

MANCIPIA

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THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



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TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE: BEYOND DOGMA



Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

“We’re beyond all that”! How common it is for a frustrated member of Christ’s faithful to hear that response from a progressivist cleric, catechist, or teacher in a nominally Catholic school. Just what we’re “beyond” is either some infallible formulation of our Faith (a dogma), a traditional liturgical expression of that

same Faith, or a part of the moral law which is not subject to alteration. The routine is a familiar one.

Can we ever get “beyond all that”? The answer is “yes,” but for reasons radically different from the liberals’. For the faithful Catholic, dogma can never be other than true, and truth does not evolve. For the liberal, truth is in flux, cannot be adequately articulated, and must ever be subject to the *zeitgeist*. Today’s liberal is generally not the doctrinaire modernist that St. Pius X condemned in *Pascendi* — such a one lacks the intellectual rigor of the modernists — but he is certainly influenced by the same movements that (a) deny the human mind’s capacity to know truth; (b) make religious principles something very personal, i.e., not mediated to us through the Church; and (c) subject everything, including dogma, to the inescapable process of evolution.

If this is so objectionable, why is it that I say we can “get beyond all that”? How can a hidebound traditionalist and “Feeneyite” ever dare to assert that it is possible in any way to transcend dogma and dogmatic formulations?

There is a perfectly rational explanation.

Our religious have been studying together the two-volume masterpiece of Father Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P., *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*. Describing the passage through the dark night of the senses, which takes the generous soul into the illuminative way, the great Dominican cites a passage from St. John of the Cross on the “beginning of obscure and arid contemplation.” By this contemplation, says the learned Dominican, “God nourishes the soul while purifying it and giving it strength to go beyond the figures, to penetrate the

On the cover: Easter Sunday, Sister Mary Peter, M.I.C.M., with nine of the twelve First Holy Communicants she catechized.

meaning of the formulas of faith that it may reach the superior simplicity which characterizes contemplation.” The influence of the gift of understanding “makes us go beyond the letter of the Gospel to attain its spirit; it begins to make us penetrate, beyond the formulas of faith, the depths of the mysteries that they express. The formula is no longer a term but a point of departure.”

In the mouth of a liberal, the phrases I have quoted would be so many affirmations of the relative uselessness, or at least radical mutability, of dogma. In the mouth of a real Catholic (such as Father Garrigou-Lagrance), these phrases not only have a totally orthodox meaning, they also penetrate into the sublime inner workings of the Holy Ghost in souls.

A similar insight comes from Father Feeney. He used often to say that “Heaven will prove to be full of surprises, but no surprise will prove false any word of God.” In that ecstatic vision, which is our heavenly beatitude, we will behold, to our surprise and great wonder, just how true every single dogma of the Church is. As Father Garrigou-Lagrance so frequently reminds us, the mystical life here on earth is a prelude to that vision. Those souls who attain to the heights of contemplation here and now achieve a simple intuition of the mysteries of the

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The 2008 May Crowning at Saint Benedict Center was very well attended. We had an outdoor procession and crowned four statues of Our Lady during the ceremonies.

CONVENT CORNER



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

RECOLLECTION

If we wish to accomplish any task well, we need to focus. This necessary focus is also known as “recollection”.

Imagine that you are in your car, cruising down a busy expressway to some destination. You are enjoying your favorite CD, eating a delicious hot sandwich, *and* having a lot of fun with your friend on the cell phone and the five keyed-up

passengers in your car. Suddenly, the person in the passenger seat screams, “STOP!!!” and you realize, as your brakes shriek, that you are barreling into a five-car pileup.

You were not recollected. You had allowed distractions to absorb your focus. When you finally realized that focus was necessary for your very life, you frantically tried to get it back. Did you get it back in time to save yourself and your passengers from a mortal accident?

In our spiritual lives, we have the same need for recollection; only, the disaster resulting from the lack of it can be irreparable and eternal. Just as recollection is necessary for driving safely to your destination, so, too, is it required for journeying safely to heaven.

So now, picture yourself again in the same driving situation. The sickening shriek of your brakes and the sight of the pileup force you to think of your impending death. Are you prepared? Are you ready to be judged by God? Are you His friend, living in the state of grace; or, are you His enemy, living in the state of mortal sin and ready for an eternity in hell? At this moment, if you find yourself in the state of grace, you have been practicing some degree of recollection. Your cooperation with grace in order to avoid mortal sin requires you to focus.

In our school, both elementary and secondary, the goal is to develop such good habits of recollection in the students that they may become not merely safer and happier citizens of our country, but that they may also become blessed citizens of their heavenly country through their attentiveness to God’s grace and inspiration.

We have many ways, both natural and supernatural, in which we teach the students to form good life habits of recollection. We provide a solid course of academics, which requires sustained attention from our students. This attention is a form of recollection. We use traditional (“old-fashioned”) teaching methods instead of high-powered computer and video technology, which technology robs children of their attention spans and creates a distractible child rather than a recollected one. We also discourage television, video, Nintendo and Internet use by our students since it has a notable effect on

their attitudes and attention spans.

During the day, silence (an aid to and sign of recollection) is enforced in the hallways and classrooms. Before speaking, a student must raise his hand, wait to be called upon, and then stand before speaking. This forces him to think (recollect) before he speaks and helps to keep the general silence. Before each class, the students stand and reverently pray a Hail Mary, always working on remembering that our Blessed Mother is listening as they speak to her. Each morning, the students attend Mass and have the opportunity to receive Holy Communion and go to confession. Once a month, each student makes a “preparation for death,” mentally placing himself in a vivid situation such as the imminent car crash above, and preparing now, in God’s presence, for confession and Holy Communion as though it were their last chance to receive these sacraments.

I would like to recommend three things for you to do, Dear Reader, in order to help develop this recollection in your own life.

First, make a good confession and get yourself into the state of grace. (Thank God if you are already there.)

Second, get some *professional* help: Ask your guardian angel for assistance — before each of your duties, for each decision, and in all temptations — in order to help you pay attention to the inspirations God is giving you. This ought to get you speaking to him at least once each hour. Be simple about it: “Dear Angel, please help me: to resist this temptation; to do this work well; to be charitable to this person; to know what God wants me to do; to know what to say; protect me.”

Third, get a Miraculous Medal and put it on a chain (or on your scapular). Every morning, before you even get out of bed, kiss it and say the prayer on it. Every evening, kneeling by your bed, kiss it and say the prayer on it. Both times, try to realize that our Blessed Mother is actually listening to you and is very interested in your interests.

If you put these three things into practice (confession, frequent prayer, devotion to Our Lady), you will develop a habit of recollection that will prepare you for eternity.

Recollection. Nothing good can be accomplished without it.

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org.

Suddenly, the person in the passenger seat screams, “STOP!!!” and you realize, as your brakes shriek, that you are barreling into a five-car pileup. You were not recollected.

PREFECT'S COLUMN

FIRST NATIONAL THIRD ORDER MEETING



Tertiary* Br. John
Marie Vianney

For the first time in the history of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, there will be a National Third Order Meeting during the Conference at the *Crowne Plaza* Hotel in Nashua, NH, on Saturday, July 19, 2008. Only tertiaries will be admitted to the special meeting. If you are interested in joining the Third Order, please contact our Mem-

bership Director, Tertiary Br. Michael Maria, at cbrgrinstead@yahoo.com. It is my hope that every tertiary in the order will attend and that this meeting will better solidify the Third Order, thereby helping in the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center. Since I recently became Prefect, I have encouraged all tertiaries to seek greater sanctification. This gathering should foster such sanctification as well as providing the opportunity to share in that special camaraderie that comes of being with our good brothers and sisters. We will do this only once a year.

I have a few disparate housekeeping items to bring to your attention:

Tertiary email list. In order to communicate better with the tertiaries of the order, I ask that you send me an email at thirdorder@catholicism.org. Please enter "Email Update" on the subject line. Periodically, I will notify you of Third Order events, when novenas begin, new Saint Augustine Institute Circles of Study, the death of (or need of prayers for) one of the religious or tertiaries of the order, new tertiaries who have joined, new apostolates, etc.

Membership Records. Some of the older members came into the Third Order in a different manner from that which we have established in recent years. If you joined more than four years ago, please contact me. We are updating our files.

SAI Study Circles. We have had a great deal of interest in the Saint Augustine Institute Circles of Study. Some folks are interested in

* Third Orders, whose members are called "tertiaries," are associations of the faithful established by religious orders. Most M.I.C.M. tertiaries are lay folk.

joining a circle, some in starting a circle, and some, who have moved, in joining a local circle. Because people move around quite a bit today, I am asking all Circles of Study to check in with me and to indicate your current meeting location, moderators, and members. Just place "Circles of Study" in the subject line of your email. You may also telephone me at the Center, but only on Wednesdays.

Open House. This year's three Open House speakers are Dr. Maike Hickson, Joseph Topalian, and yours truly. The Annual Conference — only once a year — promises to have the most vendors ever, e.g., statues, scapulars, rosaries, good Catholic pamphlets and books, prayer cards, medals, etc. I encourage you not to miss it.

Nota Bene: Every tertiary is reminded: to carry the Rosary at all times; that the use of the tertiary name is for sanctioned Center activities only; and that every tertiary must acknowledge and pray for the current reigning pontiff, Benedict XVI.

For the first time in the history of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, there will be a National Third Order Meeting during our Conference.



On the First Saturday of May, three new members joined the Third Order.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN



Catherine Goddard Clarke*

LOVE IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (EXCERPTED FROM THE *HOUSETOPS*) BY SISTER CATHERINE, M.I.C.M.

Where can truth be found? Jesus Christ, who said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32), left that truth, which integrates all lesser truths, in the keeping of His Church, that Church which has for its visible head His Vicar, the Bishop of

Rome, and hence is called the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The truth is nowhere else. (It is useless to quibble about the possession of partial truth! The whole truth alone suffices.) Adherence to the Holy Catholic Church is the one thing that will save the world . . . The time is short; we must shout the truth, teach the truth, plead the truth, while it is yet not too late.

The voice of truth began to be muted in the world when the Renaissance came in. Trends reach their climaxes over centuries, and the Reformation grew out of the Renaissance. Whole countries were lost to the Church, countries in which the truth was no longer preached to every man. The Church entered upon a long siege, known as the Counter-Reformation, in which it was obliged to spend its time not in asserting the truth, but in defending it. In this measure it resorted to making friends with the mammon of iniquity in order that its children might have enough to eat for their bodies on the one hand, and, on the other, that churches and schools and parishes might be built for the nourishment of their souls.

One of the inevitable marks of every heresy is that, before its expiration, it undergoes a swing to the exact opposite of that for which it stood in the beginning. The history of each heresy in the Church testifies to this amazing, although not surprising, fact. And so we find Protestantism, which began with Luther's "faith without works," now everywhere professing "good works without faith". This is what we call "love" without truth, which, as we know, is a contradiction in terms because, may I repeat, there can be no real love without truth.

The Renaissance said, approximately, "There has been an excessive emphasis on God; let us return again to what man on his own can do. Let us go back to man at his best, to the natural man of Greece and Rome, to the classics — to Man." It required centuries for a theocentric civilization to become an anthropocentric one, but gradually it was accomplished. God went out of art and poetry and prose and sculpture and music. The godless man we are given to know in the modern novel, in

* Later known as Sister Catherine, Mrs. Clarke was the foundress of Saint Benedict Center, which began as a lay apostolate in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

the motion pictures, in modern art and modern music is a lewd, degenerate, depraved thing.

Good works without faith (the end, in the sense of last days, of the Reformation) and humanitarianism (the end of the Renaissance) are responsible for the many manifestations of love without truth that we find about us. On the surface, it would seem that love were everywhere. During the war we dispensed it in many forms: Russian Relief (we regret that now), Bundles for Britain (since the Palestine situation recently we seem to be cooling on that also), Spreading Our Way of Life, Making the World Safe for Democracy. At the present moment it comes to us, in the press, over the radio, in the motion pictures, under the titles: Common Objectives, Everyone Is Sincere, One Religion Is the Same as Another, Bundles for Everywhere, Billions for Everyone (outside of the United States), You Mustn't Hurt People's Feelings (by telling the truth).

This is all called love, love for one's fellow man. This species of love does not seem to have been subscribed to by the world at large since Europe and the East are frankly selfish, but the United States is seriously drunk on it. It is, of course, a form of selfishness, too, a fact that Europe has long seen and taken advantage of, but of which the United States is un-

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Immaculate Heart of Mary School needs your help!

Support traditional Catholic education! Immaculate Heart of Mary School needs your help to provide an affordable education that will enable our students to reach their full potential: mentally, physically, and spiritually.

With a few lay teachers and our dedicated sisters, our expenses are kept to a minimum, but there are still costs that aren't covered by tuition.

We are looking for *Patrons of IHM*: individuals, families, or businesses that would help with contributions (which could be given monthly or in a few larger installments).

Will you help us? All *Patrons* receive: 1) a framed, autographed picture of the students and faculty of Immaculate Heart of Mary School; 2) an annual subscription to the school newspaper, *The Queen's Quarterly*; 3) a remembrance in certain special daily prayers; and 4) our eternal gratitude!

Email or call Sister Maria Philomena at
sisters@FromTheHousetops.com or (603) 239-
6495 to sign up or for more information.

THE BEATIFIC VISION, OUR LAST END



Mr. Brian Kelly

That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. 2:9).

A Catholic friend of mine brought up the question of heaven with me recently. He was going through a severe trial over a death in the family and confessed that he

did not find any of the descriptions of eternal happiness, with which he was familiar, to be very motivational.

As I was considering his words, I wondered about the clarity of my own understanding of heaven. I know, by faith, that eternal life is what is called “the beatific vision”. But, how do I explain this “vision” to those whose picture of heaven is literally drawn from paintings where the adoring saints and choirs of angels are gathered together in a blissful pose on billowy clouds? They seem to imagine heaven more as a place, an abode where all dwellers are at peace and enjoying a never-ending happiness — all of which is true, and quite consonant with the concept itself that goes with the term “heaven”. Nevertheless, such images, even the most resplendent, can only portray the accidental joy of final beatitude. The essential “act” of the blessed in heaven — what is termed the beatific vision — is intellectual; it is the cognitive contemplation of the Creator, without any veil or imagery, face to face, in His infinite goodness, and sharing in His uncreated happiness, which is His very essence.

St. Paul, who in his mortal life was lifted up in ecstasy to the “third heaven” (which would seem to be just short of the beatific vision), put our final beatitude in these words: “We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known” (1 Cor. 13:12).

The beloved Apostle John expressed the state of final bliss thusly: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

And, finally, Our Lord, in His prayer to the Father at the Last Supper, gave to His Apostles these inexhaustible words: “Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

In truth, then, the reason why some of us are unsure of ourselves when we try to describe the true Catholic doctrine about heaven is that we have not applied ourselves often enough to contemplate the Blessed Trinity in the light of faith.

It is in knowing Him that we can, by His grace, “be like Him.” We can know God by contemplating Him in the light of

His attributes and by not resisting the Holy Ghost in His desire to possess us; we can know God intimately by possessing His Son and allowing Him to assimilate us in Holy Communion; and we can know God by seeing His presence in our neighbor and loving that neighbor for His sake.

Happiness, St. Thomas assures us, is contemplation. Even the natural happiness that man experiences on earth is a result of some contemplative experience. It is not in *doing* something that man is happy, but in *possessing* some true good, and resting in this intellectual embrace. Our final happiness, however, can only be achieved by possessing the Source of all goodness, Goodness Itself. In this final and everlasting “swallow” of God (to borrow a vivid analogy of the philosopher Josef Pieper), which is the beatific vision, the heart of man arrives at perfect rest, fully satiated, with nothing more to thirst for. The overflow of this everlasting peace is everlasting joy. “Enter thou,” Our Lord says in His parable of the servants who have done the Lord’s will faithfully unto death, “into the joy of thy Lord” (Matt. 25:21).

When St. Paul says that we shall see God “face to face,” he is speaking analogously. Every man, even the damned, on the day of judgment will see our glorified Lord face to face in His human nature; however, the Apostle in his epistle to the Corinthians, is speaking of the beatific vision, which is spiritual, for God is a Spirit. What, then, does “face to face” mean?

There is no greater subject for contemplation than this: the face of God. Father Feeny used to say with childlike perspi-



Our Lord and Our Lady in glory.

cacity: “God became man to show men what God looks like.” And, did not Our Lord answer the Apostle Philip’s bold question, “Show us the Father and it is enough for us,” with this revelation? “Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father?” (John 14:9).

By “face” is meant the essence, the one nature, which is the one *whatness* of the three *whos*: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The blessed will see God, as do the angels, with the direct grasp of the intellect, and without any veils. In other words, in heaven (both before and after the resurrection of the body) we will know God without any sense medium. The saints in heaven see God directly and not through any other means at all than that of direct intuition of His essence. In this vision, the blessed, by one eternal act of contemplation, behold the three divine Persons as one God. The distinction in unity and unity in distinction, which is the Trinity, is grasped in its adorable Simplicity. The vision is in the eternal “Now” of God’s immutable Life. There is a “before” and an “after” in the saints’ experience of the accidental joys of everlasting life (which involves change), but not in their “eternal life,” which is one and the same beatific act.

There is another point to be made. Wholeness of vision does not mean wholeness of comprehension. The creature, no matter how highly exalted, cannot become infinite. Only the Infinite God comprehends His own Infinite perfection and simplicity. The saints share in the Infinite Goodness and glory

of God, but their goodness and glory are still finite.

Finally, after this clumsy attempt to elucidate by reason so sublime a revelation, we must affirm the *mystery* of the Blessed Trinity. The Life of three Persons in one God is not a “problem” to be solved by reason, but a mystery to be believed in by faith.

Two more questions will serve as my conclusion.

Question: Do the blessed *see* all of God in heaven?

Answer: Yes. God is not only a Pure Spirit, but also perfectly Simple. He has no parts. The attributes that we, for our human understanding, distinguish in God, are one in Him — even His essence and existence. The essence of God is His self-existence. St. Augustine succinctly sums up this truth with an evocative question: “What shall we not see, when we see Him who sees all?”

Question: Do the blessed *comprehend* all of God?

Answer: No. All of the blessed do have the same beatific vision of God, but not the same comprehension of Him whom they see. Because God is infinite, no creature, even Our Lady (who comprehends God more than all the blessed together) can fully comprehend Him. The measure of the saint’s comprehension of God is equal to the measure of the love they gave Him without seeing Him. That is the meaning of Our Lord’s statement: “In my Father’s house there are many mansions” (John 14:2).

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.

Join the Team, Be a Queen’s Tributer

*Every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity:
for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).*

Just as a family has to budget its monthly income in order to pay the bills twelve times a year, so do the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary here in Richmond, NH. Foremost on the Order’s list of expenditures are our uncompromising Catholic publications. These include our monthly mailings: bi-monthly *Mancia* and circular letter; our books and magazines; our expanding internet outreach; and our ever-increasing line of multimedia products produced by the Saint Augustine Institute.

None of these programs would be possible without your support. The natural advantages of giving monthly rather than annually are many:

1. It is a commitment; although voluntary, it is still more likely to be met.
2. It helps the religious economize more prudently and, at the same time, more magnanimously.
3. It can be less stressful on most benefactors because giving less, more often, is easier than giving more once a year.

Of course, this doesn’t apply to every donor.

4. It helps young benefactors, who are just beginning to practice their obligation to support the Church, to budget accordingly.

The supernatural advantages are beyond measure: they are purgative (purifying the soul here, rather than in the next life), illuminative (increase of grace in this life), and unitive (increase of glory in the next). Every month, Queen’s Tribute donors receive whatever mailings we have. More importantly, every month the traditional Latin Mass is offered for all our benefactors.

Fill out the reply form on page 11, call our bookkeeper, Russell LaPlume, at (877) 773-1773 (toll-free), or email him at rlp@catholicism.org to join or for more information.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN

LOVE IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

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aware. Europe, having had the Faith and having lost it, has the memory of a capacity for truth, at least. We have never had the Faith, as a nation, and therefore have always had a substitute for the truth. That is why Europe has always been able to “put it over on America.”

Planned Parenthood is called love, love for the family! Interfaith meetings are called love, love for all creeds (as if that were possible in the true sense). Modern social work — stemming from materialistic and atheistic premises and turning out upon the poor, at high salaries, workers whose knowledge is far sadder than the lives of the people they would “raise,” — is called love. Experimental psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, economics are called love. The Red Cross is called love.

Love, love, everywhere, and not a thought to think! Truth would seem to be nowhere, so seldom is its voice heard, and one is led to wonder where the Catholics, who know better, have been through all this.

[The following lines were written by Father Frederick William Faber] in 1856, before the age of politeness and liberalism had set in. [They] explain what has happened to Catholics, and if you will remember that trends reach their climaxes only over long years, it will be clear that the very thing Father Faber was warning about [in his book *The Wonders of Divine Love*] has come to pass in 1948. He writes:

“Good Christians hear conversation around them, catch the prevailing tone of society, read books, and become familiarized with certain fashionable principles of conduct; and it is impossible for their minds and hearts not to become imbued with the genius of all this. It is irksome to be always on our guard, and from being off our guard we soon grow to be unsuspecting. When a Catholic enters into intimate dealings with Protestants, he must not forget to place his sentries, and to act as if he were in an enemy’s country; and this is unkindly work, and as miserable as it is unkindly. Yet, so it is. When newspapers tell us that Catholicism is always more reasonable and less superstitious when it is in the immediate presence of Protestantism, we can have little difficulty in deciding whether it has changed for the better or the worse. All this illustrates what we mean. The prevailing errors of our time and country find their way down to us, and corrupt our faith, and lower our practice, and divide us among ourselves.”

We who have the truth should love all our fellow men so much that we cannot rest until they also possess that truth.

“And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity” (I Cor. 13:13). But the first of these is faith — knowing. Then, and then only, is charity — loving — possible. So far has man gone from God in his long emphasis on himself that he must be taught all over again, and if we would love him with Christ’s love (and what other love is worth loving him with?), then it is necessary first to give him the truth in order that he may love — and be loved.

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

WISH LIST

OUR NEEDS INCLUDE:

\$400,000 – needed for repairs and maintenance on our buildings.

\$38,000 – for an upgrade and overhaul of Catholicism.org and FromTheHousetops.com. The two sites are going to be combined and made much easier to use.

\$8,000 – to reprint 15,000 copies of the Saint John Neumann catechism for distribution in our door-to-door apostolate.

\$9,875 – for duplicating, editing, and recording equipment so that the religious can assume all audio production and distribution tasks for the Saint Augustine Institute, our multimedia/educational apostolate.

\$200 – for the printing of 5,000 Spanish *How to Pray the Rosary* pamphlets, which are distributed in our missionary work.

\$0 – for school craft projects: 100% wool sweaters (to be taken apart or unraveled for “recycled wool” projects), crochet hooks (a half dozen – size G or H), cookie molds (any deep molds of various shapes and sizes).

Please note that you do not have to cover an item totally. You can donate any amount toward it. Donations to fund a specific project are accepted with the understanding that, if full funding is not attained, the money may be used for other needs.

You make the difference! We depend upon God’s providence through you for all these works and many more. Thank you for your help!

Contact Brother Maximilian Maria to help with these items or for more information. Phone him at (603) 239-6485 or email him at brm@catholicism.org.

Twelfth Annual Saint Benedict Center Conference
Nashua, New Hampshire, July 18 to 20, 2008.

Free Open House at Saint Benedict Center,
Richmond, New Hampshire, July 17, 2008.

www.SbcConference.com or (877) 773-1773

PRIOR'S REPORT

BEYOND DOGMA

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Faith, an intuition which goes beyond the formula, but does not contradict it. And how well the friar expresses this truth! Both the dogmatic theologian and the mystic can admire his simple language: for the proficient soul, “the formula is no longer a term [i.e., an end or goal] but a point of departure.” Savor that a bit. It's rich.

Oprah Winfrey attributes her neo-gnostic religious awakening in part to the frustration she felt when she heard her Baptist preacher say that God is a “jealous God”. According to Oprah, God is “bigger” than that. What a shallow observation! The poor thing could not figure out — or would not see — that the “big” God of Christian revelation can, by an anthropomorphism, be said to possess arms, eyes, ears, anger, hatred, repentance, and, yes — jealousy. A child can understand these things, but, if I recall correctly, Oprah experienced this crisis at about age twenty.

I said a child can understand these things. This is no exaggeration. A few days ago, I asked an eight-year-old boy what “God is jealous” could mean. He said, “He's jealous of the devil. He wants more people for himself in heaven and not for the devil.” Tell me if a more astute commentary on Exodus 34:14 is possible: “Adore not any strange god. The Lord his name is Jealous, he is a jealous God.”

The same sentence that scandalized Oprah into new-age pantheism, was clearly understood by my eight-year-old interlocutor.

The theologians tell us that all our knowledge of God is strictly analogical. Even what is not merely figurative (eyes, arms, jealousy, etc.) is analogous. This means that the word used has a meaning at once similar but different. In the “being” of a rock, a man, and God, there is something the same, but something different. Creatures have only a participated and conditional being; God is the source of all being. Yet, “God is” and “I am” are both true statements. What can be said of God's being can also be said of His mercy, justice, holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, etc. Yes, it can even be said of His “bigness,” which is not limited to spacial dimensions, as are a Big Mac or Big Bird. Somehow, the child brought up with the Faith has a nascent sense of this, even though he cannot express it in the exacting language of logic or epistemology.

The language of the Church — her scriptural, dogmatic, and liturgical formulae — should be precious to us. It cannot be “gotten beyond” in the manner of a sneering George Tyrell, a garrulous Karl Rahner, or a confused Oprah. But each and every part of it can become a “point of departure” that leads us to penetrate into divine mysteries — obscurely in this life, and with the clarity of vision in the next. “We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known” (I Cor. 13:12).

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.



The brothers and a few of our scouts recently climbed Mt. Monadnock.



IHM School End of the Year Performance, a mirthful occasion.



The audience enjoying the school performance.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

BACK TO THE FUTURE, BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

I had just finished reading *Fish on Friday* and was struck by all the divine coincidences that took place in Father Feeney's life when he encountered the "common man of the streets," whom he loved so much. In reflecting on this aspect of his extraordinary life, I was brought back to a divine coincidence that occurred in my life some years ago.

I was a cradle Catholic nurtured in the Faith by very devout parents who were of French Canadian peasant stock. They were both born in Canada, had immigrated to America in the early 1900s, and settled in a northern Massachusetts city where many other French Canadians had come. Back in those days it was typical in these cities to have whole sections divided ethnically. You had a French section, whose faithful built their own church; an Irish section which did the same; an Italian section; Polish section; and so on. There were invisible lines one did not cross without fear of "contamination" from other nationalities. And of course, if you did cross them, you were trespassing on national boundaries, war was declared, and battles fought.

It was in this environment that I, along with my twelve siblings, was raised. I took the normal course of many Catholic boys back then by attending a Catholic primary school run by nuns (drill instructors released from the Marine Corps for being too tough), then going on to Central Catholic High School (I always wondered why they did not use a saint's name) run by Marist brothers (who were released from the Marine Corps for not being tough enough). I say this because the year I graduated was 1967, and the changes following Vatican II were being implemented sneakily into this school by "boiling the frog slowly," as they say. Indeed, when I entered my frosh year in 1963, the old-time religion along with its disciplines was being enforced. By the time my senior year came along, in 1967, a complete reversal in both disciplines and religion had occurred, sending myself and many others into a tailspin of confusion and liberation. I thought I had a calling to the religious life and was seriously pursuing the matter with our vocations director for several years during high school. I had always been awestruck by the reverence, drama, and ceremony of the pre-Vatican Church, and ever since my altar-boy days, I wished to be closer to that life, which was the heartbeat of the Church. This all changed with the "renewal" of the Church — no more was the altar a sacred place to me — just a stage where guitars strummed, priests hummed, and one former altar boy bummed.

Well, my vocation was lost (and the blame was mine mostly for not persevering), so now what to do? Well, I did what any intelligent dummy would do — I joined the Marine Corps to fight for truth, justice, and the American way! (Thanks to the good sisters' training in parochial school, boot camp was a breeze.) I was sent to Vietnam, and, in two years' time, I realized that something was amiss, not only in the Church, but

in the temporal realm as well. As the Church goes, the world goes. I will fast-forward now to the time where this divine coincidence occurs.

Being a child of the turbulent 60s, I had run amok after leaving high school, had abandoned my faith, and, what was worse, had become a scandal to my devout parents, who continually prayed that I might return to the bosom of the Church. Thank God, their prayers were heard for I responded to the graces being provided by Our Lord, and, like a prodigal son, I returned to the God of my youth. I went immediately to my parents' house to beg their forgiveness. My father had always kept several candles lit in front the statue of Our Lady in our house, and I always figured it was just some special devotion that he had. When I asked his forgiveness, he arose, went to one of the candles, and snuffed it out. Sadly, there were six or seven candles still burning — representing my siblings — and my father's burning devotion to bring them back. The spirit of Vatican II.

I now set about in earnest to repair the damage I had done to the relationship with my God. It was difficult indeed to repair this breach (God forgives, then forgets, but I could not forget), and more impossible with the sterile Church I had come back



The Marriage of Our Lady and Saint Joseph

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to. I studied Church history, hagiography, and, of course, “the end times” (some sort of rite of passage for those who have re-entered the Church). I could not find fulfillment in the new rite, nor guidance from its representatives. I searched until a special friend turned me on to the “dogma of faith”. It all suddenly became clear; the diabolical confusion in the Church with the world following close behind; the lack of spirituality and the loss of the sense of sin. I immediately went to my father to explain the hijacking that

the Council had done and now, this time, I begged *him* to come back to the Church. We argued from both sides — for he had accepted all the changes and had even become an “eucharistic minister” — and given the simple, blind obedience he held, I could not convince him. During one of these sessions he arose in frustration, went to the shrine, and re-lit my candle.

Shortly after, my good father died (God rest his soul, and please pray for him). I would visit my mother, and with less vehemence, discuss the crisis in the Church, hoping that she would see the light. On one of these visits I brought up Father Feeney, and to my surprise she remarked, “I know all about Father Feeney.” Surprised (for like my father she was quite simple in her lifestyle and did not follow the news especially), I enquired how she knew.

She said, “I was in the hospital with a difficult birth. On the first of those three hard days when I was delivering, a doctor who was passing by in the hallway noticed that I was saying the Rosary, so he stopped and asked if he could join me. Of course, I said ‘yes.’ He came that evening also, then on following days. On my last day, just before my giving birth, he came to say the Rosary, and it dawned on me that I had not even asked his name. So I asked who he was. He said that he was a Jewish convert who was at the hospital for only that week, and he thanked me for letting him say the Rosary. I forget his name now, but he told me that, while he was in Boston, he was converted by Father Feeney. And that baby that was giving me such a hard time was you. And you haven’t stopped being trouble since.”

Divine coincidences are all part of His most wonderful providence.

Email Russell LaPlume at rlp@catholicism.org.

Reply Form

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PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY FATHER

V. Let us pray for our Pontiff, Pope Benedict.

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

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. Let us pray.

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

CALENDAR NOTES:

- Our sixth annual Richmond Blueberry Fiddle Festival will be Friday and Saturday, August 8 and 9, 2008, at the Cheshire County Fairgrounds, in Swanzey, New Hampshire. Visit www.BlueberryFiddleFestival.com or call Sister Maria Philomena at (603) 239-6495 for more information.
- Join the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on pilgrimage! The St. Joseph's Brigade (boys and men) and Immaculate Heart of Mary Brigade (girls and single ladies) invite you to accompany us in New York state, on an arduous and prayerful journey from Lake George to Auriesville, in honor of the North American Martyrs. The dates for the 2008 pilgrimage are September 24 to 27. For more details, go to www.national-coalition.org; or call (603) 239-6485 (St. Joseph's Brigade); or (603) 239-6495 (IHM Brigade).

OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

For more information:

Our congregation website:

www.catholicism.org

Our bookstore website:

www.FromTheHousetops.com

And our conference website:

www.SbcConference.com

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(603) 239-6485

Conference on the Internet

The twelfth annual **Saint Benedict Center Conference** will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, **July 18 to 20, 2008** at the Crowne Plaza hotel in **Nashua, New Hampshire**. The free Open House will be Thursday, July 17, at Saint Benedict Center in Richmond, New Hampshire. For those unable to come to the conference, we are offering **webcasting** of the event. You can "attend" our event through the internet. Visit **www.Sbc-Conference.com** for information on speakers, pricing, and webcasting. Call Russell or Brian to register or for more information (toll free) **(877) 773-1773**.

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