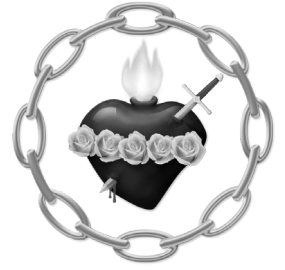


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



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Saint Aloysius Gonzaga by Guercino (1591–1666)



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

BEAUTY EVER ANCIENT, EVER NEW

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” is one of the more pleasant sounding little lies of modernity. It is attributed to the writer of light Victorian-era romantic fiction, Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, and first appeared in her best known novel, *Molly*

Bawn. Though from County Cork, Ireland, Mrs. Hungerford, whose works were popular on both sides of the Pond in her day, was not a Catholic; she belonged to the so-called “Church of Ireland,” which is an Anglican (Episcopal) institution and is therefore Protestant. She was born in 1855 into a family that was part of the Protestant Anglo-Irish gentry, her father being a clergyman, “Canon Fitzjohn Stannus Hamilton, rector and vicar-choral at St. Faughnan’s Cathedral in Rosscarbery,” as we are told by Wikipedia, which also kindly informs us that her fiction had nothing about it that raised the eyebrows of polite folk in the Victorian era.

It seems that, in her day, in lieu of the crass impurity and lurid details of later literature that passes for “romantic,” her oeuvre consisted largely of flirtatious dialogue that was inoffensive to Victorian sensibilities. Her commercial popularity likely owes itself to the fact that her works reflected the bourgeois banalities of her time.

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” should probably be assessed in this light. It is not a radically Marxist or deconstructionist approach to aesthetics as we might expect from a modern university professor teaching a course in, say, “Postmodern Feminist Literary Criticism.” While not that malignant, it is, rather, trite and shallow. But it is still wrong.

Yes, on its peripheries there are certain subjective aspects to beauty, which is why two people who have refined aesthetics may have different *tastes*, a truth captured in the phrase *de gustibus non est disputandum* (“there is no disputing about taste”); hence, two lovers of real music might argue over whether Mozart’s Jupiter Symphony or Dvořák’s New World Symphony is the better of the two. (I’m a Dvořák man, myself). But to reduce beauty entirely to the subjective is, in the realm of aesthetics, a damnable lie.

Why is Mrs. Hungerford’s observation so damnable? Ultimately, because God is Beauty.

Beauty is objective in character, participating in the qualities of the other two transcendentals commonly listed alongside it: truth and goodness. Like truth, it is *perceived* by the intellect. Like goodness, beauty is *enjoyed* by the will. This tells us that beauty is itself eminently *rational*, not merely emotional.

There have been many efforts made to define beauty. Saint Thomas said that “Those things are beautiful which please when seen” (*pulchra sunt, quae visa placent*). This definition is really

based upon the effect of beauty and does not get at its essentials; for, as Saint Augustine had pointed out more than eight hundred years earlier, “Things are not beautiful because they please, but they please because they are beautiful.” But, when Saint Thomas lists these three constituent parts of beauty, he gets to the marrow of his subject:

Integritas or *perfectio rei* — integrity/perfection or completeness of the whole

Proportio debita partium — harmonious relation of its parts or due proportion

Claritas — clearness, luster, splendor, radiance, or clarity

First, God is complete and perfect in a radical way; His is the very fullness of Being from which all created being has received its existence. He is Goodness Itself, utterly complete, completely perfect.

Second, while God has no “parts” to be in harmony (He is the most simple Entity in existence), He has many *attributes* or *properties*, yet these are only logically distinguished from one another and even from the Divine Essence. This means that He has the *greatest* proportionality of all things in existence because all of His various and diverse attributes — e.g., His aseity (self-existence or “being from Himself”), holiness, justice, mercy, omnipotence, omniscience, benignity, beneficence, etc., which are only logically distinguished from His Essence — *are all one in Him*. That is a radical harmony of attributes such as exists in no creature.

Third, God is very clearness, luster, splendor, radiance, or clarity — so much so that Saint John says of Him, “God is light, and in him there is no darkness” (1 John 1:5).

Another Augustinian definition of beauty is “unity in variety,” which touches on the second of Saint Thomas’ three attributes of beauty, above. Now, concerning this notion of beauty, Monsignor Joseph Pohle says that there exists “no greater variety than that implied in God’s infinite perfections; nor a more intensive unity than the identity of the Divine Essence with its attributes.”

The German Jesuit neo-scholastic theologian, Father Josef Kleutgen, S.J. (1811-1883), provides his own definition of beauty as “the goodness of an object, insofar as this, perceived by the mind, affords pleasure.” This captures what I said earlier about the intellect perceiving beauty while the will enjoys it, which means that beauty has something in common with both truth and goodness.

If Father Kleutgen is right — and he agrees here with Saint Thomas — then this is applied to God in a supereminent way in the beatific vision, where the saints perceive God’s infinite goodness and are thereby given such exceeding delight that they are made *blessed* and *happy* and *joyful* beyond compare in that supernal vision.

No wonder Saint Augustine lamented in a justly celebrated passage in the *Confessions*, “Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty

ever ancient and ever new; too late have I loved Thee!”

God is “Essential Beauty,” meaning that, just as He has His being from Himself (*ens a se*), so is He *pulchritudo a se* — Beauty from Himself, which leads Monsignor Pohle to utter this mouthful: “Consequently, He is substantial, subsisting, aseitarian Beauty.” (“Aseitarian” is a fancy adjective meaning “from Himself.”) God is also “Primordial Beauty,” and “All-Beauty,” as His beauty entirely exceeds every kind of created beauty. Saint Gregory Nazianzen captures this truth in his ironic statement that God is both “all beauty and far beyond all beauty.” Further, He is the Source and Exemplar of all created beauty because every created beauty derives from and reflects the Divine Beauty. Saint Hilary and Saint Augustine agree that God is both the creator and source of all beauty. Saint Augustine notes that, “No beautiful objects would exist outside of Thee, had they not received being from Thee.”

In light of these reflections on Divine Beauty, the lovely words that Fyodor Dostoevsky put on the lips of Prince Lev Nikolae-vich Myshkin in his wonderful novel, *The Idiot*, take on a more poignant meaning: “The world will be saved by beauty.”

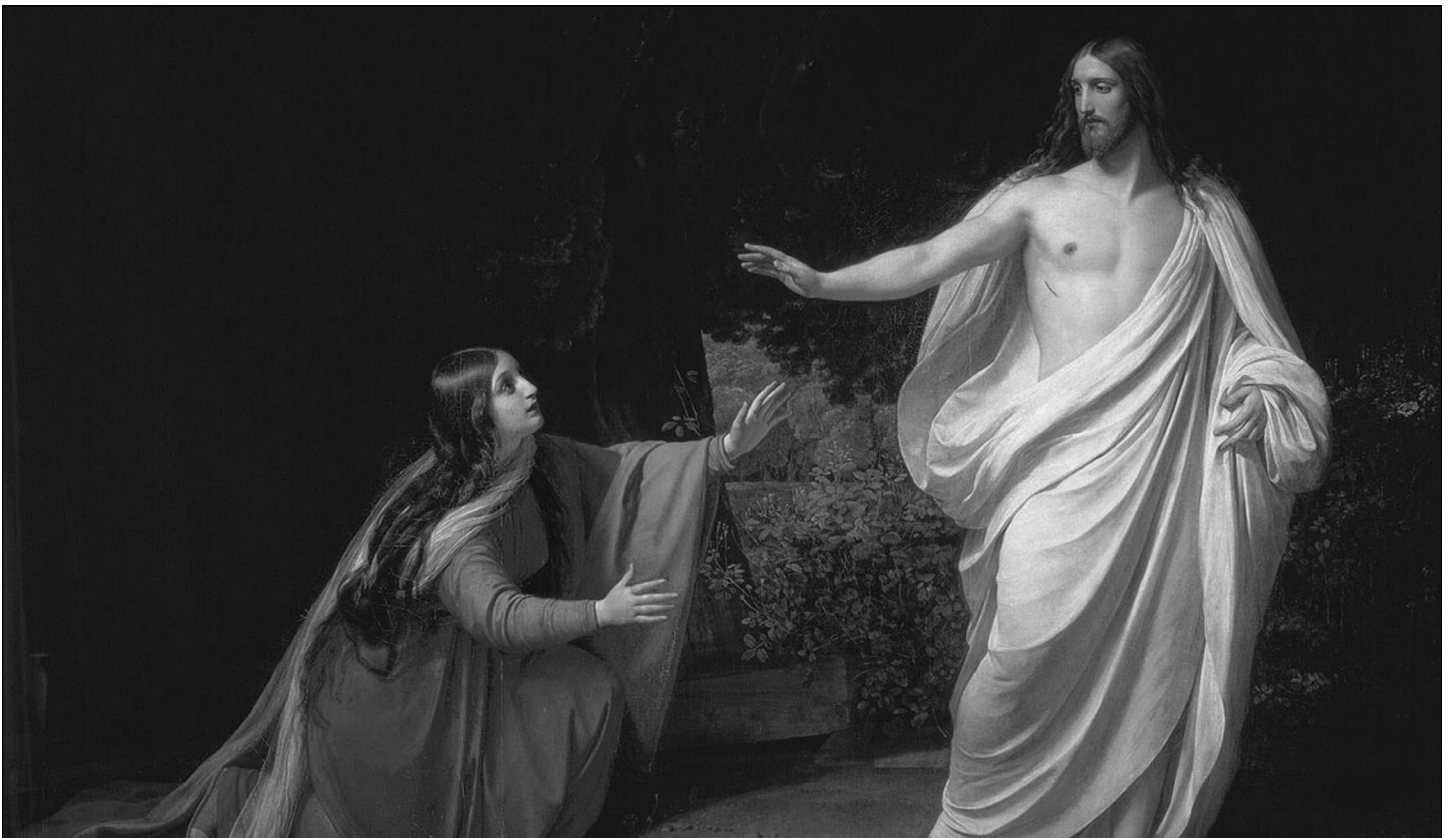
While we say of God that He is “Beauty Itself,” the Incarnate Logos is also rightly called beautiful, not only in his Divine Nature, but even in His Sacred Humanity, which was prophesied thus by King David: “**Thou art beautiful above the sons of men:** grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore hath God

blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty. **With thy comeliness and thy beauty** set out, proceed prosperously, and reign. Because of truth and meekness and justice: and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully” (Ps. 44:3-5).

While Jesus was no doubt beautiful in appearance — the most perfect specimen of masculine beauty — what is meant primarily here is His moral beauty, His peerless holiness. This makes all the more poignant that Passion prophecy of Isaias: “There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not (Isaias 53:2b-3).

For God’s glory and our salvation, Beauty Himself was made *ugly* in His Passion. Yet, in His triumphant Resurrection and glorious Ascension, that Holy Face which was beaten and spit upon shines radiantly and saves us:

- “Convert us, O God: and shew us thy face, and we shall be saved” (79:4, cf. vs. 8, 20).
- Ah me! for whom Thou diest,
Hide not so far Thy grace:
Show me, O Love most highest,
The brightness of Thy face. (Hymn, “O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded”)



Given what we have said about beauty being rational (even if elevated to the supernatural order by grace), certain things follow. That which merely appeals to what is base in man — our lower passions — *cannot* be beautiful. It might be arresting, tantalizing, titillating, alluring, evocative, tempting, etc., but it is not beautiful. In the performing arts, the plastic arts, the literary arts, etc., that which simply scratches an itch cannot be given the noble name of beauty.

This has clear implications for much of what passes for art in our times.

The words of the great Russian novelist quoted above became the subject of a few lines of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's lecture, given on the occasion of his winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970, just over a century after Dostoevsky wrote them:

One day Dostoevsky threw out the enigmatic remark: "Beauty will save the world." What sort of a statement is that? For a long time I considered it mere words. How could that be possible? When in bloodthirsty history did beauty ever save anyone from anything? Ennobled, uplifted, yes — but whom has it saved?

There is, however, a certain peculiarity in the essence of beauty, a peculiarity in the status of art: namely, the convincingness of a true work of art is completely irrefutable and it forces even an opposing heart to surrender. ...

But a work of art bears within itself its own verification: conceptions which are devised or stretched do not stand being portrayed in images, they all come crashing down, appear sickly and pale, convince no one. But those works of art which have scooped up the truth and presented it to us as a living force — they take hold of us, compel us, and nobody ever, not even in ages to come, will appear to refute them.

So perhaps that ancient trinity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is not simply an empty, faded formula as we thought in the days of our self-confident, materialistic youth? If the tops of these three trees converge, as the scholars maintained, but the too blatant, too direct stems of Truth and Goodness are crushed, cut down, not allowed through — then perhaps the fantastic, unpredictable, unexpected stems of Beauty will push through and soar TO THAT VERY SAME PLACE, and in so doing will fulfil the work of all three?

In that case Dostoevsky's remark, "Beauty will save the world," was not a careless phrase but a prophecy? After all HE was granted to see much, a man of fantastic illumination.

And in that case art, literature might really be able to help the world today?

Of course, the answer is yes. Literature and all the arts — if they be *beautiful* as well as *true* and *good* — will help the world today. This is a powerful argument for us to reconsecrate the arts to the glory of God and the service of religion, restoring them to the place they had in the Ages of Faith.

But that sublime beauty that we call sanctity — not merely the icon or statue of a saint, but the original — that is what will really save the world.

Let us not forget that, in all dogmatic rigor, we truly say that one of the effects of grace is that it "beautifies the soul." Beauty really is *id quod visum placet* — "that which being seen pleases" — and this even applies to God, who looks on the soul in grace and is thereby *pleased* or *delighted*, which is why Saint Thomas calls sanctifying (or "habitual") grace, *gratia gratum faciens*: "grace which makes pleasing."

Upon the baptized soul, the Father looks and says of it what He said of His Only-Begotten Son when the sacrament of regeneration was instituted by Our Lord standing next to Saint John the Baptist in the Jordan: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Luther, Calvin, and company did not believe this, which is why the Council of Trent taught against them that "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts whereby an unjust man becomes just and from being an enemy becomes a friend, that he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting."

"The most beautiful of the sons of men" radiates His beauty unto us so that we might be, as He is, *beautiful* to His Father.

In this light, we might look at the fourth Beatitude — by which the soul hungers and thirsts for justice (holiness) — as a desire for supernatural beauty. The words *beauty* and *beatitude* only accidentally resemble one another in the English language; they are not etymologically related. However, there is a higher coalescence of meaning. The Beauty ever ancient and ever new is lovingly beheld by the blessed, who are themselves ever beautified in Heaven by His glory as they were on earth by His grace.

So, in an exclusively ironic sense, maybe Mrs. Hungerford wasn't *entirely* wrong when she wrote, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Those who behold Beauty Itself in the Face are thereby made beautiful. The beauty, though, is not limited to their resurrected eyes, but radiates to the entire person — body and, especially, soul. ■

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

CONVENT CORNER

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE UNLIKE ANY OTHER

It seems that God is not overly fond of cookie cutters. At least He does not employ that sort of technique in creation. Science has confirmed for us that there are no two snowflakes that are identical. This is the case with leaves, flowers, clouds, mountains, and caterpillars. It is true about us, His most dear creatures. We know that each human soul is completely unique, as is every thumb print, retina, skin cell, and hair. Everything is personalized. How immense God is to create such variety — to know every detail! I would like to take a moment to appreciate one of these singular gifts in particular, and that is the voice.

There is something especially intimate about a voice. I suspect it represents a man more than his external appearance does. You would naturally be sad if someone found your face homely, but how much deeper the hurt if your voice was thought to be ugly or offensive — deeper being the operative word. Your voice comes from down inside of you; it is much closer to your heart than your face is. All men desire to be loved, not for how they look or what they do, but for who they are. And what expresses a person more than his voice?

Our Maker, the One Who gave each a singular voice, does love us. He likes the way we sound, and He likes to hear us sing. In fact, He has even gone so far as to make singing enjoyable for us. That's right. Singing causes pleasure. Yes, I realize this natural pleasure can be lost along the way. We might develop erroneous ideas or expectations about singing, which rob us of our delight and cause us frustration. People can be

afraid or uncomfortable to sing for many different reasons. But, surely those unpleasant associations are learned; surely we were made to sing from the heart and to enjoy it immensely. At least that is what I understand from the Psalmist, who unceasingly urges us to sing. "Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" (Ps. 100:2) "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!" (Ps. 135:3) "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being." (Ps. 104:33)

Whatever vices, weaknesses, or fears we fail to rid ourselves of on earth will be cleaned up in Purgatory, which means that, in Heaven, we will be our perfected selves. Not only will we love to sing in Heaven and will sound our unique best, but everyone else will be pleased with our voice — most of all, its Maker. Perhaps Eternal Wisdom has composed music for each of us to sing. I imagine there will be times when each person sings his own song, times we will sing together in unison, and times for magnificent harmony. But in every case, we will contribute something to the music which no one else can supply.

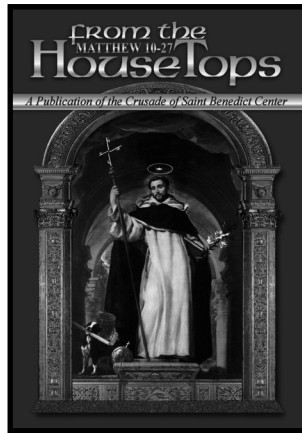
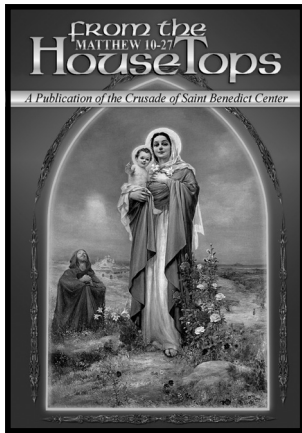
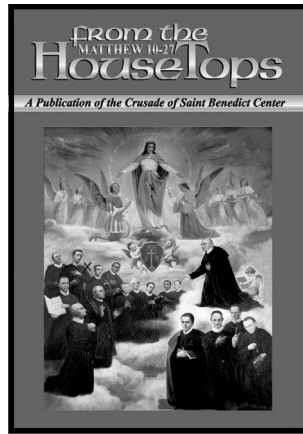
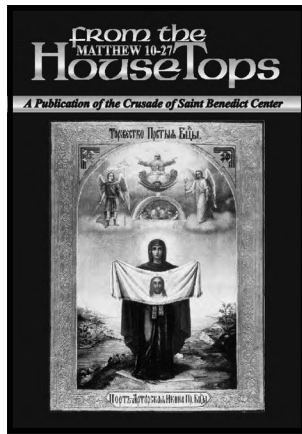
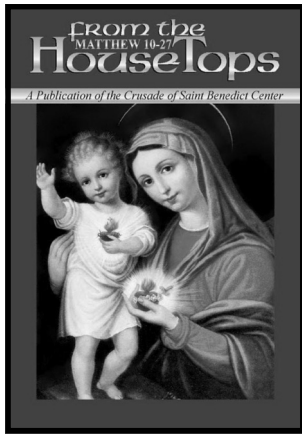
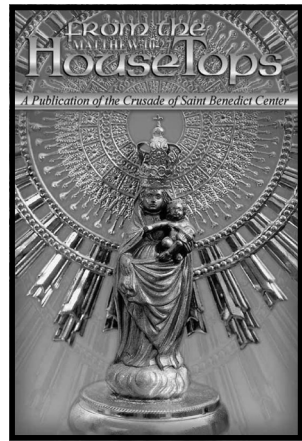
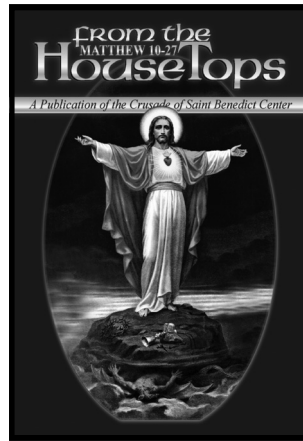
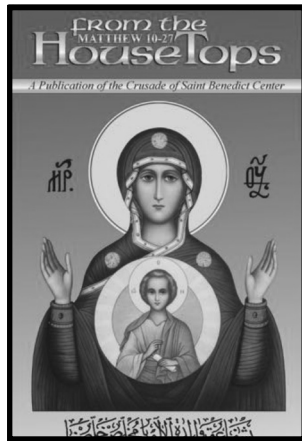
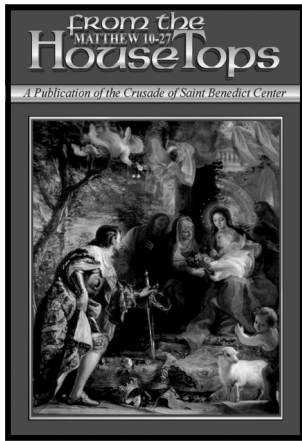
Sing then! Sing aloud when possible and within your heart always. Prepare yourself for the heavenly joy to come; be grateful for the foretastes that are given here below. Offer to the One Who loves your praise, thanksgiving, and all that is in you.

Thank You, dear God, for my voice, for creating musical tones, and for making me capable of producing them. Thank you for all the circumstances and trials of my life, by which You have formed me and prepared me to offer my very own everlasting canticle. Grant me the grace to join the heavenly choirs so I may sing for You the beautiful song which is my love, and which I alone can sing. ■



CORNELIUS A LAPIDE'S COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS

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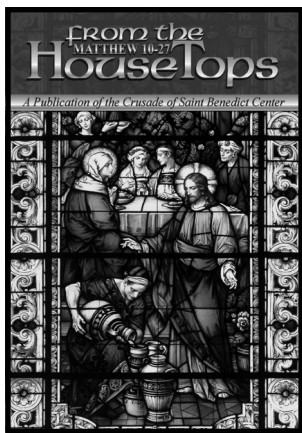
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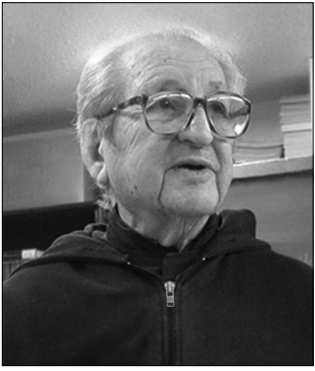
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Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE: A MYSTERY OF THE NATURAL ORDER

“Philosophy begins with wonder,” says Aristotle; and indeed those who have no capacity for wonder, have no appetite for wisdom. But what is wonder? Wonder arises in the mind when, what started to be a problem, turns out to be a mystery. If you are working on a crossword puzzle, you have a problem on your hands; but if you suddenly discovered that the crossword puzzle is really a disguised message from the one you love, the problem becomes a mystery. In a problem there is nothing to be known besides a solution, but in a mystery there is no final solution, but a continual growth towards contemplation. You face a problem but you plunge into a mystery. When a problem is once solved, you do not want to think about it any longer, but the more you think about a mystery, the more you want to think about it. Mysteries are visible leads to invisible realities; they are landmarks on the way to our destiny. Mysteries are undeciphered messages from our eternal lover and the supreme object of our love. Father Leonard Feeney said once that mysteries are not things about which we can know nothing but things about which we cannot know everything, precisely because there is so much to be known. Tides, for example, are a problem, but the sea is a mystery. Making a living is frequently a problem to man, but life itself is always a mystery.

Now the world is alive with such mysteries, and they occur as frequently in the order of nature as they do in the order of grace. We look at the sky and say; what is this apparently limitless expansion of the blue? Is it infinite or is it finite? Is it thoroughly full, or is it partly empty? Is space a substance or is it an accident? Or is it perhaps a figment of the mind? Is it changing or is it changeless? And how about time; where is the past and what is the future? What is even the very actual present, the evasive now, which, as soon as you grasp it, has already slipped away and is no more! Birth and death, food and growth, thought, love, and even sleep; all these are mysteries in the natural order which parallel the mysteries of the faith and prepare the mind for the message of revelation. The early philosophers called them problems, but we are entitled to change their labels and call them mysteries, having seen so many ages of thinkers throughout history try to sound their depths.

I intend to take up here one sample of a mystery which has haunted the minds of men at all times, and which is partly responsible for the development and growth of philosophy. I mean the mystery of change. I wish to suggest that meditation on this mystery is an excellent introduction to philosophy. I can even promise, that when assisted by the light of grace, such meditations may illuminate the central mysteries of the faith,

and increase our knowledge and love of God.

At first glance, it does not seem as if change is even a problem, much less a mystery. Yet down through the ages, men from all over the earth, have felt that a changing universe could not be the only kind of reality in existence, but that this changing world must have a changeless creator, a Being who can be known by the mind, although not seen through the senses. In other words, men (and I do not mean philosophers only) have always felt that this universe of ours, by being in a state of change, indicates its insufficiency and leads the mind to God. And the fact of change is not something which requires any specialized or expert observation in order to be known; on the contrary, it is overwhelmingly with us all the time. It can be brought to our attention by winds or waves or rain, by the procession of the seasons or the succession of the days, by the movement of the stars or by the growth of a tree. Even things which appear firm and constant, like mountains and rocks, are in fact subject to forces which in time will cause decay and dissolution. At times change seems ordinary and commonplace, but every once in a while we are shocked into a terrific realization of what it implies to us.

The shock might come from the death of a friend, the end of an era, or the sudden realization that we are growing old and that there is no way back to childhood.

In the history of philosophy, the importance of the problem of change was fully recognized when a Greek philosopher of the sixth century before Christ, ventured the daring opinion that all reality is change. This philosopher is Heraclitus, who held that “everything flows like a river.” Ordinarily we talk as if there are things which undergo change. This clearly implies, that while change is going on, something remains the same; for if everything about an object or a being were to change, we could not continue to talk about the same being. If while growing up from childhood, not only my size and weight and ideas change, but even my personal identity, then why keep saying that I was a child and that I am now an adult? What is this “I” which was something and is now something else? How was this “I” identified with childhood without being identical with it? For if it were identical with its childhood, it could never truthfully say about itself: “I am now an adult.” According to Heraclitus, nothing remains the same, and therefore, not only is all the world changing, but all is change! “Nobody jumps into the same river twice,” says Heraclitus, “because the second time he jumps, it is another and a different river.” One of the disciples of Heraclitus went further to say: “Nobody jumps into the same river even once, because even before he touches the river, neither the river nor the jumper remain the same.”

If this doctrine of Heraclitus is true, then neither science is possible nor philosophy. Even when science talks about change it must talk about what is permanent in it. If nothing is permanent about reality, then there can be no scientific knowledge

about it. If Heraclitus himself failed to draw all the latent conclusions of his doctrine, his disciples certainly perceived all its logical implications. When one of them, named Cratyles, was asked: "And what then should the philosopher do, if, as you say, all is change?" he replied, "The wise man simply wiggles his finger!" There is no use making any philosophical statements, if before you finish uttering your assertion, all reality has changed, and the assertion no longer applies. As a matter of fact, if Heraclitus is right, morality and moral responsibility become absurd. What, in that case, would justify condemning a man for murder, unless we are dealing with the same entity responsible for the misdeed. If nothing remains the same, then nobody can be held responsible for an act of the past.

The absurdities of the Heraclitian doctrine led a contemporary philosopher, Parmenides, to the absurdities of the opposite extreme. Parmenides held that change is a mere illusion of the senses, and that what is really real must be one and changeless. All change, says Parmenides, involves being coming out from non-being or turning into non-being, both of which are absurd and impossible. Nothing can turn into its other. Being can be limited only by its only remaining alternative, which is non-being and therefore nothing. Therefore being cannot be limited, and must be one continuous whole, remaining for ever one and the same. Reality, concludes Parmenides, is an infinite, homogeneous, and changeless sphere. All else is illusion.

Zeno, a disciple of Parmenides, formulated a number of arguments which seem to prove the impossibility of movement and change. The best known of these is the race between Achilles and the tortoise. Zeno argues that if Achilles were to give the tortoise only ten yards advantage, he could never overtake the tortoise, even though he ran ten times as fast. Before he can overtake the tortoise, Achilles must first cover the ten yards, but in the meanwhile the tortoise would have moved one yard ahead. Achilles must now cover the yard before overtaking the tortoise, who in turn would have moved one tenth of a yard in the meantime. It is clear that this process may be repeated ad infinitum, and so Achilles will never get to be ahead of the tortoise. Another argument of Zeno aims to prove that a flying arrow could not be in motion, for if it is in motion it should be in motion at every instant of its flight, but at any given instant the arrow cannot be moving either in the space occupied by the arrow at that instant, or in any other space. It could not be moving in the space of the arrow because this is exactly the size of its volume and allows no freedom of movement within it; nor in any other space, because the arrow cannot move where it is not. Another argument may be stated in this manner: "no body can be moved from one place to another place, because there is always an infinite number of positions between the two terminal places, and no body can occupy an infinite number of places in a finite time."

What do the arguments of Parmenides and the paradoxes of Zeno aim to prove? They seem to show that when we try to think about change with our intellects we judge it to be im-

possible. You say: But if by our intellects we judge change and movement to be impossible, while by our senses we see clearly that things do change and move, why don't we trust our senses and disregard the judgment of the intellect? The answer is that such an attitude is impossible to man, because man's supreme and ultimate power of knowledge is his intellectual judgment and not his sense perception. What appears to the senses is naturally subordinated to what is evident to the intellect. Even the choice between the evidence of the senses and the evidence of the intellect is a matter for the intellect and not for the senses to decide.

But on the other hand, neither can the intellect deny the testimony of the senses, especially with regard to that part of reality, the material universe, which falls within the province of the senses. When we consider the senses by our intellect, we find them to be cognitive powers, that is, faculties intended by their very nature to report things as they are and not as they are not, unless something interferes accidentally with their natural operations. If it were true, as Parmenides and Zeno claim, that the senses methodically and systematically report the fact of change, while the mind irrevocably denies its possibility, then the result is intellectual despair. There is no doubt that the controversy about change and motion between the school of Heraclitus and the school of Parmenides is at the root of that period of Greek thought known as the age of sophistry, when philosophers, having despaired of attaining the truth with their minds, discarded speculative philosophy, and used their intellects instead for the acquisition of power.

It was Aristotle who contributed the right solution for the problem of change. The solution was already implicit in the common-sense judgment of men; but when Aristotle succeeded in drawing from the ordinary discourse about change, the distinctions and definitions required for a philosophic solution of this problem, philosophy as a science became possible. Parmenides had said, as already mentioned, that "being is, and non-being is not," that "being can be limited only by non-being, and therefore, being cannot be finite or plural," that "being cannot become non-being, nor can non-being become being," and since these are the only possible alternatives, then change is impossible. But Aristotle denied the dichotomy between being and non-being; he said, between being in the fully actual sense, which is God, and absolute non-being, which is nothing, there is a third possibility, namely, a being in potency, like a seed. A seed, Parmenides would say, either is or is not a tree. If the seed is a tree then it cannot change to one, because there is no change when things remain the same, but if the seed is not a tree, then neither can it change to one, because the being of a tree cannot arise from its non-being. But stated in the more common-sense terminology of Aristotle, the problem can be stated more correctly in the following manner: a seed is not a tree in act but a tree in potency and therefore when sufficient causes cooperate to reduce that potency to act, the seed develops into a tree and the process of development is what we call



change. This is how Aristotle arrived at his definition of change: “change is the act of a being-in-potency as long as it is yet in potency.” Potency is a reality and is different from sheer non-being which is nothing. Change is the actualization of real potency in beings that are real but finite.

We cannot leave the problem here without at least suggesting the way to solve the Zeno paradoxes. The fallacy of the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise consists in regarding as divided what is seen to be only divisible. Movement, time and distance, are different kinds of continuous quantities. Being continuous, each of them is immediately seen to be divisible ad infinitum. But divisibility is potential and not actual division. If distance were actually divided into an infinite number of intervals, it would be hard to see how Achilles can ever overtake the tortoise.

Thus as far as philosophy is concerned, the problem of change is solved by reduction to this concept of a being-in-potency. But how about potency, and what report does it give of itself apart from the fact of change? The truth is, that potency as such, can neither exist nor can it be conceived or understood. There is no existing entity which may be called pure potency. Philosophers imply that much when they tell us that prime matter is not a being but rather it is a principle of being. Whenever real potency exists, it exists as the potency of something actual. You should have an actual egg before you can claim to possess the real potency of a chicken, and you must know a real and actual chicken before you can understand what is meant by a potential chicken in an egg. If potency can neither exist

nor be understood except in its relation to act, then a being in potency like our universe, is also to that extent a being opaque to our complete understanding. The element of potency in the universe implies an aspect of mystery which will be resolved only when we see face to face the One Eternal Being in whom there is no potency and therefore no mystery. Our senses cannot perceive such a Being who is pure act, but our intellect cannot be satisfied without it. We may be able now to realize a little more fully how both Parmenides and Heraclitus were baffled by the same aspect of mystery in the visible universe which was intended by God to wake them up to a realization, be it dark, of the intelligible but invisible God behind the visible universe. Parmenides was looking with his mind on the objects which his senses offer, and insisting on finding in these extended material things the one object which satisfies the intellect. He was looking for the right object in the wrong direction, and the result is his monotonous, uniform, but empty sphere where is neither a good God nor a good universe. Parmenides was staring at time and imagining eternity.

On the other hand, when Heraclitus denied permanence and asserted that all is mere change he was implicitly denying the existence of God and the substantial reality of things. Both philosophers were thwarting the universe regarding its first message as a creature, for when the world changes it confesses its insufficiency, and points towards God. ■



Charles Colombe

FIGHTING THE MALICIOUS WITH THE MIRACULOUS

Yet when the city sleeps;
When all the cries are still:
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

— Lionel Johnson,
“By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross”

In to-day's world, it is extremely easy to be brought down by the constant flow of bad news in Church and State. “The enemies of a man shall be those of his own household” has never seemed truer than now. But the seemingly endless assaults on all things decent — high or low, important or not — does wear on one — especially when such attacks come from those given high ecclesiastical or political office, to whom one would normally look for support in a fallen world. This in turn trickles down to every level — including our personal relationships. Whatever political theories we may hold, reality itself is not in the least democratic, and the lower always reflects the higher. If those in charge seek to ape the lowest elements in society, that in itself is their choice, not that of those whom they imitate. In a word, the world in which we live seems dominated by malice.

But the word “seems” is all important. Christ is still King, Mary is still Queen; and unlike Their earthly counterparts — whether deposed or “reigning” — They retain complete power over the planet, as well as an often despised authority. The way in which this power is demonstrated, as it has been since the Creation — but especially since Our Lord's earthly ministry — is by the miraculous.

Now that miraculous comes in innumerable forms — beginning with the many ways in which Jesus showed His contemporaries His power over nature, culminating in His victory over death. He has not ceased to do so, as a comparison of the blood types on the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo on the one hand, and the various Eucharistic Miracles on the other, show. Nor is this the end of it. The Marian apparitions and those of other Saints; incorruptible bodies, miraculous images, shrines, and relics, the miracles required for beatification and canonisation — the list goes on and on. The first modern writer to tackle the whole of this sort of thing was the German Joseph von Goerres in his *Christian Mysticism*, published in four volumes, from 1836 to 1842. In our own time, Joan Carroll Cruz produced a very important series of books surveying such events.

The reason why these things are important to know about and reflect upon on a fairly constant basis is that they remind us of the need constantly to reset the way we look at reality. Beset by cares and setbacks in both the personal and public spheres, how often do we find ourselves saying something like, “I guess all we can do now is pray,” as though prayer

were the least of our options, and a measure of last resort. This is a perfectly natural response, in the face of a world that seems dominated entirely by the powers of darkness.

But by virtue of our Baptism, Confirmation, and reception of the Blessed Sacrament, we are called upon to look at things in a Supernatural light — and should be emboldened to do so by all the many miracles which have occurred, precisely to confirm our Faith, as they did when Jesus physically walked the Earth — that, after all, is their purpose. We should pray for all of our endeavors before we even begin them, knowing that without God's help, we can accomplish nothing — with it, we may not achieve what we wish to — but we shall achieve what HE wishes us to. That is a different matter, and shall infallibly bring about much better ends than we could decide upon — even if those ends' superiority is concealed from us in the here and now.

It is readily apparent that, to our eyes, there is a seeming randomness in the eruption of the miraculous into our world. Why is this person healed, and not that one? Why does an angel appear to help the Christians at *that* battle, and not *this* one? Why does the bread and wine turn to visible flesh and blood at *that* Mass, but not at any to which I have gone? There are no answers to those questions this side of the grave. But we may be assured that the Divine Intellect is not at all random, but, rather, all-wise and acting for precise and perfect reasons which we are incapable of discerning.

Now, despite the seeming universal triumph of malice, the miraculous is not confined to signs and wonders — not by a long shot. It is discernible in the natural world, where an intricate and pre-ordained order that we take for granted allows us to exist. Gravity, the tides, the seasons — all are in a very real sense miraculous, for there is nothing other than the Divine Will that keeps them functioning. Our Sciences can discern a great deal of *how* they function — but not *why*. The very electricity that is allowing me to write these words is a mystery — science can describe what it *does*, but not what it *is*. This marvellous Divine Order, which the human mind has tried to explore for as long as we have records, is utterly beyond our comprehension — but not, thank God, our use.

Of course, those uses are often turned to evil by our fallen wills and intellects. But their very miraculous nature should

remind us that we must strive to use them in God's service, and not that of the enemy. The sailing ship could bring piracy and slavery, evangelisation and commerce; the internet can bring both pornography and the Faith into every home, however remote. But the reason why these things work at all is to make them available for the best possible use.

The miraculous is at work as well in our own lives. If one looks back at anything good in one's own life — the circumstance of one's parents' meeting; the advent of a successful romance, deep friendship, or even a very good job — the circumstances required for it to happen would often be unbelievable in a fantasy novel. Yet these miracles too are part of the entire package, the Divine Order in the Mind of God.

All of these things should remind us of an essential fact — God loves us. Each and every one of us as individuals, as families, as nations — and mankind as a whole. Whilst we live, we have the opportunity to overcome our fallen nature, return His love, and avail ourselves of the means of Eternal Salvation He has provided for us — the Church and Sacraments; if we do so, He shall take us unto Himself for all Eternity, and make us like Him. Thereat we shall be reunited with all those whom we have loved and lost that were willing to do the same.

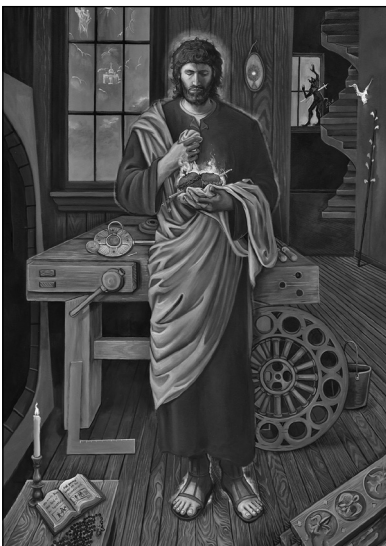
This is the reality that undergirds all the struggles and difficulties that take up so much of our regular attention: problems with spouses or friends; tax audits or moronic laws; liturgical suppression or clerical abuse; ill health or outright pandemic; endless wars and the fear of worse yet to come; incompetence at every level; crime and fear of crime; and on and on. These are all real enough in their way, and we certainly have to deal with them. But so has every

generation, one way or another, and none can change the essential facts of the human condition.

We all descend from people who managed to live through the horrendous incidents which fill the history of every continent. Some few of our ancestors may have played leading roles in some of those dramas, but most — as with we ourselves today — were simply on the receiving end of history. Unless they left written accounts (a very small proportion of the human race), we cannot know how they felt about it all. But because we are here, we know how they responded. In hope of something better eventually, they lived, and begat us. We know that in various times and places, the miraculous erupted into the darkness with which they were faced, and lit a torch which led them at least part of the way in which they had to travel.

It is the same with us, and — just to name a few — the approved Eucharistic Miracles of the past few years, and those attributed to the intercession of Bl. Emperor Charles. It is interesting to note that historically the former usually occur when there is doubt in the Real Presence. The recent ones have all occurred at the *Novus Ordo*, where perhaps one might be forgiven for thinking there might be greater disbelief in Transubstantiation than among Traditional Mass-goers; indeed, the most recent happened at a Communion Service in Honduras!

Let us bear in mind, then, that despite all the evil in the world, God "is not dead nor doth he sleep." If we respond to Him the best we can, He shall come to our aid — although that aid may not preserve our life in this World, it shall in the next — and after all, that one lasts forever, unlike this one. ■



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.

AD ALTARE DEI

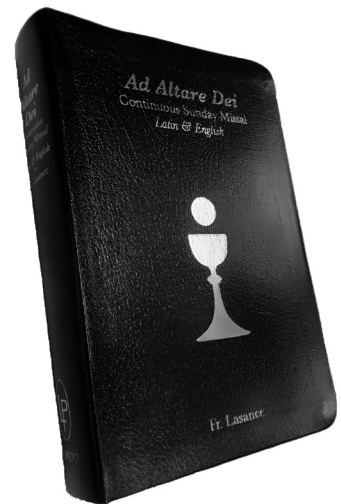
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Easter

The Easter, or Paschal, season extends from Easter Sunday to the Sunday after Pentecost. It is a period of over fifty days of great joy and celebration exceeding even that of the Christmas cycle. Easter is a moveable feast determined by the following formula: the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21 (the vernal equinox); thus, any date between March 22 and April 25. The Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost are celebrated during Paschal-tide. Since Pentecost and its octave is included in the Paschal season, the final portion of the liturgical year is technically called the Time After Pentecost.

584 • Dominica Resurrectionis

☞ Habéamus ad Dóminum.
 ☞ Grátias agámus Dómino, Deo nostro.
 ☞ Dignum et justum est.

Preface for Easter
 Vere dignum et justum est, equum et salutáre: Te quidem, Dómine, omni tēpore, sed in hac potissimum die gloriósius prædicáre, cum Pascha nostrum immolátus est Christus, ipse enim verus est Agnus, qui abstulit peccáta mundi. Qui mortem nostram moriéndó destrúxit, et vitam resurgéndo reparávit. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Dominatióibus, cumque omni militia cœlestis exercitus, hymnum glóriæ tue cínimus, sine fine dicéntes:

Joining his hands, he bows and says:
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus, Deus Sábaoth. Pleni sunt Cœli et terra glória tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus, * qui venit in nómine Dómini. Hosanna in excelsis.

CANON OF THE MASS

Te igitur, clementíssime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum Dóminum nostrum, supplices rogámus ac pétimus, he kisses the altar and joining his hands says: **uti accepta hábeas, et benedicas**, he makes the sign of the Cross three times over the Host and Chalice together saying: **hec & dona, hæc & mīsera, hæc & sancta sacrificia illibáta, in primis que tibi offerimus pro Ecclēsia tua sancta Cathólica: quam pacificáre, custodire, adunáre, et régere digneris toto orbe terrárum: una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N., et Antistite nostro N., et ómnibus orthodoxis, atque cathólicæ et apostólicæ fidei cultóribus.**

The Commemoration of the Living
Memento Dómine famulorum famularúmque tuárum N. et N. he joins his hands and prays briefly for those for whom he intends to pray; then extending his hands, he continues: **et ómnium circumstántium, quorum tibi fides cónita est, et nota devotio, pro quibus tibi offerimus: vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis pro se, suisque ómnibus: pro redemptione animárum suárum, pro spe salutis et incolúmitátis suæ: tibi que reddunt vota sua aetérno Deo vivo et vero.**

Easter Sunday • 585

☞ We have them lifted up unto the Lord.
 ☞ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
 ☞ It is meet and just.

Preface for Easter
 It is truly meet and just, right and profitable, to extol Thee indeed at all times, O Lord, but chiefly with highest praise to magnify Thee on this day on which for us was sacrificed Christ our pasch. For He is the true Lamb Who hath taken away the sins of the world; Who by dying Himself hath destroyed our death; and by rising again hath bestowed a new life on us. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominations, and with all the array of the heavenly host we sing a hymn to Thy glory and unceasingly repeat:

Joining his hands, he bows and says:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. The heavens and the Earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. * Blessed is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

CANON OF THE MASS

Wherefore, we humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord, he kisses the altar and joining his hands says: **to receive and to bless** he makes the sign of the Cross three times over the Host and Chalice together, saying: **these & gifts, these & presents, these & holy unspotted sacrifices, which we offer up to Thee, in the first place, for Thy holy Catholic Church, that it may please Thee to grant her peace, to guard, unite, and guide her, throughout the world; as also for Thy servant N., our Pope and N., our Bishop, and for all who are orthodox in belief and who profess the Catholic and apostolic faith.**

The Commemoration of the Living
Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, N. and N. he joins his hands and prays briefly for those for whom he intends to pray; then extending his hands, he continues: **and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee, for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee, this sacrifice of praise, for themselves, their families, and their friends, for the salvation of their souls and the health and welfare they hope for, and who now pay their vows to Thee, God eternal, living, and true.**

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MISERERE

Father Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.

One's faith has little nightmares
It easily survives: —
Divorcing lust and Luther,
Henry and lots of wives.

But these are sham encounters
Quickly dissolved in air;
The soul beset no more than this
Will never know despair.

But oh, to go by moonlight
And wrestle all alone,
And fight against no heresy
Except against one's own;

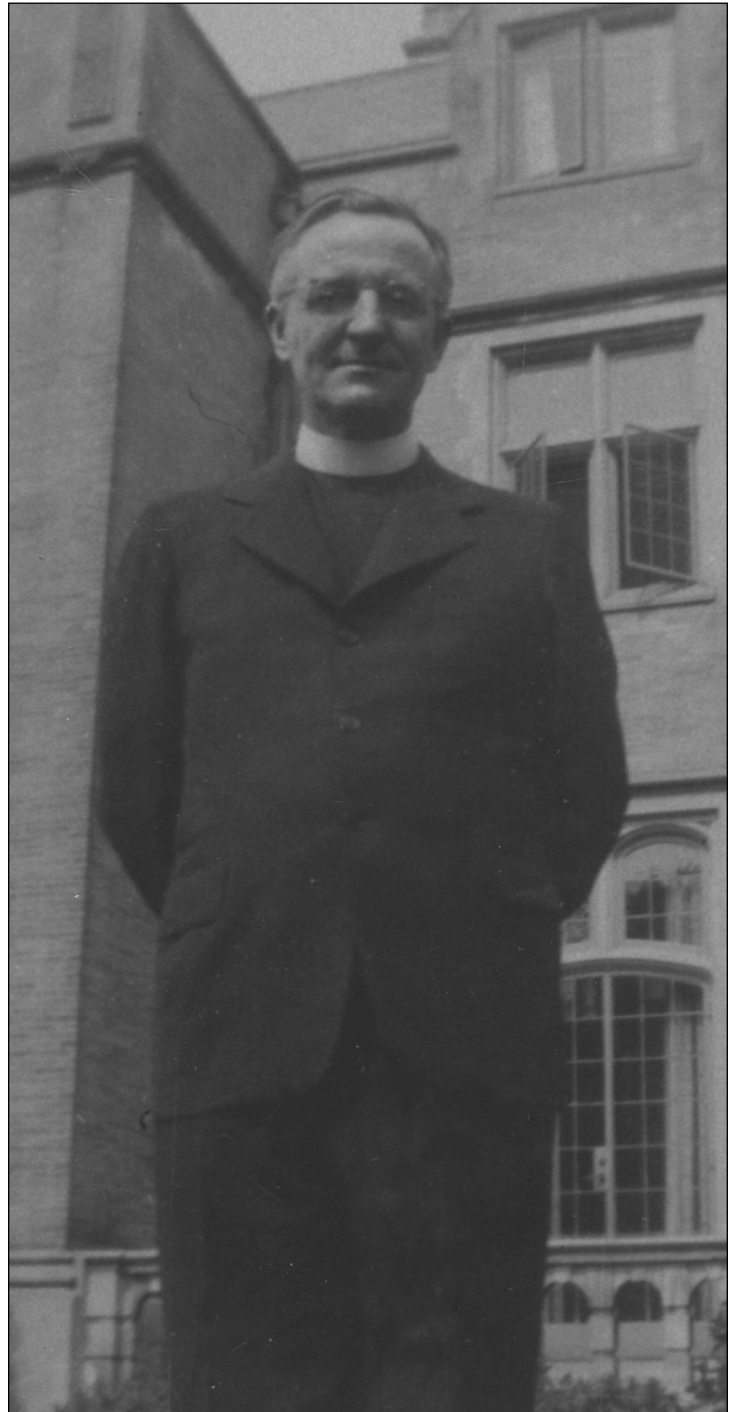
And be entrapped forever
By what one knows is true,
And dared to do the only thing
That one desires to do!

This is what makes one falter
And waver like a wraith;
This is the Christian's agony,
And this the Faith.

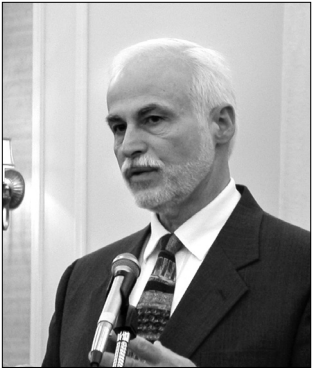
To face those stark alternatives:
A Nothing and an All;
To choose a Vision or a Void,
A Silence or a Call; —

This is what sets one groaning
Under the olive trees,
Bathed by the blood of Jesus
In wild Gethsemanes.

From *Boundaries*



FALLING FOR SCAMMERS AND SENTIMENTAL THEOLOGY



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

Last week I fell for an e-mail scam. I had received a legitimate request by e-mail to pray for a friend's wife who had cancer. The following day I received another message, this time directly from him, requesting my help. His niece to whom he was very close was suffering from cancer and did not have long to live, and it was her birthday today. He was having trouble with his credit card, so would I be so kind as to purchase a gift certificate through Amazon for her, and he would reimburse me with a check. Realizing that he must be suffering greatly because of the ordeal his wife was experiencing I agreed to buy a gift card and send it to the email address he specified in his message. My reason warned me against it, that sending some form of money to a third party with a promise to pay sometime in the future opposed my reason, my good judgment, but my feelings of compassion for this poor man overrode my logic. Fortunately, my credit card company had more sense than I, and caught the scam, not allowing the charge to go through. Later, I called my friend and he explained that his account had been hacked and I was one of a number of friends who had received the malicious message.

As I recovered from my embarrassment over having been fooled in such an obvious manner, I began to think about

how I could have been so imprudent. What was my motivation for overriding my good judgment? Though I credit myself for being fairly prudent in practical matters, I realized it was my powerful emotional response to the request to help a friend in need which caused me to set aside my initial and reasonable idea to call him immediately. At that moment it seemed that calling him might disturb him as he took care of his wife, so I demurred.

This incident made me think of an article which Brother Francis had published in the Fall 1947 edition of *The Housetops* entitled "Sentimental Theology." After much consideration, I realized I had made a very similar error to those whom he accused of being *sentimental theologians*, those who allow their emotions to cloud their judgment. It struck me how easy it is to fall into this error, if one is not on his guard.

As Catholics, we are taught that Charity is willing the good for someone else, but it is easy to mistake the *good* for a *good feeling*. My friend's note sounded sincere, and I was sincerely concerned about him and his family, but was sincerity enough to prevent a fraud? As Brother explains in his article:

Are we saved by mere sincerity? If this were the good news Jesus brought into the world, this would be the way to proclaim it: "You shall be sincere and sincerity will bring you to heaven; your own devices may be your way to the Father." Or at least, "There are two ways to God: I am one and your personal integrity is another." But, on the contrary, this is the way Our Lord speaks: "You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free"; "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; "He that believeth not shall be condemned." And when He proclaimed, saying: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you," He did not stop to apologize or to explain or to add so many reservations which can mean nothing to an unbeliever, and which can only add to the weakness and hesitancy of those who believe.

So I can now ask myself a similar question. Would my sincerity have prevented me from being the victim of a fraud? It appears I experienced something similar to *Sentimental Theology* first hand. Like I said, I realized how easy it is to be caught up in such a thing. When God's Church defines that there is no salvation outside of the Church, it's natural to become sentimental and feel that all those kind, helpful, funny, enjoyable people who are my non-Catholic friends and relatives really cannot lose their souls. They are so good, so sincere! How could God allow them to go to hell? Just as my feelings triumphed over my knowledge of how e-mail scams are perpetrated, my feelings about my non-Catholic friends and relatives fool me into thinking that they will somehow save their souls while remaining in error.

As Brother Francis assures us:

Suppose you went to a doctor and inquired whether a man with double pneumonia should be placed on the danger list,



and suppose the doctor's reply was: "Well, a man with double pneumonia is not necessarily in danger of death, for if this man had a thorough immunity against all diseases, and if he had never been in serious illness before, and if all his organs are in absolutely perfect condition, and if no further complications arise, and perfect medical attention is given to him, this man might pull through." Wouldn't the doctor be of greater practical service to you if he had said, "Yes, a man with double pneumonia is in grave danger"? The same is true of men in any way severed from the unity of the Church and without the divinely established and infallible guidance of the Holy Father; they are in a grave and permanent state of danger as far as their eternal salvation is concerned. If some of them are saved, it would not be because of their heresy, but rather in spite of it, and on account of the sufferings of Christ, Who continues to suffer for the salvation of the world in His Mystical Body, the Catholic Church.

Ultimately, I walked away from this situation with two thoughts. First, that Brother's article on Sentimental Theology is as relevant today as it was in 1947. He was right on

target when he described the problem of feelings trumping reason in the modern Church. Second, if I am going to use my feelings to drive my actions, maybe I should use my feelings of guilt over not inviting my non-Catholic friends to convert to the One, True Church to drive me to becoming more active in pursuing them for this purpose.

And I will be more careful about allowing my feelings to let me fall for such e-mail scams in the future! But I also must keep in mind that regarding the eternal salvation of my friends and relatives, there may be no further opportunity to prevent a disaster for their eternal future!

Here is the link to read Brother Francis's full article about *Sentimental Theology*. www.catholicism.org/sentimental-theology.html ▪

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PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY FATHER

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

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

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. Let us pray.

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

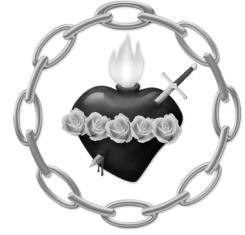
EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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

NOTES:

- Save the date, our 2025 SBC Conference will be October 10 and 11.
- New in the store: Cultivating a Catholic Homestead, The Crucifixion, The Roman Catechism of the Council of Trent, Butler’s Lives of the Saints.
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