In this vein, à Lapide cites Saint John of Damascus, "The pains she had escaped in childbirth she bore at the time of His Passion, so that she felt her bosom torn asunder by reason of the depth of her maternal love" (*de Fide, lib. iv. cap. xv*).

And, too, Saint Bernard: "The chosen arrow," he says, "is the love of Christ, which not only pierced, but pierced through and through, the soul of Mary, so that it left in her virginal breast not the smallest part void of love, but with all her heart, and all her soul, and all her strength, she loved. And truly, again, it penetrated through her to come to us, that of that fullness we might all receive, and she might be the Mother of that Love whose father is the Love of God ... And in her whole self did she receive the vast sweet wound of love. Happy shall I think myself if sometimes I may feel pricked with but the very tip of that sword's point, that my soul too may say, 'I am wounded with love'."

That, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed

This passage is surely difficult to interpret.

À Lapide prefers the explanation of the sixteenth century Jesuit, Toletus: "The sword that shall pierce thy soul, O Virgin, shall be the occasion of revealing the thoughts of many hearts that before lay hidden. For, long before Christ was slain, the leaders of the Jews had the intention of slaying

Him, but dared make no attempt against Him, for fear of the people. But then the Jews had already before the Passion made manifest their thoughts about Christ, by caviling at His words and works, although they concealed their desire to slay Him.”

The “*that*” that begins the passage is expressive both of the purpose and its attainment. It refers back to the preceding verse, “This child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel and for a sign that shall be contradicted.” Thus, we see it exhibited manifestly in the scribes and pharisees who, like heretics of all times, appeared to be the upholders of justice and truth. Their “thoughts would be revealed” in their murderous designs against the Messiah and His justice, and all the Jews were about to see this antagonism. For, before the advent of Christ, their leaders were in hopes that He would come with pomp, might, and splendor, even as Solomon, and certainly deliver them from the Romans. Too, they hoped to be exalted with Him as His champions. Therefore, when they saw Him in His humility and poverty opposing Himself to their ambition and avarice, and publicly rebuking them for it, they schemed how they might have Him put to death. Let us see with what detail their hateful scheme was prophesied:

He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the son of God. He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold: for his life is not like other men’s, and his ways are very different. We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and he preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that he hath God for his father. Let us see then if his words be true, and let us prove what shall happen to him, and we shall know what his end shall be. For if he be the true son of God, he will defend him, and will deliver him from the hands of his enemies. Let us examine him by outrages and tortures, that we may know his meekness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a most shameful death: for there shall be respect had unto him by his words. These things they thought, and were deceived: for their own malice blinded them. And they knew not the secrets of God, nor hoped for the wages of justice (Wisdom 2: 13-22).

Thus, the thoughts of men were revealed in Israel manifesting who were the just who loved Christ and who were the unjust who hated Him.

But, you may still be wondering, why is the piercing of Our Lady’s soul with this sword or lance the cause of the revelation of the thoughts of men’s hearts?

Perhaps we may think here of Dismas. He was first moved by hearing the King of the Jews forgive His enemies. Prior to that it seems that he also was blaspheming along with his companion in crime: “Let Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him” (Mark 15:32).

My own belief is that Dismas was moved also by seeing the grief of Jesus’ mother. There is a tradition that on their flight into Egypt the Holy Family was accosted by robbers and that one of the robbers, seeing Mary, took pity on them and caused the others to leave the Family alone. Tradition is that this was Dismas. (See Abbe Gaume’s book, *The Life of the Good Thief*, available from our bookstore.) If this be true, he merited the prayers of the Mother of God who remembered him as she stood beneath the Cross. The thoughts of Saint Dismas were then opened to grace and, after his conversion, they were revealed. So it is through the centuries. The thoughts of those who love Mary and those who scorn her or snub her will always be revealed.

What dark thoughts the heretics have in their disregard for the Mother of God! They see her soul pierced with that lance on Calvary and they are unmoved. They will not call her “Blessed.” They will not proclaim her perpetual virginity, her Immaculate Conception, and sinlessness. Their protests of “Lord, Lord” will be of no avail before the Judge. Love of Mary is the sign of contradiction for all who claim to be Christian. He who will not have Mary for his mother cannot have God for his Father.

What did Saint Elizabeth say when she saw Mary at her door for the Visitation? “Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” She first praises the mother and then her Son.

This is the way of God: To Jesus through Mary. It is the way God came to us. ▪ *Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.*

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

GUEST COLUMN

RETURN OF THE HERESY OF HATE

When most people hear the word “Iconoclasm” the first thing that comes to mind is the eighth and ninth century heresy which manifested itself in the destruction of religious images and was condemned at the second Council of Nicaea in 787. However, iconoclasm

consists of much more than that. In fact, it may just be the Devil’s favorite heresy, because it is founded on, and builds upon, the human capacity for hate, and thus is an integral part of the revolutions under which we currently live and which impact our society so much.

After Iconoclasm was condemned, and subsequently went somewhat dormant, it returned with a vengeance during the Protestant Rebellion, the so-called Reformation. Under the influence of “Reformers” such as Calvin and Zwingli, riots occurred all over Europe in which anything sacred, i.e., churches, tabernacles, statues, art, books, etc. were destroyed by mobs of heretics. Similar incidents occurred during the rise of godless liberal democracy during the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the years leading up to the Spanish Civil War, among others.

But if one looks carefully at each of these periods, one thing becomes clear: Iconoclasm is not merely the destruction of sacred images because they are “unbiblical” or otherwise inappropriate, but is rather based upon hatred and contempt for a civilization (or other institution) that has gone before and an attempt to ridicule, destroy and otherwise delegitimize it. Wikipedia (a site which must be quoted with care) summed up Iconoclasm as, “The social belief in the importance of the destruction of icons and other images or monuments, most frequently for religious or political purposes. People who engage in or support iconoclasm are called iconoclasts, a term that figuratively applies to any individual who challenges, ‘cherished beliefs or venerated institutions on the grounds that they are erroneous or pernicious.’”

But even if it is not directly concerned with religious doctrine per se, can it still be considered a heresy? Yes, it most certainly can. Hilaire Belloc discusses this in his book, *“The Great Heresies”* (page 2) and defines it as, “the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein”. He then goes on to state that, “the heretical spirit has become generalized and appears in various forms.” (page 8).

Rightly or wrongly, we here in the United States have our own generally accepted historical narrative, which seeks to explain and justify the existence of our nation and extol its virtues, while acknowledging its lack of perfection to some

extent. This narrative (indeed, some refer to it as our national civil religion) goes something like this:

‘In the beginning (1620), in search of freedom of religion, persons began arriving on our shores, primarily from England. Over the next 150 years, they developed a society of free men and women on the east coast of the continent, which was forced to throw off the tyranny of King George in 1776 and found a new institution known as Democracy, the greatest form of government known to man. Thus was formed the United States of America, a Christian nation. Subsequently, while welcoming immigrants from many other countries, our nation fulfilled its Manifest Destiny by spreading from Atlantic to Pacific, while taking time off to defeat the concept of secession and free the slaves in the 1860’s. Additionally, the nation made the world safe for democracy in the First World War, saved the world in the second, and has since continued its role as the greatest country on earth. We must now stand firm and be proud of our nation and preserve it.’

My purpose is not to put down our country, which I love. Although much is left out in the above narrative, and it is a real oversimplification of our history, it reduces things to something which most Americans hold dear and it has worked pretty well, or at least did while we still had a Christian consensus of some sort. However, what has now taken shape is a competing narrative, born out of Cultural Marxism, foisted upon a younger generation which has only vague notions of its Christian past, and which has no historical memory, by a liberal educational establishment. This competing narrative goes something like this:

‘Despite what your parents have told you, and in order to set things straight, please be advised that our nation was formed as a way of institutionalizing slavery and white male supremacy and spreading such oppressive values to the North American continent. In terms of religion, it was based not upon the loving, inclusive words of Jesus, and his warning to, “Judge not, lest ye be judged”; instead, it was formed as a means of institutionalizing not only slavery, but white supremacy, misogyny and homophobia. As such, it is worthy of our hatred and contempt and it, and its icons, must be destroyed.’

Many of us will remember that these views seemed to emerge from the shadow in the 1960’s, but they have become entrenched in academia, government, and the media and have virtually taken over a major political party. These ideas have become so entrenched that they have become a virtual religion, and we now have two competing Americas, each with a different world view, and neither one communicating with the other except by means of propaganda, which, of course, is not true communication at all.

Further, the proponents of this new narrative seek only to condemn, silence, and destroy those who do not agree with them. We have seen a president torn down and ridiculed, with his social media platforms revoked and everyone associated with him put in a caste of untouchables. We have one political party which exalts sexual perversion and the murder of innocent unborn children, and another party whose main character trait seems to be cowardice.

We have witnessed the tearing down of statues: first Confederate generals, then prominent American historical figures (of whatever party), and last but not least saints. Christopher Columbus is impugned as an oppressor, as is Saint Junipero Serra. The fact that they were concerned primarily with converting the Indians to Catholicism, without which their souls could not be saved, is sneered at as white triumphalism and supremacy. It is considered a mere pretext for the enslavement of the indigenous peoples. Of course, this could not have happened without the complicity of many in the Church hierarchy. Gary Potter has often noted that revolutions succeed because those in power lose faith in their right to rule, and that is evident everywhere we look.

Yet in an age of Iconoclasm, where the good, the true and the beautiful are ridiculed and destroyed, where perversion is exalted and where not only is a president destroyed but he, and all those associated with him are “cancelled”, Saint Benedict Center is on familiar ground and is not weakened in the least. We are, of course, familiar with the story of how our order, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was

formed due to the trials and tribulations of those who merely stood up for truth. This is our legacy, and it continues to this day. But how many are familiar with the testimony of Pat Buchanan, a schoolboy at the time Father Feeney was silenced? Pat has stated, that when that happened, he and all his classmates were required to tear Father’s stories, poems, etc. out of their textbooks, merely because Father Feeney, a priest referred to as “America’s Chesterton” and called by his own Jesuit provincial, “the greatest theologian we have in the United States by far”, preached the Faith without compromise, and thereby stepped on the toes of the establishment. The “cancel culture” was invoked, but could erase neither his memory nor the thrice defined dogma, “*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*”.

Thus we see that political correctness and the “cancel culture” are nothing new. Our order has long been accustomed to dealing with it, and still has to. Perhaps, this era when iconoclasm, the heresy of hate, seems to be in the ascendancy is a time when Saint Benedict Center and the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are uniquely positioned to fulfill the role of not only preserving the salvation dogma, but of actually finally converting America to the One True Catholic Faith. We stand on the shoulders of an illustrious number who have so labored. I speak not only of the canonized North Americans but of the uncanonized: Father Arnold Damen, S.J., Father Michael Mueller, C.Ss.R., Orestes Brownson, and Father Pierre de Smet, S.J. ■

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ATTENTION PRIESTS!

DR. WOLFGANG SMITH WANTS TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING

The deeply philosophical and Catholic work of Dr. Wolfgang Smith needs to be read, discussed, and diffused as widely as possible, especially in Catholic intellectual circles — most especially within the Catholic presbyterate. The venerable mathematician-philosopher-physicist extraordinaire has just penned a small masterpiece of a booklet entitled, *Three Scientistic Heresies*, that he wants to put into the hands of as many priests as possible. It is available for free as a PDF download. While the goal is to get this work into the hands of as many priests as possible, the work was not exclusively written for priests — I have read it; it is excellent! — nor is the free offer exclusively for the clergy.

In order to get your free digital copy, please go here: www.tinyurl.com/Wolfgang-Smith

Here is a brief message from one of Dr. Smith's collaborators, who recently reached out to me to solicit our help in promoting this great work:

To our beloved priests and faithful laity:

It appears that we are presently in the midst of a formidable cultural cataclysm: the Western world has fallen prey *en masse* to a pernicious ideology scornful of religion, which proves however to be in a sense religious itself. And what in effect renders that

ideology untouchable is the fact that it presents itself under the banner of Science. That ideology may consequently be designated by the term scientism. The salient-and generally unrecognized-fact is that *scientism* has, for a long time, wrought havoc and bewilderment in the Catholic world; that it has, in particular, posed problems for the priest which he is not normally equipped to resolve.

This brings us to the point of our Sacerdotal Outreach initiative. For many decades, physicist, mathematician, and philosopher Wolfgang Smith has been leading the charge to expose that "pernicious ideology" for what it is: *a satanic inversion of the truth, masquerading as Science*. And now, in the evening of his life, Dr. Smith has prepared *Three Scientistic Heresies* — a booklet especially addressed to priests, designed to convey the essential facts regarding the nature and origin of that *scientism*. He wishes moreover to make this booklet available to all potentially interested priests and laity *free if charge* to help them discern and unmask this diabolical ideology which by now has infiltrated a considerable portion of the institutional Church.

We pray that this *expositio ad sacerdotium* will assist you, our beloved priests, to discern and effectively oppose the dominant scientistic heresies rampant in the Western world.

Thank you and God bless,

Brian Murphy

Director of Sacerdotal Outreach, TSH

Project



EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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

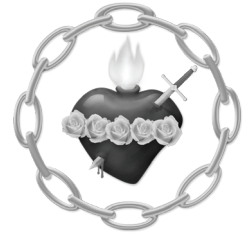
Ex Cathedra: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

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

NOTES:

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