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PAPAL INFALLIBILITY AND OBEDIENCE

— Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Since Traditional Catholics of America (TCA) is thoroughly Roman Catholic, it follows that we believe and profess in its entirety the traditional teaching of the Church concerning the Papacy, including the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. Nor is there anything in our literature which would imply otherwise.

Concerning the proper attitude of traditional Catholics towards Church authority in general and the Pope in particular, two items appear to cause much of the prevailing confusion: papal infallibility and the obligation of obedience. As regards the first, many traditional Catholics, as I see it, tend to associate the concept of infallibility with that of impeccability, that is, faultlessness or sinlessness. Every true Pope as the Vicar of Christ has the power to speak infallibly and, if and when he does, as, for example, the declaration of the dogma of the Assumption in 1950, a Roman Catholic is bound to accept such a pronouncement wholeheartedly and unreservedly. However, infallible declarations are very rare and are restricted by most stringent conditions.

Those conditions, in brief, are three in number: (1) The Pope states (defines) a doctrine of faith or morals; (2) He speaks in his official capacity ("ex cathedra") as the supreme head of the Church, as the Vicar of Christ; (3) He has the intention of binding the universal Church. Apart from acts of canonization, so rare are infallible papal declarations that there have been but two in the past 136 years: the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 (Pope Pius IX) and that of the Assumption in 1950 (Pope Pius XII). (Whether or not Pope Leo XIII's declaration in 1896 on the invalidity of Anglican orders was an *infallible* pronouncement is perhaps a debatable question although there is no question, of course, about the invalidity of those orders).

Impeccability, on the other hand, has no connection with infallibility. Papal infallibility does not imply or include papal impeccability. In other words, a pontiff's moral deficiencies, erroneous judgments, political observations, etc. have nothing to do with infallibility, and it is here, I think, where some traditional Catholics confuse these two concepts. They seem to have the false notion that the Pope can say or do no wrong because he is the Pope. They appear to consider almost his every observation or pronouncement as infallible. Such is the impression I have gotten. If it be correct, then these Catholics have a concept of infallibility which is at odds with the teaching of the Church. Again, the Pope has the power of infallibility and, in rare instances in which he exercises that power, he is incapable of error. In other matters, except when his teaching is in conformity with tradition or with the teachings of previous Popes, he can be wrong because he is not impeccable or faultless or sinless.

A second cause of considerable confusion among many traditional Catholics involves the obligation of obedience to Church authority, an obligation incumbent upon all who are members of the Roman Catholic Church. But does this obligation allow no exceptions? Is it so all-inclusive as to be, in effect, a blind obedience? Must a Catholic obey Church authority in all circumstances regardless of the nature of what he may be commanded? Of course not. The Church has never taught this. Such teaching would be unjust and irrational. While the point seems to be so obvious as to be unnecessary to mention it, yet it has to be stated today because "the innovators and destroyers within the Church are using the obedience of the faithful as a weapon to destroy the Church."

What, then, is the obligation of Roman Catholics in this matter? Simply put, Church authority must be obeyed when what that authority orders or commands is in harmony with tradition and, of course, with the law of God. If it is in conflict with tradition, then there is no obligation to obey. Such is our surest guide

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through the turmoil and chaos that beset our beloved Church in this our day. "...hold fast to the traditions which you have received." (II Thess. 2, 15)

How, then, can anyone seriously say or imply that an organization such as the TCA is schismatic or bordering on schism? How, pray tell, is this possible since we fully subscribe to the doctrine of the Church on the Papacy, and all we are trying to do is to preserve the True Mass, the traditional Sacraments, orthodox cathechetics, in a word, the entirety of our God-given Faith? That it is even seriously suggested that total fidelity to tradition may be bordering on schism is but one more proof, if such proof were needed, that we are living in a very crazy world indeed!

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For Traditional Roman Catholics

SOME PRACTICAL POINTS

(1) - Apart from danger of death only a priest may ordinarily and lawfully administer the Sacrament of Baptism. Even though, then, it may be some time before an infant can be baptized because of the inavailability of a traditional priest, it is a grave violation of Church law for parents or others to administer Baptism except when danger of death is present. Because of the necessity of this sacrament for salvation, all Roman Catholics, of course, should know how to administer it should they ever have occasion to do so.

(2) - Only good traditional Roman Catholics may be sponsors at Baptism. It is customary to have two sponsors but one is sufficient.

(3) - It is not certain that the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is binding under pain of mortal sin. However, because of the importance of this sacrament - and especially in these times - a person (or, in the case of a child, the parents) would be guilty of some sin of negligence who would forego receiving Confirmation when the occasion for doing so was available. No traditional Roman Catholic, of course, would receive this sacrament from a Conciliar Church bishop or priest.

(4) - "To attend Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation" is one of the precepts of the Church, a precept whose fulfillment binds under pain of mortal sin unless a very good reason excuses one from attendance. Obviously, this duty applies only to the True Mass since a person could hardly have an obligation to attend a false form of worship such as the Novus Ordo. Indeed, attendance at false forms of worship is forbidden by the First Commandment of God and so a Catholic is bound *not* to attend the Novus Ordo service. In terms of distance, since the traditional Mass is not readily accessible to all, how

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THE MORALITY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

— John Kenneth Weiskittel

"Whoever takes the life of any human being shall be put to death." (Leviticus 24:17) Thus the Lord instructed Moses; thus from the first pages of Sacred Scripture capital punishment is shown to be the divinely mandated remedy for grave crimes. St. Paul warned Christians that the state has the God-given authority to put evildoers to death. (Romans 13:1-5)

The Church has always defended the lawfulness of the death penalty and, further, it has argued that the state has an obligation to use executions in order to protect its citizens and to see that justice is attained. In his immortal "theology of history", *The City of God,* St. Augustine wrote that servants of God "represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no means violated the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' " (*De Civitate Dei;* Book I: Chapter 21) The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, has made the analogy that a criminal put to death is removed from society by the same manner in which a hopelessly diseased limb is amputated to preserve health in the remaining body. (Summa Theologica; second part of the second section: question 64, article 2.)

Among the heresies that the Church battled during the Middle Ages was one formed in the twelfth century by the French merchant, Peter Waldo. The group repudiated papal authority, denounced Church property, denied the sacraments except for Baptism and Communion, rejected purgatory, and in several other beliefs served as a forerunner of Luther and other religious revolutionaries some four hundred years later. The Conciliar "Catholic" theologian, John A. Hardon, S.J., has written in his *Modern Catholic Dictionary:* "Among the errors of the Waldenses condemned by the Church is the proposition that denied the lawfulness of capital punishment." (1)

Why, some readers may be asking, an article on the morality of capital punishment? If the teaching of the Church is so clear, so unmistakably in favor of it, why belabor the point? And these are fair questions. Certainly, at this point in our nation's history there is, with the ever escalating number of violent crimes committed, abundant need for an increase in the use of this weapon in our battle against such felonies. How, one wonders, could anyone sincerely concerned with the erosion in the quality of life in America — especially, in the safety of our people — believe otherwise? Unthinkable!

And yet, there is an anti-capital punishment lobby in this country whose work for the last two decades has not only stifled real criminal justice, but has acted as a catalyst of more violence, since the criminal sees society as losing the will to defend itself. (We can only wonder how much longer God will choose to tolerate America's policy of banning executions of even the most monstrous brutes while legalizing the wholesale slaughter of millions of unborn innocents before He pours forth His wrath upon us. Our guess is, not much longer!) It should come as no surprise to informed readers that much of the drive behind this lobby comes from longtime subversive groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as from the forces of Secular Humanism. What may come as a surprise to some though is the role that the Conciliar "Catholics" have had in the movement. Within the past two years, Conciliar bishops have sought more "humane" means of punishment.

It is next to incredible that professedly Catholic bishops would be among those wandering lost in the immoral maze called America, 1982. But such is the case. What could be more obvious proof of their misplaced ethical priorities than the fact that they have chosen to equate the "rights" of murderers, rapists, terrorists and the like with the God-given right-to-life of innocent unborn children?!? To argue, as they seem to do, that protecting a convicted killer is as much a pro-life issue as opposing abortion or "mercy-killing" can only be described as theological surrealism.

The bishops have not, to our knowledge, gone as far as the Waldenses — and modern heretics who have called the death penalty "legalized murder" — but have, while admitting the moral validity of the practice, sought to show that it somehow did not fit in with the humanistic aspirations of Conciliar "Catholicism". Among the ideas fostered by these aspirations appear to be a greater emphasis placed upon "this world"; a theological view tainted by behaviorism to the extent that the concept of free will is minimized, replaced with the notion that man is basically a creature whose behavior is determined by his surroundings — and thus the criminal is merely a tragic "victim" of natural forces which have conspired against him; the concept that people are "basically good" and that, therefore, murderers may repent and reform; and that, while capital punishment is not *evil,* it is still somehow *wrong* and should be replaced by long prison terms. We wonder how many of those bishops still hold an anti-execution mentality in light of the unspeakable violence committed against a nun and, later, a priest last year.

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When we consider the extent to which crime has a stranglehold upon America we can see how the opponents of executions have crippled our ability to resist. In New York City, for example, where an average of only two criminals for each eighty-nine convicted ever sees the inside of a jail cell, people are murdered at the rate of five every day. One person is slain each day in Miami, Florida, a city much, much smaller that New York. Similar figures have been the rule in major U.S. cities. The F.B.I. reports that somewhere in our nation a murder is committed every twenty-four minutes; a forcible rape every seven minutes; an aggravated assault every fifty-one seconds; and that murder is the leading cause of death among black males in the twenty-four to thirty-four age group. (2)

Although it is not within the scope of this article to present page after page of statistical data to demonstrate the value of the death penalty as a deterrent to crime, we believe that briefly examining some of the recent studies will serve to help illuminate the subject. Let us preface this with a statement from journalist Robert W. Lee pertaining to how important deterrence is as a determining factor in sentencing:

> And what about deterrence? It is often argued that the death penalty does not deter potential murderers and other heinous criminals, as if deterrence were the main issue. It is not. It would be both immoral and unjust to punish one man merely as an example to others. The basic consideration should be: Is the punishment *just?* If not, then it should not be administered regardless of what its deterrent impact might be. If so, then it should be. If a punishment administered to one man deters another from committing a crime, all well and good - but such a result is merely a bonus of justice properly applied. (3)

Mr. Lee's point is well taken: It has always been a hallmark of totalitarian regimes to execute a person to "serve as an example", in an effort to cast fear into the hearts of those remaining. So, in taking a look at this aspect we would do well to recall that justice - not deterrence - is the primary goal.

Despite claims (usually from "Liberals" of one sort or another) to the contrary, experience has shown time and again the real deterrent value of punishment, except in extreme cases where the antagonist is either incorrigible or criminally insane. Travellers to Islamic countries, where a thief has a hand chopped off if caught stealing, have noted that, while seeing a person missing one hand is not uncommon, it is extremely rare to see someone missing *both hands.* While we, as Christians, are likely to deplore the barbarity of such a punishment, we, nonetheless, concede its effectiveness.

As for studies of justice in Western countries, there have been several to help demonstrate executions as deterrents. Professors James Q. Wilson (Harvard), Paul Ehrlich (University of Chicago), and Gordon Tullock (Virginia Polytechnic Institute), all respected names in academic circles, working independent of one another, all came up with similar findings, namely, that "the most fundamental contributing cause to rising crime is quite simply declining punishment." (4) Boston Herald-American reporter Warren T. Brookes discussed these analyses in his 1976 article entitled "The Myth that Poverty Causes Crime." Mr. Brookes quotes Professor Tullock's conclusion: "There is no longer any question. Economists in the U.S., Canada, and England have shown conclusively that punishment does cut down on crime." (5) And, writing about Professor Ehrlich's notable study, Mr. Brookes informs us: "He found that 'society is exacting a smaller and smaller price for crime.' The conviction rate for burglary (in 1975 - JKW) is less than half of what it was in 1960, for auto theft it has fallen by two-thirds, and for murder it has declined by 30 per cent." (6) A more recent study, this one dealing exclusively with the deterrent value of capital punishment, was conducted by David Phillips, a sociologist at the University of California at San Diego. The Phillips Report appeared in 1980, in the *American Journal of Sociology,* and was based on a comprehensive examination of weekly homicide statistics in London for the years 1858 to 1921. From these figures, Professor Phillips was able to assert: "On the average, homicides decrease by 35.7 percent immediately following a publicized execution." (7) These studies, taken as a whole, ought to indicate that punishment acts to check crime while, on the other hand, punishment withheld can serve as a virtual "license to kill." In short, the resolve - or lack of resolve - a society has in utilizing its options in this sphere will greatly determine whether or not the maxim "crime doesn't pay" holds true. Sadly, in our land in recent years, many criminals have been finding out that crime *does* pay. We must reverse this trend or perish as a free nation.

It so happens that the Conciliar hierarchy has joined other foes of state executions in arguing that death is not necessary for any criminal, that as long as they are kept behind bars society is safe, and that perhaps they will be rehabilitated. It is true that as a deterrent or corrective measure life imprisonment can be satisfactory; but, as has been emphasized above, *justice*, not deterrence or correction, is the fundamental condition to be answered. Can the need for justice be truly satisfied in a case of cold-blooded murder, say, by *corporal* punishment such as proposed above? We think not. If murder was solely a crime against society, then it would be possible to answer in the affirmative. But it is not. It is a crime with a three-fold nature: not only is it a grave offense against society for depriving it of one of its members but it is also a sin against God so terrible as to cry out to Heaven for vengeance (Genesis 4:10), and also an in-

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justice to the victim, who has a God-given right to life. (8) Oddly enough, the Conciliar "Catholic" bishops do not seem to have the support of all their theologians regarding this point. Father Hardon, in the work cited above, says this on the need for the death sentence: "In principle...it is morally licit because *in the most serious crimes the claims of retribution and deterrence are so demanding that the corrective value of punishment must, if necessary, be sacrificed.*" (9; emphasis added.)

Along these lines, anti-execution forces like to mention the martyrdom of that glorious virgin, St. Maria Goretti, as an example of how even murderers can be reformed. When, upon being attacked, our saint zealously preserved her honor, she was stabbed and mortally wounded. On her deathbed, the twelve-year-old made the most earnest petitions to God that her assailant would repent his abominable deed. The boy, in his late teens, did, to the amazement of many, agonize over his sin and renounce his former ways. Still more amazing, he fled the world to take up the habit of a religious and lived the rest of his life a totally changed man. Surely, this story is most inspiring, and it points to the great power of prayer, but how valid is it as an argument against capital punishment?

To respond to this, let us take a look at an incident in the life of another twentieth century saint, the Little Flower, St. Therese of Lisieux, and compare and contrast it with the event reported above. While still a young child, St. Therese heard news that a man soon scheduled to be beheaded at the guillotine had rejected every attempt that was made encouraging him to repent. Out of her deep love of souls, our great saint prayed that in his final moments this man would make some visible sign of his reconciliation with God. On the day of the execution the condemned man showed absolutely no sign of repentence when authorities brought a priest to his cell. All the way to the site of the execution, the prisoner ridiculed the attempts being made on his behalf. It was only a moment before the great blade was to fall, when asked if he had any last request, that the accused astonished all present by calling for the priest. Beseeching the mercy of his Maker, the man reverently kissed the crucifix held by the priest.

We can readily see striking similarities in both accounts. In both, a man's life is forever changed through the prayer of a saint. Each man, by repenting, went from being a creature of violence to being a child of God. We are reminded that prayer can be a tremendous power for good, and that people *can* change for the better, be they only receptive to God's Holy Spirit.

But it is the contrasts that are of importance in the context of this article. In the first case, St. Maria Goretti forgave her assailant and sought his reform; in the second, St. Therese was *not* praying that the condemned man - a total stranger to her - be spared in this life but only in the world to come. It was St. Maria Goretti's decision to appeal that her attacker's life be spared; it was not a decision that St. Therese had the authority to make regarding another person's aggressor. The difference between the two is alluded to by Robert W. Lee in his very perceptive article, "Crime and Justice", in the September, 1981 issue of *American Opinion.* Observes Mr. Lee:

> And what about the tempering of justice with mercy? Shouldn't Christians forgive those who trespass against them? In criminal cases, the two most responsible sources to extend mercy and forgiveness are God and the victim. This places murder in a unique category because the victim is no longer available to extend mercy and forgiveness. (The case of St. Maria Goretti is an extraordinary exception to this rule. - JKW) And what right does the state or any other earthly party have to intervene and offer mercy on behalf of a murder victim? If someone robs me of, say, twenty dollars, perhaps I will forgive him and forget it. But if someone were to rob *you* of twenty dollars, what right would I have to step in and forgive the thief on your behalf, perhaps against your wishes?
>
> Since there is no way in this life for a murderer to be reconciled to his victim, and secure the victim's forgiveness (with St. Maria's and similar cases excepted. - JKW), civil authority has no responsible alternative to applying *justice* as the standard of punishment. (10)

Along these lines, Mr. Lee has remarked, "to whom can a murderer make proper restitution, and with what but his own life?" (11)

This brings us to the question of individual responsibility. If a murderer is to make restitution with his own life, is it not because he *freely* chose to break God's law? Of course, in the vast majority of homicides the assailant is responsible for his acts. What could be more obvious? For the past fifteen years, to hear the criminal courts tell us, it has been anything *but* obvious. More and more the defense attorneys are using insanity pleas to get their clients off the hook. As Secular Humanism spreads its evil teachings throughout the land the indefensible position is heard more often that for someone to kill another means that the killer *must* be insane, that no rational person would take another's life. Such a view is argued by the German criminologist and United Nations advisor, Wolf Middendorff, who writes: "Guilt is never absolute; therefore absolute punishment, i.e. the death penalty, is never justified." (12)

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The absurdity of holding such a view has been pointed out by H.B. Acton, professor of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh:

> There is something incongrous about a free society's regarding all breakers of the law as sick men and treating them as patients. In free societies, the laws are regarded as expressing the will of the citizens; everyone has some share in making them. Citizens are regarded as responsible individuals who can choose to break the laws or obey them. Treating all those who break the law as sick, providing them with doctors rather than judges, is putting them on a quite different footing from that of their non-law-breaking fellow citizens. They come in this way to have only a tenuous claim to citizenship; yet there are many more mentally ill people who do not break the law, and many who have broken the law but have not been caught. If so, the members of the community unfit for citizenship would be very high, and the case for their participation in government is weakened. To reject the idea that free and responsible men may be rightly convicted and sentenced in courts of law is to attack the liberal-democratic assumption that ordinary men can make a contribution to the government of their country. (13)

And if what Professor Acton writes is true regarding ordinary citizens, then consider what the conservative Catholic writer James F. Fitzpatrick notes about those who have made extraordinary contributions to civilization:

> Think of what it means if the criminal act, by definition, becomes an insane act. Think of what it means if the criminal is not to be blamed for his actions. Great heroes of history - Moses, John the Baptist, Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Arbaham Lincoln, Congressional Medal of Honor winners, Jonas Salk, the defenders of the Alamo, the Dutch boy who held his finger in the hole in the dike - would really be no more worthy of praise or blame than Nero, Herod, Caligula, John Wilkes Booth, Pontius Pilate, Jack the Ripper, Charles Manson, Adolph HItler, Al Capone, Sirhan Sirhan, Rapunzel's witch. The human notions of courage, loyalty, perseverance, become "hang-ups" or "lack of hang-ups" which can be explained away on a psychiatrist's couch." (14)

Another way in which the "Liberal"-Humanist anti-execution lobby attempts to shift the blame is to say that the criminal is a "victim", that somehow "society" is to be villified. When President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the secular media - and some "Liberal" Catholic publications - spouted nonsense about his being killed by the "climate of fear" that was supposedly gripping America; somehow, we were told, we were *all* guilty for his slaying. The eminent linguist, Mario Pei, has noted that the concept "We are all guilty" has been a successful Communist ploy for changing our attitudes in the U.S. from a belief in individual responsibility to a collective - or shared - guilt. The longtime Congressman from Ohio, John Ashbrook, acknowledged this to be a factor in the skyrocketing crime rate when, in 1975, he wrote for *"Human Events":*

> In my opinion one of the causes for the growing crime rate has been the decline of one of the basic tenets that this country was founded on - individual responsibility. Our forefathers believed that a person was responsible for his or her own actions. If a person did wrong, that person should pay the price.
>
> In recent years sociologists and other social scientists have held that individuals are not responsible for their actions. Instead, individuals are supposedly products of their environment, the society or various other forces. The result has been the decline of individual responsibility and at the same time a rise in crime.
>
> Attempts to ignore facts of life have not negated those facts. They have not gone away. Human beings are responsible for their actions. A return to this basic point of view will help in deterring and punishing criminals. (15)

We can think of no better example to prove Representative Ashbrook's contention than to refer to a *Chicago Tribune* article which quotes a nineteen-year-old convicted killer telling reporters: "This man (the victim killed in a robbery by the young thug) ain't coming back, even if they put me away for 300 years. I mean, why should a person be really punished for, you know, 'cause a human got killed?" (16; Note the language; the man has substituted the impersonal " 'cause a human got killed" for an acknowledgement of personal guilt, such as "because *I* killed a person.")

This attempt by criminals to somehow dismiss their offenses and appeal to authorities to mitigate their punishments is not altogether new, however. The contrast between those who admit their guilt and those who seek someone else to blame is best seen at Calvary when, after one crucified thief mocked our Lord Jesus Christ, the other, the good thief, St. Dismas, rebuked him, saying: "Dost not even thou fear God, seeing that we are under the same sentence? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what our deeds deserved; but this man has done nothing wrong." (St. Luke 23:40-42) The pious Jesuit Jeremias Drexelius wrote, in his great seventeenth

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century devotional work, *Heliotropium: Conforming the Human Will to the Divine,* the following parable that ties in with what we have been saying:

> Once upon a time some of the dregs of society, and a large gang of thieves, night-prowlers and burglers, presented a petition to the judges, praying them to do away with gibbets, so that some regard might be shown to the eyes and noses of passers-by. The judges replied that, if they desired the practice of hanging to be done away with, they must themselves first of all put a stop to the habit of stealing, and that they, for their part, would not hesitate to remove crosses and gibbets if the petitioners would first put an end to felonies. Upon hearing this, one of the thieves, more daring than the rest, replied: "Venerable sirs, we are not the originators of felonies. That, therefore, which we did not introduce we cannot do away with." To which the judges answered: "Neither did we invent gibbets, good sirs, and therefore we will not abolish them." (17; Were only *our* judges so wise!)

One last point is in order: the Conciliar bishops ape the Humanists in their fear that an innocent person may be executed by mistake. While it is obvious that the danger exists, it should only spur us to be as certain as is humanly possible that the accused is guilty. It is understandable that Humanists, with no hope of a life after death, would be overly concerned about this, but for those who *do* believe in a hereafter, the fear should not be so great, as God will surely compensate in Heaven any wrongs committed against us on earth. St. Thomas has written that a guilty party, making a conversion before he is slain, thereby gives himself the chance to restore his human dignity, which he lost in committing an inhuman act. (18) For all possible reasons it is essential that we reaffirm the morality of the death penalty and use it for the preservation of an orderly society.

Footnotes

1. John A. Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary,* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), page 81.

2. Robert W. Lee, "Crime and Justice", *American Opinion,* September, 1981, page 26.

3. Ibid., page 75.

4. David L. Bender and Gary E. McCuen, editors, *Crime and Criminals,* (Minneapolis: Greenhaven, 1977), page 13.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Lee, op.cit., pages 75-76

8. Charles E. Sheedy, C.S.C., S.T.D., *The Christian Virtues,* (Notre Dame, IN: University of N.D., 1959), page 211.

9. Hardon, op.cit., page 81

10. Lee, op.cit., page 76

11. Ibid., page 73

12. *Punishment: For and Against,* (New York: Hart, 1971) page 13.

13. Ibid., pages 53-54

14. James K. Fitzpatrick, *How to Survive in Your Liberal School* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1975) pages 47-48

15. Bender and McCuen, op.cit., page 15

16. Ibid., page 21

17. Jeremias Drexelius, S.J., (edited by Ferdinand E. Bogner) *Heliotropium* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1912) page 214.

18. Donald Attwater, *A Catholic Dictionary* (New York: MacMillan, 1942) page 436

THE MASS

Amid all the features of greatness and grandeur that Almighty God has bestowed upon His Church, there is nothing more glorious, nothing more sublime, nothing more awesome than the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the supreme act of man's worship of God, a spiritual treasure of inestimable worth, a supernatural drama of unsurpassed beauty. It is the heart and center of our divine Faith, the prayer par excellence of the Roman Catholic Church, the focal point around which the entire life of Christ's Mystical Body revolves, "the fountainhead of all the blessings of redemption."

ON ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT

"The coming of the world state is longed for, and confidently expected, by all the worst and most distorted elements. This state, based on the principles of absolute equality of men and a community of possessions, would banish all national loyalties. In it no acknowledgment would be made of the authority of a father over his children, or of God over human society. If these ideas are put into practice, there will inevitably follow a reign of unheard-of-terror."

Pope Benedict XV (July 25, 1920)

The following article originally appeared in the March 1, 1980 issue of this newsletter. Since it may well be that some of our newer subscribers do not understand the significance of the name of our newsletter, The Athanasian, it seems worthwhile to reprint this good article for their benefit.

ATHANASIUS: SAINT FOR OUR TIMES

— R. Lance Lohr

Saint Athanasius, the patron of this newsletter, is one of a number of saints of the Church who suffered trials that have become all too common over the past fifteen years or so to traditional Catholics around the world, bishops, priests and lay people. A Doctor of the Church, St. Athanasius bears the glorious title: "Champion of Orthodoxy." The famous convert to the Church, John Henry Cardinal Newman, describes him as a "principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world."

For most Catholics of the last two generations "orthodoxy" has been a difficult term to understand. Most of us have grown up associating it with the various Orthodox Churches, those Eastern sects that have a valid Mass and Sacraments but are nonetheless schismatic. Well, being schismatic makes one far from orthodox.

In searching for an appropriate definition for "orthodoxy", which is essential to understanding St. Athanasius, the most appropriate one was penned by a non-Catholic. It was written by an independent-thinking Protestant who appears to have differed from most of his fellow heretics by being always optimistic about man, his nature and his future. A great contemporary scholar, the late E. Merrill Root wrote:

> "...orthodoxy simply means straight thought; it means that one does not conform, but confirms...the laws and rules set in Nature by God, the absolutes and eternals or reality."

Truer words could not apply to St. Athanasius, the confirmation of straight thought being his life's work and the wellspring of his sanctity.

Tradition tells that the young boy, Athanasius, was one day playing near the sea with some chums. Unknown to them they were being observed by Archbishop Alexander of their native town. The boys were playing "church" and Athanasius, in the role of a priest, was "baptizing" them in turn. The Archbishop upon seeing this was not at all scandalized. He sent for them and, in questioning Athanasius, he was amazed at the boy's faith and intellect. From that time on Alexander supervised his education and eventually made the young man Athanasius his personal secretary.

Athanasius was born at the end of the third century in the greatest center of Graeco-Roman scholarship of that age, Alexandria in Egypt. This, the most cosmopolitan city in the Roman Empire, was the center of "philosophizing Christianity." He thrived in this atmosphere and, after what was most likely a thorough classical education, began preparation for the priesthood.

One should not be misled into thinking that Athanasius was just an intellectual. While serving as Archbishop Alexander's secretary he came to know the holy hermit of the Egyptian desert, St. Anthony. It was probably under Anthony's influence that Athanasius became an ascetic, which led him to seek refuge among the desert monks during several exiles for the Faith.

Athanasius must have very early become devoted to the study of the central mystery of the Faith - the Incarnation. While still a deacon he wrote "Adversum Gentes Duo Libri", works of Faith and intellect defending belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. But not all clerics under Alexander had this same devotion. About the year 323 a priest named Arius began teaching that Jesus was not eternal but created in time by the Father. He was condemned by the Bishop of Alexandria and later by a Council of Egyptian bishops. Athanasius composed the official letter announcing Arius' condemnation. Arius was not so easily subdued, however, and gained the support of the Bishop of Nicomedia. He also appealed to various dissident religious and political factions in and outside Egypt.

The student of this heresy should fully realize that the complex theological debate associated with Arianism was really quite secondary. This pervasive heresy was not nurtured or spread by religious argument at all.

> ...the prestige of Arianism never lay in its ideas. From whatever school it may be logically derived, the sect, as a sect, was cradled and nurtured in intrigue. Save in some few instances..., its prophets relied more on crucial influence than upon piety, or Scriptural knowledge, or dialectics.
>
> (Catholic Encyclopedia)

Even though the Council of Nicaea, at which Athanasius was present, reaffirmed Arius' condemna-

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tion and produced that beautiful profession of Faith, the Nicene Creed, politics eventually and for quite some time prevailed.

When Alexander died he named the young Athanasius as his successor to the See of Alexandria. Meanwhile, in 330, Arius' ally, Bishop Eusebius, appealed to the Roman Emperor to pressure Athanasius to reinstate Arius. Of course, the new bishop refused.

Intrigue followed intrigue as the Arians spread calumny after calumny. Athanasius was accused of stealing food for widows and orphans, destroying a chalice, murder, and even fostering treason against the emperor. Butler reports in his classic "The Lives of the Saints" that Athanasius was banished five times and spent seventeen years in exile, once in faraway Gaul. During these years Alexandria was controlled by the Arians, and the faithful loyal to their exiled bishop suffered much as their city became the scene of sacrilege and violence. The usurpers occupied the churches and the positions of authority. Instead of Athanasius' brother bishops rallying to the Faith they fell to the political pressure of Arianism. Even Pope Liberius himself turned on Athanasius and collaborated with the heretics. Remember, we are writing of the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ!

Of course this is similar to our own time when the traditional theological arguments are almost completely ignored and a contrived charge of disobedience is being used to deny official hearing of our position. Politics prevails and the Faith suffers.

What Athanasius witnessed has repeated itself time and again in the history of the Church. But our century, and in particular the post-Vatican II era, has no historical peer. Pope Pius X saw this "intrigue" as a conspiracy of theologians (heretics) who refused to submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote in Pascendi, his work on Modernism:

> Their own partisans shower the Modernists with inordinate, never-ending eulogies and they greet their books, which teem with innovations from beginning to end, with loud applause; the more boldly one knocks down anything old and rejects tradition and ecclesiastic doctrine, the more learned he is considered to be; and when one of them is finally condemned by the Church, he is not only, to the horror of all good Catholics, loudly and publicly praised by a whole horde of admirers but also practically venerated as a martyr of the truth.

We have not seen solely legitimate theological dispute over the past decade but, increasingly, the actual popularization of heresy - with the Vatican, for some twenty years now, being an actual collaborator in the destruction of the Church.

In 340 Athanasius issued a circular letter to all his fellow bishops. Distraught by the advance of Arianism and the condition of the Church he wrote:

> What we have suffered is terrible and quite intolerable;...the whole Church is suffering injustice, the priesthood has been insolently abused - and what is worse - the God-fearing persecuted by the godless...Today the whole Church is seen dismembered...Let yourselves be scandalized, I implore you, not as if we here but as if all of you had suffered injustice. Each of you should offer his aid as if he himself were the victim of it. Otherwise the order and Faith of the Church may shortly go to ruin. For both are threatened if God does not quickly repair the crimes through your agencies and expiate the injury inflicted on the Church.

Athanasius' trials, unlike many saints, came to an end before his death. And it was not the bishops or the Pope who restored him to his See. Fearing an insurrection of the faithful in Egypt who were tired of the abuse suffered by themselves and their bishop, the Roman Emperor revoked the edict banishing Athanasius. He lived in peace for seven years before his death in 373. With his return the influence of Arianism slowly declined.

While this saint's life ended in triumph and peace, we Catholics have yet to experience such sweetness. Our condition is more similar to the lament of St. Jerome on the Church of Athanasius' time: "The whole world groaned and marvelled to find itself Arian." It appears that we also will continue to groan for the Faith for some time. Some of us will not be as fortunate as St. Athanasius, to taste the victory of our struggle before our death. But our quest to revive the failing Church of Jesus Christ will, by the grace of God, continue nonetheless. It is our prayer that *The Athanasian,* through its patron, the "Champion of Orthodoxy," contribute its part to the preservation of Catholic orthodoxy and, thereby, to the greater glory of God and salvation of souls.

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pray the rosary daily

KNOW YOUR FAITH

— Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Traditional Roman Catholics today are, on the whole, better informed on the teachings of the Church than were the generality of Roman Catholics, say, some 30 or 40 years ago. This, I submit, is more or less self-evident to those traditionalists presently old enough to make such a comparison. But, granting the truth of this, can we further say that the *average* traditional Catholic of our day is a fairly well-informed person on matters pertaining to Faith? I am inclined to think that we can.

Whatever be the extent of our comprehension of the Faith though, the fact is that we all have the obligation to know our religion as well as we can because (1) it is God-given; (2) we cannot intelligently live a way of life or be dedicated to a cause which we do not adequately know and properly appreciate; and (3) we cannot rectify the erroneous notions others may have about the Faith or effectively refute attacks upon it if we ourselves are not well informed on the subject. For such reasons then, it is a duty incumbent upon every traditional Roman Catholic to know his religion, a duty particularly urgent today because of the widespread confusion regarding Catholic doctrinal and moral teachings occasioned at least in large part by the false teachers of the Conciliar Church. Would that some of our fellow traditional Catholics were anywhere near as knowledgeable on matters pertaining to their divine Faith as they are on matters mundane! Such individuals are well versed on subjects which they are under no obligation to know at all while they remain relatively illiterate on the one subject above all others which it is their duty to study and to comprehend to the best of their ability, namely, their Roman Catholic Faith. A distortion of priorities indeed!

Converts to the Roman Catholic Church down through the centuries are numbered in the tens of millions, among them some of the greatest minds and keenest intellects of their time (G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, John Cardinal Newman, Ronald Knox, Robert Hugh Benson, Orestes Brownson and so many more). It was the famous author Robert Hugh Benson, the convert son of an Anglican archbishop, who wrote: "The Church promises a great deal, but my experience is that she gives ten times more. The Catholic Church is supremely what she promises to be. She is the priceless pearl for which the greatest sacrifice is not too great." To be sure, whether for lack of sufficient prayer or study or instruction or because they became Catholics for the wrong reasons, there has always been a percentage of converts who have turned out to be poor or mediocre Catholics, some of them sooner or later even abandoning the Faith. But, while statistics on this would be hard or impossible to come by, yet it is safe to state that the vast majority of converts over the years have proved to be commendable Roman Catholics, many of them being among the most active and dedicated in the ranks of traditional Catholicism today. The reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that such people have an appreciation of the Faith which has often been found lacking in those who have been Catholics from birth. A number of so-called cradle Catholics, who have all along simply taken the Faith for granted, have only in recent years - due to the turmoil and chaos in the Church - come to a realization of the treasure which is theirs. On the other hand, so many (multitudes) of those who are today a part of the Conciliar Church are people who never had an adequate grasp of their religion in the first place and so have gradually become non-Catholics without even realizing it. Perhaps before God invincible ignorance may excuse a number of them. It is hard to imagine such ignorance excusing the older bishops and priests of the Conciliar Church though. As I have said and written a number of times in recent years, there is no question to my mind that many of the bishops of the Conciliar Church in this country, as well as worldwide, have simply lost the Faith.

On the matter of knowing the Faith, however, the point should be made that such knowledge is, in itself, no guarantee of virtue. In other words, however well versed one may be in the teachings of the Church, it does not follow that he or she will thereby automatically lead a commendable Catholic life. A person — whether a priest or a religious or a layman —may be an expert theologian and lose his immortal soul. If we are to be truly traditional Roman Catholics then, together with the grave obligation we have of knowing our religion there is the equally grave duty of living it through prayer, sacrifice, good example, resignation to the will of God, the keeping of the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, the practice of the virtues, cooperation with divine grace, etc. "True faith consists in this, that we do not contradict by our actions what we profess in words". (St. Gregory the Great)

"What doth it profit a man if he gain the world and suffer the loss of his soul"? What too does it profit a man if he be an expert on trivia, if he knows much about many things which don't amount to a hill of beans and is an ignoramus on matters pertaining to the Faith and the intelligent living of that Faith? What kind of scale of values is that? What sense does that make? I'm not saying that all knowledge of secular or worldly matters is wrong. Of course not. But I am saying that when a knowledge of and a concern for such things so occupy and consume a person's thinking and living as to overshadow — if not obliterate — the

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very purpose of his life, then that person ought to start getting his priorities straight.

To the catechism question, "Why did God make us?", the answer given is crystal clear: "God made us to know HIm, to love Him and to serve Him in this life and thereby to be happy with Him forever in Heaven". And in that one simple catechism statement we have the foundation for the one and only sane and sound philosophy of life which means anything in the last analysis. But to know God as He wills to be known - and thereby truly to love and serve Him - we must know the Faith which He has revealed and which is taught in all its truth and beauty and fulness and purity in and by the Roman Catholic Church alone. Hence, again, the grave obligation of knowing our Faith that we may know God, compared to which all other knowledge is empty and hollow and futile. "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity" save in knowing, loving and serving God, to live with Whom eternally in Heaven is the ultimate sole purpose of our lives on this earth.

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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.

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"Some Practical Points"
Cont. from page 2

far would a Catholic be expected to travel in order to fulfill his obligation to be present? Well, a reasonable distance, say, approximately 50 miles.

(5) - No properly informed traditional Roman Catholic will attend the Novus Ordo service or have any part of the Conciliar Church.

(6) - What about a traditional Catholic's attendance at, for example, the funeral of a relative or friend who is a member of the Conciliar Church? The same ruling would apply here as would apply in relation to any non-Catholic Church. The Church teaches that, apart from scandal, such attendance is permissible on the condition that the Catholic take no active part in the services.

(7) - Traditional Roman Catholics properly observe the law of fasting before Holy Communion by abstaining from food and alcoholic drink for three hours and from all other liquids for one hour before receiving Communion (water does not break the fast). Such is the legislation enacted by Pope Pius XII in 1957. The practice of fasting from all food and drink from midnight (the law prior to 1957) is highly commended but not obligatory.

(8) - The Third Commandment of God ("Remember thou keep holy the Lord's Day") forbids, among other things, commercial occupations and business transactions unless, in a particular case, there is a justifying reason. Marketing or shopping is one of those prohibited occupations or transactions. Consequently, traditional Roman Catholics, in reverence for the Lord's Day, will avoid shopping on Sundays apart from necessity.

(9) - The Church, now as always, forbids mixed marriages, that is, marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics (in which category are included members of the Conciliar Church) and only reluctantly permits them for very good reasons. Hence, traditional Roman Catholics, with a view to marriage, have the obligation to keep steady company only with traditional Roman Catholics.

MASS REQUESTS

As happens from time to time, the sizeable backlog of Mass requests I accumulate requires that I do something about it. As of this writing I have some 90 Mass intentions to which I am committed. So, in order that I may be able to get caught up on these Mass obligations, I will not accept any further Mass requests for three months, that is, until June 1. I always regret having to do this but it is necessary so that I may fulfill the Mass requests I receive within a reasonable period of time.

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PLEASE NOTE

Following is the address and telephone number of Christ the King School. They should be used for all correspondence and telephone calls relating to the school.

Christ the King School
P.O. Box 6428
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934-6428
(303) 635-9183

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COLORADO

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

COLORADO SPRINGS
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
815 South 25th Street
(Christ the King School)
(303) 636-1575 - Call between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
Masses at 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. Mar. 7, Mar. 14, Apr. 11

DURANGO
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Durango Savings and Loan
1101 E. Second Ave.
(303) 884-2878
Mass at 10:00 a.m. Apr. 25

STRATTON
OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL
(303) 348-5454
Call for time of Mass Apr. 18

FLORIDA

PORT RICHEY (Tampa area)
ST. JOSEPH'S
Gulf Highland Club House
900 Gulf Highland Drive
(813) 868-0166
Mass at 7:00 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 6:00 p.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 11:00 a.m. Mar. 21, Mar. 28
Mass at 10:00 a.m. Apr. 25

MONTANA

GREAT FALLS
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHAPEL
2020 Second Avenue North
(406) 452-8826
Mass at 11:00 a.m. Mar. 28, Apr. 4
Mass at 10:00 a.m. Apr. 25

PENNSYLVANIA

ESSINGTON (Philadelphia area)
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Ramada Inn
Airport South, Route 291
(215) 876-8737
Mass at 10:00 a.m. Mar. 14, Apr. 18

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP
Hilton Inn
154 West 600 South
(801) 278-7501
Mass at 11:00 a.m. Mar. 28

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND
OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL
5217 Futura Avenue
(804) 737-8211 or 262-4354
Mass at 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Mar. 7, Mar. 21, Apr. 4, Apr. 11