

TRUTH VERITAS

Newsletter of the Dominican Laity



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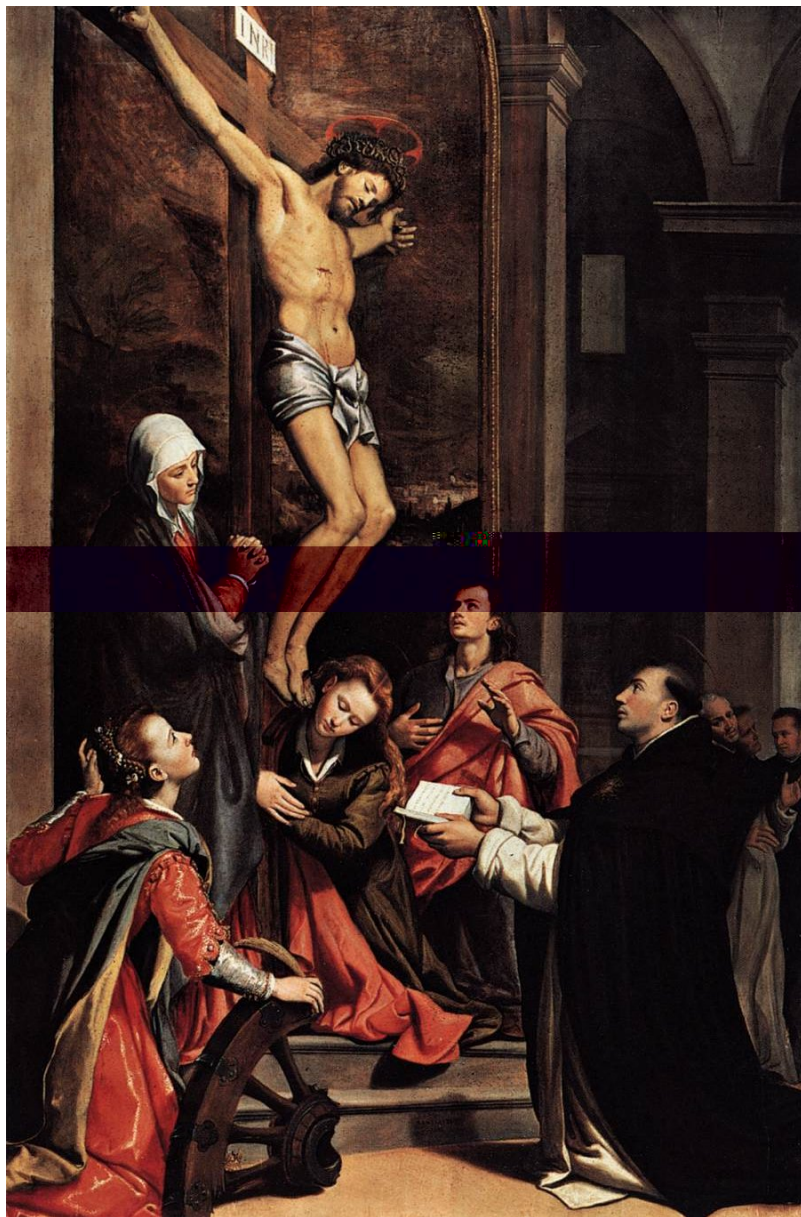
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Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

Bringing Jesus to the World

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It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: "The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee" (Isaiah 64:4). St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q1, Response

Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace

Benedict XVI

"Sweet Christ on earth," St. Catherine of Siena

1. At the beginning of the new year I offer good wishes to each and all for serenity and prosperity, but especially for peace. Sadly, the year now ending has again been marked by persecution, discrimination, terrible acts of violence and religious intolerance.

My thoughts turn in a special way to the beloved country of Iraq, which continues to be a theatre of violence and strife as it makes its way towards a future of stability and reconciliation. I think of the recent sufferings of the Christian community, and in particular the reprehensible attack on the Syro-Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Baghdad, where on 31 October two priests and over fifty faithful were killed as they gathered for the celebration of Holy Mass. In the days that followed, other attacks ensued, even on private homes, spreading fear within the Christian community and a desire on the part of many to emigrate in search of a better life. I assure them of my own closeness and that of the entire Church, a closeness which found concrete expression in the recent Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops. The Synod encouraged the Catholic communities in Iraq and throughout the Middle East to live in communion and to continue to offer a courageous witness of faith in those lands.

I offer heartfelt thanks to those Governments which are working to alleviate the sufferings of these, our brothers and sisters in the human family, and I ask all Catholics for their prayers and support for their brethren in the faith who are victims of violence and intolerance. In this context, I have felt it particularly appropriate to share some reflections on religious freedom as the path to

Continued on page 2)

Religious Freedom

(Continued from page 1)

peace. It is painful to think that in some areas of the world it is impossible to profess one's religion freely except at the risk of life and personal liberty. In other areas we see more subtle and sophisticated forms of prejudice and hostility towards believers and religious symbols. At present, Christians are the religious group which suffers most from persecution on account of its faith. Many Christians experience daily affronts and often live in fear because of their pursuit of truth, their faith in Jesus Christ and their heartfelt plea for respect for religious freedom. This situation is unacceptable, since it represents an insult to God and to human dignity; furthermore, it is a threat to security and peace, and an obstacle to the achievement of authentic and integral human development.

Religious freedom expresses what is unique about the human person, for it allows us to direct our personal and social life to God, in whose light the identity, meaning and purpose of the person are fully understood. To deny or arbitrarily restrict this freedom is to foster a reductive vision of the human person; to eclipse the public role of religion is to create a society which is unjust, inasmuch as it fails to take account of the true nature of the human person; *it is to stifle the growth of the authentic and lasting peace of the whole human family.*

For this reason, I implore all men and women of good will to renew their commitment to building a world where all are free to profess their religion or faith, and to express their love of God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their mind (cf. Mt 22:37). This is the sentiment which inspires and directs this *Message for the XLIV World Day of Peace, devoted to the theme: Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace.*

A sacred right to life and to a spiritual life

2. *The right to religious freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person*, whose transcendent nature must not be ignored or overlooked. God created man and woman in his own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:27). For this reason each person is endowed with the sacred right to a full life, also from a spiritual standpoint. Without the acknowledgement of his spiritual being, without openness to the transcendent, the human person withdraws within himself, fails to find answers to the heart's deepest questions about life's meaning, fails to appropriate lasting ethical values and principles, and fails even to experience authentic freedom and to build a just society.

Sacred Scripture, in harmony with our own experience, reveals the profound value of human dignity: "When I look



at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have established, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man, that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than God, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:3-6).

Contemplating the sublime reality of human nature, we can experience the same amazement felt by the Psalmist. Our nature appears as openness to the Mystery, a capacity to ask deep questions about ourselves and the origin of the universe, and a profound echo of the supreme Love of God, the beginning and end of all things, of every person and people. The transcendent dignity of the person is an essential value of Judeo-Christian wisdom, yet thanks to the use of reason, it can be recognized by all. This dignity, understood as a capacity to transcend one's own materiality and to seek truth, must be acknowledged as a universal *good*, indispensable for the building of a society directed to human fulfillment. Respect for essential elements of human dignity, such as the right to life and the right to religious freedom, is a condition for the moral legitimacy of every social and legal norm.

Religious freedom and mutual respect

3. *Religious freedom is at the origin of moral freedom.* Openness to truth and perfect goodness, openness to God, is rooted in human nature; it confers full dignity on each individual and is the guarantee of full mutual respect between persons. Religious freedom should be understood, then, not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one's own choices in accordance with truth.

Freedom and respect are inseparable; indeed, "in exercising their rights, individuals and social groups are bound by the moral law to have regard for the rights of others, their own duties to others and the common good of all".

A freedom which is *hostile* or *indifferent* to God becomes self-negating and does not guarantee full respect for others. A will which believes itself radically incapable of seeking truth and goodness has no objective reasons or motives for acting save those imposed by its fleeting and contingent interests; it does not have an "identity" to safeguard and build up through truly free and conscious decisions. As a result, it cannot demand respect from other "wills", which are themselves detached from their own deepest being and thus capable of imposing other "reasons" or, for that matter, no "reason" at all. The illusion that moral relativism provides the key for peaceful

(Continued on next page)

Religious Freedom

(Continued from previous page)

coexistence is actually the origin of divisions and the denial of the dignity of human beings. Hence we can see the need for recognition of a twofold dimension within the unity of the human person: a *religious* dimension and a *social* dimension. In this regard, "it is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one's rights".

The family, the school of freedom and peace

4. If religious freedom is the path to peace, *religious education* is the highway which leads new generations to see others as their brothers and sisters, with whom they are called to journey and work together so that all will feel that they are living members of the one human family, from which no one is to be excluded.

The family founded on marriage, as the expression of the close union and complementarity between a man and a woman, finds its place here as the first school for the social, cultural, moral and spiritual formation and growth of children, who should always be able to see in their father and mother the first witnesses of a life directed to the pursuit of truth and the love of God. Parents must be always free to transmit to their children, responsibly and without constraints, their heritage of faith, values and culture. The family, the first cell of human society, remains the primary training ground for harmonious relations at every level of coexistence, human, national and international. Wisdom suggests that this is the road to building a strong and fraternal social fabric, in which young people can be prepared to assume their proper responsibilities in life, in a free society, and in a spirit of understanding and peace.

A common patrimony

5. It could be said that *among the fundamental rights and freedoms rooted in the dignity of the person, religious freedom enjoys a special status*. When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and the *ethos* and institutions of peoples are strengthened. On the other hand, whenever religious freedom is denied, and attempts are made to hinder people from professing their religion or faith and living accordingly, human dignity is offended, with a resulting threat to justice and peace, which are grounded in that right social order established in the light of Supreme Truth and Supreme Goodness.

Religious freedom is, in this sense, also an achievement of a sound political and juridical culture. It is an essential good: each person must be able freely to exercise the right to profess and manifest, individually or in community, his or her own religion or faith, in public and in private, in teaching, in practice, in publications, in worship and in

ritual observances. There should be no obstacles should he or she eventually wish to belong to another religion or profess none at all. In this context, international law is a model and an essential point of reference for states, insofar as it allows no derogation from religious freedom, as long as the just requirements of public order are observed. The international order thus recognizes that rights of a religious nature have the same status as the right to life and to personal freedom, as proof of the fact that they belong to the *essential core* of human rights, to those universal and natural rights which human law can never deny.

Religious freedom is not the exclusive patrimony of believers, but of the whole family of the earth's peoples. It is an essential element of a constitutional state; it cannot be denied without at the same time encroaching on all fundamental rights and freedoms, since it is their synthesis and keystone. It is "the litmus test for the respect of all the other human rights". While it favors the exercise of our most specifically human faculties, it creates the necessary premises for the attainment of an integral development which concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension.

The public dimension of religion

6. *Religious freedom, like every freedom, proceeds from the personal sphere and is achieved in relationship with others. Freedom without relationship is not full freedom*. Religious freedom is not limited to the individual dimension alone, but is attained within one's community and in society, in a way consistent with the relational being of the person and the public nature of religion.

Relationship is a decisive component in religious freedom, which impels the community of believers to practice solidarity for the common good. In this communitarian dimension, each person remains unique and unrepeatable, while at the same time finding completion and full realization.

The contribution of religious communities to society is undeniable. Numerous charitable and cultural institutions testify to the constructive role played by believers in the life of society. More important still is religion's ethical contribution in the political sphere. Religion should not be marginalized or prohibited, but seen as making an effective contribution to the promotion of the common good. In this context mention should be made of the religious dimension of culture, built up over centuries thanks to the social and especially ethical contributions of religion. This dimension is in no way discriminatory towards those who do not share its beliefs, but instead reinforces social cohesion, integration and solidarity.

(Continued on page 12)

Praised be Jesus!

An Interview With Abby Johnson

Lent is a grace filled season for conversion, which prepares us to receive Jesus at Easter. One woman's dramatic story captures the essence of Lent and captivates our attention. Her name is Abby Johnson. She went from a career at Planned Parenthood to a staunch pro-life advocate overnight. She has appeared on numerous television programs and has traveled around the country sharing her testimony. Abby is also the author of the best selling book "unPlanned".

Denise: Thank you, Abby for being with us in this interview.

I'd like to get right to the heart of your story and start with the day that changed your life. You were working on an ultrasound guided abortion when you actually saw an abortion procedure being done for the first time. Tell us about that day and explain to us exactly what you witnessed.

Abby: The doctor said to me, "just hold the probe in place during the procedure so I can see what I'm doing." The cannula—a straw shaped instrument attached to the end of the suction tube—had been inserted into the uterus and was nearing the baby's side. It looked like an invader, out of place. Wrong. It just looked wrong. The next movement was the sudden jerk of a tiny foot as the baby started kicking, as if it were trying to move away from the probing invader. As the cannula pressed its side, the baby began struggling to turn and twist away. It seemed clear to me that it could feel the cannula, and it did not like what it was feeling. The cannula was already being rotated by the doctor, and now I could see the tiny body violently twisting with it. For the briefest moment the baby looked as if it were being wrung like a dishcloth, twirled and squeezed. And then it crumpled and began disappearing into the cannula before my eyes. The last thing I saw was the tiny, perfectly formed backbone sucked into the tube, and then it was gone.

What happened to you immediately after seeing that procedure?

I knew that I had to leave Planned Parenthood. I knew that I could not continue to stay and spread the lies that they had been creating for so many years.

Planned Parenthood, in their own words, states: "Pro-choice means supporting access to all reproductive options whether its motherhood, contraception, abortion or adoption". However, their statistics show that for every one adoption referral they perform 62 abortions. That's certainly not the unbiased ratio that's suggested in their statement. Does Planned Parenthood encourage women to have abortions?

Yes. They have to coerce women into having abortions. There is no information available concerning prenatal care, fetal development or adoption. They are not concerned in providing that, because those services do not increase their bottom line.

Planned Parenthood claims that only 3% of their business is abortion. They further claim to provide vital medical care including mammograms, STD tests, and ultrasounds for women who otherwise might not receive these services. Are these statements true?

While Planned Parenthood says abortions make up just 3 percent of its services, I found they used an sleight of hand, unbundling family planning services so each patient shows anywhere from five to 20 "visits" per appointment (12 packs of birth control would show up as 12 individual visits). It does the opposite for abortion visits, bundling them together so each appointment shows as one visit. This skews the numbers. You have an overwhelming number of "visits" for family planning compared to abortion, even though you may have seen the same number of patients.

Does Planned Parenthood prey on low income women, and if so, how?

They have placed 76% of their clinics in low income and minority areas. They have special health educators designed to go into low income areas and convince women and men that PP is the only place they can go for health-care in their area.

Most of us have seen the videos produced by Live Action exposing Planned Parenthood in their concealment of underage women and human trafficking crimes. Were you aware of this illegal activity, and were you also encouraged to "work" the system?

We weren't given any specifics on how to necessarily work the system. But it is common for PP clinics to cover up child sexual abuse.

With all the media attention lately, it seems that the truth is finally being discovered about Planned Parenthood. What's at stake for them right now and how important is it for them to keep up appearances?

It is extremely important for them to keep their government funding. They cannot keep their clinics open without it. They need for this political battle to appear as an attack on women...instead of what it really is...an attack on Planned Parenthood and their poor quality of health care.

Spiritually speaking, did you ever feel the presence of evil or experience any struggle in your life when you were

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Interview

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working at Planned Parenthood?

No. I didn't feel it while I was there. I now see how evil was pervasive in my life. I am able to see how my thoughts, actions, speech and so many other things were completely taken over by evil.

Would you say that prayer vigils outside of clinics are effective?

Absolutely. I wouldn't be here today, fighting in this movement, if people hadn't been outside of my clinic. When people are outside of clinics, it is reminding the workers and clients that there is something morally objectionable about what they are doing inside of that building. We also have to be a public witness to our communities. Being outside abortion clinics helps bring about that awareness.

Some pro-life advocates have, shall we say, a less than Christian approach in defending life. Did you ever witness that yourself and if so, what effect did it have on you and your co-workers?

We did have a group of very angry protestors outside of our clinic. They only invigorated our movement. When people would be hostile towards us and our clients, it would make us feel very protective of our clients. It almost helped to form a sort of camaraderie with our clients. They were harassing our clients and we were saving them. It also did not serve the "Christian" population very well. It made Christians seem judgmental, harsh, mean, condemning and hateful. The patients and the workers saw that...there was little chance of conversion.

Eighty-five percent of our country's population consider themselves to be Christian; yet its "legal" to kill children. In your experience, what would you attribute this to; and what advice would you give to pro-life advocates so their message will be more effective?

I believe abortion has been legal for 38 years because of apathy. Our churches aren't frequently talking about abortion. Our churches don't have ministries for women who might be considering abortion, or may have already chosen abortion. We are fighting a spiritual battle...and unfortunately, many of our churches are part of the problem.

What would you like to say to Christians who don't actively take part in the pro-life movement simply because they think others are doing it?

There is a place for everyone in this movement. My 4 year old daughter prays with me outside of the abortion clinic. Everyone should be involved. There really is no excuse. One day, we will stand in front of Christ and He

will ask us what we did for the "least of these." I hope we all have an answer.

With your change of heart came not only a change in employment but also a change of faith. You and your husband are being received into the Catholic Church this Easter. You were formally members of the Episcopal Church and were asked to stop attending services because of your pro-life activity. What did you feel when they asked you to leave? Did you see it coming?

I felt very sad and betrayed by them. This was our faith community...people who we loved. But on the other hand, we had started to attend there because of their liberal views, so it made sense. It was still very hurtful.

Tell us about your journey home to the Catholic Church.

We are very excited about becoming part of the Catholic Church. After we left the Episcopal Church, we went searching for a different church home. After attending our first Mass in the Catholic Church, we knew we were home. In particular, I think I have always longed for a relationship with our Blessed Mother. I can see this even as a child. Being able to fulfill that devotion has truly completed my faith.

It's beautiful to see how God is working in your life. When you gave up a job that took away the body and blood of a human being, He replaced that with The Body and Blood of Jesus.

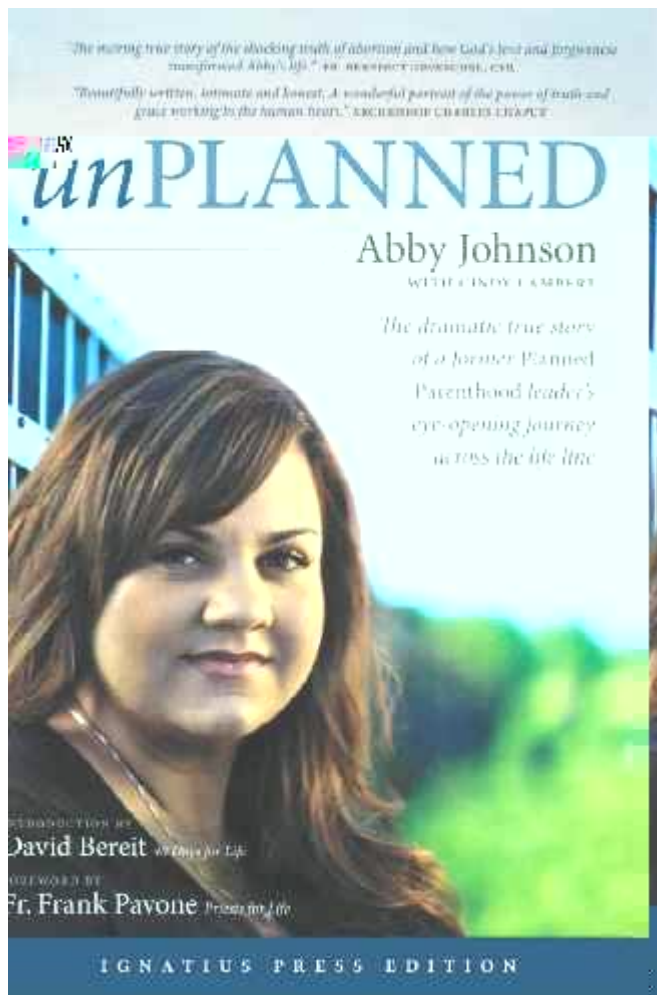
Thank you again, Abby for your time and all your good work. May Our Lord bless you and Our Lady wrap her mantle of protection around you. I am so happy and excited that very soon you will be brought into The Church. You will be in my prayers and I would also ask the Western Province to pray for you as well.

God Bless you,
In Jesus and St. Dominic,

Denise Harvey
Vice President
Western Province

I would encourage everyone who can to pick up a copy of Abby's book. It's a fascinating story that unmask all the lies about abortion and reveals the truth. You will also be supporting Abby and her mission to end abortion in this country. I would also encourage you to get involved with "40 days for life" which is underway now. The 40 days for life folks pray, fast and hold peaceful vigils outside abortion clinics. I've become more and more convinced that abortion is the greatest threat to peace and safety in our country. Following is the first chapter of *unPlanned*:

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CHAPTER ONE THE ULTRASOUND

CHERYL POKED HER HEAD INTO MY OFFICE. “Abby, they need an extra person back in the exam room. Are you free?”

I looked up from my paperwork, surprised.

“Sure.”

Though I’d been with Planned Parenthood for eight years, I had never been called into the exam room to help the medical team during an abortion, and I had no idea why I was needed now. Nurse-practitioners were the ones who assisted in abortions, not the other clinic staff. As director of this clinic in Bryan, Texas, I was able to fill in for any position in a pinch, except, of course, for doctors or nurses performing medical procedures. I had, on a few occasions, agreed at a patient’s request to stay with her and even hold her hand during the procedure, but only when I’d been the counselor who’d worked with her during intake and counseling. That was not the case today. So why did they need me?

Today’s visiting abortionist had been here at the Bryan clinic only two or three times before. He had a private abortion practice about 100 miles away. When I’d talked with him about the job several weeks before, he had explained that at his own facility he did only ultrasound-guided abortions — the abortion procedure with the least risk of complications for the woman. Because this method allows the doctor to see exactly what is going on inside the uterus, there is less chance of perforating the uterine wall, one of the risks of abortion. I respected that about him. The more that could be done to keep women safe and healthy, the better, as far as I was concerned. However, I’d explained to him that this practice wasn’t the protocol at our clinic. He understood and said he’d follow our typical procedures, though we agreed he’d be free to use ultrasound if he felt a particular situation warranted it.

To my knowledge, we’d never done ultrasound-guided abortions at our facility. We did abortions only every other Saturday, and the assigned goal from our Planned Parenthood affiliate was to perform 25 to 35 procedures on those days. We liked to wrap them up by around 2 p.m. Our typical procedure took about 10 minutes, but an ultrasound added about five minutes, and when you’re trying to schedule up to 35 abortions in a day, those extra minutes add up.

I felt a moment’s reluctance outside the exam room. I never liked entering this room during an abortion procedure — never welcomed what happened behind this door. But since we all had to be ready at any time to pitch in and get the job done, I pushed the door open and stepped in.

The patient was already sedated, still conscious but groggy, the doctor’s brilliant light beaming down on her. She was in position, the instruments were laid out neatly on the tray next to the doctor, and the nurse-practitioner was positioning the ultrasound machine next to the operating table.

“I’m going to perform an ultrasound-guided abortion on this patient. I need you to hold the ultrasound probe,” the doctor explained.

As I took the ultrasound probe in hand and adjusted the settings on the machine, I argued with myself, *I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to take part in an abortion.* No, wrong attitude — I needed to psych myself up for this task. I took a deep breath and tried to tune in to the music from the radio playing softly in the background. It’s a good learning experience — *I’ve never seen an ultrasound-guided abortion before, I told myself. Maybe this will help me when I counsel women. I’ll learn firsthand about this safer procedure. Besides, it will be over in just a few minutes.*

I could not have imagined how the next 10 minutes would

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unPlanned

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shake the foundation of my values and change the course of my life.

I had occasionally performed diagnostic ultrasounds for clients before. It was one of the services we offered to confirm pregnancies and estimate how far along they were. The familiarity of preparing for an ultrasound soothed my uneasiness at being in this room. I applied the lubricant to the patient's belly, then maneuvered the ultrasound probe until her uterus was displayed on the screen and adjusted the probe's position to capture the image of the fetus.

I was expecting to see what I had seen in past ultrasounds. Usually, depending on how far along the pregnancy was and how the fetus was turned, I'd first see a leg, or the head, or some partial image of the torso, and would need to maneuver a bit to get the best possible image. But this time, the image was complete. I could see the entire, perfect profile of a baby.

It looks just like Grace at 12 weeks, I thought, surprised, remembering my very first peek at my daughter, three years before, snuggled securely inside my womb. The image now before me looked the same, only clearer, sharper. The detail startled me. I could clearly see the profile of the head, both arms, legs, and even tiny fingers and toes. Perfect.

And just that quickly, the flutter of the warm memory of Grace was replaced with a surge of anxiety. *What am I about to see?* My stomach tightened. *I don't want to watch what is about to happen.*

I suppose that sounds odd coming from a professional who'd been running a Planned Parenthood clinic for two years, counseling women in crisis, scheduling abortions, reviewing the clinic's monthly budget reports, hiring and training staff. But odd or not, the simple fact is, I had never been interested in promoting abortion. I'd come to Planned Parenthood eight years before, believing that its purpose was primarily to prevent unwanted pregnancies, thereby reducing the number of abortions. That had certainly been *my* goal. And I believed that Planned Parenthood saved lives — the lives of women who, without the services provided by this organization, might resort to some back-alley butcher. All of this sped through my mind as I carefully held the probe in place.

"Thirteen weeks," I heard the nurse say after taking measurements to determine the fetus's age.

"Okay," the doctor said, looking at me, "just hold the probe in place during the procedure so I can see what I'm doing."

The cool air of the exam room left me feeling chilled. My eyes still glued to the image of this perfectly formed baby, I watched as a new image entered the video screen. The cannula — a strawshaped instrument attached to the end

of the suction tube — had been inserted into the uterus and was nearing the baby's side. It looked like an invader on the screen, out of place. Wrong. It just looked wrong.

My heart sped up. Time slowed. I didn't want to look, but I didn't want to stop looking either. I couldn't not watch. I was horrified, but fascinated at the same time, like a gawker slowing as he drives past some horrific automobile wreck—not wanting to see a mangled body, but looking all the same.

My eyes flew to the patient's face; tears flowed from the corners of her eyes. I could see she was in pain. The nurse dabbed the woman's face with a tissue.

"Just breathe," the nurse gently coached her. "Breathe."

"It's almost over," I whispered. I wanted to stay focused on her, but my eyes shot back to the image on the screen.

At first, the baby didn't seem aware of the cannula. It gently probed the baby's side, and for a quick second I felt relief. *Of course*, I thought. *The fetus doesn't feel pain*. I had reassured countless women of this as I'd been taught by Planned Parenthood. *The fetal tissue feels nothing as it is removed. Get a grip, Abby. This is a simple, quick medical procedure.* My head was working hard to control my responses, but I couldn't shake an inner disquiet that was quickly mounting to horror as I watched the screen.

The next movement was the sudden jerk of a tiny foot as the baby started kicking, as if it were trying to move away from the probing invader. As the cannula pressed its side, the baby began struggling to turn and twist away. It seemed clear to me that it could feel the cannula, and it did not like what it was feeling. And then the doctor's voice broke through, startling me.

"Beam me up, Scotty," he said lightheartedly to the nurse. He was telling her to turn on the suction — in an abortion the suction isn't turned on until the doctor feels he has the cannula in exactly the right place.

I had a sudden urge to yell, "Stop!" To shake the woman and say, "Look at what is happening to your baby! Wake up! Hurry! Stop them!"

But even as I thought those words, I looked at my own hand holding the probe. I was one of "them" performing this act. My eyes shot back to the screen again. The cannula was already being rotated by the doctor, and now I could see the tiny body violently twisting with it. For the briefest moment the baby looked as if it were being wrung like a dishcloth, twirled and squeezed. And then it crumpled and began disappearing into the cannula before my eyes. The last thing I saw was the tiny, perfectly formed backbone sucked into the tube, and then it was gone. And the uterus was empty. Totally empty.

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I was frozen in disbelief. Without realizing it, I let go of the probe. It slipped off the patient's tummy and slid onto her leg. I could feel my heart pounding — pounding so hard my neck throbbed. I tried to get a deep breath but couldn't seem to breathe in or out. I still stared at the screen, even though it was black now because I'd lost the image. But nothing was registering to me. I felt too stunned and shaken to move. I was aware of the doctor and nurse casually chatting as they worked, but it sounded distant, like vague background noise, hard to hear over the pounding of my own blood in my ears.

The image of the tiny body, mangled and sucked away, was replaying in my mind, and with it the image of Grace's first ultrasound — how she'd been about the same size. And I could hear in my memory one of the many arguments I'd had with my husband, Doug, about abortion.

"When you were pregnant with Grace, it wasn't a fetus; it was a baby," Doug had said. And now it hit me like a lightning bolt: He was right! What was in this woman's womb just a moment ago was alive. It wasn't just tissue, just cells. It was a human baby. And it was fighting for its life! A battle it lost in the blink of an eye. What I have told people for years, what I've believed and taught and defended, is a lie.

Suddenly I felt the eyes of the doctor and nurse on me. It shook me out of my thoughts. I noticed the probe lying on the woman's leg and fumbled to get it back into place. But my hands were shaking now.

"Abby, are you OK?" the doctor asked. The nurse's eyes searched my face with concern.

"Yeah, I'm OK." I still didn't have the probe correctly positioned, and now I was worried because the doctor couldn't see inside the uterus. My right hand held the probe, and my left hand rested gingerly on the woman's warm belly. I glanced at her face — more tears and a grimace of pain. I moved the probe until I'd recaptured the image of her now-empty uterus. My eyes traveled back to my hands. I looked at them as if they weren't even my own.

How much damage have these hands done over the past eight years? How many lives have been taken because of them? Not just because of my hands, but because of my words. What if I'd known the truth, and what if I'd told all those women?

What if?

I had believed a lie! I had blindly promoted the "company line" for so long. Why? Why hadn't I searched out the truth for myself? Why had I closed my ears to the arguments I'd heard? Oh, dear God, what had I done?

My hand was still on the patient's belly, and I had the sense that I had just taken something away from her with

that hand. I'd robbed her. And my hand started to *hurt* — I felt an actual physical pain. And right there, standing beside the table, my hand on the weeping woman's belly, this thought came from deep within me:

Never again! Never again.

I went into autopilot. As the nurse cleaned up the woman, I put away the ultrasound machine, then gently roused the patient, who was limp and groggy. I helped her sit up, coaxed her into a wheelchair, and took her to the recovery room. I tucked a light blanket around her. Like so many patients I'd seen before, she continued to cry, in obvious emotional and physical pain. I did my best to make her more comfortable.

Ten minutes, maybe 15 at most, had passed since Cheryl had asked me to go help in the exam room. And in those few minutes, everything had changed. Drastically. The image of that tiny baby twisting and struggling kept replaying in my mind. And the patient. I felt so guilty. I'd taken something precious from her, and she didn't even know it.

How had it come to this? How had I let this happen? I had invested myself, my heart, my career in Planned Parenthood because I cared about women in crisis. And now I faced a crisis of my own.

Looking back now on that late September day of 2009, I realize how wise God is for not revealing our future to us. Had I known then the firestorm I was about to endure, I might not have had the courage to move forward. As it was, since I didn't know, I wasn't yet looking for courage. I was, however, looking to understand how I found myself in this place — living a lie, spreading a lie, and hurting the very women I so wanted to help.

And I desperately needed to know what to do next.

This is my story.

Excerpt from UNPLANNED by Abby Johnson
Ignatius Press Edition
To get the rest of the book, go to:
<http://www.UnplannedBook.com>

Abby Johnson holds a B.S. in psychology from Texas A&M University and an M.A. in counseling from Sam Houston State University. She was hired by Planned Parenthood in 2005 and was later promoted to health center director. Abby ran both the family planning and abortion programs. In 2009 she left Planned Parenthood and joined the local Coalition for Life as a volunteer. She now serves as Chief Research Strategist for Live Action and works on projects with the national 40 Days for Life campaign.

From the President

Dear Brothers and Sisters in St. Dominic,

May Jesus provide a blessed Lent for all of us.

Just a bit of housekeeping this month:

A number of chapters will hold, or have held, elections and I'd be grateful if you'd bring us up to date on any office changes within your chapter, particularly with your LPC Representative. It's still a bit early, and I won't convoke the council until sometime in late April or early May, but the Lay Provincial Council will meet at St. Albert Priory July 8, 9 and 10. There is quite a bit of planning that is required for this meeting, and one of the issues we have to work around is St. Albert's Priory itself. Having a list of attendees to present to the Guestmaster early on assists him with planning and guaranteeing sufficient resources for the guests that will be staying there. While many of the regular residents may be away from the priory during the summer months, one of the ways the friars are able to make ends meet is by hosting groups such as ours. One way we are able to assist them and help ourselves in the process is with an early and accurate list of attendees. Many thanks in advance for keeping me posted with your council changes.

This year it is the Western Province's turn to host the Dominican Laity Interprovincial Council. The DLIPC is a

meeting that occurs every 18 months or so on a rotating basis and it involves the four US provinces (East, South, Central and West) and Canada – which hosted the 2009 gathering. Provincial Presidents, DLIPC Representatives and Promoters will be meeting this year at St. Albert's Priory, and in addition to me, Gary Sims and Fr Vincent Serpa, OP will be attending. A whole host of common issues will be touched on and I eagerly request your prayers for a successful meeting – which we'll be reporting on at the LPC in July.

Finally, I have a small request – well, maybe it's not so small – but I'd like to request ongoing prayers for our chapters-in-formation. We have a fairly large number of such chapters and I've been able to visit a number of them, most recently Eugene and Seattle, though we've been in regular communication with all of them and other members of the EC have visited other fledgling chapters. So many blessings in these new chapters – faith-and-hope-filled, earnest and hard working, the folks forming them are a credit to us all, and, in some ways, people for us to look up to. I would encourage an occasional prayer of intercession for their ongoing success and growth.

Yours in St. Dominic,

Tony Galati
President



From the Justice Promoter

Dear Dominicans:

Thank you for your good effort to proclaim the Gospel through biblical justice and peace efforts within your sphere of influence. Many times we feel isolated and without a voice. However, last week, among the member states at the United Nations, one woman delegate from the nation of Chile was like a voice crying out in the wilderness.

It was at the 55th session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. During a discussion on the elimination of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and the empowerment of women, the Chilean delegate noted that since Chile banned therapeutic abortions in 1989, the maternal mortality rate had decreased 88 percent. Too often, a num-



ber of the U.N. member states argue in favor of abortion as a method of reducing maternal mortality. She told the assembled delegates that, "Legislation that protects the life of unborn children does not increase maternal mortality." She also noted that, "The reason for Chile's decrease in maternal mortality is the promotion of safe pregnancy, not [the promotion] of abortion."

At another presentation during the 55th Session, the issues of sex selection and abortion were raised, including the use of sex selection to commit violence against kids in the womb—a form of violence mostly used against girls. The delegate from the Holy See noted that the, "Recognition of the intrinsic dignity and worth of girls from the moment of conception onwards is the way to eliminate discrimination and violence against women."

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Justice

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We should be thankful that these governmental delegates to the U.N. fight for justice and peace first in the womb, so that women and men of good will may promote and secure justice and peace across the world.

You can check out the following links to learn more:

- See the Agenda here for U.N. Commission on the Status of Women meeting held February 21 through March 4, 2011. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#part>

- The dialog mentioned above can be seen here: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/03/55th-session-of-csw-panel-5-english.html>
- For your information, here is a blog regarding the issue: <http://www.turtlebayandbeyond.org/2011/abortion/chile-statement-video/>

Have a happy and holy Lenten season.

In St. Dominic,
Dr. John Keenan, O.P.
Dominican Lay Promoter
Justice, Peace & Care of Creation



From the Editor

In the last issue the laity of the province were notified that the use of “OPL” as a designator was being deprecated in favor of use by the laity of “OP”. This is a contentious item, and I appreciated the emails I have received on the subject. At issue is how this relates to our identity as laity and Dominicans. What I’ve found is that both sides of the issue are grasping something that is true; but there is no agreement because what they are correct about is two different things. The little identifier has been pressed into a different service than traditionally used. For the purpose TOP was once used, OPL is deficient and OP is unsuitable, whereas for the purpose those who wanted OP, while true, I can’t say I’m convinced it’s suitable. Although the underlying truth that we are all equal before God by reason of our baptism is a truth of the faith, we are not the same. As an examination of conscience, I wonder if what we have done is in accord with the express Will of the Church, as found in the document *On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained*

Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest [\[link\]](#), or is it part of an ongoing effort to “democratize” or otherwise make level the field, so to speak?

This particular question, representing the corner of the world that the Dominican laity live and breath in, is perhaps emblematic of an identity struggle within the Church at large. I suspect that the Holy Father is trying to tell us that the struggle for identity may soon be eclipsed by multi-faceted challenges to our ability to continue in the faith in public at all. The enemy of God and man has arisen in many forms over time and attempted to gain ascendancy, yet each time he attains the appearance of success, he is defeated; beginning at the cross.

May the victory of the Cross of Christ be yours.

Mark Gross,
Editor

Trumping Roe v Wade

HB 1450—BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 12.1-01-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

12.1-01-04. General definitions.

15. "Human being" means an individual member of the species homo sapiens at every stage of development.
25. [] Person includes all human beings.

HB 1450 passed the South Dakota House Feb 10, 2011. ([Link](#))

Are You Pro-life or Are You Anti-Abortion?

John Keenan

"If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. ..." Proverbs 24:10-11.

Recently, with my youngest son, Timothy, a 19 year old autistic child in tow, I had the blessing of attending along with 12 other men from Boise, Idaho, a retreat at the Holy Trinity Cistercian Monastery in Huntsville, Utah. The monastery rests on a 1900 acre tract nestled in the Rocky Mountains 40 miles north of Salt Lake City.

After our initial early evening meal and vespers, the men gathered in the library at the Monastery and began to discuss all kinds of topics. Among the topics, one included a retreatant's testimony that some people are "anti-abortion" but are not "prolife." Intrigued, I listened to his passionate chat. He testified that years ago not long after the *Roe v. Wade* decision—when a young father of seven living in New Zealand—he and his family marched in the streets alongside several other prolife families protesting the legalization of abortion.

With his family's conscience put to the test, they decided to take a young 13 year old pregnant mother into their family home—the first among many. As the father of seven with limited resources of time, he asked his prolife friends to help him taxi the youth to school and medical appointments.

No one responded. Obviously, this father of seven and patron of a 13 year old mother was devastated.

From this poor experience long ago, this now grandfather made this charge at the Monastery to the other retreatants that evening: that there are far too many people who are "anti-abortion" and not "prolife."

That charge may have been true in 1973. However, it is worthy to note that since the irrational and unscientific Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* opinion was published, an entire core of prolife donors and organizations have arisen, that give of their time, talent, treasure, and resources to pregnant girls and women and children before and after birth. These people give food, clothing, money, emotional support, medical, and housing to the needy.

In desperate times such as these, mothers' hearts are raised and they learn about life in the womb—in their womb. The testimony of mothers who experienced abortion, mothers who chose life, their children, and dedicated prolife people and organizations are educating our Nation about respect for innocent human life from conception to natural death. In this growing respect for the dignity of human life, there is being nurtured a change of heart individually and collectively for all human life, whether innocent or not. An example of such prolife people and organization is Stanton Healthcare located in Boise, Idaho. <http://www.stantonhealthcare.org/default.asp>.

A similar charge regarding a division between "prolife" people and "anti-abortion" sentiments was raised during the political debates of 2008. During that debate, it was noted that a consistent Catholic social teaching gives rise to not only a right to life of the unborn but also the quality of life for those after birth. It seeks what has been called a "consistent ethic of life" where not only is the right to life secured at law, but that public policy would expand significant public programs on behalf of the needy and increases the scope of governmental responsibility for the poor. This charge rationalized many votes for abortion-supporting candidates in 2008.

Nevertheless, the taking of innocent life is universally wrong and violates fundamental justice. It violates the natural law to which all human law is subject with no exception. The Faithful that are prolife should be consistent in their own lives. They should protect not only the innocent but stand up for the poor, the disenfranchised, and those who cannot speak for themselves. In other words, Christians must practice the Gospel.

However, this Gospel message does not necessarily address the degree of governmental involvement or spending. The question of how much government should be involved is a question of public policy, an issue—at least in America—from which men and women of good will may prudently differ in the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and other public forums.

For me, *in the grand effort* to aid the poor and hungry, the government is a partner alongside private institutions, men and women of good will, and the free association of the Christian Faithful. Government cannot be the only or major solution to the staggering problem of poverty and hunger. People are. In all of human history, the human masses have suffered grinding poverty *except* where a free people live in and benefit from a free enterprise system. In modern America where a free enterprise system has borne fruit and where the American people have heard the desperate need of unfortunate people whether domestic or foreign, they have responded generously if not magnanimously.

While trying to fulfill the justice of helping the poor and hungry demanded by the Gospel, we cannot forget the spiritual element and dignity of each human person. To respect all of human life requires recognition that God is the Father of all humanity. And, it is here where all Humanity, who each suffers from Original Sin and fallibility, can be prompted by the command of Jesus Christ: to love Him with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

This is the first step toward a consistent ethic of life.

John Keenan, LPC Promoter of Peace, Justice, and Care of Creation is a member of the Bl Margaret of Castello Chapter

Religious Freedom

(Continued from page 3)

Religious freedom, a force for freedom and civilization: dangers arising from its exploitation

7. *The exploitation of religious freedom to disguise hidden interests, such as the subversion of the established order, the hoarding of resources or the grip on power of a single group, can cause enormous harm to societies.* Fanaticism, fundamentalism and practices contrary to human dignity can never be justified, even less so in the name of religion. The profession of a religion cannot be exploited or imposed by force. States and the various human communities must never forget that *religious freedom is the condition for the pursuit of truth, and truth does not impose itself by violence but "by the force of its own truth"*. In this sense, religion is a positive driving force for the building of civil and political society.

How can anyone deny the contribution of the world's great religions to the development of civilization? The sincere search for God has led to greater respect for human dignity. Christian communities, with their patrimony of values and principles, have contributed much to making individuals and peoples aware of their identity and their dignity, the establishment of democratic institutions and the recognition of human rights and their corresponding duties.

Today too, in an increasingly globalized society, Christians are called, not only through their responsible involvement in civic, economic and political life but also through the witness of their charity and faith, to offer a valuable contribution to the laborious and stimulating pursuit of justice, integral human development and the right ordering of human affairs. The exclusion of religion from public life deprives the latter of a dimension open to transcendence. Without this fundamental experience it becomes difficult to guide societies towards universal ethical principles and to establish at the national and international level a legal order which fully recognizes and respects fundamental rights and freedoms as these are set forth in the goals – sadly still disregarded or contradicted – of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

An issue of justice and civility: fundamentalism and hostility to believers compromise the positive secularity of states

8. The same determination that condemns every form of fanaticism and religious fundamentalism must also oppose every form of hostility to religion that would restrict the public role of believers in civil and political life.

It should be clear that *religious fundamentalism and secularism are alike in that both represent extreme forms of a rejection of legitimate pluralism and the principle of secularity*. Both absolutize a reductive and partial vision of the

human person, favoring in the one case forms of religious integralism and, in the other, of rationalism. *A society that would violently impose or, on the contrary, reject religion is not only unjust to individuals and to God, but also to itself. God beckons humanity with a loving plan that, while engaging the whole person in his or her natural and spiritual dimensions, calls for a free and responsible answer which engages the whole heart and being, individual and communitarian.* Society too, as an expression of the person and of all his or her constitutive dimensions, must live and organize itself in a way that favors openness to transcendence. Precisely for this reason, the laws and institutions of a society cannot be shaped in such a way as to ignore the religious dimension of its citizens or to prescind completely from it. Through the democratic activity of citizens conscious of their lofty calling, those laws and institutions must adequately reflect the authentic nature of the person and support its religious dimension. Since the latter is not a creation of the state, it cannot be manipulated by the state, but must rather be acknowledged and respected by it.

Whenever the legal system at any level, national or international, allows or tolerates religious or antireligious fanaticism, it fails in its mission, which is to protect and promote justice and the rights of all. These matters cannot be left to the discretion of the legislator or the majority since, as Cicero once pointed out, justice is something more than a mere act which produces and applies law. It entails *acknowledging the dignity of each person* which, unless religious freedom is guaranteed and lived in its essence, ends up being curtailed and offended, exposed to the risk of falling under the sway of idols, of relative goods which then become absolute. All this exposes society to the risk of forms of political and ideological totalitarianism which emphasize public power while demeaning and restricting freedom of conscience, thought and religion as potential competitors.

Dialogue between civil and religious institutions

9. The patrimony of principles and values expressed by an authentic religiosity is a source of enrichment for peoples and their *ethos*. It speaks directly to the conscience and mind of men and women, it recalls the need for moral conversion, and it encourages the practice of the virtues and a loving approach to others as brothers and sisters, as members of the larger human family.

With due respect for the positive secularity of state institutions, the public dimension of religion must always be acknowledged. *A healthy dialogue between civil and religious institutions* is fundamental for the integral development of the human person and social harmony.

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Religious Freedom

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Living in love and in truth

10. In a globalized world marked by increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, the great religions can serve as an important factor of unity and peace for the human family. On the basis of their religious convictions and their reasoned pursuit of the common good, their followers are called to give responsible expression to their commitment within a context of religious freedom. Amid the variety of religious cultures, there is a need to value those elements which foster civil coexistence, while rejecting whatever is contrary to the dignity of men and women.

The public space which the international community makes available for the religions and their proposal of what constitutes a “good life” helps to create a measure of agreement about truth and goodness, and a moral consensus; both of these are fundamental to a just and peaceful coexistence. The leaders of the great religions, thanks to their position, their influence and their authority in their respective communities, are the first ones called to mutual respect and dialogue.

Christians, for their part, are spurred by their faith in God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, to live as brothers and sisters who encounter one another in the Church and work together in building a world where individuals and peoples “shall not hurt or destroy ... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Is 11:9).

Dialogue as a shared pursuit

11. For the Church, dialogue between the followers of the different religions represents an important means of cooperating with all religious communities for the common good. The Church herself rejects nothing of what is true and holy in the various religions. “She has a high regard for those ways of life and conduct, precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women”.

The path to take is not the way of relativism or religious syncretism. The Church, in fact, “proclaims, and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6); in Christ, in whom God reconciled all things to himself, people find the fullness of the religious life”. Yet this in no way excludes dialogue and the common pursuit of truth in different areas of life, since, as Saint Thomas Aquinas would say, “every truth, whoever utters it, comes from the Holy Spirit”.

The year 2011 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace convened in Assisi in 1986

by Pope John Paul II. On that occasion the leaders of the great world religions testified to the fact that religion is a factor of union and peace, and not of division and conflict. The memory of that experience gives reason to hope for a future in which all believers will see themselves, and will actually be, agents of justice and peace.

Moral truth in politics and diplomacy

12. Politics and diplomacy should look to the moral and spiritual patrimony offered by the great religions of the world in order to acknowledge and affirm universal truths, principles and values which cannot be denied without denying the dignity of the human person. But what does it mean, in practical terms, to promote moral truth in the world of politics and diplomacy? It means acting in a responsible way on the basis of an objective and integral knowledge of the facts; it means deconstructing political ideologies which end up supplanting truth and human dignity in order to promote pseudo-values under the pretext of peace, development and human rights; it means fostering an unwavering commitment to base positive law on the principles of the natural law. All this is necessary and consistent with the respect for the dignity and worth of the human person enshrined by the world’s peoples in the 1945 *Charter of the United Nations*, which presents universal values and moral principles as a point of reference for the norms, institutions and systems governing coexistence on the national and international levels.

Beyond hatred and prejudice

13. Despite the lessons of history and the efforts of states, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the many men and women of good will who daily work to protect fundamental rights and freedoms, today’s world also witnesses cases of persecution, discrimination, acts of violence and intolerance based on religion. In a particular way, in Asia and in Africa, the chief victims are the members of religious minorities, who are prevented from freely professing or changing their religion by forms of intimidation and the violation of their rights, basic freedoms and essential goods, including the loss of personal freedom and life itself.

There also exist – as I have said – more sophisticated forms of hostility to religion which, in Western countries, occasionally find expression in a denial of history and the rejection of religious symbols which reflect the identity and the culture of the majority of citizens. Often these forms of hostility also foster hatred and prejudice; they are inconsistent with a serene and balanced vision of pluralism and the secularity of institutions, to say nothing of the fact that coming generations risk losing contact with the priceless spiritual heritage of their countries.

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Religious Freedom

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Religion is defended by defending the rights and freedoms of religious communities. The leaders of the great world religions and the leaders of nations should therefore renew their commitment to promoting and protecting religious freedom, and in particular to defending religious minorities; these do not represent a threat to the identity of the majority but rather an opportunity for dialogue and mutual cultural enrichment. Defending them is the ideal way to consolidate the spirit of good will, openness and reciprocity which can ensure the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in all areas and regions of the world.

Religious freedom in the world

14. Finally I wish to say a word to the Christian communities suffering from persecution, discrimination, violence and intolerance, particularly in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East and especially in the Holy Land, a place chosen and blessed by God. I assure them once more of my paternal affection and prayers, and I ask all those in authority to act promptly to end every injustice against the Christians living in those lands. In the face of present difficulties, may Christ's followers not lose heart, for *witnessing to the Gospel is, and always will be, a sign of contradiction.*

Let us take to heart the words of the Lord Jesus: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted ... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied ... Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:4-12). Then let us renew "the pledge we give to be forgiving and to pardon when we invoke God's forgiveness in the *Our Father*. We ourselves lay down the condition and the extent of the mercy we ask for when we say: 'And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us' (Mt 6:12)". Violence is not overcome by violence. May our cries of pain always be accompanied by faith, by hope and by the witness of our love of God. I also express my hope that in the West, and especially in Europe, there will be an end to hostility and prejudice against Christians because they are resolved to orient their lives in a way consistent with the values and principles expressed in the Gospel. May Europe rather be reconciled to its own Christian roots, which are fundamental for understanding its past, present and future role in history; in this way it will come to experience justice, concord and peace by cultivating a sincere dialogue with all peoples.

Religious freedom, the path to peace

15. The world needs God. It needs universal, shared ethical and spiritual values, and religion can offer a precious



contribution to their pursuit, for the building of a just and peaceful social order at the national and international levels.

*Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task which is never fully completed. A society reconciled with God is closer to peace, which is not the mere absence of war or the result of military or economic supremacy, much less deceptive ploys or clever manipulation. Rather, peace is the result of a process of purification and of cultural, moral and spiritual elevation involving each individual and people, a process in which human dignity is fully respected. I invite all those who wish to be peacemakers, especially the young, to heed the voice speaking within their hearts and thus to find in God the stable point of reference for attaining authentic freedom, the inexhaustible force which can give the world a new direction and spirit, and overcome the mistakes of the past. In the words of Pope Paul VI, to whose wisdom and farsightedness we owe the institution of the World Day of Peace: "It is necessary before all else to provide peace with other weapons – different from those destined to kill and exterminate mankind. What are needed above all are moral weapons, those which give strength and prestige to international law – the weapon, in the first place, of the observance of pacts". Religious freedom is an authentic weapon of peace, with an *historical and prophetic mission*. Peace brings to full fruition the deepest qualities and potentials of the human person, the qualities which can change the world and make it better. It gives hope for a future of justice and peace, even in the face of grave injustice and material and moral poverty. May all men and women, and societies at every level and in every part of the earth, soon be able to experience *religious freedom, the path to peace!**

*Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace,
January 1, 2011 ([Link](#))*

Correct Interpretation of the Council Benedict XVI

It all depends on the correct interpretation of the Council or - as we would say today - on its proper hermeneutics, the correct key to its interpretation and application. The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face to face and quarreled with each other. One caused confusion, the other, silently but more and more visibly, bore and is bearing fruit.

On the one hand, there is an interpretation that I would call "a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture"; it has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology. On the other, there is the "hermeneutic of reform", of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church. It asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council. It claims that they are the result of compromises in which, to reach unanimity, it was found necessary to keep and reconfirm many old things that are now pointless. However, the true spirit of the Council is not to be found in these compromises but instead in the impulses toward the new that are contained in the texts.

These innovations alone were supposed to represent the true spirit of the Council, and starting from and in conformity with them, it would be possible to move ahead. Precisely because the texts would only imperfectly reflect the true spirit of the Council and its newness, it would be necessary to go courageously beyond the texts and make room for the newness in which the Council's deepest intention would be expressed, even if it were still vague.

In a word: it would be necessary not to follow the texts of the Council but its spirit. In this way, obviously, a vast margin was left open for the question on how this spirit should subsequently be defined and room was consequently made for every whim.

The nature of a Council as such is therefore basically misunderstood. In this way, it is considered as a sort of constituent that eliminates an old constitution and creates a new one. However, the Constituent Assembly needs a mandator and then confirmation by the mandator, in other words, the people the constitution must serve. The Fathers had no such mandate and no one had ever given them one; nor could anyone have given them one because the essential constitution of the Church comes from the Lord and was given to us so that we might attain eternal life and, starting from this perspective, be able to illuminate life in time and time itself.

Through the Sacrament they have received, Bishops are stewards of the Lord's gift. They are "stewards of the

mysteries of God" (I Cor 4: 1); as such, they must be found to be "faithful" and "wise" (cf. Lk 12: 41-48). This requires them to administer the Lord's gift in the right way, so that it is not left concealed in some hiding place but bears fruit, and the Lord may end by saying to the administrator: "Since you were dependable in a small matter I will put you in charge of larger affairs" (cf. Mt 25: 14-30; Lk 19: 11-27).

These Gospel parables express the dynamic of fidelity required in the Lord's service; and through them it becomes clear that, as in a Council, the dynamic and fidelity must converge.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity is countered by the hermeneutic of reform, as it was presented first by Pope John XXIII in his Speech inaugurating the Council on 11 October 1962 and later by Pope Paul VI in his Discourse for the Council's conclusion on 7 December 1965.

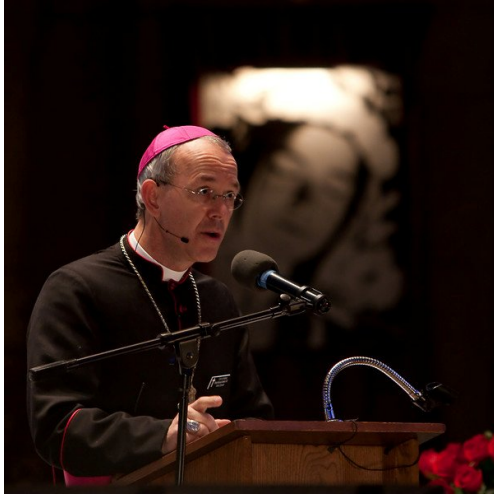
Here I shall cite only John XXIII's well-known words, which unequivocally express this hermeneutic when he says that the Council wishes "to transmit the doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion". And he continues: "Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us...". It is necessary that "adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness..." be presented in "faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another...", retaining the same meaning and message (The Documents of Vatican II, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., p. 715).

It is clear that this commitment to expressing a specific truth in a new way demands new thinking on this truth and a new and vital relationship with it; it is also clear that new words can only develop if they come from an informed understanding of the truth expressed, and on the other hand, that a reflection on faith also requires that this faith be lived. In this regard, the program that Pope John XXIII proposed was extremely demanding, indeed, just as the synthesis of fidelity and dynamic is demanding.

However, wherever this interpretation guided the implementation of the Council, new life developed and new fruit ripened. Forty years after the Council, we can show that the positive is far greater and livelier than it appeared to be in the turbulent years around 1968. Today, we see that although the good seed developed slowly, it is nonetheless growing; and our deep gratitude for the work done by the Council is likewise growing.

Christmas Address of Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia, Dec 22 2005 ([link](#))

The Challenge of Opposing Interpretations by Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of Kazakhstan



Bishop Athanasius Schneider, ORC - Auxiliary Bishop of Karaganda, Kazakhstan at the 2009 Call to Holiness Conference in the Detroit area

[. . .] For a correct interpretation of Vatican Council II, it is necessary to keep in mind the intention manifested in the conciliar documents themselves and in the specific words of the popes who convened and presided over it, John XXIII and Paul VI.

Moreover, it is necessary to discover the common thread of the entire work of the Council, meaning its pastoral intention, which is the "salus animarum," the salvation of souls. This, in turn, depends on and is subordinate to the promotion of divine worship and of the glory of God, it depends on the primacy of God.

This primacy of God in life and in all the activity of the Church is manifested unequivocally by the fact that the constitution on the liturgy occupies, conceptually and chronologically, the first place in the vast work of the Council. [. . .]

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The characteristic of the rupture in the interpretation of the conciliar texts is manifested in a more stereotypical and widespread way in the thesis of an anthropocentric, secularist, or naturalistic shift of Vatican Council II with respect to the previous ecclesial tradition.

One of the best-known manifestations of such a mistaken interpretation has been, for example, so-called liberation theology and the subsequent devastating pastoral practice. What contrast there is between this liberation theology and its practice and the Council appears evident from the following conciliar teaching: "Christ, to be sure, gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious one" (cf. "Gaudium et Spes," 42). [. . .]

One interpretation of rupture of lighter doctrinal weight

has been manifested in the pastoral-liturgical field. One might mention in this regard the decline of the sacred and sublime character of the liturgy, and the introduction of more anthropocentric elements of expression.

This phenomenon can be seen in three liturgical practices that are fairly well known and widespread in almost all the parishes of the Catholic sphere: the almost complete disappearance of the use of the Latin language, the reception of the Eucharistic body of Christ directly in the hand while standing, and the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice in the modality of a closed circle in which priest and people are constantly looking at each other.

This way of praying – without everyone facing the same direction, which is a more natural corporal and symbolic expression with respect to the truth of everyone being oriented toward God in public worship – contradicts the practice that Jesus himself and his apostles observed in public prayer, both in the temple and in the synagogue. It also contradicts the unanimous testimony of the Fathers and of all the subsequent tradition of the Eastern and Western Church.

These three pastoral and liturgical practices glaringly at odds with the law of prayer maintained by generations of the Catholic faithful for at least one millennium find no support in the conciliar texts, and even contradict both a specific text of the Council (on the Latin language: cf. "Sacrosanctum Concilium," 36 and 54) and the "mens," the true intention of the conciliar Fathers, as can be seen in the proceedings of the Council.

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In the hermeneutical uproar of the contrasting interpretations, and in the confusion of pastoral and liturgical applications, what appears as the only authentic interpreter of the conciliar texts is the Council itself, together with the pope.

One could make a comparison with the confused hermeneutical climate of the first centuries of the Church, caused by arbitrary biblical and doctrinal interpretations on the part of heterodox groups. In his famous work "De Praescriptione Haereticorum," Tertullian was able to counter the heretics of various tendencies with the fact that only the Church possesses the "praescriptio," meaning only the Church is the legitimate proprietor of the faith, of the word of God and of the tradition. The Church can use this to fend off the heretics in disputes over true interpretation. Only the Church can say, according to Tertullian, "Ego sum heres Apostolorum," I am the heir of the apostles. By way of analogy, only the supreme magisterium of the pope or of a future ecumenical council will be able to say: "Ego sum heres Concilii Vaticani II."

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Call for a Syllabus

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In recent decades there existed, and still exist today, groupings within the Church that are perpetrating an enormous abuse of the pastoral character of the Council and its texts, written according to this pastoral intention, since the Council did not want to present its own definitive or unalterable teachings. From the same pastoral nature of the texts of the Council, it can be seen that its texts are in principle open to supplementation and to further doctrinal clarifications. Keeping in mind the now decades-long experience of interpretations that are doctrinally and pastorally mistaken and contrary to the bimillennial continuity of the doctrine and prayer of the faith, there thus arises the necessity and urgency of a specific and authoritative intervention of the pontifical magisterium for an authentic interpretation of the conciliar texts, with supplementation and doctrinal clarifications; a sort of "Syllabus" of the errors in the interpretation of Vatican Council II.

There is the need for a new Syllabus, this time directed not so much against the errors coming from outside of the Church, but against the errors circulated within the Church by supporters of the thesis of discontinuity and rupture, with its doctrinal, liturgical, and pastoral application.

Such a Syllabus should consist of two parts: the part that points out the errors, and the positive part with proposals for clarification, completion, and doctrinal clarification.

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Two groupings stand out for their support of the theory of rupture. One of these groupings tries to "Protestantize" the life of the Church doctrinally, liturgically, and pastorally. On the opposite side are those traditional groups which, in the name of tradition, reject the Council and exempt themselves from submission to the supreme living magisterium of the Church, from the visible head of the Church, the vicar of Christ on earth, submitting meanwhile only to the invisible head of the Church, waiting for better times. [. . .]

In essence, there have been two impediments preventing the true intention of the Council and its magisterium from bearing abundant and lasting fruit.

One was found outside of the Church, in the violent process of cultural and social revolution during the 1960's, which like every powerful social phenomenon penetrated inside the Church, infecting with its spirit of rupture vast segments of persons and institutions.

The other impediment was manifested in the lack of wise and at the same time intrepid pastors of the Church who might be quick to defend the purity and integrity of the faith and of liturgical and pastoral life, not allowing themselves to be influenced by flattery or fear.

The Council of Trent had already affirmed in one of its last decrees on the general reform of the Church: "The holy synod, shaken by the many extremely serious evils that afflict the Church, cannot do other than recall that the thing most necessary for the Church of God is to select excellent and suitable pastors; all the more in that our Lord Jesus Christ will ask for an account of the blood of those sheep that should perish because of the bad governance of negligent pastors unmindful of their duty" (Session XXIV, Decree "de reformatione," can. 1).

The Council continued: "As for all those who for any reason have been authorized by the Holy See to intervene in the promotion of future prelates or those who take part in this in another way, the holy Council exhorts and admonishes them to remember above all that they can do nothing more useful for the glory of God and the salvation of the people than to devote themselves to choosing good and suitable pastors to govern the Church."

So there is truly a need for a Syllabus on the Council with doctrinal value, and moreover there is a need for an increase in the number of holy, courageous pastors deeply rooted in the tradition of the Church, free from any sort of mentality of rupture, both in the doctrinal field and in the liturgical field.

These two elements constitute the indispensable condition so that doctrinal, liturgical, and pastoral confusion may diminish significantly, and so that the pastoral work of Vatican Council II may bear much lasting fruit in the spirit of the tradition, which connects us to the spirit that has reigned in every time, everywhere and in all true children of the Catholic Church, which is the only and the true Church of God on earth.

As reported by Sandro Magister, *Chiesa Online* ([link](#))

FAITH - REJECTING ONE ARTICLE OF

"To reject any article of the faith is to reject the faith itself. This is like pulling one stone out of an arch; it is like putting one hole in the hull of a ship. The whole arch tumbles down; the whole ship sinks. A man who has the faith, accepts God's word. Now, God's word has set up the Church as man's infallible teacher and guide. If a man, therefore, rejects one article of the faith, and says that he believes all the other articles, he believes these by his own choice and opinion, not by faith. Rejecting one article of the faith, he rejects the whole authority of the Church, and he rejects the authority of God who has set up and authorized the Church to teach truth. Hence, it is entirely incorrect to say that a man may have lifeless or formless faith in some article of the Creed while he rejects others; such a man has not the faith at all, living or lifeless." *Thomas Aquinas, Summa Ila Ilae Q5*

On June 29, 1972, on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, speaking off the cuff, he went to the point of saying that he had "the sensation that through some fissure, the smoke of Satan has entered the temple of God. There is doubt, uncertainty, trouble, disquiet, dissatisfaction, confrontation. The Church is not trusted . . . It was believed that after the Council there would be a day of sunshine for the history of the Church. What has come instead is a day of clouds, of darkness, of seeking, of uncertainty . . . We believe that something preternatural (the devil) has come into the world to disturb, to suffocate the fruits of the Ecumenical Council and to prevent the Church from bursting into a hymn of joy for having regained full awareness of itself." These are painful and severe words that deserve painstaking reflection.

How could it have happened that from the legitimate pronouncements and texts of Vatican II, a season followed that was so different and distant?

The question is complex, and the reasons are multiform; but without a doubt one influence was a process (so to speak) of aberrant "distillation," which from the authentic and binding conciliar "reality" extracted a completely heterogeneous mentality and linguistic form. This is a phenomenon that pops up here and there in the "postcouncil," and continues to advance itself more or less explicitly.

We can, in order to make ourselves understood, hazard to illustrate the schematic procedure of this curious "distillation."

The first phase lies in a disc66(l and :yase)-11(hroawhich)-2torb,191787(the)] TJ0 -1.1565 Td12(conciliar36)-57o[(noorm)-un

Ideology

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"Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies" (Romans 1:24).

And to prevent any misunderstanding and any accommodating interpretation, the apostle proceeds with a startling analysis, formulated in perfectly explicit terms:

"Therefore, God handed them over to degrading passions. Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another. Males did shameful things with males and thus received in their own persons the due penalty for their perversity. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper" (Romans 1:26-28).

Finally, Paul takes pains to observe that the greatest abjection takes place when "the authors of these things . . . not only do them but give approval to those who practice them" (cf. Romans 1:32).

It is a page of the inspired book, which no earthly authority can force us to censor. Nor are we permitted, if we want to be faithful to the word of God, the pusillanimity of passing over it in silence out of concern not to appear "politically incorrect."

We must on the contrary point out the singular interest for our days of this teaching of Revelation: what St. Paul revealed as taking place in the Greco-Roman world is shown to correspond prophetically to what has taken place in Western culture in these last centuries. The exclusion of the Creator – to the point of proclaiming grotesquely, a few decades ago, the "death of God" – has had the result (almost like an intrinsic punishment) of the spread of an aberrant view of sexuality, unknown (in its arrogance) to previous eras.

The ideology of homosexuality – as often happens to ideologies when they become aggressive and end up being politically triumphant – becomes a threat to our legitimate autonomy of thought: those who do not share it risk condemnation to a kind of cultural and social marginalization.

The attacks on freedom of thought start with language. Those who do not resign themselves to accept "homophilia" (the theoretical appreciation of homosexual relations) are charged with "homophobia" (etymologically, the "fear of homosexuality"). This must be very clear: those who are made strong by the inspired word and live in the "fear of God" are not afraid of anything, except perhaps the stupidity toward which, Bonhoeffer said, we are defenseless. We are now even charged sometimes with the incredibly arbitrary accusation of "racism": a word that, among other things, has nothing to do with this issue, and in any case is completely extraneous to our doctrine and our history.

The essential problem that presents itself is this: is it still permitted in our days to be faithful and consistent disciples of the teaching of Christ (which for millennia has inspired and enriched the whole of Western civilization), or must we prepare ourselves for a new form of persecution, promoted by homosexual activists, by their ideological accomplices, and even by those whose task it should be to defend the intellectual freedom of all, including Christians?

There is one question that we ask in particular of the theologians, biblicists, and pastoralists. Why on earth, in this climate of almost obsessive exaltation of Sacred Scripture, is the Pauline passage of Romans 1:21-32 never cited by anyone? Why on earth is there not a little more concern to make it known to believers and nonbelievers, in spite of its evident timeliness?

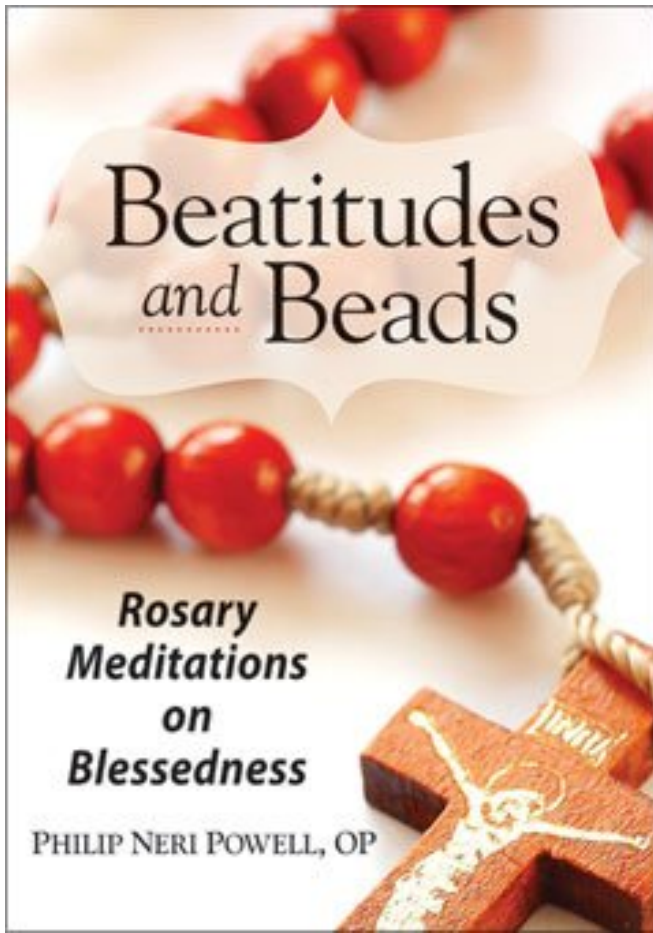
*Giacomo Biffi, "Memorie e digressioni di un italiano cardinale,"
Translation by Matthew Sherry for Sandro Magister, Chiesa
Online ([Link](#))*

Another cause of the present state of emergency with regard to the liturgy could be the underlying cause of the entire mess we're in. Having taught the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to a large number of parishioners, I have found the following insight of the Catechism to be quite amazing. When discussing the Ninth Commandment, the Catechism states:

'The sixth beatitude proclaims, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Pure in heart refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity; chastity or sexual rectitude; love of the truth and orthodoxy of faith. There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith' (#2518).

It is interesting to note, based upon a lifetime of observation, that those priests who habitually carry on with women, or those active homosexual priests who carry on with their proclivities, are guilty of the most obtrusive and bizarre liturgical abuses. There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith.

Fr James Faraglia, "State of Emergency, The Present Situation of the Catholic Liturgy in America, in Renew America, 2007 ([link](#))



Beatitudes and Beads: Rosary Meditations on Blessedness
By Philip Neri Powell OP

Our happiness in Christ is not assured because we're right or powerful or feared. Jesus said we inherit the kingdom when we face insult, persecution, and lies with gladness, charity, and mercy.

Praying this rosary and meditating on the mysteries of blessedness will bring you closer to the heart of Christ's teaching found in his Sermon on the Mount.

[W]e have reflected on health care, capital punishment, the legitimate human needs of migrants, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. All of these issues and many more have a "common denominator": the life and dignity of the human person, given to us irrevocably by God. Man-made law does not, of itself, establish right and wrong. God grants His graces, including the inestimable gift of human life. Law must work to safeguard and protect this life, and to establish norms for the good order of society. If law does not honor the primacy of human life, we as citizens must work to change and improve these structures in a manner that secures man's most basic protections.

Bp Robert Finn

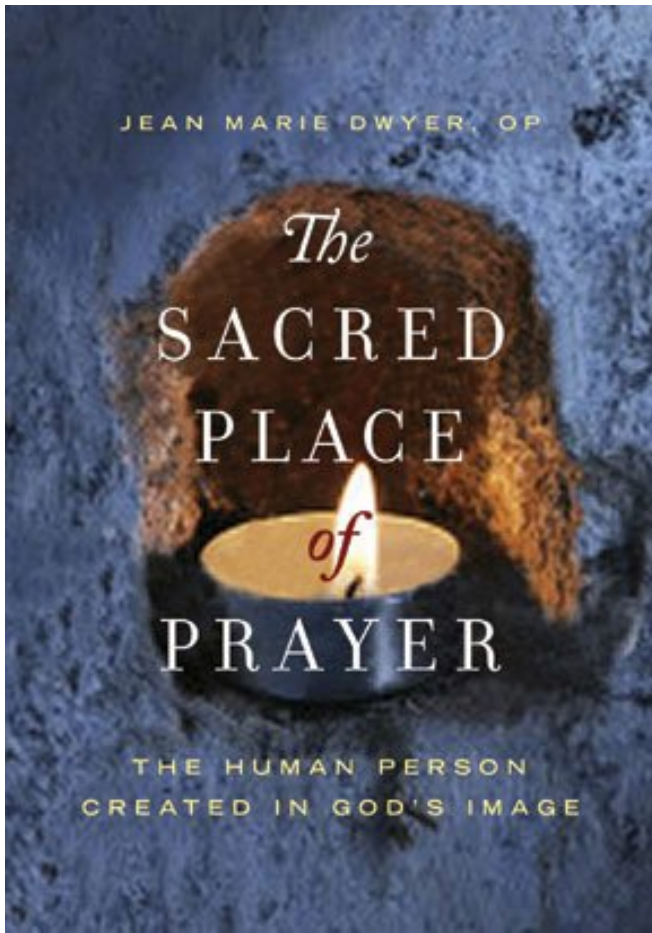
Additional Resources

- Selected works of Henri Lacordaire ([Link](#))
- *The Dominican manual: a selection of prayers and devotions authorized by the church, and enriched with numerous indulgences.* Published 1913 by Browne and Nolan in Dublin ([Link](#))
- *Pilgrimage to St Albert Priory*, 1960, Video. [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)
- *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2003 ([Link](#))
- *The Internet Archive*, digital books online ([Link](#))
- **Dominican Supplies**
 - Orders for Dominican supplies—call Claire Rogus, (650) 570-7835

On St. Joan of Arc

Our saint lived prayer as a form of continuous dialogue with the Lord, who also enlightened her answers to the judges, giving her peace and security. She prayed with faith: "Sweetest God, in honor of your holy Passion, I ask you, if you love me, to reveal to me how I must answer these men of the Church" (Ibid., p. 252). Joan saw Jesus as the "King of Heaven and Earth." Thus, on her standard, Joan had the image painted of "Our Lord who sustains the world" (Ibid., p. 172), icon of her political mission. The liberation of her people was a work of human justice, which Joan carried out in charity, out of love for Jesus. Hers is a beautiful example of holiness for the laity who work in political life, above all in the most difficult situations. Faith is the light that guides every choice, as another great saint would testify a century later, the Englishman Thomas More. In Jesus, Joan also contemplated the reality of the Church, the "triumphant Church" of Heaven, and the "militant Church" of earth. According to her words, Our Lord and the Church are one "whole" (Ibid., p. 166). This affirmation quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 795), has a truly heroic character in the context of the Trial of Conviction, in face of the judges, men of the Church, who persecuted her and condemned her. In the love of Jesus, Joan found the strength to love the Church to the end, including at the moment of her conviction.

Wed Catechesis of Benedict XVI, Zenit ([link](#))

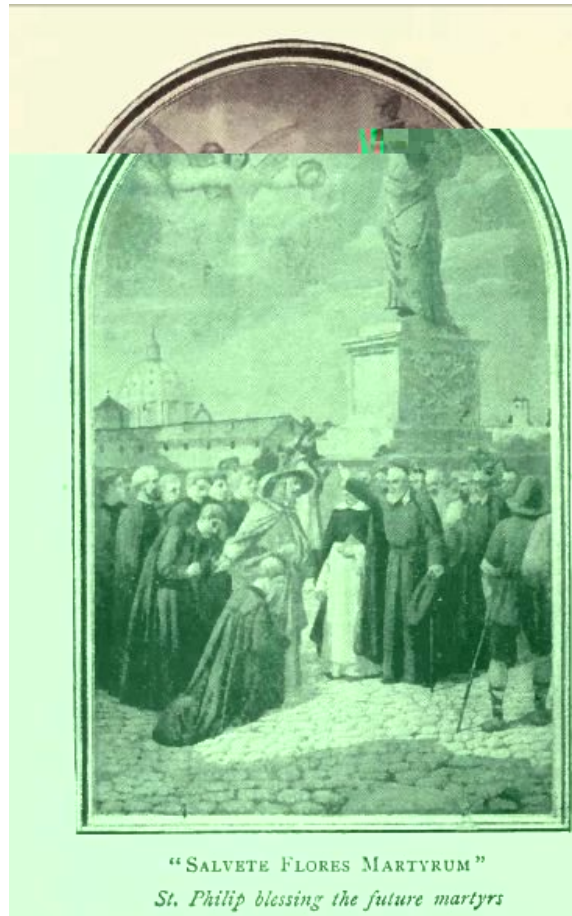


The Sacred Place of Prayer
 Author Jean Marie Dwyer

This book considers the human person as the sacred place of prayer. The first three chapters lay philosophical, biblical and theological groundwork for the understanding of the human person as the sacred place of prayer. Subsequent chapters develop this truth more fully. The chapters on desert spirituality, illusions and finding our center give insight into how we find our true self and our place of home and belonging. A major premise is that everything flows from our creation in God's image. Each of us is the privileged and sacred place of prayer.

Learning to be a person of prayer introduces new and wonderful elements into our life, for example, silence and reflection, which in turn can produce an ever growing sense of awe in being fully alive, fully present not only to God, but to ourselves, to creation, to our neighbor and to all the circumstances of life. An inward stillness helps us to seek God in the daily ordinariness of our lives. Setting aside times is important, even just a momentary pause in a busy day can be an oasis of stillness to re-center ourselves.

<http://www.novalis.ca/Product.aspx?ids=6241729>



"SALVETE FLORES MARTYRUM"
St. Philip blessing the future martyrs

Stand Fast

B. William Hart to the Afflicted Catholics, 1583

Stand fast, brethren, stand steadfast, I say, in that faith which Christ planted, the Apostles preached, the Martyrs confirmed, the whole world approved and embraced. Stand firm in that faith which, as it is the oldest, is also the truest and most sure, and which is most in harmony with the Holy Scriptures and with all antiquity. Stand constant in that faith which has a worship worthy of all honor and reverence, Sacraments most holy, abounding in spiritual consolation. For if ye have remained constant in this faith, that is, in the Catholic Church, in the Ark of Noah, in the house of Rahab, with what joy and consolation of the soul will ye not be flooded : yours will be the Sacrament of penance for the cleansing of your souls ; yours the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Savior for the refreshing of your souls ; you will be partakers of all the satisfaction and merits of Christ, of the fellowship of the Saints, of the suffrages, prayers, fasts, and almsdeeds of all the just whom the Catholic Church throughout the world holds in her bosom. O blessed they, yea, and thrice blessed, who in this deplorable world stand firm in the faith of Christ.

The devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist ye strong in faith. 1 PETER v. 8, 9.

St. Thomas on the Preacher's Vocation

A Homily of Fr Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP



Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., professor emeritus of the University of Fribourg, is one of the world's leading scholars of the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. His two-volume biography of the Angelic Doctor, *St Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work* (vol. 1) and *Spiritual Master* (vol. 2), is already a classic.

Like all theologians (at least, I think it's true for all), I pay close attention to the work of exegetes, and frequent recourse to their scholarship has taught me much. Even so, I am not always fully satisfied by their explanations. Take, for example, today's Gospel (Mk 1:29-39). After having passed a night in prayer, Jesus says to His disciples: "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." The Ecumenical Translation of the Bible thinks to make this more plainly precise: "came out of Capernaum." I find this to be a bit too plain, and not only because I can reach that conclusion myself, but rather because it forgets that the verb "to come out" acquires a much more profound meaning if one brings together all the passages where the Christ of St. John's Gospel uses it. "I have come out from the Father and have come into the world." The disciples know this well: "We believe that you have come out from God." And there are yet other passages that likewise say that if Jesus has come out from the Father, it is because He has been sent by the Father.

Saint Thomas is not wrong about this. In interpreting the parable of the sower - who also "came out" early in the morning - Saint Thomas applies it to Christ without hesitation, returning to precisely these same passages of St. John. But he also extends what is said of Christ in order to apply it to everyone who announces the Gospel in Christ's name. They also should "come out," out of the world, out of sin . . . but above all, these sower-preachers sent by Christ should themselves leave the hiddenness of their prayer for the public square. In effect, what they drink in by contemplation is what they should then pour out in their preaching.

The signature of a friar preacher could not be more clear. Thomas loves to blend the image of Christ announcing the Gospel with that of his Dominican brothers who discharge the same mission. And he underlines with force that their "coming out" should resemble as much as possible the "coming out" of the Word leaving the bosom of the Father for the visibility of an earthly life.

To describe a bit better what has taken place, Thomas displays his genius: he turns to the lover's speech in the Song of Songs: "I belong to my beloved, and His desire is for me." In secret, the soul turns itself towards God by fervent prayer and contemplation, and God turns Himself towards the soul by the secret word that He inspires in it. But the Song of Songs also says that one cannot remain in the sweetness of this intimate exchange: "Come, my beloved, let us go out to the fields." One must "come out," "out to the fields," that is, to the people who await this preaching; yet the preacher does not go there alone. "Let us go out." This means: I am with you; I inspire you and you speak (*ego inspirando et tu praedicando*).

May it please God to grant to us also the grace to approach this ideal! Amen.

Fr. Torrell preached this homily on Jan. 12, 2011 at the conventual Mass at the Albertinum (an international Dominican priory in Fribourg, Switzerland associated with the University of Fribourg). It has been translated from the original French. This copy is from the Friars blog of the Province of St Joseph ([Link](#))

The spiritual life of the Friars Preachers is delicately balanced and, for those who are less than saints, hard to live. If thrown off center its constituents destroy themselves -- the sacerdotal element becomes "parochial", mired in local interests; the monastic element becomes "monkish", considering the apostolate a distraction; the doctrinal element becomes "bookish", having little to do with the salvation of souls; the apostolic element becomes "activistic", spending itself in feverish activity. To escape these extremes, the Dominican must nourish his zeal with a burning desire for Christ, must make contemplation primary in his life. His contemplation must center on Christ Crucified, thus engendering the apostolate. Père Regamey has crystallized this truth in these few words: "An apostolic message that has not been shaped in the sanctuary, the choir, and the cloister is never complete."

Dominican Spirituality, Principles and Practice,
by William A. Hinnebusch, OP ([Link](#))

The Gospel: Pungent and Offensive

Fr. Philip Neri Powell, OP

While thinking and praying about the Sermon on the Mount and what I would preach about this morning/evening, I read a review of the newly released movie, *The Rite*. Based on a book by an American priest who studies the art of exorcism in Rome, the movie takes some liberties with author's story and threatens to turn his spiritual battle into a demon-populated spring break flick. According to the all the reviews I've read, however, the movie does an excellent job of portraying the priest's battle with the Devil without becoming just another horror movie. One review in particular caught my attention. John Zmirak, who writes for the website, *Inside Catholic*, appreciates the movie b/c it goes a long way toward challenging the oftentimes Hallmark-like way that our faith is portrayed by Hollywood. He writes, "The Catholic faith is neither [simply bland nor inoffensive]. In fact, like really authentic Mexican food (think habeneros and fried crickets), it is at once both pungent and offensive. It offends me all the time, with the outrageous demands it makes of my fallen nature and the sheer weirdness of its claims. It asserts that, behind the veil of day-to-day schlepping, of work and laundry and television and microwaved burritos, we live on the front lines of a savage spiritual war. . ." If we need an example of the "sheer weirdness" of our faith, we couldn't ask for better than the Sermon on the Mount. Just about everything Jesus says in this sermon is "pungent and offensive" to just about everything our culture wants us to believe. Living as faithful Catholics in this world is often an exercise in contradiction and opposition.

Before we get to the Sermon itself, let's take a look at what Paul writes to the Corinthians. It's pretty clear that Paul understands just how weird our commitment to Christ can be. Consider, for example, who it is that God has called into His Church: "God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing. . ." This sounds to me like a recipe for disaster! Rather than picking the wise, the strong, the highly placed and well-loved of the world, God calls out the foolish, the weak, the lowly and the despised. Imagine if God had pitched His idea for establishing a Church to a group of American investors and told them, "Management and personnel will be recruited from the poorest of the poor; from the wretched, the broken and diseased; from the uneducated and poorly educated; from the mentally and emotionally crippled; basically, I want this new enterprise to be a place where all the rejects and throwaways of the world can come to find healing and peace." Do you think the investors would jump at the chance to buy into this obviously doomed project? Or would they tell God that His plan was "sheer weirdness" and walk out? To the modern American sense of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, every-

thing about the Church God has given us reeks of falsity, evil, and ugliness.

Of course, we don't have to imagine that God planned a Church like the one presented to the investors. He, in fact, established just such a Church, and we are it. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out his business plan. Who will be among the blessed? The poor in spirit; those who mourn; the meek; those who hunger for righteousness; the merciful and the clean of heart; the peacemakers and those persecuted for righteousness' sake. Find a wretched soul, broken and beaten by the world, persecuted for his or her trust in God, a soul steeped in mourning, yet thirsting for justice, and you have found the Church God established. Everything about this picture of our faith is just weird, simply bizarre. What could be more offensive and pungent to the world than an organization that prizes above all else the blessedness of mercy, forgiveness, meekness, poverty of spirit, self-sacrifice, obedience, moral restraint, charity, and life-long fidelity? That Christians are the single most persecuted group of religious believers on the planet tells us that there is little about our strange faith that pleases the powers of this world. That Christians—especially Catholics—are safely ridiculed, discriminated against, and openly slandered tells us that the Church sits in the midst of our culture like a pungent, offensive prophet—a living sign of contradiction, a witness against the vanities of the world and the futility of trying to be wise without God.

The Sermon on the Mount is a prediction and a promise. Jesus predicts our persecution and promises us blessedness. He makes it perfectly clear that following him back to the Father will be not only difficult but dangerous as well, potentially deadly and most definitely discomfiting. And even if we weren't persecuted for standing against the demands of a culture without God, the outrageous demands of the Church herself would be difficult enough. Think for a moment about what it is that we are asked to believe. We are asked to believe that there is an all-good, all-knowing, ever-present god who loves us. Yet, evil seems to flourish. Disease, violence, unimaginable suffering, natural and man-made disasters. We are asked to believe that this god took on human flesh and sacrificed himself for our benefit. We are asked to restrain perfectly naturally passions and desires so that we might imitate the goodness of this god. Perhaps the most outrageous demand for modern Americans is that we are asked to sacrifice in order that others might flourish, to set aside our own needs, our own wants and work diligently for the benefit of strangers and for our enemies. What sane person helps those who would see him dead? But therein lies blessedness. That's not just a promise made by a crackpot preacher 2,000 years ago. That's a promise

(Continued on next page)

Pungent

(Continued from previous page)

made by the Word made flesh, God Himself, a promise already fulfilled and waiting for us to claim it.

Living in this world as faithful Catholics is often an exercise contradiction and opposition. We stand against a culture that promotes death as a solution to unwanted pregnancies, terminal illnesses, and inconvenient suffering. We stand against a culture that promotes the goodness of satisfying every base desire regardless of the consequences. A culture that rewards lying, self-promotion, greed, the prestige of wealth and celebrity. But while standing against the tides of this world, we stand with the blessed: the poor, the diseased, the oppressed, those persecuted for the faith. We stand with self-sacrifice, unconditional mercy, boundless hope, and the promise of freedom from the slavery of sin. Most importantly: we do not stand alone, as individuals but together as one Body

in Christ. With all of our weirdnesses, all of our outrageous demands, with all of our pungent and offensive beliefs, we are of one heart, one mind, and we give God thanks and praise with one voice. Our hope lies in a single truth. Though we are engaged on the frontlines of a spiritual battle, the war has already been won. God is victorious. Our work—as His faithful sons and daughters—is to make sure that His victory shines through everything we do, everything we think, everything we say. As living, breathing testimonies to His redeeming love, we stand—as weird and offensive as we can sometimes be—we stand always as witnesses for His will that all of creation return to Him, whole, pure, perfected in Christ.

*Homily for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary time,
Fr. Philip Neri Powell, OP
St Joseph Church, Ponchatula ([link](#))*

The Winning Strategy by Dr. Peter Kreeft

To win any war, the three most necessary things to know are: (1) that you *are* at war, (2) who your enemy is, and (3) what weapons or strategies can defeat him.

You cannot win a war (1) if you simply sew peace banners on a battlefield, (2) if you fight civil wars against your allies, or (3) if you use the wrong weapons.

Here is a three point checklist for the culture wars.

1. We Are at War

If you don't know that our entire civilization is in crisis, I hope you had a nice vacation on the moon.

Many minds do seem moonstruck, however, blissfully unaware of the crisis—especially the “intellectuals,” who are supposed to be the most on top of current events. I was dumbfounded to read a cover article in *Time* devoted to the question: Why is everything getting better? Why is life so good today? Why does everybody feel so satisfied about the quality of life? *Time* never questioned the assumption, it just wondered why the music on the Titanic sounded so nice.

It turned out, on reading the article, that every single aspect of life that was mentioned, every single reason for life getting better, was economic. People are richer. End of discussion.

Perhaps *Time* is just *Playboy* with clothes on. For one kind of playboy, the world is one great big whorehouse.

For another kind, it's one great big piggy bank. For both, things are getting better and better.

There is a scientific refutation of the Pig Philosophy: the statistical fact that suicide, the most in-your-face index of unhappiness, is directly proportionate to wealth. The richer you are, the richer your family is, and the richer your country is, the more likely it is that you will find life so good that you will choose to blow your brains apart.

Suicide among pre-adults has increased 5000% since the “happy days” of the '50s. If suicide, especially among the coming generation, is not an index of crisis, nothing is.

Night is falling. What Chuck Colson has labeled “a new Dark Ages” is looming. And its Brave New World proved to be only a Cowardly Old Dream. We can see this now, at the end of “the century of genocide” that was christened “the Christian century” at its birth.

We've had prophets who warned us: Kierkegaard, 150 years ago, in *The Present Age*; and Spengler, 100 years ago, in *The Decline of the West*; and Aldous Huxley, seventy years ago, in *Brave New World*; and C. S. Lewis, forty years ago, in *The Abolition of Man*; and above all our popes: Leo XIII and Pius IX and Pius X and above all John Paul the Great, the greatest man in the world, the greatest man of the worst century. He had even more chutzpah than Ronald Reagan, who dared to call Them “the evil empire”: He called Us “the culture of death.” That's our culture, and his, including Italy, with the lowest

(Continued on next page)

Strategy

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birth rate in the world, and Poland, which now wants to share in the rest of the West's abortion holocaust.

If the God of life does not respond to this culture of death with judgment, God is not God. If God does not honor the blood of the hundreds of millions of innocent victims then the God of the Bible, the God of Israel, the God of orphans and widows, the Defender of the defenseless, is a man-made myth, a fairy tale.

But is not God forgiving?

He is, but the unrepentant refuse forgiveness. How can forgiveness be received by a moral relativist who denies that there is anything to forgive except a lack of self-esteem, nothing to judge but "judgmentalism?" How can a Pharisee or a pop psychologist be saved?

But is not God compassionate?

He is not compassionate to Moloch and Baal and Ash-taroth, and to Caananites who do their work, who "cause their children to walk through the fire." Perhaps *your* God is—the God of your dreams, the God of your "religious preference"—but not the God revealed in the Bible.

But is not the God of the Bible revealed most fully and finally in the New Testament rather than the Old? In sweet and gentle Jesus rather than wrathful and warlike Jehovah?

The opposition is heretical: the old Gnostic-Manichaeon-Marcionite heresy, as immortal as the demons who inspired it. For "I and the Father are one." The opposition between nice Jesus and nasty Jehovah denies the very essence of Christianity: Christ's identity as the Son of God. Let's remember our theology and our biology: like Father, like Son.

But is not God a lover rather than a warrior?

No, God is a lover who is a warrior. The question fails to understand what love is, what the love that God is, is. Love is at war with hate, betrayal, selfishness, and all love's enemies. Love fights. Ask any parent. Yuppie-love, like puppy-love, may be merely "compassion" (the fashionable word today), but father-love and mother-love are war.

In fact, every page of the Bible bristles with spears, from Genesis 3 through Revelation 20. The road from Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained is soaked in blood. At the very center of the story is a cross, a symbol of conflict if there ever was one. The theme of spiritual warfare is never absent in scripture, and never absent in the life and writings of a single saint. But it is never present in the religious education of any of my "Catholic" students at Boston Col-



lege. Whenever I speak of it, they are stunned and silent, as if they have suddenly entered another world. They have. They have gone past the warm fuzzies, the fur coats of psychology-disguised-as-religion, into a world where they meet Christ the King, not Christ the Kitten.

Welcome back from the moon, kids.

Where is the culture of death coming from? Here. America is the center of the culture of death. America is the world's one and only cultural superpower.

If I haven't shocked you yet, I will now. Do you know what Muslims call us? They call us "The Great Satan." And do you know what I call them? I call them right.

But America has the most just, and moral, and wise, and biblical historical and constitutional foundation in all the world. America is one of the most religious countries in the world. The Church is big and rich and free in America.

Yes. Just like ancient Israel. And if God still loves his Church in America, he will soon make it small and poor and persecuted, as he did to ancient Israel, so that he can keep it alive. If he loves us, he will prune us, and we will bleed, and the blood of the martyrs will be the seed of the Church again, and a second spring will come—but not without blood. It never happens without blood, sacrifice, and suffering. The continuation of Christ's work—if it is really Christ's work and not a comfortable counterfeit—can never happen without the Cross.

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Strategy

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I don't mean merely that Western civilization will die. That's a piece of trivia. I mean eternal souls will die. Billions of Ramons and Vladamirs and Janes and Tiffanies will go to Hell. That's what's at stake in this war: not just whether America will become a banana republic, or whether we'll forget Shakespeare, or even whether some nuclear terrorist will incinerate half of humanity, but whether our children and our children's children will see God forever. That's what's at stake in "Hollywood versus America." That's why we must wake up and smell the rotting souls. Knowing we are at war is the first requirement for winning it.

The next thing we must do to win a war is to know our enemy.

2. Our Enemy

Who is our enemy?

Not Protestants. For almost half a millennium, many of us thought our enemies were Protestant heretics, and addressed that problem by consigning their bodies to battlefields and their souls to Hell. (Echoes of this strategy can still be heard in Northern Ireland.) Gradually, the light dawned: Protestants are not our enemies, they are our "separated brethren." They will fight with us.

Not Jews. For almost two millennia many of us thought that, and did such Christless things to our "fathers in the faith" that we made it almost impossible for the Jews to see their God—the true God—in us.

Not Muslims, who are often more loyal to their half-Christ than we are to our whole Christ, who often live more godly lives following their fallible scriptures and their fallible prophet than we do following our infallible scriptures and our infallible prophet.

The same is true of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Quakers.

Our enemies are not "the liberals." For one thing, the term is almost meaninglessly flexible. For another, it's a political term, not a religious one. Whatever is good or bad about political liberalism, it's neither the cause nor the cure of our present spiritual decay. Spiritual wars are not decided by whether welfare checks increase or decrease.

Our enemies are not anti-Catholic bigots who want to crucify us. They are the ones we're trying to save. They are our patients, not our disease. Our word for them is Christ's: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We say this of the Chinese communist totalitarians who imprison and persecute Catholics, and to the Sudanese Muslim terrorists who enslave and murder Catholics. They are not our enemies, they are our pa-

tients. We are Christ's nurses. The patients think the nurses are their enemies, but the nurses know better.

Our enemies are not even the media of the culture of death, not even Ted Turner or Larry Flynt or Howard Stern or Disney or Time-Warner. They too are victims, patients, though on a rampage against the hospital, poisoning other patients. But the poisoners are our patients too. So are homosexual activists, feminist witches, and abortionists. We go into gutters and pick up the spiritually dying and kiss those who spit at us, if we are cells in our Lord's Body. If we do not physically go into gutters, we go into spiritual gutters, for we go where the need is.

Our enemies are not heretics within the Church, "cafeteria Catholics," "Kennedy Catholics," "I Did It My Way" Catholics. They are also our patients, though they are Quislings. They are the victims of our enemy, not our enemy.

Our enemies are not theologians in so-called Catholic theology departments who have sold their souls for thirty pieces of scholarship and prefer the plaudits of their peers to the praise of God. They are also our patients.

Our enemy is not even the few really bad priests and bishops, candidates for Christ's Millstone of the Month Award, the modern Pharisees. They too are victims, in need of healing.

Who, then, is our enemy?

There are two answers. All the saints and popes throughout the Church's history have given the same two answers, for these answers come from the Word of God on paper in the New Testament and the Word of God in flesh in Jesus Christ.

Yet they are not well known. In fact, the first answer is almost never mentioned today. Not once in my life have I ever heard a homily on it, or a lecture by a Catholic theologian.

Our enemies are demons. Fallen angels. Evil spirits.

So says Jesus Christ: "Do not fear those who can kill the body and then has no more power over you. I will tell you whom to fear. Fear him who has power to destroy both body and soul in Hell."

So says St. Peter, the first pope: "The Devil, like a roaring lion, is going through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Resist him, steadfast in the faith."

So says St. Paul: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers of wickedness in high places."

(Continued on next page)

Strategy

(Continued from previous page)

So said Pope Leo the XIII, who received a vision of the 20th century that history has proved terrifyingly true. He saw Satan, at the beginning of time, allowed one century in which to do his worst work, and he chose the 20th. This pope with the name and heart of a lion was so overcome by the terror of this vision that he fell into a trance. When he awoke, he composed a prayer for the whole Church to use to get it through the 20th century. The prayer was widely known and prayed after every Mass—until the '60s: exactly when the Church was struck with that incomparably swift disaster that we have not yet named (but which future historians will), the disaster that has destroyed a third of our priests, two-thirds of our nuns, and nine-tenths of our children's theological knowledge; the disaster that has turned the faith of our fathers into the doubts of our dissenters, the wine of the Gospel into the water of psychobabble.

The restoration of the Church, and thus the world, might well begin with the restoration of the Lion's prayer and the Lion's vision, because this is the vision of all the popes and all the saints and our Lord himself: the vision of a real Hell, a real Satan, and real spiritual warfare.

I said there were two enemies. The second is even more terrifying than the first. There is one nightmare even more terrible than being chased and caught and tortured by the Devil. That is the nightmare of becoming a devil. The horror outside your soul is terrible enough; how can you bear to face the horror inside your soul?

What is the horror inside your soul? Sin. All sin is the Devil's work, though he usually uses the flesh and the world as his instruments. Sin means inviting the Devil in. And we do it. That's the only reason why he can do his awful work; God won't let him do it without our free consent. And that's why the Church is weak and the world is dying: because we are not saints.

3. The Weapon

And thus we have our third Necessary Thing: the weapon that will win the war and defeat our enemy.

All it takes is saints.

Can you imagine what twelve more Mother Teresas would do for the world? Can you imagine what would happen if just twelve readers of this article offered Christ 100% of their hearts and held back nothing, absolutely nothing?

No, you can't imagine it, any more than anyone could imagine how twelve nice Jewish boys could conquer the Roman Empire. You can't imagine it, but you can do it. You can become a saint. Absolutely no one and nothing can stop you. It is your free choice. Here is one of the tru-

est and most terrifying sentences I have ever read (from William Law's *Serious Call*): "If you will look into your own heart in complete honesty, you must admit that there is one and only one reason why you are not a saint: you do not wholly want to be."

That insight is terrifying because it is an indictment. But it is also thrillingly hopeful because it is an offer, an open door. Each of us can become a saint. We really can.

What holds us back? Fear of paying the price.

What is the price? The answer is simple. T.S. Eliot defines the Christian life as: "A condition of complete simplicity/Costing not less than/Everything." The price is everything: 100%. A worse martyrdom than the quick noose or stake: the martyrdom of dying daily, dying to all your desires and plans, including your plans about how to become a saint. A blank check to God. Complete submission, "islam," "fiat"—Mary's thing. Look what that simple Mary-thing did 2000 years ago: It brought God down and saved the world.

It was meant to continue.

If we do that Mary-thing—and only if we do that—then all our apostolates will "work": our missioning and catechizing and fathering and mothering and teaching and studying and nursing and businessing and priesting and bishoping—everything.

A bishop asked one of the priests of his diocese for recommendations on ways to increase vocations. The priest replied: The best way to attract men in this diocese to the priesthood, Your Excellency, would be your canonization.

Why not yours?

Posted at *The Integrated Life* by Dr. Peter Kreeft,
January 23, 2011 ([Link](#))

The child, who does not think about so serious a thing as health, dreams of meals that are made up of desserts. Men and women, who do not think about so serious a thing as living, dream of a life that consists only of sweetness, soft music and rest to the echo of applause and gently sympathetic understanding. But meals are never like that; neither is life. In the same vein, our modern men and women dream of God as a being of whom no one could ever be afraid, a gentle, stupid god who would allow men and women to ruin themselves and then admire them for the work they had done in destroying his masterpiece. You see they never really think about God, for God is not like that.

- Walter Farrell OP, *A companion to the Summa*

The Smoke of Satan Fr Dwight Longenecker

There are many problems in the Catholic Church that might be thought to be the 'smoke of Satan' entering the church, but for my money one thing, above all others, has been the successful work of Satan, which has undermined the church, emasculated her ministry, sabotaged the aims of the Holy Spirit and captured a multitude of souls.

It is the modernist re-interpretation of the Catholic faith. The reductionist results of modern Biblical scholarship and

the infiltration of a modernist, rationalistic and materialistic mindset meant that the supernatural was assumed to be impossible, and therefore the Bible stories (and also any supernatural elements of the faith) had to be 'demythologized.' Everything supernatural within the Biblical account and within the lives of the saints and within the teaching of the church were assumed to be impossible and had to be 're-interpreted' so they would make sense to modern, scientifically minded people.

So the feeding of the five thousand wasn't a miracle. Instead the 'real miracle' was that everyone shared their lunch. Everything had to be questioned and 're-interpreted' in such a way that it could be accepted and understood by modern people. So when we call Jesus Christ "God Incarnate" what we really mean was that he was so fully human, and that as he reached his potential as a man that he shows us what divinity looks like. When we speak of the Blessed Virgin we mean she was 'a very good and holy Jewish young woman.' When we speak of the 'Real Presence' we mean that we see the 'Christ that is within each one of us.'

I hate this crap.

It's the smoke of Satan, and it's virtually triumphant within the mainstream Protestant churches, and sadly, the modern Catholic Church in the USA is riddled through with the same noxious heresy. The reason it is so obnoxious and disgusting is because priests and clergy of all sorts still use all the traditional language of the liturgy, the Scriptures and the creeds, but they have changed the meaning of it altogether. They never actually stand up and say that they have changed the meaning, and that they no longer believe the faith once delivered to the saints. They don't discuss the fact that they have not only changed the meaning, but robbed it of meaning altogether. Instead they still stand up week by week and recite the creed as if they think it is true, but what they mean by 'true' is totally different from what their people mean.



So Father Flannel stands up on Easter Day and says, "Alleluia! Today we rejoice in the glorious resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead." His people think he really believes that Jesus' dead body came back to life by the power of God and that he went on to live forever. In fact what Father Flannel really means is that "in some way the beautiful teachings of Jesus were remembered and continued by his followers long after his tragic death." The people don't know why Father Flannel's Catholic life is so lightweight and limp and they don't know why his style is so lacking in substance, and they go on in their muddled way thinking that he really does believe the Catholic faith when, in fact, he doesn't at all.

Consequently, Fr Flannel doesn't really have much of a message at all. He doesn't believe any of the gospel except as some sort of beautiful story which inspires people to be nicer to each other. All that is left of his priesthood, therefore, is to be a nice guy to entertain people with inspirational thoughts and get everyone to be nicer to one another and try to save the planet.

The poor faithful have swallowed this stuff for two or three generations now, and they don't even know what poison they're swallowing because the lies are all dressed up in the same traditional language the church has always used. It's like someone has put battery acid into a milk bottle and given it to a baby, and never imagined that there was anything wrong with doing so--indeed thought it was the best thing for baby.

The faithful don't know why their church has become like a cross between a Joan Baez concert and a political activism meeting. They don't understand why they never hear the need for confession or repentance or hear about old fashioned terms like 'the precious blood' or 'the body, blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord and Savior' The fact of the matter is Father Flannel doesn't really think that sort of thing is 'helpful'.

This is why evangelization of the American Catholics in the pew is probably the most difficult task of all. They don't know what they don't know. For three generations now they have been given watered down milk and been told it was wine. They actually think that Catholic lite is what it's all about, and are astounded to think that there are some of us who think that they have actually been fed a version of Christianity that is scarcely Christianity at all.

From the Blog of Fr Dwight Longenecker ([link](#))

St. John Chrysostom on the New Evangelization Roger Vignocchi

If you ask how St. John, who died in 407, could speak about this subject, in 2 Peter 3:8 time, a thousand years are like a day to the Lord, he lived only about a day and a half ago. Also, the New Evangelization is just the Old Evangelization, which he served so well, done in our day by us. Let's listen to this great preacher, whose words I'm condensing from Liturgy of Hours, Office of Readings, Reading 2 for Holy Men, Religious. You can find the whole text in every book of the 4-volume set.

There is nothing colder than a Christian who does not seek to save others. You cannot plead poverty here; the widow putting in her two small coins will be your accuser...You cannot plead humble birth, for they were humbly born...You cannot offer the excuse of lack of education, for they were uneducated. You cannot plead ill-health, for Timothy also had poor health...Each one can help his neighbor if only he is willing to do what is in his power...Notice that none (of those condemned by Christ) is accused of personal sins...only of not helping anybody else. The man who buried the talent was like this. His life was blameless, but he was of no service to others. How can such a person be a Christian? Tell me, if yeast did not make the whole mass like itself, is it really yeast? Again, if perfume failed to pervade all around it with its fragrance, would we call it perfume? Do not say it is impossible for me to influence others. If you are a Christian, it is impossible for this not to happen...Do not insult God. If you say that the sun cannot shine, you have insulted him. If you say that a Christian cannot help others, you have insulted God and called him a liar. It is easier for the sun not to give warmth or shine than for the Christian not to shed his light...Do not say that it is impossible. The opposite is impossible. Do not insult God. If we have put our affairs in order, these things will certainly come to be, and will follow as a natural consequence. The light of a Christian cannot escape notice. So bright a lamp cannot be hidden.

One way we can help the New Evangelization right now is to pray for it. Why, then, do I seldom hear such prayers at Mass? Why do we not pray for the Church in lands where it is persecuted and denied its rights and freedom? I hear prayers for the sick, for help needed and many other good things. We pray for our loved ones, and this is proper. But, is our circle of love too small to include brothers and sisters in troubled countries who are the ones most able to evangelize their neighbors?

Allow me to suggest that you adopt a country or region and make it your personal mission to pray and offer sacrifices for our people, for their needs and for evangelization there. Become familiar with their history and culture, perhaps even their language. Put them into your heart and pray for them with a personal interest. Become willing

simply to do for them what is in your power. Do not say it is impossible for me to influence others. If you are a Christian, it is impossible for this not to happen.

Roger Vignocchi writes from the
St Dominic Chapter, Eagle Rock

The Holy Father on the New Evangelization

Making my own the concerns of my venerable Predecessors, I consider it opportune to offer appropriate responses so that the entire Church, allowing herself to be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, may present herself to the contemporary world with a missionary impulse in order to promote the new evangelization. Above all, this pertains to Churches of ancient origin, which live in different situations and have different needs, and therefore require different types of motivation for evangelization: in certain territories, in fact, despite the spread of secularization, Christian practice still thrives and shows itself deeply rooted in the soul of entire populations; in other regions, however, there is a clearly a distancing of society from the faith in every respect, together with a weaker ecclesial fabric, even if not without elements of liveliness that the Spirit never fails to awaken; we also sadly know of some areas that have almost completely abandoned the Christian religion, where the light of the faith is entrusted to the witness of small communities: these lands, which need a renewed first proclamation of the Gospel, seem particularly resistant to many aspects of the Christian message.

This variety of situations demands careful discernment; to speak of a "new evangelization" does not in fact mean that a single formula should be developed that would hold the same for all circumstances. And yet it is not difficult to see that what all the Churches living in traditionally Christian territories need is a renewed missionary impulse, an expression of a new, generous openness to the gift of grace. Indeed we cannot forget that the first task will always be to make ourselves docile to the freely given action of the Spirit of the Risen One who accompanies all who are heralds of the Gospel and opens the hearts of those who listen. To proclaim fruitfully the Word of the Gospel one is first asked to have a profound experience of God.

As I stated in my first Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (n. 1). Likewise, at the root of all evangelization lies not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life.

Benedict XVI ([Link](#))

From the Chapters



Corpus Christi, Menlo Park

On January 22, 2011, representatives of the Corpus Christi Chapter joined the 7th annual **Walk For Life West Coast**. There were over 50,000 people who walked to proclaim the sanctity of life. We prayed the Rosary, sang joyful hymns of praise and were blessed with beautiful weather as we walked the streets of San Francisco. One could not miss the presence of the Dominicans including friars of the Western Province of the Holy Name of Jesus as well as the Sisters of Mary, Mother of Eucharist.



On February 5th, some of the members attended the **Spiritual Warfare Conference** held at the Nativity Church in Menlo Park. The conference started with 8:00 am Mass followed by a line up of speakers including Fr. Gary Thomas, exorcist of the Diocese of San Jose. Fr. Gary's training as an exorcist is depicted in a book entitled "The Rite", on which the recently released movie with the same title is based. At the start of his talk, Fr. Gary made an irrevocable pronouncement that the devil has been defeated forever. He said that for one to understand Satan, one must understand the mystery of the Cross as God's ultimate act of Love to save mankind from sin. Finally he spoke about exorcism as a ministry of healing. Remembering that Jesus was the first exorcist, there should be great joy in knowing that God's power is greater than all evil that exists, he said.

Charo Aguirre

Holy Rosary, Portland

Long time parish and chapter member Richard "Dick" Cloud (R 4-85, L 4-93) passed away on 1-30-11. He was 84 years old. The 2-6-11 Holy Rosary Parish bulletin had a nice tribute to Dick about his active support and involvement in the parish. He served as Sacristan, maintained candles in the church, counted money for the Sunday collection and assisted in the Rosary Center. He had been experiencing some health problems recently but attended the chapter Epiphany Party at Mary Fazio's on 2-23-11 and appeared to be doing fairly well so it was a surprise that he passed away so soon after that. Dick's Rosary and Funeral Mass were on 2-3-11. He was buried in one of Holy Rosary pastor, Rev. Anthony Patalono, OP's, habits that he had given him many years ago. Please keep Dick and his family in your prayers.

Mary Fazio hosted a well attended (including members from Olympia, WA. who are usually unable to attend meetings regularly because of the distance) Epiphany Party for the chapter at her beautiful home on 2-23-11. She made spaghetti and meatballs and chapter members filled in with the rest of the meal. The event had been postponed from 2 weeks earlier.

Rev. Antonius Wall, OP invited the chapter to assist him in his "ministry in the marketplace" at Lloyd Center Mall where he witnessed and ministered Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the month of January. Members of the chapter along with others, spent some time at the mall with him assisting in this ministry. He was well received and accommodated by the Mall Administration and other departments. The chapter also donated money to support this ministry.

Female chapter members are being encouraged to attend a Dominican retreat for women entitled "Growth in Prayer" from 2-18 to 2-20-11 lead by Rev. Brian Mullady OP at Our Lady of Peace Retreat. Men may attend a retreat lead by Rev. Bill Casey on "Being a Soldier for Christ." This is not a Dominican retreat but looks to be very good. We also may team up with the Carmelites again for their annual retreat.

Suffrages for Deceased Parents of Dominicans will be Saturday, Feb. 12 at Holy Rosary Church beginning with 8:00 a.m. Mass followed by the Rosary and Office for the Dead.

Mary Halvorson and Cecelia Hoesly will be putting together a new directory for our chapter. Members are asked to notify them of any changes in address or phone number.

(Continued on next page)

From the Chapters

(Continued from previous page)

Marjie Leo, once again, made prayer cards for the 2011 year. Each member received a card with the name of one current chapter member and one deceased chapter member to pray for throughout the year along with the name of a Dominican Saint to ask to assist with intercession.

Please pray for the following ill members: Jane Hoesly, Edie Roland, Joanne Moore and Suzie King.

Ms. Roberta Powell, OP

St. Mary Magdalene, Tempe

On Feb. 10 some of us were blessed by a visit from our brothers, fr Anthony Rosevear, OP, Novice Master, and three of the novices: Brothers ??Kevin Andrew, Brad Elliott, and Dennis Klein. There are two other novices, members of the Southern Province who were not on this tour, but rather one in their own province: Brs Juan Sanchez and Thomas More Barba. Hosted by Inquirer Lisa Armijo-Zorita and her husband Millan, the friars stopped off with us for a couple of days on their way from the Las Vegas Newman Center to the Tucson Newman Center, even though we no longer have friars living in the Phoenix Metro area. We were so pleased that they made time for us. We celebrated with Mass, dinner, and lots of conversation at Lisa and Millan's home and then returned to our own homes renewed as Dominicans and as Newman community members who painfully miss our brothers.

Preparation has begun for our 2011-2012 formation program. A committee is studying several very good ideas, including books by fr Timothy Radcliffe or fr Paul Murray, "The Parables of Jesus" by Denis McBride, CSSR, and several other suggestions. The committee will narrow down the list and submit it to the chapter at our March meeting.

Our Tempe Newman Center is on the brink of demolition at this time. Masses have already been moved to the historic Old Church, St. Mary's, which is located on the perimeter of the Newman property. The chapter belongings are in our keeping, in storage, along with Dominican art that has graced the walls. Those of us who have been community members for a while grieve the demolition, even though we know that it is necessary and that it makes way for a much better place of ministry. Still the poor old place is home to many of us. During construction of the new center, depictions of which you can view at the website (Google Newman Center ASU), offices will be moved to a nearby building owned by ASU but being vacated just in time. Our chapter will utilize that building for our regular meetings.

Ms Karen Woods, OP

St. Joseph, San Jose

Alene-Marie Wilhelmi made her life profession at the December Day of Recollection/Meeting.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Lillian Cousins, aunt of Dionysus Flora and Alene Wilhelmi who passed away Saturday, February 5, 2011.

Thank you for your time and may Almighty God bless you and yours in the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercession of Blessed Mary, Ever Virgin and St. Dominic,

Alene Wilhelmi

St Dominic, Eagle Rock

The Chapter continues its monthly meetings and study of Matthew's Gospel. We welcome some new members. A planned day of Retreat had to be cancelled, but we hope to reschedule soon.

Roger Vignocchi

Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, Sacramento

On January 14, 15 & 16 our Chapter met at the Sisters of Mercy Retreat Center in Auburn, CA Our Retreat Master was Fr Michael Sweeney, OP. Our focus topic was "Helping Catholics Succeed at a Primary Discipline of the Christian Life: Discerning, Developing and Using their Spiritual Gifts (Charisms)"

The following quotes have been taken from our study material, particularly "The Catholic Spiritual Gifts Inventory" by Sherry Weddell

"Blessed be God in all His gifts." From the constitution of the Order of Preachers, 1228

"Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good, of men, and to the needs of the world." CCC 799

What is at the heart of life as a Catholic? — **Following Jesus** (CCC, 519-521)

"There is a general rule concerning all special graces granted to any human being. Whenever the divine favor chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all

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From the Chapters

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the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfill the task at hand." St. Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444)

"Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms. (CCC,800)

"It is in this sense that discernment of charisms is always necessary. No charism is exempt from being referred and submitted to the Church's shepherds. 'Their office is not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good,' so that all the diverse and complementary charisms work together 'for the common good.'" (CCC 801)

"Therefore, you blessed ones...ask your Father, ask your Lord, for the special gift of his inheritance, the distributed charisms...Ask, he says, and you shall receive. In fact, you have sought and you have found, you have knocked, and it has been opened to you." Tertullian's treatise on Baptism (c200)

"It was the power of the Holy Spirit working through Jesus' human nature that enabled him to heal and to work miracles. It was the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead (CCC 695).

Jesus promised the same Spirit to those who followed him, who would enable his disciples to be his witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:8)

What is a charism? Charism is simply the Greek word used in the New Testament for "favor" or "gratuitous gift."

With these powerful quotations before us, Fr. Michael took us on an intense 3 day journey into what a charism was, how charisms differ from natural talents, what the

difference was between the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts (charisms). We talked about how many charisms there are, that all baptized Christians are given charisms. Charisms are both tools given to disciples so that they are able to accomplish their mission and important clues as to what their mission in life might be. We talked about how permanent or long term charisms need to be discovered and developed, just like natural gifts. We all took an inventory to help us pinpoint the best places to begin our discernment. Discerning our charisms is a process that takes time. The inventory is designed to help us begin to identify patterns in our lives, but it is intended to be used only as part of a more extensive discernment process. Each of us will be individually interviewed in the near future in order to continue this discernment process.

Each of us left the Retreat Center a bit overwhelmed but also energized to continue this discernment process. Fr. Michael Sweeny did an outstanding job presenting to us this important discipline of the Christian life.

Anna Marie Gshwandtner

St Andrew, Riverside

We are very sorry to report that several weeks ago, a fire destroyed our Dominican Friars' house in Riverside, Ca. Thankfully, and miraculously, all of the friars survived. Fr. Raymond Finerty, OP, has had to be hospitalized and at this writing (2/19/11) is still in the hospital. He suffered severe smoke inhalation and burns around his mouth. He is doing better; please keep him and the other Riverside Friars in your prayers. Should anyone wish to send financial donations, please send them to the Provincial Office of the friars. (5877 Birch Court, Oakland, Ca. 94618; attention: Riverside House Fire Fund). Thank you all and may God grant us a Lent filled with many graces!

Fraternally in JMJ and our holy father, Dominic,
Mr Bill Rabalais, OP

The most evident mark of God's anger, and the most terrible castigation He can inflict upon the world, is manifest when He permits His people to fall into the hands of a clergy who are more in name than in deed, priests who practice the cruelty of ravaging wolves rather than the charity and affection of devoted shepherds. They abandon the things of God to devote themselves to the things of the world and, in their saintly calling of holiness, they spend their time in profane and worldly pursuits. When God permits such things, it is a very positive proof that He is thoroughly angry with His people and is visiting His most dreadful wrath upon them.

St. John Eudes

De Profundis

Requiescat in pace

William Gross, father of your editor, passed from this life Feb 20, 2010.

From the Chapters

(Continued from previous page)

St Albert, Oakland

St. Albert Chapter celebrated the feast of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, O.P., second Master General of the Order (1185-1237) with Mary Rudge giving a moving talk about him. Her late son was named Jordan after this notable Dominican. Jordan Rudge died a little while back of Hodgkin's disease, a long and difficult death. Mary spoke of the importance on the deep friendship between Blessed Jordan and Blessed Diana, an early contemplative nun of the Order. The two were close, prayed for each other and the work to be done and gained strength from the friendship and prayers to perform their own ministry. She recommended the lovely, small book of letters, "Love Among the Saints".

Mary also spoke of the importance of praying for one another and for people we don't even know. She is firmly convinced that someone was praying for her years ago and that those prayers led to her conversion to the Catholic faith. She has no idea who it was, but feels sure her call to faith was promoted a member of the communion of saints to which we all belong.

It was a reminder to all of us to keep in our prayers individuals or groups of people whose needs come to our minds as we pray. Adding them, no matter who or where they are will help them and will strengthen our own faith as we begin to understand how God's loving care for each of us takes shape in many different ways.

Mary helped us all reflect on the meaning of the communion of the saints and that we all belong to the one body that is the church under the Lord's guidance.

Next month we'll hear about another pilgrimage and, in April, try something new for our chapter. Everyone will

have a copy of the 2011-2012 calendar and, together, we'll work out events for and celebrations for the year.

The chapter had its annual retreat at the Carmelite House of Prayer in Oakville. Fr Jerome Cudden, OP was our preacher. He spoke on the sacrificial traditions of the Old and New Testaments and in our daily liturgy. Only the brave ventured out in cold, wet weather but all of us enjoyed the warmth of our welcome by the Carmelite fathers and the goodness of the conferences.

Fr Anthony Rosevear, OP, will preach our Lenten Day of Reflection and all Bay Area chapters are invited to join us.

Ellen Logue

BI Margaret of Castello, Boise

In January the Chapter began a new formation program concentrating on personal holiness, open to Dominican laity in the particular form presented by our Order; to be attained by observing the rule and imitating the life of St Dominic according to our particular vocation. Formation Director Stephanie DeNinno continued this in the February meeting, with presentations by members that were well researched, presented in an animated and engaging manner, and were well received. The chapter is also pleased to have several visitors who are coming regularly and becoming part of the "family."

In March the Chapter will have a one day retreat presented by Fr. Andrew Szymakowski of the Baker diocese. Since Father was transferred from a nearby parish we have missed him at our events, and are pleased that he has offered to present a retreat for us.

Mark Gross

Vocation of Love

Whatever God does, teaches us lessons. Each one of His works has many significancies. All possible interpretations are true, so long as they be worthy of His majesty. At the very outset the specialty of God's love of us teaches us some lessons, which we must at least enumerate before we go further. The first is that there is no service of God except that of love. We must love Him with a hopeless love, despairing of our ever being able to love Him as we ought. We must love Him with a brave love, which indeed calculates grace, but does not calculate difficulties. We must love Him with a swift, pushing love, which, like a tree, is fastening itself deeper in the ground with its roots, while it is also climbing higher into the blue sky. God's love of us is so bewilderingly great, and so bewilderingly special, that we must love Him with a glorious love, to be worthy of the name of love at all. But this specialty of His love also teaches us to be afraid. Our love will be no worse for this, but all the better. It is indeed a fearful thing to have to do with God. It is fearful to think how much He expects of us, and yet with what justice He expects so much. It is fearful to think of the sea of grace around us, which so much love, and so special a love, implies. It is fearful to think how easily we may slide out of our place, how easily we may miss of our work; and then whither shall we fall? Truly, to wander away from God eternally seems a cheerily hard thing to do when we think of His much love of us, and yet almost inevitably easy when we think of His special love of us. That specialty, which makes His love so sweet, is just the thing which makes our responsibilities so terrible. Even human love is half fear, and more than half fear when it is more than commonly sweet. What then shall we say of divine love? At least this, that he, who loves most, fears most.

Fr Faber

From the Mailbag

To the Editor:

I humbly offer the following thoughts in response to the eloquent argument put forward by Dr. Sims (O.P.), *Why I will not use "OP"*.

For the Dominican, O.P. is our family designation. Among the "First Order", student brothers receive the right to use the designation O.P. as a novice, as do lay members, as a sign of reception into the Order. Regardless of rank or training, whether a green novice or a wizened Thomistic scholar, all are of the same family, the Order of Preachers. The use of honorifics such as Fr., Br. and Sr., already in common practice throughout the Order, identifies one's position in the family without compromising the equal status of family members.

By adopting O.P. in place of O.P.L. or T.O.P. we, the lay members, are identifying ourselves as members of this one, great and unified Dominican family. We are Dominicans. The honorifics of Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Dr. simply specify our position in the family. We should give praise that we have been called by the Holy Spirit to this family and with great humility, reverence and obedience accept the honor of this designation.

As to the difference in training in theology and doctrine, the argument is valid and deserves considerable attention. My sole disappointment with the Lay Dominican formation is its relative lack of a structured, in depth training in theology, apologetics, and church doctrine. This is not to say that the lay members should be made as erudite as the friars; but a minimum standard of knowledge in the aforementioned areas seems reasonable. It is my opinion that the DLIPC would better spend its time and energy on improving the Lay Dominican formation than debating which letters to place after our names.

Your brother in Christ and St. Dominic,
Dr. Daniel T. Malleske, O.P.

—

A response to Dr. Sims:

I read with great interest the article from Dr. G. S. Sims in the January-February 2011 issue of "Truth Be Told". I am a life-professed member of the Dominican Laity from St. Dominic Chapter in Eagle Rock, California. I have been forced in the past, by a certain situation that occurred in that chapter, to give a great deal of thought to the initials that should go after our name.

While Dr. Sims makes several good points, I fear that they do not actually apply to the question at hand. Let me start out by saying that I have no preference with whatever initials appear after the name. Still, I feel compelled

to respond and point out some problems I see with the arguments which he proposed in his refusal to use "OP". Let me try to comment on his statements point by point – starting with the last, since it is actually the easiest to answer.

Dr. Sims writes: "I am a layman." While this is true, it doesn't really address the issue. Dr. Sims apparently makes a mistake that many of us tend to make – that of "opposing" the idea of "Laity" to that of "Religious". Actually, the Code of Canon Law (CIC 207 § 1) reads:

"Among the Christian Faithful by divine institution there exist in the Church sacred ministers, who are also called clerics in law, and other Christian faithful, who are called laity."

Thus, the real difference is not between laity and religious but rather between laity and clergy. Parenthetically, the counterpart to "Religious" is "Secular" (the Diocesan priests and deacons are properly referred to as "Secular clergy"). The practical result of this is that any Dominican who is not in Holy Orders is, by definition of Canon Law, a Layman/laywoman. So, all of the apostolic sisters (read 3rd Order Regular) and all of the nuns (read 2nd Order) and all of the cooperator brothers (read 1st Order non-clerical brothers) are laypeople. In fact, I believe that, in the "old days" the cooperator brothers were officially referred to as "lay brothers". This having been said, according to Dr. Sims' reasoning – all of them should not be using "OP". So it would appear then that the "correct" designation for us would be "secular Dominicans" rather than "lay Dominicans" – but that doesn't quite fit either (since we are a part of the Dominican Order). It does really become an interesting situation when one looks more closely at it.

Dr. Sims also writes as one of his reasons: "Confusion". There should be no confusion about the status of the person, in most cases, if the proper "honorific" is used. There is grounds for real confusion of status in only one case that I can think of. That is where a secular priest (or bishop) or permanent deacon is also a member of a "Clerical Fraternity". Then, there might be confusion (although they should still have been academically trained in accordance with the requirements as set out in the Code of Canon Law.) This also can be viewed in relationship with the next reason that he gives.

Dr. Sims writes as one of his reasons: "Formation".

While there could, I suppose, be some possible grounds for concern here – the real question that is involved is: "how seriously do we take our vocation as members of the Dominican Order (which we are constitutionally)? I remember being told by a Friar once – if you want the Friars to take you seriously, you need to take yourselves seriously. Our initial formation and on-going formation

(Continued on next page)

within our chapters and also our personal study needs to be taken seriously and, if we do so, we should be able to knowing comment on doctrine and discipline and church practice. We are not trying to pretend to be something we aren't – but we are supposed to prepare ourselves to preach the good news as what I like to refer to us as – stealth preachers. By that, I mean that we have an advantage that the religious members of the Order do not have. It is easier for us to “sneak up” on people. Believe it or not, when one is in the presence of a priest or a sister (most of us seldom actually meet nuns) there is a “mode-of-behavior” that people put on – maybe not totally consciously, but it is real nonetheless. He also makes the statement that “Just as ‘PhD’ describes, in three letters, an academic background; ‘OP’ in two letters, ought to identify a level of theological and doctrinal preparation and development.” While that is certainly true – and we should all agree with it (but see my comment about the

The crucial difference between the Catholic and common uses of the word "mystery" lies here. When the term is applied to divine realities, the mystery involved is by definition without end. This is not to say (as nominalists, in contrast to Aquinas, seemed to want to say) that the things of God are permanently or radically incomprehensible and ineffable, but that they are endlessly comprehensible and expressible. Not darkness, but too much light is what we encounter here. That irritating conversation stopper, "it's a mystery," doesn't mean that we have nothing further to say but that we can't say enough about the matter in hand. The mysteries of faith are so far-reaching in their meaning and so breathtaking in their beauty that they possess a limitless-that is to say, literally an unending and inexhaustible-power to attract and transform the minds and hearts, the individual and communal lives, in which they are pondered, digested, and, ultimately, loved and adored.

*Consumed by the Holy Mysteries of
this Great Sacrament, A Homily by Archbishop
Augustine Di Noia, O.P. ([Link](#))*



So let us remain with Jesus, the eternal and incarnate Wisdom. Apart from him, there is nothing but aimless wandering, untruth and death. "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life" (Jn. 14:6). Now let us see the effects of Wisdom in souls.

The Love of Eternal Wisdom, St. Louis de Montfort

"Frequently he made a special personal petition that God would deign to grant him a genuine charity, effective in caring for and obtaining the salvation of men. For he believed that only then would he be truly a member of Christ, when he had given himself totally for the salvation of men, just as the Lord Jesus, the Savior of all, had offered himself completely for our salvation. So, for this work, after a lengthy period of careful and provident planning, he founded the Order of Friars Preachers."

Libellus de principiis O.P. Office of Readings, Aug 8



St. Jean Dorcy, O.P.

Let us, then, not light the lamp by contemplation and action, only to put it under a bushel - that lamp, I mean, which is the enlightening word of knowledge - lest we be condemned for restricting by the letter the incomprehensible power of wisdom. Rather let us place it upon the lampstand of holy Church, on the heights of true contemplation, where it may kindle for all men the light of divine teaching. -St. Maximus the Confessor

Mary, our mother
 And mother of the Redeemer,
 Gate of heaven and Star of the sea,
 Come to the aid of your people,
 Who have sinned,
 Yet also yearn to rise again!
 Come to the Church's aid,
 Enlighten your devoted children,
 Strengthen the faithful throughout the world,
 Let those who have drifted
 Hear your call,
 And may they who live as prisoners of evil
 Be converted!

Pope John Paul II

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Editor – Mark Gross

Submissions to the Editor

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters or articles, in particular presentations made at chapter meetings. We cannot guarantee that all will be published, and we reserve the right to edit submissions. The purpose of sharing submissions is to pass on relevant information and suggestions for proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel according to the charism of St. Dominic, and in accord with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.