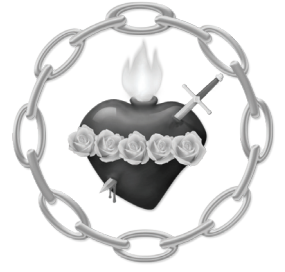


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



January/February 2026



Virgin of the Rocks, by Leonardo Da Vinci



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

THE BLESSED VIRGIN IS AND MUST BE CALLED OUR 'CO-REDEMPTRIX'

On November 4, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) published a Doctrinal Note that had previously been approved by Pope Leo on October 7, *Mater Populi Fidelis* (MPF). Without issuing any dogmatic definition,

formal condemnation, or canonical prohibition against the terms “Mediatrix of All Grace” and “Co-Redemptrix,” the document — the fruit of “a particular ecumenical effort” (“Presentation”) — said that the Virgin Mary ought not to be called by those titles.

It should not be a surprise to our readers that the *Slaves* of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, my Congregation, are what some now call “Marian maximalists,” who strongly oppose the kind of Marian minimalism this new document champions. Our Founder, Father Leonard Feeney, was such a maximalist, and the Montfortian name he bequeathed to his Congregation bespeaks it. (In Saint Louis Marie’s formula of Marian Consecration, we tell Our Lord that He has given His most holy Mother “for a mediatrix with Thee.” With Saint Louis Marie, our other maximalist hero is, fittingly enough, Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe.)

“Religious Submission” to Contrary Propositions?

Before I proceed further, let me address those who may have scruples about being “disobedient” to Rome in “dis-senting” from this document: they may object that such a document demands of us a “religious submission,” so we cannot criticize it, nor should we do what the document deems “*always inappropriate*” by calling the Blessed Virgin, “Co-Redemptrix” — as I do with gusto in the very title of this *Ad Rem*. To these, I point out that a string of popes have used and expounded upon the titles this document now seeks to put in disrepute, and that those documents — *of a higher magisterial order as part of the ordinary papal magisterium* — are also owed “religious submission.” (This rather thorny and technical matter is addressed on our website.)

This is what the document has to say on the title, Co-Redemptrix (I will address Mediatrix later on this site, *Deo volente*):

22. Given the necessity of explaining Mary’s subordinate role to Christ in the work of Redemption, *it is always inappropriate* to use the title “Co-redemptrix” to define Mary’s cooperation. This title risks obscuring Christ’s unique salvific mediation and can therefore create confusion and an imbalance in the harmony of the truths of the Christian faith, for “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (*Acts* 4:12). When an expression requires many, repeated explanations to prevent it from

straying from a correct meaning, it does not serve the faith of the People of God and becomes *unhelpful*. In this case, the expression “Co-redemptrix” does not help extol Mary as the first and foremost collaborator in the work of Redemption and grace, for it carries the risk of eclipsing the exclusive role of Jesus Christ — the Son of God made man for our salvation, who was the only one capable of offering the Father a sacrifice of infinite value — which would not be a true honor to his Mother. Indeed, as the “handmaid of the Lord” (*Lk* 1:38), Mary directs us to Christ and asks us to “do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5). [All italics as in original.]

Neither “*inappropriate*” nor “*unhelpful*,” both italicized in the original, are theological or canonical terms of art. They are not theological censures. But we live in a day when words like those — along with “*unacceptable*” and “*inadmissible*” — are employed in official documents and protocol letters, and given a weight they do not actually have.

But She Is the “Second Eve”!

One of the most noteworthy incongruities in the document is that it interprets *in a Marian sense* two Biblical passages, respectively from the first and last books of Holy Writ, that Marian maximalists apply to the Blessed Virgin. By stark contrast, liberal Catholic and Protestant exegetes refuse to concede that sense to those passages. Here is Father Serafino M. Lanzetta commenting on this:

The biblical aspect is treated with great precision. Indeed, upon reading the introductory section, one is pleasantly struck by a statement that stands in clear contrast to the prevailing historical-critical exegetical *milieu* in vogue. It states that Genesis 3:15 prefigures, in Eve, the Virgin Mary, “the Woman who shares in the definitive victory over the serpent” (n. 5). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Jesus addresses his mother as “Woman” at Cana (cf. *Jn* 2:4) and at the “hour” of the Cross (cf. n. 5).

In the next numbered paragraph (n. 6), the document says, “In a similar sense, the Book of Revelation presents the ‘Woman’ (*Rev* 12:1) as the mother of the Messiah (cf. *Rev* 12:5) and the mother of ‘the rest of her children’ (*Rev* 12:17).”

Father Serafino points out that the document could have used those fine Biblical passages as a starting point to show — using the teachings of popes and solid theologians — how the Blessed Virgin has an active role in our salvation as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix. But, sadly, the document took a different course. Hence, the incongruity.

Indeed, the Marian interpretation of Genesis 3:15 and the patristic doctrine of the Holy Virgin as “the Second Eve” provide us with the foundation for explaining the beautiful title and doctrine of Mary Co-Redemptrix. All the essentials are there, and they have been developed by great Mariolo-

gists. In brief, it is the sin of Adam that brought Original Sin into the world; we inherit that guilt from our first father, *not from Eve*. Yet, Eve did have a true causal role in the fall. The first woman, whose name means “mother of all the living,” was supposed to be Adam’s “helper” (Gen. 2:20), but she was, instead, his “partner in crime” — indeed, his instigator. Now, Jesus Christ is “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) and “the second man” (1 Cor. 15:47), who came to reverse that curse, to restore and elevate our race. This Pauline doctrine was further developed by the Fathers: The Last Adam had a helper in restoring man; this is the Second Eve, Mary. We see Her recapitulate Eve at the Annunciation, and we see Her do so again under the Cross. The typology is obvious: two virgins are approached by two angelic beings with a message; the one helps to effect our Fall, the other, our redemption. At the Cross, we see Mary again as the Second Eve, this time standing under the Tree of Life (the Cross) where She is given by Jesus as a *mother to all those living in the order of grace*, whereas Her antitype stood cursed under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil for having illicitly partaken of its fruits and assisted her husband in bringing about our demise. At the Cross, the Church is born out of Our Lord’s pierced side, whither flow the baptismal water and the Eucharistic Blood. There, the Second Eve suffers the birth pangs She was spared when She birthed Jesus because *there*, at the Cross, She is giving birth to Jesus’ *members* — the sinners who form the Mystical Body of Christ our Head. From the *Fiat* to the *Stabat*, there was a perfect partnership between Jesus and Mary that effected our Redemption. It was Jesus who effected it, but Mary assisted actively, entering into the causality of our rise just as Eve assisted actively and entered into the causality of our fall. Mary, as the popes and theologians have assured us, did so *through, with, in, and under* Christ, but still, *She did so*.

Strangely and Protestant-like, MPF separates what God has joined together — Mary’s Spiritual Maternity and Her Mediation and Co-Redemption.

I mentioned that there are popes who have used the titles that the DDF Note seeks to discredit. Father Serafino lists Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Pius XI, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Here is Pope Pius XII:

We wish to recall here the words of Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, who said: **“The Church has always taught that the Virgin Mary is the Co-Redemptrix of the human race.”** And We Ourselves have repeated these words in Our Encyclical, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*. But today, on this solemn anniversary, We desire to affirm once more that Mary, associated with the King of Martyrs in the work of human Redemption, **is always associated with Him in the distribution of the graces that derive from the Redemption**. She is the dispenser of these graces, the Mother of divine grace, as the liturgy calls her.

And so, with St. Bernard, We can say: ‘Let us venerate this Mediator of God and men, this Immaculate Virgin, who, because she is the Mother of God, is the Treasurer of all graces.’ (Pope Pius XII, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 38 [1946], pp. 264–267; cf., *The Pope Speaks*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 399–401; **bold** emphasis mine.)

For more citations from the Roman Pontiffs, please see www.catholicism.org/ad-rem-no-492.html.

What’s With All the Confusion?

As for the supposed confusion that this title engenders, we think Dom Mary Eugene Boylan’s explanation of the title — first published in 1945 — should clarify that, understood properly, this title implies no infringement on Our Lord’s unique prerogatives as the only Redeemer:

Theologians are still discussing Mary’s share in the Redemption. The title co-redemptrix has been applied to her, and she has a perfect right to it; but the title must not be misunderstood. It does not imply that Christ’s work of Redemption was incomplete, or that there is a single part of the whole plan of Redemption that does not depend upon Him. Even the act by which we enter into our share of His grace, depends upon a grace coming from Him. The title means that God freely and without any necessity decided to associate Mary in the Redemption so that she should share in the glory of it. But every single act by which she co-operated drew all its value from the merits of Christ the Redeemer, and was vivified by His grace. Independently of Christ, Mary could contribute nothing to the Redemption. Everything she did was done through Christ, with Christ and in Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In no one is the life of the Mystical Body of Christ so complete and so perfect.” (M. Eugene Boylan, O. Cist. R., *This Tremendous Lover*, The Newman Press, Westminster, MD, 1957, pg. 334)

Note that the above comes from an immensely popular volume, a work of piety that was well within reach of the decently formed Catholic layman of that day. In our sad times, when rotten catechesis has so damaged the faithful, this may no longer be the case. But should we really dumb down the Faith because people might be confused? Or worse, because non-Catholics don’t like it? If we do this for “Co-Redemptrix” and “Mediatrice of All Graces,” we would also have to do it for “Mother of God”!

In response to the Note’s claim that, “When an expression requires many, repeated explanations to prevent it from straying from a correct meaning, it does not serve the faith of the People of God and becomes *unhelpful*,” many have already noted the extremely confusing recent statements from the Chair of Peter and the Holy See that have required multiple explanations (some contradictory), leading to massive confu-

Continued on page 13



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

CONVENT CORNER

CONFRONTING THE MONSTER MADNESS

If you haven't already noticed, our culture is becoming increasingly "monstra-fied." Is this a sign of our broad-mindedness and growth in compassion? Are there good qualities to be found in monsters? Do they have a few noble motives and desires? Do they sometimes

do kind deeds? Are they perhaps victims of unfortunate past experiences? Shouldn't we get to know and understand them? Can we help them — can they help us?

For those whose common sense is fully functional, the answer to all of these questions will be clearly negative — no, no, definitely no, emphatically no, heaven-help-us NO! But, then, common sense can be obscured (by monsters) and prevented from understanding the true nature of these creatures. Although members of the Monster Advocacy Association will most likely want proof for my assertions, I'm not inclined to try to provide any. I'd be afraid the dearth of common sense in such individuals would present a substantial impediment to fruitful communication.

But all of this seems irrelevant if monsters aren't even real — hence the question: *Are* monsters real? Boogeymen, vampires, werewolves, zombies. . . ? Do they have any existence beyond our imaginations and artistic depictions?

My answer is yes, monsters are really real, but they are actually invisible, and they have a backstory.

Real life monsters were once beautiful creatures, gifted with intelligence and free will. They were made to know, love, and serve the most high Lord of creation and to delight in His friendship for eternity.

In one definitive and grotesque movement of the will, these beings turned away from their purpose, choosing to serve themselves instead of the Creator. Immediately they fell from light to darkness. Their immaterial forms were twisted hideously, and all their spiritual substance was so thoroughly corrupted that they would never again be capable of good.

Permanently Broken Beings

These invisible monsters remain in this same state today — utterly filled with hatred and despair. Their knowledge of reality is distorted, their wills are immovably fixed upon the nothingness of evil, and their only desire is to tear down and destroy the souls of men. We know them as fallen angels; chief among them is Satan.

It is when we attempt to portray these vicious enemies, who are imperceptible to our eyes, ears, and every other sense, that we use the imagery of gargoyles, ogres, and so many other fiends. Perhaps the typical artistic portrayal of monsters helps to demonstrate the characteristics of these incorporeal devils.

Evil Eyes — Fallen angels perceive everything through the lens of hatred and malevolence. The total darkness of their being warps their knowing faculty, which we men depict in art by ghoulish eyes.

Fangs and Claws — Monsters have violent intentions, as is clearly manifested by their sharp claws and fangs ("the better to eat you with, my dear. . ."). But more important to the evil spirits than ripping bodies to pieces (which demonically-influenced individuals have indeed been known to do) is disfiguring immortal souls. Though they cannot forcefully destroy human beings, they are permitted to make suggestions, to try to lead men to mutilate themselves as the demons did. (Disturbingly, though not surprisingly, certain fashion trends lay a heavy emphasis on damage to our bodies.)

Big — Angels, not having bodies, are present in space quite differently than we men are. We think of good angels, not as omnipresent, but as abundantly present, always near, never out of reach. The bad angels, because of their great hostility, are thought of as *overly* present. This might be why monsters are often depicted as huge, giant, too big.

Animal-like — In failing to recognize their greatest good, the bad angels have degraded themselves. They have behaved so badly that they are effectively worse than senseless beasts. I imagine this plays into the hairy and wild form monsters are often given.

Deformed, Ugly, Scary — Although deformity and ugliness are not exact synonyms, they share the note of disorder causing repulsion. I wonder if we are afraid of this visible disorder in a creature — especially one with power of locomotion — because we feel threatened. Spiders, for example, with their disproportionate number of eyes and appendages, are both hideous and horrifying, in a word, monstrous.¹

In summary, I am suggesting that all the visual elements of monsters as we picture them convey the core attributes of the evil spirits.

Maintaining Sanity Amid the Madness

So then, how do we interact with this world of fallen angels?

Actually, we need not and ought not interact with them at all. There is nothing in them to benefit us, except perhaps that, as archenemies of God, they give us the opportunity to despise evil.

Pity? No, that would be out of place. Pity is for those who suffer or are hurt. The demons are the cause of suffering and hurt, not the victims. Furthermore, they are where they want to be — away from God. It is unreasonable to feel sorry for those who have what they want. They are not to be befriended, even when they pretend to be nice, or good, or misunderstood. It is all a lie to trap souls — to lead men into the snare of destruction. We must not pity these foul creatures that hate God and love sin.

We do well to expose children to the concept of monsters through stories — the right kind of stories. A wholesome worldview is cultivated by tales of brave heroes defeating cyclopes, ogres, and dragons — where no apology is offered to the villain. In classic literature monsters are not treated as if they were fellow men — as people with rights who should be respected. Rather, they are treated as villainous usurpers, worse than enemies; more as things than persons; as poisonous, purely toxic and intrinsically malign.

Just imagine, then, the delight of the king of monsters as he watches the toys, stuffed animals, cartoons, movies, games, and songs, that are given to children nowadays, saturated with goblins, zombies, vampires, and ugliness of every kind. (Oh, and let's not forget the latest specimens of twisted AI generated nastiness, *Italian Brainrot*).

Children made comfortable with weird and grotesque characters during their times of play and relaxation cannot really be expected to feel repulsion for sin and vice in their moral sensibilities. If a healthy disgust for hideously deformed creatures carries over spiritually into a detestation for sin, then the opposite would seem to be true — sin is less appalling to hearts that are desensitized to and comfortable with disorder. And, as hell is the epitome of all chaos and confusion, the devils like to see men developing a taste for disorder and derangement in this life. It makes for a good preparation for eternal death in the underworld.

Some Good Advice

“. . . Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

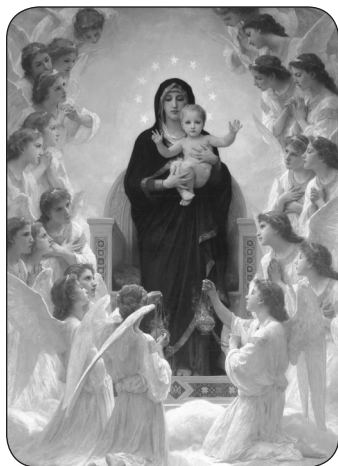
In this matter of counteracting the unwholesome “monster culture,” the strongest strategy is to build up the positive. Without a clear sense of the good we are aiming for, too much emphasis on rooting out the negative can lead to frustration

and discouragement. To be convinced I should stop eating at McDonald's, for example, doesn't tell me what I *should* eat. Whereas cultivating a taste for good, healthy food will naturally lead to a disinterest in garbage.

We very well may choose to boycott all games, movies, clothing, and books that glorify the monstrous, the weird, and the disturbing, even though this in itself is not the real goal. As much as avoiding evil is a necessary part of the picture, our true aim is to do good. It is far better to set our focus on cultivating a knowledge and love of what is good, true, and beautiful. And that *does* take focus; the act of *cultivating* is the exact opposite of *falling off a log*. In other words, building up what is best requires effort. To quote an art teacher of my acquaintance, “You don't have to know anything to draw an ugly picture, anyone can do it. It takes time and work to make something beautiful.”

Let us spend our time and energy to nurture our hearts and minds with the riches of goodness and truth. What else has time and energy been given to us for? Let us reach for what is noble and lovely so that we no longer want what is base and ugly. May we find ourselves so busy acquiring virtue that we have no space for vice. God grant us the grace to love justice and hate iniquity, so that we “be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). ■

1. While spiders look and act the way they do by God's design, and cannot therefore be called wicked or disordered, it is my firm conviction that they were deliberately given features which would distress us. I believe God, in His wisdom, made them to be monster-like, as a representation of evil. With their solitary, creepy, dark-dwelling, bloodsucking habits, they portray well the opposite of everything noble that good men strive to be and to do.



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Father Leonard Feeney, MICM

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

DO NOT GO TO BETHLEHEM TO FIND THE OBVIOUS

Christianity is not the religion which holds that God exists. Every religion holds this dogma, whether it conceives God to be one or many. Christianity is the religion which holds that God became man, that He entered our ranks, assumed our nature, translated Himself into our idiom, "sifted Himself to suit our light," and was born in Bethlehem in a temporal generation, Who was born in eternity in an eternal generation.

When we betake ourselves to the crib on Christmas morning, it is not to see just another baby, nor even to see just another mother. This is the most different child and the most different mother who have ever existed. Nobody like them ever was before, or ever will be again. Take the mother.

Her child was born of the love of the Holy Ghost; sheer Love made her fruitful. She is the fulfillment of a thousand prophecies uttered in the Old Testament. As a special preparation for this most holy prerogative, she was herself conceived free from Original Sin, never tainted by the evil that beset our nature when Adam spoiled us all in Paradise.

A few brief notes in connection with the Lady who bends over her child with such awe and reverence on the first Christmas night, may be not unwelcome even to those who know in substance the details of the mystery. There was established between this young girl and God Himself, a sublime relationship which we call the state of Sanctifying Grace. This relationship was determined by God to be a permanent quality of human nature. Adam and Eve, the father and mother of the human family, were endowed with the gift of sanctification and were given the opportunity of establishing it as a permanent possession of mankind, and of handing it on as an heirloom to their children. God's plan was excellent and simple. By applying the gift of Sanctifying Grace to human nature at its sources, in the persons of the parent mother and father who contained potentially the natures of all human children, God could devise most generously and expeditiously to sanctify all mankind without compromising, as He never could, the gratuitous character of His gift.

But, by a most contemptible abuse of their liberty, this man and woman desecrated our nature and unsanctified it by sin. They were false to their trust and robbed the human race of the supernatural excellence which God had attached to it. We are the children of that sinful pair, and we pay the toll. We come into this world deprived of the heavenly adornment which would make us eternally desirable in the sight of God. There is a lack in us of something God's love had wanted to be there. Our nature is now crippled and

unable to achieve its primal destiny. There is a void in us, a darkness, an incapacity for fulfilling our original purpose. We bear a wound, a guilt; we are soiled with a stain, a macula, which is called Original Sin.

To restore human nature to the Divine excellence it once possessed, God became man. He wanted to redeem us and adopt us back again into our original state of Divine childhood. Nineteen hundred years ago He came to fulfill this task. He took possession of a human nature and made it his own; He came to pay the price of our ransom and be our Saviour.

Please do not think I am attempting to exaggerate this mission of Our Lord in coming into our world. About Baptism, the normal means by which a Christian is restored to the state of Sanctifying Grace, Our Lord has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." And of Sanctifying Grace, the "living water" of which He spoke to the woman of Samaria, He said: "If thou didst know the gift of God." Sanctifying Grace is no catchword. It is the fundamental benefit Christianity has to offer the world through the Incarnation. Its realization and fulfillment in the souls of men is the only reason for the existence of the Catholic Church. A sanctifying Jesus Christ has been the Catholic Church's Messias from the beginning. God did not become man to make us contented with this world; He came to make us discontented with this world. He came to amaze us with a revelation about a world to come. He came to talk about a pearl of great price, a wedding garment of incomparable beauty which humanity could put on and thus enter the wedding feast of Eternal Life.

Listen to the way Christ prayed for us to His Heavenly Father on the night before He died:

Sanctify them in truth . . . that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; . . . that they may be one as we also are one: I in them, and thou in me; . . . and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world. . . . And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

What is the meaning of this constant repetition of one . . . one . . . on Our Saviour's lips? With whom are we to be made one? With God? "Yes," said Saint Augustine, "God became man that man might become God." He became man to adopt us into the sunlight of His everlasting beatitude, to make us participators of the life of God, to unite us to the

perfection of His single nature and take us to live in eternal ecstasy with the Blessed Trinity.

To the young Mother who stands in silence and wonderment beside the manger-box in the cave of Bethlehem, this gift of Sanctifying Grace was bestowed in its fullness. Our Blessed Lady was a little Jewish girl. She lived in the northern province of Palestine, which is called Galilee, and was the only child of an aged couple, Joachim and Anna, and her name, as we know, was Mary. Nine months before her birth, Mary of Nazareth was conceived in the womb of Anna. Her physical conception occurred naturally, according to the manner of every other human child, through the humble processes of her father and mother cooperating as husband and wife. This much of her was usual and ordinary.

But being destined, as she was, to become the Mother of Jesus Christ, she was pre-sanctified for this sublime function by being given, at the first moment of her conception, the gift of Sanctifying Grace. The darkness which exists in human nature in the first phase of its development was not allowed to enter the soul of Mary. As a beautiful gesture of Divine courtesy and filial respect, Our Saviour saw to it that this maiden, from whose body He would one day derive the substance of His own, should enjoy the benefits of Redemption in a fashion all her own. At the first earliest instant when there was life in the womb of Anna, God sanctified it. He destined Mary at that moment for the Kingdom of

Heaven. This is the Immaculate Conception.

The Immaculate Conception has nothing to do, as is commonly supposed, with Our Lady's chastity, nor with the chastity of her father and mother. The Immaculate Conception refers to Our Lady's Christianity. Its meaning is best studied, not in connection with the Nativity or the Annunciation, but in connection with the third chapter of Genesis and with the discourse of Our Lord at the Last Supper; for there is a world of difference between the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and that of the Virgin Birth. The Immaculate Conception refers to Our Lady at her own birth and the sanctified condition of her soul in the nine months that preceded it. The Virgin Birth refers to her at Our Lord's birth, and to the fact that she conceived Him without the aid of man. The Immaculate Conception refers to Our Lady as a child; the Virgin Birth has to do with her as a mother. The Immaculate Conception has reference to the condition of Our Lady's soul at the instant of its creation; the Virgin Birth to the condition of her body before, during, and after the time that she became fruitful with the Divine Child. This is the woman, the miracle woman of all the centuries, who stands so quietly by her Infant in the cold of the first Christmas Eve, and at whose side stands meekly her husband, Saint Joseph, marveling at the Child of predilection which was not his own. ... ■

Read the rest on catholicism.org

Immaculate Heart of Mary School



Immaculate Heart
of Mary School
ihmsnh.org

P.O. Box 627
Richmond, NH 03470
Tel: 603-239-6495
ihmschool@catholicism.org

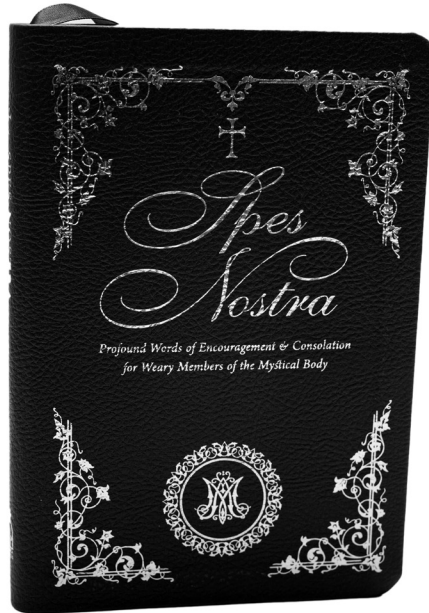
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O n the long and dusty road of life, which is not without its sorrows, tragedies, and betrayals, it is easy to feel beleaguered, beaten down, ready to give up. Often, all it takes is a timely word of truth, of hope, of strength, of comfort, to refresh us like a drink from a cool spring. For that purpose, this book is truly a godsend. It more than lives up to its subtitle, *Profound Words of Encouragement and Consolation for Weary Members of the Mystical Body*. Its pages remind us, with a well-selected abundance of ‘power quotes’ from the saints, that our heavenly Father holds us lovingly in His hands; the Lord Jesus is with us always, as He promised; and our compassionate Mother accompanies us with her attentive prayers. A treasure-trove of Christian

wisdom, sparks for igniting meditation, ammunition for the daily battle — this book could not have come at a better time!

— Dr. Peter Kwasniewski, *Tradition and Sanity*

W e all experience disappointments, frustrations, sorrows, and other assorted kinds of pain in this life of exile from our blissful heavenly homeland, often leading us to the brink of discouragement or perhaps even despair. It is at (or approaching) this perilous precipice that we most need to be arrested with the pull-back of encouragement, simply in order to persevere. In a word, we need *hope*. This book *Spes Nostra* contains, in its various sectional categories, wise advice and counsels excerpted from the luminous meditations of numerous illustrious spiritual writers. The text thus becomes a veritable pharmacopeia of remedies applicable to the various problematic contexts and situations in which we might find ourselves. It is therefore highly recommended for random reference, periodic perusal, or even a regular daily consumption of preventative medicine in sequential doses for those seeking continual uplift and edification.

— Dr. David Lang, Professor of Thomistic Philosophy at Our Lady of Grace Seminary.





Gary Potter

IGNORING CHURCH TEACHING

[Published in August 14, 2018]

Here is a question for any reader who is a lifelong Catholic younger than 50: Have you ever heard a homily preached against the evil of contraception? My guess is that you have not. I know that I never have in the fifty-three years since I came into the Church.

Yet artificial contraception, also known as family planning or birth control but which might better be called life prevention, was condemned in a papal encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, published on July 29, 1968.

What happened? With surveys for decades showing Catholics in the U.S. to be practicing life prevention at least at as great a rate as non-Catholics, how is it that *Humanae vitae* might as well never have been published? I can tell you. I do so from my memory of events as I and colleagues at *Triumph*, a Catholic monthly magazine based in Washington, D.C., reported them at the time.

The first thing to know is that a commission had been set up by Pope John XXIII and enlarged by Pope Paul VI to study the question of contraception in light of development of the Pill earlier in the sixties. In late spring word was leaked to the press that the majority of the commission favored approval of the new means of life prevention. By the end of July the real question was whether Pope Paul would go against the majority view of his own commission. As every good American knows, the majority is supposed to rule.

We didn't believe that at *Triumph*, not when it came to matters of morality. As soon as news of *Humanae vitae* reached us, we hung a hand-lettered sign from the K Street windows of our office. HABEMUS PAPAM, it said. A wire-service photographer took a picture of the sign that ran in a number of big-city newspapers around the country. I don't now remember the exact words of the wire-service caption that went with the photo, but the gist was: Unbelievably, there are some Catholics who actually favor the pope's unpopular and undemocratic edict.

Our little sign was almost immediately obscured by the kind of news that the media really wanted, expected, and were eager to broadcast. That is, two days after the encyclical's publication a couple of dozen priest-theologians, most notably Charles Curran of the Catholic University of America, bought advertising space in a Washington newspaper to proclaim their "dissent" (their word) from the document's teaching. Taking their lead from the papal commission's majority, they proclaimed, "spouses may responsibly decide according to their conscience that artificial contraception in some circumstances is permissible and indeed necessary to preserve and foster the value and sacredness of marriage."

Of course this dissent was welcome to an untold number of couples who had taken to using the Pill when it became available. That would not matter if swift action had been taken to discipline the priests and to squash their dissent.

Washington's Archbishop Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle tried. He suspended the faculties of the priests and ordered the dismissal from the university of Fr. Curran unless he recanted. Thereupon students and other CUA professors called for a strike to protest the Cardinal's "violation" of Curran's "academic freedom." The Cardinal then ordered a lock-out, effectively shutting down the university. At the same time, as ex-officio president of the university's board of trustees he called for an emergency meeting of the board, which consisted entirely of bishops.

It was a wrong move. Except for O'Boyle himself the board voted unanimously to end the lock-out and let Curran continue to teach. Catholics who cared about the welfare of the institutional Church and safeguard of her teaching now held their breath. Clearly, nothing would save the situation at this point, which is to say, save the Catholic character of what was, after all, the pontifical university in the United States, except action by Rome.

We never learned at *Triumph* how desperately, or even if, Cardinal O'Boyle sought support from Rome, but he certainly hoped action was forthcoming. It wasn't. Nothing was heard from Rome except resounding silence. To be sure, events at CUA weren't unique. Rome also faced dissent from the encyclical in Canada and several Western European countries, including from some leading prelates. It remains, with the rug pulled from under him by his brother bishops followed by silence from Rome, Cardinal O'Boyle threw in the towel. Classes resumed at CUA and Curran would remain ensconced in the faculty for a number of more years. And Catholic couples on the Pill felt free to stage their own dissent by continuing their practice of life prevention.

They might still have been diverted from their sin except for what came out of the annual meeting of the U.S. bishops in November, 1968.

It was their last annual meeting conducted behind closed doors. It was also covered by an unusually large number of reporters because the main business of the meeting was the discussion, preparation and publication of their official response to *Humanae vitae*. Since the meeting was closed to reporters, we were briefed after each session. The spokesman briefing us was an auxiliary bishop of Minneapolis-St. Paul named James Shannon. He did a fabulous job, especially at ingratiating himself with reporters from the top secular media. The result: *TIME* magazine put him on its cover as the very model of how a modern Catholic bishop should be.

Perhaps it gave him a perverse pleasure because by the end of that November he abandoned the priesthood and shortly afterward married. (At least it was to a woman.)

As for the bishops' official collegial response to Pope Paul's encyclical, they hailed it for expressing an "ideal" but basically took the line that the public had first heard months before: that whether or not a couple fulfilled the "ideal" was really up to what their conscience "told" them to do.

Seeing his authoritative teaching ignored, Pope Paul did not venture to issue another encyclical on any subject during the remaining ten years of his pontificate, and that is understandable. Nothing, not even open defiance, is more hurtful to authority than ignoring it. Defiance at least recognizes that it exists.

The lasting damage from the aftermath of *Humanae vitae* was the subsequent rise of the "cafeteria Catholic" who

thinks he may choose which Church teachings he will accept according to what his conscience "tells" him, and still remain fully Catholic.

He does not realize the teachings are of a piece, a truly seamless garment. Start pulling on one thread, the whole thing begins to unravel. It may still hang from our shoulders, but will be misshapen and not provide the cover needed through life in order to reach the end God wishes for all of us: eternity in His presence. ■

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Sacred Heart of Jesus by Norman Faucheux



Blessed Father Seelos



Saint Joan of Arc



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

As this writer has only recently become aware of the online world of YouTube videos, I am only now becoming aware of the amount of information (and misinformation) circulating online, which is apparently the main source for most people. This has become increasingly evident since the election of Cardinal Robert Prevost, now

Pope Leo XIV, to the papacy.

It is not the purpose of this article to cast aspersions on the Holy Father, but some of his actions, including blessing an oversized ice cube at an environmentalist event with Arnold Schwarzenegger, approving of limitations on the use of the term “Co-Redemptrix” for Our Lady, apparently condoning a grotesque “LGBTQ pilgrimage” to Saint Peter’s Basilica on Vatican Hill, along with a continuation of various policies of Pope Francis has resulted in consternation among many Catholics, particularly among those who genuinely love Catholic tradition.

Again, I am not here to throw rocks (or ice cubes) at the Pope, but, rather, to point out that we must not consider the papacy to be vacant in spite of it all. Too many “YouTube influencers” have apparently taken such a hostile view of the current Pope that they are even wondering if he is, indeed, the pope at all. Some have concluded categorically that he is not. If this doubt as to whether he actually is the Pope is carried to its logical conclusion, then the true Church would be invisible, consisting only of those who are the elect. Does this sound Protestant? It is, having been set forth by John Calvin in Book 4 of his “Institutes of the Christian Religion.” By contrast, for us Catholics, the Roman Pontiff is the principal of the Church’s visibility.

While most readers of the *Mancipia* are presumably familiar with Matthew 16:16-19, where Our Lord established the Papacy, along with Luke 22:31-32, in which Peter is given a role of leadership among the apostles: “...the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” If one considers the context, it is obvious that Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him (v. 34). Does this mean that Peter ceased being Pope? Hardly; how about

the other apostles when they fled? Remember that at the foot of the cross, the only apostle who returned was St. John. Our Lord certainly was aware of the frailty of man, including Popes.

Many sedevacantists rely on the writings of St. Robert Bellarmine to support their argument that a pope who espouses heresy (I am not accusing Pope Leo XIV of that) becomes, *ipso facto*, a heretic. However, familiarity with Bellarmine’s writings (he is a Doctor of the Church) shows that nowhere does he give us, as members of the faithful, the right to decide the status of the pope. It should be noted that Pope Liberius, who condemned Saint Athanasius, and Pope Honorius I, who was anathematized after his death by the Third Council of Constantinople, are both still officially listed as popes by the Church.

In so far as one’s salvation is concerned, should he become a sedevacantist, there are, of course, official pronouncements on the matter. As one example, “We say, define and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff”, as infallibly stated by Pope Boniface VIII in his *Bull Unum Sanctam*. As more food for thought, in order to receive a plenary indulgence, among other requirements, one must pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. For whose intentions would the sedevacantist pray? For the Unknown Pope?

In closing, I would like to bring to your attention one of the more ludicrous examples of falling into the error of sedevacantism. Over twenty years ago, while engaged in research, I came across the name of a man calling himself Pope Pius XIII. His name was Father Lucian Pulvermacher, a former Capuchin, who was living in Kalispell, in the wilds of western Montana. At the time, he was lamenting that only one other priest in the world had recognized his papacy (not surprising). After getting fed up with the changes in the Church after Vatican II, he had become a sedevacantist, and was later “elected Pope” by a group of other Sedevacantists. He has since gone to his reward. I will not speculate as to the reception he received from St. Peter at the pearly gates beyond suggesting that the Apostle did not recognize Father Pulvermacher as one of his successors.

In short, however one may feel about some of Pope Leo XIV’s actions, we must not enter into the rabbit hole of Sedevacantism, and we must counsel others not to do it, either. Our eternal destiny is at stake. ■



Saint Robert Bellarmine

Continued from page 3

sion on the part of the faithful. We are suffering through a regime of confusion, yet Cardinal Fernández is concerned that a beautiful title of the Holy Virgin, so often used by popes, theologians, popular devotional writers, and preachers, might be confusing.

A Maximalist to the Rescue!

In the 1955 theological manual published in Madrid as the second treatise in volume IIIA of B.A.C., *De B. Maria Virgine*, the Jesuit Mariologist, Father José Antonio de Aldama y Pruaño admirably defended a number of theses that he gathered from the writings of the popes and approved theologians who came before him. I would like simply to list these theses (which he proves at some length) so that the reader can see what was considered the norm in the scholasticism of the pre-Vatican II theological manuals, referring the reader to that work for Padre Aldama's actual arguments. It is worth noting that, at Vatican II, this Jesuit was one of the "good guys" in the wars between the Maximalists and Minimalists, as narrated by Roberto de Mattei. Here are the theses, numbered as they are in the book, with all grammatical and capitalization conventions as in the original (the previous numbers have to do with other subjects):

7. The Bl. Virgin Mary was constituted proximately and formally the spiritual mother of all men both by her consent to the Incarnation and by her compassion under the cross.
8. The Bl. Virgin Mary is said to be and in the proper sense is Mediatrix.
9. The Bl. Virgin Mary participated with Christ in the

work of redemption and therefore she is rightly called the *corredemptrix*.

10. The Bl. Virgin Mary participated in accomplishing the work of redemption principally by her virginal consent and by her maternal compassion.

It should be noted that, by "compassion," Padre Aldama means not Mary's virtuous disposition to take pity, but *Her active, willing suffering with Christ in His Passion*: He suffered His Passion; She, Her *Compassion*.

Aside from quoting many popes to support these theses, the learned Jesuit has recourse to various decrees of the then Holy Office — now called the DDF. The reader may draw his own conclusions from that fact.

Good can and does come out of evil (cf. Rom. 8:28). This document has engendered a groundswell of interest in the subject, and that is good. It is also forcing people to distinguish between the gradations of magisterial intervention and the nature of the non-infallible magisterium. I am very confident that this whole matter will be clarified in favor of Mary's Mediation and Co-Redemption when the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart, prophesied at Fatima, takes place. In the meantime, those privileged to be Mary's slaves and also Her "heel," should expect that the infernal serpent will strike at them through his earthly minions.

So be it. May God be ever glorified and the Virgin Mary ever exalted! ■

1. www.catholicism.org/second-eve.html

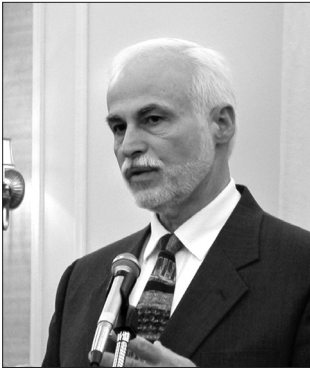
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A METHOD OF MEDITATION

A Method of Meditation: Review of *Conversation with Christ* by Peter T. Rohrbach

Some time ago, I wrote a piece about my inability to meditate, and how I have found it nearly impossible to figure out how it's done following the classic guidelines contained in

most books. To my chagrin, even reading the famous books by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila left me completely cold. As much as I studied, as much as I tried, nothing I did seemed to resemble what was described as a "meditation." Thus, I've spent my time engaged in using prayers prepared by others, reading spiritual books, and reciting vocal prayers, including the most holy Rosary, offering everything up to Our Lady, figuring this would have to do for a person like myself who, it turns out, has no real visual imagination, which these books said was a necessary requirement to make a meditation.

In a recent conversation with Sister Marie Therese, I explained to her how I had come upon a new book which, for the first time, helped me to grasp the concept of meditation, and actually to pursue it. I excitedly explained how simple it was and that this was the first time in my life I could actually engage in the practice. She suggested that I write a book review to encourage others who may have difficulties meditating as I have had for most of my life. While we both realize that many of you have already mastered some form of meditation, she felt this might be helpful for those of you who have struggled as I have.

A few months ago, our parish priest recommended to me a book I had never heard of before, entitled, *Conversation with Christ* by Peter Thomas Rohrbach, originally published in 1956 and now offered by TAN Books. After reading this short book, for the very first time, I was able to engage in what is called "meditation," because the author explains it is literally a conversation, a visit with Jesus. Once I understood this, I was astonished at how simple and effective the process could be.

The author lays out a series of steps, similar to other meditation books I have read. They are: preparation, selection of the material, the consideration, the conversation, conclusion. The preparation is simply imagining ourselves in the presence of Christ Himself. The selection of the material to be considered can be from anywhere — a book, a picture, a statue, a prayer, the Gospels. The choice is personal. The consideration is often accompanied by the six circumstantial questions of Aristotle: who, what, when, where, why and how. The conversation is the heart of the meditation, during which we are to have a friendly, unabashed conversation with Jesus, whom we know is in our presence. Though it is

recommended, the conclusion is optional in which we thank Jesus for the graces received and examine our failings, promising to do better the next time. The author stresses this process is not to be some sort of intellectual workout, but is to be an unaffected conversation between two friends.

The unique thing about this book is that the author makes everything very simple. There is no intense struggle to imagine some great scene, no need for reading lengthy passages in a book, no need for a long string of vocal prayers. In fact, there is no need for much preparation at all, as long as one can speak directly with Jesus. For someone like me, who has a very limited visual imagination and memory, this realization made all the difference in the world. For the very first time, I could actually interact with Jesus in mental prayer, something that has completely eluded me before now. How was this possible? I discovered that the conversation is the key.

Most of us have a continual chatter going on inside our heads, a sort of wandering dialogue, usually referred to as a "stream of consciousness."¹ At times, for example, if we are angry with or if we are planning to have a sensitive interaction with someone, the dialogue is focused on an imaginary conversation with that person as we are rehearsing what we will say the next time we meet him or her. The phenomenon is, in fact, so well known that James Joyce's famous (infamous?) novel entitled *Ulysses* features the inner dialogues of three individuals which form the bulk of the book. Like others, I have recognized this process for many years, but have never thought to relate it to meditation. I thought I had to progress through certain laborious steps, and these always made the process insurmountable.

It was the discovery of what Saint Teresa of Avila meant by having a "conversation" with Christ that finally opened the door for me to be able to meditate. The book explains it is elevating the normal mental dialogue we engage in every day which constitutes the heart of the process. We turn the process toward Christ, instead of some other imaginary companion — we focus on talking to Jesus. It doesn't necessarily take great pains to prepare for this, nor does it take reading deep treatises on difficult topics. It is really as straightforward as having a conversation with Jesus, as you would with any other close friend. The more one practices it, the easier it becomes. For me, even though I am in the very beginning stages, the result of starting this practice has already been most rewarding.

The author encapsulates the process as follows:

When one has begun to meet Christ daily on this level of friendship, his entire relationship to God will undergo a revolutionary alteration. Christ will no longer be an historical figure who lived some two thousand years ago. He will, instead, be a living, personal, knowable friend. And once a person arrives at a practical realization that Christ is not just *something* but rather *someone*, his whole

life will be reorganized. Religion for him will not consist in a series of “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not”; no, it will be an exciting, absorbing friendship with Christ. This is the road St. Teresa invites us to travel by engaging in mental prayer.

Needless to say, there are many other ways to approach meditation, and some of you may have found one that is fruitful for you. On the other hand, for those of you who are like me, and have struggled with mental prayer in the past, this book may be a worthwhile read. ² ■

1. Editor’s Note: On the very first page of his massive, two-volume work, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Père Réginald Garrigou-Lagrangé, O.P. (1877-1964), writes of this internal dialogue:

“As everyone can easily understand, the interior life is an elevated form of intimate conversation which everyone has with himself as soon as he is alone, even in the tumult of a great city. From the moment he ceases to converse with his fellow men, man converses interiorly with himself about what preoccupies him most. This conversation varies greatly according to the different ages of life; that of

an old man is not that of a youth. It also varies greatly according as a man is good or bad.

“As soon as a man seriously seeks truth and goodness, this intimate conversation with himself tends to become conversation with God. Little by little, instead of seeking himself in everything, instead of tending more or less consciously to make himself a center, man tends to seek God in everything, and to substitute for egoism love of God and of souls in Him. This constitutes the interior life. No sincere man will have any difficulty in recognizing it. The one thing necessary which Jesus spoke of to Martha and Mary consists in hearing the word of God and living by it.”

2. Rohrbach, Peter Thomas, *Conversation with Christ: The Teaching of St. Teresa of Avila about Personal Prayer*, TAN Books, 2012 (original copyright 1956 by Fides Publishers)

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A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

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

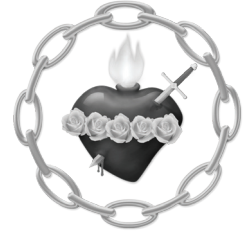
Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, *Raccolta* No. 579).

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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