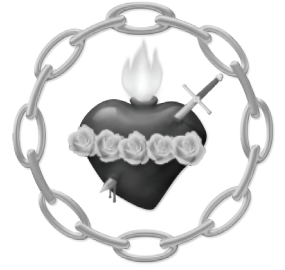


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

November/December 2024



Virgin Mary — Theotokos



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE PRIMACY

What are the implications of the Absolute Primacy of Christ for our Crusade? To answer this, we must keep in mind that ours is a two-fold Crusade: first, to propagate fidelity to the Catholic Church's teaching on her own necessity for

salvation; second, to work for the conversion of America to the Catholic Church. As Brother Francis used to insist, this Crusade brings us up against the four heresies condemned by Popes Gregory XVI (*Indifferentism*), Pius IX (*Liberalism*), Leo XIII (*Americanism*), and Saint Pius X (*Modernism*).

The first implication I will call **a deeper, more intensely supernatural and Christian outlook on creation and on history**: The Incarnation is not only the central event that splits history in two between B.C. and A.D., and, as such, is the center or axis upon which all history hangs; it is that, but it is also much more, for it is the very purpose of creation itself. **All creation is for Jesus Christ, predestined to be the Supreme Glorifier of the Blessed Trinity, and the Recipient, in turn, of the glory we give Him.** "And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's," says Saint Paul in I Cor. 3:23. He is the archetype of all creation. The Scotistic "proof texts" — especially Col. 1:15-20 — bring this out admirably.

The Mystery of the Annunciation is not only the central point of history, but also the very *raison d'être* of creation, without which there would be no history — only eternity. The weight of this Mystery is *in* history, but also *beyond* history; it is cosmological and metaphysical, not merely *historical*; and, while this statement can somehow be made of all of Christ's mysteries, it is more absolutely true of this one because this Mystery is *entirely antecedent* to history, and history itself depends upon it. Such an outlook thoroughly vanquishes the historicism that is one of the constitutive elements of Catholic Modernism. Historicism holds that social and cultural phenomena are determined by history, and the Modernists subjected Catholic doctrine to this false principle so that doctrine was shaped and determined by evolutionist historical processes. No, reality is quite the other way round: History was shaped and determined by this central Christian Mystery.

The second implication I will draw flows from the first, and it pertains to *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, a doctrine of the Church that I believe makes more sense, or, if you will, "fits better" into the economy of Christ's Absolute Primacy. Let me say here that the so-called Thomist position is certainly compatible with Catholic doctrine, and I would not want to say or even imply otherwise, for that would usurp the role of the ecclesiastical Magisterium. What I am saying is that, as a theological synthesis of revealed truth, the Scotist position of

Christ's Absolute Primacy provides us with a superior edifice into which this dogma fits.

In order to make sense of this sweeping declaration, let me cite a passage from the works of Saint Paul:

To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things. (Eph. 3:8-9)

The Scotist authors interpret this "mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God" as the eternal plan for the Incarnation to happen and Jesus Christ to exist as the supreme Glorifier of the Triune God. According to the Jesuit Biblical scholar, Père Ferdinand Prat and his theologian confrere, Father Emile Mersch, this Mystery is the plan to save all men without distinction of race by identifying them all with His well-beloved Son in the unity of the Mystical Body. But this is not an either-or matter. I believe that "the Mystery" is both of those things, and that they are of a piece: It is the predestination of Jesus Christ as our Head and of us as His members in the Mystical Body, the Catholic Church, which Saint Augustine aptly referred to as "the Whole Christ." Again, we "are Christ's; and Christ is God's." If we look at the Biblical texts cited by Blessed John Duns Scotus and his disciples, we see in several of them the predestination not only of Jesus Christ as antecedent to the fall and sin, but also of us, His mystical members. We also see in these passages explicit or implicit affirmations of the doctrine we defend.

Let's begin with a look at Romans 8:29, giving it a slightly broader context with the two verses that enclose it:

And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints. **For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren.** And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

The Scotists provide a long list of Fathers of the Church who said that it is Christ *as Man* who is the firstborn. Firstborn not only in eternity, but in creation — firstborn not chronologically, but by way of *intention*, because, as they properly reason, using a famous passage from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *that which is first in intention is last in execution*; or, as Blessed John reformulated it for his purposes, "everyone who wills in an orderly manner, wills first the end, then more immediately those things which are closer to the end." But note that this passage from Romans 8 — which does not mention sin at all — speaks not only of Christ as the firstborn, but of

us as His brethren, who are foreknown and predestined to be “made conformable to his image.” As Father Maximilian Dean, a Franciscan author, notes in his book, *A Primer on the Absolute Primacy of Christ* (p. 57),

Based on this passage of St. Paul, what is the divine intention? “For those whom He has foreknown He has also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.” (Rom. 8:29). Before God creates, calls, justifies, and glorifies His saints, He predestines them to be “conformed to the image of His Son.” This necessarily means that God predestined and foresaw Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, first in His plan. The sacred humanity of Christ is predestined to grace and glory *and the saints are predestined in Him*.

Would it surprise you that many approved authors, including Fathers and Doctors of the Church, have connected this verse to the sacrament of Baptism? Here is Saint Gregory of Nyssa, who cites the circumstances of Our Lord’s Baptism in the Jordan:

Again, He becomes “the first-born among many brethren,” Who is born before us by **the new birth of regeneration in water**, for the travail whereof the hovering of

“The weight of this Mystery is in history, but also beyond history”

the Dove was the midwife, whereby He makes those who share with Him in the like birth to be His own brethren, and becomes **the first-born of those who after Him are born of water and of the Spirit**.... (Gregory of Nyssa, “Gregory of Nyssa against Eunomius,” in *Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, Etc.*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. William Moore et al., vol. 5, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series [New York: Christian Literature Company, 1893], 158.)

And here is Saint John Chrysostom:

Ver. 29. “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son.” See what superb honor! for what the Only-begotten was by Nature, this they also have become by grace. And still he was not satisfied with this calling of them conformed thereto, but even adds another point, “that He might be the first-born.” And even here he does not come to a pause, but again after this he proceeds to mention another point, “Among many brethren.” So wishing to use all means of setting the relationship in a clear light. **Now all these things you are to take as said of the Incarnation. For according to the Godhead He is Only-begotten.** See, what

great things He hath given unto us! Doubt not then about the future. ... Ver. 30. “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified.” **Now He justified them by the regeneration of the laver.** “And whom He justified, them He also glorified” by the gift, by the adoption. (John Chrysostom, “Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans,” in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. B. Morris, W. H. Simcox, and George B. Stevens, vol. 11, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series [New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889], 453.)

“The regeneration of the laver,” is a reference to Titus 3:5, and clearly refers to the sacrament of Baptism, as Catholic authors, ancient and modern, recognize.

Saint John Damascene also applies this text to Baptism:

And He is called First-born among many brethren, for although being Only-begotten, He was also born of a mother. Since, indeed, He participated just as we ourselves do in blood and flesh and became man, **while we too through Him became sons of God, being adopted through the baptism**, He Who is by nature Son of God became first-born amongst us who were made by adoption and grace sons of God, and stand to Him in the relation of brothers. Wherefore He said, I ascend unto My Father and your Father. He did not say “our Father,” but “My Father,” clearly in the sense of Father by nature, and “your Father,” in the sense of Father by grace. (John Damascene, “An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” in *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 9b, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series [New York: Christian Literature Company, 1899], 77.)

The U.S. Bishops’ own online Bible commentary has this to say:

Image: while man and woman were originally created in God’s image (Gn 1:26–27), **it is through baptism into Christ, the image of God** (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), **that we are renewed according to the image of the Creator** (Col 3:10).

This list of Fathers who applied Romans 8:29-30 to Baptism could be augmented.

Not to put too fine a point on it, and certainly not to sound more erudite than I am, let me point out that the Greek word for “called” in this passage — ἐκάλεισεν (*ekálesen*) — is the basis for the word ἐκκλησία (*ekklésia*), which is the Greek New Testament word for “Church” — i.e., the society of those who

are “called out” (the literal meaning of ἐκκλησία) of the world by the baptismal vocation to holiness.

Father Prat says this of the word used in Romans 8:30:

We know that for the Apostle vocation (κλήσις) is always the efficient call to faith. The *called* (κλητοί) are those who have really responded to the call of God. It is, therefore, almost a synonym for Christians, but with an allusion to divine favor. (*The Theology of Saint Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 241)

In other words, those whom God foreknew and predestined in Christ are efficaciously called to conformity to His image, and incorporated into His Body, the Church.

In my previous conference talk, I explored other scriptural passages that Blessed John Duns Scotus used to prove the Absolute Primacy, i.e., that Our Lord Jesus Christ was predestined from all eternity antecedent to God’s foreseeing the fall of man, in such wise that the Incarnation, God’s greatest work in creation, was in no way occasioned by or conditioned upon sin. These passages include Ephesians 1:3-10 (the famous Christological hymn) and Colossians 1:15-20, both of which have ecclesiastical ramifications flowing from their Christology.

For now, though, I would like to conclude with a thought from the above-cited Father Maximilian Dean’s *A Primer on the Absolute Primacy of Christ* (p. 94), who distills his own thoughts on these Pauline passages — as enlightened by the sublime doctrine of Blessed John Duns Scotus — in the following terse synthesis:

The absolute primacy of Jesus Christ underscores the centrality of Christ in the whole created universe. Creation is fundamentally christocentric. This means that all rational, free creatures find their reason for existence in Him alone; either they live for Him or die without Him, and this forever — Heaven or Hell. In a word, all the elect, angels and saints, are predestined in Him before the foundations of the world as members of His Mystical Body, the Church. Christ is the Head; we are His members.

Is this not a lofty and profound demolition of the heresy of indifferentism? Is it any wonder that Father Feeney should have considered himself a “Franciscan” on this issue of the Absolute Primacy of Christ — given its powerful implications for our Crusade? ■

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.



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Sr. Marie Gabrielle, M.I.C.M.

CONVENT CORNER

DON'T JUST SAY IT: SAVOR IT

Our Lady is *such* a good Mother. She knows we want to become saints. She knows that if we are not proactively doing something towards that end, we feel as though nothing is being done. So She gives us something to do.

Pray the Rosary.

“You do not know what to do to convert those Albigensians? Here, Dominic — pray the Rosary.” “You do not know what to do to help procure peace for the world, the conversion of poor sinners, and grace for the Holy Father? Here, little Jacinta — pray the Rosary.” “You do not know what to do to go to Heaven? Here, Francesco — pray many Rosaries.” “You do not know what to do to convert your spouse, your child, your parent? Here,” Our Lady says lovingly to each one of us, “pray the Rosary.”

“But,” you might counter, “I already say the Rosary. Nothing is changing.”

Yet. If we are serious about drawing down truckloads of graces on ourselves and our loved ones through this incomparable prayer, we might do better not to just *say* the Rosary but to truly *savor* it; that is, strive to appreciate the very design of the Rosary, along with its importance, power, and convenience.

Made in China Heaven

First of all, the Rosary is a flawlessly fashioned prayer, hand-tailored by our Blessed Mother to meet the needs of Her children in every circumstance. We should appreciate that, as a vocal prayer, it may be said in common with others, so that the spouses, families, and societies that pray together *stay together*. Let us appreciate that, as a mental prayer, it may be said interiorly, thus fostering the intimate union of our hearts with God's. In its mysteries, Mary's Rosary connects the faithful with liturgical prayer of Holy Mother Church. Finally, we should value its various constituent parts: the *Ave* (so beautiful!), the *Pater Noster* (so profound!), the *Gloria* (so exalted!), and the Fatima Prayer (so relevant!).

Remember the Austrians

Next, we are enriched with even deeper insights when we set about savoring the *importance* of the Rosary. On the natural level, the repetitiveness of the Rosary is highly therapeutic. I once met a gentleman while out doing our missionary work who started trying to sell me on the calming, psychological benefits of saying, “Ommm.” When I found out the poor fellow was a lapsed Catholic, I chided him with a cheerful, “Don't be silly. Reciting the Hail Mary does all that for you and worlds more besides!”

We could speak also of the Rosary's historical importance, such as in the well-known victory of Lepanto and the miraculous withdrawal of the communists from Austria in 1955.

But even if none of these points existed, the mere fact that the Queen of Heaven's constant refrain for the last 800 years has been “Pray the Rosary, pray the Rosary, pray the Rosary” should at least be enough to make us ask ourselves, “Why, dear Mother? Why is such an ancient prayer of such current significance?” “Because it is so *powerful*, my child,” we can almost hear Her replying.

Power to Please, Power to Protect

Ah, Catholics, let us savor the *power* of the Virgin's Rosary.

Do we truly love Our Lady? Do we genuinely wish to please Her? She told St. Mechtilde: “I want you to know that no one can please me more than by saying the salutation which the Most Adorable Trinity sent to me, and by which He raised me to the dignity of the Mother of God.” “The Hail Mary,” St. Louis Marie de Montfort tells us, “is a chaste and loving kiss which we give to Mary; a vermilion rose we present to Her; a precious pearl we offer to Her.”

Do we honestly want to become holy? Sr. Lucia of Fatima assures us that “with the Holy Rosary we will sanctify ourselves.” And again we learn from St. Louis Marie: “The Hail Mary is a blessed dew that falls from Heaven upon the souls of the predestinate. It gives them a marvelous spiritual fertility so that they can grow in all the virtues. The more the garden of the soul is watered by this prayer, the more enlightened one's intellect becomes, the more zealous his heart, and the stronger his armor against his spiritual enemies.”

Do we really want to save souls, snatch them away from the devils who are hell-bent on destroying them? Pope Adrian VI says that “the Rosary is the scourge of the devil.” St. Louis Marie says, “The Hail Mary, said with attention, devotion, and modesty, is...the enemy of the devil which puts him to flight and the hammer which crushes him.”

No Problem Too Great

Do we crave the assurance that your prayers will be answered for any and every intention dear to our hearts? St. Bernadette promises us, “You will never pray the Rosary in vain.” Our Lady Herself gave us Her word that *we shall obtain all we ask of Her by the recitation of this prayer*.

The Rosary is every bit as powerful today as it has been for the last eight centuries. Actually, according to Ven. Lucia do Santos — more so.

The Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary, to such

an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, temporal or especially spiritual, in the personal lives of each one of us, of our families, of the families of the world or of religious communities, or even of the lives of peoples and nations, that cannot be solved by the recitation of the Rosary. There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary.

No matter how many times we hear this quote, it should always strike us as spectacularly encouraging. *There is no problem*, Catholics, the Rosary cannot solve. Would that we really believed this!

Satisfaction Guaranteed

Finally, we should savor the fact that the tremendous power of this prayer should be so *convenient*, so unspeakably accessible to us. In a world cursed with constant motion and busyness, the Rosary is not only short, but segmentable! One decade takes three minutes. The words are easy; any child can learn them (indeed, every child *should* learn them). Think about that. Our Lady could have attached Her power to anything She wished — bread-and-water fasts, pious pilgrimages, excessively generous

donations to needy organizations such as Saint Benedict Center. But no. For three minutes a day, prayed while walking your dog, driving to work, on your coffee break, kneeling by your bedside in the evening, She *promised* to grant whatever you ask.

How like a Mother to make things so *easy* for Her children — even at the risk of them taking it for granted.

But let us not be the ones who do that. Let us, for the love of Her Immaculate Heart, out of compassion for Her sorrows, and in reparation for those who should be heeding Her maternal admonitions far more than they do — let *us*, at least, not just *say* the Rosary but *savor it*.

May we recommend something to help you savor the Holy Rosary? Here it is: *The Liturgical Rosary*, by The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. ■

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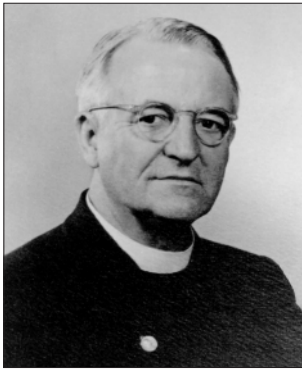


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FOUNDER'S COLUMN

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

Editor: This is taken from *Fish On Friday*

From Dorothy Burke

Dear Rev. Father:

Father Leonard Feeney, MICM

I wonder would you be willing to read this letter and tell me what you think. I have been

so disconsolate for the past two weeks I do not know what to do. I guess it's just my vanity which is a foolish thing for a girl to have at my age, being, well, to be honest, forty-two, which is easier to admit in a letter than when I am talking with people. Sometimes I don't look forty-two, at least so my brother Eddie says, and the fellows who come to play poker with him at our house after supper says Eddie is right.

One of the fellows who plays poker with Eddie and who wins most of the big pots in the game says, "Eddie, Dorothy don't look a day over thirty-five or six." And Eddie replies, "You'll have to bid a little higher than that to get the old lady's age," and I think that that's what started the fellows who plays poker calling me "the old lady," though never to my face, but only when I am in the kitchen making club sandwiches for the boys and not supposed to hear.

It didn't hurt me so much to be called "the old lady" by the boys if they started it, but Eddie started it just because he has so darn much blah. I told Eddie that if he didn't have so darn much blah he would make more money playing poker. Every time he has a good hand you can tell it by his blah and the way he twitches his cigar, and all the fellows are wise and pass. And that's why whenever Eddie wins a pot there's nothing to win because nobody raises him. When Eddie bids and starts blahing all the fellows know he has a good hand and all pass.

I know it doesn't sound right for a lady like me to be knowing so much about poker but I can't help it as the fellows come every night and play and you get so tired of the radio it sort of whiles the time away to look in at the game and find out how much Eddie is losing, and he is always losing on account of having so much blah and giving his hand away,

Once or twice the fellows made me sit in and play a hand while Eddie went out to the store to buy some ginger ale which I always serve to the boys before leaving, and every time I sat in for Eddie I won. I think the reason I won was because one of the fellows named Mr. Devins, who is quiet and who looks at me sometimes in the strangest way, backed out and let me win the pot just to make me feel happy,

The boys refer to me sometimes as the Queen of Hearts, that is when I am in the room, but when I am out of the room getting sandwiches and ginger ale ready it's always "the old lady," all except Mr. Devins, who calls me the

Queen of Hearts even when I ain't there to hear him. I never heard Mr. Devins call me "the old lady."

Mr. Devins looks so sad even when he is winning on account of being a bachelor, although the boys says his wife left him and he is paying alimony, and that's why they hate to lose to him on account of having to pay somebody else's alimony. In fact the boys have got into the habit of calling the chips they put up alimony, and they'll say, "There's lots of alimony in this pile, boys," and this is all on account of Mr. Devins, who never says anything about his past life, and who never refers to the chips as alimony and never calls me "the old lady," but always the Queen of Hearts.

The boys got a great laugh out of my knowing so much about poker one night when Eddie went out in the kitchen to get the ginger ale. Eddie says, "It's time to pour out the ginger ale, Dorothy! Ain't you got any openers?" Eddie of course meant the openers for the ginger ale bottles, but I said, so the boys could hear me, "Why don't you get a pair of Jacks? Ain't they openers?" Because in poker you have to have higher than a pair of tens to open the bid, and you have to show your openers, and Mr. Devins was the first to get on to the joke and laughed for the longest time. And the other fellows all laughed too when they got on to the joke, and Mr. Devins kept on laughing so much he lost four dollars in the next two pots on account of being distracted from his cards by my joke. And the fellows says, "The Queen of Hearts is a witty old girl, isn't she?" And Mr. Devins spoke up and says, "Yes, the Queen of Hearts is a witty lady," which was a much sweeter way of putting it than saying "the old girl," but that is just like Mr. Devins, who is a perfect gentleman, and how he got in with the gang Eddie travels around with is more than I know, because, although they are gentlemen in a way, being good fellows at heart, they are not perfect gentlemen. Mr. Devins is a perfect gentleman.

My brother Eddie is a bachelor and I keep house for him, and that is why I suppose I never married, having Eddie on my hands, as he is an awful baby even though he tries to be a hard guy. Eddie is really an awful baby because we had a white dog, a collie that Eddie bought, and when the dog died last May Eddie cried. And I think it is a good sign when a man cries as it shows that there is some good in him. And I was going to tell the boys about Eddie crying over the dog, just to let them know that there is something gentle in Eddie's nature, only when I started to tell about the dog dying before the boys Eddie says: "It's a good thing. He was a lousy little cur anyhow!" and he looked at me as though he was going to kill me if I said another word, no matter what it was.

And so I says, "Yes, the dog is dead," and began to cry myself. And all the fellows says, "Gee, that's tough, Dorothy," all except Mr. Devins, who said, "I'm so sorry!" And Eddie says,

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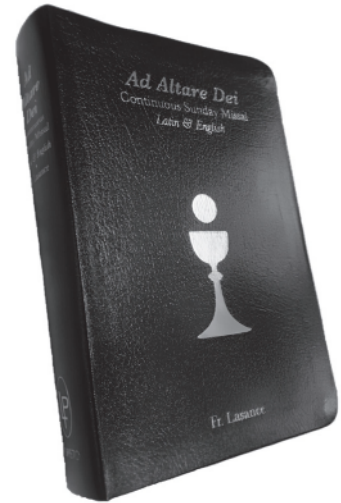
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“Well, what the blankety-blank are you boohooing about?” bursting into profanity at me. And the fellows think Eddie is much harder than he is.

And the next day Eddie bought me a canary bird and that night when the boys came in to play poker they said, “Oh, ho, a new bird, eh?” and Eddie says, “Yes, I had to get her something to keep her mouth shut!”

And that night when the boys left I went in and knelt down by Eddie’s bed and says, “Eddie, why didn’t you buy another dog?” and Eddie says, “There’ll be no more dogs now that Snuff is dead. No more. No more,” and he buried his head in the pillow. And Eddie keeps the picture of Snuff, the white dog we used to have, on his dresser behind our mother’s picture. Only the fellows don’t know that.

Mr. Devins is always so sad. If a fellow who wins as much money playing poker as he does is still sad there must be some tragedy in his life, only you can be sure Mr. Devins would never tell you what it was. And Mr. Devins looks at me sometimes for the longest time while one of the boys is shuffling the cards, and he looks at me so long I have to look away or lower my eyes, although the boys never suspect Mr. Devins of looking at me, but think he’s only trying to dope out how much alimony he’s winning.

And Mr. Devins is always so well dressed. All the boys dress well except Eddie, who comes out in his suspenders just to show it’s his house and not theirs, but they dress flashy and they wear socks that look like cheap wallpaper, but Mr. Devins always dresses to the king’s taste and not with wallpaper socks. And he is always neatly shaved and never needs a haircut, and some of the other fellows always needs a haircut and even a shave, and when a man doesn’t shave he always keeps rubbing his beard when he plays poker, and it makes a disagreeable, swishy sound like trying to shuffle a sticky pack of cards, and that annoys me more than the smell of the fellows’ black cigars which I like to smell.

And when fellows play poker they sometimes get very intense and sometimes don’t speak for a long time, and all you can hear is the clicking of the chips, and the room gets so still you can hear the fellows breathing one by one, and one of the fellows has a habit of grinding his toe inside his shoe, and you can hear every little noise in the room you otherwise wouldn’t notice. And maybe I ain’t glad when those tense moments are over and the hand is won and the men talk and laugh again and drown out the little noises that you hear only when they get intense.

Because when the men get intense that’s when Mr. Devins’s eyes get big and look at me in the strange way, and you’d think I was one of the cards, he stares at me so when the game gets intense and the clock begins to tick and you hear the fellows breathing and Eddie squidges his cigar in his teeth and the fellow who churns his toe inside his shoe begins to do it.

And last Thursday an awful calamity happened, at least for Eddie, and I was all to blame. There was about fourteen dollars on the table, which is one of the biggest pots the boys ever play for, and the boys were all keyed up over it, all except Mr. Devins, who acts the same whether he wins or loses, though he generally wins.

I was sitting behind Mr. Devins and watching his draw. One of the fellows, named Jimmy Hutch, opened it and Eddie stayed in and so did all the other fellows, because the pot was so big. And Mr. Devins held four hearts, Ace, King, Jack, and ten, and he discarded the four of spades and drew one card, trying for a Royal Straight Flush in hearts, which is the highest thing you can get in poker.

Jimmy Hutch called for three cards, showing he had a pair to start with and nothing else. Eddie called for two cards, meaning he must probably have three of a kind. The other boys called for either four or five cards, and Mr. Devins called for one. It was one of those times when the boys was terribly intense and all the little noises in the room began to start up again on account of the awful silence. The clock began to tick, and the little bird in the cage could be heard twitching his feet, and you could hear Eddie giving little chews on his cigar, and all the boys began to breathe out loud, and the toe of one of the fellows that he crunches inside his shoe was crunching away, and everybody’s perspiration was on their forehead, and I thought I would have to scream from nervous excitement, but I knew that if I even coughed the boys would go into hysterics.

And one of the fellows said, “Oh, Rats!” out loud, which doesn’t mean a thing in poker, because maybe he was trying to bluff it that he didn’t draw anything so the others would stay with him on the bid. And then Mr. Devins, whose hand I was watching, reaches for his one card. And he turned it over, slowly, slowly, and it was a Queen! Only it wasn’t the Queen of Hearts, it was the Queen of Spades, and my nerves seemed to give way on me, and I said, “Oh, Mr. Devins, I’m so sorry!”

And when I said, “Mr. Devins, I’m so sorry,” the awfulest hush came over the poker game I ever heard, and the boys turned white and glared at me, because nobody who is watching the game is ever, ever supposed to speak during the time of play. And Eddie just looked at me as though I had run a knife through the heart of every man at the table. And the boys just sat there holding their cards and staring at me, and I thought the room had turned into a furnace in Hell; and then I turned cold and the blood ran out of my fingers and I would have shrieked and fell into a faint with all the boys staring at me if Mr. Devins hadn’t said, “Your bid, Eddie.” ... ▪

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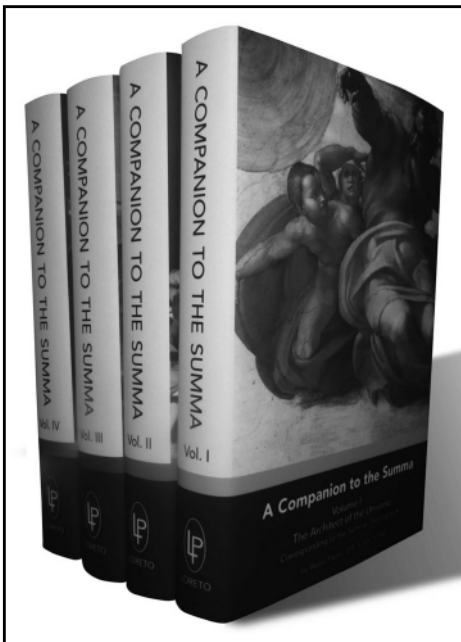


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Charles Colombe

MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

Although in the buildup to Halloween one may get tired of hearing from various sources that “the veil between the worlds is very thin this time of year,” in a certain sense it definitely feels that way in the Autumn. All Hallowtide, the triduum comprising Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls leads immediately

into the Octave of All Saints, which even in the New Calendar exists as a period when plenary indulgences may be gained by visiting cemeteries. The entire month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls — something echoed in Catholic folklores as remote from each other as the French Canadian and the medieval Estonian. Then there is the modern cultus of Great War remembrance and the Unknown Soldier, which starting in 1918 remembering the horde of dead on all sides in that and subsequent wars — with the wearing of particular flowers (red poppies in the Anglosphere, blue cornflowers in Francophonie, the forget-me-not in Germany, and the edelweiss in what were the Austro-Hungarian lands) in commemoration.

It is certainly true that as we get older, the number of our loved ones — family and friends — among the departed increases dramatically, just as the moment when we ourselves must join them draws closer. The Church, of course, in all her various rites, provides for the souls of her children, both as they are dying and if ensconced in Purgatory. The Last Rites and Apostolic Blessing, of course, are the most obvious for those leaving this world, as well as the Litany for the dying and other such prayers. The Requiem Mass, with its black vestments and Dies Irae are stark reminders of reality; but especially comforting are the “Mind” Masses, Gregorian Masses, Privileged Altars, and such paraliturgical practises as the “Daily Pilgrimage to Purgatory” made popular by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart — whose church in Rome, Sacre Cuore del Suffragio, coincidentally hosts the Purgatory Museum. November is a good time for cultivating such devotions in our own prayer life.

The evidence of such returnees from Purgatory is at the centre of Catholic ghost lore, as exemplified by Sir Shane Leslie’s *Ghost Book* and such stories as *West Virginia’s Wizard Clip*. Indeed, traditional Catholic teaching on ghosts — to the degree there is any — from St. Augustine to the present would first indicate two divisions in “Hauntings.” The first is where an image of a deceased person does the same thing over and over, with no interaction with the astonished viewer. There seems to be no intelligence present. The other is where there does seem to be something to interact with. This latter in turn fell into three categories: a) demons masquerading as the dead (which is why the Church forbids her children to attend seances, use Ouija boards, and

so forth); b) damned souls, who mean no good by the living — least of all those whom they loved in this life; and c) the afore-mentioned souls from Purgatory. In a sense, one might think of apparitions of the Saints as ghosts — but this is not true of Our Lady, who currently has the glorified body she has had since her Assumption into Heaven.

In the Byzantine Calendar, November 8 is the feast of St. Michael and all the Angels; turning our thoughts to the Blessed Mother, Queen of the Angels, and to All the Saints, must make us think of the other inhabitants of Heaven — the Angels. In the Latin Rite, of course, Michaelmas on September 29 is the big feast, and the Guardian Angels have one (although in the traditional calendar, there is a second for St. Michael, Ss. Gabriel and Raphael have their own, as did the Guardian Angels of various countries). But they are with us constantly. The Nine Choirs both praise God at all moments as the company of Heaven, assist Him in the governance of the Universe, and — as regards Guardian Angels — assist individuals, communities, and institutions as guides and protectors. Cultivating devotions to the Holy Angels is also a wise move in November.

The feast of All Saints ushers in the month of course, and while our eyes are Heavenward, we should remember and invoke them — those canonised and otherwise. In the new calendar the first days of November are celebrated by various religious orders (and by England and Wales on the same day, although the two countries commemorate their own batch of the holy separately) all the Saints of that order or country. These older brothers of ours are far more than just examples

“The veil between the worlds is indeed thin this time of year”

and intercessors; they are those with whom, alongside God, His Mother, and the Angels, we wish one day to dwell in all Eternity. Forging a relationship on this Earth with those who catch our particular fancy — and be assured that if you are interested in them, they are in you — is a foretaste of what we hope to achieve. As Dom Guéranger quoted from St. Cyprian in his treatment of November 8: “Strangers as we are and pilgrims on the earth, let us fix our hearts and our thoughts on the day which will give to each of us a home, and restore us to Paradise. Who, that is on a voyage, would not hasten to return to his country! Who, that is on the way home, would not eagerly desire a favorable wind, that he might the sooner embrace his dear ones! Parents, brothers, children, friends in multitudes impatiently await us in our heavenly fatherland; blessed crowd! already secure of their own eternal happiness, they are solicitous about our salvation. What joy for them and for us, when at length we see them and they may embrace us!”

But, of course, while we still linger upon the Earth, the demons and our fallen natures shall continue to tempt us — and the nearness of the unseen in this month will remind us of the spiritual evil which lurks all around us. Theologians have argued about the reality of the vampires, werewolves, and witches of folklore for centuries, even as they have debated since St. Jerome about what for want of better words, we would call elves or fairies. But what is certain is that what we can see is like the tip of an iceberg. To help guide us through this maze of unseen enemies and allies, the Church has given us the sacramentals — Holy Water; St. Benedict, Miraculous, and other Medals; the various scapulars, rosaries, and chaplets; and many other weapons in her spiritual arsenal. A great many of these were delivered to different holy person by apparitions of Our Lord, Our Lady,

of different Saints. These too, we can use November to learn about and employ.

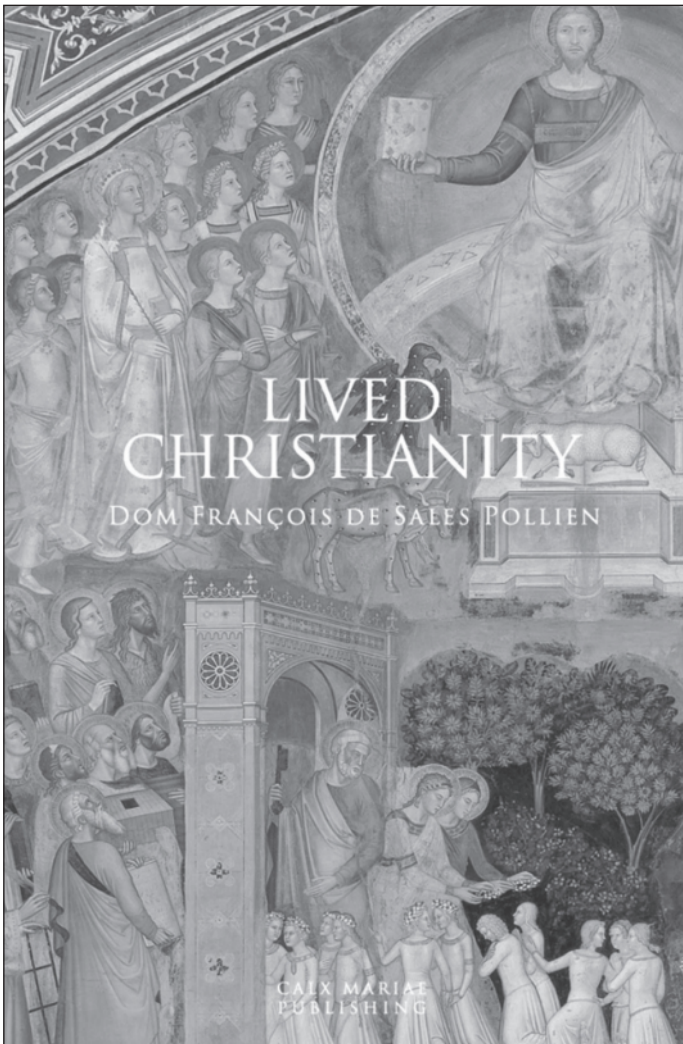
At this strange and magical time, when the Year is visibly dying around us, let us prepare for Advent and the looming coming of Our Redeemer at Christmas by trying to supernaturalise our perceptions. Let us redouble our devotions, attend the Sacraments as frequently as we can, and attempt to submit our Will to God's. The veil between the worlds is indeed thin this time of year — but it is that which lies between us and Heaven which we must seek to break through! ■

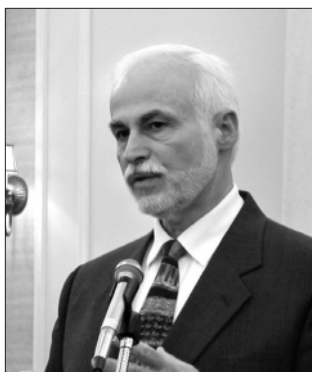
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Brother Lawrence, M.I.C.M., Tert.

THE AXIOMS OF ALL THOUGHT

For those who took geometry in high school, you probably recall that, at the start of the year, you had to memorize a series of *axioms*, ideas that were so general they were unable to be proved by logical means. In fact, all geometric proofs begin with one or more of these axioms, or at least assumed them to be true. For example, *the whole is greater than its part* or *all right angles are equal to one another*. These notions are technically unable to be proved, but because there is nothing which contradicts them and they apply to all cases in our experience, they are assumed to be true. Philosophy also has several such general notions that cannot be proved, but are obviously true to anyone with common sense. In fact, one of the goals of philosophy is to ferret out the axioms that guide our thinking, the major premises from which stem our thoughts, and in turn, influence or guide our actions.

The most fundamental axiom is the *Fact of Knowledge*. Without knowledge, no thinking can occur. There is no way to prove that knowledge exists, and all attempts to do so have been unsuccessful. We simply have to accept the fact. Without that simple acceptance, it is impossible to move forward in our thinking. The modern philosophers who have denied or questioned this fact have given us a world in which critique and doubt are the order of the day, and moral behavior is simply a figment of an individual's imagination.

Another is the *Principle of Contradiction*, which simply says a thing cannot be and not be at the same time in the same respect. This is the basis of all sound thinking. For example, when I say "all men are mortal," it means just that--all men who have ever lived or ever will live are mortal. If even one human being is found to live forever, not to die, then the statement would be false. Either all men are mortal, or they are not all mortal, and instead, just some men are mortal. Hegel tried to turn this axiom on its head with his proposal of "thesis, antithesis, synthesis," that a thing and its opposite somehow come together, and by some mystical and magical process, become something new, a synthesis of the two opposites. This error was adopted by Karl Marx and became the basis for the continual upheavals of Communism.

From actual existence the possibility of existence is validly inferred. This seems almost painfully obvious, but it is merely the statement of something that is accepted but cannot be proved per se. And behind this axiom is another: that things actually exist and are not merely figments of our imaginations or dreams. This most fundamental axiom is not accepted by the modern Idealists such as Immanuel Kant.

Another axiom, *nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses*, keeps us in touch with reality. When humans are born they are *tabula rasa*, meaning like blackboards all erased,

clean slates. Everything they learn comes through the senses, even their abstract thoughts, which arise from their various sense images.

The intellect is of universals, the senses are of particulars reassures us that animals, who have only sense activity, are unable to think and do not have intellects.

Following upon this, though not a formal axiom of philosophy is *Speech*. Without the ability to communicate knowledge--ideas, facts, judgments--human interaction is not possible. Certainly some sort of communication is always there--grunts, shoves, slaps, and such like--but not the type of communication we all take for granted and is not available to any other living creature. *The fact of knowledge*, in particular intellectual knowledge, would be severely curtailed if it could not be shared through speech.

There is no science of singulars. This notion is especially important in today's world, one that is filled with countless facts that come at us from all directions--the media, public education, the Internet, and social media, to name a few. Facts are singular. They do not provide guidance or principles of thought, and they certainly do not give us science of any kind. *Science* is defined by Brother Francis as "the systematic organization of facts and truths around what is already known about a thing in its causes."

Against an established fact, you cannot argue. The true philosophers are realists. If there is a table in front of me, which I can see and touch, there is no argument against its existence. Even though a fact is not science, it is still a reality.

Nothing is the cause of itself. This is the basis for one of the proofs for the existence of God. Unfortunately, in the modern world, this has been ignored. In fact, the atheistic scientists are so desperate to eliminate God and explain the universe without a Creator that some, like Stephen Hawking, have asserted that the universe caused itself!

Another axiom that moderns have forgotten is *the cause is greater than the effect*. The Evolutionists assert just the opposite--out of chaos comes order, so they say. Things become more and more organized by chance action, and that they eventually develop into living beings, finally becoming human. This is

"Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses."

contrary to common sense and all good reason. *The corruption of one thing is the start of another* is another axiom that how what is called "macro Evolution" is not tenable. For a living species of ape to become human, it must die. Plain and simple.

Everyone holds axioms that guide their thinking, even though most people have never examined them, nor even considered them at all. Philosophy seeks to uncover these most basic ideas, those that are behind everything else, though they themselves are unable to be proved in the strict sense of the word. From time-

to-time, it is good for all of us to examine our major premises, our assumptions, our axioms. I'm not referring exclusively to those that are philosophical.

For example, in today's world, an increasing number of people hold the assumptions that there is no God and that there is no life beyond the present life on earth, and that they do not have eternal souls. If they should happen to believe there is a God and their souls are eternal, many hold that they will be magically transported to some sort of "heaven" when they die, whether or not they deserve it, whether or not they have earned it. These assumptions, or personal axioms, one could call it a *mind set* have a huge impact on their attitudes and actions, and on their opportunity to save their eternal souls.

On the other hand, practicing Catholics also have a mind set. It is one that presupposes a belief in a Triune God, in the Incarnation, and in His Church, one in which there are moral absolutes, and where it is assumed that truth is available and

can be discovered. Divine Revelation and the Apostle's Creed are accepted as true, as are Traditions and defined dogmas of the Catholic Church.

When we examine our own axioms, our postulates, our major premises,, those ideas which guide everything we think and do, if we find they are not Catholic, or if they resemble those of our worldly friends, coworkers and associates, maybe it is time to see which, if any, need to be reconsidered.¹ ■

1. For guidance on how to conduct a thorough and careful review of one's guiding principles, the reader is referred to Brother Francis's courses in philosophy. www.catholicism.org/complete-philosophy-set.html



Group photo of First, Second and Third Order Members at our 2024 SBC Conference.

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).

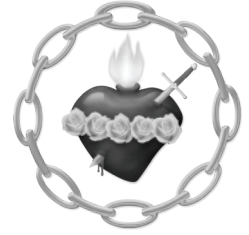
EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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:

- Save the date, our 2025 SBC Conference will be October 10 and 11.

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