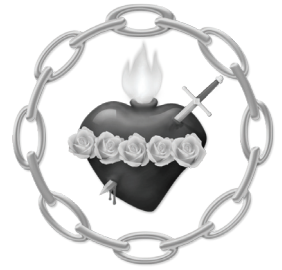


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



March/April 2023



Saint Patrick Catholic Church (Junction City, Ohio)

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Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

MUST I PRAY ONLY TO MARY?

A woman once came to speak to me about some difficulties she was having. At some point in the conversation, it came out that she could not pray to God the Father, but insisted on addressing all her prayers only to the Blessed Virgin

Mary. She was quite explicit on the point; it was no vague or merely implied thing. I made it clear to her that this was disordered. As she continued to speak, it became evident to me that some serious childhood wounds were the cause; she had a horrible relationship with her own father that had the effect of preventing her from approaching God the Father. I assured her that the Blessed Virgin was there to facilitate her relationship with the Eternal Father, and that in so doing Our Lady could heal those wounds as she grew in a loving relationship with the First Person. But she refused to listen. It saddens me that this poor lady is no longer a practicing Catholic.

While extreme, this depressing anecdote is a practical illustration that the authentic Catholic *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin Mary cannot be taken as a sort of spiritual matriarchy that prevents the Christian from having an intense relationship with the Father in His Son and through the Holy Ghost.

In a less extreme form, I have detected a certain confusion bordering on error among some who practice Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary in the manner prescribed by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. The nub of the issue centers on this point: Whether one should, in order to practice True Devotion, pray *only to Mary* and have Her intercede with God, or whether one may and should continue to address himself to the Holy Trinity and the Divine Persons singly.

Just as some questions are answered in the asking, it seems to me that this confusion is dispelled by its merely being articulated. **Of course the true devotee of the Blessed Virgin Mary not only may but must continue to address the Trinity and the distinct Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in his prayers.** What follows in the rest of this column are seven reasons why I make this assertion. I hope to follow up with a fuller development of how Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary enhances rather than forbids intimate communication between the faithful soul and the Holy Trinity.

First, Our Lord taught us to pray to the Father. The prayer called “the Lord’s Prayer,” the Our Father, is a fundamental part of Christian prayer. In the Roman Mass, the Our Father is recited with a lovely introduction, translated as follows: “Taught by Thy saving precepts and guided by

the divine institution, we make bold to say ...” It is a saving precept of divine institution, that is, something that Our Lord not only taught but *ordained* and *commanded* us to say. And indeed, Saint Matthew has Our Lord teaching us this prayer by way of a command: “Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven ...” (Matt. 6:9). So does Saint Luke: “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name ...” (Luke 11:2). In the Sermon on the Mount, a mere three verses before the text of the Our Father begins, Jesus says this about prayer: “But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee” (Matt. 6:6). What the celebrant in the Holy Mass does as he recites the Our Father is very revealing. As the rubrics prescribe, *he looks at the consecrated Host on the altar* while reciting or singing the *Pater Noster*. He is joining himself to the Son so that, in Him, he might dare to call God his Father. Father Feeney used to say that when we pray the Our Father, Jesus holds our hands and prays with us. He is not, of course, praying that His (non-extant) “trespasses” be forgiven; but He prays for and with us, *as our Mystical Head*, to the Father. Any purportedly Catholic spirituality that renders such prayer impossible — for clerics, religious, or laity — is simply not worthy of the name.

Second, the Church in her liturgy teaches us to pray to the Persons of the Trinity. Since we are considering a particular Marian devotion most closely associated with Saint Louis Marie de Montfort, we can situate this second reason around his own prayer life. As a priest, he prayed the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Latin Rite, was bound to pray the Divine Office, and, at times, administered the sacraments of the Church, especially Penance, according to the *Rituale*. He did not — nor can we — jettison the Trinitarian mode of prayer that is the treasure of the Church in her sacred liturgy, which exceeds all other devotions in excellence.

Third, the Church has approved, for monks, canons, friars, nuns, etc., a variety of religious rules and the modes of prayer they enjoin, all of which involve praying to Christ and the Trinity. It would be irrational to assert that the Benedictines, Basilians, Studites, Carthusians, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, etc., should abandon the traditions of liturgical and personal prayer they received from their venerable founders and the numerous Doctors of the Church who were their (and the Universal Church’s) great luminaries. Liturgical prayer demands addressing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost singly and collectively. Private prayer, in whatever tradition (mental prayer, or the older monastic *lectio, meditatio, oratio*, and *contemplatio*), also demands that one address himself to Our Lord and often to the other Persons. Saint Louis Marie would not demand the incongruous, nor would he undermine these wholesome

traditions — many of whose adherents supplied him with word and example for his own writings on Our Lady. Rather, I believe Saint Louis would say that Marian Consecration can and does *enhance* all these authentic modes of Christian spirituality and prayer.

Fourth, Our Lady has taught us to address the Persons of the Holy Trinity in prayer. To take just one example: The five Fatima prayers that were taught to the Portuguese visionaries by the Angel and Our Lady are all either addressed to Our Lord, to God simply speaking, or to the various Trinitarian Persons. While Saint Louis Marie lived and died centuries before these approved apparitions of the Twentieth Century, it entails an absurdity to say that the spiritual doctrine of this great Marian apostle would rule out the recitation of these devotional gems from an ecclesiastically approved Marian apparition.

Fifth, Saint Louis Marie himself teaches us to pray to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Among the prayers that he prescribes in the preparation for Total Consecration, Saint Louis Marie de Montfort includes *Jesus Living in Mary*, a prayer composed by Father Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1657) and popular in the “French School” of devotion of which Saint Louis is a part, the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and the *Litany of the Holy Ghost*. These prayers are addressed, some to the Son, others to the Holy Ghost. With the exception of the Litany of the Holy Name, all the litanies Saint Louis prescribes conclude with an oration that is directed to God the Father. Moreover, as he recommends renewing one’s consecration with the prayers and readings that go with it, the great Marian apostle presumes that the one consecrated to Jesus through Mary will continue to say these prayers. His “short form” for renewing one’s consecration monthly or daily — “I am all thine and all I have is thine, O dear Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother” — is evidently addressed to Our Lord. To this, we can add that the Our Father — a prayer entirely addressed to the First Person of the Trinity — is integral to the recitation of the Rosary, a devotion Saint Louis recommends wholeheartedly.

The Marian typology of Rebecca and Jacob that Saint Louis Marie

develops at length in *True Devotion* stands as a direct refutation of the error under consideration. The account in Genesis tells us that Rebecca dressed Jacob in Esau’s clothes, put the hairy skins of two kids on his hands and neck, prepared the meats of those kids, and counseled him to obtain the blessing that Isaac was planning to give to Jacob’s older brother, Esau. In Saint Louis’ reckoning, Rebecca is a type of the Blessed Virgin and Jacob is her client, the recipient of her intercession; that is, Rebecca is Mary and we are Jacob. Note carefully that Rebecca’s actions here were *to prepare Jacob to address his father*. She lent invaluable assistance to Jacob, but she did not stand in his place before Isaac. She facilitated the meeting and made it fruitful. That is one of the key operations Mary carries out for us.

Sixth, Catholic theology has taught us clearly and carefully about the worship due to God and the veneration due to Mary and the saints. If the devotee to Our Lady were forbidden to address himself to the Trinity, then the entire Catholic apologetical defense of the *cultus* shown to the Virgin Mary and the saints would collapse, for it depends on the distinction between the *cultus latriae* (the worship properly due to God alone) and the *cultus duliae* (the honor due to the saints), of which the devotion shown to the Blessed Virgin Mary (*cultus hyperduliae*) is the highest species. The idea that we cannot or should not address ourselves to the Three Divine Persons but rather only to the Blessed Virgin Mary effectively dissolves the *cultus latriae* in the name of the *cultus hyperduliae*. This would be a deformed sort of worship that plays into a very ugly Protestant caricature of Catholic devotional life.



Saint Louis de Monfort in Saint Peter’s Basilica

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Seventh, common sense, based upon the analogy of real-life human relationships, militates strongly in favor of praying to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Both psychologically and theologically, the prohibition from doing so is *dangerous* inasmuch as it makes devotion to Mary not an aid to developing a relationship of deeper devotion to the Trinity, but a virtual replacement for it. Above, I wrote that devotion to Mary is not a kind of spiritual matriarchy. This is true even, nay especially, in the “maximalist” Marian approach of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort and Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe. Mary is no matriarch. Our entire religion is patriarchal in nature and one cannot hide behind Marian piety to deny this truth.

Regarding devotion to the Father, if a child needs to address his father exclusively by means of his mother, then the idea is conveyed that the father is unapproachable and aloof. While this is sometimes sadly the case with human fathers, it is not a mark of good fatherhood. With her feminine and maternal gifts, a good mother can and should facilitate an enhanced relationship between a human father and their mutual child. Translated into the supernatural order, the Blessed Virgin helps to foster a greater relationship between Father and child, but She does not stand as a replacement for such; neither does She become the universal arbiter or conduit of all interactions. While as Mediatrix of grace, She can be conceived as a “conduit,” She is not a *mere* conduit. Our Lady is not a piece of plumbing or electrical circuitry in the Mystical Body; She is, rather, a *person* — the highest ranking human person in that Body. In that capacity, She has a unique social influence in the Church, and a unique influence over the intimate lives of individuals in that society — if we but let Her in.

Regarding the Second Person of the Trinity, let us take the example of a consecrated woman, a nun, a canoness, or a religious sister. She is in miniature what the Church is writ large, a “Bride of Christ.” Jesus is her “Bridegroom.” It is incongruous to think that a consecrated woman cannot speak to her heavenly Bridegroom in adoration, love, thanksgiving, reparation, petition, etc. Such thinking is not merely incongruous, but positively destructive of that woman’s vocation.

To make every act of love between the consecrated bride and her heavenly Bridegroom explicitly dependent on the Blessed Virgin as a conversational go-between would reduce Our Lady to the status of a spiritually meddling mother-in-law, which would be a vulgar caricature of the august person of the Mother of God.

A similar logic applies to men. While not “brides” of Christ, we are called to partake of a masculine friendship with Jesus Christ. Marian consecration fosters this intimacy and augments it.

Next time, I intend to develop the idea that, because Marian Consecration is fundamentally Christological and Trinitarian in nature, there is no tension but only perfect compatibility between this True Devotion and prayer to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The key, I believe, is her constant presence and involvement in our lives. Her abiding and ever-proximate maternal goodness, beauty, and love serve to heighten our communion with the Holy Trinity. But more on that later! ■

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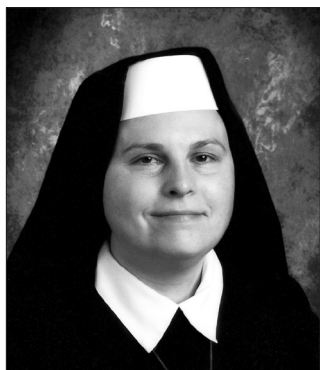
TOTAL CONSECRATION TO MARY



This five-piece album contains a series of successive one-hour conferences on St. Louis de Montfort’s masterpiece, True Devotion to Mary. Brother André Marie gave these talks to an audience who, for the most part, were preparing to make the “Total Consecration to Mary” according to the progressive schema of the great Marian apostle. Having many times given similar courses of conferences to prepare people for the total consecration, he parted from his usual program this time to introduce considerations on the spiritual life drawn from masters such as Blessed Columba Marmion, O.S.B. and Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. It may be said that the net result is a synthesis of Saint Louis de Montfort with these spiritual masters, one in which heavy emphasis is placed on explaining the Blessed Virgin’s role in the economy of salvation. God has commissioned her, as Mediatrix of All Graces, with a quasi-infinite power, especially in these latter times, to gather the elect, her children, under her mantle, and preserve them in grace even as she increases their capacity for more grace, so that they will be more conformed to the image of her Son, Jesus Christ. As a member of the Order of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Brother André Marie knows the value of this consecration, and the comforting security that it offers to those who live it well. **5 talks on MP3 \$15 \$12**

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Sr. Marie Thérèse,
M.I.C.M., Prioress

CONVENT CORNER

A HOUSE OF MIRRORS

Dear Reader, have you ever been to an amusement park and wandered into a house of mirrors? The various formations of the mirrors produce entertaining reflections, such as a very tall and unusually skinny “you,” or a squat and fat “you,” or a “you” with a huge nose and tiny feet.

Each mirror indeed reflected you, but unless there was one normal mirror in that house of mirrors, none of them reflected you accurately.

Of course, if mirrors were all like the distorted ones at the amusement park, people would get tired of looking into them fairly quickly. Normally, the point of looking into a mirror is to see our own images reflected as precisely as possible so that we can see ourselves as others see us ... as we truly are. Then, with our reflected image before our eyes, we make any appropriate adjustments to ourselves, perhaps we make a few “faces” at our image, and then we turn from the mirror to face the “real world,” confident of our image.

If we are careful of our image, we will check it often in the various mirrors that grace our daily lives; from the rear view mirrors in our cars to the polished glass of an office door. The more frequently we check it, the closer our image will be to what it should be.

Dear Reader, for years I have mulled over some of the mysterious invocations we Catholics use. For example, we ask mirrors to pray for us. Hmmm. What in the world does that mean!?

In the Litany of Loretto, among other mysterious titles, we call upon Our Lady as the “Mirror of Justice” asking Her to pray for us. In the Litany of Saint Joseph, we implore him as the “Mirror of Patience” to pray for us. Why not just say to Our Lady, “Oh Mary, most just, pray for us!” Or, to Her chaste spouse, “Joseph, most patient, pray for us!” Why the “mirrors”?

Please bear with me, dear Reader, as I attempt to understand a bit more of these tremendous mysteries!

When we speak of the perfections of God, we stumble across realities that transcend our experience. So, it is not adequate to say, for example, that God is “good.” We can say of any other person that he is “good.” But only of God can we say that He is “Goodness” ... the very perfection and source of all that is good. We can also say that God is Power; God is Wisdom; God is Being; God is Holiness; God is Love; and so on with all of His perfections.

Every human being is a mirror, created by God to reflect certain of these Divine perfections. Most human beings are like the mirrors in that notorious house of mirrors in the amusement park: The images of God they reflect are scarcely recognizable and terribly distorted. The saints, however, do reflect the myriad perfections of God.

The saints are like the mirrors in that other House of Mirrors — where we find the Mirror of Justice and the Mirror of Patience, forever turned toward the Image of the Invisible God ... the God-Man. These two Mirrors reflect the most exact images of God and His perfections. Since they so singularly reflect God, they have a right to the title, “Mirror.”

But, their titles are not merely, “Mirror of God.” Our Lady’s title is, “Mirror of Justice” and Saint Joseph’s is, “Mirror of Patience.” And here, dear Reader, I will venture to posit my own interpretation!

Another bit of explanation is necessary here. You have probably heard of the “predominant fault.” The predominant fault is our particular inclination to evil which is beneath all of our sins. In order to get a grasp on our spiritual lives, we do well to study ourselves to find out our predominant fault. Once we know what it is, we dispel much mystery in the examination of our conscience and in the amendment of our life, and we have a “handle” on things.

However, that is not what I wanted to discuss with you, dear Reader! The predominant fault is the negative side of ourselves, useful as it is. God has also given us a “special attraction of grace.” This attraction is different in each individual ... it is unique. The saints, by prayer, discover what this special attraction of grace is for them, and begin to fly to God by acting upon it.

Every saint had a special virtue God wanted him to be known for ... a particular Divine perfection He wanted the saint to reflect in their lives ... and then for all Eternity. This, again, is based on the special attraction to grace. Each saint is a mirror of some perfection of God ... they reflect Him in their lives. However, some mirrors are more perfect and polished than others. The most perfect of all mirrors are the Mother of God and the Foster Father of Jesus. Of all the perfections of God that they reflect, there is one that summarizes their particular reflection of God ... and I hold it is their special attraction to grace ... For Our Lady, it is Justice (Holiness). For Saint Joseph, it is Patience (perfect union with God’s Will).

Dear Reader, you are also a mirror, reflecting God. After all, you are in His Image and Likeness. How reflective are you? And, what special perfection of God is shining out in your life? ■

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Brother Francis Maluf,
M.I.C.M.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Sound philosophy proves (1) the existence of God, (2) the immortality of the human soul, (3) the freedom of the will. Error in these important matters can close the mind to all revelation from God.

The First Vatican Council defined: "If anyone should

have said that the One, True God, our Creator and our Lord, cannot be known with certitude by those things which have been made, by the natural light of reason, let him be anathema" (Denz. 1806).

This means that since Vatican I, it is a formal heresy to hold that the human mind is not able to know the existence of God. This heresy is tantamount to saying that God creates an intelligent being incapable of discovering Him. Now this knowledge of God is not sufficient for salvation. Though it is necessary, it alone is not sufficient. (To say otherwise would make one a Pelagian.) This ability to know carries with it a responsibility on the part of man: an obligation to use this faculty. Those who have reached the age of reason are culpable if they do not know that there is a God, and even more culpable if they deny the existence of God.

A missionary going to a pagan land where the Gospel has never been preached cannot blame a pagan when meeting him for the first time for not knowing about the Incarnation, about the sacraments, or about the fact that the Holy Scriptures were inspired by God. All these are truths of the supernatural order. We know them because God revealed them and the Church teaches them in His name. But the missionary is entitled to blame pagans — even berate them — if he finds that they do not even know that there is a God. They should have found that out with their own minds before the arrival of the missionary. Like all natural virtue, the achievement of knowing God through natural reason is praiseworthy, but not sufficient for salvation (it is for this purpose that the Church has missionaries).

It is supernatural wisdom that is both necessary and sufficient. It comes to us from God, and we receive it by the docility of the will. It is presented to us by the inspired author of the Book of Wisdom:

Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God and the spirit of Wisdom came upon me: And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stones: for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her light cannot be put out. Now all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. (Wisd. 7: 7-11)

But why philosophy?

Having shown the paramount importance of supernatural wisdom, why need we occupy ourselves with philosophy? In a way, in the full development of the following courses, we shall be trying to meet the challenge of this question. Since God has bestowed on us a wisdom we receive in the light of grace, why need we seek wisdom in the light of natural reason?

These are a few considerations in favor of the cultivation of philosophy as part of wisdom:

First, God gave us our natural powers of intellect and will, and He is pleased to see us use them well. Indeed it is in the possession of these powers that men are made "in His image and likeness."

Second, it is natural for men to raise the questions dealt with in philosophy. When these questions are not answered correctly through the sound method, they are likely to be answered by error (and this is subversive of Faith and morals, as we shall make abundantly clear). To give one example, sound philosophy proves that the human soul, being rational, is spiritual and therefore immortal. A mind equipped with this truth is more receptive of the truths of revelation. A mind which rejects this truth will fall into philosophical error, heresy, and — most likely — moral corruption.

Third, sound philosophy provides clear, defined concepts and sound methods for expressing accurately the revealed truths of the Faith. For example, the Church uses the concepts of "substance," "nature," "person," etc., to express and defend the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Eucharist.

Fourth, God reveals the truths necessary for salvation, and man can go to Heaven by accepting with childlike simplicity these revealed truths. But if we want to have a culture guided by Faith and reason, the disciplines of sound philosophy become indispensable. A Catholic culture on this earth requires just laws, a sound philosophy of education, good family values, noble art standards, etc., and only sound philosophy can provide such principles.

Fifth, the experimental sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, geology, astronomy, etc.), and the mathematical sciences are the foundations of the technological age in which we find ourselves literally immersed. Philosophy differs from these sciences.

While they seek proximate causes and are interested in practical results, philosophy seeks ultimate causes from a more universal point of view. Philosophy is more speculative (even more contemplative) and more detached. Philosophy, therefore, can evaluate the realm of validity of each science and prevent the false generalizations which we associate with the dangers of scientism. So, to extend the scholastic metaphor "philosophy is the handmaid of theology," we may add that at the same time, philosophy is the queen of the arts and sciences. ■



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

PREFECT'S COLUMN AND SO THE MASS BEGINS . . .

My last article reported on an interview with a traditional Catholic, a friend of SBC. The interview covered many subjects. In this article I will cover matters relating to the Traditional Mass, as stated by the Catholic. We only spent a paragraph in the last article revealing this soul's

thoughts about the Mass. Because I try to repeat the individual's comments verbatim, some of this article is in a style called stream of consciousness. A couple of my questions are given in bold.

"The Mass, TLM, if you wish, is so ingrained in my mind, my heart, my soul, that I do not retire for sleep, nor wake in the morning, without the intent to attend the Holy Sacrifice each day. My schedule reflects that plan. I suppose, by habit, I attach the recitation of the Rosary as an integral prelude to every Mass. My family prays Our Lady's Holy Rosary before Mass, if that is at all possible, or immediately after Mass. I have arranged my life so that I live near the Traditional Latin Mass, close to a community which supports the traditions of the One True Church, and among persons who strive to make Heaven their final destination. I find that Mass is the most important thing I can do all day long without exception.

"Aside from illness or severe weather, I will be at the Mass. No matter if I find it difficult, I will make the effort. It is rare that I ever miss a daily Mass. **No sacrifice is too great to assist at His.**

"I try to arrive early, not only because I do not like to be late for any appointment, but because, once seated, I can focus all on the stage in front of me ... there is the Lord, affixed to a wooden Cross, by nails in His hands and feet ... with blood and water oozing from His side ... with a thorn-crown encircling His head ... there are statues of His Mother, venerable saints, candles, the tabernacle, and, of course, the altar. On it is a book and the altar linens. One can absorb all these beautiful objects ... they should enhance the event that will soon take place.

"The priest, the altar servers and choir hurry around in preparation. People go to Confession. In the meantime, I can pray some prepared prayers, as well as take the opportunity to speak to God, to His Mother, to patron saints, and other members of the heavenly court in my own words.

"As I look at the cross above the altar, I remember the Crucifix at the back of the Holy Family Church, where I received my first Holy Communion. We were given a little white prayer book. I recall nothing in the book, save its inside cover where lay a beautiful metal in-plate with the Crucifix of Jesus on it. I would go to the back of the Church, where a

life-size Crucifix was on the wall and pray this prayer, while gazing intently at Our Lord.

"Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus while before Thy face I humbly kneel and, with burning soul, pray and beseech Thee to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity; true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment.

While I contemplate, with great love and tender pity, Thy five wounds, pondering over them within me and calling to mind the words which David, said of Thee, my Jesus:

"They have pierced My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones. Amen."

"I pray that prayer when I arrive in the Church and just before I leave.

"There are so many things that rush to my mind when contemplating the TLM. How can I explain it? How can I ever translate the experience of the very mysteries that accompany each traditional Mass?

"The actions ... movements ... speech and responses ... the hymns, and finally the miracle that happens during the Mass are far beyond our human understanding, and yet, quite easy to understand when experiencing it if one surrenders to it. The action is the highest spiritual event one could imagine."

Why the Mass? "Some friends, relatives, and the occasional stranger seem surprised that attending daily Mass is such a priority. But this is Our Lord's own act of perfect adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and petition! Where else can you receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity? They do not seem to understand: God is coming to man. Let others seek earthly riches which fade away. The riches of Sanctifying Grace **contained in one Holy Communion compare with nothing in the world!**"

What happens when you receive Holy Communion? "Simply, a precious union between my soul and Him. Every time I ask myself: I am so very unworthy to receive Him into my sullied soul. Often I am brought to tears considering my sins, and His sinlessness. **God is in me!** He must love me so much that He forgives my treasonous activities, my traitorous conduct, my many failures and imperfections ... I am overwhelmed, but then I accept, and my love of Him increases.

"I should add that, before I receive I ask Our Lady to lend me Her heart to receive the King of Kings. She can entertain Her Son in a way I am incapable of doing. I also pray Hail Marys as I await at the Communion rail for the priest to come to me and say, '*Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* (May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen.)'

“From there on, I am lost in thought, love, praise ... almost unaware of myself. It is at these moments I try not to think, but let my heart remain open to Him. I do not wish my thoughts to prevent whatever lights He gives me to be dimmed.

“I will never forget seeing my father after he received Holy Communion. He knelt in his pew, bowed his head, and held it in his hands for a long period of time. It was an action that exemplified his piety, affection and honor he gave to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.”

“After the Mass ends, there remain to be done the thank yous. If you are given a gift, you say thank you, you send a

thank you card, you call the person and tell them you appreciate the gift and you thank them. It then follows that with the Great Gift, we should give much gratitude. Although the Mass is over, the thank yous should begin. Thanking God for giving us His Son, under the appearances of Bread and Wine, is so great a good, that we could spend the rest of the day thanking Him ... the week ... the month ... eternity.” May God bless you all. ■

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

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PURITY OF HEART IS NECESSARY FOR KNOWING GOD'S WILL

It is necessary for you to pray diligently to God to make you know His will as to what state He wants you in. But take notice that to have this light, you must pray to Him with indifference. He who prays to God to enlighten him in regard to a state of life, but without indifference, and who, instead of conforming to the divine will, would sooner have God conform to his will, is like a pilot that pretends to wish his ship to advance, but in reality does not want it to: he throws his anchor into the sea, and then unfurls his sails. God neither gives light nor speaks His word to such persons. But if you entreat him with indifference and resolution to follow His will, God will make you know clearly what state is better for you. — Saint Alphonsus of Liguori

A TRUE VOCATION

Avocation, therefore, speaking generally, is not a mysterious thing, but simply the choice God makes of one for a certain kind of life. Moreover, a vocation to the religious state supposes not only a supernatural inclination but an aptitude, or fitness, for its duties. God cannot act inconsistently. Hence, if real obstacles stand in the way, e.g., serious infirmities, an old parent to support, etc., such a one is not called to enter religion.

God at times inspires a person to do something, which He does not really intend to be carried out. Thus, Abraham was told to sacrifice his son merely to test his obedience and willingness, for, says Saint Teresa, "God is

sometimes more pleased with the desire to do a thing than with its actual accomplishment."

Saint Francis de Sales writes: "A genuine vocation is simply a firm and constant will desirous of serving God in the manner and in the place to which He calls me. [...] I do not say this wish should be exempt from all repugnance, difficulty or distaste. [...] In order to know whether God wills one to be a religious, there is no need to wait till He Himself speaks to us, or until He sends an angel from Heaven to signify His will; [...] but the first movement of the inspiration must be responded to, and then one need not be troubled if disgust or coldness come later."

The Vows

But that which constitutes the essence of religious life is the observance of the three vows of Evangelical Perfection: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. A vow is a solemn promise made to God, after serious deliberation and having fully grasped the responsibilities involved, by which the soul engages to perform something, under pain of sin, which is better to do than to omit.

It is more perfect and more agreeable to God to do a good work after having obliged ourselves to do it by vow than to do it freely without this obligation. All the actions performed in virtue of the vows of the religious life are elevated to the dignity of acts of the virtue of Religion, giving them not only greater value in the eyes of God, but immensely increasing the holiness of the person.

Of all the vows, the three of the religious state are the noblest and best. The three great obstacles to perfection are, according to Saint John, the concupiscence of the eyes (for riches), the concupiscence of the flesh (for the pleasure of the senses), and the pride of life (in seeking after honours) [I Jn II, 16]. The vow of poverty destroys the first, chastity the second, and that of obedience the third.

By these vows, man makes of himself a perfect sacrifice to God, surrendering into His hands his liberty and will. Seeing how pleasing is this lifelong sacrifice, the Fathers of the Church and many others have called religious profession a 'Second Baptism,' by which the guilt and punishment due for past sins are entirely remitted.

One can easily understand, then, the determination of those who have been obliged to leave a religious house to enter it again. Like Isabella of France, who refused the hand of the Emperor Frederick to become a humble nun, they exclaim: "A spouse of Jesus Christ is far more than even an Empress!"

From www.catholicism.org/are-you-called.html



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

RE-EVANGELIZING OUR PAGAN SOCIETY

To anyone with eyes to see, what used to be known as Western Christian Civilization is under an unrelenting attack by what may best be called a new paganism. While the roots of this cancerous growth can be traced at least to the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century,

followed by the so-called Enlightenment, and has been propelled by Freemasonry and related forces of Organized Naturalism, which stoked that “fire” that Dostoevsky tells us (in *The Possessed*), “is in the minds of men, not in the roofs of buildings.” That flame was revolutionary Liberalism.

Since the time of the French Revolution, this idea, this false philosophy has so taken hold in today’s post-Christian culture, that it has come to be accepted as truth. In reality, it might be more appropriately termed “anti-truth,” since the philosophy that spawned it does not even believe that there can be any such thing as real truth.

We are left with a society in which Modernism reigns and we are surrounded by what Gary Potter described in a talk at Saint Benedict Center: “Coarse manners, foul language, slovenly dress calling itself casual, ... in a word, Modernity.” Yet, in a society in which (at least in California where I reside) one sees, on a daily basis, tattooed, pajama clad women with nose rings out in public with no apparent embarrassment or shame (shame being an obsolete concept, apparently.) Are these things themselves the real problem?

Not really. They are more the symptoms of a nihilistic society going down the drain, one in which a mother’s “right” to murder her child is open to discussion, where a boy can supposedly become a girl or vice versa, and in which right or wrong can supposedly be determined by majority vote or the violence of unruly mobs. Now, believe it or not, we are even confronted with the fact that a film, “*Bones and All*,” which celebrates cannibalism, has won several awards at various film festivals around the world. If you find yourself wondering if things can get more depraved, please assure yourself: they can and they will!

What, if anything, is the solution to this abominable state of affairs? One thing, and one thing alone, can solve these problems: A reawakening of Christianity, not in some heretical form, but in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the religion left to us by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Without it, there can be no true solution just as outside it there is no salvation.

None of this is completely new. Holy Mother Church has been faced with such situations before and emerged

triumphant, and there is no reason to doubt that She can and indeed will, emerge triumphant again.

We must remember that, as bad as things may appear in our godless society, where the very air we breathe is soaked with Liberalism, this is no surprise to God, and is all accounted for in His divine plan. Again, this is nothing new. As Saint Augustine writes concerning Cain and Abel, “There was no rivalry in any cupidity for the things of earth, nor was there any envy or temptation to murder arising from a fear of losing the sovereignty, if both were ruling together. In this case Abel had no ambition for domination in the city that his brother was building. *The root of the trouble was that diabolical envy which moves evil men to hate those who are good for no other reason than that they are good*” (*City of God*, XV:5). We must see the evils of our day as the latest installment in the war between the City of God and the City of Man.

But evil never actually prevails — not *really*, not *finally*. At Golgotha, the forces of evil seemed to have triumphed, yet that proved to be an illusion three days later. At Our Lord’s glorious Ascension into Heaven, He sent forth His disciples to convert the world, adding, “Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Mt. 28:20). Does this sound like a prescription for defeat? It most certainly does not. Here we have the omniscient, omnipotent creator of the universe pledging to be with the Church always, and after Pentecost, when the disciples were “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), they set about heading for the four corners of the earth, willing to face death in the accomplishing of their one mission: to convert the entire planet.

The Christian civilization that appears to be undergoing its annihilation before our very eyes was founded by and through the evangelism of the Catholic Church. It was the Catholic Church that converted the Roman Empire, slowly transforming it into the Holy Roman Empire. It was Catholic missionaries, many following the *Rule* of St. Benedict, who took on the then barbarian nations of Europe, converting England, Ireland, Spain, France, Germany, etc., and civilizing them. All this was done with seemingly little to work with, among a variety of pagan cultures, each with their own false religion, by small groups of dedicated men, mostly on foot, and subject to the evangelical counsels. The world owes more than it knows to early monks who, in more ways than one, started Christian civilization, saved it from heathen marauders, and brought it through the so-called Dark Ages.

Unfortunately, primarily as a result of a failure to quash the heretical Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century, the notion arose that each person had the right to interpret God’s word, and from there arose the concept that one person’s view of God is as good as another’s. Thus did

indifferentism and a false concept of religious liberty enter the world, eventually attacking the very structure of revealed religion and the notion of objective truth itself.

We now find ourselves in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and in its continuation. Along with Liberalism, Darwinism, Marxism and a host of other evil “isms” we have a “deep state” as well as, apparently, a “deep church,” a corrupt, self serving media and, basically, an economic system ruled by the forces of Organized Naturalism, a society in which evil seems to be prevailing, and in which control seems to be placed firmly in the City of Man. However, we know that this cannot go on forever; we have Our Lord’s own assurance of that.

But what can be done? The only solution is a missionary spirit and a re-evangelizing of our ugly, neo-pagan society. Unlike our predecessors, who evangelized the barbarian nations centuries ago, we must do it in a world in which most people have had a sort of inoculation against Christianity. They feel as though they have tried Christianity and found it wanting, but they really haven’t. We in the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary know that Christianity in all its fullness has been under direct attack by Modernism and Americanism since at least the nineteenth century. Our forebears in this order experienced that attack directly in the 1940’s due to their insistence on preserving the Catholic faith in its wholeness, and that attack is still ongoing.

As bad as things are, there are signs of a resurgence. The current attacks on sound doctrine, morals, and even the Church’s traditional liturgy bear the marks of a desperate attempt to insulate the faithful from full-throated

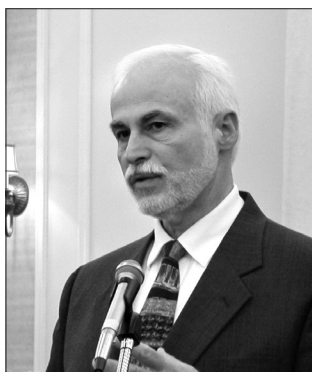
expressions of authentic Catholicism. They can only fail. The same churchmen who are engaged in these attacks have, sadly, lost their moral voice and undermined their own attempts. Their loud protestations come across more as self-incrimination than as genuine exercises of their God-given authority. And people can tell.

As we ponder the challenges we meet in the Church Militant, it would behoove us to look up to our elder brothers and sisters in the Church Triumphant. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Saint Francis Xavier are given to us as the co-patrons of all Catholic missions (and missionaries). While Saint Thérèse gave us her “Little Way” that we should strive to practice in our daily lives, her Jesuit co-patron, the greatest missionary since Saint Paul, left us a prayer we can offer for our own beloved country, and I humbly suggest that all reading these lines to do just that.

Eternal God, Creator of all things, remember that the souls of unbelievers have been created by Thee and formed to Thy own image and likeness. Behold, O Lord, how to Thy dishonor hell is being filled with these very souls. Remember that Jesus Christ, Thy Son, for their salvation suffered a most cruel death. Do not permit, O Lord, I beseech Thee that Thy divine Son be any longer despised by unbelievers, but rather, being appeased by the prayers of Thy saints, and the Church, the most holy spouse of Thy Son, deign to be mindful of Thy mercy, and forgetting their idolatry and their unbelief, bring them to know Him Whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord, Who is our health, life, and resurrection, through Whom we have been redeemed and saved, to Whom be all glory forever. Amen. ■



The Holy Roman Empire including its members by Jost de Negker



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

WHY PHILOSOPHY — I FEEL THIS ... THEREFORE THAT

Recently, I was talking to my daughter about conflicts and how to manage them. When we came to how our emotions are involved in such situations she quipped, “I feel this ... therefore that.” After I stopped laughing, I realized that she had hit upon

an essential element of too many arguments nowadays, even those that pose as “intellectual.”

My daughter was referring to an incident in which a relative insisted that her daughter (my granddaughter) take a covid test because of a recent contact with her grandmother. The problem was that the grandmother refused to take a test and the relative was afraid the grandmother might get sick, “therefore, it follows that your daughter should be tested.” Of course, there was no taking into account of all of the intervening contacts that had occurred with the grandmother after her daughter had visited. The basic situation was: the relative felt afraid, “therefore ...”

I was reminded of an interchange that occurred many years ago when I was a supervisor at the Division of Motor Vehicles. An angry mother had called me to complain that her daughter had failed her driving test. She shouted into the phone, “My daughter is a good girl and an excellent student, and I love her very much, THEREFORE (emphasis hers) she should have passed her road test!”

After getting a little chuckle, the student of logic would assess this statement as a classic fallacy referred to as *ignoring the issue*. The issue is that the daughter’s multiple accomplishments in other areas had nothing to do with her failing a road test. Looking at her statement a bit deeper, it was another example of moving from the strong feeling of having to defend her daughter (who was a good girl), to asserting that this was a sufficient reason for the daughter to pass her test. *I feel this ... therefore that*.

In his book entitled *The Science of Correct Thinking: Logic*, Father Celestine Bittle has an entire chapter describing various fallacies. Under the category of *ignoring the issue* is the error of *emotional phrasing*, “... words and phrases, fraught with emotion and colored by prejudgment are employed so as to sway the minds of the readers or listeners to one side of the question without an adequate appeal to their reasoning powers to judge the case on its intrinsic merits.”

The *I feel this ... therefore that* fallacy is a type of *ignoring the issue*, with an important difference. While emotional phrasing is the attempt to engender a certain emotion in the listener or reader, *I feel this ...* (the part of the proposition that is called the *antecedent*) is based on the emotion of the person making the argument, who erroneously moves from his own feelings to an unwarranted conclusion.

This type of argument is more prevalent than appears at first glance. Decades of courses in “Assertiveness Training”

have taught this exact fallacy as a technique of asserting power or control over a person or a situation, maintaining that it is difficult for others to disagree with or argue against a person’s feelings. Students are trained to say something like this: “When you (the supposed “aggressor”) do or say this, it makes me feel like (insert some negative emotion here). Therefore I need you to refrain from that activity or saying such things in the future.”

It doesn’t take much imagination to see what this type of fallacy has devolved into. “The fact that you are a certain race makes me feel slighted (or uncomfortable, less worthy, etc.). Therefore you need to (pay reparations, apologize, etc.)” In its modern iteration, the argument is: *You make me feel this, therefore you need to do that to make me feel better*.

Just to see what I would find, I pulled up a random news article on the internet which described a new law that will affect gun owners in Tennessee and found the following statement within a few seconds: “I don’t understand our regression to the old West, because this is what it feels like,” he told ABC News. “I’ve studied the old West, and I don’t think anyone wants to go back to the murder rate of Tombstone.” Translation: “This new law feels to me like a regression to the old West, therefore we must avoid high murder rates.” Of course there is no relationship between the two parts of the man’s statement; it is a nice example of *I feel this... therefore that*.

Here are several more examples. A young man makes an off-handed comment to his fiancé. She feels slighted and reasons as follows: He hurt my feelings, therefore he is an insensitive boor. Her conclusion causes an argument when she confronts him with it, and eventually the engagement is broken.

Because a person is afraid of looking foolish in front of others, he reasons as follows: I am afraid of looking like an extreme religious Fundamentalist, therefore I will express my support of atheistic evolution and an earth that is zillions of years old, even though my Faith teaches me that this is not correct.

Or a man feels uneasy about appearing to reject the most current media proclamation, so he reasons: I feel funny about appearing to reject “science,” therefore I and everyone around me must wear masks, even though published research indicates that they do not work against airborne viruses.

The above examples are all expressions of *I feel this ... therefore that*. As experience has shown, this fallacy can lead to very unfortunate consequences — a broken engagement, a rejection of the teachings of the Catholic Faith, a rapid slide into greater government control.

I suggest you have some fun and look for this argument in the popular press. Even if the *antecedent* (the first part of a *conditional* or *hypothetical proposition*) leaves the emotion unstated, it is helpful to examine it further to see if one is implied. Once you begin to look more closely, you may be surprised how often you encounter *I feel this ... therefore that*. ■

MY MARIAN CONSECRATION BY JULIE MCCANN

I was totally unprepared when God chose to give me the gift of His Blessed Mother. I thought I loved Mary as much as any rosary-praying, scapular-wearing Catholic could. But I was so wrong. At thirty-three years old I found myself a mother of ten, fighting an uphill battle within my marriage and ignoring a seriously lukewarm relationship with my faith. It was at this point in time our good God enrolled me in the school of His Heavenly Mother.

The phone rang. It was my best friend Betty Ann. She called to ask if I wanted to attend a fully paid retreat for the weekend. Even though she said retreat, I heard escape. Betty Ann had registered for three days at the St. Paul Center about an hour away from home. Her children were sick so she was unable to leave. Not wanting the reservation wasted, Betty Ann very generously asked me if I wanted to go in her place. My mind was racing. Is it possible? Can I leave all my duties and just go? Would my husband agree to flying solo for three days with our ten children so I could go on a retreat? I gave my friend a tentative yes and thanked her warmly for the opportunity. The gratitude was both genuine and deceptive. I thought the idea of a retreat was boring, but the briefest consideration of liberation from my crazy life for a few days was unabashedly glorious. I only mention this shameful mindset to demonstrate how much God was willing to condescend to bless me in spite of my bad will.

My husband whole-heartedly consented. I was out the door and on the road before either of us had time to change our minds. I arrived at the retreat house and mingled politely among the other participants. As we were given a tour of the modest facility, I privately winced a little realizing television would not be part of the itinerary. Notwithstanding, I was still intent on using the weekend for a more indulgent time of rest and relaxation.

A bell rang and a group of approximately forty to fifty women were ushered into the main conference hall for introductory remarks as well as the first talk. A woman by the name of Marianne stood before us on the stage in a simple skirt and blouse. Hanging over her shoulders and outside her clothing was the largest scapular I had ever seen; it almost completely covered her torso. This in-your-face scapular piqued my curiosity and summoned my attention.

I was being introduced to the concept of 'Total Consecration to Mary'. Marianne delivered her message in a striking manner. She communicated with such undisguised affection describing how consecrating yourself to the Mother of God was the shortest and surest path to sanctity. She was able to convey the information about the *what, why* and *how* of consecration while completely enrapturing my thoughts. Grace was opening my mind, heart, and spirit — and flooding my soul. Resistance was futile.

I stayed up most of the night reading a booklet called *The Secret of Mary* by Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort. The introduction was almost foreboding. The author asks (I'm paraphrasing), *Predestinate soul, do you want to know a secret?* He continues by sharing the conditions of knowing it. *The secret, if acted upon will secure your salvation; the secret, if ignored, will turn into poison and result in your damnation.* Obviously, there is a serious responsibility in agreeing to know the secret and should not be sought from a disposition of vain curiosity. Spoiler alert: The secret is Total Consecration to Mary. God, in His mercy, had confided in me a secret which I didn't deserve to know.

Saturday was a day of mind-blowing revelation. Before the retreat I was of the opinion that it was proper to hold Mary in a place of honor. Jesus desired for us to love her because He loved her. However, if I prayed about something really "important" I felt it was more advantageous to go right to the top and speak directly with God Himself. Well, that day I changed my perception. It was explained to me that Jesus came to us through Mary His Mother and in perfect imitation of Him, He wanted us to go to Him through Mary His Mother. The supposition not only appealed to my logic but also seemed compatible with the way God typically does things, with beautiful and poetic symmetry. He came through her to come to us and we go through her to come to Him. I was converted.



The Annunciation dating between circa 1410 and circa 1430

It's difficult to recount all the knowledge I acquired that weekend. I felt truly blessed being able to assimilate the overall concept: *Total Consecration is the unrestricted gift of self to the Holy Mother of God, made for love of Jesus. All of one's being, actions and possessions are freely given over to Mary. The Immaculate then chooses to dispose of them for the greatest glory of God, for the optimal salvation of souls, and for our own sanctification according to her good pleasure.* Meditating on this reality, I understood that the commitment was daunting. Upon making the consecration a certain surrendering was necessary: my finances, my health, my choices of entertainment and even my very children would ultimately belong to my Heavenly Mother. But somehow I knew, I had already given my fiat and signed the contract in my soul.

On Sunday, The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered, the last day of the retreat. I wanted to pour out my gratitude for my new found relationship with Mary. I spoke with her as a little girl speaks to her own mother. I asked Our Lady what would be the most pleasing way to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. Without hesitation, I heard words from my heart saying "Come into my womb." Surely I was imaging things! I resisted heartily. What business would a sinner like me have in occupying space in the Blessed Virgin

Mary's womb? I was annihilated by the very thought of it. Again, my heart spoke, more firmly and insistently "Come into my womb." The words penetrated my defenses. "Oh please good Mother, don't let me offend you or Jesus." I acquiesced to what I perceived to be Her sweet invitation. Following the tender promptings, I mentally placed myself in Our Lady's womb as I approached the Communion rail. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I received Him. It would be impossible to describe the sweet exchange of love in those precious moments occurring someplace between Heaven and earth. Suffice it to say, I have never experienced a Communion like that, before or since. A celestial flame took residence in my heart and I would soon bring it home to set others on fire.

I am genuinely humbled to be privy to the secret called Mary. I preface most stories about my life as happening either "before" or "after" my consecration; it changed everything. Oh sanctifying disruption! Completely and utterly convicted, I knew life would never be the same. I will always be grateful for the retreat where I discovered the divine shortcut: to Jesus through Mary. ■

CHARLENE RICHARD, 'THE LITTLE CAJUN SAINT'

BY GRACE FILIPI

Many saints have been canonized through the official process of beatification and canonization of the Catholic Church; however, there are many saintly men and women whose causes have not found their way to the Pope despite the awe and veneration they inspire. One such cause is that of the Servant of God, Charlene Richard (REE-shard), a young Cajun girl whose sanctity through the suffering of painful illness is comparable to that of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Charlene Richard was born in 1947, the second of ten children born of Mary Alice and Joseph Elvin Richard. The Richard family lived in a small Louisiana town named Church Point, close to Lafayette. The Richards were a typical Cajun-Catholic farm family — their sons were altar servers, while the daughters sang in the choir. They regularly attended Holy Mass three days a week in addition to Sunday. Charlene and her siblings attended Catholic school until she was in second grade. If the children were not at school, they were tending to the Richard's farm, where they raised several different types of crops and raised multiple farm animals.

The New York Times describes Charlene as "exuberant, loyal, [and] generous."¹ Charlene's "Mom-Mom" played a major role in the young girl's spiritual development.² Charlene was known to pray the rosary nightly by an altar she had improvised on her bedside table. At a young age, she developed a particular devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and desired to be a saint as great as she. In 1959, Satan, in the form of a woman wearing a black bonnet covering her face, allegedly appeared to the young girl twice. Though no one else witnessed this vision, Charlene's story was believed as she was honest and devout.

It was not long after Charlene received the strange apparitions that she began to have intense hip pain and many bruises appeared on her body. She received radiation therapy, but it provided no relief. She began bleeding from her rectum and severely from her nose. After visiting her local doctor, Charlene was sent with a letter to Lafayette to see a specialist. Once the specialist opened the letter, he asked that a priest be present while he explained Charlene's condition to the Richards. This priest was Fr. Joseph Brennan — a young, recently ordained priest who later stated, "It was pure chance

that I was the priest in the room when the news was told to Charlene's parents."³ After Fr. Brennan's arrival, the doctor told Mary Alice and Joseph Elvin Richard that their daughter had acute lymphatic leukemia and had about two weeks to live. Understandably, the Richards did not wish to inform Charlene of her condition, and asked that Fr. Brennan do so instead.

Fr. Brennan reluctantly agreed to tell Charlene the heartbreaking news. He kindly told her, "A beautiful lady is going to come to take you home." In reply, Charlene said, "When she does, I'll say, 'Blessed Mother, Father Brennan says hello.'" ⁴

During the thirteen days that followed, her last thirteen days, she was in excruciating pain, but Charlene was joyful and did not complain once. Fr. Brennan spent much time with her during these days, teaching her of redemptive suffering. Each day, Charlene would ask the priest, "Who am I to suffer for today?"⁵ Often, Fr. Brennan would suggest that her sufferings be offered for another patient with a terminal illness or a person who was not Catholic. Fr. Brennan later stated that the sick she prayed for recovered, and the non-Catholics converted. The day before she died she kissed Fr. Brennan, and told him that she would pray for him while she was in heaven. The day after, August 11, 1959, she passed from this life.

Though Charlene's life on earth ended over six decades ago, her story is far from over. There have been several miracles attributed to Charlene since her death, thus leading to the opening of her cause. Many people pray at her grave each year, especially those with illnesses asking that she heal them. Within fifteen years of Charlene's death, there were cards made with her picture, as well as intercessory and beatification prayers on them.⁶ Her evident sanctity in life, especially in her final days, and the purported miracles after her death earned her the sobriquet, "the Little Cajun Saint." Thanks to her proponents — Fr. Brennan; her brother, John Dale; and a witness to several miracles attributed to Charlene, Bonnie Brossard — at the beginning of 2020, Charlene's cause was opened in the Diocese of Lafayette. If Charlene is to be canonized, she would be the first official saint from Cajun Country (provided that no other Cajun is canonized first, and two other causes have been opened).

On the thirtieth anniversary of her death, there was a commemorative Mass offered where Fr. Brennan spoke of his experiences with the young saint, saying, "Charlene taught us lessons in humility, acceptance, simplicity, and faith. We have many books teaching us how to live. Charlene wrote the book on how to die."⁷ The overriding lesson of Charlene's story is in the words of Christ Himself in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done." Rather than viewing suffering as something to complain about, we can look at it as not only an opportunity for growth in our relationship with God, but

also a way to help others as Charlene did, when she offered her agonizing pain for whomever Fr. Brennan requested she pray. Charlene's life shows us that pain, whether it be physical, emotional, or spiritual, is truly a gift from God, as it gives us the opportunity to imitate Christ in His Passion and death, as we can see the words of St. Paul, "For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow into our lives; so too does the encouragement we receive through Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:5). Though she died young, Charlene has changed many people's lives both during her life on earth and after her death, by means of her edifying story and intercessory power.

"Our Father in heaven ... May Your servant and native of Louisiana, Charlene Marie Richard, be raised to sainthood by the Holy Father, Successor of the Apostle St. Peter, and visible head of Jesus' Church on earth."⁸ ■

1. Rich, N., & Kranitz, S. (2022, December 20). The Miraculous Life and Afterlife of Charlene Richard. The New York Times.
2. Ball, A. (2001). Faces of Holiness II: Modern Saints in Photos and Words. Our Sunday Visitor, 91
3. Rich, N., & Kranitz, S. (2022, December 20). The Miraculous Life and Afterlife of Charlene Richard. The New York Times.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Gaudet, M. (n.d.). Charlene Richard: Folk Veneration Among the Cajuns. Retrieved December 28, 2022
7. Ball, A. (2001). Faces of Holiness II: Modern Saints in Photos and Words. Our Sunday Visitor, 94
8. Excerpt from Charlene's beatification prayer, which can be found here.

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).

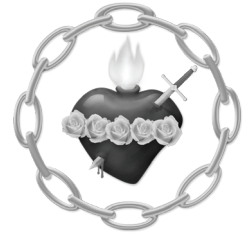
Ex Cathedra: "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

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:

- Stop dangerous content at your internet router. Protect your children at home. Check out www.freefiltering.org/#16037576021
- Save the date, our 2023 SBC Conference will be October 13 and 14.

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