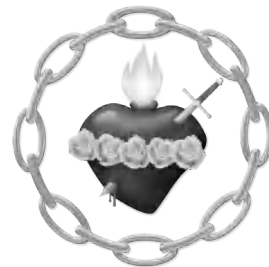


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



July/August 2023



Santiago de Compostela Cathedral

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Br. André Marie,
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PRIOR'S COLUMN

THE VIRGINAL ESPOUSALS OF SAINT JOSEPH AND OUR LADY, PART II

This is a continuation of the article on this subject that appeared in the May/June *Mancipia*.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the overwhelming patristic evidence for belief in Our Lady's perpetual virginity. Here is a partial list of

Fathers. From the **East**: Clement of Alexandria (215), Origen (253), Saint Ephrem the Syrian (373), Saint Athanasius (373), Saint Basil the Great (379), Saint Gregory of Nyssa (395), Didymus the Blind (398), Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (403), Saint John Chrysostom (407), Saint Proclus of Constantinople (425), Saint Cyril of Alexandria (444), Saint Gennadius of Constantinople (471), all the Fathers of Constantinople II (the fifth Ecumenical Council in 553), Saint John Damascene (749); from the **West**: Saint Hippolytus of Rome (235), Saint Hilary of Poitiers (368), Saint Zeno of Verona (380), Pope Saint Siricius (392), Saint Ambrose (397), Saint Jerome (420), Saint Augustine (430), Leporius (after 430), Saint Peter Chrysologus (450), Saint Leo the Great (461), Saint Maximus of Turin (465), Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe (533), all the Fathers of the Lateran Synod of 649, and Saint Ildephonsus of Toledo (667), who wrote a tract called, "on the perpetual virginity of Bl. Mary against three infidels."

Of these, Saints Gregory of Nyssa (395), Ambrose (397), and Augustine (430) all held that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual virginity.

The Fathers on this list wrote in either Greek, Latin, or Syriac (Ephrem), and represent the three great ancient Patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, as well as the later Patriarchate of Constantinople. The notable exceptions to the universal belief in this Christian dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity were called out as heretics by their contemporaries and roundly condemned by the Church. The acceptance of this doctrine was so widespread at the time of the Protestant Revolt, that Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Cranmer, and Wesley all held it (as did many lesser known "reformers"), railing against those who questioned the doctrine, and approvingly citing the polemical writings of Saint Jerome on this point. It was only later that large segments of Protestants began to develop their own ideas contrary to the universal belief — traditions of man that void the word of God (Cf. Mark 7:13).

Given the universality of this belief, the burden of proof is on those who would deny the dogma. In every instance, the Biblical arguments they hold up as contrary evidence have been answered thoroughly by ancient authors well versed in Biblical Greek. Also, despite confident claims to the contrary, nowhere in the Bible is it said that "Mary had other children after Christ." Nowhere.

In the context of this universal belief in Mary's perpetual virginity, the Church Fathers wrestled with two questions which were very much disputed. The first is whether Saint Joseph and Our Lady were truly husband and wife. They wrestled with this because, for many of the Fathers, the idea of virginal marriage seemed an oxymoron as the *bond* of matrimony and the *use* of matrimony were completely inseparable in their minds. From the time of Saint Augustine of Hippo, in the West, at least, the marriage of Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin was accepted as a genuine marriage because it enjoyed all three of the "goods," of matrimony, namely, "offspring, fidelity, and sacrament." The offspring was Christ Our Lord; the fidelity was the total absence of adultery in the relationship; and the "sacrament" (by which Augustine meant indissolubility) was present by virtue of there being no divorce. Here is his celebrated text:

Thus every good of marriage was fulfilled in the parents of Christ: offspring, fidelity, and the sacrament. We recognize the offspring in Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; the loyalty, in that no adultery occurred; and the sacrament because of no divorce. — *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, Ch. 11 and 12; *ML* 44, 421: "*Omne itaque nuptiarum bonum impletum est in illis parentibus Christi, proles, fides, sacramentum. Prolem, cognoscimus ipsum Dominum Jesum; fidem, quia nullum adulterium; sacramentum, quia nullum divortium.*"

At a later date, canonists and theologians reignited this dispute. In his *Decretal* published about 1140, the esteemed canonist of Bologna, Gratian, took the view of many of the Fathers (especially those of the East) which held that a marriage not consummated by sexual intercourse was no marriage. He therefore concluded that Joseph and Mary were not truly husband and wife. Against this opinion stood the view of the influential Saxon-French theologian, Hugh of Saint Victor (1141), who argued that the consent that each had made to the contract of matrimony was sufficient for their being truly married, and this is abundantly clear from Holy Scripture, which explicitly refers to Joseph and Mary as husband and wife. Weighing in on Saint Augustine's and Hugh's side was the estimable theologian, Peter Lombard, whose highly influential *Book of Sentences* was published around 1150. This work became the textbook in scholastic theology for centuries to come and would be studied and commented upon by subsequent theologians (e.g., Saint Thomas Aquinas) as part of their pursuit of advanced degrees. After Roland Bandinellus, a theologian from Bologna, was elected to be Pope Alexander III in 1159, he decided certain marriage cases using the criteria of Hugh of Saint Victor and Peter Lombard, thereby discrediting Gratian's view. From this point on, the canonists sided with the theologians, and the opinion of Augustine *et alia* prevailed, being enshrined in Church law. Saint Thomas Aquinas lent it the great weight as well as the further

development of his powerful intellect. (One thing that this sometimes hot medieval debate bequeathed to subsequent generations of Catholics is the distinction *ratum sed non consummatum*, which it is beyond the scope of these lines to discuss further.)

Saint Thomas also maintained that Saint Joseph and Our Lady did indeed consent to carnal intercourse *if such were the divine will*: “both consented to the nuptial bond, but not expressly to the bond of the flesh, *save on the condition that it was pleasing to God*” (*ST*, IIIa, Q. 29, A. 2), which it clearly was not. Therefore, the great Dominican had a somewhat nuanced position on the opinion, mentioned above, of Saints Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, and Augustine, i.e., that Mary had vowed Her virginity: “[T]he Blessed Virgin vowed virginity as the thing most excellent and most acceptable to herself, yet not simply speaking, but under a most noble condition — namely this: unless God should ordain otherwise” (*In IV Sent.* d. 30, q. 2, a. 1, qa. 1).

Returning now to the Fathers, there was another subject of disagreement among them that is relevant to our issue. Some had argued, based upon the authority of certain apocryphal books, including the *Protoevangelium of James* (written around 150), that Saint Joseph was an aged widower when espoused to Our Lady. To these Fathers, the “brethren of Jesus” were Saint Joseph’s children by this previous marriage. Saint Jerome and others would argue against this view (the often acerbic Jerome ridiculed these apocryphal books as repositories of ridiculous fables). To Saint Jerome and other Fathers, these “brethren” were, rather, near kinsman of Our Lord, cousins. While the opinion of Jerome was more common in the West, where the influence of the apocryphal books was less strong than in the East, there were Eastern Church Fathers — including Hegesippus (180), Saint John Chrysostom (407), and Theodoret (457) — who believed that the “brethren of the Lord” were not Joseph’s sons by another marriage, but near relatives of Jesus.

Still, the dominant opinion current in Eastern Orthodox circles seems to be that these “brethren” were Saint Joseph’s children by a former wife. It also appears from my readings that some of the more polemical Orthodox reject the genuineness of Saint Joseph’s marriage to Mary, and for this reason, they oppose the Catholic devotion to the Holy Family (though, in justice, I should add that there remains a strong devotion to “Joseph the Betrothed” in their liturgy, and, of course, a great devotion to the Mother of God and to Jesus Christ, true God and true Man).

These two points of dispute — the genuineness or not of Mary and Joseph’s marriage and the virginal or previously married status of Saint Joseph — rose up among men who in no way questioned Our Lady’s perpetual virginity. In fact, *the disputes arose primarily as a result of different efforts, opposing*

differing heresies, to safeguard that very doctrine.

If all this sounds like too much inside Catholic baseball in what is essentially an apologetical article, there is something I am building up to: There is a *sensus catholicus* surrounding the sacrosanct person of Our Lady that many outside the Church simply do not understand. It is the conviction, common in the East and West, that the Virgin Mary is such a holy vessel that She could not be touched in a venereal way. She is the Ark of the New Covenant and the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Closely added to this is the idea that Saint Joseph, “being a just man” (Matt. 1:19), would not deem it appropriate to subject Her to the normal use of matrimony. As Saint Ambrose of Milan (397) tells us:

But Mary did not fail, the mistress of virginity did not fail; nor was it possible that she who had borne God, should be regarded as bearing a man. *And Joseph, the just man, assuredly did not so completely lose his mind as to seek carnal intercourse with the mother of God.* (*De Inst. Virg.*, VI, 44; emphasis mine)

To the natural mind, this is very challenging indeed, and not only in our particularly hypersexualized and now aberrosexualized culture. For true Christians, the Blessed Virgin was sanctified by the presence of Our Lord and became thereby a sacred vessel, something not to be given over to profane use. This is typified by a mysterious vision of Ezechiel the prophet:

And he brought me back to the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary, which looked towards the east: and it was shut. And the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut (Ezechiel [Ezekiel] 44:1-2).

Saint Thomas Aquinas cites Saint Augustine’s Marian interpretation of this passage:

Expounding these words, Augustine says in a sermon (*De Annunt. Dom.* iii): “What means this closed gate in the House of the Lord, except that Mary is to be ever inviolate? What does it mean that ‘no man shall pass through it,’ save that Joseph shall not know her [that is, carnally]? And what is this — ‘The Lord alone enters in and goeth out by it’ — except that the Holy Ghost shall impregnate her, and that the Lord of angels shall be born of her? And what means this — ‘it shall be shut for evermore’ — but that Mary is a virgin before His Birth, a virgin in His Birth, and a virgin after His Birth?” (*ST*, IIIa, Q. 28, A. 3)

Saints Jerome and Ambrose also saw the Blessed Virgin’s perpetual virginity typified in this vision:

Some quite emphatically understand this closed gate through which only the Lord God of Israel passes ... as the Virgin Mary, who remains a Virgin before and after

childbirth. In fact, she remains always a Virgin, in the moment in which the Angel speaks with her and when the Son of God is born. —Saint Jerome (*Commentarium in Evangelium Lucae*, PL 25, 430.)

Only Christ opened the closed doors of the virginal womb, which continued to remain closed, however. This is the closed eastern gate, through which only the high priest may enter and exit and which nevertheless is always closed. —Saint Jerome (*Dialogus contra Pelagianos* 2, 4)

Who is this gate (Ezekiel 44:1-4), if not Mary? Is it not closed because she is a virgin? Mary is the gate through which Christ entered this world, when He was brought forth in the virginal birth and the manner of His birth did not break the seals of virginity. —Saint Ambrose (*The Consecration of a Virgin and the Perpetual Virginity of Mary*, 8:52)

She is closed because she is a virgin; she is a gate, because Christ has entered through her.... This gate faces east, because she has given birth to him who rises, the sun of justice.... Mary is the good gate that was closed and was not opened. Christ passed through it, but did not open it. —Saint Ambrose (*De Institutione Virginis*, 8, 57. PL 16, 334)

But these Fathers are not alone. The aforementioned Saints Proclus of Constantinople, Hilary of Poitiers, Peter Chrysologus, and Gregory the Great also held this view of Ezekiel 44:1-2. Further, among Protestant exegetes, Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), and John Mayer (1583-1664) all advanced the same Marian interpretation of the passage.

In “More Reasons for Mary’s Perpetual Virginity,” Tim Staples plausibly argues, based upon Old-Testament marital laws, that Saint Joseph was obliged to recognize that Mary, though his wife and under his care, belonged uniquely to the Holy Ghost, by whom She had conceived the Child. At greater length and citing numerous rabbinical authorities and Jewish traditions, Br. Anthony Opisso, a physician, scriptural and rabbinical scholar, and hermit, argues the same. Br. Anthony’s witness has the value of laying something of an Old-Testament foundation to the *sensus catholicus* concerning Mary’s consecration to God as the Spouse of the Holy Ghost (see his online article, “The Perpetual Virginity of Mary”).

Father Joseph Pohle summarizes Saint Thomas Aquinas’ reasons for Mary’s perpetual virginity; note how connected his second, third, and fourth reasons are to the *sensus catholicus* I mentioned:

Saint Thomas enumerates four principal reasons why it was morally necessary that the Blessed Virgin Mary should preserve perpetual virginity. These reasons are: (1) The unique character of Christ as the Only-begotten Son of God [and therefore the fittingness that He should be

the only Child of Mary]; (2) The honor and dignity of the Holy Ghost, who overshadowed her virginal womb; (3) The excellency of the title *Deipara* [Mother of God], and (4) The honor and chivalry of Saint Joseph, who was commissioned to be the protector and guardian of his chaste spouse. (*Mariology*, pg. 103)

There is another reason that I brought up what I earlier called “inside Catholic baseball” regarding the patristic and medieval disputes concerning matrimony: it shows the possibility — however rare in practice — that virginal or continent marriages can exist, such as those of Saint Pulcheria with Marcian, Saint Cunegunda with Emperor Henry, Saint Edward the Confessor with his spouse, Edith. In these cases, affairs of state virtually demanded a marriage, but in each instance one of the couple had previously vowed celibate chastity. Saint Pulcheria’s competence as Empress in her own right shows she was no fool. Her lending the prestige and power of her throne to not one but two Ecumenical Councils (Ephesus and Chalcedon) shows her to have been a most Christian Empress. By mutual consent, the strong and capable General Marcian’s marriage to Pulcheria was celibate. Yet their fruitfulness in good works, along with that of the others just mentioned, is still justly celebrated by the Church.

I surmise that there will be Protestant objectors to this piece, as there were with my previous article on this subject. They will again claim that somehow it dishonors Mary or Joseph that their marriage was not “open to life.” But the weight of Christian centuries argues against this. It would have been dishonorable for the sacred vessel of the Most Holy Virgin to have been touched in a carnal way by man. I would rather stand with the entire Church Catholic than with modern sectaries, the founders of whose sects mostly agreed with me anyway. As for the charge of Mary and Joseph not being “open to life” when the unique Offspring born of that marriage was Life itself, I am tempted to think that the most appropriate response is scorn and ridicule, yet I hold out hope that even these polemicists may have a conversion of heart and see that in parenting Jesus, who is the “seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:16), in whom the Baptized become children of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), Mary and Joseph have numerous spiritual offspring — which is why we Christians, with Christ Jesus, call them respectively Mother and Father.

I would like to thank you for the most generous response you made to our appeal back in April. You came to our rescue in the financial “tight spot” in which we found ourselves. THANK YOU VERY MUCH! Please be assured of our community’s continued prayers for all our benefactors. ▪

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Sr. Marie Thérèse,
M.I.C.M.

CONVENT CORNER

OF HUMMINGBIRDS AND HEARTS

Dear Reader, I wanted to discuss repairs with you. Well, not repairs on a car, fence, or watch, but repairs on a living creature.

One day recently, I was praying quietly before our altar while one of the Sisters was freshening the bouquets

of flowers. She suddenly hastened toward me and whispered excitedly, "There's a hummingbird on top of the bouquet in front of Saint Joseph!" Together, we practically flew to the bouquet! Atop the tallest purple flower was something that looked like a black pom pom, about the size of a golf ball. I quickly cupped the bird in my hands, and, with some difficulty, gently removed the tiny, stiff body from the petals. Certain now, that it had been dead for some time, I was amazed to see the tips of its wings move microscopically in my hand. It was still alive!

Sister and I gently conveyed the tiny body to our kitchen where I touched a drop of honey water to its long, black, closed beak. Almost imperceptibly, the very tip of a tiny tongue protruded from the beak and drew in the sweet liquid. Encouraged, I continued to add drops of saving nourishment to its beak...until I could see the throat begin pulsing from swallowing. I tipped the tiny specimen and dipped its beak into the drink. It was taking in the liquid with great alacrity! But alas, I accidentally dipped its feathered chest into the small pool of liquid! I stepped outside with the wet creature, into the sunshine. A minute later, there was no need to be concerned about the wet feathers, since the miniature bird shook itself dry as though it had taken a refreshing bird bath. It perched on my palm, tilting its head in various directions, shimmering its magnificent colors in the sunlight. And then, without warning, in an unhesitating straight line, it buzzed from my hand to a blooming cherry tree across the parking lot — right next to a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and the three children.

Well, dear Reader, would you say I "repaired" the hummingbird? I wouldn't either! And yet, there is something in my action that was akin to a repair. But, what would you say about repairing a broken heart?

A "broken heart" is defined in Wikipedia as "the intense emotional stress or pain one feels at experiencing great loss or deep longing. The concept is cross-cultural, often cited with reference to unreciprocated love or lost love." Many traumas based on rejection and loss can cause this syndrome. The definition goes on to explain the docu-

mented physical pain that is experienced with a broken heart, the real possibility of death (yes, death) and the methods of managing and healing this condition.

Could blasphemy cause a broken heart? But, dear Reader, what is blasphemy anyway? Contempt, disrespect, insult, desecration and irreverence for holy persons and things leapt out at me from the various definitions of blasphemy that I perused.

So, why did I suddenly eject your attention from "repairing broken hearts" only to have it land in "blasphemy," dear Reader? Because, in this article, there is an essential connection ... as well as in reality. And here, dear Reader, we have jumped the rails numerous times to get to the real object of my article — repairing broken hearts ... or, precisely, repairing the Immaculate Heart, broken by five distinct blasphemies.

Simply, here is the list of five blasphemies: against Her Immaculate Conception; against Her Divine Maternity; against Her Perpetual Virginity; against Her children; against Her images. You can get the best understanding of these five blasphemies (for which there are the five First Saturdays of reparation) by spending time alone with Our Heavenly Mother, so I will allow your curiosity to move you to your Mother's feet.

Understand, dear Reader, that these blasphemies break Her Heart, producing such pain that She could truly die of it; yet, She lives on. As you have seen, She holds out Her Heart to us, pierced with the long thorns that encircle it, topped by the Burning Fire that does not consume it, the fire of Divine Love that She would share — but She finds Her love largely unrequited by most of Her children.

As with the dying hummingbird, our hearts are drawn by suffering. Our Mother is not obliged to share Her sufferings with us, but She does so for our benefit. If we take time to consider that dear, broken Heart, we are filled with compassion and holy desires to make up for what has wounded it; we desire to make repairs — *reparation*.

Fulfilling the conditions of the Five First Saturdays merely to get the great promise of Our Lady to assist us at the moment of death with the graces necessary for Salvation is certainly not a bad thing! But, there is so much we are missing out on if that is the extent of our benefit from the Five First Saturdays. Our Mother gives us five months to gain some amazing habits: Confession, recollected Holy Communion, praying the Rosary, and spending time in the presence of Our Mother.

But, when your own heart starts breaking for the broken Heart of Mary, you will find consolation by remembering

that She gave us a way to make reparation on a daily and hourly basis — not just on five consecutive first Saturdays. Our Heavenly Mother said, “Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say very often, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: O my Jesus, it is for the love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

In summary, let us hear about the First Saturday devotion from Our Lady Herself as She expressed it to Sister Lucy on December 10, 1925: “See, my daughter, My Heart surrounded with thorns with which ingrates pierce me at every moment with blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, make sure to console me and announce that all those who for five months, on the first Saturdays, go

to confession, receive Communion, say five decades of the Rosary and keep me company for fifteen minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to Me, I promise to assist them at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their souls.”

By the way, dear Reader, the day we discovered the hummingbird on the bouquet at Saint Joseph’s statue was a Saturday. To be precise, it was Saturday, May 13 — the feast of Our Lady of Fatima.■

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ARE YOU CALLED?

OBJECTIONS

Christ and the Rich Young Man

We play into the hands of the Tempter by building up for ourselves imaginary difficulties, forgetting that, with the call, come special graces, which enable us to do what God asks of us.

1. “I may not persevere.” – Instead of being frightened over a few who have been inconstant in their vocation, why not consider the great number of those who find in the religious life peace, happiness and salvation?

2. “My health may break down.” – Fr Surin, S.J. advised his mother to become a Carmelite nun at the age of 56. So delicate had she been that she had required the constant attendance of four nurses, yet during the 15 years she lived in the convent, observing all the austerities of the Rule, she never once entered the infirmary.

3. “I should break my parents’ hearts.” – Though it might mean a big sacrifice, no right-minded father would dream of forbidding a marriage which would bring to his child joy and good fortune; why then interfere with that holy alliance made in Heaven which brings far greater happiness?

4. “I could do more good in the world.” – In a very exceptional case, this might be true, but such a statement generally shows a lack of realization of the immense advantages of religious life and the merit which comes from the living of vows. Would St. Francis, St. Dominic, or St. Ignatius have done more for God’s glory had they led the life of pious laymen?

5. “Good people are wanted in the world.” – But does God want me there? If so, why did He call me to leave it? Surely I must assume that He knows what is best for me and for His glory!

6. “I may be unhappy in the convent.” – Is the world, then, such a paradise that no sorrow is found there? “Father,” said an old Trappist monk, “I have so much consolation here amid all our austerities, that I fear I shall have none in the next world.”

7. “Perhaps I never had a vocation.” – Theologians state that even if one should enter religion without a vocation and persevere through the novitiate, God will certainly give that vocation at the moment one makes one’s vows.

8. “Wait! Wait! Wait!” – But Jesus would not let the young man delay: “Let the dead bury their dead,” He said. “Make haste and tarry not!”

ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

“What a glorious kingdom of the Holy Ghost is the religious state!” writes Fr Meschler, S.J.; “It is like an island of peace and calm in the middle of the fleeting, changing, restless flood of this earthly life. [...] It is like a lofty mountain where the last echoes of this world are still, and the first sounds of the blessed eternity are heard. What peace, what happiness, purity and holiness has it shed over the face of the earth!”

Peter said to Jesus: “Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee: what, therefore, shall we have?” And Jesus said to them: “You shall receive a hundredfold and possess life everlasting” [Matt. XIX, 27-29].

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



Father Leonard Feeney, MICM

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

A PLEA FOR COURAGEOUS CATHOLICS

My interest in your knowing that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church is not for the sake of the thoughts you are going to have about people outside the Church whom you are going to meet. It is for the purpose of putting you right, in your own Faith! It is for the sake of your salvation primarily, that I tell you the Church's doctrine on salvation, and only secondarily for the sake of the salvation of other people.

Just suppose you are minded to make the salvation of other people more important than your own salvation? That is not the right order of interest on your part! That is not according to God's plans. That is not what God expects of us.

God expects some kind of, what I might call, innocent selfishness to be attached to our regard of our own existence and the preservation, of it. We blink our own eyes as something flashes in front of us. We pull back our own hands if some danger approaches. Our own heart beats when some horror is beside us.

Putting other people before yourself in the things you are meant to be most interested in, in terms of yourself, is a wrong kind of vicariousness. There is a wrong kind of selfishness, as we know, but there is a right kind of selfishness.

"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) I think that this statement of Our Lord's is strong enough to imply in its challenge: "What good does it do if everybody gets into Heaven, if you do not get in?"

"Well," you say, "if everybody else does not get in, I do not mind not getting in. I will just sacrifice myself for Humanity. I will be democratic about the whole thing!"

That is not a sane response! God does not expect us to be that selfless. On that score you would want to be insane every time you passed an insane asylum, or be put in prison every time you passed a jail — by way, let us say, of democratic charity. That makes no sense!

Jesus says: "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." (Matt. 22:37.) Before He passes to the second commandment, Jesus tells us about the first: "This is the greatest and the first commandment." Do not touch one single phrase of the next commandment until you have fully comprehended and understood this first one!

Our Lord then goes on: "And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:39.)

But the first is the greatest commandment! That means

that in regard to the saving of your soul, you desire your own salvation; and there is enough love of self during your life to preserve that desire.

We think alone! We suffer alone! We are lonely alone! We worry alone! We pray alone! We are heartbroken alone! And, we die alone! A man with an assignment like that to fulfill is entitled to a certain amount of healthy, salutary and noble self-interest.

To be more interested in my neighbor's salvation than in my own — to ask how the man next door is going to be saved instead of how I am going to be saved — is asking the right question in the wrong place; putting the first question where the second should be.

Were the scheme to go on that crazily on the subject of salvation, A would be interested in B's salvation, and B would be interested in A's salvation. It would be said to A: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of B's soul?"

It is hard enough to save your own soul, with a conscience of your own, a disposition of your own, a temperament of your own, without using all that equipment to save somebody else's. We will get over later to the points where unselfishness comes in, but, first of all, the basic challenge is to save your own soul.

If you think there is any salvation outside the Catholic Faith, you cannot save your own soul — even though you never told it to anybody! You cannot say: "I am not going to deny it orally, but I am not going to believe it inwardly."

You never could save your soul that way. You would be praying hypothetically. There would be a condition in your prayer, a proviso, a hold-back, a little limp in the wrong place. You would have a hidden suspicion in your mind that the Catholic Faith was not truly the way for you if you could have been saved without it in another situation.

If you think that people who live lives unmotivated by the true Faith, and who measure up to all that is best and sincere in themselves, get into Heaven by reason of that performance, it would take only the slightest bit of adjustment to see yourself as that person.

Any one of us can see a thousand places in the course of our lives where one detour would have meant the loss of our Faith. One priest not encountered, one book not read, one sermon not listened to, would have meant the loss of our Faith. One support not given, or one prayer not had recourse to, would have meant the loss of our Faith. Therefore, we are incapable of totally excluding from our thought the five-sixths of the world in which we might so easily have been, had it not been for the grace of God. Thanks be to God, we corresponded with the grace which He gave us!

God has sufficient grace waiting for every man in the world, would he but take it! Were God to see that he would take it were it offered to him, it would be given. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:3,4.)

We have been urged to think by our Liberal clergy, who are more sociological than they are theological, that it is the greatest kindness to those who have not the Faith to say that they will get into Heaven without it. This is not the greatest kindness! It is the greatest lack of charity towards them!

If you feel that those outside the Church can get into Heaven, there is something weak in your prayer for conversions. There is something senseless about your contributions to foreign missions. There is something lacking in your respect for the power of the Holy Ghost when you send a missionary off to foreign lands — to make the natives more interested in material benefits than in the necessity of their salvation!

Your belief that those outside the Church can get into Heaven is a terrible belittling of the labors of the twelve Apostles, who cast lots for the whole world and went off here and there all over the earth. It is a terrible belittling of all the traveling the great priests and apostles of the Church did in the early days, and all down the centuries. These men did not become missionaries just for the sake of vacations, or excursions, or religious experiences. They became missionaries and traveled to every known part of the world because it was a necessity that they go!

Jesus said to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16.)

The Apostles divided up the world and went off to the ends of the earth, because they knew that the ends of the earth would never see God were they not to go!

Do not tell me that the voyages of Saint Paul, that gorgeous little Apostle to the Gentiles — who never rested for a moment except when they put chains on him in prison and locked him up, with a keeper at the door to bar him in — do not tell me that the voyages of that tireless little worker, up and down Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and Spain, were just for the sake of making an impression! Or that they were by way of seeing what the set-up for the future Church was going to be! Or were simply because he was a restless man who could not stay still very long!

Where Saint Paul most wanted to be, as everybody knows, was in Jerusalem.

He wanted to stay in Jerusalem because he wanted to be with Our Blessed Lady.

The Gospel of Our Blessed Lady was written by Saint Paul's beloved disciple, Saint Luke, who learned from Saint Paul how to love the Mother of God. Both Saint Jerome and Saint John Chrysostom refer to the Holy Gospel of Saint Luke as the Gospel of Saint Paul. In his humility, Saint Paul wanted Saint Luke, the beautifully educated physician, to tell the classic story of Saint Paul's love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, which he did, under Saint Paul's own tender auspices.

Instead of remaining with Our Blessed Lady in Jerusalem, Saint Paul, as we know, was always on the march, always on a ship, always on the go, from town to town, country to country. He was writing letters here and there, exhorting, beseeching, encouraging, and repeating, that the Church of Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation.

I think that it is a terrible belittling of Saint Paul to say that two things could have saved the people to whom Saint Paul traveled: (1) Saint Paul's arrival, and (2) their own fine sincerity, in case he had not come.

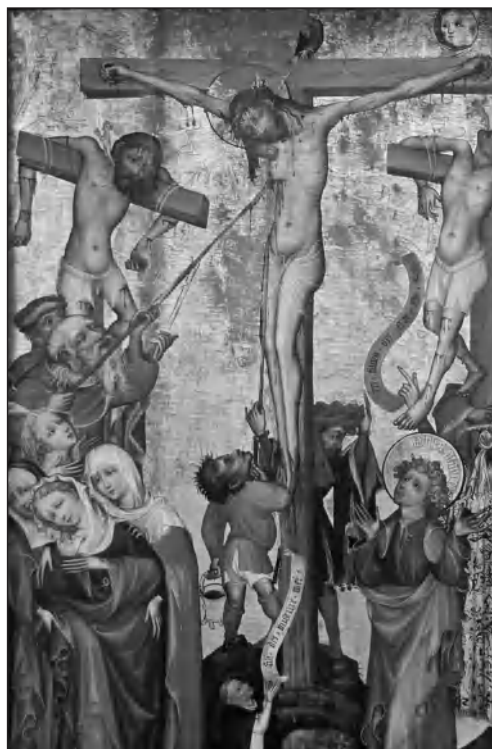
Anybody with half an eye can see that on Saint Paul's last great journey to Rome, the shipwreck which cast him on the tiny island of Malta, just off the coast of Sicily — where the natives came and received him and were baptized — was an accident in man's plans, but was providence in God's plans. It was because there was a loving heart on that island, a head waiting for Baptism, and a mouth open for the Holy Eucharist, that the ship was wrecked on Malta.

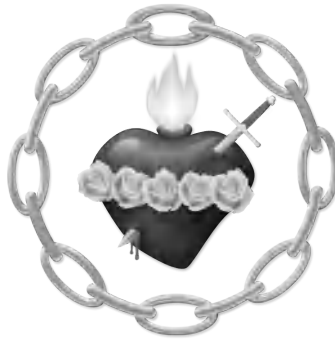
If you, a Catholic, can feel that the Faith you have is not essential to your salvation, all your prayers and contemplation will get you nowhere. Your adoration will cool. Your protests of gratitude to Our Blessed Lady will not ring true. Your "Hail Mary, full of grace..." will be just one version of the apostrophe to where all graces are and from where all benefits come! The whole rest of the world will be un-Mary'd and un-Mother'd, at least in your heart.

You will feel that it is somehow Our Lady's fault that she is not known to those who, in your mind, are presumably so anxious to know her!

How dare you call Our Lady "Virgin Most Powerful" if there is somebody who really wants her, and who cannot reach her! ■

Taken from *Bread of Life*.





2023
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Cultivating and Passing on a Catholic Worldview
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Bother John Marie Vianney,
M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

PREFECT'S COLUMN

THE DEATH AND REVIVAL OF AMERICA, PART II

In Part I of this article, we pointed out the several evils that we Americans, especially Catholics, face today. We provided the short answer: Fatima. We will begin to provide the nuts and bolts of that answer, and expand on it.

If you know nothing about the Church-approved messages and events that occurred in Fatima in 1915-1917, I can recommend a very easy read. Those of you who wish to reacquaint yourselves with the momentous miracle of modern times also should read it. As a fellow-tertiary, who is involved in the apostolate which publishes the booklet said, this is the most complete monograph of its size on Fatima ever to be published. *The True Story of Fatima* by Father John de Marchi, I.M.C., is a complete account of the Fatima apparitions. One can say that it provides a perfect road map to avert God's justifiable anger and retribution. It is a "survival guide" you need in this terrible crisis in the history of the Catholic Church — one which will help you get to Heaven. (You may read the book online at fatima.org, or purchase a copy at that site's online store, or — even better! — you may obtain a free copy if you come to our next SBC Annual Conference: October 13-14, 2023. Unless otherwise noted, all the quoted material in this article is from this book.)

Let us begin with the first heavenly manifestation the children encountered. It is not well-known that certain events preceded the appearances of Our Lady at Fatima. "On a day unnamed by any of the records, in the year 1915, four little girls had been playing in the fields." Lucia de Jesus dos Santos, a child of eight was among them. After the recitation of the Rosary they saw "a cloud, whiter than snow, slightly transparent, with a human outline." This figure — who we will later learn was an Angel — appeared three times to them, leaving a powerful impression on the children. But save for the later events, these preparatory visions would likely have been forgotten.

"A year passed and three children, Lucia, her cousins Jacinta and Francisco, shepherding sheep, completed their Rosary and were playing jacks. Again, 'a light whiter than snow ... [in] the form of a young man ... more brilliant than a crystal pierced by the rays of the sun' approached them."

He said, "*Fear not! I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me!*"

"The Angel knelt on the ground and bowed very low. By some inspiration, they imitated him and repeated the words they heard him pronounce: '*My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love Thee. I ask pardon for all those who do not believe in Thee, do not adore Thee, do not hope in Thee, do not love Thee.*' He repeated this prayer three times. Then he arose and said: '*Pray this way. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the*

voice of your supplications.'" The Angel disappeared and the awareness of the supernatural was so intense that for a long space of time they remained there in the same position in which he left them, unaware of their very existence, repeating that same prayer over and over again. 'We felt the presence of God so intensely, so intimately, that we dared not speak even to each other. The next day we felt ourselves still enveloped by that atmosphere. Only very gradually did its intensity diminish within us. None of us thought of speaking of this apparition or of recommending that it be kept a secret. It imposed secrecy of itself. It was so intimate that it was not easy to utter even a single word about it. Perhaps it made a deeper impression upon us because it was the Angel's first clear manifestation.'"

Please note, bowing low, or actually prostrating themselves became the way the children often prayed, after the first vision of the Angel. How many of us have ever prayed in such a position? How these little ones immediately imitated the Angel in a very honorable position!

To this point, the Angel identified himself only as the Angel of Peace. Later he added that he was also the Patron Angel of Portugal. Who is this angel? What was his identity? It is a pious belief that the Angel was Saint Michael, the Archangel.

Michael is the prince of the faithful angels who opposed Lucifer and his associates in their revolt against God. He is the "special guardian and protector of the Church ... in the persecution of the Antichrist, he will powerfully stand up in her defence ... At that time Michael shall rise up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of thy people ... Michael, in a vision, admonished the Bishop of Siponto to build a church in his honor on Mount Gargano, near Manfredonia, in the kingdom of Naples." ("The Apparition of Saint Michael the Archangel" at fatima.org.)

In the *Lives Of The Saints* by Alban Butler, Saint Michael is called not only the protector of the Church, but of every faithful soul. He defeated the devil by humility: we are enlisted in the same warfare. His arms were humility and ardent love of God: the same must be our weapons. We ought to regard this archangel as our leader under God: and, courageously resisting the devil in all his assaults, to cry out, "Who can be compared to God?" Or, *Who is like unto God?* ("The Apparition of Saint Michael the Archangel" at fatima.org.)

With regard to Angels in general, recall the words of Psalm 103:3: *Who makest the clouds thy chariot: who walkest upon the wings of the winds.* "And the words of the (Fatima) Angel echo the words of the Angels in other Biblical apparitions, 'Fear not! I am the angel of peace.' The presence of the Angel always fills the witnesses with astonishment, and he must first reassure them. 'Fear not!' he says to Zachary and to the Blessed Virgin, to the shepherds on the night of the Nativity,

and to the holy women on the morning of the Resurrection.”

What the children described was very similar to other apparitions of heavenly denizens: “Lucia affirmed that he resembled a young man of great beauty, around fourteen or fifteen years old, whiter than snow and resplendent with a crystal-clear light, so much so that when Canon Barthas asked (her), ‘What was he like?’ she summed up her response in this laconic (Portuguese) expression: *‘Era de luz.’* That is, ‘He was of light’ . . . The Angel who announced the Resurrection of Christ, relates Saint Matthew, had an appearance as of lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. (Matt. 28:3) And the same Evangelist, describing Our Lord transfigured on Tabor says: ‘His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as snow.’ (Matt. 17:2) . . .” (“Saint Michael, the Angel of Peace,” at returntofatima.org.)

God is light, “and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5), and whenever He deigns to manifest Himself to men, by the ministry of Angels or the mediation of His Holy Mother, He appears to us clothed in splendour, according to the beautiful verses of the Psalm: ‘O Lord my God, Thou art exceedingly great. Thou hast put on praise and beauty: And art clothed with light as with a garment.’ (103:1-2) At Fatima, after each of the apparitions, this word ‘Light’ always comes back to the lips of the seers.” (“Saint Michael, the Angel of Peace,” at returntofatima.org.)

In the second apparition of Saint Michael, he finds the children playing a game. The Angel asks, “*What are you doing? Pray, pray very much! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.*” Lucy asks him “How are we to make sacrifices?” The great Prince of the Heavenly Host responds, “*Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you.*”

Imagine an angel coming to you tonight, perhaps in a dream as with Saint Joseph. Suppose he said the same things to you. If you took the apparition seriously, you would try to change your life immediately. It is what these obedient children did. And they met with sacrifices, diligently, and daily.

The renowned Fatima scholar, Frère Michel, notes that, “In the book of Kings, when the Voice of God spoke to Elijah, at Mount Horeb: ‘What are you

doing, Elijah?’ (1 Kg. 19, 13). It was the same with the seers of Fatima: ‘What are you doing? Pray! Pray much!’” (“Saint Michael, the Angel of Peace,” at returntofatima.org.)

“The Angel’s admonition was not in vain, for in the fall, when the Angel returned for the third time, he found them prostrate and praying as he had taught them. It was in late September or early October and the children had returned to the Cabeço . . . We sprang up to see what was happening, and beheld the Angel. He was holding a chalice in his left hand, with the Host suspended above it, from which some drops of Blood fell into the chalice. Leaving the Chalice and the Host suspended in the air, the Angel knelt down beside us and made us repeat three times:

‘Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly and I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the same Son Jesus Christ, present in the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for all the sacrileges, outrages and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.’

“Then, rising, he took the Chalice and the Host in his hands. He gave the Sacred Host to me, and shared the Blood from the Chalice between Jacinta and Francisco, saying as he did so:

‘Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men! Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.’

“Once again, he prostrated on the ground and repeated with us, three times more, the same prayer, ‘*Most Holy Trinity...*’, and then disappeared.

“These words were indelibly impressed upon our minds. They were like a light which made us understand who God is, how He loves us and desires to be loved, the value of sacrifice, how pleasing it is to Him and how, on account of it, He gives the grace of conversion to sinners. It was for this reason that we began, from then on, to offer to the Lord all that mortified us ...” (“Saint Michael, the Angel of Peace,” at returntofatima.org.) ■ Email Brother John Marie Vianney at toprefect@catholicism.org.



St. Michael the Archangel



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

ISSUES IN APOLOGETICS: ON SOLA FIDE

In sharing the Catholic faith with an Evangelical Protestant (hereinafter “Fundamentalist”) one will often hear the allegation made that, “I used to be Catholic but now I’m Christian”. Just what does this mean? Are they saying that a Catholic is not a Christian? How can this be?

Many Fundamentalists are saying exactly that. While the term may sometimes be used to refer to a simple generic nondenominational Christianity, many fundamentalists simply do not believe that a Catholic is a Christian, and this goes directly back to their idea of what a Christian is.

In order to understand this, we must begin at the beginning. First, the founders of the Protestant religion were, in large part, renegade priests who violated their most sacred obligations and went off to found a heretical religion in opposition to the Church founded by Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The one who really got the ball rolling on the so-called Reformation was the neurotic Augustinian friar, Martin Luther. Luther had such a problem with scrupulosity that he was overwhelmed with guilt for his sins and seriously doubted that he could be saved. He would spend hours in the confessional; he would at times leave the confessional after receiving absolution and then return. He would be told, basically, “Father Luther, your sins are forgiven, please get out of here,” yet no matter what, he always felt inadequate, sinful, and afraid that he would be damned.

Had these fears led Luther to walk more closely with God, the effect could have been constructive; but no, he took a different course of action: Luther, who told his followers to “sin boldly” and then trust Christ for forgiveness, formed a new religion, one in which, if one merely “trusts Christ,” in theory all his sins are forgiven, though the quality of his life will remain unaffected, as God imputes the righteousness of Our Lord to said sinner, overlooks all his sins, and allows him into heaven in a legal or forensic declaration of righteousness. The sinner’s virtue, or lack thereof, matters not. In fact, Luther, who based his teaching on the concept of the Total Depravity of Man, and actually helped multiple nuns desert their convent, eventually simulated marriage with one of these, Catherine von Bora. Whether or not Luther actually compared the justified Christian soul to a snow-covered dunghill, that grotesque image is perfectly consonant with both Luther’s depraved ideas on imputed justice, and his scatological way of expressing himself.

Although a sinner who wishes to attain heaven without changing his life (a so-called “Carnal Christian”) may appreciate being told that he is now “under grace, not law” and that merely trusting Christ to save him because he has “accepted Christ as Lord and Savior” at a so-called “altar call” guarantees his entry into heaven, we need only to look at Scriptures to see that this is both preposterous and presumptuous. The concept of justification *by faith alone* is clearly contradicted in the Bible. First, the passage that is often quoted in support of the concept that good works are irrelevant to our standing with God is Romans 3:1, where Saint Paul writes, in setting forth the New Covenant over the legal requirements of the Jewish law, states, “Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ.” Nowhere is the word “alone” found. In fact, the whole idea of justification by faith alone is flatly dismissed by Saint James in verses 2:24 and 2:26 of his epistle, where he states, “Do you see that by works a man is justified and not by faith only? ... For even as the body without the spirit is dead; so also faith without works is dead.” It seems that the best retort to those who would presume to push “Justification by Faith alone” in the face of such scriptural opposition is found in the words of Our Lord Himself in Matthew 15:7-9: “Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men.” Clearly justification by faith alone falls into this category.

What about the idea that the Catholic is not a Christian, as he is (supposedly) “working his way into heaven” and thus “adding something to the simplicity of the Gospel” as it is sometimes put? That we Catholics depend upon God’s grace



Saint Paul Preaching in Athens

first before any good works of our own is amply indicated in the way we worship. In the Holy Mass, just after the consecration, the priest prays that we may be admitted into the company of the saints in heaven “not considering our merits, but of thy own free pardon.” But that we also need good works is clearly stated by Our Lord Himself, as in His narrative of the Last Judgment, recorded in Matthew 25:31-46. The Fundamentalist will usually remain unconvinced, dismissing this argument on the basis that Our Lord uttered these words before Pentecost, or that the words apply to the loss of certain heavenly honors, but not one’s salvation, as that is guaranteed after the altar call. Even the unequivocal language of Saint Paul to “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12) may not make much of an impact, as the concept of justification by faith alone is ingrained in the belief of the Fundamentalist through the power of Sophistry and the effects of the Fall, with concupiscence leading him to believe what he wants to believe.

Further, the cherry picking of Scripture relies on the manipulation of a select number of proof texts.

In another article I will deal with a key reason for this, in that the Protestant version of Grace itself is different than that taught by the Church: that grace does not “perfect nature” as a Catholic might say, but that it is merely “unmerited favor” on someone who is only saved through the imputed righteousness of Christ. In other words, the underlying philosophical presuppositions foisted on the world by Luther and his fellow revolutionaries, along with the human willingness to hear what we want to hear and the skilled sophistry employed on the Protestant side are the true reasons the Fundamentalist has been led to his beliefs, as they are surely *not* what the Scriptures teach. We have nothing to fear in a debate with the Protestant. The Scriptures, as well as Our Lord and Our Lady, are on our side. ■

A NEW APPROACH TO CONVERTING

By Sam Zahaykevitz

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

IN DEFENSE OF BLACK OR WHITE THINKING

Several times over the past year I have been told that my thinking is “black or white,” as if that were some sort of pejorative. The most recent incident got me thinking about what that statement means and if there is something wrong with “black or white” thinking.

When I asked the last person to explain what he meant, he said that I do not allow for any “gray,” that I believe something must be one thing or another, nothing in-between. After I considered the matter for a while, I had to agree. Some things are that clear — black or white — but others are not. How to know the difference seems to be the difficulty for many of us.

I will begin with some thoughts or ideas that are clear for most of us. I believe that a person with common sense and without malice would agree that it is always wrong willfully to take the life of an innocent human being, before or after he is born. A related example is that it would always be wrong willfully to torture a person known to be innocent. To me, the principles that govern our actions in such situations are black or white, allowing for no gray area. Either you understand and accept the concept or you don’t; there is nothing in-between.

Another example would be: all human acts proceed from thought. There are no exceptions to this. In fact, if the act does not fully engage the intellect and will, it is not a human act but simply an act of a human being, which could be anything from digesting food to inadvertently scratching one’s nose.

All human beings have an immortal soul. If the creature does not have an immortal soul, it is not a human being. Either it has such a soul or it does not. In this case, there is no gray area to be had. Either the soul is immortal or it is not; either human beings have one or they do not.

“But what about in the study of ethics or in the application of moral principles,” someone may object. It seems obvious that there are all sorts of cases where the situation is not so clear. Actually, Brother Francis himself once said, “Human motives are complex. They are not simple like abstract ideas.” In this case, the application of moral principles, things may not be so clear cut and there can definitely be a gray area.

Let us take a look at something a bit more complicated. A couple has been married for many years and they have an old female school friend with whom the husband was very close at one time, but whom they have not seen in many years; moreover, she now lives in another state. They discover that she has suddenly lost her husband and the man searches frantically until he finds the old friend’s contact information. He calls her and immediately drives to her residence

to meet her and offers to help her. They go out for dinner frequently and, after that, every time he is in town they get together and go out to eat at his expense. During one of the meals he reveals to the widow that his wife does not know he has contacted her, and that they are in frequent conversation, and that they are going out to eat. He further admits that he believes that his wife would not approve of him doing this. What, if anything, should the widow do once she discovers this information? Is this situation black-or-white or is it one that is nuanced with a significant gray area?

Some questions that arise may be the following: The widow feels that she and the man have been friends for many years so it should not matter what his wife thinks. That is a problem he and his wife need to resolve for themselves and the widow feels entitled, because of their former friendship, to continue to meet him for dinner whenever he is in town. After all, they are merely going out for dinner and are doing nothing unseemly.

Or is the situation more clear than it first appears? Should the widow, in consideration of the wife’s feelings as stated by her friend, advise him that she is unable to continue seeing him when he is in town? Or, should she call the wife and ask directly if it is acceptable if she continues to remain in contact with the husband and have dinner with him when he is in town? Or should she follow the principle of justice which would state that the husband and his wife have, by marriage, a relationship that demands that the wife’s feelings, even if they seem “unreasonable,” should be respected and the relationship brought to an end?

In this case it is very clear — the widow should cease contact with the old friend.

The point of the above complex example is to demonstrate that, even in situations which seem complicated, with what appears to be lots of gray area, having clear moral principles can serve to make decisions that are firm and direct — “black or white” thinking.

But what about situations in which clear principles are not apparent at all? Should such a thing arise, we need to exercise prudence, carefully looking at the reality of the situation before us, and if possible, seeking counsel before proceeding. We still need to investigate further to determine if any definite principles can be applied to the situation, but in these cases, we may have need to make a judgment before moving ahead, while maintaining a certain reserve lest the judgment be in error, and being ready to adjust the decision as needed. What we want to avoid is proceeding without first considering the principles involved and then seeking out guidance from counselors. Such omissions could have us unnecessarily wandering down a wrong path.

This is black-or-white thinking. It is simply making judgments based on clear principles whenever possible, and standing by those decisions when they have been made in this manner. ■

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A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

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

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

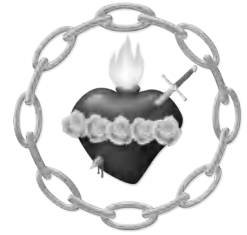
EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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

NOTES:

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- Join us in the Novena to the Immaculate Heart on August 14. Go to catholicism.org/novena-ihm.html
- Save the date, our 2023 SBC Conference will be October 13 and 14.

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



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