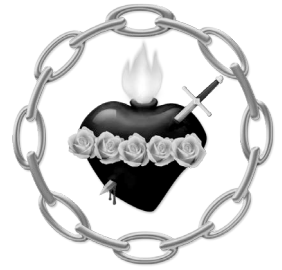


MANCIPIA

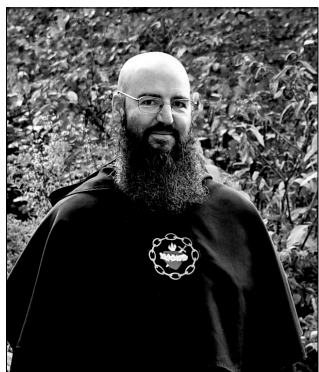
THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



July/August 2026



The Assumption of Mary



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

WHAT DOES 'THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS NEVER BEEN REVOKED' MEAN?

The following question came in through our contact page on Catholicism.org:

"Hello, among the recent mass of terms flooding my social media such as, 'The Chosen People,' 'Christian Zionism,' and 'Replacement Theology,' I

searched the Catechism to see what it had to say about this. It turns out, a lot of people use Cat. 121 to support that Jews remain God's chosen people, since the Old Covenant was never revoked. Then I read Brother André Marie's excellent article about the topic. I just am a little confused about what the Catholic Church actually teaches, as I have friends of mine asking me, and I'm not sure what to say. After reading Brother André Marie's article, 'Who are God's Chosen People?' I firmly answer that those faithful to the Church are, but where does Cat 121 come in this conversation?"

Because this is a matter of general interest, I thought I would post my reply on the site.

We faithful of the Catholic Church, by God's grace, are the "True Israel" and the "Chosen People." (To anticipate an objection, I note that all men, Jew and Gentile alike — men of "every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people" (Apoc. 14:6) — are invited into Catholic unity, so this exclusive claim has nothing to do with *racism* of any sort, including *antisemitism*.)

CCC 121 says this:

The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value,⁹² for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.

As the context shows, this passage is situating the Old Testament in the full sweep of salvation history and divine revelation. Citing *Dei Verbum*, CCC 122 notes that the books of the Old Testament "contain matters imperfect and provisional" and that they "declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men." CCC 123 makes it clear that the Church "always vigorously opposed the idea of rejecting the Old Testament under the pretext that the New has rendered it void (Marcionism)." The heresy of Marcionism rejected outright the books of the Old Testament, which the Church does not do. These holy books were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

We Catholics pray the Psalms. We read the Prophets. We accept the entire Old Testament as divine revelation. Abraham is our father.

While the Old Testament retains its permanent value and is not revoked, the Mosaic Law itself is *no longer in effect*, having been fulfilled in Christ and the New Law of the Gospel.

Speaking of the Church's relationship to the Jews, another passage of the Catechism, CCC 839, cites Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans saying "for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable." This is often misunderstood to mean that the Mosaic Law is still in effect, which it clearly is not (see the reference to the Council of Florence, below). What the passage means is that God does not repent of the gifts He gave the Jews of old, and He still calls them to believe in Christ, just as Saint Paul himself endeavored to "provoke them to emulation" (Rom. 11:14) and therefore called them into the Church. Jews have converted, and still do so, all throughout the history of the Church.

The Jews have a unique role in salvation history. Even those who have not accepted Jesus Christ have a special place as a "witness people" (Saint Augustine). In the end, the Jewish nation will be brought into the Catholic Church.

The Council of Florence taught the following:

[The Catholic Church] firmly believes, professes, and teaches that the matter pertaining to the law of the Old Testament, of the Mosaic law, which are divided into ceremonies, sacred rites, sacrifices, and sacraments, because they were established to signify something in the future, although they were suited to the divine worship



Moses holds his staff with the help of Aaron and Hur.

at that time, after our Lord's coming had been signified by them, ceased, and the sacraments of the New Testament began; and that whoever, even after the passion, placed hope in these matters of the law and submitted himself to them as necessary for salvation, as if faith in Christ could not save without them, sinned mortally. Yet it does not deny that after the passion of Christ up to the promulgation of the Gospel they could have been observed until they were believed to be in no way necessary for salvation; but after the promulgation of the Gospel it asserts that they cannot be observed without the loss of eternal salvation. All, therefore, who after that time observe circumcision and the Sabbath and the other requirements of the law, it declares alien to the Christian faith and not in the least fit to participate in eternal salvation, unless someday they recover from these errors. (Denz. 712)

According to the Council of Florence — following the universal tradition of Scripture, the Fathers, and the Scholastics — the Old Law “ceased” (*cessasse*) when the New Law of Christ was instituted. This passage from the council relies heavily on Saint Thomas Aquinas — some passages are close paraphrases — who divided the Old Law into the moral, ceremonial and judicial precepts. The moral law, which is continued in the New Testament, is nothing other than the natural law. The ceremonial and juridical precepts both ceased with the Passion of Christ (see, ST Ia IIae, Q. 103,

A. 4 ad 1 for the ceremonial and Ia IIae Q 104, A. 3 for the judicial precepts). To Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine, the observance of the Old Law's ceremonies was “*neither dead nor deadly*” before the Passion of Christ, “*dead but not deadly*” during the time in between the Passion and the promulgation of the Gospel, and finally, “*dead and deadly*” after the promulgation of the Gospel. For this reason, it has always been regarded as mortally sinful for Catholics to practice Jewish rites (e.g., a Passover Seder).

For further reading go to tinyurl.com/mancipiajuly:

A Slow Reading of Romans XI

Who are God's Chosen People?

The Heresy of Dual-Covenant Theology

Catholic Truth and the Salvation of Souls are at Stake

The Jewish Mystery and the Universal Church

Why Modern Israel is Not Biblical Israel

Two Reconquest Episodes on Christian Zionism

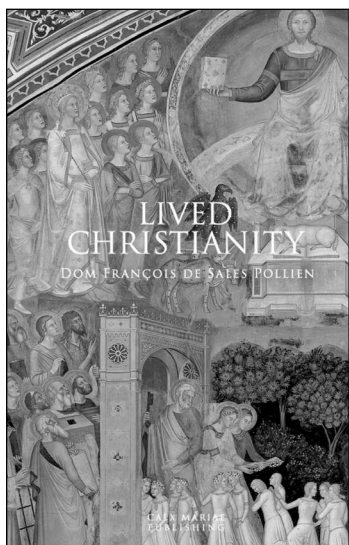
The Truth Behind Zionism in U.S. Politics: Mike Church & Brother André Marie

The Jewish Nation will Enter the Church

▪ Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.

Lived Christianity

By Dom Francis de Sales Pollien



A classic on the spiritual life and the quest for holiness. “To what height the saints have risen! Undoubtedly, not all of them have done the full work of their purification here below. In some, there may be some part left to do in Purgatory. But many have reached the highest peak in this life and entered Heaven at the moment of their death. And as for those in whom a small part of the work was still left to do, they had nevertheless travelled the path to its greatest extent. It goes without saying that they had fully carried out the first part of Christian life — God first — and also that they were already far ahead in the second — God alone. This is why they are so great! They had faith and reason, and they lived according to their faith and reason ... They were men like you, with the same passions and nature, as well as with the same reason and faith. And they knew how to rise above their passions, to live according to their reason and faith. They were men! ... And will you be a man? A Christian? A saint? Do you have faith?”

193 pages, Softcover **\$20.00** Go to store.catholicism.org/lived-christianity.html

CONVENT CORNER



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

HOW DESCRIBE HELL?

What *is* — the mind was made to understand,
For nothings nurture not the nascent thought.
While sums are simply cookies in each hand,
Subtraction makes much less sense to a tot.
They think of darkness, ugliness, and sin
As things that are, when they're but absences.
The essence of the hole of hell lies in
It's missing unity with Him Who Is.
This suffering of sinners without end
Our Mamma to three children did explain
In terms their growing minds could comprehend,
Like *too much* heat and *too much* fire and pain.
Her Dante got the harder truth of it —
No movement, heat, or love — a frozen pit.

A MYSTERY IN MATTHEW 1:19

When understanding's wanting, set your sight
On likenesses, and clues you can procure.
A look at manly men may shed some light
On Joseph's noble heart and motives pure.
The sensitive, protective sort of man
Will always feel it keenly when his bride
Is seen or judged as somehow lesser than
What he knows her to be from the inside.
A faithful man abandons not his wife,
Whose very honor pleads for him to stay.
Contrarily, he takes delight when life
Demands he stand beside her in the fray.
And so "to put away" we may be sure
Was Joseph's way to keep his Sweet secure.

BOOKS OF THE SLAVES OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY IN OHIO



By The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

This book tells the life of Saint Joseph, and of his great power and virtues, mostly through the writings of the saints. Includes prayers to Saint Joseph and some stories.

Softcover, 48 pages.

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1 black and white.

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When Our Lady Closes a Door... She Infallibly Opens a Window!

The Sad News: IHM School Will Not Be Open Next Year

- Thirty-five years
- Dozens of boarders
- Sixty-seven graduates
- Hundreds of children
- *Millions of memories*



Immaculate Heart of Mary School will not be in operation for the 2026-2027 school year because of a lack of students.



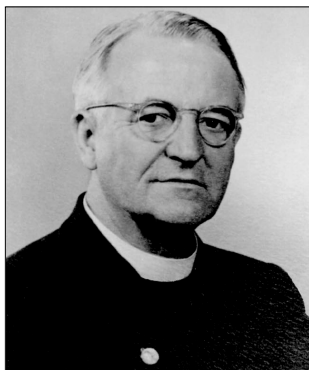
The Happy News: The Sisters Have Big Plans

- Increased missionary work
- More frequent speaking engagements
- Completion of publishing projects
- Heightened focus on Community Life and Prayer



Thank you for all your support.
The Sisters and students are most grateful!





Father Leonard Feeney, MICM

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

HOW YOU LOST YOUR FAITH

For the past dozen years I have been noticing that every now and then, with sometimes a six months', never less than a twelve months', regularity in one of the in-between magazines in this country — and by an "in-between" magazine I mean that sort in which you sense here and there a certain amount of stale Christian sentiment, but never an iota of Christian dogma (the names are too obvious to mention) — there appears an intimate confession-story from the pen of some lapsed Catholic telling how he lost his Faith.

These revealing *Apologias* originate usually from one of two sources: a) from the writer of a recent lubricious novel which has shocked his co-religionists and won him a certain amount of temporary kudos with the devourers of scandal (always finding in the moral defection of a Catholic, who once believed in something as sublime as the Virgin Mary, a little more spice, let us say, than in the loss of faith by a Holy Roller who never believed in considerably more than exercise); and b) an unconscionable nobody, whom nobody has ever heard of before, or ever wants to hear from again, but who serves "the cause" for the moment by making a display in public of the way in which his religious convictions went to the dogs because of the unreasonableness or cruelty of some item of Catholic teaching.

One's first reaction to such an exhibition is always noticeably this: that the magazine which takes and pays for the article is not in the least sympathetic with the author as a person, only as an exhibitionist. The editors have not the slightest charity for or sympathy with what the lapsed Catholic once believed, nor are they in the least concerned about the fact that even in his present petulance and revolt there may still be some point of sensitiveness in which he would not want to be too far pressed. All they look to is the result. "Here is another Catholic," they say, "who in his youth was an angelic little altar boy. See what he has to say for himself now! We loathe the dog. We would not tolerate him for ten minutes as a regular contributor to our columns. The fellow has no style, no competence, no art. But he does serve a purpose. And so we will allow him this one chance to vent his spleen. And it will give us the feeling of having obliquely rebutted the intellectual challenge of the Catholic Church, from which we must veer away by every subterfuge we can. Here is something we picked up in the waste can outside the door of a Catholic sacristy. Can you ask us to believe that it ever smelled sweetly? Or that anything in the place it has been discarded from is more agreeably redolent?" . . . This is invariably the attitude of the in-between magazines who stage once a year a piece of exhibitionism by a lapsed Catholic.

Now, in the type of article I am describing you will find,

though you may have to wade through a few pages before you come to it (or even through a few installments), that the outstanding grievance against the Catholic Church is persistently, monotonously, always, the doctrine of Hell. There may be other, minor resentments, but these can be waived aside. The sore spot, the inevitable and inescapable sore spot, is our teaching on Eternal Punishment. And there is probably nothing in the world so pitiable as the spectacle of a cashed-in Catholic endeavoring to explain to a public that never believed in anything supernatural the supposed terror aroused in his mind as a child when he had to face the fact of Damnation and devils as propounded — the example chosen is always grotesque — by some nun who told the boys in her class that if they threw stones at the church they would incur God's eternal displeasure; or of some missionary priest who related in a sermon how a young boy, given to practices of impurity, saw the Devil appear at his bedside the night before he died to tell him that forevermore he would be writhing in pitch and blackness, and salted eternally with flame.

Now, I am greatly skeptical of statements attributing one's religious and psychological collapse to a mental trauma occasioned by hearing in one's youth of the horrors of Eternal Punishment. I cannot believe that these authors were constituted so vastly different from myself and my best boyhood friends, to say that the Hell-stories they heard drove them out of the Faith, and the Hell-stories we heard kept us in. And did they keep us in? Precisely. I do not say that

Hell — and the fact that all bullies, if they went on being bullies, would some day at God's hand pay for the cruelties...

they were always the ideal form in which to present Hell to a child's imagination, and there may have been on occasion a superstitious excess (an excess which is admirably removed from the excellent Catechism instruction which is imparted to Catholic children in our schools today). But the horror stories we heard about Hell, when they were such, were on the whole eminently salutary. And I will tell you why.

A boy's problem, if I know anything about boys through having been one myself, is *not* the fear of retribution for sin. A boy has a terrible sense of justice. His problem is a fear that there will be *no* retribution at all. Retribution against whom? Against those living nightmares of everyone's childhood: the bullies.

I have seen a bully take hold of the hair of a little girl, twist it, and torture her until she nearly fainted. I have seen a bully on a skating pond hurl a rock with a hockey-stick against the leg of a little girl skater, cut her stocking and

draw blood. I have seen a young boy, who tried to protect his sister from the foul language of a neighborhood gang, jumped on by a group of them and knocked unconscious in the street. I have myself been chased into an alley and unmercifully beaten for nearly half an hour by five bullies for having done no more than appear in a tough neighborhood with a violin under my arm, on the way to take my lesson. The violin was taken as a symbol that I was a sissie. This is not one tenth of the horrors I have seen.

I remember there was in our town a very nice bakeshop where one could buy a very especial kind of cream-cake. Not the inferior sort, full of milk and corn starch which cost only five cents, but a superior brand, costing ten cents, prepared with a fluffy crust and stuffed full of pure whipped cream.

On a certain Holy Saturday afternoon (Sister had told us that we should fast from sweets during Lent, in honor of Our Lord's Passion; she had also informed us, to our immense delight, that Lent ended precisely at twelve noon on Holy Saturday), another boy and myself, richer because of our penances by thirty cents, entered the bake-shop described above, and purchased three of these luscious cream-cakes. The lady deposited them in a bag. We smiled, thanked her, and walked out of the shop . . . and right into the arms of the bullies! (It was not that they were so formidable individually. I once had the pleasure in single combat of breaking one of their noses with my fist. But they always traveled in gangs.) The bullies seized us, pinned our arms behind our backs, punched us a great deal, stole our cakes, blew wind into the bag, and exploded it in our faces.

And what was my only comfort, my rampart, my safeguard when, on the nights following such scenes, I lay in bed, tried to put the world's injustice out of my head and get to sleep? Hell! That was my comfort. Hell — and the fact that all bullies, if they went on being bullies, would some day at God's hand pay for the cruelties they had inflicted on the innocent children I loved.

Nor would it have done me any good in those days to have had Hell depicted to me merely as a place where one incurred "the loss of the Beatific Vision." A boy's theology must be imaginative, just as all his stories about any event. Jack must be the Giant Killer if he is to receive any attention at all. So, Hell must be a place in which you suffer in terms of something you know *is* suffering. And fire was a splendid instrument for that. "The bullies will be burned" was infinitely more comforting than "they will not be considered nice little boys by God." And if I had not known that the bullies would be burned, would I have ever got to sleep at all?

I am not in favor of grotesque descriptions of Hell that outstrip sound theology in their extravagance. And I am all too conscious of the danger of injuring the imagination of a child with details of too much horror. But Hell *is* a place of horror, and was described so in no unmistakable terms

by Our Lord, Whose great fondness was for little children. And I was always taught that I could expect with completest confidence that One so merciful and forgiving as He would assuredly save me from Hell if I did not desert Him by joining the ranks of the bullies.

Another thing I discovered as a child, all by myself. If you were to suppose that our religious teachers were allowing us to be committed to Hell for minor and pardonable faults, all out of proportion with the enormity of the punishment to be received (let us say, such as "throwing stones at the Church window," or "giving way to desires against holy purity"), was it not strange that the very ones who *did* throw stones at the Church window, and who *did* show by their language and the writings they inflicted on the walls of latrines that their desires were reekingly impure, were the very ones who were also the bullies, trying to tear the hair off the heads of poor little girls?

I must confess that in later years I have wanted to tone down somewhat a few of the descriptions of Hell that I heard or read as a child. Having been on many occasions perilously near being committed there forever, naturally I have wanted to furniture the place with as many comforts as the statements of Revelation might permit. It has always become more important to me of late to view my Eternal Damnation in terms of the loss of the Beatific Vision, which is Hell's essential sanction.

But in childhood it was not quite so. And the reason I did not lose my Faith during childhood is because no one ever does. One loses it later on in life, by willfulness and sin. Whereupon the temptation is to become retroactive. Never, of course, to ascribe anything to one's own fault; but rather to the conditions of one's childhood. One can be induced to recall, with the aid of a psychiatrist, how one was once frightened by a rat, which accounts for one's emotional instability; and then, of course, the horrible story of Dives and Lazarus related by gruesome little Sister Genevieve, which was the root cause of one's religious collapse.

Then there is left only to doctor up a story about one's spiritual awakening to the absurdities of the Catholic Faith, and sell it to one of the in-between magazines. They will take one about once a year. ■ From *You'd Better Come Quietly*.

SLAVES OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

PUSH BACK AGAINST FALSE CLAIMS BY THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

The following is the text of a press release we published on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 4, 2026.

With the release of a new report today documenting their relations with Church authorities, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are pushing back against a false narrative constructed by these same authorities to discredit their apostolate.

The Slaves, located at Saint Benedict Center in Richmond, New Hampshire, are one of the traditional Catholic religious communities descended from the followers of the late Father Leonard Feeney.

Repeated attempts by the Slaves to receive official recognition from the Church have been rebuffed by the Diocese of Manchester, under the leadership of Bishop Peter Libasci and his Judicial Vicar, Father Georges de Laire.

These longstanding, good-faith efforts at reconciliation have been met with draconian canonical measures, a campaign of vilification in the Catholic and secular media, a plethora of wild and unfounded charges, and the false claim that the Holy See has condemned the doctrinal position of the Slaves on the perennial Catholic teaching of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — outside the Church there is no salvation.

The history of this controversy reveals however, a record of facts which contradicts the false narrative contrived by the leadership of the Manchester Diocese:

- In 1988, during the pontificate of Pope Saint John Paul II, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then under the leadership of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — the future Pope Benedict XVI — stated that the “strict,” traditional interpretation of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* could be held by faithful Catholics.
- That statement has never been revoked, and became the basis for the canonical regularization of two religious communities in the Diocese of Worcester, which remain in good standing today.
- The truth of that statement was recalled and reaffirmed in 2010 by Manchester Bishop John McCormack when he accepted the Profession of Faith made by the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and assigned a diocesan priest to say Mass and hear confessions for them.
- At the time, the Holy See encouraged Manchester

to go further, recommending both the erection of Saint Benedict Center’s chapel as a public oratory and recognition of the Slaves as a Public Association of the Faithful.

All of this changed roughly two years after the appointment of Bishop Peter Libasci as Ordinary of the Diocese of Manchester in 2011, with his appointment of Father Georges de Laire as Judicial Vicar in 2013.

Years of progress towards canonical approval ground to a halt. In its place, a regime of unrelenting official hostility was imposed.

Appeals to the Holy See under Pope Francis were of no avail. After a Vatican official declared, in 2016, that one observation in a letter from the Slaves was “unacceptable” (a term that is neither a canonical nor a theological censure in the Catholic Church), Father de Laire publicly misrepresented the facts, claiming that the entire doctrinal position of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was, based upon this Vatican official’s statement, “incompatible with the official teachings of the Catholic Church.”

This false claim became the pretext for the imposition of the 2019 *Precepts of Prohibition* by the diocese — harshly oppressive canonical measures clearly intended to isolate and suppress a religious community whose origins can be traced back more than three quarters of a century. The incongruity of this is manifest in the canonical approbation of two communities in the Worcester Diocese who hold to the same doctrinal position.

No tactic to discredit the Slaves is, apparently, beneath Father de Laire, including the vicious calumny he made to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and then leaked to the mainstream media, that a novice in the community was being held against her will.

The story of the relationship between the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Diocese of Manchester, under its current leadership, is one of good faith met with apparent ill will, of forbearance treated with contempt, and of candor dismissed with misinformation.

Now, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary wish to make known their story to the Church, to the faithful, and to secular society with the release today of a 4,800-word document entitled “‘Unacceptable’: Did the CDF Censure Saint Benedict Center’s Beliefs in 2016?”

It is a truth worth telling.

Read the full story: ‘Unacceptable’: Did the CDF Censure
Saint Benedict Center’s Beliefs in 2016?
Go here: tinyurl.com/falsenarrativeonsbc or scan the code.



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For more information and to register:
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Or call at (603) 239-6485, extension 1

Saint Benedict Center attire required.

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

For lodging information go to the link above. All conference meals—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—are catered; while Friday’s dinner menu varies, Saturday’s dinner will always feature steak.

To complement our meals, we are pleased to provide wine and our own homemade beer served on tap.

As a special thank you for attending, all registrants are eligible for an exclusive **50% discount** on the full set of conference audio or video recordings on flash drive. You may pre-order your set in person using the sign-up sheet available at our conference, or place your order online using the code CONFERENCE2026.



Br. John Marie Vianey, MICM,
Tert.

PREFECT'S COLUMN

FOR THOSE WHO ARE ON A SHIP IN A GREAT STORM

It would be foolish not to recognize that these are wicked times. Evil abounds in almost every aspect of our lives. And, as Our Lord told the Apostles, the harvest is great, but few are the laborers. Jesus also warned that many and great are the obstacles in the way of salvation, and how few will be the number of the elect.

These teachings should not discourage us, but rather encourage us to be among the few and within the elect.

If you have not read the book, I strongly suggest you make *The Challenge of Faith* part of your daily reading program. This is the small book of very rich meditations by Dr. Fakri Maluf — the late Brother Francis, our founding Superior here at Saint Benedict Center in Richmond, N.H. A daily dose of about one or two pages will provide you with insights, knowledge, and simple Catholic gems that you will find very helpful in your spiritual journey. The little volume is packed with wisdom. Some priests read it daily.

Here are two numbered meditations from entry fifty-six, on "Redemption":

5. Jesus made it possible for us, not merely to imitate His work, but to co-operate with Him, as needing our help to reach more souls. Even our presence at Mass is made valuable.

6. Redemption is abundant with God; but He can always use more hands to pass it around.

There is another small book that can similarly be read in one- to two-page passages daily, to help keep our minds fixed on peace — an important matter so we do not lose that precious commodity in the midst of all of the business and insanity going on in the world around us. The book is *Spiritual Diary — Daily Meditations for the Year*. Both books are available in our bookstore.

The May 30 Reflections read thus:

To maintain our soul in a state of peace, it suffices to perform all our actions in God's presence as though He Himself had commanded us to do them. — Saint Francis de Sales.

This is the reason why Saint John Berchmans always did everything well and on every occasion was invariably unperturbed. Before doing anything he always prayed to God for guidance and then remained in His presence while performing the action.

Here are some other recommendations that can help each of us on a day-to-day basis.

Firstly, if you will place yourself in God's Hands from the moment you wake up until you retire, you will find graces and solace in your life. God loves us so much that He has assigned each of us a Guardian Angel. So, why not pray to him, speak to him, listen to him, be guided by him?

One of the Fathers of the desert was asked how he managed



to lead a life always so well ordered and serene. He answered, "I often turn to my Guardian Angel who is always at my side. He assists me in my every need and tells me what to do and say in every situation. Hence, I have a holy fear and respect for him which keeps me ever on the watch to avoid saying or doing anything to displease him" (*Daily Meditations*).

Establish within your life the habit of prayerfulness. It is one of the foundations of holiness. "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Matt. 5:48*).

In his excellent book, *A Novena of Holy Communions*, Father Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D., writes this about the benefits of prayer:

O Lord, Thou hast given me prayer as an unfailing means of salvation and holiness, and **Thou didst promise that my prayers would be heard.** "Ask and it shall be given to you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (*Matt. 7:7-8*). "All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you." (*Mark 11:24*). But this will happen **on the condition that I abide in Thee** [live in the state of Sanctifying Grace], for Thou also did say, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (*John 15:7*).

Of course, the highest of all prayers is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Our Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest and Victim, offers Himself through the Holy Ghost to the Father, rendering to God the purest and highest adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and petition. So, if it is at all possible, attend the traditional Mass daily. I learned this lesson

from an aunt who was a daily communicant. Should you miss a Mass on one day, just attend the next one. God knows when you are old, ill, or employed and cannot attend. When you die it is those Masses you attended and Communions you received that will answer for your frailties.

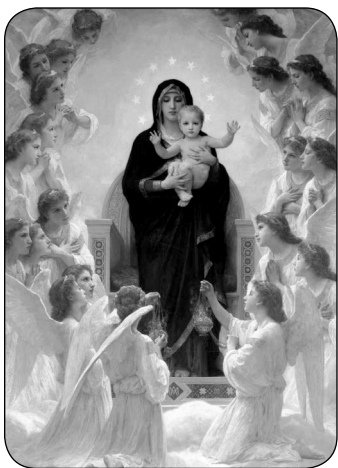
"When Mass is being celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the Divine Victim immolated on the altar" said Saint John Chrysostom.

"If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy" said Saint Jean Marie Vianney.

Read that again, "If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy." The Mass should be the center of our Catholic lives as we receive the gift of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Why would we want to miss assisting at a Mass we can attend, even on a day when it is not a strict obligation?

Those of us who want to work for the restoration of Catholic doctrine and the conversion of America to the one, true Church, should be living the interior life of union with Our Lord. If we do so, our work will be blessed because we are doing it in union with Him. ■

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



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DOJ Indicts Anti-Catholic Southern Poverty Law Center — Says SPLC Was a Scam — Paid Extremist Groups to Foment Hate — Then Fundraised off Incidents!

The following is a Catholic Action League of Massachusetts news release... April 22, 2026.

The Catholic Action League of Massachusetts today is applauding the decision of the Trump Administration's U.S. Department of Justice to indict the notoriously anti-Catholic Southern Poverty Law Center.

On April 21st, a federal grand jury in the Middle District of Alabama delivered an eleven count indictment against the SPLC --- six counts of wire fraud, four counts of bank fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

The indictment alleged that the SPLC funneled more than \$3 million to members of white supremacist organizations and other extremist groups, including the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party.

The SPLC claimed it was only paying informants, but it created dummy corporations to shield the payments from donors.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said "The SPLC was not dismantling these groups. It was instead manufacturing the extremism it purports to oppose by paying sources to stoke racial hatred."

The SPLC was founded in 1971, by Morris Dees, Joseph Levin and Julian Bond, ostensibly to support civil rights and expose violent extremist groups.

In recent years however, it has waged a campaign of demonization against such mainstream conservative groups as the Family Research Council, the Alliance Defending Freedom, Turning Point USA, Liberty Counsel and Moms For Liberty.

The SPLC has demonstrated a particular animus against traditional Catholics who attend the old Latin Mass.

The Southern Poverty Law Center was the source for the infamous, 2023 FBI Richmond memo, which called for the surveillance of traditional Catholics as prospective "white nationalists" and "violent extremists."

The memo, which was retracted and disavowed by the Bureau after it was leaked to the press by a whistleblower, identified nine traditional Catholic organizations as hate groups which it recommended for "assessment," "mitigation," and "source recruitment."

The memo claimed that "Radical Traditional Catholics" were marked by an "adherence to anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ and white supremacist ideology."

Included among the footnotes in the memo was a

direct copy of the SPLC list of "Radical Traditional Catholicism Hate Groups," which the SPLC said "may make up the largest single group of serious anti-Semites in America."

Catholic Action League Executive Director C. J. Doyle made the following comments:

The SPLC is a lucrative bunco scheme which monetizes left-wing paranoia about conservative Christians.

Lucrative indeed! The revenue of the SPLC in 2024 was in excess of \$129 million, while it boasted assets of nearly \$787 million.

Apparently, for the fundraising purposes of the SPLC, the demand for hate groups has outrun the supply.

With the modern implosion and marginalization of the KKK and the American Nazi Party, financial interest impelled the SPLC to target mainstream conservatism, and then traditional Catholicism.

Now, the SPLC is funding its own hate groups to raise money off of them.

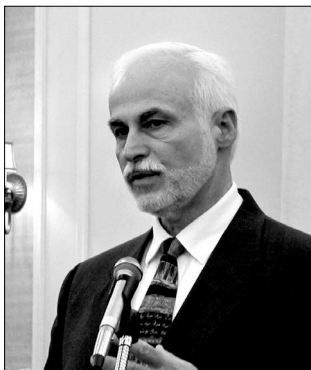
One of the Catholic victims of SPLC disinformation was the traditional order, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, located at the Saint Benedict Center, in Richmond, New Hampshire.

Among the absurdities about them peddled by the SPLC were claims that the nuns practiced martial arts, the brothers carried rifles with night vision scopes, and that automatic weapons fire could be heard coming from the monastery grounds. [See our response on our site — Br. André Marie, MICM.]

It should, by now, be clear to any honest observer, that SPLC is a collection of sociopaths, who lie recklessly and unscrupulously, defaming and endangering innocent people, to line their own pockets.

It is a confidence game and a hate group, itself, and it ought to be shut down.

The Department of Justice is to be commended for finally exposing this fraud.



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

JOSEF PIEPER'S ABUSE OF LANGUAGE, ABUSE OF POWER: A MODERN ILLUSTRATION

Brother Francis insisted that, for the Crusade of the Saint Benedict Center to be successful, everyone needed to be of like mind, to be part of the same school of thought, and that school of thought must be entirely focused on finding the truth. If

we are to have any hope of succeeding in our quest to restore the One True Church and all of its doctrines, beginning with *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*, nothing less is acceptable, nothing else will be effective. Fortunately, his philosophy lectures were recorded, along with other courses he gave, all of which are solidly Catholic and which manifest clearly the "mind of the Center." I would like to touch upon a mortal enemy of such thought — *sophistry*.

Just as a review, a *sophism* is defined as reasoning that seems plausible on a superficial level but is actually unsound; a fallacious argument meant to deceive. *Sophists* are those who use such arguments. *Sophistry* is what they engage in. The fallacious arguments they employ are called *sophistical*. In Josef Pieper's book, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power*¹, they are all part of what he calls the "abuse of language." It is language that is used in any way that does not advance or search for the truth, language that is used not to communicate but to manipulate. Unfortunately, our modern age is drowning in sophistry.

Brother Francis always decried the Sophists of all eras, particularly those from the modern age, when men who should have known better — who had been given the truth, both human and divine — chose instead to obfuscate it and promote error. When dealing with the Sophists of the early ages, before Jesus came to earth, Brother pointed out their errors, but treated them more-or-less academically. However, when dealing with modern Sophists, he gave them no quarter. This is the type of sophistry we will consider in this article.

Josef Pieper explains that the purpose of language is to conform to reality, to express the truth and to communicate that truth to someone else. He says, "The dignity of the word, to be sure, consists in this: through the word is accomplished what no other means can accomplish, namely, communication based on reality." Whenever someone uses language to distort the truth, to flatter or mislead to gain some advantage or to get money, it becomes sophistry. Even if the language is beautiful, if it is not conveying the truth, it remains sophistry, and in fact, the use of elevated language itself can be a means of distorting the truth. When someone engages in sophistry, the desire for power is most often behind the manipulation of words.

Recently, an example of this sort of gross sophistry has

been exposed. It is the case of a group that pretends to defend the downtrodden, those groups of individuals who are discriminated against or being treated unfairly. The Southern Poverty Law Center's blatant use of lies, and not just lies, but actually going so far as to fund those very groups it pretends to expose so that it can use diatribe against these groups as a way to raise money, has become public knowledge. One needs to spend a few moments contemplating this in order to let the gravity of this sophistry sink in. It's one thing to create a "straw man" argument, but the SPLC has taken it to a new level of depravity, by actually funding the "evil" groups it pretends to "expose."² As Pieper says: abuse of language — abuse of power.

Pieper points out that technology has made it possible to multiply the ill effects of sophistry. No longer does a single person simply stumble on a propaganda pamphlet or book of bad philosophy and share it with a few of his friends, but, nowadays, after he stumbles upon it, he places the sophistries on the internet, which are then shared and re-shared *ad infinitum*, with an impact that was not thinkable in the past. As Pieper says, "It is entirely possible that the true and authentic reality is being drowned out by the countless

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superficial information bits noisily and breathlessly presented in propaganda fashion. Consequently, one may be entirely knowledgeable about a thousand details and nevertheless, because of ignorance regarding the core of the matter, remain without basic insight....the place of authentic reality is taken over by a factious reality...a *pseudoreality*, deceptively appearing as being real, so much so that it becomes almost impossible any more to discern the truth.... The sophists fabricate a fictitious reality."³

On top of all this, the world is undergoing the so-called "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) revolution. This is where computer technology, using high speed calculations, draws upon multiple sources of information at once and translates them into language. AI brings sophistry into the modern age and is of a different strength — more powerful, more attractive, and potentially more devious. AI is replacing the real culture of living human beings that used to train the children. AI is also replacing their jobs and recent research shows it is actually changing the structure of the brain.

A problem when using AI is that people's brains become lazy far more quickly than they realize. In fact, studies show

that the brains of those who depend on AI and do not use it simply as a tool to begin their research are actually rewired and work differently. At the same time, because using AI gives them the impression that they have competence, users of AI gain a certain over-confidence. Research shows people who are dependent on AI to assist them in writing papers, or doing research, or performing their jobs are actually losing their ability to think and to perform. In fact, they are losing the skills that tied their minds to reality and now, because of the ease with which AI performs complicated tasks, they believe they know more than they do and that they have skills they do not possess. They are losing their ability to evaluate, to judge, and to determine what is true or not. But instead of recognizing this as a problem, they actually believe they are more competent than they were before AI and are now possessed of the foolish confidence of a beginner in any field who only finds out how much he does not know after he gains some experience.

According to modern author, Tom Slater, AI, if not treated with extreme but healthy skepticism, can be like sophistry on steroids; in the end, it will leave many people unable to think for themselves or to exercise certain skills, although they are completely (and falsely) convinced that this is not the case.⁴ In other words, the sophistry will have actually distorted their very apparatus of thought, their ability to receive the truth; their minds will no longer conform to reality.

Slater says: “The crucial near-term risk is not that AI makes people less intelligent in any simple sense. It is that it creates what researchers call ‘illusions of understanding.’ That is the belief that you understand more than you do, that you have considered all possibilities when you haven’t, and that your judgement is objective when it is being shaped by the system you are relying on. These illusions are invisible

Technology giveth something but technology also taketh something away...

to those experiencing them.... You cannot fix a problem that the people affected by it are confident does not exist.”⁵

Joseph Pieper died in 1997, long before the current AI technology existed (though it *was* the goal all along in the computer world). It is noteworthy that much of what Pieper writes about the abuse of language can be applied to these AI “large language models” (LLMs), which reduce reality to probability-derived math problems processed by computer machine language and regurgitated to the user as a pile of pleasant-sounding mind slop. Pieper writes, “...the general public is being reduced to a state where people not only are unable to find out about the truth but also become unable even to *search* for the truth because they are satisfied with deception and trickery that have determined their convictions, satisfied with a fictitious reality created by design through the abuse of language. This, says Plato, is the worst thing

that the sophists are capable of wreaking upon mankind by their corruption of the word.”⁶

So with this hyper-charged mechanism for sophistry, what is a reasonable person to do? How does he protect himself from being sucked into the convenient vortex of AI sophistry? Josef Pieper gives us a general direction: “In this respect we are well able to pronounce the general principle and at the same time to be very specific: opposition is required, for instance, against every partisan simplification, every ideological agitation, every blind emotionality; against seduction through well turned yet empty slogans, against autocratic terminology with no room for dialogue, against personal insult as an element of style (all the more despicable the more sophisticated it is), against the language of evasive appeasement and false assurance..., and not least against the jargon of the revolution, against categorical conformism, and categorical nonconformism....”⁷

Practically, everyone who wants to retain his faculties and not be enervated by the siren call of modern technology, including Artificial Intelligence, needs to force himself to do things that are uncomfortable and apparently not as easy and efficient as inserting a phrase into an AI application. For example, in small things, one can take charge: such as performing arithmetic calculations in one’s check book rather than using an electronic calculator, such as forcing oneself to write his own material and do his own research, even if AI is used as a starting point, instead of relying on AI to provide an easy answer.

Slater says, “The people who will thrive are not those who use AI the most, but those who can still think without it. The institutions that will matter are not those that adopt AI fastest, but those that preserve the human capabilities AI cannot replace.” While Slater is speaking of the effects of AI on the brain, the same applies to the level of sophistry being spun by such systems. Only those who step back and continue to do their own thinking will have any chance at all to avoid being swept away in the flood of sophistry.

In an ironic demonstration showing the concerns about an even greater danger of sophistry, AI wrote its own examples for a book about AI. Recently, Steve Rosenbaum, the author of a book about AI, entitled *The Future of Truth*, discovered that quotes he used were actually AI fabrications. An article about the problem noted: “The author of a nonfiction book about the effects of artificial intelligence on truth acknowledged on Monday that he had included numerous made-up or misattributed quotes concocted by A.I.”⁸ This demonstrates the power of AI to create sophistry on a level never before experienced by man. AI is not real language, but (to quote Brother Francis) parades around as if it is: an ultimate sophistry.

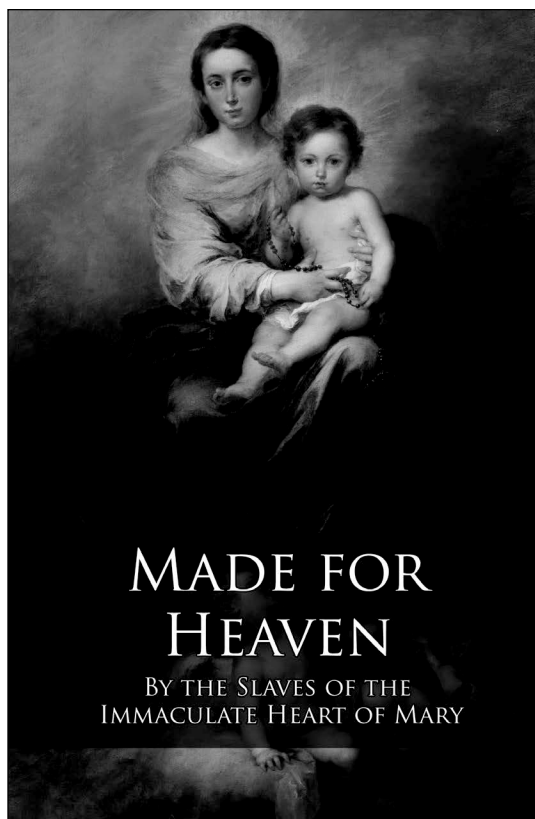
All of this is important because the abuse of language becomes the abuse of power. In his 1994 book, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, author Neal Postman states prophetically: “To this day, and notwithstanding the individuality of authors, there is a tendency to believe what appears in print. Indeed, wherever the mark of a unique individual is absent

from the printed page, as in text books and encyclopedias, the tendency to regard the printed page as a sacrosanct voice of authority is almost overwhelming. What is being said here is that typography is by no means a neutral conveyor of information.”⁹ If this is true of print, we can only imagine the power of videos and podcasts. When we consider that now, much of this language is being generated by a machine that is pumping out sophistry at a level previously unheard of, it is easier to see the problem. In a C-Span interview, Postman added, “Technology redefines our language. It gives us different meanings of older words and very often we are not aware as we should be of how that process is working. ... All technological change is a Faustian bargain. Technology giveth something but technology also taketh something away, and not always in equal measure.... It is never one sided.” Postman’s comments support Josef Pieper’s contention: abuse of language...abuse of power.

It seems to me that, despite the attractiveness of ease which is offered by technological sophistry such as AI, the same universal conditions apply that resulted from the fall of Adam and Eve: “In the *sweat* of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return” (Gen. 3:19). To avoid the increasing seductiveness of the sophistries offered by today’s technology and hold to the truth, one must return to the path set for us by God in the beginning: that of toil, of work, of slogging our way through problems and difficulties. Unless we take the more difficult path, while constantly asking Jesus, Mary and Josef for their help and guidance, we are helpless in the face of the tsunami of soph-

istry which is headed our way. ■

1. Pieper, Josef, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power* 1992, Ignatius Press
2. One thing needs to be made clear: the Southern Poverty Law Center has funded groups like the “Aryan Nation” and the “Ku Klux Klan” but has never provided money to other groups it has attacked, including all those that are Traditional Catholics.
3. Piper, Josef, *Ibid.* p. 33-34
4. “AI isn’t coming for your job. It’s coming for your mind,” at bailliegifford.com
5. Slater, *Ibid.*
6. Pieper, Josef, *Ibid.* p. 35
7. Pieper, Josef, *Ibid.*, p. 39
8. “Book on Truth in the Age of A.I. Contains Quotes Made Up by A.I.,” at nytimes.com. Editor’s note: We here at Saint Benedict Center have used the best of AI LLMs for research purposes, and have discovered such fabrications, called “hallucinations” in the (generous) professional AI jargon. These include completely fabricated passages from St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* that appear remarkably convincing. When “confronted” with the counterfeit nature of the material, the LLM will, strangely, become *obsequiously apologetic*. This has happened so often that we developed a policy of “don’t trust; verify” when dealing with alleged quotes from sources.
9. *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Neil Postman, Vintage Books, 1994



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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.

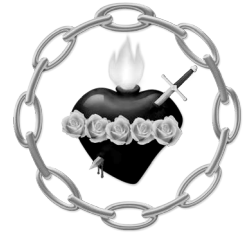
Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, *Raccolta* No. 579).

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