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Anti-Catholicism in the USA

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Did you know that the mass media in the United States (the three major TV networks, *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, "many other local TV and radio stations," etc.) are all run from behind the scenes by the Roman Catholic Church? Were you aware that the same holds true as to control of the FBI, the IRS, U.S. armed forces, public schools, the Supreme Court, the Post Office, AT&T, organized crime and subversive groups? Or that the Catholic Church is the world's biggest secret society, now engaged in a gigantic plot in which it is using the United Nations and the "ecumenical" movement as tools in a drive to enslave humanity?

We didn't either and, frankly, it's hard to believe that anyone in his right mind would accept such charges as being true. Yet, for the past two years, posters proclaiming these "revelations" have been seen in cities throughout the country. They are but the tip of an emerging anti-Catholic iceberg that includes:

• Mission to Catholics, an evangelical organization that distributes literature like a pamphlet by university chancellor Bob Jones, Jr., which calls the pope the "archpriest of Satan, a deceiver, and an anti-Christ," and the Church "the old harlot Church still sitting on the seven hills of Rome, drunk with the blood of martyrs and fornicating with the political leaders of the world." Moral Majority co-founder Tim LaHaye's Scott Memorial Church funded the group until 1980, but has not repudiated its contentions.

• Films attacking Catholic teachings, such as *Monsignor* and *Agnes of God* (starring Jane Fonda) made and shown in our country, often to rave reviews. Imported blasphemy has also hit the theaters in movies like *Camila* from Argentina and *Hail Mary* from France (this latter distributed in the States by Coca-Cola's subsidiary, Columbia Pictures). The first three are broadsides against the priesthood and religious life, while *Hail Mary* is a sacrilegious portrait of the Holy Family.

• Televangelists John Osborne, Jimmy Swaggart and Herbert W. Armstrong mesmerizing millions of weekly viewers with shocking "exposes" on the Church. On radio, similar messages are broadcast by preachers like Kenneth Hagen, J. Vernon McGee and F. Kenton Beshore. And in the print medium, featured titles include Tony Alamo's pamphlet *The Pope's Secrets*, comic book collaborations *Alberto* and *Smokescreens* by Jack Chick and Alberto Rivera (who claims to be an ex-Jesuit and ex-bishop), and Ralph Woodrow's book, *Babylon Mystery Religion*.

• The Conversion Center, a sort of Catholics Anonymous, which seeks to draw the faithful from the Church with tracts on the order of *My Passport to Freedom*, a leaflet by lapsed Catholic Jeanne Lunkowski. (She writes that, had she remained in the Church, she would have been on a path that "would lead me straight to hell with no stops along the way." At the end, the reader is asked to pray "My Decision for Christ," wherein one vows: "...I hereby transfer my faith from the priest, the pope and Mary to the Lord Jesus Christ...I here and now transfer my faith from the Roman Catholic Church to the word of God."

Now that anti-Catholicism has reared its ugly head again, it would be well for us to examine not only the basic tenets and implications of its proponents, but also its role in shaping America's religious community in past generations. This specter appears in many guises—Masonry, Humanism, and other forms of "free-thought," Communism and other totalitarian systems of government, Protestantism (fundamentalist and modernist), Judaism, Islam and other religions, and even the subtle (or often not so subtle) movement to destroy the Church from within.

However contradictory and incompatible these groups may be, all can be found to have expressed hatred for the Catholic Church in one way or another. The subject of anti-Catholicism is, then, so large that we must narrow down the field a bit. Since those Protestants who are theologically closest to Catholicism (that is, they believe in Christ's divinity, His miracles, moral teachings, redeeming death and resurrection, etc.) make up the group requiring the least in the way of corrections before accepting the Church, the errors promulgated by their leaders seem a logical emphasis for this article. Further, ironically, it is this very group that has occupied a central point in American anti-Catholic thought both historically and presently.

Intolerance In "The Land Of The Free"

As Catholic Americans we all cherish our ability to freely practice our Faith as part of our nation's heritage of reli-

gious tolerance. What we must regret, however, is that one of the consequences of "religious freedom," as interpreted by our government through the years, is that it permits intolerance in the name of tolerance. With the state's official blessing, any Church may declare "open season" on another. And what of the targeted group's protection under the law? It must head for cover and fend for itself the best it can, while the government tends to "more important" matters. Of all religious bodies in the U.S., none has been as persistently maligned as the Roman Catholic Church.

Anti-Catholicism in the States can be traced back to the pre-Revolutionary colonies. In seventeenth-century New England, colonial governments controlled by the Congregational Church prohibited Catholics from even settling there. (Rhode Island was, for a time, an exception but in 1689 it reinterpreted its 1663 charter to conform with the others.) As late as 1765, John Adams (himself no lover of the Church) could say of the situation in that part of the country: "Roman Catholics are as scarce as a comet or an earthquake." New York permitted free exercise of the Faith until 1691 when the "Romish religion" was excluded from the tolerance afforded other Churches. Nine years later persecution forced Catholics underground and in 1741 a minister named John Ury was mistakenly hung for being a priest. Similarly, a 1702 law in New Jersey promised "liberty of conscience to all persons, except papists." Even Pennsylvania, one of the more tolerant of the colonies, at one time imposed a Test Act barring Catholics from public office.

Conditions in the southern colonies were no better. Charters of the Carolinas (1663) and Georgia (1732) expressly excluded "papists." Although Virginia passed a Resolution assuring religious rights a few weeks before the Declaration of Independence was signed, prior to that its record was no better than the others. Protestant historian Martin Marty, writing about the 1634 landing of English colonists in Virginia in *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*, confirms as much when he notes: "To this day it is not clear how the Catholics, including the priests aboard, sneaked past the official searcher who was assigned to extract from passengers the oath of allegiance that specifically rejected the pope and Catholicism."

Indeed, of the 13 original colonies, it was Maryland during its early Catholic days that provided a model for the others of cooperation between the various denominations, but even this was short-lived. In his study "*In God We Trust*": *The Religious Beliefs and Ideas of the American Founding Fathers*, liberal journalist Norman Cousins concedes this, writing: "Catholics wrote the early laws of Baltimore and administered a state which for a time had one of the finest records for religious freedom among the colonies. But when the Protestants came to authority, especially after 1689, Catholics felt the weight of repressive legislation." This rise to power came about in part with the establishment a year before of a group Marty says was perhaps the first U.S. "ecumenical movement"—Association in Arms for the Defense of the Protestant Religion and assisting the rights of King William and Queen Mary. In 1702, the Church of England became Maryland's official religion.

The two decades leading up to the War of Independence saw the intolerance ease up somewhat, but never totally vanish. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, a dishonest account of Protestant sufferings at Catholic hands, made the rounds, complete with a title page illustration of devils assisting at a Mass. Harvard College, during the 1770's, hosted the annual Dudleian Lecture and gave the learned the opportunity "to expose the idolatry of the Romish church." (Marty) John Adams wrote to Jefferson that Catholicism was "Hindu and cabalistic," and to his wife Abigail that a Mass he attended in Philadelphia was a superstitious show. Meanwhile, in his *Boston Gazette*, the Mason Samuel Adams argued that "popery" was a greater threat to freedom than the Stamp Act. When Canadian Catholics were granted greater liberties in 1774, similar fears were expressed. Even Washington and Franklin, both of whom were later considered friends of American Catholicism, could be counted on to let slip in an occasional snipe at "Romanism."

Although Catholics in Revolutionary America made up but one percent of its population (an estimated 25,000 in a total 2.5 million), their presence as a force was not overlooked by George Washington. At a time when "No Popery" banners flew in parts of New England, he used his influence to push for moderation. He ordered that there be no more burning of the pope's effigy in Boston and, when he heard Benedict Arnold make anti-Catholic remarks, counseled his officer to "look with compassion on the errors of Catholicism." The British could have capitalized on the belligerence with which Catholics were treated in the colonies. By taking the opposite approach they made a fatal mistake. Cousins writes:

Tory Loyalists tried to frighten their fellow Americans into giving up the fight against England by holding up the threat of domination by the Catholic Church. "An absolute dominion over you will be set up by your late protectors," a Tory pamphlet declared. "An American Bastille will be erected; the Romish religion will be established; the maxims and proceedings... of the Romish inquisition will be your reward for your infinite ingratitude and folly in casting off the enlightened, humane, and equitable authority of your rightful sovereign."

The tactic failed, perhaps because the "threat" of the Church, no matter how real it seemed in the minds of many, was something distant and abstract, while the effect of King George's dictates on their lives was a daily, immediate concern.

Postwar euphoria did little to divert anti-Catholics from their self-appointed task of ridding the nation of the

sacerdotal "menace," as it came at a time when the second "Great Awakening" swept through Protestant America. The Alien and Sedition Act of 1798 made publication of malicious writings against the U.S. Government a criminal offense but it also sought to protect "native Americans" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) from the first waves of Irish Catholic immigrants. This Nativism, which, as we shall see, would grow into a major movement, found a rallying cry in the "Winning of the West." Westward expansion began yet another round of anti-Catholic hysteria by the Rev. Lyman Beecher and *Home Missionary* with the warning in 1839 that the battle for the West was one fought "between Christianity and the combined forces of Infidelity and Popery." Such fears were agitated by the publication earlier in the decade of *Priestcraft Unmasked*, and *A Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, penned by the inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, which disclosed an alleged Vatican plot. A series of convent "horror" stories also contributed to the mood: *Nun* told of the escape of a Turin heiress from a convent dungeon; *Six Months in a Convent* related how a greedy bishop imposed sadistic penances on Ursulines; and *Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures*, writes Father Newman Eberhardt in *Summary of A Catholic History*, "ascribed immoral conduct and smothered infants to a Montreal convent." Despite the fact that Protestant editor William L. Stone investigated *Maria Monk's* claims and found that the authoress was "an out-and-out impostor," that she was of loose character who died in jail for pickpocketing in 1849, and that her book could only be found in pornographic bookshops—despite all this, some, determined to believe any and all literature against the Church, hold it to be a true account. (Like *Maria Monk*, a nun's smothered infant is part of the plot of *Agnes of God*. Coincidence?)

Morse intensified nativist paranoia by founding the American Protestant Union in 1841. This group, with its official opposition to the "subjugation of our country to the control of the Pope of Rome, and his adherents," helped fan the fires of violence set by writings like those mentioned above. Already in 1834, "a mob, aroused by...Dr. Beecher, attacked and burned the Ursuline convent in Boston on pretext of rescuing a novice." (Father Eberhardt) The perpetrators of the crime were never brought to justice, which opened the door to other outbreaks. The worst of these was a three-day riot in Philadelphia in May, 1844. The attack, provoked by Bishop Kendrick's condemning of Protestant Bible lessons in the public schools, led to the burning of two churches and a seminary, the plundering of dozens of Irish Catholic homes, 13 deaths and 50 wounded. Masses were suspended until state troops restored order. When it appeared New York City churches would also be assailed, Bishop John Hughes had armed men stationed around them to stave off further tragedy.

Nativists formed a nationwide anti-Catholic secret society in the 1850's called the Order of United Americans. Set up as a political party (the American Party), "its members observed a masonic secrecy which they guarded with such fidelity as to be nicknamed 'Know-Nothings.'" (Father Eberhardt) That the Masonic Lodge was the model is made clear in this excerpt from Sydney E. Ahlstrom's *A Religious History of the American People*: "Upon initiation the member was introduced to all the glories of a secret lodge: grand titles, special handclasps, distress signals, and other types of mumbo-jumbo." The party constitution was pledged "to resist the insidious policy of the Church of Rome," but the *Know-Nothing Almanac* was even more vicious, adding "Anti-Romanism...Anti-Pope's Toeism, Anti-Nunneryism, Anti-Winking Virginism, Anti-Jesuitism and Anti-the-Whole-Sacerdotal-Hierarchism with all its humbugging mummeries" as articles of its *Anti*-Creed. Membership was open only to native-born Protestants without Catholic wives or parents. An oath was taken that the member would never vote for a Catholic or foreign-born candidate. Mob activity was condoned by party officials, and voters who could not give the party password were threatened. On August 5, 1855—"Bloody Monday"—in Louisville, Kentucky, violence kept Catholics from casting votes. Despite such a record the Know-Nothings had a million members, 75 of which they sent to Congress. Fortunately, the party was short-lived; the tensions leading the U.S. into the Civil War and a general apathy of party members spelled doom for the Know-Nothings before they could achieve their goal: control of the national government. As with all anti-Catholicism, the Know-Nothings exploited people's ignorance of the Church. It "failed most completely in the Old Northwest, where immigrants and Roman Catholics were more familiar to the native Protestant Americans because they mingled on equal terms and in about equal numbers." (Ahlstrom)

After the war, however, the bigots started up again. (The Vatican was behind the plot to kill Lincoln according to one of their rumors.) A new nativist secret group, the Ku Klux Klan, made Catholics one of their objects of hate, even burning a cross on the lawn of the Benedictine convent in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1893, another new outfit, the American Protective Association, also a secret society, told the credulous that Pope Leo XIII had issued an order for American Catholics to "exterminate all heretics found within the jurisdiction of the United States of America," and it published a false encyclical to that effect.

Anti-Catholicism in the twentieth century has tended to be more toned down than in the past (though the above mentioned cross-burning took place in its early years). Normally, Woodrow Wilson wouldn't be thought of in such company, but in his public papers we read: "Our liberties are safe until...legislators have resigned their functions to ecclesiastical powers and their prerogatives to priests." The reason many may be surprised at such a quote is that they overlook what historian Peter Viereck saw so clearly: "Catholic-baiting is the anti-Semitism of

the liberals." One such leftist organization was Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), founded in 1947 with the pro-Communist Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam as its first president. Two years later it published *American Freedom and Catholic Power* by Paul Blanchard, a work still cited by anti-Catholics in which the author painted a familiar scene, "an international dictatorship emanating from Rome, scarcely less menacing than the Communism of the Kremlin." (Father Eberhardt, *A Survey of American Church History.)* Later, POAU changed its name to the present Americans United for Separation of Church and State. There is reason to believe it is a Masonic front for it shares an address with the Masonic Service Association. Clearly, anti-Catholic sentiment is a permanent, if loathsome, fixture of our national culture.

Sins of Commission and Omission

In the past 30 years or so a spate of books and tracts has appeared purporting to uncover scandals at every level of Church life, from the parish to the Sacred College of Cardinals. Typical of these are such titles as *People's Padre; Is Roman Catholicism a Cult?; The Other Side of Rome; The Missing Dimension in World Affairs; The Secret History of Jesuits* and *The Vatican-Moscow-Washington Alliance,* to name a few. Certain Protestant denominations make anti-Catholicism a central part of their teachings. We've all heard the criticisms: the Mass is magic; Purgatory is an invention by which priests are "extorting money from believing, trusting and unsuspecting people" (J. Lunkowski); Mary is worshiped; Catholic countries are poor, backward and superstitious because of the Church, etc. But these and other objections to the Church are always based on either distorting or neglecting evidence. The Mass (more specifically the Consecration of the Mass) is no more *magic* than Christ's changing water into wine. Stipends given to priests for Masses offered do *not pay* for Masses. Veneration is not worship. Mere culture and material affluence do not make a nation godly.

In the final analysis, what many conservative Protestants believe is that the Catholic Church is in league with the devil. Some, by calling the Church a cult or a false religion, will merely insinuate it. Others, more bold, will turn to Scriptural prophecies to "prove" that the Pope is the anti-Christ and the Church the Whore of Babylon. It may be worth our while to take a short look at the genesis of this most vicious slander, since many seem willing to accept it. Let's look at several aspects that go into this thinking, one at a time.

Paganism

A supposed historical basis upon which to identify the Church as Beast, anti-Christ, Whore of Babylon, etc., is that at an early period of Church history the larger portion of the Church and its leaders became infected with paganism and apostatized. A Seventh Day Adventist book, *Bible Readings for the Home,* teaches that "there is a genuine line of inheritance, from Babylon through the Roman Empire to the Roman Church, of religious elements," and quotes Cardinal Newman on the use of vestments, tonsure and the ring in marriage to prove its case. Devotion to Mary is equated with the worship of Ishtar and other pagan goddesses. But this overlooks the fact that the Church only has made Christian certain *externals* of paganism; she has never appropriated its *doctrines.* To suggest such a paganizing plays into the hands of both atheists and Masons, for the former holds that Christianity is merely an offshoot of the mystery religions of the Roman Empire and the latter holds that paganism and Christianity can be thrown together into a religious melting pot.

Atrocities

On this subject, scholarship takes a vacation. Catholicism is unmistakably of Satan because it supposedly has murdered the true followers of Christ. We're told that countless innocent men, women and children were murdered "under the dripping blades of Catholic authorities and in the flames of priestly fires." (John Wilder, *The Other Side of Rome.*) How many were there? Well, that depends on which "authority" you consult. Wilder first cites the apostate priest (if, indeed, he was ever a priest) Walter Montano's figure of 50 million deaths during the Inquisition, and then the nineteenth-century Protestant leader Alexander Campbell's estimate of upwards to 68 million. But the body count is free-floating with the controversialists. Ed and Jody Mitchell in *The Mystery of Babylon Revealed* hazard a guess of 95 million. On his international TV ministry, *Prophecy Countdown,* Seventh Day Adventist John Osborne escalates the total to between 100 million and 150 million. As you can see, the sky's the limit. Not even the lowest of these figures approaches the truth. (Osborne's figure would be almost a quarter of Europe's current population.) A more sober view by a non-Catholic can be found in Will Durant's *The Reformation.* Although a critic of the Inquisition, which he calls one of the "expressions of an age afflicted with homocidal certainty in theology," he doesn't even *pretend* that there were hundreds of thousands of victims, much less millions. For example, concerning the Spanish Inquisition—universally acknowledged as the most severe—he gives one estimate for the years 1480-1808 at about 32,000 deaths and almost 300,000 "heavily penanced," but then notes that these "guesses...are now generally rejected by Protestant historians as extreme exaggerations." And nowhere do people like Wilder and Osborne talk about *Protestant* atrocities; it is as though they never occurred. Nor do they admit that some of those executed in the Inquisition were political revolutionaries or practitioners of the black arts.

The Little Horn

"Judge" Rutherford of the Jehovah's Witnessess said that the Catholic Church is "the Devil's chief representative on the earth." Chick and Rivera say "we believe at Chick Publications that the Whore of Babylon is the Roman

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Saint Dominic Savio: Model For Youth

Jill Wiesner

Many Americans, distressed by the shocking immorality they face at every turn, wonder how the youth of today will ever resist such an onslaught. The temptations they face are so numerous and they are, after all, so young. To help them in the all-important battle for their souls is the example of a saint canonized just over thirty years ago, a saint who was "an adolescent who preserved his baptismal innocence to the very last." Saint Dominic Savio, whose death came a month before his fifteenth birthday, is "a true model for the youth of our times."

Born in the village of Murialdo, Italy, on April 2, 1842, Dominic was from the start a cheerful considerate child. He did, however, have a quick temper which he fought to keep under control. He was not always successful. A classmate named Vaschetti (later Monsignor Vaschetti), who was punched in the head by Dominic during a childhood argument, reported that Dominic "was quick-tempered, sometimes even violent. He held stubbornly to his own opinions. Afterward, however, he would always feel very sorry for it."

Dominic's sense of mission was evident at an early age. To obtain an education, he willingly walked six miles a day, winter and summer, on a road often frequented by bandits. When he was ten, his family moved to the town of Mondonio where he started school under Father Cugliero. During class one day, Dominic was accused of a prank which another boy had pulled. He did not defend himself and quietly accepted the punishment, which was to kneel in the center of the classroom for the rest of the classes that day.

Father Cugliero later discovered that Dominic was innocent and asked him why he had said nothing. Dominic told him, "the one who did it was already on his last chance...It would have only been my first chance and I knew you'd let me off with something lighter. Besides, I thought of our Lord when He was unjustly accused. He didn't say a word either."

A short time later, Father Cugliero paid a visit to Father John Bosco who had begun an outstanding school for boys in Turin. He asked Father Bosco to consider Dominic Savio for his school because, said Father Cugliero, "you may have a number of excellent boys here as you say, Don Bosco, but I don't think you could possibly have any better than young Savio. Try him out and see if you don't find in him another St. Aloysius."

It was arranged for the priest to meet the boy on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary in Becchi. In his book, *The Life of Dominic Savio*, Don Bosco described Dominic at that meeting as "a cheerful youngster with a smiling face...I recognized in him a soul made wholly according to the spirit of God, and I was not a little astonished to see the marvels that grace had already wrought in one so young."

On October 29, 1854, Dominic left home to begin school at Don Bosco's "Oratory," a long, renovated old house surrounded by a low, tiled wall. The one hundred boys who lived there rose for Mass each morning, after which they ate a meal consisting of bread and soup or stew. After the meal, the boys gathered around Don Bosco's chair and talked to him. Their trust in him was complete. His selfless concern for them was tempered with wisdom.

All of the boys at the Oratory were either apprentices or students. Dominic was placed in the latter category. His professors were delighted with him, praising "his knowledge and piety" as well as his "pleasant ways and general ability." His characteristic modesty and friendliness won the hearts of his schoolmates and Dominic was, from the beginning, a general favorite among the boys. Don Bosco's mother, Mama Margaret, who helped her son at the Oratory, said that Dominic "always seems to be in the presence of God."

For all of his excellent qualities, Dominic was, after all, a normal boy, as was attested to by Michael Rua, an older boy who was one of the Oratory's "superiors." In a class which he was teaching, he was forced to reprimand Dominic for laughing out loud. As he turned to continue his lecture, Dominic burst out laughing again. One of the other boys was being silly behind Rua's back and he finally had Dominic laughing so hard he couldn't stop. As a result, Dominic was required to spend the remainder of the class period on his knees.

On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. In honor of the occasion, Dominic consecrated himself completely to the service of the Mother of God for the rest of his life. Don Bosco wrote that, "From this moment began that exemplary kind of life, that exactness in the performance of his duty, beyond which it is difficult to go." Dominic Savio was twelve and a half years old.

One of the things Dominic worked hardest at was controlling his eyes. He once told Don Bosco that, when he first came to Turin, avoiding certain sights required such an effort that his head would ache. But he persevered. According to Don Bosco:

Those who admired Dominic's outward calm and self-control found it so natural to him that they might have been inclined to attribute this to the fact that he was made that way by his Creator. But those who understood him better, or had charge

of his education, knew that it was the result of his own great efforts, assisted by the grace of God.

Often, when returning from the city, the boys would ask Dominic his opinion of something they had seen along the way. He would apologize, saying that he had not seen it. When asked what he had eyes for anyway, he would answer, "I have eyes to look on the Mother of God, if and when I get to heaven."

Dominic's increasing attempts at penance and mortification were softened by Don Bosco, who told him to "suffer patiently any insult or injury that may come your way... suffer with resignation the heat, the cold, the rain, sickness, fatigue and all the other ills that God will be pleased to send you."

The boy followed faithfully the guidelines of the priest, quietly including such additional mortifications as walking slowly through the snow in order to feel the bite of the cold, keeping his hands off the bench when kneeling in church and keeping his hands out of his pockets when embarrassed.

But he never had a sad face or sour temper. As he told a new arrival, "you know that in the Oratory we become saints by being very cheerful about it...Don Bosco always tells us to serve God with a smile."

As Dominic progressed toward sanctity, he was often filled with what he called "distractions." "When I am at prayers," he said, "a distraction comes. Then I lose the thread of my thoughts and the hours fly by like minutes." He became acutely embarrassed when questioned too deeply about these "distractions" by Don Bosco, so the priest did not press him. On one occasion, Dominic was absent from breakfast as well as all his classes and lunch. Don Bosco looked for him in St. Francis Church, where he found the boy lost in contemplation. Though Don Bosco called him several times, he did not hear and had to be shaken by the shoulder. Dominic turned and looked up vacantly. "Is Mass over already?" he asked. His "distraction" had lasted seven hours.

Dominic's health had always been precarious, and the winter of 1856 was particularly hard on all at the Oratory. In addition to the aggravated poverty and suffering endured by the people of Turin as a result of the Crimean War, the weather was unusually cold and severe. Mama Margaret, Don Bosco's mother, was stricken with pneumonia and, despite the best medical care, died on November 25.

Dominic's health also began to decline. He became more quiet and, at times, almost withdrawn. One of his friends asked if he didn't like to talk to them anymore. "Oh yes!" Dominic immediately replied. "It isn't that. It's only that when I speak at all, I feel two knives cut right through both my temples."

Severe stomach pains caused him to eat less and less, but he consistently refused any special treatment. Finally, at the advice of the doctors, Don Bosco ordered Dominic to go home for a rest. Dominic sighed heavily when told, and said, "This time, if I go, it will be to return no more."

The evening before his departure, Saturday, February 28, 1857, the boys said their usual prayers, "The Exercise of a Happy Death." In the prayers "for the one among us who will be the first to die," those near him heard Dominic insert his own name.

The next morning after Mass, he stopped one of the boys and returned to him a small amount of money he had borrowed, telling him, "I don't want to be embarrassed with debts in front of our Lord." His friend Cagliero said that, as his father arrived to take him home, "I saw him with that same old smile. Knowing what it was costing him to leave us, I said to myself: 'What a great little saint he must be!'"

In a few days, Dominic's appearance improved and the color returned to his cheeks. The doctor told his parents the danger had passed and his worried family sighed with relief. His father, however, asked Dominic what he thought.

"I think it is now time to receive Viaticum before I die," he said quietly.

The following morning, the doctor assured Dominic that they had beaten the illness and, "All we have to do now is take it nice and easy."

"We've beaten the world, Doctor," Dominic smiled. "All we have to do now is prepare to appear before God."

Two days later, on March 9, he suffered a relapse. Dominic's father kept vigil at his son's bedside. Toward evening, Dominic stirred. His face alight with joy, he seemed unaware of all around him. He cried out to his father, "Look! Can't you see the wonderful...the beautiful..." He reached out toward something, then gently fell back onto the pillows, lifeless.

On December 6, 1876, Don Bosco had a vision, which the Holy Father later made him write down. In the vision, Dominic appeared to him and offered him a bouquet of flowers. Dominic explained that they represented "the virtues we must practice to please God. Roses for charity, violets for humility, sunflowers for obedience, gentians for penance, ears of wheat for frequent Holy Communion, lilies for purity. The evergreens...represent perseverance." Asked what gave him the greatest consolation at the hour of death, Dominic replied, "the assistance at death of the Mother of God. Tell that to the boys, Father. Tell them never to forget to pray to her all the days of their lives."

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Traditional Catholicism (1986)

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

With the appearance of this issue (the forty-ninth) we begin the seventh year of the publication of this newsletter. While we have always worked long and hard to make *The Athanasian* a publication which would reflect favorably upon traditional Catholicism, what success our efforts may have had is difficult to determine. Insofar as I am able to judge, our impact has been at best but a modest one to date. While we have the spiritual and financial support of many and while we receive a considerable amount of commendation and encouragement, we do not seem to have a great deal to show for our endeavor in terms of concrete accomplishments for the cause of traditional Catholicism. Well, it's always a consolation to realize that good intentions and persistent effort are what count in the sight of God. And so we will keep on doing the best we can.

The fact that this issue of *The Athanasian* marks the beginning of another year of its publication is, in itself, of little significance but it seems an appropriate time to make a few observations on the traditional Roman Catholic apostolate. It had no formal origin and so no specific date can be cited to indicate when it began. Since, however, the infamous Vatican Council II concluded in 1965 and since the traditional apostolate was, at least in large part, a reaction to that Council, perhaps it is fairly accurate to say that the traditional effort came visibly into being around that time, say, in 1966.

That was 20 years ago. And what have traditional Roman Catholics accomplished over that span of time? The obvious answer is the preservation of the Roman Catholic Faith—and that is a major accomplishment indeed. Nowhere else is divine Truth found today in its purity and totality except in traditional Catholicism. As has been stated in these pages from time to time over the past several years—but it demands constant repetition—the one true Church, the Church of the Apostles and saints and martyrs, the historic Roman Catholic Church of nineteen and a half centuries is here and now traditional Catholicism. How any "Catholic" can deny this and remain a part of the Conciliar Church is beyond my comprehension—but millions do.

But it is the duty of every authentic Roman Catholic not only to preserve the Faith but to promote, to advance, to propagate it as well—by prayer, example, instruction, Catholic Action. And how is the traditionalist apostolate faring in that respect? From my observation, very poorly. Traditional Catholics possess the most precious treasure in all the world, the Roman Catholic Faith. They are members of the Roman Catholic Church, the one society or organization on the face of the earth established by the Son of God for the salvation of all men. As the consequence of this, they are morally bound not merely to know and to keep and to live the Faith themselves but to do all they reasonably can to bring that Faith to their fellowmen. In other words, by the very fact that they are Roman Catholics, they are morally obligated to be activists, to be convert-conscious, to be apostolic. In this the record appears to be a rather sad one. Despite the fact that never before in Christian history has there been a more desperate need for zealous, dedicated, apostolic Catholics than there is in this our day, where, pray tell, are individuals of this caliber to be found in the ranks of traditional Catholicism? Yes, there are some but they are very much the exception. Our God-given Faith and our beloved Church and our moral standards are being more and more openly maligned and ridiculed and defamed all around us. At what point do we stand up and fight? At what point do we shed our apathy and become at long last what we are supposed to be—the Church Militant?

When the traditional Roman Catholic apostolate began, I envisioned that it would become a sort of crusade whose members would, in truth, be warriors who would not only fight for the Faith but, if need be, give their lives in its defense. After all, were not these people the remnant who, blessed by God to have perceived the satanic subversion of the Church, had committed themselves to remain loyal to their beloved Faith and, by the grace of God, to do all in their power to preserve and to advance and to defend it, whatever the sacrifice required? Much to my surprise and disappointment, I gradually learned that the reality was something else indeed. However much may be favorably said for the typical traditional Catholic, a crusader, a warrior he definitely is not!

In the interest of fairness to the traditionalist cause it should be noted, of course, that it labors under many difficulties and obstacles. The one true Church, the Roman Catholic Church (traditional Catholicism) is all but a nonentity in the eyes of both the "liberal" and conservative (*The Wanderer*, *The Remnant* and the like) branches of the Conciliar Church as well as in the eyes of the secular, amoral, decadent world of this our day.

If traditional Catholicism is not here and now the Roman Catholic Church, then that Church no longer exists. It's as simple as that. Will this year 1986 witness any change for the better for us traditional Roman Catholics? Will we continue to remain an ignored remnant or will we, at long last, begin to make at least some slight impact upon the American scene? In good part because of the deplorable and, to my mind, incomprehensible lack of any significant number of apostolic, militant, truly dedicated Catholics in our ranks, the prospects are dim. There *must be* a substantial increase in our membership of Catholics

of such caliber—crusaders, fighters, warriors for the Faith. We traditional Catholics have the greatest thing in all the world, our Roman Catholic Faith. How long more, pray tell, are we going to keep it a secret *from* the world?

"Even if Catholics faithful to tradition are reduced to a handful, they are the ones who are the true Church of Jesus Christ." (St. Athanasius)†

"Anti-Catholicism" continued from page 4

Catholic Institution." Ditto F. Kenyon Beshore, Bob Jones, Jr., and John Osborne. Just *where* in the Bible does it so identify the Church? Well, according to these "experts" the answers are all right there in front of us in the books of Daniel and The Apocalypse of St. John. In the Seventh Day Adventist *Bible Readings* we're told that the "little horn" mentioned in Dan. 7:8 is a title of the anti-Christ, that is, the Catholic Church. (A drawing in an Adventist magazine shows the pope rising from a beast's head.)

All said, there is nothing original about these attacks on the Church. Jack Chick proudly recalls that Knox, Calvin and Luther all taught the Church was the Whore of Babylon, as well as such "respected" nineteenth-century Protestant evangelists as England's Charles Spurgeon and America's Dwight Moody. (Incidentally, John Osborne calls the idea of a "rapture" of Christians at the second coming a theory "invented by a Jesuit priest, Francesco Ribera, in order to discredit those Reformers... who were attacking the papacy.")

"And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake". (Matt. 10:22) So Christ told His disciples. He had no sooner spoken these words when He reminded them that He had been called Beelzebub. (Matt. 10:25) Even Saint John Eudes, whose whole ministry was centered in a godly tenderness, could write: "I received some very fine epithets. Some called me the precursor of the anti-Christ; others said I was the anti-Christ himself. Some characterized me as a seducer, a devil who must not be believed; and others condemned me as a sorcerer enticing everyone in his wake."

Such is a part of the cross we must bear as members of Christ's Mystical Body. It should propel us to a deeper study of our Faith and a more vigorous defense of the Church. No doubt the weakness of the Conciliar "Catholic" Church has sparked this new wave of anti-Catholic activity by those who mistake it for the true Church and feel they can deal it a deathblow. For our part, we must let the world know that the Church Militant is alive and unwilling to compromise God's Word one iota. Otherwise, we'll have a great deal of explaining to do in the not-too-distant future when called to render an account of our stewardship before the judgment seat of Almighty God.†

Reprint Orders Increase

In the previous issue of this newsletter I bemoaned the poor response from our subscribers for additional copies of the excellent article on Freemasonry which appeared as a supplement to the October 15, 1985 issue of *The Athanasian*. It is gratifying to report a significant increase in recent weeks in the number of orders for that article ("The USA, Past and Present—Christian or Masonic?"). Thus far, 1,135 copies have been ordered. The April 15, 1985 newsletter issue contained the article, "Masonry's War Against the Roman Catholic Church." To date, 1,704 copies have been purchased. The price scale for bulk orders of each article is found in the issues indicated above.

—Fr. F. Fenton

"Saint Dominic" continued from page 6

On June 12, 1954, Dominic Savio was canonized by Pope Pius XII, who declared Dominic to be a "timely model for the youth of the world." Pope Pius XI before him stated:

When we consider the conditions in which young people of the whole world find themselves today, the dangers and evil arts that threaten their Purity; the education to violence, to respect for nothing and nobody, we have every reason to thank God for having raised in our midst this edifying figure... We have in Dominic Savio a providential gift for our own time.

For all the evils which threaten the youth of today, Dominic Savio is the remedy. Against every temptation and snare, he offered his love for God. Armed with the intention that "the passion of our Lord be always in my mind and heart and on my lips," and shielded by the Mother of God, this fourteen-year-old hero was victorious in the battle against sin. May the youth of today take up his armor and shield and, through his intercession, may they be equally victorious.†

Pray
the Rosary
Daily

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