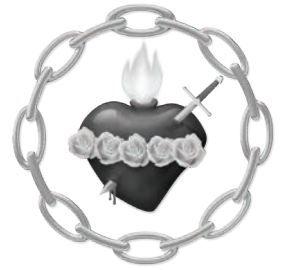


# MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



May/June 2023



The Sacred Heart by Norman Fauchoux



Br. André Marie,  
M.I.C.M., Prior

## PRIOR'S COLUMN

### THE VIRGINAL ESPOUSALS OF SAINT JOSEPH AND OUR LADY, PART I

Some months ago, a group of Protestant apologists landed on Catholicism.org to attack the doctrine of Our Lady's perpetual virginity. They did this in the comment sections of various articles. They also impugned Our Lady's continent marriage with

Saint Joseph, which, they argued, would give a "bad example" to married couples regarding the obligation to render the marriage debt. In honor of the sanctity of both Our Lady and Saint Joseph, I would like to explore and defend their virginal espousals in this and the next issue of the *Mancipia*.

The Biblical data are explicit that Mary was a virgin at the time of the Annunciation: "And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26-27). On that same occasion, when the angel proposes to Mary the plan of the Incarnation of the Son of God in Her womb, the Blessed Virgin asks a question *which would make no sense had She not intended to remain a virgin*: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" At this point, Saint Gabriel explains that the spousal overshadowing of the Holy Ghost will not violate Her virginity, and Mary consents to the plan with Her much celebrated *fiat* ("let it be done").

At this point in Her relationship with Saint Joseph, Mary was already espoused; that is, they had undergone their first espousals. Within a year after that, they would be solemnly espoused. The first espousals were much more than a mere "engagement," but were a genuine espousal; the two were already wed. Yet, according to custom, they did not begin to cohabit until after the solemn espousals. (Some Catholic authors, by the way, think that the solemn espousals had already happened at the Annunciation. Both opinions are viable.)

Given the content of this conversation, the *prima facie* evidence is that the Blessed Virgin simply had no intention to have a conventional marriage with Saint Joseph. Even if we factor in a full year between the Annunciation and the solemn espousals, it is contrary to reason that a young bride would ask how it is that she will become pregnant if she fully intends to enter into normal marital relations with her spouse. It would be a patently absurd question. For this reason, various Fathers of the Church, e.g., Saints Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and Germanus of Constantinople, saw in these words a sign that Mary had made a vow of chastity. Saint Thomas Aquinas agreed and would later develop the teaching of Saint Augustine on this point, by saying that Joseph and Mary did indeed consent to carnal intercourse *if*

*it was God's will*, which it manifestly was not. In other words, Saint Thomas introduced the idea that the vow Our Lady had made was conditioned on God's consent to it.

Regardless of whether or not Our Lady had made a "vow" in the current technical sense of that word — and I consider it obvious that *She did consecrate Her virginity to God* — numerous Fathers explicitly affirmed Our Lady's perpetual virginity. The notable exceptions from the patristic era — Tertullian, Jovinian, and Helvidius — were all heretics.

As for the various pseudo-Biblical arguments that modern Protestants make against Mary's perpetual virginity, they have been answered many times, but I find this claim particularly preposterous in light of the following two points (of which the first is much more important than the second):

1. The Greek Fathers like Saints Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Epiphanius of Salamis, John of Damascus, and all the Fathers of the Second Council of Constantinople (who called Her *Aeiparthenos* — "ever virgin") did not simply *know* Greek. *It was their language*, the very one in which they read and meditated upon the New Testament. Many of them were positively eloquent in it (one was "golden-mouthed"!), being trained in the philosophical and Biblical use of this great tongue. All of the aforementioned (and many others) affirmed Mary's perpetual virginity. For a modern scholar to parse Greek texts in an effort to contradict these ancient Greek scholars *whose whole world was Greek* is the height of hubris. I said this to one of the Protestants who commented on our site, and he accused me of an *ad hominem* argument, but I believe he simply missed my point.
2. The original Protestant "reformers" virtually all believed in Mary's perpetual virginity, including Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Cranmer, and Wesley. This argument does not win the day, of course, but it has the advantage of exposing a certain internal inconsistency in our adversaries on the point.

Beyond the clear Biblical indication that the Blessed Virgin intended to remain a virgin, and beyond replies to the typical heretical objections to the dogma under consideration, there are deeper reasons for Mary's perpetual virginity that should be appreciated.

First, objectively considered, virginity is superior to non-virginity. Evidently, there are saintly patriarchs and matrons, and the married state is blessed in the New Dispensation with a sacrament that is intended to sanctify the couple. So, it is not a question of "good" and "bad," but, rather, of "good" and "better."

Jesus speaks positively of some men being given to be "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:10-12). His



Apostle, Saint Paul, elaborates while writing to the Corinthians concerning matrimonial matters. In the seventh chapter of his first Epistle to Corinth, he begins: “Now concerning the thing whereof you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (I Cor. 7:1). He recommends to them the state he himself has embraced, celibacy: “For I would that all men were even as myself: but every one hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that. But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I” (1 Cor. 7:7-8). Then he gives us some reasons why virginity is better: “But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband” (vs. 32-34). The Apostle makes it clear that marriage is not a sin (v. 28), but that virginity is better; in fact, he uses the very word “better” in this context: “So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better” (v. 38).

We see another Biblical portrayal of the superiority of virginity in Saint John’s Apocalypse: “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb” (Apoc. 14:2-4).

This scriptural teaching was expounded upon by the Fathers, who praised monasticism to the skies. It was also fixed in the positive magisterial teaching of the Church at the Council of Trent: “If anyone sayeth, that the marriage state is to be placed above the state of virginity, or of celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or in celibacy, than to be united in matrimony; let him be anathema” (On Matrimony, Canon X).

Next, aside from its being intrinsically superior, in the case of Our Lady, Her consecrated virginity is typological of the Church, as Paul Senz beautifully argues:

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Mary's perpetual virginity is one of many of her attributes that make her a beautiful symbol of the Church, as the virgin bride of Christ and the fruitful mother of Christians. St. Ambrose wrote, "Fittingly is [Mary] espoused, but Virgin because she prefigures the Church which is undefiled yet wed. A Virgin conceived of the Spirit, a Virgin brings us forth without travail" (*On Luke 2:6-7*).

As the authors of "All About Mary" argue,

Following the example of Mary, the Church remains the virgin faithful to her spouse ... For the Church is the Spouse of Christ, as is clear from the Pauline Letters (cf. Eph. 5:21-33; 2 Cor. 11:2), and from the title found in John: "bride of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:9). If the Church as spouse "keeps the fidelity she has pledged to Christ," this fidelity, even though in the Apostle's teaching it has become an image of marriage (cf. Eph. 5:23-33), also has value as a model of total self-giving to God in celibacy "for the kingdom of heaven," in virginity consecrated to God (cf. Matt 19:11-12; 2 Cor. 11:2). Precisely such virginity, after the example of the Virgin of Nazareth, is the source of a special spiritual fruitfulness: it is the source of motherhood in the Holy Spirit....

Another reason for Mary's perpetual virginity can be found in eschatology, or "anagogy." Here, again, is Paul Senz:

Mary's perpetual virginity matters because its truth has implications that matter to all of us; namely, [it] points beyond her life to the world that is to come, a world in which there will be no more marriage and we will all be as Mary was. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven," Jesus told the Sadducees (Matt. 22:30). Mary's virginity is a prefigurement of heaven, the reward for those who say to God, with Mary, "Thy will be done."

If anyone can be said, after Jesus, to live the heavenly life while yet on earth, it was Mary!

I will complete these thoughts in a second installment, focusing more on the great Saint Joseph's half of the relationship, but I will anticipate that somewhat by answering a question that is frequently asked: **If Mary was predestined by God to be a perpetual virgin, why would She have an earthly husband at all?** Here, I need not be original: In his *Book of Commentaries on Matthew*, Saint Jerome asks and answers the question this way:

Why was the Lord conceived of an espoused virgin rather than of a free? First, for the sake of the genealogy of Mary, which we have obtained by that of Joseph. Secondly, because she was thus saved from being stoned by the Jews as an adulteress. Thirdly, that Himself and His mother might have a guardian on their journey into Egypt. To these, Ignatius, the martyr of Antioch, has added a fourth reason namely, that the birth might take place unknown to the devil, who would naturally suppose that Mary had conceived by Joseph.

To these four reasons, I can add four more: (1) to safeguard Jesus and Mary's reputation (which is related to Saint Jerome's first reason); (2) because the Davidic lineage of the Messiah-King *had* to come from Saint Joseph, His legal father; (3) so that Saint Joseph could be an antetype to Joseph of the Old Testament, who was made "master of his house, and ruler of all his possessions" (Ps. 104:21; the NT Joseph was to the Eternal Father what the OT Joseph was to Pharaoh); and (4) so that the Holy Family would fulfill another typology, that of the "holy family" of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. (To be continued ...) ■

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## SISTER MARY PETER IS NOW OUR MOTHER PRIORESS

A message from Sister Marie Thérèse:

With a joyful sound and hearts full of love for God, we Sisters sang the Easter *Haec Dies* on Tuesday during our sexennial Chapter Meeting. At the meeting, we held elections ... and I am happy to announce that Sister Mary Peter, whom I trained as a novice a quarter century ago, is now our Mother Prioress. Please rejoice with us and pray for our new Mother Prioress!

In the Immaculate Heart,  
Sister Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.

On the same occasion — our sexennial Chapter meetings on April 11 — Brother André Marie was elected to continue as Superior of the Community and Prior of the Brothers.





Sr. Marie Thérèse,  
M.I.C.M.

## CONVENT CORNER

### STONE MARKERS

**I**t was, I would guess, a 90-year-old maple, tall and stately before the modifications started.

I would like to think we Sisters are at least partly to blame for the prolonged death of that work of art. Dear Reader, let me explain.

About 5 years ago, the alterations commenced. As we Sisters drove by on our way to and from the Holy Sacrifice praying our Rosary, we observed tree limbs hewn and the towering trunk lonesomely surrounded by scaffolding and ladders. The bare trunk yielded to the sketching cuts and blows of a would-be artist. It appeared that the goal was a totem pole of sorts. But as its purpose was more clearly carved out, we began to realize that this was not something decent people should behold.

We didn't plant a Miraculous Medal on the property. No, we pulled over as we drove by one day and — as one might toss a hand grenade — hurled a blessed Miraculous Medal into the dense growth at the edge of the property. Immediately, we began praying the prayer on the medal, "O Mary! Conceived without sin! Pray for us who have recourse to Thee!" and added the Maximillian augmentation, "And for those who do not have recourse to Thee! And especially for the Masons." Finally, to secure his powerful intercession, we added, "Good Saint Joseph! Pray for us!" This we prayed militantly every time we passed the location.

Work on the tree continued and the figures on the bare trunk were gradually cut in deeper relief, practically beckoning our eyes to look upon it. I suppose it was much like the enticing fruit of the Tree in the Garden that our mother Eve "beheld" ... to her own spiritual defilement. It required a real effort on our part to avoid gazing at it! I chose to physically turn my head or avert my eyes at each passing, and if I wasn't vigilant enough, my eyes were drawn like a deer into bright headlights. This provided a very good spiritual exercise!

On an uncertain day, work halted on the unfinished enterprise. It took a few drives past the property to realize that the ladder and scaffolding were in the same positions for weeks. Then ... for months ... and finally, there were several signs that the project was unexpectedly put on hold. That was happy news to us!

And yet, the incomplete monstrosity remained standing and broadcasting the successfully carved indecent images to the passing cars. We suggested to God that a fierce lightning strike would do nicely ... We kept praying ... every time we passed.

Dear Reader, did you ever notice how God's timing is usually not ours?

A few years passed ... We hadn't been traveling that route for some time, but this particular morning God's Providence set us on it. As we rode to the Holy Sacrifice early that morning, I was roused from my somnolent struggle by my eyes being drawn toward that very location. Strikingly changed, there was now a vine-covered edifice in place of the carved trunk and scaffolding. Our conclusion: God veiled the indecent images with His vines! And we began our thanksgiving — by praying the same prayers in gratitude.

But a month ago, as we again sped to the Holy Sacrifice at the rising of the sun, things had changed signally. Take a guess what that trunk looked like on that morning.

Well, dear Reader, the truth is that it didn't look like anything at all. No, it was gone! It had been cut down. And, we prayed the same prayers, this time in *triumphant* thanksgiving!

We will continue to remember God's graces and thank Him for them every time we drive by "the spot." For how many years will we continue our thanksgiving for that victory?

Twenty some years ago, after placing a Miraculous Medal and praying to Our Lady and Saint Joseph (for several years) every time we passed it, a bar advertising immoral entertainment burned down. Then it was rebuilt. At last, it burned down again — this time permanently. For years, the charred remains stood as a testament to prayer overcoming evil. Slowly it crumbled to the ground. At some point the rubble was bulldozed into a pile. At each stage, we rejoiced and thanked God. At last, the pile totally disappeared beneath a newly constructed home and yard that now graces "the spot." As with the totem pole, we continued to pray those same prayers in thanksgiving every time we passed by. And, more than 20 years later, we still do!

These are no idle prayers. These are prayers of gratitude, recalling God's graces. Every time we pray them, we are personally edified, we give glory to God, and our Faith is increased. Examples of recalling favors from God abound in Holy Scripture. Often a large stone, or pile of stones was placed on "the spot" to permanently note the location of God's action. The most significant stones are our altar stones. For the Holy Sacrifice ... where we "give thanks always and everywhere." "Do this in memory ..."

Dear Reader, surely you have prayed fervently for some petition dear to your heart. Have you never received a favorable answer to your prayers? If you have, are you done saying "thank you" to God? Have you even begun?

You might need to add a few "stone markers" to your life! ■

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Catherine Goddard Clarke\*

## FOUNDER'S COLUMN

### OUR GLORIOUS POPES

For over nineteen hundred years, Saint Peter and the Popes who have descended in unbroken succession from him have never ceased to feed, with the life-giving Sacraments and doctrines of the Catholic Church, the sheep whom Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, left to their infallible guidance and in their keeping. That this will be so until the end of time, we know, because He Who can neither deceive nor be deceived has given us His promise of it.

And that Saint Peter, the Apostle who loved Jesus and whom Jesus chose to be His Vicar upon earth, lives again in the Popes who have succeeded him, we know from the story of the Church. The story of the Church, lovingly and justly told, is a glorious one, in spite of all that its enemies have done to becloud it. There enfolds for those who read it with eyes that see, a story of conflict so gigantic, so fierce, so cunning, so unrelenting, so rewarding, so glorious, so magnificent that never is it possible for those who have thus glimpsed it, ever again to give their minds to any lesser loyalty.

The story of the Church is the story of struggle for the hearts and the minds of men. It is the story of the struggle of Peter against Caesar, of the Spirituality against the encroachments of the Temporality. It is, above all, the story of the conflict of the Blessed Virgin Mary against Lucifer, the Father of Lies, for the souls of men. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. 3:15.)

The story of the Church is vital and living, because the Church is vital and living — and loving and teaching and fighting. We are the Church Militant! And we can ever be sure that weakness and compromise have replaced the spirit of watchful combat when we see the intensity of the Church's battle against the dark forces which beset her — and which will always beset her — in any way relaxing. Our Lord's promise to His first Pope that the gates of Hell would never prevail against His Church tells us clearly that the gates of Hell, presided over by the mighty intelligence of the fallen Lucifer, would make every effort to prevail against her.

It was not Our Lord's way to belittle Lucifer, Lucifer whose name means light bearer — the light of knowledge bearer. Jesus spoke of Satan as "the prince of this world,"

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\* Later known as Sister Catherine, Mrs. Clarke was the foundress of Saint Benedict Center, which began as a lay apostolate in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

both to give the devil his due and to warn us not to underestimate the enemy. For Lucifer did not lose the blazing gifts which are an integral part of him when, after his terrible battle with Saint Michael, he was hurled forever into Hell. He still retains in the natural order his marvelously brilliant intellectual powers, the awareness of which led him to desire to be like unto God — the identical temptation of every proud and accomplished mind ever since.

Pope Leo XIII, who died in our own century, in 1903, had a vision during his pontificate of Lucifer and his devils. He saw their fearful triumphs in all the countries of the world in the days soon to come. He beheld their evil glee and unholy mockery as they ravished the Mystical Body of Christ, stilled heavenly espousals in the hearts of maidens, muted the voices of priests and bishops, imprisoned the Popes, and silenced the song of monks and nuns in monasteries and convents grown empty of vocations.

The vision, given the Holy Father one morning after his Mass, was so beyond bearing, so overpowering in its sheer unrelieved, inexpressible evil, that it stopped the heart of Christ's Vicar. The Pope lost consciousness. His frail body sank to the floor. The physicians who rushed to him could not, for long moments, hear the beat of his heart or feel the throb of his pulse. When they were about to pronounce him dead, he awoke, in great labor and groaning, in overwhelming pain of spirit.

He told, as much as such things lend themselves to words, what it was that he had seen. He told that when he was filled with so much terror for the world that he thought he would die of it there appeared to him, beside the maliciously triumphant Satan, the gloriously shining Saint Michael, the Archangel. And when he recovered, Pope Leo XIII wrote letters of warning to the bishops all over the world. He fearlessly named the enemy behind whose deceiving mask Satan looked out upon the twentieth century world and plotted its destruction. In the encyclical letter *Humanum Genus*, he instructed his bishops as to what they must teach and do before it would be too late, in order to overcome Lucifer and his devils.

It was then that Pope Leo XIII drafted, to be added to the prayers at the end of Low Mass and said by the priests and the faithful over the whole world, the intercession to Saint Michael which is now so familiar to us all:

"Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. Restrain him, oh God, we humbly beseech Thee, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the divine power of God, thrust down to Hell Satan and all the other evil spirits, who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls."

Our Lord Himself told us that this life is a warfare. "Do

not think that I came to send peace upon earth,” Jesus said. “I came not to send peace, but the sword.” When the battle is fought on His side, against His and our own ages-long enemy, Lucifer, it is a glorious battle. The history of the Church is the story of it. Sometimes the Church wins, and for a long time, and often — when her children are cowardly, self-seeking, world-loving, and weak in their Faith — she loses; but on and on it goes.

The story of the Church is perforce packed with drama. Its conquests and defeats become the hope and the despair of the world. Its heroes are of such sublime stature that their lives and accomplishments put to shame the tales of all the secular conquerors who ever lived. The story of the Church not only dwarfs every legend and myth and fairy tale woven to fire the imaginations of men, but it gives us, along with the inspiration of lofty and holy adventure really undertaken, an absorbing account of the dealings of God with man, of man with God, and of man with man.

The heroes and heroines of the Catholic Church are stalwart men and valiant women. They stir one’s heart, burn in one’s brain, and inflame one’s soul with their own high purpose and consuming love. And conversely, the villains of the Church’s story, be they her own trusted sons or her avowed enemies on the outside, surpass in iniquity all the rogues of fiction. For their guilt bears the heinousness of sacrilege because of the august purpose of her whom they would defile: the one, holy, inviolate Bride of Christ.

In the story of the Church, there is clearly to be seen Saint Peter dramatically living again in the Popes who follow after him, and who rule in his name. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, the first Holy Roman Pontiff; Peter, of the deeply loving heart, the burning zeal, the impetuous honesty, the dogged loyalty; Peter, whose tears were furrows in his cheeks for the memory of three denials, the vivid sorrow for which thirty-three years of unwearied confession of Jesus Christ never dimmed; Peter, crucified upside

down, avowing his unworthiness to hang as Jesus hung; Peter, protesting with his last breath, “Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!”

Peter, whom Jesus made the foundation of His Holy Church. “I have already called thee the Rock,” the great Doctor, Saint Ephrem, exclaimed with regard to Jesus’ words to Peter, “because thou shalt sustain My whole building! Thou art the bishop of those who build Me a church on earth. If they would build anything reprobate, do thou, the foundation, repress them. Thou art the source of the fountain whence My doctrine is derived. Thou art the head of My disciples. Through thee will I give all nations to drink. Thine is that life-giving sweetness which I bestow. Thee have I chosen to be in My institution as the first-born, and to become the heir of My treasures. I have given to thee the keys of My kingdom. I have appointed thee the chief over all My treasures.”

“This, then, is the city to which, most blessed Apostle Peter,” Pope Saint Leo the Great cried out, speaking, in 451, to the bishops of Italy, “you did not fear to come, while the Apostle Paul, the fellow heir of your glory, was still occupied in the ordering of other churches. You entered that forest of howling beasts, that ocean whose abyss was swept by storms, with more assurance than when you walked upon the water. You who, in the house of Caiphas, trembled at the voice of a serving-maid, do not fear Rome, the mistress of the world. Had Claudius less power than the judgment of Pilate, or Nero less cruelty than the rage of the Jews?



Woodcut for “Die Bibel in Bildern”, 1860

“The force of your affection overcame what there was reason to dread, nor would you endure to fear those whom you had promised to love.... But your confidence was increased by the signs of so many miracles, by the gifts of so many special favors, by the experience of so many virtues ...” ▪

From *Our Glorious Popes*.





March 25<sup>th</sup> marks the profession anniversaries of many of our Sisters. This year, the local community held a surprise party to honor the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sister Maria Philomena. A well-kept secret, the joyous event was attended by old friends and new. *Page 8, clockwise from top left:* Flowers from Bill Fall and a special place setting mark the seat of honor; Rebecca Baab and Douglas Bersaw look through Sister's profession album from twenty-five years ago; Sister Maria Philomena is pleasantly surprised by the crowd; Sister responds to Brother's toast, expressing her gratitude and love for the community; St. Joseph's Hall was filled with dear friends and good food; a card from the fifth & sixth grade class; Brother André Marie gives a toast in recognition of the Silver Jubilee. *Page 9, clockwise from top left:* One of two delicious lemon cakes, this one decorated with flowers; Sister and Bridget Nye share a laugh about old times; cards & gifts; Sister Maria Philomena admires the cards made by her nieces while her sister, Suzanne Cormier, holding number eight, looks on; the second cake enthrones Our Lady of Lourdes – which statue was on Sister's original profession cake, a gift from Larry and Sue Koralewski; Eleonore Villarrubia wishes Sister another twenty-five years, but doesn't promise to be there for it!







# A CARMELITE DEFENSE OF FATHER FEENEY'S CRUSADE

By JOHN HENDERSON

The purpose of this article is not to show that Carmelite saints believed in the dogma “outside the Church there is no salvation” in the same sense that Father Leonard Feeney believed it. That would be too easy, and *catholicism.org* already contains a plethora of quotes from saints from all the major orders demonstrating a belief in the strict necessity of Church membership.

Rather, the purpose of this article is to focus on a wise insight from a holy Carmelite priest which illustrates why, out of all the dogmas being undermined by the modernists, the one Father Feeney courageously emphasized is, in the practical order, the most important to defend if we want to see a restoration of holiness in the Church.

The great Carmelite author of *Divine Intimacy*, Father Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalen, identified the apostolic ideal to convert souls as one of the principal generators of holiness. Father Gabriel’s elaboration as to why the apostolic ideal is so foundational to holiness is very easy to follow, but also worthy of serious meditation in that the teachings contained therein provide the solution to the root evils behind the current crisis. Father Gabriel writes:

“The interior life is the vital principle, the force, and the flame of the apostolate, but on the other hand, the apostolate brings its contribution to the interior life, helping to make it more generous and intense. When a soul is fired with zeal for the apostolic life, its very desire to win other souls for God impels it to devote itself with greater generosity to prayer, mortification, and the practice of the virtues, with the intention of making itself more capable of a fruitful apostolate.

Thus, while the interior life is the soul of the apostolate, the apostolate in its turn is a very powerful mainspring urging the soul on to union with God, to perfection, to sanctity. The apostolic ideal is of its very nature a generator of spiritual energy and a spur to a generous, holy life.”<sup>1</sup>

Father Gabriel then uses Saint Teresa of Avila as a concrete example of how apostolic zeal spurred her to sanctity. Her holy reform, after all, was born out of her zeal to save souls that were being lost as a result of the Protestant heresy.

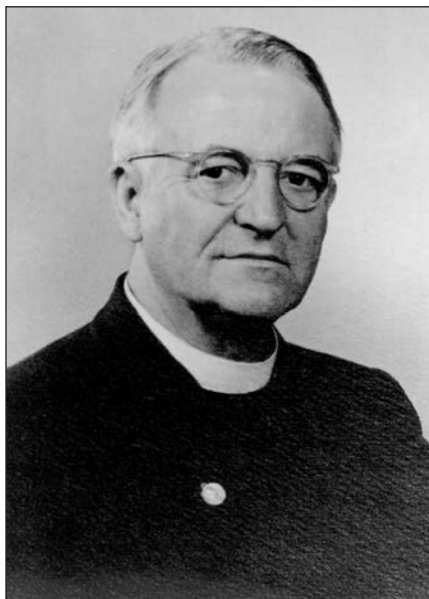
The apostolic concern for the salvation of souls leads Catholics to pray and sacrifice more — it is, as Father Gabriel wrote, “a generator of spiritual energy and a spur to a generous, holy life.” How many Communion have been offered, Masses said, novenas and rosaries prayed, sacrifices made, all out of the apostolic ideal to participate in the work of the conversion and salvation of souls? How many of these beautiful things are neglected wherever the apostolic ideal is not present?

If the apostolic ideal is one of the principal generators of holiness, we can see how anything which undermines it must necessarily lead to a decline in holiness. This is why Father Feeney was absolutely correct to emphasize *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in our era. The modernist weakening of this one dogma has done more to destroy the apostolic ideal than anything else. And with the destruction of the apostolic ideal we are all witnessing the concomitant destruction of holiness. Most Catholics no longer believe that there is a need to convert our neighbors, and we consequently are missing out on one of the biggest incentives to work on converting ourselves. What Father Gabriel wrote about the apostolic ideal impelling the Catholic to, “devote itself with greater generosity to prayer, mortification, and the practice of the virtues, *with the intention of making itself more capable of a fruitful apostolate*,” no longer resonates with modern Catholics who have allowed themselves to be robbed of any desire to have a supernatural apostolate.

Father Feeney’s statement in his foreword to the 1974 reprint of *Bread of Life* is just as true today as it was then: “The sad situation of the Faith in America and in the

whole world is breaking the hearts of true Catholics. The gates of hell have all but prevailed against the Church. It is because Catholics have let go of the Church’s doctrine on salvation that all else is being taken away from us. This is what is causing the sickness of the world.” ■

1. Father Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalen, O.C.D. *Divine Intimacy: Meditations on the Interior Life for Every Day of the Liturgical Year*. Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, 1996, pp. 971-973.





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

## PREFECT'S COLUMN

### THE DEATH AND REVIVAL OF AMERICA, PART I

If you do not recognize the America of today, compared to the America of yesteryear, you are not alone. In fact, it is not the same America.

We have lost all sense of order. Daily, we are subjected to new and abhorrent waves of incoherent, abominable, disgusting attitudes and movements that shake the country to its roots.

Patrick Buchanan, in his books *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization* — 2002 and *Suicide of a Superpower* — 2011, reveal what has already happened and what will happen, if things do not change — drastically and immediately. America's loss of her cradle faith, Christianity is at the center of our woes.

Not only America, but the West at large is dying. Birth rates below replacement levels, the collapse of the family, skyrocketing illegitimacy, unchecked immigration, a loss of the American identity, a collapse of the moral order as a “reset” is in full swing, and the wholesale slaughter of the little innocents of today — the babies in the womb — is still with us.

Catholic culture in America is passing away and the new world order with its draconian inferences bodes no good for our country. Love of country, the virtue of Patriotism, is without the great love we used to have for it. We can no longer completely sing, *This is My Country, land of the Brave . . .*

America is not now, and never has been a Catholic country, although it was a Catholic land before the British invasion,

as exemplified by the many Catholic missionaries and outposts. Numerous souls were converted to the one true faith. In fact, we may borrow a thought from a U.S. Presidential rallying cry — Make America Catholic again! Is it possible? Yes. Will it be easy? Absolutely not.

A religious order, such as ours, dedicated to making America Catholic, and to defend all the dogmas of the Faith, especially, *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* (Outside the Church there is no Salvation), I submit, is set up for just that purpose, i.e., to make America Catholic again.

The task will take more than the few traditional good priests, religious and religious orders. It will take us, the lay people of the country, together with those traditional good priests, et al. And how do we accomplish this?

We do not have to re-invent the wheel. The Blessed Virgin herself assured us at Fatima (1917) that peace will come to the world “when there is practiced sufficient devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”

Saving the world was what Fatima was all about. The message and entreaties of Fatima give us a map to follow to save our souls, our country and the world. But most practising Catholics (whatever “practicing Catholics” means today) do not know very much about Fatima.

In Part II, let us focus on what we each can do, why we should do it, and what are the guaranteed results, if we do so.

May God bless you all. ■

Email Brother John Marie Vianney at [toprefect@catholicism.org](mailto:toprefect@catholicism.org).

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

## ISSUES IN APOLOGETICS: TELLING 'EM WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR

Presumably most of the readers of this publication are aware of the two fold purpose of our Order: the preservation of Catholic doctrine, in particular the infallibly defined dogma that Outside the Church there is no Salvation and the conversion of our nation to Catholicism. The

fact is, though, that in accomplishing those goals we will often run into opposition, both from within and without our own Catholic Church.

Having been at one time myself in the anti-Catholic camp, after allowing myself to be lured out of the Church by the siren song of Evangelical Protestantism (hereinafter fundamentalism), I would like to address some of the issues that one can run into when engaged in our apostolate, which is so vital to the salvation of souls.

First, before addressing each of the issues which separates us from Protestants (and which I will attempt to cover in a series of articles), I would like to state that there is no reason whatever to fear the debate with a Fundamentalist, no matter how much he seems to know about Scripture; Our Lord formed only one Church and that Church (the Catholic Church) gave us the Scriptures, and has had the exclusive right to interpret them from the beginning. The problem that surfaces when the Fundamentalist begins quoting the Bible to the Catholic is that he (the Fundamentalist) seemingly knows what he is talking about, while most Catholics have never read the Bible. The Fundamentalist knows this, and even if it is not true in a particular case, he assumes it and seemingly speaks with authority. In reality, the Fundamentalist is most often quoting proof texts that he has heard, assumes he is speaking to an ignoramus, and states his position with an air of complete confidence, usually against someone who is unprepared for the argument. This lack of preparation unfortunately has become even more acute in the wake of Vatican II and a severe lack of catechesis on the part of most Catholics.

Our Fundamentalist also is basing his arguments mainly upon the Pauline and Johannine epistles, which have never been read in depth by the typical Catholic, who tends to be more familiar with the Sunday Gospel readings. The Fundamentalist has, further, fallen into the trap of being, in effect, his own pope, apparently not “understanding this, that no prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20) and, even more relevant to the situation, apparently not even considering the words of 2 Peter 3:16 which state that contained in the writings of Saint Paul are, “certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.”

The two primary assumptions (both fallacious) which provide the underpinnings for Protestantism are the concepts *sola fide* or justification by faith alone, and *sola scriptura* or the principle that the primary authority in matters of faith and morals is the written word of God, with no allowance made for either oral tradition or the authority of the Catholic Church. While there are no statistics available, it is quite possible that these two heresies are responsible for the loss of millions of souls, and we must know how to deal with them while presenting the Dogma and attempting to convert our nation.

Several months ago I attended the funeral of one of my clients. Although I would not have knowingly attended a service put on by a heretical ecclesial community, while stopping in at a mortuary to pay my respects to the deceased, I inadvertently walked into something of the sort. As I was speaking to the family and getting ready to drive to the cemetery, a man walked to the front of the room and began to speak. After saying a few words about the deceased (whom I shall call Evelyn), and whose religious affiliation, if any, was unknown to me, the speaker, apparently a Fundamentalist minister, launched into his evangelistic sales job. With a smirk and a sneer, he told the story of his elderly father, who, being Catholic, had no “assurance of salvation,” and when asked if he were going to heaven, could only reply, “I hope so!” Well, the speaker informed us, the problem was that his father had been Catholic, and unaware of how to be “saved.”

We were then informed that the deceased (Evelyn) was in heaven, and we could be guaranteed that we would be there also someday, provided we “accept Jesus as savior” by repeating a formula provided by the speaker. He then presented his listeners with some Bible verses which purportedly proved his point, and told them to repeat the “sinner’s prayer,” one sentence at a time. The audience (with at least one exception) dutifully repeated words to the effect that they were grateful to Jesus for His death on the Cross, which paid the price for their sins, and wanted Him to come into their life as Savior. The speaker then changed from his prior smirk and sneer into a triumphant smile and informed his listeners that they now “knew for sure” that they were going to heaven and would see Evelyn again some day.

While there are many issues involved in the above scenario, and many more need to be addressed in the context of apologetics, I would like to address first the use of sophistry and the way it works when combined with the effects of Original Sin on the listener. The terms may be unfamiliar to some, but understanding them is critical to knowing why the more substantial issues, such as *sola scriptura* and *sola fide* are readily believed by many.

First, Original Sin is a result of the fall of Adam and Eve that affects every human person except Our Lady. Among its consequences are a weakening of the will and a darkening of

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the intellect. One result of these defects is that we weak men fall for what we want to hear. The Fundamentalist minister in my example was simply telling people what they wanted to hear: that they could have the “assurance of salvation” merely by repeating what amounted to a set of “magic words.” Presumably the man had at least a basic familiarity with Scripture and knew that nowhere in the Bible is the salvation of one’s soul presented as a repeat-after-me formula. What he was doing was deriding the Catholic religion and presenting Salvation as a sort of juxtaposition of *sola fide* along with a corruption of Calvin’s “perseverance of the saints,” often referred to today as, “once saved always saved.”

The point is that any Catholic familiar with Scripture has the advantage in any argument. The Fundamentalist, no matter how sincere he may be, must rely on sophistry to prove his point. Sophistry is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “the clever use of arguments that seem true but are really false,

in order to deceive people.” Regarding justification by faith alone (*Sola Fide*), which Martin Luther referred to as the issue upon which the Church would stand or fall, we are specifically told in James 2:24 that man is *not* justified by faith alone. Likewise on the issue of *sola scriptura*, Saint Paul specifically instructed the Thessalonians to, “... stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle.” (2 Thess. 2:14). Regarding the verse in James, Luther, the ultimate sophist, urged that the entire epistle be stricken from the Bible. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

In future articles I will discuss many of the issues that need to be addressed when bringing Protestants to the faith without which they cannot be saved. Suffice it to say at this point that every argument the Fundamentalist uses is based largely upon sophistry and can be, and has already been, answered by the Catholic Church. ■

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## A NEW APPROACH TO CONVERTING

By Sam Zahaykevitz

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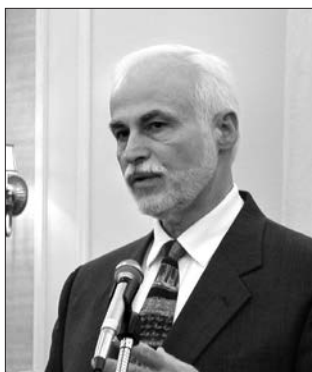
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Brother Lawrence, M.I.C.M., Tert.

## WHY PHILOSOPHY XXIV: THE THREE “A’S” OF CONTEMPLATION — APPRECIATION, ADVENTURE, ACCOMPLISHMENT

As students of Brother Francis know, his philosophy courses are more than mere instruction in Thomistic or Scholastic Philosophy. They are specifically designed to teach *wisdom* in the tradition of *philosophia perennis*, the true philosophy, the school which includes St. Thomas, St. Augustine and other great Catholic and non-Catholic philosophers, but it is not limited to any particular philosopher. It is the timeless, true philosophy: philosophy as wisdom. Brother’s purpose is to help us become truly happy when we realize that happiness is contemplation.

The contemplative experience means being captured by something of the goodness, truth, or beauty of God, usually through one of His creatures. It is not simply understanding something with the intellect; it is fully realizing its depth. In this life, contemplation is a good, not of means, but of ends. It is a proximate end, one that points to the last end, the Beatific Vision. It may be defined as “The complacent, loving gaze of the soul on divine truth already known and apprehended by the intellect, assisted and enlightened by divine grace.”

As may have happened to you already, after reading the preceding, you found this can be very confusing! Brother profoundly understood this difficulty for his students. To help us with this, he gave us the Three A’s of Contemplation: Appreciation, Adventure, and Accomplishment.

The contemplative experience can be taken at two intensities. First, it can be highly specialized, such as a contemplative religious who devotes his entire life to prayer and contemplation. Second, it can be less specialized. While God is the chief object of contemplation, He is not the only object. Because all goodness, truth, and beauty we find in the world are reflections of the Goodness, Truth and Beauty in God, whenever there is a realization involving a creature, it is a foretaste of contemplating God. Our discussion here is of the second intensity.

A problem with the contemplative experience is this: When it is not directed toward God, it can be a distraction away from Him. The experience can be either a stepping stone toward happiness or a movement away from it. For example, a contemplative experience can be as earthy as being completely absorbed in a football game. One’s experience can begin and end in the game itself, or it can be raised to another level. For example, a man could use it as a springboard to appreciate the magnificent athletic prowess given by God to his creatures and be grateful to Him for it.

*Appreciation* is the first word Brother gave us in order to understand contemplation better. To appreciate is to grasp the nature, worth, quality, or significance of. It is often

accompanied by gratitude or thankfulness for some benefit received, but it is separate from it.

As a result of the Fall of Adam and our inheritance of Original Sin, we begin in a state of imperfection. In fact, we are the most imperfect of all material beings. We know nothing; we are completely helpless; and we suffer from concupiscence. Our education for heaven is a removal of these imperfections by growing in appreciation. When we experience something such as looking at a famous painting, hearing a symphony, or smelling a flower and we are raised to appreciate something of the Goodness, Truth, or Beauty of God, we have had a contemplative experience.

Brother reminds us that the whole scheme God intended for this mortal life is to school us into appreciation. As a personal example, many years ago I decided to make dandelion wine. At the time, my lawn was a sea of dandelions. We picked all the blossoms and I made my home brew. The next year, for some reason, very few dandelions grew in our lawn. I quickly developed a real appreciation for them and longed for them to return!

Do we appreciate the powers given to us by God? If I am able to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion, do I meditate upon all the things that made this possible and do I appreciate them? Do I enumerate everything that made this happen — thinking, walking, swallowing, digesting, knowing how to pray and to read, etc., and did I thank God for them? Or am I like Louis of Granada’s description of the swine being fed acorns by the farmer? They squeal, grunt and push each other around while remaining completely oblivious to, and unappreciative of, the farmer who has dispensed them.

What if we began to appreciate that every human soul will live forever, that its destiny will be eternal beatitude or everlasting suffering, and that we may be able to influence that outcome? Imagine what a difference that would make in our interactions with everyone we meet.

*Adventure* is the second word. Brother Francis explained it is an element in any human activity which makes people happy. It is a foretaste of a very much higher order. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, adventure is an undertaking usually involving danger and unknown risks.

Most people would agree that climbing a mountain is an adventure. Adventure is accompanied by the exhilaration (sometimes desperate) which is gained from the push, the struggle, the focus and the discipline involved in some difficult endeavor. When you are climbing Mount Everest and you have nearly reached the top, when your head is swimming from lack of oxygen and your limbs are freezing and you cannot breathe, you know you’re almost there. That is adventure. Most of sports are a matter of adventure. Father Feeney said that, if you discipline yourself for holiness as you discipline yourself for football, you will become a saint.



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Adventure is not limited to extreme sports. The physical risk or danger enhances the experience but does not need to be extreme. It may be experienced by a mathematician working a very difficult problem or a mother assisting her infant to take his first steps. The sense of adventure can come from the risk of professional embarrassment or the mother's anxiety as the infant tries to avoid hitting the hard floor.

*Accomplishment* is Brother's third word to help us better understand contemplation. The fine arts offer a good example. The audience participates in the contemplative experience of the artist himself. The violinist is the servant, the one who provides the experience, but he also has the taste of finality, the sense of achievement.

Brother says that one of the causes of unhappiness in today's work place is the loss of the contemplative spark provided by personal achievement. For the most part, wages govern one's work in the modern world. In the time of the guilds, a craftsman had a sense of achievement; plus, he got paid for it. With the assembly line, the contemplative aspect of work is greatly reduced. A sense of achievement could be regained if the heads of families increased their understanding of the importance of their role as provider and developed an appreciation for it.

Appreciation, Adventure and Accomplishment let us know that even the lower grades of happiness contain elements of contemplation. When trying to explain to someone that happiness is contemplation, you can say, "Every time you are happy, you are having a foretaste of the thing we are talking about." In all the activities of men, these three are what human nature must be educated for, disciplined for, prepared for.

These three elements are most manifest in the lives of the saints. Who better appreciates the world and its Creator and the value of human souls better than they? What can be a greater adventure than the process of winning souls for Christ and His Church? What greater sense of accomplishment can be had besides the knowledge that one has assisted in the salvation of someone's eternal soul?

Brother's conclusion is this: God is the chief object, but He is not the not the only object of contemplation. Whoever man gets any taste of happiness, he is getting a taste of the contemplative experience. When a man is happy about anything, even on the lowest planes, it is always a reflection of the thing that the philosophers define as *contemplation*. And, for those who are educated for their true happiness, St. Thomas Aquinas says, "All human occupations appear to serve those who contemplate." ■

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## COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS SET

With the assistance of Father Feeney, Brother Francis had devoted over thirty years to the study of the Gospels before he gave classes on them. He actually memorized each of the four, and could recite Saint John's Gospel in Greek. The best way to get to know Our Lord, he insisted, is to contemplate Him as He is revealed to us in the Gospels. Brother always insisted that if any other book preoccupies us more than the four Gospels then our priorities are out of order.

Brother Francis explains by citing scores of passages how the Gospel of Saint Matthew had the conversion of the Jews most in mind, which is why Matthew is the only writer among the New Testament authors to have written originally in Aramaic, the language spoken at the time of Our Lord by the Hebrews in Palestine. To convince the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah this first Gospel includes an abundance of examples of Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Christ. Brother goes into depth explaining each of these passages referenced by Saint Matthew.

The commentary on Saint Mark's Gospel was given by Brother Michael under the tutelage of Brother Francis. Brother Michael had studied the four Gospels in Greek and Latin under his teacher. While not one of the twelve, Saint Mark was intimately associated with Saint Peter and is traditionally styled *Interpres Petri*, the "interpreter of Peter." We should expect to find in this Gospel, reflections of the Prince of the Apostles, especially his spontaneity, and we do.

Saint Luke's Gospel was Brother Francis' favorite. One of the reasons he was so enthused about Saint Luke's Gospel was that this sacred writer gave much prominence to the cooperative role of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her indispensable fiat, her consent to be the Mother of God at the angel's Annunciation. Saint Luke gave us the detailed account of the Annunciation and the Visitation with Our Lady's sublime canticle the Magnificat. He also gives chivalrous tribute to other women whose lives were touched by Our Lord.

Brother Francis' series on the Gospel of Saint John is his masterpiece. Brother takes full advantage of the fact that 90% of this Gospel is "fresh" material, not found in the three synoptic accounts. This is the Gospel written by him whom the east honored, and still honors, as "The Theologian," on account of the sublimity of the inspired doctrine he delivered. It begins in eternity, "in the beginning," before creation, with the generation of the Word. John's objective was to defend the divinity of Christ against the Gnostic heretics who denied it.

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## PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY FATHER

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

R. The Lord preserve him, and give him life, and make him to be blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies (Roman Breviary).

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. Let us pray.

R. Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ our Lord. Amen (Roman Ritual).

## 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:

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