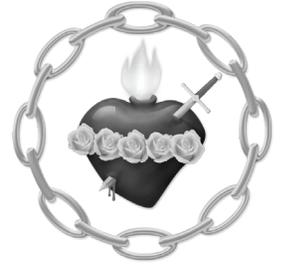


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



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Saint Louis the King at the Nativity of Christ



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

WHAT DO HOPE, FEAR, AND POVERTY HAVE IN COMMON?

I would like to begin these thoughts on Christian Hope with that lovely traditional prayer, the “Act of Hope”:

O MY GOD, relying on Thy almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain the pardon of my sins, the

help of Thy grace, and Life Everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

This prayer teaches us much of a doctrinal character, just as it allows us truly to exercise the second theological virtue: First, it teaches us that without the virtue of faith whereby we know of the divine promises of grace in this life and heavenly glory in the next, we cannot have hope. Next, it teaches us that the infinite power and the mercy of God are the motives for our Christian hope. Lastly, it teaches us about what Saint Thomas calls the “primary and secondary objects” of the virtue of hope: Primarily, hope has eternal life in heaven as its object; but, secondarily, it has as its object the divine assistance we need in this life in order to be saved, referred to in the prayer as “the forgiveness of sins and the help of Thy grace.” Saint Thomas teaches us that we cannot hope for material things by this virtue unless those material things are in fact something helpful to our salvation. He also points out that we hope for ourselves only and not for other people — but with one exception: If we are joined to another by charity, that person is “another self,” and we can hope for him as we hope for ourselves and by that same theological virtue of hope. He likens this to the fact that the theological virtue of charity is *one*, even though with it we love both God and neighbor. Similarly, with this second theological virtue we hope both for ourselves and those to whom we are united in charity. This is a profound encouragement for those of us with fallen-away loved ones. If we are united to

them by divine charity, we can make acts of hope both *for their and our* conversion and salvation.

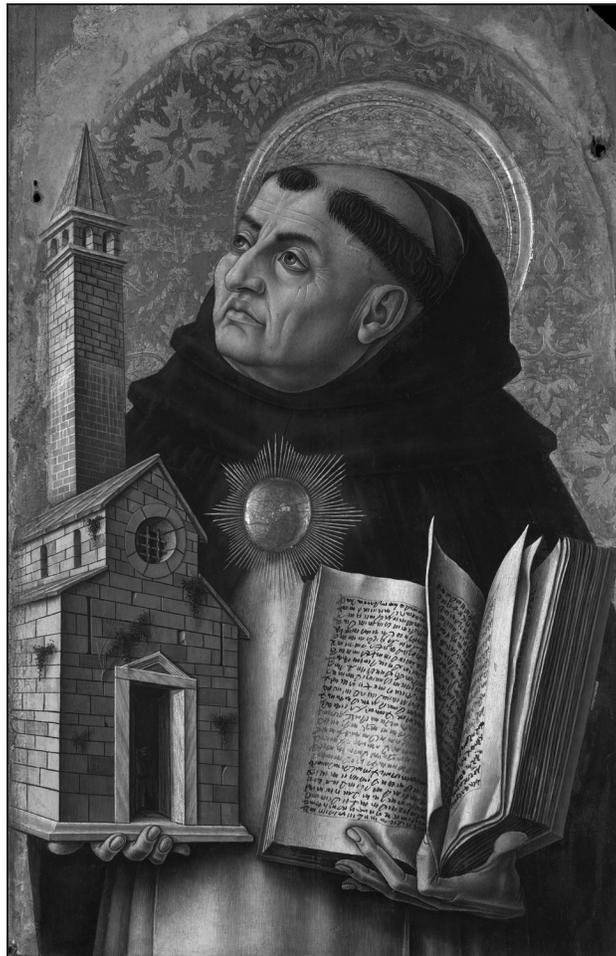
In the times in which we live, unrest and incertitude are prevalent both in the Church and in civil society, and not only because of the coronavirus phenomenon. Other causes include the social balkanization we are experiencing, along with the civil disturbances following in its wake, the deplorable increase of “culturecide” in the nation, and the seemingly unrelenting scandals in the Church. The economic ruin suffered by many small business owners and wage earners thanks to the COVID-19 lockdowns has caused a spike in depression, anxiety, and consequent suicides. The atmosphere is heavy with the toxic fumes of despair. In light of this, we need to make frequent acts of hope, renewing *the supernatural purpose* of that virtue which does not put its trust in this world or its rulers but in God’s almighty power and infinite mercy. This will serve to assure us — amid the manifold heartaches, trials, and contradictions of this life — that we can and will certainly obtain a better life if we persevere and avail ourselves of God’s grace. In fact, based upon what mystical and ascetical theology teaches us,

terrible trials can cause us to purify our hope of all the dross that can creep into it — like the consolations and comforts that often help to prop us up — and bring us to hope only in God’s unfathomable mercy and omnipotence. Of course, we hope in the prayers of Our Lady and the saints as well as those of our Catholic brothers and sisters in the Church Militant, but only as instrumental causes working with the primary efficient cause of hope, *who is God alone*.

Concerning this matter of trials perfecting hope, Saint Paul had some things to say:

[W]e glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience trial; and trial hope; And hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us. (Rom. 5:3-5)

For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in



pain, even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, we wait for it with patience. (Rom. 8: 22-25)

Patience, Dear Reader, is the ability to suffer well.

There is a bad kind of fear that our visible and invisible enemies aim to manipulate, but now I would like to speak briefly of the good kind of fear, the kind of fear we need. The virtue of hope is perfected by the gift of the fear of the Lord. This fear is not mundane fear (which is always evil) or even servile fear, which is good but imperfect. The fear which is a gift of the Holy Ghost is none other than filial fear, the supernatural reverence of God that fears to offend Him because He is so good and so worthy of our love. That fear is something that the Man-God Jesus Christ Himself possesses — even now in Heaven. Hope reaches out to God while fear keeps us in reverent awe of our divine Father and Judge. And, while the virtue and gift of fortitude are the chief opponents of the base kind of fear that we see being manipulated by our enemies, there is a certain sense in which the wholesome fear of the Lord that is this gift of the Holy Spirit serves as a remedy to base and unworthy fear. If nothing else, by it our fears are rightly ordered in accord with Our Lord's admonition: "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). And again: But I will shew you whom you shall fear: fear ye him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear him" (Luke 12:5). It is the *power* that He has as God that Jesus fears, or is in awe of, Filially, in His human nature.

Saint Thomas Aquinas agrees with Saint Augustine in attributing the first beatitude to this gift of Fear of the Lord. In Saint Augustine's words, "The fear of the Lord is befit-

ting the humble of whom it is said: Blessed are the poor in spirit."

If we are truly poor in spirit, we seek what our souls need from God alone, from whom all good things come, and not from ourselves or from any other mere creatures except as instruments in God's hands. Thus the beatitude of poverty of spirit is a perfect, excellent, and delightful fruit that comes from the theological virtue of hope perfected by the gift of fear of the Lord.

One of the Sisters who so graciously proofread this piece sent me a lovely passage from the writings of Saint John of the Cross, thinking that this prayer of the great Doctor of Mystical Theology would serve as a nice complement to what I had written. I append it here as a *coda*:

Clothe me, O God, with the green garment of hope. A living hope in You gives the soul such ardor, so much courage and longing for the things of eternal life that, by comparison with what it hopes for, all things of the world seem to it to be, as in truth they are, dry, faded, dead, and without value. Give me then, a strong hope, O my God, so that it may strip me of all the vanities of the world, that I may not set my heart upon anything that is in the world, nor hope for anything, but live clad only in the hope of eternal life. Let hope be the helmet of salvation which will protect my head from the wounds of the enemy, and will direct my gaze to heaven allowing me to fix my eyes on You alone, my God. As the eyes of the handmaid are set upon the hands of her mistress, even so are my eyes set upon You, until You take pity on me because of my hope. Grant that I may set my eyes on naught but You, nor be pleased with aught but You alone. Then You will be pleased with me, and I shall be able to say in all truth that I receive from You as much as I hope for. (John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul, II, 21,6-8) ■

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Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

CONVENT CORNER

APATHETIC TORPOR IN THE END TIMES

Dear Reader, are you familiar with the classic illustration of a frog heated in a pot of water? Well, bear with me as I expound it to you. If you drop a frog into a pot of scalding water, it will immediately struggle vigorously to get out... and undoubtedly will! How-

ever, put a frog into a pot of cool water and begin slowly heating it. It will never even attempt to jump out and will eventually be cooked, floating lifelessly in the pot.

I suppose this could be useful information should you ever want to cook a live frog. However, the lesson to be learned from this illustration applies to things eternal and current.

What we need to know is that our enemies don't hesitate to use this method on us. Torpor, I think, is what we are experiencing in the world-wide evil today, and the main reason why Our Blessed Mother is now so sad.

Dear Reader, I will now let Sister Lucy of Fatima explain. These quotes are copied and pasted from an interview with Father Fuentes. There are many points here which should wake us up...if we are not yet "cooked."

Father Fuentes: I wish only to tell you of the last conversation I had with Sister Lucy. I met her in her convent. She was very sad, pale, emaciated. She said to me:

Father, the Most Holy Virgin is very sad because no-one has paid any attention to Her message, neither the good nor the bad. The good continue on their way, but without giving any importance to Her message. The bad, not seeing the punishment of God actually falling upon them, continue their life of sin without even caring about the message. But believe me, Father, God will chastise the world and this will be in a terrible manner. The punishment from Heaven is imminent.

Tell them, Father, that the Most Holy Virgin told my cousins Francisco and Jacinta, as well as myself, many times, that many nations will disappear from the face of the earth and that Russia will be the instrument of chastisement chosen by Heaven to punish the whole world if we do not beforehand obtain the conversion of that poor nation. (...)

Father, the devil is engaged in a decisive battle with the Holy Virgin, and as he knows what it is that most offends God, and which in a short space of time will gain for him the greatest number of souls, he does everything he can to capture souls consecrated to God, because in this way the devil separates souls from their leaders, and thereby he can seize them more easily.

That which afflicts the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus is the fall of religious and priestly souls. The

devil knows that religious and priests who fail in their beautiful vocation drag numerous souls to hell (...). The devil wishes to take possession of consecrated souls; he tries to corrupt them in order to deaden the souls of lay people in a final impenitence. He employs all the tricks, even going so far as to suggest delaying entrance into religious life. The result of this is the sterility of interior life, and among lay people, coldness regarding the subject of renouncing pleasure and total dedication to God.

My cousins Francisco and Jacinta sacrificed themselves because in all the apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin, they always saw Her very sad. She never smiled at us and this sadness, this anguish caused by offences against God and the punishments which menace sinners, penetrated our souls, and we thought only, with our childish little imaginations, of inventing different means of praying and making sacrifices. (...) The other thing which sanctified the children was seeing the vision of hell. (...) This is why, Father, my mission is not to tell the world about the material punishments which are certain to come if the world does not pray and do penance beforehand. No. My mission is to tell everyone about the imminent danger we are in of losing our souls for all eternity if we remain obstinate in sin.

We should not wait for the Holy Father's call to penitence for the whole world to come from Rome; neither should we wait for it to come from our bishops in their dioceses, nor from the religious congregations. No. Our Lord has already, very often, used these means and the world has not paid attention. This is why it is now necessary for each one of us to begin to reform himself spiritually. Each person must not only save his soul but also all the souls that God has placed in his path. (...)

The devil does all he can to distract us and to take away from us the love of prayer. We shall be saved together or we shall be damned together.

Father, the Most Holy Virgin did not tell me that we are in the last times of the world, but She made me understand this for three reasons. The first reason is because She told me that the devil is about to engage in a decisive battle with the Holy Virgin. A decisive battle is a final battle where one side will be victorious and the other side will suffer defeat. Hence from now on we are either for God or we are for the devil. There is no middle course.

The second reason is because She said to my cousins as well as to myself that God is giving two last remedies to the world: the Holy Rosary and the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, these being the last two remedies. This signifies that there will be no others.

The third reason is because, as always in the plans of Divine Providence, God, before He is about to chastise the world, exhausts all other remedies. Now, when He sees that the world pays no attention whatsoever, then, as we say in our imperfect

manner of speaking, He offers us with a certain trepidation the last means of salvation, His Most Holy Mother. It is with a certain trepidation because if you despise and repulse this ultimate means we will not have anymore forgiveness from Heaven because we will have committed a sin which the Gospel calls the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin consists of openly rejecting, with full knowledge and consent, the salvation which He offers. Remember that Jesus Christ is a very good Son and that He does not permit that we offend and despise His Most Holy Mother. We have as testimony many centuries of Church history which demonstrate, by the terrible chastisements which have befallen those who have attacked the honour of His Most Holy Mother, how Our Lord Jesus Christ has always defended the honour of His Mother.

There are two ways to save the world: prayer and sacrifice (...).

Regarding the Holy Rosary, look, Father, the Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary. So much so, that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or, above all, spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families, of the families of the world, or of the religious communities, or even of the life of peoples and nations, that cannot be

solved by the Rosary. There is no problem I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by praying the Holy Rosary. With the Holy Rosary, we will save ourselves, we will sanctify ourselves, we will console Our Lord and obtain the salvation of many souls.

Finally, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Most Holy Mother, consists in considering Her as the seat of mercy, of goodness and of pardon, and as the certain door by which we are to enter Heaven.

Dear Reader, can you hear your Mother? Are you awake... yet? WAKE UP, DEAR READER!!! WAKE UP!!! If you are not yet doing everything in your power to cooperate with your Heavenly Mother...what are you waiting for? Death? The end of the world? They are coming. ■

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org



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Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM

A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER UNDER CAESAR? WAS IT LICIT?

And the soldiers also asked him, saying: And what shall we do? And he said to them: Do violence to no man; neither calumniate any man; and be content with your pay (Matthew 3:14).

Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Matthew 26:52).

The question came to my mind the other day whether or not an early Christian in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Age could be a soldier in the Roman army before the reign of Constantine?

On the one hand, Saint John the Baptist does not tell the soldiers who came to him to leave the army. Who were these soldiers? They could have been Jewish temple guards, or soldiers of Herod, but more likely it would seem that they were Gentile soldiers in the Roman army who were moved by John's preaching and sincerely wanted to serve the one true God and follow His commandments. These came to John because in military service they had committed many sins and were now, in a better light, faced with many temptations, not the least of which was complicity with idolatry. Caesar's troops invoked the false gods before battle and offered them incense in thanksgiving for victories. No righteous Gentile could partake of such before and most certainly after the coming of Christ.

But the Baptist does not mention idolatry in addressing these soldiers. It would seem that they were not tempted in that regard, for they were devoted to the teaching of the great prophet in the desert. Nor did Saint John warn them against fornication or adultery, or even drunkenness. That is to say, it is not recorded in the Gospels that he did so. In a life of military service, however, there was violence. Such is the nature of combat. And, in their common life together, soldiers had to contend all the time with grumblers and calumniators. A soldier's life, even under pagan Rome, required discipline. The lower caste among them had hopes for advancement, and Roman citizenship, as well, if they were not already so privileged. Drunkenness and debauchery would get a soldier expelled quickly. He would be deemed irresponsible and a cancer to order and morale. Consequently we find Saint John warning against other things that were typically disruptive of good morals. The soldiers had no union representative; they were expected to be content with the pay they agreed to when enlisting. If they were mercenaries, then, too, they ought not to grumble.

Nor does Our Lord Himself require the Roman centurion to forfeit his duties; he whose faith Jesus so lauded before He cured his servant from a distance: "Lord I am not worthy that

thou should come under my roof. Only say the word and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8).

Nor does Saint Peter say to the centurion Cornelius, who sends for him in Acts 10:47, that he must resign his military post.

On the other hand, Our Savior admonishes Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane to put his sword away adding "for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." But Peter had a higher vocation than the Roman centurions.

It would seem that in regard to serving in the Roman army what Our Lord applies to paying taxes to Caesar also applies to serving in his army.

Does this mean that a Christian has no higher obligation than obedience to his military superior? Hardly. No, the Christian soldier must first keep free of any act of idolatry; second, do violence to no man (which includes doing violence to a man's reputation by calumny) and third, be content with his pay. Calumny is singled out because the gentiles may not have taken it as serious an evil as other more debasing sins of the flesh. Yet, it is like murder, destroying a victim's good name and that, not merely by detraction, but with the sword of an outright lie

Obviously, it is the second point that poses a problem. How does a soldier avoid violence if he engages in battle? He cannot. What he can do, and must do, is respect the life of civilians. Furthermore, he cannot fight in a clearly unjust war. If the legions of Rome invaded a peaceful nation to plunder it, steal its lands, and kill its people, a Christian soldier could not take part, not even in fighting the opposition's soldiers. Where there may be a doubt, as you will see in Saint Augustine's treatise below, the soldier can assume that there is a just cause and render obedience. (Saint Ambrose teaches the same [Sermon 7] as cited by Cornelius a Lapide.) Church fathers, Tertullian and Origen, on the other hand (neither of them saints), insisted that a Christian could not be a soldier in any army.

Without further ado, let us see what the African Doctor of the Church writes to the heretic Faustus on the subject of war.

Contra Faustum Book XXII

What is the evil in war? Is it the death of some who will soon die in any case, that others may live in peaceful subjection? This is mere cowardly dislike, not any religious feeling. The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to punish these things, when force is required to inflict the punishment, that, in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars, when they find themselves in such a position as regards the conduct of human affairs, that right conduct requires them to act, or to make others act in this

way. Otherwise John, when the soldiers who came to be baptized asked, *What shall we do? Would have replied, Throw away your arms; give up the service; never strike, or wound, or disable any one. But knowing that such actions in battle were not murderous but authorized by law, and that the soldiers did not thus avenge themselves, but defend the public safety, he replied, "Do violence to no man, accuse no man falsely, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). But as the Manichæans are in the habit of speaking evil of John, let them hear the Lord Jesus Christ Himself ordering this money to be given to Cæsar, which John tells the soldiers to be content with. "Give," He says, "to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" (Matthew 22:21). For tribute-money is given on purpose to pay the soldiers for war. Again, in the case of the centurion who said, "I am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me: and I say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it," Christ gave due praise to his faith (Matthew 8:9-10). He did not tell him to leave the service. But there is no need here to enter on the long discussion of just and unjust wars.*

75. *A great deal depends on the causes for which men undertake wars, and on the authority they have for doing so; for the natural order which seeks the peace of mankind, ordains that the monarch should have the power of undertaking war if he thinks it advisable, and that the soldiers should perform their military duties in behalf of the peace and safety of the community. When war is undertaken in obedience to God, who would rebuke, or humble, or crush the pride of man, it must be allowed to be a righteous war; for even the wars which arise from human passion cannot harm the eternal well-being of God, nor even hurt His saints; for in the trial of their patience, and the chastening of their spirit, and in bearing fatherly correction, they are rather benefited than injured. No one can have any power against them but what is given him from above. For there is no power but of God (Romans 13:1) who either orders or permits. Since, therefore, a righteous man, serving it may be under an ungodly king, may do the duty belonging to his position in the State in fighting by the order of his sovereign — for in some cases it is plainly the will of God that he should fight, and in others, where this is not so plain [doubtful], it may be an unrighteous command on the part of the king, while the soldier is innocent, because his position makes obedience a duty, — how much more must the man be blameless who carries on war on the authority of God, of whom every one who serves Him knows that He can never require what is wrong?*

Please note that Saint Augustine is not saying that a soldier can obey any command against the law of God; he is saying that when there is a doubt as to the justice of a military campaign, the soldier can obey orders and fight the soldiers of the enemy, presuming that his superiors know better than he the righteousness of the cause. Never, ever, however, can a soldier commit violence against an innocent person or civilian. This

would include burning the property or crops of civilians or otherwise destroying their livelihood.

Examples of Military Saints from the Early Church

There are many saints and martyrs who served in the Roman army under evil emperors. One immediately calls to mind — the Theban Legion. Under their leader Saint Maurice, 6,600 Christian soldiers, most of whom Egyptian, were martyred in Switzerland in the year 287 for refusing to sacrifice to idols. These soldiers fought under the pagan emperor Maximian. They did not refuse their service in suppressing a revolt against Rome in Burgundy. What they refused to do was to offer incense to gods (and to the “divine” emperor) before battle. And for this they were slain for Christ.

Other Christian soldiers and martyrs who served in the Roman army before Constantine’s reign were:

Saint Andrew the General (303, Cilicia). He was a general in the Roman army under Emperor Maximian. Refusing the pay tribute to the false gods, he and 2,593 of his men were beheaded in Syria under orders of the diabolical leader of all the troops, Antiochus, who hated the Christian religion. Andrew was tortured first, but this was to no avail.

Saint Demetrius of Thessalonica (306). He was a nobleman and soldier from Thessalonica, where he was also martyred, under the persecution of Diocletian.

Saint Eustace was converted from paganism to the Catholic Faith in 118 and was subsequently martyred. As with Saint Hubert he saw a cross miraculously shining in the antlers of a deer he was hunting. He sought baptism and along with receiving the sacrament changed his name from Placidus to Eustace. He converted his family and, together with his wife and sons, was roasted to death for refusing to sacrifice to idols. He was from Tivoli, near Rome.

Saints Florian, George, Victor the Moor, and Expeditus (303). Of these Saint George is the most popular. He was a member of the Roman Praetorian Guard, a tribune; his father, from Cappadocia (today Turkey) was a general in the Roman army. George is a Greek name. He was martyred under Diocletian for refusing to recant his Catholic Faith. The emperor tried every worldly ruse to get George to sacrifice to idols, but the holy tribune would not waver. He was subsequently beheaded in Nicomedia. As we know, George is one of the patron saints of England. Why that is so is another story. He was also the patron saint of the Crusaders.

Saint Menas of Phrygia (309). Called the “Wonder Worker” Saint Menas was a Christian soldier in the imperial army. He joined the army as a young man in Egypt and was sent to Phrygia. When the persecutions of Maximian and Diocletian were raging there he left the army and retired to a hermetical life in the mountains. When his fellow Christians were being

slaughtered in the city he came out of seclusion and professed his Faith publicly during a circus. He was arrested, scourged, and finally beheaded. His body was returned to Egypt where he is to this day highly venerated.

Saint Martin of Tours (397) was a soldier for a time under Julian the Apostate before abandoning military life for that of a hermit, abbot, and bishop. He was the uncle of Saint Patrick. He had determined in his mid-life that he could not serve Christ and Julian.

Lastly, I wish to include the martyrs, John and Paul, brothers, martyred by Julian the Apostate in 362. They were Roman soldiers of high rank in the imperial army who retired from service during Julian's persecution. They were beheaded in Rome for refusing to worship idols at the command of Julian. They are named in the Canon of the Mass.

It also should be noted that the wretched apostate emperor passed a decree in his short two-year reign expelling all Christians from the Roman army.

I kept my examples of military saints to the early centuries of the Church. If I went too far beyond that I would have to write a book. Let these three saints suffice: The soldier, Saint Ignatius Loyola (+1556), after all, originally named his order, The *Company* of Jesus. The word "Jesuit" was actually a pejorative term used in the fifteenth century to mock those devout Catholics who repeatedly invoked the Holy Name. The term fared well with the Protestants who used it to malign the Company or "Society" of Jesus. In an ironic twist of history, Ignatius the soldier fought for Spain when Ferdinand and Isabella invaded the Kingdom of Navarre, which was then allied with France under King John III. The two Catholic nations fought each other for eighteen years, Spain dominating in the end. Fighting for Navarre were two of Saint Francis Xavier's brothers. Perhaps it was one of them whose cannonball happily wounded the wayward Loyolan, leading to his conversion? In God's wonderful Providence the mystic General teamed up with the great missionary-to-be from the castle of Xavier, and, after the latter's conversion, Ignatius sent him on his mission "to set the world on fire."

Too, Pope Benedict XVI, in 2000, canonized the Portuguese warrior saint, Blessed Nuno Álvares Pereira. A little more than a century before Ignatius, Saint Nuno, led his soldiers to victory against Spain in 1383-85. His 6,500 Portuguese troops defeated over 30,000 Castilians in the battle of Aljubarrota in 1385. This victory secured Portugal's independence from Spain.

Lastly, I cannot fail to mention Saint Joan of Arc. Hers is a unique case as she was commissioned by God Himself, through His saints, to fight the English invaders and their French quislings. She led the French troops in battle carrying a banner she herself had created, which had the image of Our Lord Crucified on it. She never had to use the sword she carried: "I loved my banner forty times better than my sword" she said at her trial. She was captured in a battle against the Burgundian traitors who supported the English. They handed her over to the enemy invaders. But it wasn't the English who condemned her to death. It was an inquisition of disloyal clergy led by the French Bishop Pierre Cauchon. She was martyred in 1431 at the age of nineteen, burned at the stake.

Although, it is a terrible thing when two Catholic nations go to war against each other, each soldier being a Member of the Mystical Body of Christ, God can and does draw good from it. Prescinding from all the injustices that move one Christian nation to make war on another, am I being too simplistic by affirming that both sides are never equally at fault? No, rather, it seems to me that when grievances are weighed in the balance, the truth is that one side is less at fault than the other. Or, one side is more justified than the other in the final analysis. Nevertheless, "Blessed are the Peacemakers," and "There is safety where there is much counsel" (Proverbs 11:14).

Our readers may be interested in a book published by Loreto Publications called *Gospel of Peace*, by Father John J. Hugo. The book deals with the subject of a just and unjust war. You can order this book from our bookstore. ■

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

PREFECT'S COLUMN EPILOGUE ON MURDERS IN THE CATHEDRAL

I apologize, Dear Reader, for the abrupt end to my fourth, and final offering on the *Murders* articles. Permit me to offer the following reflections.

My premise had been that those who die as martyrs attain a higher crown of glory in Heaven. It is no wonder then that they should be given that special place as they imitated Christ, Who died for us, in the ultimate sacrifice. Not only did they die for Our Lord, most of those I wrote about, died in a place where His death was remembered daily on the altar of a church or chapel. I offered that this made them even more special. It was the best and most Christ-like oblation. Here at the altar their lives were given up in a bloody manner in a place where Jesus gives up His life for us in an unbloody, sacramental, but yet sacrificial, manner. And so we do, through the hands of the priest, what Christ commanded His Church to do at the Last Supper, instructing us always to remember that Bloody Event of Calvary when offering each Mass wherein His Glorious Body and Blood comes down to earth re-presenting the very act of holy atonement through the priest. So true and real is this that, in consecrating the bread and wine, the priest pauses before he says: 'This is *My Body*' and 'This is *My Blood*.' The words have power to effect what they signify. The Body is now become the Living Body of Christ.

What a wonderful grace: to die for Him, as He died for us, in His earthly house, right before His home, the tabernacle! Colloquially, we might say: what a way to go!

In his Wednesday Angelus talk of August 11, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said: "The strength to give one's life comes from profound and intimate union with Christ," he explained, "because martyrdom and the vocation to martyrdom are not the result of human effort, but the response to an initiative and a call from God, they are a gift of his grace, which makes one capable of offering one's life for love of Christ and of the Church, and thus of the world."

We wrote only of those recognized by the Church as martyrs. But people are being killed for the Faith around the world today. The death of martyrs can lead to conversions, a principal aim of our Order, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, since its inception. Presently, there are those who may become officially martyrs. One case in particular brought about at least one conversion.

On July 26, 2016, at a Normandy, France Catholic parish church, the Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, two young Muslim men entered while Father Jacques Hamel

celebrated the morning Mass. They brutally murdered the 86-year-old priest. He was forced to kneel and had his throat slit.

During his homily at the funeral Mass for Father Hamel, Archbishop Dominique Lebrun mentioned the priest's last words. The prelate said, "After you were struck by the knife, you tried to push away your assailants with your feet and said, 'Go away, Satan.' You repeated it, 'Go away, Satan.'" (See *Catholic Culture*, 2016, August 3, news headlines)

The circumstances of his death have led him to be called a martyr. Online photographs depicted Father with wispy white hair and the expression of a quiet, but holy priest. Calls to raise him to sainthood began soon after his death. The canonization cause was officially opened at diocesan level in April 2017, after Pope Francis waived the otherwise mandatory five-year waiting period for the opening of such causes.

On the same day, Sohrab Ahmar, completed a several years' search and announced his decision to join the Catholic Church. Ahmar is an Iranian-American well-known journalist, columnist, editor, and author. He tweeted, "#IAMJacquesHamel: In fact, this is the right moment to announce that I'm converting to Roman Catholicism."

Church Father Tertulian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians." History teaches us that all the Apostles, including Saint John the Evangelist, were martyrs. All of the saints mentioned in the canon of the Mass were martyrs, "except for Our Lady, whose unique, un-bloody martyrdom was like a sword piercing her soul. The first thirty-three popes were martyrs. It was revealed to Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori that in the first three centuries of persecution, from the Edict of Nero (which began the persecutions) in the year 66 to the Edict of Milan (which ended them) in 313 eleven million of the faithful were martyred for their Faith in Christ. Finally, in the last days, during the reign of antichrist, the faithful will endure the worst of all persecutions, and martyrs will usher in the final triumph of the Church, which will precede the end of the world." (See "So Many Martyrs" by Brian Kelly, 2009, on our website.)

Let us remember Father Hamel. Let us imitate, to the extent possible in our state in life, those martyr-saints who died, especially those in churches, as they gained everlasting life. May God bless you all. ■

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Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

THE POPE, THE CHURCH, AND THE BIBLE

missionary activity throughout the known world. Nation after nation was evangelized, and millions of people were being led to the way of salvation in century after century. Through the efforts of great saints and missionaries sent by Rome, such lands as Ireland, France, Spain, England, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and the immense Slavic world, were made glorious parts of an ever-expanding Christian world, united in faith and discipline.

The very year 1000 saw the scholarly Pope Sylvester II united with his idealistic student, the young emperor Otto III. Both shared the happy vision of a united Christendom in which Church and state cooperate, each in its own sphere, in fulfilling God's command to bring the way of salvation to all nations. Sylvester II — the pope who donated the famous crown of St. Stephen, king of Hungary, one of the last nations to be won for the Faith — had taken the papal name Sylvester in honor of St. Sylvester I, and in the hope of restoring the happy union and cooperation between that pope and his friend, the Emperor Constantine the Great.

However, in spite of the auspicious beginning of the second millennium, its subsequent unfolding proved to be less so. This millennium did not continue, as was expected, to extend God's kingdom and to work out the only project of God on this earth, the salvation of souls. The second thousand years since Christ's Birth has now come to its close, witnessing the complete subjection of humanity to the plans and designs of anti-Christ: in the world, the triumph of Masonic power, Zionist intrigues, and secular humanism; and in the Church, Liberalism, Modernism, and false ecumenism. Knowing that what happens in the material world is inevitably a reflection of events in the spiritual, we must seek the ultimate causality of these consequences in the sphere of religion. Outstanding among these causes are major rebellions: a major schism during the first century of this second millennium, and a major revolt in its middle.

The Issue

The dialogue with these movements, the "Orthodox" in the East and the "Reformation" in the West (to give them the names they give to themselves) has lasted about half a millennium in the latter case, and a full millennium in the former. Yet, despite all that has been said on all sides of these controversies, the issues can be reduced to two: the pope and the Bible. Did God intend His religion to be an organized, disciplined teaching authority speaking in His name; or did He intend it to depend

exclusively on a book to be read and interpreted by each individual on his own? And if he did intend a teaching authority, is it represented by one visible leader (the Pope) or by a group of more-or-less equal Bishops (the Patriarchs of the "Orthodox" churches)? If these two questions can be answered correctly, the Church of God will be able to continue successfully, in the third millennium, the admirable achievements of the first.

We of the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center maintain that these two questions have very simple and clear answers. We also maintain that anyone of good will who prayerfully seeks the truth will be given the grace to know the answers and to cooperate freely with this grace. We further hold that a baptized person has, from his Baptism, a guaranteed sacramental grace for this purpose, in addition to the actual graces bestowed on all men.

It is no exaggeration to say that more has been written in answer to these two questions than on any other subject. A whole world of so-called apologetic literature is available. And yet one does not need to read one book of apologetics to find the answers. The slightest acquaintance with Holy Scripture and with prominent and incontrovertible facts of history would lead one to some firm conclusions helpful in reaching the answers.

Our divine Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did not write one line of the Bible.

Jesus unquestionably chose a definite group from among his disciples to be the teachers and leaders in His Church, and He said to them, "He that heareth you heareth me," thus bestowing infallibility on His Church.

When Jesus charged His Apostles to go and teach all nations, there was not in existence any written gospel to spread among the nations.

Catholic Love for Scripture

But we do have the Gospels now, and how grateful we are to God for them! In addition, we have the other twenty-three books of the New Testament and the forty-five books of the Old. We also know that these seventy-two books of Scripture form the one volume that is singly and uniquely God's book. By Faith, we know that whoever was the human writer of each book was an instrument in the hand of God in such a way that what he wrote must be attributed more to God than to the human writer himself. We know all these important truths through the only authority on earth that can teach us such truths infallibly: the authority of the Holy Catholic Church. The saints of the Church, including the Fathers and Doctors, give us a vivid example of how we should receive these books and with what gratitude. It is said of some saints that had all the Scriptures been lost they could have restored them from memory!

That there exists on this earth a book which is truly God's book, and that we know with absolute certainty this book is singular and unique, is indeed a very great gift from God to humankind. Yet, as with all gifts of God, we have, through the perversity of our fallen nature, abused it in a grand way! Every

heresy claims to derive its doctrine from the Bible. We must therefore try to discover God's intention in giving us this book, and how He wants us to use it.

We watch the providence of God at work over a period of about two thousand years, from the time Moses was inspired to write the first line of the Bible (about the fifteenth century before Our Lord) to the time in the fifth century after Our Lord when it was finally given to us complete, as we now have it, by a council of the Church ratified by a pope. This act, which was recognized and reaffirmed by later councils and popes, means that we have in the Bible all the genuine inspired writings, and those alone. All spurious writings that might have crept into it erroneously have been excluded, and all the genuine ones that could have been neglected are included. We are told all these things by the one authority which can make all these determinations, and make them infallibly. Without that authority, the Bible is like every other book on the face of the earth.

God's Chosen Authority

We see that the Bible was in the making during a period of about twenty centuries. During all that period it was constantly entrusted to a divinely instituted authority: the priesthood of Aaron in the Old Testament time, and the priesthood under Peter in the New. Apart from such divinely instituted authority, no man can determine what is or is not the word of God.

All the books of the New Testament were written during the first century after Our Lord. The Gospel of St. John, the last

to be written, was completed just before the close of the first century. These books were recognized individually by the Church and highly venerated. When the tomb of St. Barnabas was opened several hundred years after his martyrdom in A.D. 60, the honorary Apostle was found holding the Gospel of St. Matthew in his hand. Yet, up to the time of St. Augustine (354-430) there was no such thing as a definitely compiled collection of all the twenty-seven books — and only those books — as the New Testament part of the Bible. Among the twenty-seven books we now have, some were still in doubt. On the other hand, there existed a great abundance of writings considered by some as part of Holy Scripture. So, it was under the leadership of the great St. Augustine that a council of the Church held at Carthage in Africa in the year 397, drew up the list of the books of Scripture which we have had ever since.

But as great as the authority of St. Augustine is, it cannot demand of us, under the pain of sin, that we believe in these books — and no others — as the word of God.

Further, the authority of a council, local or even ecumenical, depends on recognition and ratification by the pope. So it is only after the pope's approval that this list (or *canon* of Scripture, as it is officially called) is accepted by the Church as definitive. Many councils and popes have since recognized this canon of Scripture and reaffirmed it, but none has added to it or taken away from it. The Council of Trent, to give one example, imposes on the conscience of every Christian, under the pain of anathema, the following injunction:



“Books of the New Testament: the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of Paul the Apostle, to the Romans, to the Corinthians two, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, two to the Thesalonians, two to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two of Peter the Apostle; three of John the Apostle; one of the Apostle James, one of the Apostle Jude; and the Apocalypse of John the Apostle. If anyone, however, should not accept the said books as sacred and canonical, entire with all their parts, as they were wont to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition, and if both knowingly and deliberately he should condemn the aforesaid tradition, let him be anathema.” (Council of Trent, under Paul III, Session IV April 8, 1546)

So we can confidently maintain that up to the end of the fourth Century, a Christian could, without incurring the curse of anathema, reject the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews or St. John’s Apocalypse as the word of God. A Christian could also think, without falling under anathema, that such writings as the Gospel of James, the III epistle to the Corinthians, and any number of “Acts” of Saints and martyrs, such as the “Acts of Paul and Thecla,” were parts of the Bible, the inspired word of God. Such books we now call Apocrypha; they could contain truths, but only on human authority, and only a teaching authority guaranteed infallibility by God could determine what truths may be found in apocryphal writings. Yet seven books of the Bible are called Apocrypha by some people today. On what authority?!

The Sacred Writers

Now that we are secure in the knowledge of what books constitute God’s book and what writings do not belong to it, and we know that this will remain true for ever, we may contemplate the providence of God working through the centuries in the inspired writers, when only the Holy Ghost knew what was being produced.

When St. Paul was writing a letter to the Corinthians or to the Galatians, he most probably had no awareness of the fact that, at the same time and by the same act, God was writing a book of the Bible. If the Bible has a unity, and it does, so that one part of it completes and explains other parts, that unity is supernatural and divine and in no way can it be explained naturally.

There is one incident in the Gospel of St. John that could be the exception which proves the rule. The people were objecting that Jesus could not be the promised Messiah because He came from Galilee and not from Bethlehem of Juda as prophesied. Now, nowhere in John’s Gospel is the birth of Jesus told, and St. John did not answer the objection. One can almost hear St. John whispering to himself, “Matthew and Luke took care of that.” Eight and only eight persons were the inspired writers of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, James the Less, and Jude. All the Apostles taught by word of mouth and in this way they communicated the Faith as they received it from Our Lord; hence the Scriptures say *Fides ex auditu* — “Faith cometh by hearing.” All the Apostles were endowed

with personal infallibility, but the gift or charisma of infallibility was communicated only to the successors of Peter in order to preserve the unity of the Church. Otherwise we would have as many infallible heads as there are bishops. The bishops can indeed teach infallibly, but only as long as they communicate the infallible teachings of the pope, who remains the unique and ultimate principal of infallibility. Of the twelve Apostles only five are inspired authors of Holy Scripture, and if we add Paul, the honorary Apostle, it makes six.

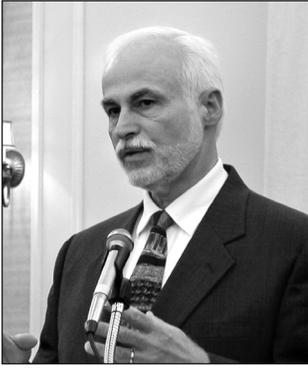
Now it is a fact that not one of the books originally written or dictated by the inspired author exists in the world today. But before we investigate the question of how we are confident, and justly so, that we do have with us the Bible, the book God inspired, let us first show some appreciation of the way it was preserved for us during the hundreds of years before Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century.

The Keeper of Scripture

For certainly the Bible could have been lost to us beyond recognition during that long period were it not for the faith of the Church and the religious veneration the faithful had for it, and for the labor of innumerable monks who copied it and recopied it with infinite care. Only the Catholic Church could have rendered this service to God and to men during those centuries. When we come to print the Bible today we must depend on ancient manuscripts that are really copies from copies. Of these there exist more than 3,000. And in spite of the fact that they were carefully done, there are to be found many variations in the different manuscripts. It is estimated that there are about 200,000 such variations! It is true, of course, that many such variations are inconsequential in that they do not touch the substance of the Faith, but it remains also true that there is only one authority that is capable of determining such decisions with finality. It must be concluded that in the providence of God, the Bible was never intended to be used apart from the Church, much less in opposition to the Church. To take one example, it is the Catholic Church and only the Catholic Church, that could state confidently that the Latin Vulgate version contains all the inspired books and only those, and that it is free from error. It is also the authority of the Church that can assure us that the Douay-Rheims version is a faithful rendering of the same Latin Vulgate in the English language.

The same authority of the Church which compiled the books of the Bible, preserved them from being lost or destroyed, and continues to determine the correct text, has imposed on us, at the risk of our salvation, the belief that the Bible is the word of God.

In conclusion, we see that Holy Scripture was given to us by God through the Church, and, therefore, the faithful children of the Church who receive it with simplicity and with the obedience of faith, can benefit from it to their edification and sanctification. Others *wrest it to their own destruction* (II Peter 3:16). This is as the Bible is meant to be by God, its True Author. ■



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

GUEST COLUMN LAKEIN'S QUESTION FOR CATHOLICS

Great philosophers have all considered the topic of time. St. Thomas Aquinas said time is the measure of the movement of natural phenomena. St. Augustine's definition is more detailed: "Perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation."

Time is one of Aristotle's Ten Categories. While philosophers consider it to be an *accident*, something that depends for its existence on a substance, it is an exacting and unforgiving accident. We have only a limited amount of time, and it is essential that we use it wisely. As living beings, when we no longer possess immanent action (the definition of life), we are out of time.

Back in 1973, Alan Lakein wrote a book entitled, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*. In short order he became one of the country's foremost personal time management experts. He discussed how to set goals and priorities so that the reader's life had a direction that was determined by himself rather than chance circumstances. In addition, he advised the reader to ask a question before they engaged in any new activity. In order to meet one's goals and complete his priorities, Lakein advised the reader to ask himself: *What is the best use of my time right now?* It has become famous as simply *Lakein's Question*.

Asking this question before starting a new activity forces one to stop and actually think about what he is about to do. If he has established his goals and priorities, it gives him the opportunity to make certain the activity is not a waste of time. It keeps him in the moment rather than defaulting to useless futuristic thinking, "Someday I'll..." It also helps prevent worrying about the past, which, unless it is for the purpose of improvement, is a waste of time. The question focuses on the only time during which we can affect anything: the present. Let us examine Lakein's question more closely.

Our interaction with the world is a little like playing an old LP phonograph record. Where the needle touches the rotating record is the point at which music is produced. There is no sound before and none after. That point is similar to the "now" of our existence; it is the only place in time where we can make our music.

To modify Lakein's question a bit: "What is the best music I can play right now?" We only have this ever-advancing moment

to play it. We could be blasting out head-banging heavy metal rock or the most elevated classical symphony. It is all the same to the needle. We decide which record will be played; we decide what happens "now."

It is a very worthwhile exercise to ask ourselves Lakein's question many times during the day. *What is the best use of my time right now?* If we make this a habit, it is amazing how many opportunities we find for making more valuable use of it. Making the best use of our time does not always mean praying to the exclusion of everything else. The best use of time right now may be to prepare supper for the family or to go to work for the day. While that can sound mundane and unexciting, the best use of these activities may be to offer up these mundane activities as prayers. So, in this case, the answer to Lakein's question is elevated by our intention. Though our activity is mundane, our intention is elevated. It is the best use of our time right now.

Lakein also suggests reviewing our priorities often during the day. It is easy to get off track and waste precious moments. His question helps us to sort through ever changing priorities. For example, today I finished a project early and, afterwards, I felt tired. I wanted to take a nap; but, when I asked myself Lakein's question, I decided it was a better idea to work on this current article. If I had decided that sleeping would make me more productive, I would have chosen the nap. In morally neutral activities, there can be a number of options. The point is that I consciously chose the best use of my time right then. I gained control of my situation and avoided wasting time.

Where Lakein's question becomes interesting and most helpful is when considering a time to engage in meditation. Of the highest priority is the need to save our souls. The saints tell us that, in order to do so, meditation is paramount. For me, meditation is difficult. I must make a determined effort to turn my attention to meditation when I am faced with the opportunity to choose what to do next. By making meditation a priority and asking the question *What is the best use of my time right now?* I discovered I can force the issue and decide when the time to meditate is now.

To recap, you may want to give Lakein's question a try. Begin asking yourself several times per day: *What is the best use of my time right now?* You may be surprised how you will become more aware of opportunities to capture some of those precious moments that have eluded you in the past.

What is the best use of your time right now? Ask yourself Lakein's question and find out.



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

GUEST COLUMN

ON OUR OWN: REFLECTIONS ON A TIMELY CONFERENCE

To anyone with eyes to see or ears to hear, it has at long last become patently obvious that our so called “elites,” i.e., those seemingly in charge of our society, our news, our government, our financial institutions, and even to some extent our Church, are not on our side and cannot be

trusted. While there have been indications of this for many years (at the very least since 1789), until fairly recently, one could go through life unaware of the problem, and blithely assume that he and his family, as well as the rest of our country, were in basically good hands and that matters would continue in a basically safe, predictable pattern.

That is no longer the case. In the last two years, we have seen a planned pandemic lead to the restriction of liberties and used as a tool of control to see how much people will take in the name of safety. We have also seen a presidential election stolen, a president deplatformed on social media, the spectacle of a pagan statue being blessed and apparently venerated in the Vatican, businesses locked down and destroyed by government officials, and a seemingly complicit clergy in which people in danger of death were denied access to the sacraments.

The list of devastating effects is seemingly endless. We have seen a general in the United States army allege that “white rage” is the major issue facing our military, while presiding over a disastrous dereliction of duty in Afghanistan, and we have learned that our children, along with many corporate employees and servicemen and women truly are being brainwashed by a Critical Race Theory designed to divide and conquer our nation.

We are also faced with a church hierarchy that seemingly is more concerned with promoting Transhumanism and climate change than with saving souls, and now war has been declared on the traditional Latin liturgy in an obvious attempt to contract it out of existence.

But enough of that; the purpose of this article is not simply to present a litany of things wrong in our society; these should be obvious to any thinking person. The fact is that a great number of people are finally waking up. We live in a world in which the City of God and the City of Man are constantly at war, and now that the war is so obviously out in the open, more people are finally becoming cognizant of the danger. This is always necessary in war, in order to have any prospect of winning, and more and more people are realizing that with much of our society and its institutions in enemy hands, we are truly, for the most part, on our own.

The annual conferences held at Saint Benedict Center are always timely and relevant, but the recently concluded 2021 conference was especially so. The aptly named theme of the confer-

ence was, “Resisting the Revolutionary Reset: Virtues, Skills, and Catholic Good Sense for Flourishing amid the Madness,” and each of the speakers brought his or her own unique perspective to the conference. In other words, to “flourish amid the madness,” we need skills, specifically Catholic ones, in each and every area of our life. In a time in which Americans, many for the first time, have run into shortages of such basic commodities as food and toilet paper, and in which it appears that the so called elites have a plan to get us further in thrall to big business and even to destroy local communities and their businesses, many Americans are now, in addition to purchasing weapons in unprecedented amounts, considering developing more local relationships and contacts, so that if and when the system crashes there will be food on the table.

This was dealt with by Sister Maria Philomena, MICM, who spoke of how the sisters at Saint Benedict Center had, seemingly inadvertently, begun farming and turned their unused land into a productive farm, raising pigs, goats, and chickens as well as growing herbs, among other things. This not only provides food for the religious living at Saint Benedict Center, but it also provides a way to bring in revenue while increasing local contacts and evangelizing, which is one of the charisms of this Order—the conversion of America. There is a growing movement in this country to return to the land, at least to some extent, growing some of one’s own food and stocking up for the predicted future shortages of food and other commodities, and this includes a new appreciation of the concept of Localism and roots, which cannot help but to assist us in the uncertain years to come.

Every speaker approached the issues we are facing today from a different angle: Brother André Marie, MICM, recognizing the seriousness of the situation, spoke on “Ordered Virtue as Resistance to Revolution”; in order to resist what is going on, we must remember that the Revolutions, especially since the Jacobin Revolution of 1789, have corrupted our way of thinking to the point that Virtue, to many people, is open to opinion and religion is irrelevant to their lives. In order to fight that revolutionary point of view (as we must), we need to understand the very concept of Virtue, as well as the orders of the virtues themselves.

Dr. David Lang addressed the issues from a similar perspective, emphasizing Thomism and its coherent philosophical theology while pointing out that what passes for reason today can be best described as the subordination of thought to an atheistically based ruling class which will brook no dissent whatever from its effort to mold culture. It has become more and more obvious that there is a plan afoot to overthrow the divinely established order for the family, society and the individual, and, while it seems to be succeeding, it can and must be resisted by a proper concept of reason as informed by revelation.

While Dr. Lang emphasized reason and revelation, John Sharp approached his talk from the angle of “Ideological Intransigence” being “The response to the Moral Death of Modern society.”

In other words, don't give an inch on anything important, even including keeping the liturgy alive at home. His grasp of the Catholic political movements of the 20th century and their seeming irrelevance after Vatican 2 were insightful, as was his critique of our national story, including tying in the history of World War II with what is unfolding today.

Sharp's comments were expanded by Mike Church and his analysis of how the Civil War and other aspects of American history all tie in with what is happening in our time. In other words, there is a generally accepted political narrative which must be understood if we are to resist or even to recognize the trends that are so devastating in this modern era. There was a time, not so long ago, when the unique perspectives provided by our speakers could be dismissed as "conspiracy theories" but that is no longer the case. Too much is out in the open, including apparently a planned implosion of our economic system, according to David Simpson, who brought his financial expertise to the program.

Charles Coulombe, in his talk, "As Darkness Fell," showed how the Arthurian legends relate to our time, in that King Arthur was watching the world he knew collapse, and fighting to save it, and C. Joseph Doyle gave us all hope for the future in his talk aimed directly at us in our increasingly irreligious society: "Religious Revival Despite Political Repression: Catholicism in Counter Reformation Ireland." Mr. Doyle is an expert on Irish history, a subject foreign to most Americans, and he gave us a detailed analysis of how the Irish managed to thrive despite centuries of repression, genocide and mistreatment. The innate stubbornness of the Irish people, the poverty of their Church (which was certainly not allied with the elites of the day) and the Irish relying more on cultural renovation than political involvement (something we Americans need to think about) all

helped them to survive during three hundred and fifty years of persecution.

And, as we should keep in mind, the Irish did it on their own. If we indeed wish to flourish amid the madness, we must do it without the assistance of any among the so called elites. We must not rely on taking back the House in 2022, running for the local school board, or putting so called "strict constructionists" on the Supreme Court. We must face the fact that, other than Our Lord and Our Lady, we are basically on our own, just like the Irish, who managed to flourish for centuries despite being under the thumb of a political and religious system intent on their destruction. The solution to the problems inherent in our society today, it should be apparent, have no political solution. In that, we are like those Irish, who, although they continued to vote (as we should also), relied on a Renaissance in their culture, history, language, and a Devotional Revolution designed to inspire a renewal of faith and culture.

We know from the words of Our Lady of Fatima to expect a "Diabolical Disorientation" and that, "the final attack will be about marriage and the family", and we are seeing this all around us. It is obvious that the only real solution is spiritual, and our religious order and its members were placed on earth at this time for a reason. One has only to consider the history of Fr. Feeney and the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and it becomes obvious that this Order has been graced with the ability to survive amid the madness, with no help from those in authority, and even to flourish. Let us take that ability and continue to stand up for Our Lord and Our Lady and to always remember that, although it may seem that we are totally alone, Our Lord told us that we really, in the final analysis, are not, when He said in Matthew 28:20, "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." ■



2021 SBC Conference

A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen.

Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, *Raccolta* No. 579).

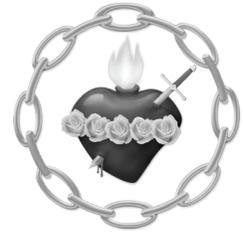
EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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

NOTES:

- Join us for the Chair of Unity Octave prayers January 18-25.
www.catholicism.org/chair-of-unity-octave.html
- To advertise your business on the crusade channel go to crusadechannel.com/crusade-channel-on-air-advertising-rates/

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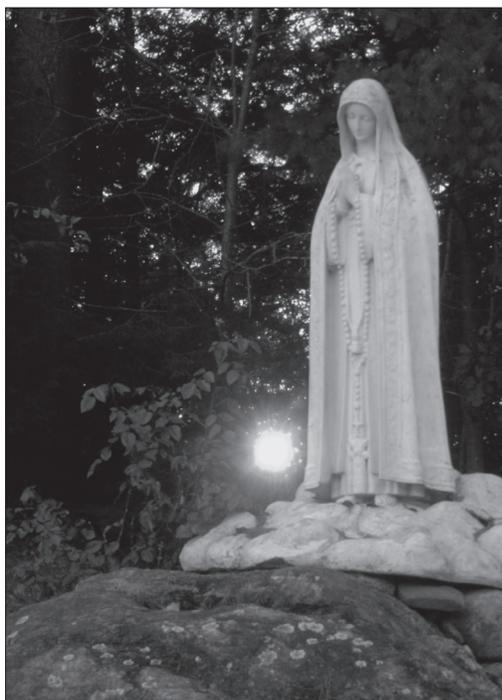
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