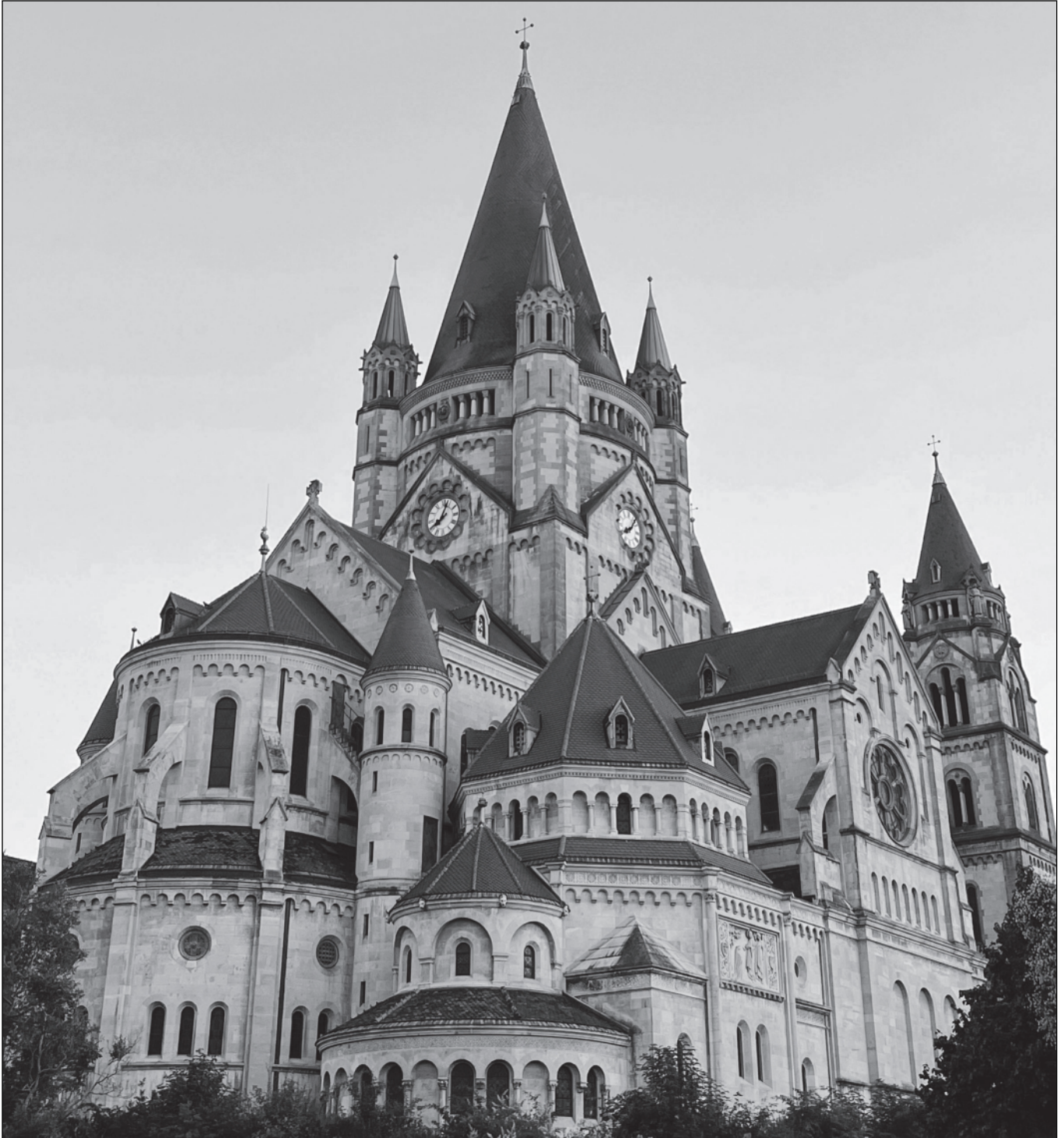
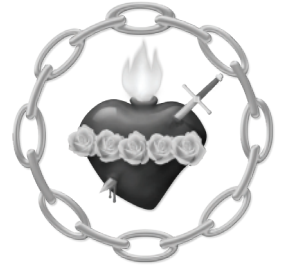


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

September/October 2024



Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Vienna, Austria



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

THE CULT OF THE BODY VS. THE RIGHTS OF GOD

By the time you read this, the Paris Summer Olympics will be over, and the numerous controversies it engendered will be lost in the news cycle, replaced by *the latest*, whatever that may be. But I ask you to stretch your memory way back to

July 26 and the much discussed opening ceremonies. We can draw some relevant lessons from the events.

A lot was said about the blasphemous mockery of the Last Supper featured in the four hours of pageantry that commenced the XXXIII Olympiad in France's capital. There are two points I would like to focus on, the first of which I read articulated succinctly by the Catholic philosopher, Dr. Edward Feser; the second point concerns the cult of the body, and I did not see anyone else writing about it.

Dr. Feser's statement is something that deserves repetition and amplification:

Liberalism has so rotted out minds that even many who are appalled by what happened in Paris frame it as a matter of offending *people*. No, it is about the evil of dishonoring *God*, and of undermining social and moral order, which requires being oriented to *God* above all.

This excellent comment reminds us that the rights of God come first. Implicit in that notion, for Catholics, is that "Christ is King!" is no mere slogan, but a statement of perennial — indeed, eternal — truth.

Many of the criticisms of the salacious sacrilege condemned it for being offensive to *Catholics*, or to *Christians*, without any mention of the objective offense to God. Some, in fact, objected to the very notion that Jesus would be offended. The argument of other commentators was that God is not so thin-skinned, the more "conservative" among them even noting that God is not "woke" — presumably because of the obvious truth that progressive folk have elevated being offended to a high art that they put on display as often as they can. Obviously, God is not a shrieking progressivist; that much, they have right.

All of this misses the point. Sin offends God. This is true of sin in general; but, of the particular sin of blasphemy, Saint Thomas approvingly cites a gloss on Isaias 18:2: "In comparison with blasphemy, every sin is slight" (*ST, IIa IIae*, Q. 13, A. 3, *sed contra*). So, while sin does not *harm* Him, it does offend His justice by failing to render to Him what is His due. Sin can only be said to "harm God" — as in, to cause *actual suffering* — if we keep in mind what theologians call "the communication of idioms" (*communicatio idiomatum*) and say that all the offenses of man against God truly and actually *hurt* Christ in His Passion, causing true

suffering and death to the Body He assumed as our Mediator. Otherwise, the Changeless One is utterly above being intrinsically harmed.; for, by virtue of the divine immutability, the Holy Trinity is absolutely impassible. But that is not contradicted by the assertion that "sin offends God."

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains this well:

The true malice of mortal sin consists in a conscious and voluntary transgression of the eternal law, and implies a contempt of the Divine will, a complete turning away from God, our true last end, and a preferring of some created thing to which we subject ourselves. **It is an offence offered to God, and an injury done Him; not that it effects any change in God, who is immutable by nature, but that the sinner by his act deprives God of the reverence and honor due Him: it is not any lack of malice on the sinner's part, but God's immutability that prevents Him from suffering.**

We can put it simply: Just as we cannot add to God's intrinsic glory by any good we do (including adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, petition, love, etc.), but can only add to His extrinsic glory; so too, neither can we wound God intrinsically, but only extrinsically detract from the glory He ought to receive. This we do by sinning against Him.

The idea that sin does not matter to God is contrary to the very nature of God. It would make God indifferent to good and evil. True, He can and does bring good out of evil, but that only proves the point: These things matter to Him much more than they matter to us. When Jesus drove out the money-changers from the Temple, the Apostles thought it a good thing and recalled the verse, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17; cf. Ps. 68:10). None of them shouted at Jesus, "*Hey c'mon!* God is bigger than all that!" as weak modern men do. It is our callousness and effeminacy that render us indifferent to sin and its effects, first and foremost, against the Divine Majesty. Our Catholic forebears thought differently; hence, Saint Thomas could write, "The theologian considers sin chiefly as an offense against God; and the moral philosopher, as something contrary to reason" (*ST, Ia IIae*, Q. 71, A. 6, ad 5).

We can go a bit deeper and recall a beautiful truth that is enshrined in an officially indulgenced prayer:

O Christ Jesus, I acknowledge Thee to be the King of the universe; **all that hath been made is created for Thee**. Exercise over me all Thy sovereign rights. ...

This prayer, composed by the Franciscan theologian, Père Chrysostome, O.F.M, was granted a plenary indulgence by the Supreme Apostolic Penitentiary in 1923, and was subsequently published in every edition of the *Raccolta* since 1929. I note in passing that the author of the prayer defended the

thesis of the absolute primacy of Jesus Christ, which includes the idea that the Incarnation would have occurred had sin not happened, and that creation itself took place *because of the Incarnation* — to give glory to Christ and through Him, to the Trinity — and not the other way round.

If we consider that Jesus Christ is the King of the Universe; that all that has been made is for Him; that He has universal dominion over the entire created order, and all for the glory of God; that He is good, and loving, and deserving of all honor, then detracting Him, *blaspheming* Him, can be seen for what it truly is: a disorder of the very worst kind in the heart of the cosmos itself. It is a calamity, a catastrophe, an outrage that makes most of what outrages us pale in comparison.

If more Catholics thought this way, we would not be where we are.

Surely, such reflections should make us strive for God's glory, including by having contrition for our offenses against the Divine Majesty and the glory of Christ; that is, we must be sorry for our own sins. These ideas are not weapons to

“Not with an hatred of malice, but
a zeal for the observance of God's
commandments”

aim at other people. But, any soul sufficiently grounded in these truths will indeed “take offense” against affronts to the glory of God and cry out with the Royal Psalmist, “Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated thee: and pine away because of thy enemies? I have hated them with a perfect hatred: and they are become enemies to me” (Ps. 138:21-22). I hasten to add, with Bishop Richard Challoner, that we are to “hate” God's enemies, “Not with an hatred of malice, but a zeal for the observance of God's commandments; which [King David] saw were despised by the wicked, who are to be considered enemies to God.” That same zeal is also manifest as the love of God and love of sinners, whose conversion we desire, for the sake of God.

Now, let us consider the cult of the body.

In his masterful *Iota Unum*, the Swiss-Italian Catholic philosopher, Romano Amerio, inveighs against the idolatrous cult of the body (Greek: σῶμα, *sōma*), which he calls “somaolatry.” He sees this idolatry under different aspects, including the disordered exultation of corporeal beauty, of bodily strength and athletic prowess, and the contemporaneous decline of the practice of corporeal penance in the Church. He treats this subject after considering the disordered notions of human sexuality that have invaded the Church.

If you have already read Chapter Ten of that book, entitled “Somaolatry and Penance” (227-244), then you would not be surprised that I thought of it in connection with the Olympic fiasco. Dr. Amerio explicitly mentions the modern Olympics:

Events at the 1972 Munich Olympics [which witnessed a terrorist attack] sharply contrasted with the worship of sport typical of the modern world and at least partly supported by the Church; they contrasted particularly with the the spirit of philanthropy and universal friendship which the Olympics are supposed to foster. Obsessive competition and national hatreds were in fact the dominant themes at the games, not philanthropy or humanity. In Baron Coubertin's original scheme, the Olympics were meant to be a competition between individuals, not states, but now contests and victories are seen as those of Russia, America, Italy, and so on. The shouting, whistling, or cheering crowds at the contests are divided and divisive. As for honest collaboration, eighteen judges were dismissed for having favored athletes of one side or another and many of the competitors were banned from the games for having used forbidden drugs and stimulants. (p. 234)

On the previous page, Amerio presented a gruesome litany of acts of violence, murder, and mayhem that occurred at national and international sporting events, all of which undermine the assertion that sporting events somehow “bring us all together.”

The ancients had a few things to say about the place of games and sports. Amerio writes,

I am well aware that the cultivation of personal strength and beauty in ancient times was one of the links that bound the Greek cities together in their amphictionsies, and that such qualities were celebrated at civic festivals. But these festivals involved the whole of Greek culture, and poets, historians, and playwrights were honored at them no less than winners of races and athletic contests; there are no Pindars among modern champions. What we call sporting prowess was only one rather conspicuous element at the ancient festivals. But even in ancient Greece, sporting ability was not much valued when separated from that cultural whole of which it was a part, and the mere pursuit of sports as such was despised by philosophers and ridiculed in comedies. [The author goes on to cite ancient authorities to prove this.] (p. 227)

Iota Unum laments the fact that the bodily pursuits of sport have been extracted from a larger whole, which can only cause harm to the very men and women these things are supposed to perfect:

The separation of these elements, the erection of bodily exercise into a special form of human activity and finally

its apotheosis, are all things that have happened in the last century [the Italian edition of the book was published in 1985]. Sport fills the lives of professional athletes, absorbs much of the energy and almost all the attention of the young, and has invaded the mentality of enormous masses of people for whom it is not exercise, but entertainment, as well as the object of fiercely competitive and combative instincts. (p. 228)

The author goes on to describe the growth of media that cover sports as a specialty, and the absurd, poetic language used by some to describe the most brutal forms of combat witnessed, e.g., in boxing. Excellence at such pursuits has been mistaken for genuine human achievement, which, to be authentic at even the natural level, must involve the perfection of man's highest faculties, the intellect and will. Amerio punctures a particularly inflated claim about the advantages of sports when he writes,

I note in passing that it is not true that bodily exercise of itself produces moral health. That had already been seen to be false in ancient times. Juvenal's dictum *mens sana in corpore sano* ["a healthy mind in a healthy body"] has in fact passed into common usage in a mutilated form that contradicts its real meaning. It does not in fact say that you will find a healthy mind in a healthy body, but rather that we ought to pray the gods to give us both: *Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano* ["We ought to pray that there be a healthy mind in a healthy body"]. (p. 230)

One last paragraph from the learned Dr. Amerio will do:

Sport does not of itself have anything to do with the perfecting of the human being or with his destiny, and is of no assistance in attaining either, since excellence in physical attainments is quite compatible with a weakening of the subordination of these lower powers to reason. It

is only the exercise of the will that confers any worth on the exercise of physical strength, inasmuch as an exercise of the will can increase the power of a man's reason and the extent of his moral freedom. One should not imagine there is any continuum between the physical and moral orders. There is a leap involved, that only the moral will can make. (p. 235)

Amerio is not completely opposed to sports, and speaks of it having a place in an integrated Christian life, but our dominant culture in America, in the West in general, and beyond has gotten it all wrong by blowing sports out of all proportion. Growing up in Dixie, and going to Louisiana State University, I witnessed a religious spectacle in the form of Southeastern Conference sports (yes, I was part of it, being in the band!). Too many other things were subordinated to sports, which were presented as having some sort of transcendental value far surpassing the actual merit of the endeavor. Aside from keeping many men in perpetual adolescence (recall Amerio referring to sports as "entertainment"), the modern *cultus* of sports has helped to invert our axiology, that is, how we measure the worth of things.

Because of this inversion and the lies that are part of it (e.g., "sports make you a better person," "sports build human fraternity and peace"), it absolutely does not surprise me that moral degenerates gyrating around in a blasphemous homoerotic parody of the sacred would be part of the festivities opening the Olympics. When He to whom all honor and glory are due has been dethroned from men's minds — and somatolatriy has helped to dethrone Him — we should expect such things. ■

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A PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH TO KNOW ONE'S VOCATION IN LIFE

Great St. Joseph, so docile to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, obtain for me the grace to know what state of life Divine Providence destines for me. Do not allow me to be deceived with regard to so important a choice, upon which depends my happiness in this world, and even my eternal salvation. Obtain for me that, being enlightened to know the Divine Will and being faithful in accomplishing it, I may embrace that state of life which God has destined for me and which will lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.



Sr. Mary Joseph, M.I.C.M.

CONVENT CORNER

HELPING CHILDREN TO TELL THE TRUTH

After working in a classroom for over twenty years, I think I'm finally getting the hang of a few things. One issue that used to come up frequently and which was very difficult for me to deal with was lying — I wanted my students to stop it. I struggled for a number of years, before discovering this bit of wisdom which has really proven to be a game changer: It is much easier and more effective to teach the habit of telling the truth than to try to stop the lying. Approaching things from this angle has made a tremendous difference, and I am very grateful to report that I no longer have the same trouble with my students lying. Of course it comes up, but it doesn't become an issue any more. When students come into my class in first grade, they usually learn how to meet my expectations for honesty by the time they reach second grade. Below are some specific strategies which may be helpful to others. And, although I have gained these insights while working with six and seven year olds, I believe many of these principles apply across a much broader age range.

We Cannot Give What We Do Not Possess

Effectiveness in teaching children to speak the truth will depend largely on the teacher's personal habit of speaking the truth. We might think that our own small (or big) faults against honesty are unknown to the little ones that we teach, but somehow they are able to smell a liar. You can tell children that the truth is important to you, and you can even think that this is really so, but, if deep down you don't actually appreciate the truth enough to pursue it yourself, they'll know. Intuition and keen perceptivity to nonverbal communication make youngsters superior to grown ups in picking up on the real message, beyond whatever we adults think we are communicating. We will only be able to teach others honesty to the extent that we ourselves are honest. It's that simple.

Getting the Facts Straight

As much as it seems perfectly reasonable to desire to get accurate information from children, it isn't necessarily possible. Sometimes when children are afraid, angry, when they really want something, or are otherwise emotionally involved, it can be quite difficult for them to give a straightforward account of the story, especially if it is going to be self-incriminating. Adults can make the mistake of insisting on getting to the bottom of things; examining witnesses, threatening, punishing, and even bluffing about already knowing who the guilty party is, because they think it's part of their duty to solve the mystery. Not only do such strategies not usually work, but the dogged determination to catch the liar seems to overemphasize the gravity of the matter. While there are certainly urgent situations which need to be handled accordingly, it is not every

situation. For myself, it has been a helpful outlook shift to acknowledge that I simply cannot always discover the truth. This is not to say I shouldn't try, but it is to say that trying is all I can do. I can't force it. Understanding this has led me to be more just with my students and less scary, which has gone a long way in building a rapport of trust and honesty.

Accusing

I used to accuse children when I was sure (or almost sure) they were lying. Again, this was not an effective way to encourage honesty. When someone is caught in a lie, it is a moment of extreme vulnerability. Nobody appreciates being humiliated or blamed, and while a child may need to be confronted about dishonesty, there are ways to do this besides directly accusing him. When a child sees — when he knows — that you genuinely love him and want to help him, a gentle manner and a few questions are much more effective than an accusation.

Fear — Not an Ally

The more I have stressed the loathsomeness of lying and the punishment awaiting those who commit such a crime, the more my students have been motivated to not get caught in a lie. Although fear of negative consequences and of displeasing others is a sign of a healthy conscience, too much fear is harmful to children as they are developing. Also, we grown ups can inadvertently intimidate and scare these dear little people into a fight or flight mode when we get too worked up or angry. This does not help them or us in the work of teaching honesty. My experience has shown that a calm and gentle manner will always be more effective in encouraging openness and trust than a heated temper.

Asking Direct Questions

It is difficult for children (for all of us) to admit our mistakes and faults. They are a source of shame and embarrassment, and we fear they will cause others to be disappointed in us. It is our task as adults to make it easier, not more difficult, for children to admit their blunders. When little Susie is asked "Did you leave this here?" "Did you tell him the answer?" or "Did you take her money?" it is almost like setting her up for a lie. If we ask boys and girls to own the humiliation of some misconduct and its attendant consequences in a single word, it is just as easy for them to choose the opposite word. Generally speaking, we will get a lot further if we avoid putting little ones on the spot. For example, when I find paper towels in the toilet, instead of asking each of the boys, "Did you do this?" I might take them all into the bathroom and explain to them, "Gentlemen, I know this sort of thing can happen. It's just an accident and nobody is in trouble. But if this happens again, please come tell me so I can take care of it. You don't want to reach in there to fish them out, and flushing paper towels can clog the plumbing so the toilet won't work." It seems like a subtle strategy, but it is definitely encouraging honesty and discouraging lies.

Equating Falsehoods with Lies

Sometimes children do not know how to express themselves, and they end up uttering falsehoods, which they do not intend to be lies. A classic example of this may come up when a child insists he isn't cheating, even though his answers clearly indicate otherwise. At a certain age a child understands that to look at someone else's page deliberately and copy his answers is cheating. However, when his eyes accidentally fall upon a classmate's answer and then he consequently decides to change his own answer, this does not register in his mind as cheating. If a student denies that he was cheating, his problem could be a lack of comprehension more than a lack of honesty. Experience in working with children has taught me to pause before jumping to conclusions. Is there room for a possible misunderstanding? Could the child have been trying to do something constructive and inadvertently broken the rules? If so, his denial of misconduct would be false, but not dishonest.

Tall Tales

Children don't necessarily understand the difference between fact and fiction, or at least it is not something that every child comprehends at the same age or to the same degree. A sanguine child of seven years may have a vivid imagination which makes his ideas seem similar to reality. In his eagerness to be a part of the conversation he may contribute an anecdote that he wishes were true without fully seeing that it isn't actually true. At a certain point I started taking time to explain these things to my students. "Sometimes we like to imagine or pretend we saw a bear, when we didn't really see one. If I ask, 'Has anyone ever seen a bear?' and you never have, but you would like to see one someday, then just tell me that. Say, 'Well, I've never seen one in real life, but I've seen one on TV, and I think it would be neat to see a live one.'" It isn't as though this explanation automatically puts an end to all tall tales, but it seems to help make children aware of the difference between fact and fiction. As obvious as that distinction may be to us adults, a child learning to think, reason, and speak sometimes needs to have it pointed out. Another way to handle tall tales is by gently turning the conversation to a different subject. Children do pick up on subtleties.

Being on the Same Team

One thing that has been tremendously helpful to me has been learning to see the situation from the child's point of view. If little Susie complains that Johnny kicked her, I try to assume a reasonable motive on Johnny's part. I ask him to explain what happened, and listen patiently and sympathetically. Sometimes I am surprised to find out that little Susie was provoking and antagonizing Johnny. The point here is not to make excuses for Johnny or to let him off, but rather to show him that I love him and understand where he is coming from. When he sees that I am not just trying to catch and punish all troublesome brats, he learns to trust me. 99% of the time he takes his punishment manfully because he knows it was given in justice and not rashly or angrily. It may take time, but Johnny will want to be friends with and tell the truth to an adult who knows that he is a good boy who needs help. This

can be hard to see when a child has an extensive collection of bad habits, but it's pretty important.

Assist Children to Articulate the Truth

Because it is hard for children to admit shameful deeds, it can be helpful for an adult to give them the words to say. If it looks like a child has broken his pencil because he lost his temper, we might suggest this to him: "When we get angry sometimes, our hands get tight and sometimes they break something. Do you think that is what happened with your pencil?" He might deny it. Perhaps there is some other explanation. But sometimes he will nod his head because you have successfully expressed what he didn't quite know how to say. Could this sort of thing turn into feeding a child convincing excuses? Maybe it could, but I have not had that problem. I have found that it helps in teaching them how to own up.

Praise Honesty

People, (even small ones,) want to be trusted. Sometimes I have had to admit to a child that I'm not sure if he is telling me the truth. They hate that. Stories can be a great way to give examples of real or fictitious children who tell the truth in difficult situations and who thereby win the confidence and trust of others. Praising children who admit their mistakes shows them that you genuinely appreciate their honesty. "Thank you for telling me," or "Thank you for being honest with me," are short but effective ways to encourage little ones to speak the truth.

Pray for Your Children

I save this for the end because if you take away nothing else, this is the most important tip. It seems easier for us to remember to pray for temporal things like money and material goods because we see and feel their absence more acutely. How many of us think to ask for such everlasting goods as honesty, justice, peace, love? The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, must be so delighted when we ask for precisely those things which He's been wanting to give us all along. Could there be any more straightforward or powerful means for helping your children to learn honesty, then by asking God to grant them an increase in that virtue? I can't think of any. Make this petition a regular one, and gradually, gently, the Sanctifier will apply the healing balm of truth to the wounds caused by lying, in our own hearts as well as our children's. ■





Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

THE VIRTUE OF PATRIOTISM

Editor: The following edited extract is taken from one of Brother Francis' Sunday talks. We are grateful again to Sister Anna Maria, from the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary community in Vienna, Ohio, for transcribing the lecture.

Patriotism — We love this country. We are grateful for being in this country. Some of us were born here; some of us are glad to have been brought here. No matter how we got here, as far as being able to work for the Faith, I don't know any country more favorable. As far as having people with good will that could at least be talked to about the Faith, I don't know where in the world you could find better folk than you do in this country.

I used to say to Father Leonard and to Sister Catherine, and they always agreed with me, that I don't know any other country in the world where we could have done what we did here. Of course, we had corrupt courts. Of course, occasionally, we had to deal with tyrannical men in power. Of course, we had lots of persecutions and injustices done to us, but substantially, tell me any other country where we could have gone on for forty years, affirming a most unpopular doctrine — and still be able to go on.

[Editor's Note: Today, as the political climate descends further and further in its commitment to exalt secularism and moral degeneracy, and the freedom to preach the truth in America seems about to be legally extinguished, I fear Voltaire's proscription for the ultimate utopian Masonic state, as outlined in his *Social Contract*, may soon come to pass: "Let him who says that there is no salvation outside the Church be cast out of the state." The political situation in America (as in Europe) has gotten a lot worse since Brother Francis said these things.]

Now don't take these liberties for granted. They are ours because there was some goodness, let it be just natural goodness, in some of the men who founded this country and gave it its ideals and its Constitution. We ought to thank God for that. That's true patriotism, and patriotism is part of the virtue of religion. The virtue of patriotism includes an active participation in whatever good we can support in the large society in which we live. We should support those running for office who are committed to protecting the just ideals found in the Constitution and to defending the country against subversion and betrayal and treason.

These are all social duties, and they are essential for the promotion of the principles of the natural law. They are not the complete picture, of course, but they are a very essential

part of that complete picture. And they can never be ignored with impunity.

Americanism — The fact that Pope Leo XIII, in the 1890s, called the prominent liberal heresies of separation of Church and State, religious individualism, and religious egalitarianism, *Americanism* (*Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*, 1898) ought to be a little challenge to us. We ought to face the fact — and learn a lesson from it as good Catholics — that the Church in America, in some very serious way, has been responsible for this liberal defection from the challenge of the unadulterated Faith, a defection that we see all around us.

Americanismus is a very correct way to name it. You cannot call it French; you cannot call it English; you cannot call it Chinese. It is American — this whole idea of one religion being as good as another. "The things on which we agree are vastly more important than the things on which we differ." The principles that Archbishop Cushing and other Americanist clergy gave in the 1940s, and even more stridently in the 1950s and 60s, became the only dogma for ambitious Catholic politicians: "We cannot inflict our conscience on anybody else." "My Faith will not affect my politics," etc., etc. They tell me there are any number of Catholics now in the Congress who say, "Oh, I am personally opposed to abortion, but I have no right to inflict my conscience on anybody else."

So they are against abortion, but they vote for every measure that encourages it. And they're betraying, through their votes, other moral values as well, through government programs that aid and abet the corruption of youth by way of sex education subsidies and socialist economic policies. This moral relativism, of divorcing right conscience from politics, started mainly here, at least as a powerful force, right here in America; it's because of the tremendous, paramount influence of America that it has progressed elsewhere. Doctrinal liberalism, even if it seemed to come from radical theologians from Germany, France, or Holland who had a direct influence at Vatican II, was still the American heresy. And it is with us in a far more pervasive degree today. The reason is that, for generations, nothing was done by the American hierarchy to extirpate it; in fact they began to call it "the phantom heresy." So let this be a challenge to us.

American foreign aid programs fuel many tyrannical regimes with their proliferation of weapons of mass murder. Immodest fashions, at least on the scale of mass production, mostly originated here. Hollywood hedonistic movies and other media of pornography originated here and they are a huge affliction on other countries and whole continents.

We know people who are going to extremes about that, to the point of being unpatriotic, cynical, negative, and in-

Continued on page 10

2024 Saint Benedict Center Conference

**“Sursum Corda: Lifting Up Our Hearts
in a Time of Crisis”**

Friday and Saturday, October 11 and 12

\$225 for both days with meals
\$120 for both days without meals

For more information and to register:
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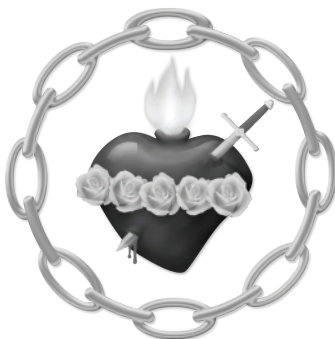
Br. André Marie, MICM	Sr. Marie Gabrielle, MICM
Mike Church	Charles Coulombe
C.J. Doyle	Brother Lawrence, MICM, Tert.
John Sharpe	Sr. Maria Philomena, MICM

Or call at (603) 239-6485, extension 1
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Saint Benedict Center attire required.

(Ladies: skirts or dresses please, no pants.)

There are a limited number of Saint Benedict Center community members who are willing to host conference attendees on a first-come, first-served basis; please call (603) 239-6485 ext 1 for details. There are several hotels in the Keene vicinity, but reservations should be made early because of tourism during the foliage season. Some include: Best Western Hotel & Suites (603) 357-3038; and Holiday Inn Express Keene (603) 352-7616. There are also bed-and-breakfasts in the area; call for details. For those interested, there is a campground three miles from the Center: Shir-Roy Campground (603) 239-4768. Also check out www.airbnb.com



Twenty-seventh Annual Saint Benedict Center Conference

Sursum Corda: Lifting Up Our Hearts in a Time of Crisis

Friday, October 11 — The Divine Maternity

8:45 Breakfast

9:30 Registration opens

10:00 Brother André Marie's **Opening Remarks**

10:30 Sister Marie Gabrielle, M.I.C.M. — **A Thousand Times Happy: An Exhortation to Love Mary and Fear Nothing**

12:00 Angelus / Lunch

1:30 Brother Lawrence Mary, M.I.C.M.,Tert — **Brother Francis — Crusader for Our Lady Seat of Wisdom**

3:00 Br. André Marie, MICM — **The Absolute Primacy of Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Our Crusade**

4:30 Charles Coulombe — **Waybread of the Angels: Navigating the Dark Forest of Our Times**

6:00 Dinner

Saturday, October 12 — Our Lady of the Pillar

8:45 Breakfast

9:45 Mike Church

11:15 Sister Maria Philomena, MICM — **Legacies of Sanctity — Lives That Changed the Course of History**

12:30 The Order's group picture and reading of the Tertiary Necrology

12:30 Angelus / Lunch

2:00 John Sharpe

4:00 Mr. C. Joseph Doyle — **The Triumph of Tradition**
After Doyle's talk: Brothers and Sisters singing Polyphony

6:00 Dinner

7:30 **Panel Discussion** (all speakers / moderated)



effective. This was never the spirit of the Center and it will never be. Even though we know that many of our founding fathers were bigots and very wrong religiously, we also thank God that they did have certain natural virtues, and they did have some good ethical principles, and we do not need to be absolutely negative in our appreciation of American history.

I had the privilege this year to teach a whole course in American History, and I am very happy I did it. I can speak now with more confidence. There are some good American principles that should be defended, should be rediscovered, and should be re-affirmed. America can be converted on its own principles. A man who said this very strongly in the last century was Orestes Brownson. He was very critical of the

false principles that were gradually creeping into the American Republic, the unconstitutional expansion of centralized government over States' rights for one thing, but he also was very proud and patriotic. He was glad to employ in his own apostolic work the many positive elements that patriotic Catholics could utilize from our own Constitution as a basis for bringing the complete truth to the nation. In fact, one of his best books, *The American Republic and Its Constitution*, was written for the instruction of Catholics concerning government in general, its human origins, and concerning the Constitution. ■

LETTER TO MY NON-CATHOLIC FRIEND

Without a doubt, this is the best presentation of the Catholic Faith to non-Catholics available anywhere today. Not only is it a terrific help in sharing our Catholic Faith with others, it contains so much important information that it is a perfect brush-up course for Catholics as well. In simple easy-to-understand language, this wonderful work describes the founding of the Church by Christ, the appointment of Peter as chief shepherd on earth, how the Church came to be called "Catholic," the Protestant rebellion and its causes, the history and proper position of the authority of the Bible, Martin Luther's teachings and the founding of various Protestant churches, the infallibility of the Church and the times and conditions of the infallibility of the Pope, heresies in the Church, good and bad popes, and the conditions of salvation. Present this book to one non-Catholic friend or relative, one friend each month, and watch the fruit of sharing God's greatest gift to us — our Catholic Faith. **Go to store.catholicism.org to order today.**

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

PREFECT'S COLUMN

HOW TO JOIN THE CATHOLIC BATTLE

In any war there must be a battle plan to win. I reveal no secret to you when I say we are in a war. The war, in our case, harkens back to the word “crusade.” The Crusades were holy wars that were undertaken by Catholic powers to free the Christian Holy Land from its Mohammedan conquerors. The

Crusade of Saint Benedict Center is a spiritual one. As you know it has two ends: 1) to defend all the dogmas of the Catholic Faith, especially *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there is no salvation) and 2) to convert America to the one true Faith. Ours is a holy war in that we are “fighting” to free our non-Catholic brothers and sisters and bring them to the liberating light of the Catholic religion. This is a work to which the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary have been particularly devoted for about eighty years. The goal is good and true, but the laborers are few.

St. Paul encourages us to use spiritual weapons in order to fight the enemies of our souls (Eph. 6:11-17). “Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day... having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” One of these spiritual weapons is Catholic knowledge; we must have plenty of it if we are to teach our countrymen. “That in all things you are made rich in him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (1 Cor. 1:5). And what will we teach? The Faith without compromise.

The Crusade was launched by Father Leonard Feeney who sought to save the salvation dogma of the Church from obscurity, and in so doing, rescue all Catholic dogmas from the “dictatorship of relativism” — to borrow a term of Pope Benedict’s. That effort began in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with, as Sister Catherine writes in *The Loyolas and Cabots*, the consideration of the “authentic doctrines of the Church through the study of Holy Scripture, and the writings of the Fathers, doctors, and saints of the Church. This program of studies achieved immediate success, filling the spiritual vacuum created by an obvious deficiency in the neighboring academic institutions. The Center was attended in large and growing numbers.”

Father Feeney chose Brother Francis Maluf, our most excellent superior of fond memory, to help him establish a strategy for the doctrinal crusade. When Brother Francis received his assignment in the 1940s he knew he had to prepare by prayer and study. And that is just what he did. He did not activate his dream to initiate a school of studies nationwide until the 1970s when he saw the time was right. It was only then that he launched the Saint Augustine Institute

of Wisdom (SAI), announcing the program to friends of the Center across America.

Brother’s assignment is now our assignment. One of the best ways to re-ignite our enthusiasm for the conversion of America is to listen to the words of the man who so deeply desired the personal sanctification of his students and religious disciples and their education in the Faith. Brother Francis had a charisma when he spoke. Anyone who heard him was instantly cognizant of it. And, thanks be to God and Brother’s loyal students, we still have his words recorded and available in our bookstore. Although his knowledge was immense in the breadth of its extension, wisdom was his greatest gift. As a true philosopher, he always sought for the causes of things, going from the immediate to the first causes. Yes, he was deep, but he also had the gift of communicating his wisdom in a clear, simple, and at times, even in a child-like manner.

Brother loved to quote an often-repeated exhortation of Saint Paul: *idem sapite*, “be of one mind.” To effect this end, a much greater emphasis is placed on the link, the connection, the training ground, the school we refer to as the Saint Augustine Institute of Wisdom (SAI). Brother Francis often called the Institute the “engine of the crusade.” Engines require fuel to operate. If we do not work at being reservoirs filled with the fuel of holiness and erudition, we will have ignored one of our founder’s prescriptions for the conversion of our own homes and of our fellow citizens, our neighbors. In order to be good aqueducts we must first be reservoirs.

We desire that all tertiaries, benefactors and friends of Saint Benedict Center to be part of the Institute. Why? Brother Francis, in his very first recorded talk about SAI, said he believed that if you gave him a couple of hundred souls working to study the Faith in the friendly atmosphere of study, that number could eventually turn into many thousands — to the point where America could be converted as the Faith spreads from one soul to another. Today, eighty years after the founding of our Crusade, our purposes are the same. What are you waiting for? Please make it your goal to start or enroll in SAI and to hear the recordings of Brother Francis, *et al* and to share your knowledge and joy with others.

Now there is a most integral aspect of the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center. Without Our Lady, who is described, “as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, **terrible as an army set in array**” (Canticle of Canticles 6:9) we would be lost, vanquished, not victorious in converting America to the one true Faith, Catholicism. We love Her and implore Her unceasingly to help us with this great war; why else would we wish to be called, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary? ■

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



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

ON TWO WAYS TO DIE

We are all aware that at some point we will die. While, for most of us, it is not given to us to know the date and time, we are all aware that it will happen some day. The question is whether or not we prepare for it, or whether our minds are so consumed by the here and now that we fail to do so. This is

what actually determines whether our life has been a success or failure. As Our Lord tells us in Matthew 16:26, “For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?”

Unfortunately, many souls are lost. We have this information, among other sources, directly from the lips of Our Lady of Fatima, who showed the three visionaries a vision of hell, stating, “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go”; and while we have no direct revelation from God as to the damnation of any particular soul (Judas excepted), much has been revealed to us which can help us to save our own souls and, hopefully, the souls of our loved ones.

The Church has always taught that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church; one of the infallible statements setting forth this teaching — from the Fourth Lateran Council — puts it quite simply and directly: “There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved.” Obviously, there is more to it: one must be baptized and in the state of sanctifying grace. For all we can tell from the evidence around us, the vast majority of men do not meet those requirements. Worse, many Catholics do not seem to think any of this is a “big deal.” In their minds, a whole host of modern errors have reduced the practice of religion to merely something of a personal choice or hobby.

Within the last year, I have experienced two deaths in my family, one of which I will describe as happy and holy; the other, was apparently not.

Many of you reading this article know that I recently lost my wife, Lori, to ovarian cancer. Lori had been attacked by cancer four times in the last ten years, and she finally lost the battle. During her brave battle for survival, she never lost her faith in God nor in the Church He founded. Having nearly died in 2019, and having received the sacrament of Extreme Unction at that time, Lori was able to return to assisting regularly at Holy Mass until she became too ill and bedridden to do so in the latter part of 2022. At that time, our priest began bringing her the sacraments once a month. During her last few weeks, this increased to once per week.

One of the high points of her final days was when four of the religious sisters from Saint Benedict Center, while distributing their books in southern California, took the time

and effort to visit Lori shortly before she died. During their visit, they sang hymns at her bedside. After their departure she said, “That must be what heaven is like.” (Thank you, Sisters!) When she died — at home, as she wished — she looked at me, and the last sentence she uttered was merely one word: “Prayers.” As she breathed her last, while I was praying, she was, for good measure, wearing her scapular with a Miraculous Medal attached. Subsequently, she had a traditional Requiem Mass, a well attended Rosary, and was buried in a Catholic cemetery with the rites of the Church.

I should also mention that many people reading this article had been praying for Lori for years. All in all, although I miss her very much, death comes to all of us, and her earthly suffering is ended. I feel good about the state of her soul.

Sad to say, the other death in my family stood in stark contrast. As the oldest of seven children, all raised Catholic, I am one of only two still practicing the faith. The other five are either lapsed Catholics or outright atheists. One of my sisters, whom I will not name, died last year. She had had a lifelong problem with drug and alcohol abuse, among other vices. She had been married twice, both times outside the Church, each marriage ending in divorce. Even worse, her third “marriage” was a relationship with another woman. When my sister’s many bad habits caught up with her, and she lay dying, I had sent a miraculous medal to her and arranged long-distance for a traditional priest to pay her a visit in Phoenix.

The priest went to her bedside, sized up the relationship between her and the other woman, apparently advised her of her need to repent, and was rebuffed. He advised her that he was unable to give her absolution, and left, leaving her to die in apparently unrepentant, in a state of enmity with God. While I obviously do not know the state of her soul, and continue to pray for her, barring a last minute act of perfect contrition, her salvation appears doubtful.

To sum it up, everyone has a choice: Do I want to die a friend or an enemy of God? One of the problems we run into in this age of liberalism — the so-called “freedom of religion,” with its consequent rejection of the Kingship of Christ — is that most people have no idea whatsoever that they are in a battle for their soul. Our Lord obviously knew this would be a problem, so He founded a Church, commissioning the apostles, “Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....” (Matthew 28:19-20). And as Saint Mark points out, He followed that up with the admonition, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

As an aside, I would like to point out that Sacred Scripture teaches us that when Our Lord used the term “believe,” He did not mean a mere abstract belief that one was “saved” at

an altar call and now merely can rest assured of his salvation. The Council of Trent very unecumenically referred to that as “the vain confidence of the heretics”! Saint James says in his epistle, “Thou beievest that there is one God. Thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:19-20). Our Lord Himself, at the conclusion of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, admonishes us: “Go, and do thou in like manner” (Luke 10:37); apparently, “faith alone,” did not occur to Him.

My poor sister’s death was followed by a so-called “Celebration of Life” ceremony and a cremation, rather than a Catholic funeral, and the people in attendance took turns standing up awarding her what I can only call a “coffin canonization.”

Presumably everyone reading this article knows that he is in a war for his soul. As Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, First, Second or Third Order, let us continue to fight the good fight that our Order has engaged in since the 1940’s: for the preservation of Catholic dogma, especially

the infallibly defined dogma Outside the Church there is no Salvation, and for the conversion of America. That way our neighbors and family members will also some day come to realize that they are in a war for their souls, as well.



A NEW APPROACH TO CONVERTING

By Sam Zahaykevitz

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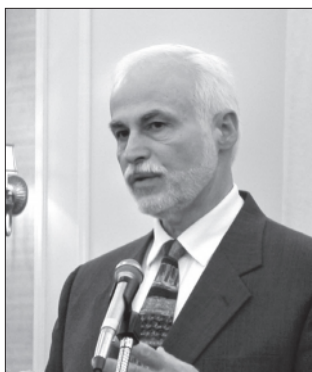
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Brother Lawrence, M.I.C.M., Tert.

WHICH IS BETTER: THINKING OR DOING

Recently, I was asked an interesting question followed by in equally interesting comment. “What difference does it make what you think? What matters is what you do.” At first it seemed pretty obvious: It’s better do good rather than merely think about doing good. But as I continued to re-

reflect on his statement, I was led in a number of directions — too many to cover in a single article — so I will examine several that may be of interest to students of *philosophia perennis*.

To begin, let us look at the human faculties (powers) that engage in thinking and doing — the two that are uniquely human. The intellect is defined as *the power of knowing in an immaterial way*, the power by which we grasp ideas and make judgments. The will is defined as *that power of the human soul...which tends toward a good apprehended by the intellect*, the power by which we carry out the judgments made by the intellect.

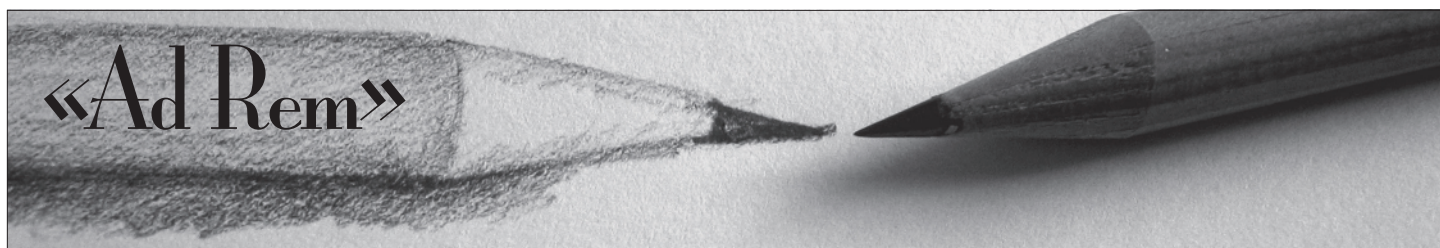
A technical clarification is necessary here. An act is not the same as an action. The act is *a perfection, what is fully real, finished or fulfilling; an actuality*.¹ An action is *the category of accident whereby a cause is constituted as actually causing something; the influence as proceeding from the cause....exercise of efficient power*.²

In this article, all my comments, whether I use either word, will be referring to “action” rather than “act.”

We also know that what is called a *human act* or *human action* is one *proceeding from human reason and free will*. Therefore an action, in order to be fully human, must engage both the intellect and the will. Looking again at the statement, “What difference does it make what you think? What matters is what you do,” we see immediately that both are important. Is it possible to merely think about doing something and, yet, not do it? Of course. Is it possible to merely act without thinking? Certainly. For example, when I inadvertently scratch my face, it is something that could have been done by any other non-human sentient being, such as a dog, a cat, or even an insect. Or I could simply act spontaneously, with no forethought or decision, or even as the result of a physical problem or chemical imbalance, such as is the case with some conditions such as Tourette Syndrome or violent hysteria.

In a truly human action, which comes first, the movement of the intellect in knowing or of the will in doing? St. Thomas Aquinas provides the answer. The intellect precedes the will. The will is a blind appetite that is guided by the intellect.

Correct thinking is essential in order to have correct action. For example, in something as basic as trustworthiness, it is essential that individuals understand the principles that guide good be-



«Ad Rem» is our Prior’s biweekly email message offering news and commentary regarding the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center, and issues affecting the universal Church. Each number offers brief, ad rem (to the point) commentary on timely or otherwise important matters.

A note on the name: The Latin word *res*, (from which we get the word *rem* in our title) means more than just “thing.” The little monosyllable is pregnant with a whole host of concepts. From it we get *ad rem*, meaning (to the point); *res sacramenti* meaning (the grace of the sacrament); *res publica*, which gives us the word *republic* (the public thing). We even get the words *real* and *reality* from it.

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havior rather than slavishly fear repercussions for making a mistake or outright disobedience. If the latter guides their decisions, there is little preventing them from engaging in bad behavior if they think they won't be seen or get caught, and lying to cover it up if they are. In this case, which is more important, thinking or doing? Thought is clearly the leader in matters of moral behavior.

I wondered if it was even possible for a thought to remain unexpressed. It seems as if there will always be some influence on actions. Thought that remains unexpressed in any way is purely subjective. That is, it has remained inside of the mind and that is where it stays. No one else, but God, knows about it.

A card player looks at another player with a “poker face” and no one has a clue about what he is thinking. If, however, the other player signals his thought to the slightest degree, it is no longer purely inside of his mind. He has now acted on it. Even if his action has been nearly imperceptible; his thought has been revealed. Such a severely limited action on his part could still have significant consequences. If the poker player has communicated his next move (thought) through slightest movement or facial expression (action) and it causes him to lose a significant amount of money, his idea has had major consequences — for him anyway.

“To act without thinking is sub human. To think to the exclusion of acting is not feasible.”

Unexpressed thought can be the basis of reflection, a purely human process in which the idea is considered from a variety of different aspects. Reflection can cause a person to grow and develop both personally and spiritually. For example, research has shown that piano players or those who engage in some sports can improve their skill by internal reflection alone. While the end result is an action, the im-

provement is experienced subjectively, within the person.

While thought which is abstract is essential to humans, we are also material beings, existing in space and time. Someone who does nothing but ruminate rather than act will not last long in the world as it has been created. He had better do something to sustain his life or he won't be around very long. Philosophy (even modern psychology) teaches us that for humans to be happy, three things must be in order: thinking, willing and doing. They must be in harmony, otherwise there is dissonance, lack of coordination, a cacophony which is ineffective at best, destructive if it is too extreme. Thought and action are equally important, two aspects of our nature, which need to be coordinated in order to be truly human. Naturally, and this is what I believe my friend intended by his comment, to merely consider a charitable act when a person has the ability to perform it would be a valid reason to object.

To act without thinking is sub human. To think to the exclusion of acting is not feasible. Like most everything in the world, there must be balance between the two. Thoughtful human action is usually the best course. Like one of my high school teachers used to warn us: “Think before you lip!”

For more information on the topic of human faculties and on philosophy in general, the reader is referred to the eight philosophy courses as taught by Brother Francis. To order online, go to Catholicism.org, search for “Complete Philosophy Set,” and you will find it.

- www.catholicism.org/complete-philosophy-set.html. ■
1. *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy*, Bernard Wuellner, S.J., Bruce Publishing, 1956
 2. *Ibid.*



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EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

Ex Cathedra: "There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved" (Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215).

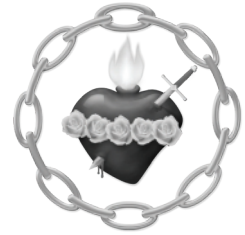
Ex Cathedra: "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

Ex Cathedra: "The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes, and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church" (Pope Eugene IV, the Bull *Cantate Domino*, 1441).

NOTES:

- Join us for the Novena to Christ the King starting October 18.

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



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