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UNDER FIRE—CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

John Kenneth Weiskittel

"Many marriages are not of God and do not please Our Lord." This sounds very current, doesn't it? Who among us, upon gazing out at the sorry state of the institution of matrimony in our day, doesn't find himself echoing such sentiments? And yet these words were spoken nearly 70 years ago, being part of a message given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Jacinta Marto, one of the three Portuguese shepherd children favored with visions of Our Lady at Fatima.

If the situation gave much offense to Christ then, what must He think of this current era of "revolving-door" marriages? Consider these U.S. statistics:

• In 1920 the marriage rate per 1,000 population was 12, while the divorce rate was 1.6, for a ratio of a little better than one divorce for every 10 marriages. By 1980 the rates (also per 1,000) were 10.6 and 5.2, respectively, or about one marriage dissolved for every two contracted. Today the figures are about the same as those in 1980.

• But even the above statistics are a bit misleading as to the magnitude of the problem. In her book *The Second Time Around: Remarriage in America* (Viking, 1977), Leslie A. Westoff—who is now on her own *third* time around—writes, "Our *first*-marriage rate has actually been *falling* for the past thirty years, and what has buoyed up the figures has been remarriage." She cites Dr. Paul Glick, senior demographer of the Census Bureau, who in 1975 projected that only 75 percent of the nation's marriages for that year were between first-time participants, while 20 percent involved those putting a second set of vows under their belts and five percent tying the knot (presumably a slipknot) for the third time or more. About 36 percent of first marriages and 40 percent of seconds will end in divorce court and, asserts the author, four out of five of the men and women divorcing each year will remarry.

• The Conciliar "Catholic" Church, of course, is right in step, as is reported by religion writer Adon Taft in *The Miami Herald* for April 25, 1986. In an article entitled "Dissolving Marriages," Taft writes, "Once a rarity among Catholics in the United States, divorce now occurs in almost half the marriages, just as it does in the general population."

• Directly related to this is the dramatic rise in the number of annulments. Since Vatican II ended in 1965, Taft writes, there has been "a conservatively estimated 600 percent increase in the number of annulments granted annually by the church." The rate is even higher in the three-county Miami Archdiocese, where annulments have "jumped from 24 in 1979 to 700 cases last year. Two priests used to handle the load part time, but it now takes all the time of four priests." Conciliar lawyer Joseph P. Zwack, in his book *Annulment: Your Chance to Remarry Within the Catholic Church* (Harper & Row, 1983), lists the number of formal cases for U.S. cities in 1981, including Boston, 1,889; Chicago, 3,246; Cincinnati, 944; Denver, 503; Detroit, 1,590; Los Angeles, 933; New Orleans, 461; New York, 405; and Seattle, 634. (By way of comparison, there were only 338 such cases *for the entire nation* as recently as 1968.) According to Zwack, there then (in 1981) were about *eight million* divorced Conciliarists in the U.S., with about 250,000 more joining the ranks yearly—and about 80 percent of them enter second civil marriages. And *six million* or more children suffer the consequences, the most heartbreaking of all the statistics.

This in a country that many believe to be Christian! What we are seeing now is a systematic shift away from the sacramental "till death do us part" view of wedlock to an opportunistic "as long as we're happy" view. We say *systematic* because the powers that be in America are moving away from the traditional position. In 1980, Ronald Reagan became the first divorced-remarried man ever to be elected president, a fitting development when one considers government policies that have liberalized divorce proceedings to the point where some states accept "no-fault" cases filed on the grounds of incompatibility. Other laws (or lack thereof) have removed the stigma associated with unwed pairings and "legitimized" the sad absurdity of "gay marriages." Popular culture—books, films, music, TV shows, etc.—nearly always paints marriage in a bad light, while romanticizing the alternatives (except celibacy, of course)—*even adultery*. Government schools and colleges have no intention of imparting to their pupils such "sectarian" notions as the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage. The news media editorializes that the nation is moving in the right direction and that anyone denying this stands in the way of "progress." And the religious community, by and large, has

either remained silent or been active in advancing this desecration of marriage as an expression of its "deepening understanding" of the mind of God.

A number of questions come to mind. How has matrimony come upon such hard times? Is it reasonable to speculate whether there is a *movement* behind the staggering figures? What is the Conciliar Church, which claims to be upholding Catholic morals and dogma, doing in response to the assault on these very morals and dogma? Besides answering these questions, this article will briefly recall the Roman Catholic Church's infallible teaching on the subject of marriage.

The Usual Cast of Characters

From her earliest years, the Church has had to defend the Sacrament of Matrimony from repeated attacks. Saint Paul, in his first letter to Timothy (4:3), warned that heretics would come, "forbidding to marry." It was not long before sects such as the Gnostics and Manichaeans did precisely that, claiming that to wed was *evil* (while often engaging in secret debaucheries).

Then in the sixteenth century, England's King Henry VIII achieved odious distinction by attempting to force from the Holy See an annulment of his marriage despite the fact that it was a clearly valid one. When the Vatican refused to become "a respecter of persons," the willful Tudor formed in 1534 the Church of England over which he was "spiritual" ruler. (It never fails to amaze us how critics of the Catholic Church allege that she will give annulments for the right price, while ignoring such evidence to the contrary.)

Nevertheless, these were mere skirmishes compared to what was to come. The blame for the modern onslaught must rest largely upon the massive German shoulders of the "Father of the Reformation," Martin Luther, who taught that "marriage is a mere worldly thing" and who lived in a manner that seemed to put it into practice. Divorce was virtually unknown in the Christian world before the Reformers granted it in cases of adultery. Of this change, Father John A. O'Brien wrote in *The Faith of Millions* (O.S.V., 1956 ed.):

> It was the fatal entering wedge that was destined to pry apart millions of unions which Christ had forbidden man to put asunder. Under the pressure of man's unbridled lust, the grounds for divorce began to be multiplied, until today they are so numerous as to permit people to sever the sacred tie for the slightest and silliest reasons. (Or now, 30 years later, for *no* reason.—JKW)

Luther's teaching that marriage was *not* a sacrament is still the stance taken by most Protestant theologians and in no small way helped to bring about the bitter fruits we see all around us. By devaluing it to the level of a mere civil contract, Martin Luther set the stage for those who followed, each with a list of demands bolder and more radical than their predecessors.

Freemasonry took it as an obligation to further Luther's program and was singled out by Pope Leo XIII on more than one occasion for its role in weakening the marriage bond. In *Humanum Genus* (1884), His Holiness writes:

> What refers to domestic life in the teaching of the Naturalists (i.e., those who profess the Masons' philosophy; namely, that nature is all that exists and that God, if He exists at all, must be identified with nature in a pantheistic way) is almost all contained in the following declarations: that marriage belongs to the genus of contracts, which may rightly be revoked by the will of those who made them; and that the civil rulers of the State have power over the matrimonial bond... These things the Freemasons... have long determined to make into a law and institution. For in many countries, and those nominally Catholic, it is enacted that no marriages shall be considered lawful except those contracted by the civil rite; in other places the law permits divorce; and in others every effort is used to make it lawful...

And in *Praeclara* (1894), Pope Leo warns that Masonry "strives to eliminate the Christian character from marriage and the family and the education of youth, and from every form of instruction, whether public or private, and to root out from the minds of men all respect for authority, whether human or divine."

Similarly castigated by the popes are the goals of the socialists and communists of whom, writes Pope Leo, Masonry "greatly favors their designs, and holds in common with them their chief opinions." Marx and Engels called for "abolition of the family!" in *The Communist Manifesto*, and admitted that "(e)ven the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists." Marriage, they charged, is a bourgeois sham, to be replaced with "an openly legalized system of free love." When Lenin took Russia in 1917 he instituted post card divorces to facilitate the change, but the Bolsheviks soon learned that, along with religion, marriage and the family are among the toughest remnants of the "old order" for them to overcome. Pope Leo observes in *Inscrutabili* (1878) that "the theories of Socialism would quickly destory (this) family life since, the stability afforded by marriage under religious sanction once lost, paternal authority over children and the duties of children to parents are necessarily and most harmfully slackened." On the consequences of adopting the Communist position, Pope Pius XI writes in *Divini Redemptoris* (1937):

> Refusing to human life any sacred or spiritual character, such a doctrine logically makes of marriage and the family a purely artificial and civil institution, the outcome of a specific economic system. There exists no matrimonial bond of a juridico-moral nature that is not subject to the whim of the individual or of the collectivity.

> Naturally, therefore, the notion of an indissoluble marriage tie is scouted. Communism is particularly characterized by the rejection of any link that binds woman to the family and the home, and her emancipation is proclaimed as a basic principle. She is withdrawn from the family and the care of her children, to be thrust instead into public life and the collective production under the same conditions as man. The care of the home and children then devolves upon the collectivity.

We will permit the readers to draw their own conclusions as to how closely the modern feminist movement parallels this with its calls for working women and day-care centers for children, and how far all this has been accepted as public policy in the U.S. of the 1980's. (Those readers seeking more on the subject are directed to our earlier article, "Roman Catholics and the E.R.A.")

Conciliar Nuptial Nonsense

There is, perhaps, no clearer indicator of the contrasts between the true Roman Catholic Church and its Conciliar counterfeit than their respective attitudes towards marriage and annulment. Thirty years ago Father O'Brien could write that "during a recent five year period this court (the Roman Rota), which hears (marriage) cases for the whole world, granted only 98 decrees of nullity." (op. cit.) Chances are that this figure is reached *every week* in the U.S. Conciliar marriage courts!

As the statistics near the start of this article indicate, it is now ridiculously simple for Conciliar Church couples to have their marriages dissolved. Take, for example, this question posed to Conciliar Church lawyer Joseph Zwack: "But my first marriage lasted for years, and we had several children. How can I possibly receive an annulment?" Answer: *"This will make absolutely no difference."* (op. cit., emphasis added.) And Adon Taft (*The Miami Herald*) cited a specific case: that of Bill and Jeanne Wescott, whose marriage was ruled invalid after 19 years and three children. The husband and father is quoted as saying, "My divorce surprised me. I never expected to be a divorced Catholic." (op. cit.)

Quite possibly the Wescotts' union was severed on psychological grounds, as have 80 percent of U.S. Conciliar marriages in the last decade. This innovation, which Zwack correctly calls "nothing short of revolutionary," was developed in 1970 by the "reformed" Roman Rota and argued that "the capacity to give valid assent *at the time of* marriage was probably not present in persons who had displayed such problems after the marriage." (ibid.: Zwack points out that it has been noted that the same conditions could apply to the validity of some ordinations to the priesthood as well.) Catholic marriage courts have always held out in favor of the validity of a marriage until proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to the contrary. Conciliar courts, on the other hand, go out of their way to find loopholes. Zwack quotes one tribunal official who boasts: "There is *no* marriage which, given a little time for investigation, we cannot declare invalid."

Further, as papal quotes above clearly indicate, the true Church has always abhorred the ease with which Masonically-influenced governments have torn apart families with worldly divorce laws. Not so the Conciliar Church, as we can see from this quote from Zwack:

> In recent years the Church has come to the position that, while sacramental marriages are indeed unbreakable, they are rarer than once thought. If, by civil standards, a marriage has been irretrievably broken down, it is quite likely that by current standards there was never a true sacramental union.

So, if Conciliar annulment figures are any evidence, true marriages are as rare as hens' teeth. And, if the world's view of marriage is used as the true gauge to validity, is it any wonder that Conciliar divorces are as common as those among the general public?

Mention must be made of Marriage Encounter (M.E.), a group allegedly founded, write Don Demarest and Jerry and Marilyn Sexton in a book by the same name, as "an answer to the doom-cryers who claim that monogamy is outmoded..." (Carillon, 1977) This dangerous movement was started in 1962 by a Spanish priest, Gabriel Calvo, who has linked it with liberation theology, saying: "The family is the key to the revolution. The energy of the family is not dying; until now families have been in the stone age...Revolution is necessary. If we don't bring it about, someone else will. The M.E. couples are the ones who are building the reality of the 'new family.' If you do not succeed, your children will find other ways." (ibid.)

Marriage Encounter applies humanistic group therapy techniques to the teachings of radical theologians such as Teilhard, Avery Dulles and E. Schillebeeckx. What takes place at M.E. meetings may involve listening to and singing songs by identified Communist Pete Seeger or by humanist pop star John Denver, and other secular "love songs," keeping notebooks with contents "too personal and erotic to reproduce here" or participating in group sessions where the conversation "is most decently conveyed by the favorite (and most meaningful) convention used by Victorian novelists..." (Demarest, et. al., op. cit.) M.E. also promotes "ecumenism" and employs Transcendental Meditation and other disciplines connected with Eastern religions. Its practitioners prefer calling marriage by names other than sacrament, such as "love union," "communicating sign" or "Covenant-Mystery." (ibid.) A fuller treatment of M.E. isn't possible here but, suffice it to say, it has done little to slow the rush of U.S. annulments since it was imported in 1967; quite likely it has *led* to many by inviting couples to "inspect" their relationship with each other. Those who are still together and who frequent its sessions are being subtly radicalized and edged away from a

proper Catholic appreciation of their wedlock.

Some Conciliar conservatives reading this article will no doubt complain, "Yes, we admit there's a problem, but isn't the Vatican trying to do something about it? What about the Curran case?" This refers to the recent request by the New Rome to Father Charles Curran, a professor of moral theology at the Catholic University of America, to "retract" his stands on many issues, including marriage and fornication. He argues that his views, that, for example, fornication is sometimes acceptable and that it is permissible to question the indissolubility of marriage, are "accepted by the majority of Catholic theologians today." In many ways this resembles the case of Father Hans Kung, since Father Curran is opposing traditional Catholic positions and is being asked to meet "the conditions necessary for a professor to be called a Catholic theologian." He is being defended in America, as was Father Kung, by Father Richard McBrien, the radical Notre Dame educator. But the New Vatican is long on rhetoric and short on action; this is but another smoke screen to conceal what it is really doing. The "Pope" John Paul II, who can speak eloquently about the need for the family to "be defended with might and main," is the same one who instructed the already swift annulment process to be speeded up to three months and who also supports Marriage Encounter. *Who's kidding whom?*

Defending Catholic Marriage

What can *I* do, the reader well may ask, in the face of such an onslaught? When we consider the magnitude of this desecration, the task is formidable indeed. We, but a small handful against the all-encompassing spirit of the age, are called upon by God to bear witness with our lives as an island of sanity and sanctity amidst troubled waters. We were never promised by Our Lord that the going will be easy but only that He will give us the wherewithal to endure if we remain faithful to Him.

At the beginning of this article we remembered Our Lady's words: "Many marriages are not of God and do not please Our Lord." Above all, Catholic couples are obliged to lead godly lives together. Husbands are called to sobriety and industry in order to provide for the family; wives are called to provide a proper home life; and both are called to fidelity, to raise their children as Catholics and to work for the salvation of each other and of their offspring. From Catholic married couples God expects pure love and such love is sorely wanting in so very many of the worldly marriages of today.

We *all* must realize and bring to the attention of others the fact that the current crumbling state of marriage is, at least in large part, the consequence of a calculated attack on the family. Those who aim to overturn Church and State seek to destroy the family for it is the family which is the basic unit of each. As true Roman Catholics we follow the lead of countless pontiffs who, in fighting for the indissolubility of marriage and against divorce, *"fought not only for the safety of religion, but for that of civilization."* (Arcanum — 1880 — Pope Leo XIII) †

An Idea

The article on cremation in the April 15, 1986 issue and the one on the fish symbol in the last issue of *The Athanasian* resulted from suggestions to us by two newsletter subscribers. And so the thought occurred that it might be a good idea to ask our readers for similar suggestions as to topics which they think would be worthwhile subjects for treatment in *The Athanasian.* Such suggestions, then, are welcome. Time will not permit us to write a note of thanks for each one that may be received nor can we give any assurance that any particular subject suggested will necessarily be found acceptable for treatment in these pages. With this understood, we would be pleased to receive any ideas our readers may have for articles for future issues of *The Athanasian.*

"The most powerful single force promoting the worldwide advance of the Communist conspiracy is the government of the United States."

(Robert Welch)

Pray the Rosary Daily

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ABOUT THOSE CONCILIAR CHURCH BISHOPS—

MORE PLAIN TALK

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

In reading conservative publications associated with the Conciliar Church, of which *The Remnant* and *The Wanderer* are among the best examples, I sometimes wonder how long more it will take before they face up to reality on the subjects of John Paul II, the Conciliar Church and its bishops. As I read such publications it often strikes me as incredible that their articles and comments about John Paul II and the bishops aligned with him could possibly refer to the same individuals discussed in *The Athanasian.* How can it be that, on the same subjects, the position of *The Athanasian* is so diametrically opposed to that of *The Remnant, The Wanderer* and other publications of like kind?

Since my conviction (and the reasons for it) that John Paul II is a non-pope has been stated in a number of previous issues of *The Athanasian,* no purpose is served in my further belaboring the point. True enough, it remains for the Church at some future time *officially* to make such as declaration. My conviction is, then, nothing more than that, my personal certainty on the matter. The facts, however, are crystal clear to anyone who makes it his business honestly and objectively to study the situation. The record speaks for itself and to deny or ignore it is to defy reason and reality and common sense. John Paul II is a non-pope, an invalid pontiff because, for one reason, his public, persistent position on the subject of religious liberty is blatant heresy. And that's that.

As for the several hundred bishops of the Conciliar Church in the USA, is there even one who has retained the Roman Catholic Faith? If there is, who is he and where is he? In fact, it is, I think, a distinct possibility that some of them never had the true Faith when they were allegedly made bishops. Conservative publications of the Conciliar Church would have us believe—and, regrettably, so many of their readers do believe—that the many and varied anti-Catholic and anti-American words and deeds of the Conciliar bishops are merely the consequence of their being naive or not understanding or being badly advised or whatever. Nonsense! How come we know the score and these bishops do not? No one could possibly convince me that, for example, the "Red bishop of Detroit," Thomas Gumbleton, doesn't know what he's doing or that he means well. And so perhaps there is another explanation as to why at least the more notorious of the Conciliar Church bishops talk and act as they do. As one such explanation I submit that the men to whom I refer have the set purpose of destroying the Roman Catholic Church (an impossible thing, as we know) or at least of so radically transforming it over a period of time that an essentially different Church would be the end result of their efforts. And that latter purpose has been fully realized in the Conciliar Church.

Am I suggesting that a number of the bishops of the Conciliar Church may actually be subversives, infiltrators, enemies of the true Church (and some of them enemies of our country as well)? Yes, I am. "By their fruits you shall know them." Those once-Catholic (?) bishops bear the primary responsibility for the existence of the Conciliar Church and for the manifold abominations associated with it, some of them active traitors to the True Church and others passively so by their silence. But others may well have always been conscious enemies of the Church, men who became "priests" and "bishops" for the sole purpose of trying to destroy the Church. Are some of them Masons or Communists? I don't know—but it might very well be. There are Masons in clerical garb in the Vatican—and so why not among the Conciliar hierarchy and lesser clergy? (The vast majority of the current crop of Conciliar Church bishops in the USA are the appointees of either Paul VI or John Paul II—and there isn't a solidly Roman Catholic bishop in the whole lot. Of course there isn't because the Conciliar Church is no more Roman Catholic than Hinduism is.)

The Conciliar Church bishops in this country are enemies of the One, True and Eternal Church of Christ. I do not hesitate to call them such. But we traditional Catholics must not allow our unhappiness, our dissatisfaction, our disillusionment with them to affect the supernatural charity we must have towards them. As noted in my article in the previous issue of this newsletter in reference to Communists, we have it on the command of Christ Himself that we must love our enemies and pray for them with a *supernatural charity* despite our adverse feelings towards them. We are thoroughly opposed to the evil the Conciliar Church bishops represent and we deplore the destruction they have inflicted upon our beloved Church—but we must love them nonetheless. Such is the will of God. So, I genuinely love those bishops with a supernatural charity—but I sure don't like them! †

THE MIDDLE AGES: DARK AGES OR THE AGES OF FAITH? (PART IV)

Jill Wiesner

The thirteenth century has often been called The Golden Age of the Church for during that century the sacrifices of the martyrs and labors of the missionaries bore abundant fruit. The arts and sciences flourished; warfare diminished; and civilization thrived.

After the Crusades many serfs and freemen moved from the manors to the towns, the serfs becoming artisans and the freemen merchants. The townspeople, only rarely in need of protection from the lords, became increasingly independent. The Church, ever a watchful mother, drew spiritual leaders from the townspeople to guard the Faith of her children. The mendicant orders, whose monks took vows of poverty and supported themselves through begging, became the apostles of the towns.

The physical well-being of the people was also watched over by the Church and, as a result, hospitals, shelters for pilgrims and homes for the poor and aged were established throughout Europe. When leprosy spread into Europe, a community known as the Order of Saint Lazarus was formed to nurse those afflicted with the disease.

The Church encouraged the formation of guilds by the craftsmen and merchants. These organizations protected their members from unfair treatment by others and encouraged superior workmanship. If a man's work was faulty or careless, he was expelled. Each guild had its own patron saint, its own chaplain, a special chapel in the church and its own object of charity. On the feast of their patron saint, the members of the guild went to confession and received Holy Communion together. An additional feast was chosen to collect alms for the sick and for the widows and orphans of deceased members.

The Church encouraged literacy by establishing cathedral and monastery schools. The Third Council of Lateran, held in 1179, decreed:

> The Church of God, being like a good and tender mother obliged to provide for the spiritual and corporal wants of the poor, is desirous of procuring for children, destitute of pecuniary resources, the means of learning to read and of advancing in the study of letters, and ordains that every cathedral Church shall have a master who will instruct gratis the ecclesiastical students of that Church and the poor scholars, and that a grant be assigned him which, by sufficing for his maintenance, will thus open the door of the school to studious youths.

Education for girls became possible for the first time with the establishment of communities of teaching nuns. These sisters followed the Rule of Saint Augustine and were called Canonesses Regular. One of the first Canonesses Regular in Ireland was Saint Bridget.

Higher education was obtained at the universities, which were started by students who organized into corporations and hired professors to teach them. Each university specialized in a particular field of study. The oldest university, at Bologna, was renowned for the study of law; the University of Salerno taught medicine; the University of Paris specialized in philosophy and theology. The term "faculty" was first used to describe the teachers of a university by Pope Honorius III in 1219. The head of the university, the chancellor, was appointed by the Holy See.

Architecture in the Middle Ages was an expression of love for God as well as a tool of education. The great Gothic cathedrals of Sainte Chapelle, Notre Dame, Salisbury and Cologne made use of vaulted ceilings, rose windows and flying buttresses to attract the eyes heavenward. Stained glass windows and statues represented scenes from the life of Christ and the lives of the saints. These magnificent structures, "books in stone," inspired and instructed all who entered. The most remarkable feature of the Gothic cathedrals is the fact that those who built them did so, not out of coercion, but out of love for their Faith.

Painting and poetry were also used to express love for God. The master painter, Giotto, who had begun as a shepherd boy drawing on stones, painted scenes from the life of Christ and of Saint Francis. The vibrance of his figures and his use of perspective inspired later painters such as Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci.

Though hymns such as the "Salve Regina" and "Veni Sancte Spiritus" were composed in Latin, the monks also wrote hymns in the newly developing languages of English, French and German.

Dante Alighieri, who is called "the greatest of all Christian poets," gave form to the Italian language. In his masterpiece, the *Divina Commedia,* he led the reader on an imaginary journey through hell, purgatory and heaven, visiting the souls of pagan and Christian kings, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks and nuns.

As they directed the minds of people toward God, the arts flourished and learning advanced at a rapid pace. In the midst of this happy situation, however, the agents of evil were laying their snares. Two particularly virulent heresies originated in France. The Waldensian heresy, instigated in the twelfth century by Peter Waldo, a merchant banker of

Lyons, claimed that bishops were murderers because they tolerated wars. They condemned all judges, contending that it is never lawful to punish wrongdoers or to put any man to death. They denied purgatory and rejected prayers for the dead, indulgences and all festivals, including Easter day. They rejected invocation of the saints, veneration of images, crucifixes and relics, and declared that all sacraments were invalid if administered by a bad priest but that a good layman had the power to remit sins and to confer the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They rejected the Canon of the Mass, only reciting the words of the Consecration in the vernacular. They divided themselves into two classes: the Perfect who did no manual labor and the Friends who were saved by their association with the Perfect.

The Albigensian heresy adopted the errors of the Waldensians and added to them. Though they took their name from the town of Albi in the province of Languedoc, their doctrine was that of Manichaeism, a heresy of the fourth century, which taught that there were two basic and eternal powers, Good and Evil. God was the source of Good; Satan was the source of Evil. Man was not responsible for physical or moral evil.

The Albigensians rejected the Old Testament, accepting only the New Testament. They claimed that the laity could consecrate the Eucharist; that contrition was sufficient for the remission of sins; and that confession, penance, fasting and almsgiving were unnecessary. They believed in the transmigration of souls; they commended suicide; and they preferred concubinage to marriage. They also referred to themselves as the Cathari (the "Pure").

Though the Albigenses heresy was condemned by The Second Lateran Council in 1139, it continued to spread. With armed troops, the Albigensians plundered monasteries and churches, expelling the priests and religious.

During the period when the Albigensians were stepping up their attacks, a child was born who would become a powerful defender of the Catholic Faith. The child, born in 1170 to the noble Guzman family of Spain, was named Dominic. Instructed carefully in the Faith by his mother, Dominic became devoted to prayer, pious reading and works of charity.

When he was 14 he was sent to school in Salamanca. Surrounded by many temptations, he subjected his senses to constant mortification, a practice he continued throughout his life. He was careful to avoid all unnecessary conversation and to keep even that of a pious nature brief. From the example of his mother he had learned a deep devotion to the Mother of God and such a great love for the poor that, during a famine, he gave all his money and personal property to help those in need, even selling his books and his own writings. His actions inspired his teachers and other students to follow his example.

When Dominic's education was completed, he was assigned to teach Holy Scripture in the schools and to preach to the people of Palentia. His gift for preaching was augmented by his knowledge and good sense, and his advice was constantly sought in temporal matters as well as spiritual. In 1198, Diego, the Bishop of Osma, invited Dominic to join his order, which followed the Rule of Saint Augustine. Dominic accepted, receiving the habit at 28 years of age.

Accompanying Bishop Diego on an official errand to the province of Languedoc, Dominic first encountered the Albigensians and his heart was filled with compassion for their souls. Dominic and Diego petitioned Pope Innocent III to be allowed to remain in Languedoc as missionaries and permission was granted. Among the heretics Dominic labored with meekness and determination. The hostility he encountered and the small results of his efforts, rather than discouraging him, increased his resolve. Though a number of attempts were made on his life, he was protected by God. He never lost an opportunity to obtain conversions, even meeting with a band of heretics who had but recently murdered another monk. When asked by an assassin who had been frustrated in an unsuccessful ambush attempt what he would have done if he had fallen into their hands, he replied, "I would have thanked God and would have begged as a favor that my blood might have been let out drop by drop, and my limbs lopt off one by one, to prolong my torments and enhance my crown." When a poor man rejected the Albigensian heresy but told Dominic he was financially dependent on the heretics, the saint offered to sell himself into slavery to free the man from their influence. God provided the man with another means of subsistence, thus preventing Dominic from making this sacrifice.

Pope Innocent III had also sent a number of Cistercian monks to preach against the Albigensians. In response the heretics assassinated Peter, the Cistercian who was the papal legate in Languedoc. The pope excommunicated the murderers and implored Philip Augustus, King of France, to raise a crusade against the Albigensians. Simon, the Count of Montfort, was chosen as general. The Catholic forces were outnumbered and lost a number of battles. Finally, de Montfort's force of 1,200 men was besieged at the town of Muret by an Albigensian army many times its size. Dominic, also within the city, informed the Count that God would grant him a victory and, as the battle raged outside the walls, the saint spent the time in prayer. On September 12, 1213, the small Catholic force was victorious, severely damaging the power of the Albigensians.

While in Languedoc, Dominic acquired a spiritual weapon which brought him great success: the Rosary. His subsequent victories in that province prompted him to organize a unit which would confront heresy worldwide. With the approval of Pope Honorius, he founded the Order of Preachers, a mendicant order whose members took vows of absolute poverty. They followed the Rule of Saint

Augustine, in addition to observing perpetual abstinence from meat and a rigorous Lenten fast. More effectively to combat the false doctrine taught by heretical priests and apostate theologians, Dominicans were trained as eloquent preachers. Dominican friars preached during the day and did penance at night. Dominic himself often spent the entire night in prayer. He instructed his religious:

> ...a man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either command them or be enslaved by them. It is better to be the hammer than the anvil.

The founder of this army of scholars died at the age of 51, exhorting his followers to humility, poverty, fervor and watchfulness, especially against the vice of impurity.

Guided by Saint Dominic, the Order of Preachers won many victories against the promoters of false doctrines. With undaunted loyalty to the Faith and with unwavering confidence in God, they regained countless souls from the errors of heresy and strengthened others against falling into them. Although the abysmal spiritual and moral decadence of our modern world may well be without precedent throughout the history of Christianity, we Roman Catholics have the same weapons at our disposal as did Saint Dominic and his confreres effectively to counteract the enemies of God and Church in this our day. It remains for us to employ those weapons with hope and courage and tenacity. Another Golden Age of the Church seems at present to be but the remotest of possibilities. But God's ways are not ours. Perhaps there will be another Golden Age of the Church and perhaps too we are part of the divine plan for the ultimate realization of that glorious era. †

A REQUEST

The good news is that, with one minor exception, the TCA owes no money to anybody. The bad news is that the TCA has little in the way of reserve funds. A financial appeal is a rarity in the pages of this newsletter. Nor would it be brought up now except for the following reason.

Father Placid White is an 88-year-old priest of the Order of Saint Benedict. The chances are that no more soundly traditional priest is to be found this side of Heaven. For many years he faithfully served the cause of traditional Catholicism both in Colorado and on the Mass circuit around the country. Even in his early 80's he continued to be active as the pastor of Our Lady of Victory Chapel in Aurora, Colorado. But his advanced age gradually took its toll and in 1984 (he was then 85 years old!) he relinquished his pastorate of the Aurora chapel. For some time after that, however, being the caliber of dedicated priest he is, he remained as active as his age and health permitted him to be.

Since March, 1984, the TCA has had the financial responsibility for the care of Father White here in Colorado Springs. (He has been in a convalescent home or hospitalized for nearly all of the past 14 months and will likely be in the convalescent home indefinitely.) The funds required to pay the expenses involved have come in large part from several traditional groups which Father White served in years past and from a few individuals, with the TCA itself paying the remainder of those expenses. The total cost to date has been approximately $28,000.

Since the TCA receives sufficient support from traditional Roman Catholics around the country to cover its ordinary expenses, I would not ask for any further financial help were it not for the additional expenses we have in the care of Father White. We are pleased that the opportunity and the privilege are ours to be of assistance to this fine priest. In the matter of the funds required to do so, however, we could use a little more support. Thank you!

(Checks should be made payable to: TCA.)

Fr. F. Fenton

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