THE ATHANASIAN

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The Athanasian
A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

The Athanasian is a traditional Roman Catholic publication named after the illustrious bishop and staunch defender of the Faith of the fourth century, Saint Athanasius, "the champion of orthodoxy." Although many publications carry, in addition to their name, a subtitle further identifying them or specifying their purpose, this newsletter has always borne merely the name: *The Athanasian*. If, however, this publication were to have a subtitle, it might well be: "A Voice Crying in the Wilderness." While I have no intention of adding those words as a subtitle, I do think it would be a rather appropriate one to distinguish *The Athanasian* from the generality of broadly similar traditional Catholic publications printed in the USA. *The Athanasian* is not a solitary voice among such publications but it certainly is a rare one.

And why do I think it appropriate to describe this newsletter as "a voice crying in the wilderness"? For two reasons, the first being the more obvious. And that is the outspoken, unqualified, uncompromising position we have taken for the past several years on the Conciliar Church and its leader, John Paul II. I know of no other comparable publication in the USA (of those I would consider reputable and having any national circulation) which has publicly and clearly taken that inflexible stand, namely, that the Conciliar Church is *not* the Roman Catholic Church and that its head, John Paul II, is *not* a valid Pope. The true Church, humanly speaking, has never been in more dire straits in the entire course of its history than it is today—and, I contend, this utterly deplorable situation will further and further degenerate as long as the bogus Pope in the Vatican continues to be recognized as a true pontiff. Not that any widespread recognition and realization of the fact that John Paul II is a non-Pope (to say nothing of the vital part he is playing in the formation of the One World Order) will in itself solve the myriad problems besetting the Church—but the awareness of this reality on a sufficiently large scale is an absolute prerequisite for any possible beginning of a solution to the Church situation. The Conciliar Church is *not* the true Church and John Paul II is *not* a true Pope—this is *the bottom line.*

The record of John Paul II, I firmly believe, proves beyond the shadow of all reasonable doubt that he is a formal heretic—and, therefore, is not even a Roman Catholic, much less a valid Pope. But am I the only traditional priest (a notion some of the subscribers to *The Athanasian* may have) who takes this position? Not at all. There are a number of other priests in this country who have the same conviction. Why, then, do they not, with two or three exceptions, speak out unequivocally from time to time on this so very vital subject? Would not some people (not knowing otherwise) logically assume that such priests accept John Paul II as a valid pope since by their silence on the matter they presumably convey that impression? (It is essential to the success of the nefarious efforts of the enemies and destroyers of the Church that the pretense of John Paul II as a true Pope be preserved.)

In a word, because I believe that the papal validity or nonvalidity of John Paul II is far and away the essential question relating to the vast Church problem, it is my contention that any priest who is a sedevacantist should so identify himself loudly and clearly. (A sedevacantist, a term anglicized from two Latin words, is one who believes that the Chair of Peter is presently vacant or, in other words, that John Paul II is not a valid pope.) Only when those priests and informed laity who are sedevacantists openly and without reserve identify themselves as such will it be possible, I submit, even to begin the restoration of the Church, a process which demands as a starting point the unmasking of John Paul II. And further, unless and until the massive deception that he is an authentic Vicar of Christ is publicly and effectively challenged and exposed, John Paul II will continue to be one of the prime forces contributing to the long-planned establishment of a One World Church.

And then there is a second reason which inclines me to describe *The Athanasian* as "a voice crying in the wilderness" and that reason is found in or derives from the writings of John K. Weiskittel who, I might note, has no idea that he is the subject of a portion of this article.

Some 50 articles by Mr. Weiskittel have appeared in the pages of this newsletter over the past eight years. Those articles—accurate, comprehensive, informative and diligently researched—have covered a wide variety of subjects, some of them being subjects but rarely, if at all, treated in other publications of this kind (for example, Pax Christi, the New Age Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., Opus Dei, Mormonism and several articles on Freemasonry). His article in this issue of *The Athanasian* on the French Revolution is an excellent example of the quality of the material which Mr. Weiskittel has consistently provided. Many times over the past several years individuals, in correspondence or in personal conversation, have commended Mr. Weiskittel's articles and have remarked how fortunate I am to have him writing for *The*

Athanasian. I am well aware of it.

But, like the publication for which he writes, is not Mr. Weiskittel "a voice crying in the wilderness"? Despite the excellence and accuracy of his writings (and so often, their direct application to current events relating to Church and State), they are, to the best of my knowledge, just about totally ignored outside the circle of our newsletter subscribers. One explanation for this is my inability to get the circulation of *The Athanasian* to a level high enough or large enough to have any significant impact on the national scene. To accomplish that seems to be a dream impossible of realization. And so, with two or three exceptions, the writings of Mr. Weiskittel, however superior they may be, simply go largely unrecognized outside the readership of the newsletter. But wouldn't you think that, in view of the quality of so many of his articles, he might be quoted occasionally, at least, say, in one or another of the various traditional or self-styled traditional newsletters and magazines that are printed in the USA? In all the publications of this kind which I receive I have never once even seen his name mentioned. This, I suppose, is understandable on the part of most publications that are called traditional since they are not really such. Knowing that John Weiskittel writes for *The Athanasian*, they just could never bring themselves to recognize him or quote from his articles. After all, isn't that the newsletter whose editor is that hard-line traditional priest who even publicly declares himself to be, of all things, a sedevacantist? Well, I can only hope that the fine writings of Mr. Weiskittel will not go largely unrecognized forever. Assuredly, they deserve far better than the near silent treatment they have received over the past eight years.

By the grace of God, I will never become despondent or despair. Admittedly though, the temptation to become frustrated does appear periodically. Despite the fact that this newsletter has so frequently carried highly informative articles on subjects of vital importance, and despite the fact that this newsletter has never concealed or watered down the truth on any matter about which we felt that that truth should be unequivocally stated—what, I occasionally ask myself, have we to show, in terms of concrete achievements, for our efforts over the past decade? What impact have we made for the better during that period of time? Yes, I know that, before God, it is not concrete results that count but rather that we have a right intention and that what we are publishing is the unvarnished truth. Still, it would be nice if we could see some substantial results of our efforts over the past ten years. *The Athanasian*'s being "a voice crying in the wilderness" for that length of time can indeed become disheartening and does tend to frustration.

As long as our finances hold out though, we fully intend to keep plugging away, always cherishing the hope that *The Athanasian* may someday become a recognized and significant force for God and His moral law upon the American scene. Hope springs eternal†

FATHER OSWALD BAKER

Father Baker is a traditional Roman Catholic priest residing in England. Ordained in 1942 for the Diocese of Northampton (England), he served over a number of years as an assistant (curate) in several parishes in that diocese—and then as pastor. In due time he was dismissed from his pastorate by the bishop for refusing to offer the "new Mass." Some time following his dismissal he established a number of traditional Latin Mass centers, four of which he presently serves.

Although Father Baker and I have never met, I have known of him for several years now and have been corresponding with him in recent months. It appears to me that he and I share the same convictions on all essential matters relating to the various problems of the Church. Two examples will suffice: (1) Father Baker has never said—nor even seen—the "new Mass." Neither have I. (2) He is a sedevacantist—and so am I.

Beginning with the next issue, an article by Father Baker is scheduled to appear in each issue of *The Athanasian*.

Fr. F. Fenton

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THE (ANTI-CATHOLIC) FRENCH REVOLUTION

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Each year on July 14 millions of French citizens celebrate their nation's "Independence Day." This year's Bastille Day—which commemorates as always a Parisian mob's storming of the fortress prison called the Bastille (symbolically representing the start of the French Revolution)—is sure to include more than the usual amount of spectacular fireworks and political pontificating, since it marks the 200th anniversary of the event.

Already travel agents are promoting attractive tour packages to France (it doesn't hurt that this year is also the centennial of the Eiffel Tower). Business will undoubtedly be good, but we have to wonder just how many among the throngs of tourists will have an inkling of precisely what the French Revolution really signifies. Our guess is, probably very few.

By and large, they would, if asked, regurgitate the pat formula they learned in history class: The French Revolution was a popular uprising of a freedom-starved people against a tyrannical monarch and marked a major turning point in modern history. As we will show in the next few pages, the first part of this is utterly false and the second true, but true in a sense quite unlike that imagined by the average sightseer in Paris.

Myths About The Revolution

Before examining the causes, characters and consequences of the French Revolution, it might be a good idea to dispense with a few common misconceptions regarding it. This is necessary (as is the article in general) because so much of the vast literature written about the Revolution comes down squarely on the side of the "liberators" and accepts their views as essentially accurate ones. This bias tends to pervade a sizable portion of those volumes often found in bookstores, libraries and classrooms. Some of the myths reside more commonly in the public imagination and are permitted to remain there—some of these even refuted by pro-Revolution writers, but there is little effort made to communicate this to the man in the street.

Myth No. 1—*The taking of the Bastille was done to free hundreds of political prisoners.* One of the most persistent falsehoods regarding the Revolution is the claim that the mob moved against the ancient fortress to liberate victims of oppression. So thoroughly has this been disproved that rare is the author who will risk his reputation by suggesting it. To cite but one recent work:

> The Bastille was stormed in order to obtain ammunition and not, as popular mythology would try to insist, out of any particularly strong desire to release its prisoners. The infamous dungeons had long since fallen into disuse and, at the time of the attack, those unfortunates lodged within the building itself numbered only seven...With the fortress already scheduled for demolition, the significance of the attack lay more in its psychological rather than actual effects...(Martin McCrory & Robert Moulder, *French Revolution for Beginners;* Writers & Readers, 1983, p. 44)

The capture was made easier because the commander of the Paris troops had not been decisive. As a result, Launay, the prison's governor, was forced to surrender, after receiving assurances that no harm would come to him or his men. What followed was at once a display of the Revolution's mentality and a grisly preview of the horrors that would haunt France for much of the next decade: No sooner was the drawbridge lowered than the mob murdered Launay and five officers. His severed head was paraded through the streets of Paris as a battle trophy.

Myth No. 2—*The Fall of the Bastille was a spontaneous popular uprising.* On the face of it this would seem plausible since thousands of rank-and-file Parisians took part. However, other elements need to be factored into this scene. Only weeks before at sessions convoked at Versailles, the Estates General—a council of mostly upper-class representatives—had defied King Louis XVI and set up a National Assembly. Many of these men embraced the anti-Catholic freethinking of Voltaire and other *philosophes*, and there were a number of them who conspired against the crown and thought nothing of *buying* agitators. There is much evidence to suggest that the siege of the Bastille was merely the final in a series of manipulations. As a dress rehearsal for the Revolution, riots broke out in several cities in the spring of 1775, less than two months before Louis' ascension to the throne. The first of these, which took place on April 18 in Dijon and which ostensibly protested the high price of bread, "bore the earmarks of outside engineering" according to the anonymous author of the excellent and (alas) unfinished study, *Seventeen Eighty Nine.* (American Opinion Preview Series, 1968, p. 30) He goes on to note that, "for some curious reason, (the rioters) protested the scarcity of grain by breaking into and destroying all the grain they could find in town," and that, eleven days later, "two whole boatloads of grain were dumped into the river at Pontoise." (ibid) Following on the heels of these disturbances was the "organized rioting" at Versailles and Paris (the so-called Flour War) that had as its leaders—"not peasants but hired thugs." (ibid)

Who was capable of financing not one but numerous such disturbances from 1775 to 1789? No doubt several noblemen contributed to the Revolutionary coffers because this was—regardless of what historians would have us believe—primarily an upper-class struggle, a "revolution from above." Rising above all others, however, was the Duke of Orleans, the cousin of Louis who coveted his crown. (One of his less bloody enterprises was to pay a crowd to cry "Long live the Duke of Orleans!" as Queen Marie Antoinette passed by at the opening of the Estates General.) As France's wealthiest citizen (his estates covered 10,000 square miles or 1/20th of the nation's total area), such expenditures were ridiculously easy for him. (Joseph Barry, *Passion & Politics: A Biography of Versailles.*

Doubleday, 1972, pp. 422-23) French biographer Bernard Fay, in his important work, *Louis XVI,* demonstrates that the Duke was behind a mob that on April 27, 1789, set fire to a factory owned by a man who was charitable, paid his employees well and whose only "crime" was "getting himself elected to the Estates General instead of the candidate protected by Orleans." (trans., Patrick O'Brian, Regnery, 1968, p. 322) When the Bastille fell, the mob was led by army deserters and, as though scripted, on the same day the provost of Paris was murdered. There was also "open talk" in the days that preceeded it at the Duke's palace in Paris "of dethroning Louis XVI and replacing him by Orleans." (ibid, p. 326) In October of the same year the Duke sponsored a march on the palace at Versailles by 15,000 traitorous soldiers and 18,000 civilian troublemakers; royal guards were murdered and the king and queen forced to return to Paris. (Father A. Guggenberger, S.J., *A General History of the Christian Era,* Vol. III, Herder, 1928, pp. 149-50) This contrived uprising was clearly seen as such when "(t)he Duke of Orleans acknowledged, before his death, that he had expended above L.50,000 Sterling in corrupting the *Gardes Francoises.*" (John Robison, A.M., *Proofs of a Conspiracy,* Western Islands, 1967 ed. of the 1798 work, p. 218) Another conspirator, the Marquis de Mirabeau, summed it up in a perfectly French way: "For a hundred louis you can have a very elegant riot." (cited, Fay, p. 322)

Myth No. 3—*The Revolution was fought to help the economic lot of the common folk.* This romantic view fails to take much into account. France, the most prosperous European state at the time (it held half the money in circulation), had no more poor than any other nation and arguably less. As historian Charles Breunig writes:

> One of the most common misconceptions about revolutions is that they occur in societies that are economically depressed and on the verge of collapse. Never has this view been more clearly disproved than it was by the state of affairs in prerevolutionary France which, during the half century before 1789, enjoyed a period of steady economic growth indicated by rising industrial production, an expansion of the volume of foreign trade, and the increasing prosperity of the merchant class...The French peasants were undoubtedly better off in many respects than their counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe but they were still far from satisfied with their lot. (*The Age of Revolution & Reaction, 1789-1850,* Norton, 2nd ed., 1977, p. 2)

Even Thomas Jefferson, certainly no friend of the throne, was forced to admit to the Marquis de Lafayette: "I have been pleased to find among the people a less degree of misery than I had expected. They are generally well-clothed and have plenty of food..." (William P. Hoar, *Architects of Conspiracy,* Western Islands, 1984, p. 2) In *Seventeen Eighty Nine* we read that economic reforms were already under way: "Serfdom itself had already disappeared in France; and the peasants owned more land than anybody else." (p. 2) So how do we explain why a fair amount of working people were drawn into the Revolution? To answer, we need only turn our attention again to the activities of the Duke of Orleans and his cohorts. In the years leading up to 1789, the nation was hit by several famines but not all of these may be attributed to natural causes. The "Flour War" is early evidence that the conspirators would create—then exploit—the suffering of the masses for their own ends. William Hoar writes:

> By 1789,...shortages of food were being consciously created by one of the prime conspirators, the Duc d'Orleans. There can be no doubt, historian Nesta Webster confirmed in *The French Revolution,* "that the famine of 1789 was deliberately engineered by agents of the duke, and that by this means the people were driven to the pitch of desperation necessary to produce the Revolution." (p. 2)

But this was only the first stage; next,

> ...word was spread that "the court" was deliberately inducing a shortage of food. By an interesting coincidence, the masses chose exactly the third week in March—while the representatives of the Estates General were being chosen by the provincial assemblies—to rise up against the "speculators." In Provence alone there were riots in fifty communes (the smallest territorial divisions—JKW). Caraman, the military commander at Marseilles, wrote in his report that it was no longer a question of "isolated riots as at ordinary times. The process is directed by uniform principles." There was but one exception to the uniform principles. One commune was spared disorder, the commune of Mirabeau. (*Seventeen Eighty Nine,* p. 119)

But it is revealing that, even after Louis was overthrown, he remained quite popular—especially with members of the working class, for whom he had a particular affection. In September, 1792, four months before the King's execution, the revolutionist Danton complained, "the Republicans are an infinitesimal minority...the rest of France is attached to the monarchy." (cited, Hoar, p. 5) The Revolution did not put an end to famines (one in 1793-94 was so severe that in Paris meat was reserved for the sick) and the poor by the thousands perished in the Reign of Terror. Their "crime" of being pro-monarchy was only surpassed by another offense: *loyalty to the Roman Catholic Faith.*

Myth No. 4—*Louis XVI was a tyrant and had to be removed.* This notion, fostered by the Revolutionists, is today held, for the most part, only by those who haven't researched the period very closely. Pick up the average Establishment history book and you will probably search in vain for the word "tyrant," so long discredited is the calumny. Instead, those books fall back on milder forms of libel. Louis, they would have us believe, suffered from a "lack of character," was "fatally indecisive," "a well-meaning man but not clever" and "a vulgar oaf, simpleminded and cowardly." These remarks, and so many others like them, have continued to sully the memory of a ruler who in many ways was one of the finest Christian kings who ever lived.

When one reads an objective study of Louis XVI it quickly becomes evident that, as a Catholic who took his faith seriously, he would have quite literally regarded despotism as a grave sin. His equally pious father, Louis Dauphin, who patiently

endured the taunts of the *philosophes* after having a chapel built at Versailles in honor of the Sacred Heart, earlier had written that a king "must take the Divinity as his model when he wields power...must submit to the laws, although he is their chief master"; that the nobility should act as "the link" between the ruler and his subjects"; that Parliament "acts as a repository for the laws"; and that "(t)he power of the clergy is very right and proper; it sets limits to tyranny without physically resisting it." (cited, Fay, pp. 28, 344) This is the political philosophy he passed on to his son who, in a kind of catechism on statecraft he compiled before his coronation, held it to be his duty to seek always his subjects' happiness and recall their natural rights which existed before "any political or common law—the right to life, to honour, to freedom and the ownership of property." (cited, ibid, p. 60) As king, he vigorously pursued the ideals he had set down. Among reforms during his reign:

> Louis XVI abolished forced labor on public works. He struck down the practice of imprisonment without provable charges being presented. He outlawed the use of torture in interrogation, emptied the prisons, convoked the Estates General for the first time in a century and, upon popular demand, restored the ancient courts of magistrates known as the Parliaments. Not only that, he himself set an example of strict economy, called for the abolition of especially burdensome taxes, besought the nobility to give up their privileges of right. He founded hospitals, established schools, reformed the law, built canals, drained marshes and constructed bridges. For all these reforms the Revolution cut off his head. (*Seventeen Eighty Nine*, p. 3)

In fact, in 1789, it was proposed that the Bastille which, as we've seen, was hardly being used, be demolished "and a noble column erected on the site bearing the inscription, 'To Louis XVI, Savior of the Public Liberty.'" Hardly the record of a despot. It is understandable, then, that Louis, when he would be tried as such, protested: "Me, a tyrant! A tyrant sees everything with reference to himself; have I not invariably seen everything with reference to my people? Is it they or I who loathe tyranny more?" (cited, Fay, p. 394)

Myth No. 5—*The Royal Family's contempt for the poor was shown when Marie Antoinette, hearing the cries of the hungry for bread, sneered, "Let them eat cake!"* Of all the lies invented by the conspirators, this one is most apt to be heard repeated by the misinformed, who point to it as the most damning proof that the Revolution was a just one. If the statement has that kind of power even today, think of the effect it carried when word of it began circulating among the poor. Effect enough, as it turned out, that a once-beloved queen became the object of a most violent hatred. But we must give the devil—or, in this case, his human agents—their just due for having arrived at such clever deceit for, you see, those words *never passed from Marie's lips!* They (or words much the same) come from the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a *philosophe* and the Revolution's godfather, who attributes them to a "princess" and refers to them as "a well-known saying." But he makes mention of this years before Marie left her native Austria as a 15-year-old girl in 1770! (*Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed., 1955, p. 329, and *Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*, 1968, pp. 274-75) Frankly, it is hard to imagine the queen expressing any sort of harsh feelings toward the less fortunate: she was the daughter of the pious Catholic Empress Maria Theresa, who certainly taught her better, and the wife of Louis, a charitable man in every sense. The fact that a recycled saying was used to villify her indicates that the conspiracy was desperate. Similarly, they shamelessly hired pamphleteers to print false (and sometimes obscene) tracts claiming to expose her endless line of adulterous lovers. Then there was the charge that her gambling and extravagant tastes had thrown the nation into debt—"Madame Deficit," she was called.

True, she had gambled—a habit Louis tolerated but deplored—yet not enough to wreck a national economy. That enormous debt came from war expenses—those already existing when Louis became king, including the Seven Years' War fought under his grandfather Louis XV, as well as those he added to it by supporting America in the War of Independence. (Because of the popularity of this cause, the conspirators found it necessary to pin the blame elsewhere for the debt.) As early as 1775, Marie had written her mother to complain about "these miserable gazettes whose lies affect me so." (Oliver Bernier, *Secrets of Marie Antoinette*, Doubleday, 1985, p. 165) What, we wonder, would she make of today's history books!

Blood And Blasphemy

When one begins to study the French Revolution in any depth, a certain mystery is bound to present itself—namely, how could a nation, which set the standards for refinement and culture, and which was in many ways the center, of Western Civilization of that era, fall to levels of such cruelty and barbarism not seen since the Age of the Martyrs? So great are the crimes of the Revolution that its apologists find themselves quite put upon to explain them away as mere "excesses" of the times. Indeed, it is difficult to come away from such a study without concluding that these atrocities, far from being exceptional cases, are in keeping with the evil spirit that animated the Revolution. As John Adams put it, "Dragons' teeth have been sown in France and come up as monsters."

Frequently, people think that the bloodshed is primarily confined to the period known as the Reign of Terror. While it did reach a fever pitch then, it neither began nor ended there. In July, 1789, Gouverneur Morris, the U.S. Ambassador to France, wrote that the nation was "as near to anarchy as society can approach without dissolution." Nesta Webster, a leading researcher of the conspiracy, writes of the attack on the royal palace of Tuileries in Paris:

> Still worse horrors took place that cannot be written, nameless indecencies, hideous debaucheries, ghastly mutilations of the dead and again, as after the seige of the Bastille, cannibal orgies. Before great fires, hastily kindled in the apartment (at the Escalier du Midi), "cutlets of Swiss (Guards)" were grilled and eaten; the actor Grammont—

one of the earliest hirelings of the Duc d'Orleans and the last man to insult the Queen on her way to the scaffold—in a fit of revolutionary frenzy drank down a glass of blood. (cited, Hoar, p. 6)

This raid, engineered by the Revolutionary faction known as the Jacobins, put an end to the myth of a constitutional monarchy and, on August 10, 1792, netted Louis and his family, who were thrown into a prison called the Temple. In the month that followed, the Jacobins gave France a taste of what to expect from the "liberators." Paid assassins murdered a minimum of 1,400 people *in less than a week* in Paris, followed by similar massacres in other cities, records Father Guggenberger, who enumerates part of the death toll as follows:

Among the victims were the Archbishop of Arles, two bishops, Princess Lamballe, 250 priests, a great number of nobles belonging to the best families of France, many former magistrates and officials, the surviving Swiss guards and some criminals who were of no service to the Jacobins. (p. 160)

Although a recounting of the details of the butchery of Princess Lamballe would convey a very revealing picture of the Revolutionary mentality, we refrain from doing so because of its heinousness and utterly appalling barbarity.

But the 1792 slaughter was a mere prelude for the Reign of Terror. It was only when the Terror began, a year later, that what one Jacobin dubbed "the holy guillotine" fell with such fiendish regularity. According to Maximilien Robespierre, the most powerful man during France's dark night of the soul, terror "is an emanation of virtue." (R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of Terror in the French Revolution*, Princeton, 1973, pp. 276-77) If so, Citizen Robespierre ruled a highly "virtuous" land. With his eleven compatriots on the ironically named Committee for Public Safety, the persecution went far beyond those manifesting royalist or Catholic sympathies (though these were still the main targets). Now one could be put to death for simply questioning Revolutionary policies. Even members of rival factions were not safe—hence the saying, "the revolution eats its own children." (It was during this period that the Duke of Orleans was executed.)

The blood that flowed beneath the guillotine was a seemingly endless torrent. For a time, executions averaged 50 to 60 a day in Paris. The same ghoulish scene of death by decree blanketed the country:

Outside of Paris every Revolutionary Committee had its guillotine. There were stationary, traveling, and elegant house guillotines: the latter for the execution of sick persons who could not be moved from their homes. (Fr. Guggenberger, p. 172)

At Lyons, a staunchly Catholic city subdued only after the fiercest of fighting, a special commission was formed because "(t)he stench and filth around the guillotine became a public problem." (Palmer, p. 170. Palmer states that, although 64 percent of Lyon's victims were upper or middle class, elsewhere in France the figure is only 28 percent of those classes, which indicates strong lower-class support for altar and throne.) Other forms of execution included mass firing squads, throwing pairs of victims—bound tightly together—into rivers and, as a variation of this, the drowning of *boatloads* of prisoners. In all, 1,200,000 died (in a country of 24 million) during the Reign of Terror. Some 200,000 fled the country, including many to England. (Thus, in a sense, returning a favor: two hundred years earlier, many English Catholics during the Anglican persecutions found haven in France.)

For faithful Catholics living through the Revolution, it must have seemed as if the very army of hell had converged on France. (Over 300 martyrs from those days have been beatified by Popes from Saint Pius X to Pius XII, including three bishops.) The war against the Catholic Church began in earnest with the abolition of religious orders and prohibition of monastic vows in February, 1790. Six months later, the infamous Civil Constitution of the Clergy was adopted (signed by the unsuspecting Louis XVI) which made the positions of bishop and parish priest elected posts (non-Catholics as well as Catholics to vote on them); forbade appointed bishops to apply for the Pope's confirmation; declared ecclesiastical estates to be the property of the state; and likewise said that henceforth priests would receive their salaries from the civil government. (Fr. Guggenberger, p. 153) "Out of 130 archbishops, bishops and coadjutors, only four, three of whom were skeptics and profligates, took the required oath on the Civil Constitution. Out of 70,000 priests nearly 50,000 refused to take the oath." (ibid) When Louis saw the document, he promptly withdrew his support and declared, "This law is contrary to my religious opinions: I see it as the signal for endless persecution in my kingdom." (cited, Fay, p. 341) In 1791, Pope Pius VI condemned the Civil Constitution, "suspended all sworn priests and declared the new ecclesiastical elections invalid and sacrilegious." (Fr. Guggenberger, p. 154)

Louis' prediction of "endless persecution" proved only too accurate. Nonjuring priests (those who would not take the civil oath) were forced to go into hiding and those captured were either deported or tortured to death; 37,000 nuns were removed from convents, including 14,000 driven from hospitals and thousands who were teachers in the only existing girls' schools; pious, charitable missionary and educational associations were dissolved; seminaries and colleges seized; tithes and money set for the poor, sick and children were redistributed—not to the needy but to rich landholders and Revolutionists; and the papal states of Avignon and Venaissin were invaded (hundreds murdered in the process), annexed to France and plundered by the Jacobin conspiracy. (ibid)

Another sorrow for Catholic France was the rise of a false religion, the so-called Cult of Reason. This was a worship of nature that sometimes fell into open atheism. (For a time the worship of God and belief in the immortality of the soul were abolished.) The Christian calendar was replaced with one that began with the founding of the French Republic (September

22, 1792) as Year I. A new 10-day week was instituted to keep people from church. The names of the months and days were changed to reflect nature. "Christmas day was dishonored by the name of dog's day (le chien)." (ibid, p. 171) Scenes of church desecrations and religious mockery were rampant.

In all of this can be seen the simple fact that the Revolution, with its cry of "Liberty," sought as much to be free from the One True Faith as from its Catholic ruler.

The Royal Martyrs

The official title of French monarchs was *Most Christian King* and, for King Louis XVI, it was a title to be taken seriously for he saw it as his duty to lead the nation according to the manner commanded by the King of kings. Thus, for Louis, to rule was to serve.

He never lost his love of his subjects nor thought himself far above them, always recalling the words his father had told him on his deathbed: "God alone is immortal, and those who are called the masters of the world are subject to disease and death, like everybody else." (cited, Fay, p. 39) Even his favorite pastimes—hunting, clock repair, metal work and map drawing—suggest a down-to-earth approach to things. He preferred the company of the common people to that of his courtiers, and biographer Fay relates an amusing tale of the time he drew the indignation of the latter by helping workmen repair a palace lock. (pp. 83-84) Louis, in short, saw his subjects as fellow creatures of God, the poorer of whom he often aided from his own pocket, while the Revolutionary "benefactors of mankind" saw them, at best, as an abstraction and, at worst, as stepping stones to power.

The Catholic Church was suffering much in France at this time; even before the Revolution many priests had become worldly or attached to the *philosophes*. King Louis would have nothing to do with this sort of cleric but rather did all in his power "to call the clergy back to their spiritual vocation." (ibid, p. 219) He likewise worked to prevent the spread of indecent and blasphemous literature which he viewed as a poison in the nation's bloodstream.

"I brought a love of peace to the throne," Louis wrote, defending himself to the National Assembly a week before his arrest in 1792, "because peace, which is the most important need of nations, is the most important duty of kings." (cited, Fay, p. 379)

Never the tyrant, the king, when knowing he would be executed, made his son swear never to avenge his death and rejected appeals to rescue him through violence, saying, "I did not want any (blood) shed when it might have preserved my throne and my life, and I do not regret it." (cited, ibid, p. 399)

As expected, the trial of Louis XVI was a travesty of justice. Robespierre worked to see that there would be no popular vote, knowing that the people would free the king. When Louis defended himself, he did so without malice, not even taking the opportunity to denounce anyone. After being judged guilty he was sentenced to death by a margin of one vote—that being cast by his Judas cousin, the Duke of Orleans. On January 20, 1793, revolutionary officials visited the cell to pronounce the verdict: guilty of conspiracy against the nation's freedom. According to Bernard Fay, the king, appreciating the irony of the situation, "smiled slightly at the word 'conspiracy.'" (p. 402)

Far from the coward the pro-Revolutionists pretend to see, Louis went to his death with the courage of a martyr. His death cell reading was the *Imitation of Christ* and the life of Charles I, the English monarch who died with quiet dignity after being deposed by Oliver Cromwell's Puritan conspiracy. When he had made his confession and fervent Communion, Louis asked his confessor, Abbé Edgeworth, an Irish Eudist, for a final blessing and that he "pray to God that He sustain me to the end." (ibid, pp. 404-405) Then, arriving at the guillotine, the king protested when they attempted to tie his hands. At this, Abbé Edgeworth said in a low voice: "Sir, in this fresh outrage I see yet one more likeness between your Majesty and the God that is about to be your reward." At which Louis replied: "Indeed, I need nothing short of His example to bear such an insult," and then, speaking to his murderers, he said: "Do what you wish: I shall drink the cup to the dregs." His steps never wavered as he climbed the scaffold. At the top he addressed the crowd: "I die innocent of all the crimes I am accused of. I forgive the authors of my death and pray to God that the blood you are about to spill shall never fall upon the head of France..." (ibid, pp. 405-406) It is reported that even some soldiers wept at his death. Truly, Louis XVI would have been justified in joining another king, Shakespeare's Lear, in the complaint that he was "a man more sinned against than sinning." Pope Pius VI said that the king's death was brought about chiefly out of hatred for the Catholic Faith.

Mention should be made, too, of the equally tragic death of Queen Marie Antoinette. She had come to the court a flighty and frivolous girl but, by the time she was sarcastically called the "Widow Capet" by the Revolutionary tribunal, she had grown into a woman who wholeheartedly embraced the duties of her station. On the eve of her death she wrote what is aptly described as an "admirable letter" to her sister-in-law, of which we cite a few excerpts:

> ...I have just been condemned, not to a shameful death, for it is shameful only for criminals, but to rejoin your brother. Like him innocent, I hope to display the same firmness he did in his last moments...I die in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, in the religion of my father, in which I was brought up and which I have always professed, having no expectation of spiritual consolation, and not even knowing if there still exist any priests here, and in any case the place where I am would expose them to too much danger if they should enter...As I am not free, they will perhaps bring me a (conformist) priest, but I protest here that I shall not say a word to him and that I shall treat him as a complete stranger. (We're pleased to note that Marie *did* receive the Sacraments before her death. An Abbé Magnin managed to smuggle a break-apart chalice and a small altar and missal into her cell where, he states, he "gave Communion

to the queen who, by the nourishment of the eucharistic bread, received from her God the courage to bear, without complaint, all the torments awaiting her."—JKW)

The Masonic Revolution

In some circles (in most, actually), to raise the part played by the Masons in the French Revolution is regarded as taboo. It's permissible to finger the Jacobins—or perhaps even the Illuminati—but Heaven forbid that anyone so much as mention Freemasonry. And yet the simple fact of the matter is that it was run from start to finish in the Lodges.

John Robison and others accepted Lodge responsibility for the Revolution, including the Abbé Barruel and a certain Mr. Lefranc, president of the Eudist seminary at Caen, who was murdered in 1792 after publishing an expose revealing the Lodge's hand in the Revolution. (Robison, pp. 219-220) Other authors who have advanced the same position have included Bernard Fay, Augustin Cochin and Fathers Guggenberger, E. Cahill and Denis Fahey—and, in an indirect way, Pope Leo XIII.

There is substantial evidence to demonstrate this link between Freemasonry and the French Revolution, of which we shall examine but a little. Fay writes:

> "Everything foretold the storms that were breaking over the monarchy," said the Duc de Montmorency-Luxembourg, the founder and secretary-general of the Grand Orient de France, the center of French Freemasonry. *"I knew perfectly well what hand was behind the people..."*
>
> In France, Orleans, the grand master of the Grand Orient and other lodges, was in control of this society. He assigned one of his secretaries to it—first, Leray de Chaumont, (Benjamin) Franklin's friend, and then others. Without compromising himself he made use of this powerful organization against the "simpleton king," Louis XVI, whose place he wished to take. (p. 318)

But he was not alone, of course, for, writes Robison, "the chief actors in the Revolution, Mirabeau, Condorcet, Rochefoucault and others, were distinguished office-bearers in the great Lodges." (p. 222) Then there is Lafayette, hero of the American Revolution who, when the Bastille fell, sent its key to his "brother" Mason, George Washington. (Hoar, p. 3. It is more than a little odd that America, which may not have won its independence without the support of Louis, did *absolutely nothing* to come to his aid at any time during the critical years of 1789-1793. A case of Lodge loyalty over gratitude?) In his defense, it is probable that Lafayette was a naive idealist who thought a bloodless coup could be run. It is known that, when the Revolution reached its most fanatical stage, he was forced to flee for his life to Austria after being branded a "traitor" to the Republic.

There is also the age-old hatred of Masonry for the papacy and French royalty, which may be traced to the medieval order of the Knights Templar. The spiritual lineage of the two is such that there are degrees in the Scottish Rite that allude to the Templars, and the U.S. Masonic boys' group is named after a Templar grand master, Jacques De Molay. In a recent book, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail,* we read:

> (The Knights Templar) were...regarded as heroes and martyrs, harbingers of the anticlerical spirit of the age; and many French Freemasons, in conspiring against Louis XVI, felt they were helping implement Jacques De Molay's dying curse against the French line. When the king's head fell beneath the guillotine, an unknown man is reported to have leaped on the scaffold. He dipped his hand in the monarch's blood, flung it out over the surrounding throng and cried, "Jacques de Molay, thou art avenged!" (M. Baigent and others, Delacorte, 1982, pp. 52-53)

When, in 1919, a ranking French Mason, Jean Bon, declared, "The Society of the Jacobins, which was the great author of the French Revolution, was only the exterior aspect of the Masonic Lodge," we can rest assured that his was no idle boast.

Revolution Today!

When Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the United Nations last December he made a point of linking the French and Russian Revolutions—and he was right to do so. Indeed, the French Revolution may be said to be the template from which all succeeding insurrections have taken shape. In 1908, anarchist Prince Petyr Kropotkin—the Duke of Orleans of his era—proclaimed: "What we learn today from the study of the Great Revolution is that it was the source and origin of all the present communist, anarchist, and socialist conceptions." (Of interest, on Bastille Day, 1889, socialists and communists joined forces at the Second International in Paris.) Lenin learned to use "real, nationwide terror...through which the Great French Revolution achieved glory (sic)" from his reading of Jacobin methods. Even Hitler saw his revolt as "the exact counterpart" of the French Revolution.

Yet, the steady advance of godless Communism by conquest is only one aspect of the way the spirit of the Revolution affects the world today. The subversion within the Church has its roots there as well, such as with *philosophe* priests who, if alive today, would be active in "liberation theology." Significantly, the Conciliar Church bishops of France issued a declaration last fall in which they praised the Revolution and stated their intention to meet this summer at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to commemorate it. They praised in particular the priests of that time who were "representatives" of the people. What's important here is that *those* were the very priests whom Pius VI suspended for giving their support to the anti-Catholic Jacobins!

Madame Roland, a Revolutionist executed during the Reign of Terror, is said to have cried, "Oh, Liberty, what crimes are committed in your name!" For two centuries the crimes have continued to multiply. Liberty, let it be remembered, was, along with Fraternity and Equality, one of the catchwords of the Revolution. May we always remind this fallen world, as Pope Leo XIII stressed in *Humanum Genus,* that these three ideals can only be achieved in union with Christ. All else is a sham and a snare. †