THE ATHANASIAN

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Editor: Fr. Francis E. Fenton, STL

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GOD AND THE SUPREME COURT

—Fr. Francis E. Fenton

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ." So reads the portion here applicable of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. What it says seems plain enough: Congress shall not legislate any religion as **the** established religion of this country nor shall Congress deny to any religion its freedom to function.

That the First Amendment to the Constitution is not an expression of the mind of the Roman Catholic Church is well known to every properly instructed Roman Catholic for it puts on an equal footing and gives equal rights to all religions or Churches. It says, in effect, that all religions are equal as far as the civil law is concerned. But, if the Roman Catholic Church is the one true religion, than all others are necessarily false. Yet, according to that First Amendment all religions are on a par and have the same rights before the civil law. Religious error, then, is on the same level and rates as well as religious truth. How can this be? Error has no rights. Only truth has rights, and especially divine truth. Such being the case, if a Roman Catholic is to be logical and consistent, he must take issue with that statement of the First Amendment referring to religion because it is irreconcilable with the mind and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

The First Amendment is the basis for the frequently cited "principle of separation of Church and State." While this "principle," from a Catholic perspective, is hardly the ideal, yet, apart from this, the fact is that even the purpose intended by the First Amendment statement on religion has been all but eliminated by it. Clearly, it was the intent of the Amendment's framers merely to prohibit the establishment of any official State religion and to allow the free practice of all religion. Nothing is said in that First Amendment about separation of Church and State but only that no particular religion should be recognized by the federal government as the official one of the nation. Only in that very limited sense, then, can it be said that the First Amendment to the Constitution legislates a separation of Church and State. The so-called principle of such separation, as presently understood, is assuredly a far cry from what the authors of the Bill of Rights had in mind when they formulated the First Amendment to the Constitution.

And what — according to the Supreme Court, the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution — what is the meaning of the First Amendment? Why, it means that God and prayer and the Ten Commandments and the Bible are outlawed from the public institutions of our country! That, according to the highest court in the land, is what is **really** intended by the First Amendment. That, for all practical purposes, is the meaning of the "principle of separation of Church and State" in the minds of the distorters of the Constitution who sit on the Supreme Court of "Christian" America. That, we simple folks are supposed to believe, is what the authors of the Bill of Rights **really** meant by the First Amendment's statement: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .". "Separation of Church and State" does not, then, merely signify that ecclesiastical and civil bodies are not to intervene in the affairs of each other but that Almighty God is to be excluded from civil government and public institutions. The Supreme Being is declared "persona non grata" by the Supreme Court! The Supreme Judge of the world is outlawed by the almighty judges of the Supreme Court!

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The practical results of this have been disastrous, as, for example, in the public schools of our nation where even a simple prayer is forbidden; where evolution may be taught but not the biblical account of man's creation by God. Indeed, just about everything may be taught, and is taught, in the government schools except God. He's illegal. Scores of examples in other areas can readily be cited of the tragic, God-less condition of America at the present time. God is out; Man is in. Human rights, yes; divine rights, no. The atheistic philosophy of secular humanism is the "religion" of our day, and situation ethics the "morality" of our "enlightened" era. Many "Catholics" of the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church, incidentally, can and do go along with this "new morality." Any why not? Since, apparently, hell is out and everybody goes to Heaven, what have they got to lose?

The Roman Catholic Church has never countenanced the so-called principle of separation of Church and State for such a "principle" is counter to its teaching. Understanding it to mean that the Church and State must function as distinct entities, with neither interfering in the operations of the other, the Roman Catholic Church has, for reasons beyond the scope of this article, tolerated in this country that "principle" so understood. But, thanks primarily to the distorted interpretation of the Supreme Court, separation of Church and State now means separation of God and morality from government and civil affairs. The application of that baseless interpretation has wrought spiritual and moral havoc in this country, contributing mightily to its destruction from within.

So, God has fared very poorly in His confrontations with the Supreme Court. There will come a day of reckoning though when the members of that Court will have another and final confrontation with the Almighty. If on that fateful day they fare no better before the Infinite and Supreme Judge than He did before them, those very finite judges could be in deep trouble indeed — and eternally.

In the words of the Roman Catholic bishops of America a number of years ago (before the disaster of Vatican Council II), "God is an inescapable fact and one cannot make a safe plan of life in disregard of inescapable facts". And neither can nations. Whether in the affairs of individuals or nations, unless God is acknowledged and His moral law obeyed, spiritual and moral decay is certain to be the inevitable result — with potentially fatal consequences for both. As for nations, the USA is today a tragic case in point.

THE PRIEST AND POLITICS

The subject of the priest and politics is one whose discussion, often enough, is likely to generate more heat than light. It is another of those so-called controversial issues. But perhaps this particular subject would lose much of its controversial character if the disputants were to agree on the meaning of the term "politics". Webster's dictionary's first definition of the word is the science and art of civil government. If the term is understood exclusively in that sense, there is surely no ground for conflict in any discussion of the priest and politics. Sound civil government and the calibre of men and women in political office is surely a legitimate concern of the priest, as it should be of any honorable citizen of the country. Indeed, if and when the moral law of God is being violated on any level of government, who else than upon the priest is there a more pressing duty to speak out and condemn such a violation? The promotion and defense of the moral law in all walks of life, civil government included, is indeed, or should be, one of the primary responsibilities of the priest.

The term "politics", however, is commonly associated in the public mind with political parties and candidates, that is, with partisan politics. Certainly the priest should refrain from involvement in politics in that sense. He should never become publicly aligned with any political party or candidate nor himself be a candidate for or hold political office. A sorrowful example of this is pro-abortionist Father Robert Drinan in the U.S House of Representatives, who is a misfit both in the Congress and in the priesthood. A priest is ordained for the service of God and the Church. He is entirely out of his element in partisan politics and by so involving himself he is bound to do harm to the apostolate which is his vocation in life.

Quite worth mentioning too is a rather common misuse or misleading use of the terms "politics" and "political" in relation to Communism. Certain priests in this country have been periodically

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TEMPTATION: TEMPERING THE ARMOR OF VIRTUE

— R. Lance Lohr

> "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him". (James I, 12)

Simply put, temptation is anything that may lead us to commit sin. It is an enticement, an attraction to sin. The sources of temptation are three — the world, including the people and things around us; the flesh of our own evil inclinations; and the devil.

That much of the world has turned from God is obvious. And because of this men suffer greatly. And not just physically. Many Americans may not suffer physically, but quite clearly we can see the result of spiritual bankruptcy. It could easily be argued that in a nation witnessing widespread decadence it is extremely difficult to avoid temptation. Scandal and bad example abound. Pornography, indecent movies and fashions are commonplace. Temptations to sin against Catholic morals are seemingly everywhere. The world even maligns the Faith. False ecumenism, the temptation to accept divorce and re-marriage and even outright license as feigned rights are all rationalized by the men around us as solutions to their problems. Of course they only succeed in compounding their dilemma. And this provides the Catholic with endless temptations to compromise or reject the faith and morals of his Church.

Yet all temptations cannot be conveniently blamed on the world. Our fallen nature leaves us quite capable of leading ourselves to sin. For as St. Paul wrote, ". . . the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary to one another." (Gal. V, 17). This weakness of the flesh, caused by original sin, leads to the temptations that, if consented to, are the seven capital sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth or laziness. Again St. Paul writes: ". . . I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind." (Rom. VII, 23).

The third source of temptation is the devil. He is supposedly dead, just like God. Yet several recent films concerning the devil, his existence and activity, have been extremely popular. It seems sophisticated America sees the devil purely as a source of entertainment. The stark fact is, of course, that the devil is very real and very much alive, and his all-consuming desire is the eternal ruin of souls. While a caricature of him may provide entertainment for the crowd, his career is totally dedicated to another purpose — and a deadly purpose it is.

The Cure d'Ars, St. Jean Vianney, who was severely tempted and harrassed by the devil, warned his parishioners to beware if they have no temptations. He was convinced that if you were rarely tempted it was because you were probably an habitual sinner already — one that the devil had long ago conquered and so just periodically tempted to sin, confident that you were going to lose your soul anyway without much help from him. He went on to instruct that it was and is those who eagerly seek to do God's will who are tempted most. Thus, according to him the holiest of people must more frequently cope with temptation to sin.

St. Jean Vianney tells the story of a follower of St. Francis of Assisi who had the gift of being able to see and talk with his guardian angel. While his community was in prayer this fellow saw thousands of devils plotting to tempt those holy Franciscans to sin. Yet when he and his angel went to a town there was only one devil sitting at the town gate. Questioning his guardian the Franciscan asked why there were thousands of devils to tempt a few pious men, but only one for thousands of townspeople. The angel replied that sinful people do not have to be tempted very frequently, but those who are strenuously seeking to do God's will must be constantly tempted, the devil considering them the greater prize.

> "Alas, how we are to be pitied if we are not fiercely harried by the devil! According to all appearances, we are friends of the Devil: he lets us live in false peace, he lulls us to sleep under the pretense that we have said some good prayers, given some alms, that we have done less harm than others . . . There you see,

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> my dear brethren, the most terrifying temptation of all, which is not to be tempted. There you see the state of those whom the Devil is preserving for Hell. If I dared, I would tell you that he takes good care **not** to tempt or torment such people about their past lives, lest their eyes be opened to their sins."
>
> St. Jean Vianney

Christ is always our perfect model. And the New Testament teaches us so much of His love for us, especially shown by His submission to the very trials we must face. So it should not surprise us to read of His temptations. The reasonable question arises, why would the devil be so foolish as to tempt the Son of God? Most theologians, including St. Thomas, felt that the devil did not really believe that Christ was God. In that belief or faith in anything flows from good will, the devil is barren, long ago having abandoned any sense of good will, in particular toward his Creator. It would appear then that Satan saw Jesus as another holy man, albeit holier than any other. This being the case, leading Jesus to sin would be a great triumph, consistent with his hatred of God and man. But Christ had prepared himself by fasting and penance, another example to us. And in our temptations it is this God-Man in whose love and power we should seek recourse.

God does not order the devil and the devil's legions to tempt us. God only **allows** this because of the good that comes from temptation. And, as a loving father, He never abandons us to the temptation He permits. "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: (I Cor. X, 13). Thus we must seek God's grace to help us overcome. This acknowledgement of God's power and goodness is one of the good things that come from temptation. The Collect from the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost contains what should be our prayer for His aid:

> "Grant to Thy people, we pray, O Lord, to avoid the defilements of the devil: and with pure mind to follow Thee, the only God."

While as individuals good Catholics are inclined to seek God's graces and thwart temptation and avoid sin, such inclinations among groups are exceptional and they are frequently snared collectively by Satan. Consider the history of the last fifty years. Statism of various kinds has repeatedly not only reduced or destroyed the dignity of man, but has also attempted to belittle or destroy the recognition that man owes his God. To an appreciable degree Fascism and Nazism were guilty of this. And today Communism's atheistic materialism both subtly and overtly does the same to a much greater degree over much more of mankind. Judging from its fruits Communism must be diabolical — a fact of which recent Popes appear blissfully unaware as they attempt to deal with the Communists.

America has far from escaped this same diabolical mass-psychology. Legal and social attitudes toward abortion, contraception, divorce, homosexuality, etc. etc. all confirm Satan's collective influence on man. But just as individuals tempted can always turn to God for His divine help, nations can do the same. It is for this reason that we pray for the conversion of Russia after Mass. (We should also pray for the conversion of America).

For the faithful these trials and temptations serve another divine purpose. If resisted, temptation leads to an increase in grace that we merit for adherence to God's will. Father Edward G. Rosenberger draws an excellent analogy, stating that "no honors can be bestowed upon troops that have never clashed with the enemy." And it is quite true that spiritual combat strengthens the soul and makes us more deserving of an eternal reward.

There is no need to search for this combat. It is more likely that temptation will find us, and when we least expect it or when our spiritual armor is in disrepair. We should be fully aware of our weaknesses (if not, we should examine our consciences thoroughly) and take the advice and wisdom of the Council of Trent: "Satan is overcome not by indolence, sleep, wine, revelling or lust; but by prayer, labor, watching, fasting, continence and chastity". Prudence alone would dictate that we should avoid the near occasions of sin. And Jesus warned us in St. Matthew's gospel: "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation".

Lastly, we should not inordinately fear temptation. God permits it because He knows us and loves us. Resisting it is therefore our way of showing our love for Him. And Jesus assures us of the reward for this love:

> "He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Apocalypse III, 5)

THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

Humility means seeing ourselves at our true worth and then thinking, talking and acting accordingly. It means seeing ourselves as God sees us and not as we think we are or like to think we are. It is the opposite of the sin of pride, which consists in a disordered love or esteem of self resulting from some real or imagined superiority. A person is guilty of pride who forgets that God is the source of whatever gifts or talents he possesses, or who acts for himself or to gain the esteem and praise of others instead of acting for the honor and glory of God. How common a failing it is to talk and to conduct ourselves as if our gifts, our abilities were our very own, and to accept whatever praise and commendation we receive for them as being rightly due to us.

That person is proud who exaggerates his own good qualities while being blind to his defects and shortcomings. A proud person acts for his own selfish ends. Others must organize their lives so as to please him for he is the center of importance to whom everybody and everything else must conform.

According to Saint Benedict, a truly humble person is one who avoids singularity, knows how to be silent, observes moderation in laughter, and willingly accepts menial tasks. Other spiritual writers tell us that an humble person lacks obstinacy in his opinions (that is, stubbornness) and refrains from boasting and monopolizing conversations.

Pride is one of the seven capital sins. Pride caused the downfall of the angels who aspired to be other gods. Pride brought about original sin wherein our first parents sought to possess the knowledge of God Himself. Pride invades every sphere of human life, as in the realm of the mind when men seek to impose their ideas on others even though their particular ideas may have little to commend them, or are convinced that they are so enlightened as to need no guidance or direction from anyone else. Especially insidious, of course, with regard to the vice of pride is that those who are the most proud are, often enough, the least aware of it.

Now the great remedy against pride, in whatever form it may be — and few there are who cannot profit by using the remedy — is a strong realization that God is the first beginning and last end of all things, that He is the Author and Source of all that is good and noble and fine in the world, that to Him we owe everything we have and everything we are, and that, consequently, to Him alone belong all honor and glory. Of ourselves, and this is a fact which we willingly admit in theory but often fail to put into practice, of ourselves we are nothing, we can do nothing, we are worth nothing. In the natural order we cannot even continue to live from one moment to the next without the supporting hand of God, while in the supernatural realm we can't perform a single act which will help us to get to Heaven except through the actual grace of God. Christ spoke very plainly on the subject: "Without Me you can do nothing". All of our worth lies in the gifts that God has given us or, as Saint Paul puts it: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if it were thine own"?

So it is only in God, with God and through God that we are what we are, whatever be our skills, talents, abilities, virtues. To Him, then, not to us belong the praise and the honor and the glory. "It is God", says Saint Paul, "who works in you both to will and to accomplish".

An humble person is real; a proud person is artificial. An humble person is honest with himself and with others; a proud person is hypocritical and prone to deceive. An humble person readily faces up to truth; a proud person avoids doing so if the truth hurts.

Sacred Scripture tells us: "God resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble". If we would obtain the grace of God, we must strive to be humble. Humility is one sign of true greatness. Not all humble people are great but all truly great people are humble. If one would be truly great then, that is, great in the eyes of God, he must be humble for, as charity is the queen of all the virtues, humility is the foundation of all the virtues. As one spiritual writer has expressed it, "without humility there is no sound virtue in anyone; with humility all other virtues grow in depth and in perfection".

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accused over the years of being political because of their active participation in the fight against Communism. Now this is a grossly unfair accusation and a distorted application of the word "political". Communism is not a political party, much less a morally lawful form of government. Communism is amoral; it is satanic; it is militant atheism. To accuse a priest or any clergyman of being political because he is actively engaged in opposing the Communist conspiracy is indeed an unjust charge. On the contrary, any priest who knows the awful truth about Communism and who is not involved in the fight against it is, in this respect, simply not doing his job. Opposition to Communism is a moral duty incumbent upon all honorable men, priests included.

Politics, again, means primarily the science and art of civil government. The objective of good government, entirely aside from political party labels, should be the concern of every conscientious individual — and **morally** good government should be a matter of particular concern to a priest. But, if we would have morally good government, we must have morally good men and women in political office, the woeful absence of whom over so many years has made the word "politician" a term of disrepute. Obviously then, this too — the moral character and standards of our nation's political leadership — should be a legitimate concern of the priest. After all, the recognition and observance of the moral law of God — in Church and State, in private and in public — is one of the principal duties of the priest's state in life.

What, then, should be the relationship between the priest and politics? He should be involved in politics in the sense of being concerned about and working for morally good government. He should publicly refrain entirely from politics in the partisan sense of the word. So, that solves that controversy — or does it?

A Patriot's Prayer

O Almighty God, in an age and in a world where Thy sacred teachings and salutary precepts are so widely and flagrantly disparaged or ignored and where even Thy very existence is held up to ridicule or contemptuously denied, we proudly profess our belief in Thee and in Thy revealed truth; we beg Thy gracious pardon for the manifold offenses we have committed against Thy divine majesty; and we thank Thee for all of the spiritual and temporal blessings which Thou hast so mercifully deigned to bestow upon us.

And as we behold with sadness the "retreat from greatness" and the present abject state of our nation, so singularly favored by Thee, we humbly entreat Thy forgiveness for whatever be our measure of guilt for this through our past failures fully to live up to the grave responsibilities incumbent upon us as Thy children and as American citizens.

With every confidence that, if we be worthy, Thou wilt be with us in all our endeavors, we pledge again our allegiance to Thee and dedicate ourselves anew to the fight against the satanic evil of Communism, upon the outcome of which conflict may well depend the freedom or enslavement of our nation and the world for even centuries to come.

Give us, O Lord, leaders who are honorable, courageous, God-serving, humble men — men of wisdom, men of prayer.

May we strive to do Thy will in all things; by so doing, may we find acceptance in Thy sight; and may the words of Holy Scripture be our inspiration:

"Even to your death fight for truth, and the Lord your God will battle for you".

(Ecclesiasticus IV, 28)

pray the rosary daily!

So Where's the Twelve-Page Newsletter?

Getting out a 12-page newsletter seems to be more of an undertaking than I had anticipated. While I should long since have learned to take nothing for granted (except, of course, death and taxes), I was quite certain that this issue of *The Athanasian* would be a 12-page one. However, two articles I had expected to receive for inclusion never did arrive. Hence, another 8-page newsletter. Well, the next issue will surely (?) be 12 pages.

TCA BUMPER STICKER

In red and black lettering on a white background, it reads: "Traditional Catholics of America — Save the Traditional Mass". Also included is our TCA address. The cost of these bumper stickers is two for $1.00 (minimum order). The price covers postage, and payment must accompany order.

FAIR ENOUGH?

The annual subscription cost for eight issues of this newsletter has thus far been $7.00 for all countries except the USA, Canada and Mexico. To send eight 8-page issues overseas via air mail costs us $7.44 per year for postage alone (the paper and printing costs are additional). So, while I do not consider the newsletter as a profit-making venture, I do not think we should be losing money on it either — and that we obviously have been doing on our overseas subscriptions.

Henceforth, then, the cost of a one-year subscription to *The Athanasian* (eight issues) will be $10.00 for overseas subscribers. But why a $3.00 increase? Because it is our intention to publish a 12-page rather than an 8-page newsletter, and the postage cost of airmailing eight issues of a 12-page newsletter overseas is $9.92. Nor does that figure include the cost of paper and printing. Since every issue is not likely to be twelve pages, however, the $10.00 subscription price would seem to be a very fair one. For the USA, Mexico and Canada the cost of an annual subscription (eight issues) remains $6.00.

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— Fr. Francis E. Fenton, Editor
— Miss Ellen W. Soisson, Secretary

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TCA TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS SCHEDULE

CALIFORNIA

PETALUMA (San Francisco area)
SAINT MARY'S
Hermann Sons Hall
860 Western Ave. (at Webster St.)
(707) 823-3610 or (415) 924-2587
Mass at 9:00 a.m. (every Sunday)

WALNUT CREEK (Oakland area)
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Veteran Memorial Hall
1250 Locust Street
(415) 837-6499
Mass at 11:30 a.m. (every Sunday)

COLORADO

AURORA (Denver area)
OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHAPEL
2566 Sable Boulevard
(303) 321-3683 or 364-8040
Masses at 9 & 11 a.m. (every Sunday)
Weekday Masses at 8:00 a.m.

DURANGO
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Durango Savings and Loan
1101 E. Second Ave.
(303) 884-2878
Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Sept. 21, Oct. 19

PUEBLO
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHAPEL
1406 East 21st Street
(303) 544-0336
Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Sept. 14, Oct. 5

STRATTON
OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL
(303) 348-5454
Call for time:
Sept. 28, Oct. 26

FLORIDA

PORT RICHEY (Tampa area)
ST. JOSEPH'S
Gulf Highland Club House
900 Gulf Highland Drive
(813) 868-0166
Mass at 12:30 p.m. on 3rd and 5th
Sundays of month

LOUISIANA

OPELOUSAS (Lafayette area)
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
Route 1, Box 195
(318) 942-9053
Mass at 10:30 a.m. on 2nd and 4th
Sundays of month

MINNESOTA

ROCHESTER
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
5820 Viola Road, NE
(507) 282-5163 or 289-8522
Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Sept. 28, Oct. 26

MONTANA

GREAT FALLS
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHAPEL
2020 Second Avenue North
(406) 452-8826
Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Oct. 26

NEW YORK

BUFFALO
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Charter House
6643 Transit Road
(NY Thruway Exit 49—near Airport)
(716) 537-9533 or 692-5308
Mass at 10:00 a.m. on 1st and 3rd
Sundays of month

PENNSYLVANIA

ESSINGTON (Philadelphia area)
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Holiday Inn
45 Industrial Highway (one mile from airport)
(215) 328-1348
Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Sept. 7, Sept. 14, Oct. 12

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP
Hilton Inn
154 West 600 South
(801) 278-7501
Mass at 11:00 a.m.
Sept. 7, Oct. 19

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND
OUR LADY OF FATIMA
In search of new location for Mass.
Details of Mass will be noted in
next newsletter issue.