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Strange Alliances: What Price Catholic Restoration?

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When a newcomer from the Conciliar "Catholic" Church visits a traditional Roman Catholic church, the priest will typically instruct him (by spoken word or posted rules or both) that in order to receive the sacraments it is necessary for him to make a clean break from that modernist sect. In practical terms, this principally means no more attending the Conciliar-sponsored *Novus Ordo Missae* (the so-called "new Mass"). A choice, then, is what is being offered to him: Come out of the false Church, or stay in it, but *do not try to do both!*

This policy is not only logical and commendable, but in a very real sense, even obligatory, for if traditional priests would allow such a confused and indecisive individual to shuttle freely back and forth between Catholicism and Conciliarism, it would not only scandalize the faithful, but keep said person in a state of abject ignorance as to where the true Church is to be found in the current crisis. Priests following such a policy thereby fulfill two prime functions of their ministry — protecting the flock from error and leading the wayward back into the fold.

It is regrettable to note, however, that some of these very same priests do not apply this standard to themselves — they do not *practice what they preach*. A kind of relativism animates their dealings so that, whereas the laity are warned away from the "new Mass," the same clergy who warn are simultaneously involving themselves with ministers from the Conciliar Church in different projects. Before reviewing these instances, there is a document most worthy of consideration in this context, since it both outlines traditional opposition to the Vatican II religion, and is signed by all of the priests involved in this intercommunion. (Some of the signatories below were not involved.)

A Statement Of Principles

On June 7, 1984, twelve priests who had been ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre and who formerly served chapels of his Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) on the East Coast, issued a six-page summary of those points that formed "the basis of their apostolate." (The signers listed were: Reverends Clarence Kelly, Donald J. Sanborn, Daniel L. Dolan, Anthony Cekada, William Jenkins, Joseph Collins, Eugene R. Berry, Thomas Zapp, Martin Skierka, Thomas Mroczka, Daniel Ahern, and Denis McMahon.) The document, "A Statement of Principles in a Time of Crisis," was also an indirect refutation of certain SSPX policies that smacked of compromise with the Conciliar Church (for example, accepting its marriage annulments, receiving priests from it without requiring conditional ordination, etc.). All but one of these priests would later go on to form a loosely knit group, Society of Saint Pius V (SSPV). Today, only seven of the original "founding members" are even nominally connected to the group. (One of these, whom the SSPV scandalously ousted from the churches he served, is now identified by it as an "inactive member," whatever that means.)

The "Statement of Principles" is a generally strong renunciation of the Second Vatican Council and the new religion it produced. The document calls Vatican II "the first phase of a liberal and modernist intrusion into the Roman Catholic Church", one in which "men influenced by modernist ideas gained positions of authority, thereby permitting confirmed heretics and enemies of the Church to overtake our Catholic institutions." The result of this subversion is described in one of the document's key articles:

> **4.** The intrusion of liberals and Modernists into positions of control has caused the widespread destruction of the Catholic Faith, morals and worship and the *creation of a new religion — the so-called conciliar religion which is not the Catholic Religion.* [italics added throughout] It should be apparent to all that this new religion is not the Catholic Religion because, since its introduction into our Catholic institutions, these institutions no longer manifest the four marks of the true Church, the marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity. Thus, *those who promote the doctrines and reforms of the conciliar religion do not represent the Roman Catholic Church*, which is absolutely and exclusively identified with the Mystical Body of Christ and which is known by its four marks.

The authors go on to write that "those who are presently thought to be occupying hierarchical positions in the Catholic Church are acting, for the most part, as if they do not have the Faith, according to all human means of

judging," and hence "there is certain and sufficient evidence to assert, as a legitimate theological opinion, that anyone who publicly professes the conciliar religion does not legitimately hold any position of authority in the Catholic Church." The authors also say they "deplore the attempt of some to settle this question by acting as though they had the authority to bind the consciences of the faithful in matters which have not been definitively settled by the Church." And as part of their conclusion, they write: "In light of the foregoing, we see no other practical course to follow than… to condemn, reprove, and reject the poisonous errors of the Modernists, refusing the Catholic name to their tenets, worship and discipline and thereby *refusing ecclesial communion with them*." [italics added]

This last passage is quite admirable, and indeed is *at the very heart* of traditional Catholic resistance to the Modernist revolution. The Vatican II sect, as has been shown for more than a quarter of a century, is nothing but a *pseudo-Catholic* religion that has succeeded in capturing the outward trappings of the Church for its own nefarious designs. So for Catholics to deny the orthodoxy of the Conciliar "Catholic" Church and refuse to have communion with it is of the same order as the rejection of the Orthodox, Anglicans, Lutherans, and other non-Catholic "Christian" sects. And, ultimately, it is *the clearest demonstration of their adherence to the one true Church founded by the Son of God nearly two thousand years ago.*

Would that all the priests who signed the "Statement of Principles" maintained today such a strict observance of this *fundamental* premise! Alas, such is not the case: As a remnant, without the ordinary means of replenishing their numbers, many of them in desperation have resorted to (or, in some cases, have agreed to) "extra-canonical" means to succor their flocks. While the present article casts no aspersions as to their *intentions*, there is, we feel, very good reason to question the *means* by which they have attained their goals.

The involvement by these priests with clerics who are either *clearly* part of the Conciliar Church, or who act as though they *think* they are still a part of it, must be weighed against the pronouncements provided in the "Statement of Principles." If these "traditional" friends have never *directly* repudiated the new sect, they must, by all right reason, be challenged as to their *catholicity*. When the balance of the following strange alliances is weighed, some major discrepancies emerge.

The Secret Ordinations Of The SSPV

A solemn rite took place in Cincinnati on September 3, 1990, that is usually an occasion for rejoicing among Catholics: the ordination of two new priests. Ordinarily, it is a cause for open celebration, much the way a baby's birth is joyously announced. And ordinarily too, such an event is heralded by the faithful, especially by ecclesial news organs, which broadcast its details far and wide. But the Cincinnati ceremony was anything but *ordinary*.

The new priests, Reverends Paul Baumberger and Joseph Greenwell, are today associated with the SSPV, the group that for all intents and purposes *sponsored* the ordinations. The rite took place in the chapel of the group's school, Saint Gertrude Academy, and five Society priests were on hand for the event. An estimated 40 of the faithful also attended.

Nothing special about any of this; however, when certain other aspects are taken into account, the utter *strangeness* of the affair becomes evident. One priest who once belonged to the Society and who was still assisting at its chapels at the time, Father Collins, made the innocent mistake of asking Father Kelly, the group's *de facto* head, why he did not know the bishop's name. He was brusquely told: *"You have no right to know. You are not a member of the Society."*

Perhaps, though it is difficult to see just how, a reasonable case can be made to justify this peculiar treatment of Father Collins, but a similar instance involved a great deal more than a breach of common courtesy. While, as noted above, five SSPV priests were present (Fathers Jenkins, Kelly, Mroczka, Skierka, and Zapp), the remaining three priests in the group (Fathers Ahern, McMahon, and Sanborn) did not attend. (The total of eight results from the fact that Father Collins, along with Fathers Cekada and Dolan, had left the Society, while Father Berry had never belonged. Later, Father Sanborn would also make an exit.)

Why was the trio absent? Simply, because they were not told! They did not have the slightest inkling that anything extraordinary was taking place on September 3rd in Cincinnati. Not only were they never *consulted* about the ordinations, as incredible as it may seem, they did not even *learn about them* until after the fact.

The question must be asked: What sort of group is the SSPV when it withholds manifestly important information from its member priests (if such a body can be said to actually have *members* in anything but name) and from another cleric who still had a fairly close working relationship with it? A group, it seems, that goes against its own unwritten rules. A little more than a year before the ordinations, Father Jenkins publicly outlined Society policy as follows: "The priests had unanimously agreed not to do anything which would affect all the priests without bringing it up before the Council of All." [This is the SSPV expression for all member priests — JKW] Clearly, by any reasonable measure of reckoning, the ordination of two new priests for the group was an event of such momentous

importance that it would necessarily require a calling of the Council of All.

Why, then, was it not called in this instance? Perhaps for the same reason that the ordinations were initially referred to as being *secret* (later, SSPV priests adopted the smoother-sounding *private* to describe the rite). Just what caused the Society to resort to secrecy in an act that usually is as public as can be? As the old saying goes, *therein lies a tale*.

The Case Of The Mystery Bishop

In the August/September 1990 issue of *The Roman Catholic*, a semi-official SSPV magazine geared to the laity, reference is made to the ordinations. The word "reference" instead of "news" is used here intentionally, since no direct mention is made of them. Instead, a two-page photo spread shows the new priests exercising their sacredotal duties weeks after receiving Holy Orders, and a short sermon by one of them follows. Yet nothing at all is written as to when or where the ordinations took place, and neither is the name of the bishop who presided nor a photograph of him anywhere to be found. This issue has been the only one to carry anything about the ordinations, and then only in this most unsatisfactory way.

Such omissions are curious, to say the least, but not half as curious as the truth behind the blackout. The lack of any report on the particulars of the event was, of course, a conscious decision by the editors, and consistent with the policy of secrecy already outlined. Even further proof of concealment is the way in which the SSPV has compelled persons inspecting the ordination certificates to swear never to divulge the name of the mystery prelate. Also enshrouding the affair has been a name game played by the Society. On cards printed for the ordinations the bishop's legal name is replaced with a pseudonym, and it is the pseudonym that is given publicly when outsiders make unwanted inquiries on the subject. No doubt the SSPV priests have had a good many chuckles while employing this policy of mystification.

But the Society had made the mistake of not swearing to secrecy *everyone* it told. Leaks quickly made this "classified information" an *open secret* known by traditional Catholics around the nation. Only weeks after the event, the *legal name* (that is, the one he affixes to his letters, and which is found in ecclesial publications) of the ordaining prelate was on the lips of many of the faithful: *Alfred F. Mendez, C.S.C., D.D.* According to biographical data culled from various sources, Bishop Mendez was born in Chicago in 1907. At some point after his ordination as a Catholic priest he ended up at Notre Dame University, where he remained until at least 1958. When a diocese was established at Arecibo, Puerto Rico, in 1960, he was consecrated its first bishop, a post he held until his resignation in 1974. He is listed in the 1992 *Catholic [sic] Almanac* as living in retirement in San Diego.

Sometime before the Cincinnati encounter, Bishop Mendez (a friend of Father Jenkins and his family) viewed *What Catholics Believe* (a television panel show featuring SSPV priests), and sympathetic to the views espoused on it, he pledged contributions totaling $5,000 to the program. Of course he would contribute much more to the Society *by ordaining its priests*.

If Bishop Mendez has such an obvious sympathy for traditional Catholicism, why would the SSPV erect a cone of silence around questions concerning him? Or why should the Society's use of his services be challenged by *The Athanasian*? For one regrettable reason (though others may exist): Because Bishop Mendez, like others who have capitulated to the Vatican II revolution, *is no longer a truly Catholic bishop, but a member in good standing in the Conciliar Church*. He does have traditional sympathies, yet he has made no attempt to sever himself from and publicly denounce this Modernist sect. Indeed, in perusing the 1993 *Official Catholic [sic] Directory*, his name is found in a list of "Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops & Abbots of the United States." (p. 1xx) Lest there be any mistake about the church under discussion there, the same book carries a section titled "Hierarchy of the Catholic Church," which identifies John Paul II as "His Holiness The Pope" and "the present successor to St. Peter." (p. xxi)

Like the directory in which he appears, and the university to which he makes generous donations (Notre Dame), the designation *once Catholic* equally fits Bishop Mendez, at least materially. The implications of this status help explain the clandestine nature of the goings-on in Cincinnati: On the one hand, secrecy prevented Conciliar authorities from taking any punitive action against him, while on the other, it saved the SSPV from the embarrassment of having to answer sticky questions about his affiliation. While the Society's methods in this enterprise have already been reviewed, a brief look as to how the bishop fended off one inquisitor's snooping will shed further light on the affair.

A little over a month after the ordinations, Father Peter Scott, the SSPX's District Supervisor for the United States wrote Bishop Mendez. In his letter, dated October 12, 1990, Father Scott begins: "A vicious rumor has been spreading around that you ordained [to] the holy priesthood two young men, friends of Father Jenkins, who are Sedevacantists, and hence schismatic." *[sic]* Although he goes on to express his doubts about "this ugly rumor," Father Scott asks the bishop to respond with "a definitive and unambiguous statement that you did not perform these ordinations" to ensure "your

continued collaboration with the Society." What constitutes a "definitive and unambiguous" denial of said participation? Logically, it *must* be direct, not using mental reservation; it *must* amount to something along the lines of these seven simple, but firm and emphatic words: *"No, I did not ordain these men!"* Anything short of this is a type of *evasion*.

So how does Bishop Mendez answer this query? Five days later he replies, but *not once* in his letter is there *anything* that can be construed as the *clear and precise* answer sought by Father Scott. Instead, he opens by declaring it "quite offensive to me to receive your demanding letter..." While concurring with the "ugly rumor" label, he gently advises that the controversy be overlooked: "Let us forget this incident, Father. We should rejoice if Pius V is growing[,] just as all of us rejoice profoundly at the vast growth of Pius X. Twenty years from now is all that matters." This evasiveness, considered in the light of Father Scott's request for an unequivocal answer, is undeniably equivalent to an admission by the bishop that he took part in the ordinations, for had he not, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to have answered with a simple denial. The gist of his reply amounts to this: "Look, Father, the less you know, the better. So just forget this ever happened."

What is found here has something of a parallel to the title of the book, *I Led Three Lives*, by Herbert Philbrick, the U.S. agent who infiltrated the American Communist Party. This is in *no way* to suggest that Bishop Mendez is somehow deliberately attempting to likewise "infiltrate" traditional Catholicism, since this is most assuredly *not* the position of *The Athanasian*. Rather, it is seen as evidence that he has little or no idea of where the Church is today, confusedly wending his way from the Conciliar Church to the SSPX, from SSPX to the SSPV, and from the SSPV back again to the Conciliar Church. It is obvious that the bishop would never have ordained these men had he not seen it as good for the Church. Yet he made no attempt to get authorization to do so from the man he views as "Pope," and did not even notify Cincinnati's Conciliar archdiocesan office that he was conducting the ordination within its boundaries. This demonstrates a manifest inner conflict, for Bishop Mendez rightly sensed that the very men with whose names his appears in the *Directory* would reject any request of his to ordain traditional Catholic priests. The mystery is why he chooses to stay affiliated with them.

In fact, this confusion carried over into the ordinations themselves. In what Father Sanborn has rightly typified as an "ecclesiastical nightmare," Bishop Mendez entoned the name of "His Holiness" John Paul II at the Canon of the Mass, while Fathers Baumberger and Greenwell remained silent — he acknowledged as Pope, and professed his union with (*una cum*) the very man whom they rejected as Pontiff. Whose church was being represented here? The very principle of Catholic unity (one of the Church's four marks) was being negated, however well-intentioned the participants surely were. But if he fails to grasp that "oil and water do not mix," must not some part of the responsibility fall upon his SSPV friends? They all reject the Conciliar Church, John Paul II, and its hierarchy (excepting Bishop Mendez, of course), and, to be consistent with this rejection, should have delayed the ordinations until the bishop was ready to break from it and fully embrace tradition. This is no different in principle than obliging the laity to assist *exclusively* at traditional chapels as a communion requirement. Would that have been too much to ask?

The manner in which the Cincinnati ordinations were conducted should be repugnant to traditional Catholics for a number of reasons. First, the SSPV went against its own rules by concealing the ceremony from some of its members. Second, it turned a normally public act into a clandestine one. Third, it engaged the services of a bishop who is found on the official membership rolls of the Conciliar sect, and yet did not make his public rejection and separation from it a pre-condition for ordaining its priests. (Essentially, this is equivalent to saying: conservative Conciliar bishop equals traditional Catholic bishop. If so, why not call Cardinal O'Connor, Cardinal Ratzinger, and Bishop Vaughn Catholics, since they sometimes say or do the right thing? Answer: Because the Church does not recognize someone as Catholic simply because he may conform in word and deed with Catholicism seventy, eighty, or ninety percent of the time — *the Faith is an all-or-nothing proposition*.)

The Roman Catholic issue mentioned above carries an article that in the present context is more than a touch ironic. Father Jenkins, in a study entitled "To Approve What the Church has Always Approved, To Condemn What the Church has Always Condemned," writes on the involvement of some traditionalists with the CMRI (or Mount Saint Michael group), which he identifies as "schismatic." Alluding to a decree on the Old Catholics by Pope Saint Pius X, he urges his readers to examine it, and "note the strong language he [Pius X — JKW] uses in pronouncing the Church's judgment on seeking consecration from non-Catholics." Pope Saint Pius X's expression is "illegitimate and sacrilegious," and it remains to be seen why such words may not be applied, if only in a material sense, to the Cincinnati ordinations. Yet Father Jenkins and the other SSPV priests find nothing amiss in using a prelate affiliated with a body that they once described (in the "Statement of Principles") as "a new religion [that] is not the Catholic religion." They have gone far afield — and outside the

Church — to find someone to do their ordinations, someone who clings tenaciously to his Conciliar identity.

A Mile High Dilemma

Three longtime parishioners of a traditional chapel take a visiting priest out to dinner on a Saturday evening. The conversation is going along in a manner typical of such exchanges between clergy and faithful. Then he drops a bombshell, announcing that his Mass the next morning would be said *in union with "Pope" John Paul II*. The laity, *staunch sedevacantists*, recoil at his revelation. What makes this all the more surprising is the fact that the resident priest (Father Eugene R. Berry), in whose chapel the visiting priest would be offering Mass, *is a sedevacantist*.

This encounter took place, in fact, last fall in the Denver suburb of Aurora. For more than a decade Frank and Sue O'Toole regularly attended Our Lady of Victory Chapel there. In a state where truly traditional Masses are as rare as palm trees, the chapel's pastor, Father Berry, has long served the lay folk with dedication and zeal. Yet after that Saturday in October the O'Tooles decided against returning to Our Lady of Victory.

The incident that prompted such an agonizing decision involved one Father Carlos Casavantes. Although some details of the discussion which they and another parishioner had with him have been disputed, the following is known about him. In 1986, he was "ordained" a "priest" in the Conciliar Church *by none other than John Paul II*. Sometime after this he was given the grace to challenge the validity of the "holy orders" he had received, and thus had himself conditionally ordained by Bishop Richard Williamson of the SSPX. (This episode speaks reams about the truly unprecedented level of confusion at work in these times, when a man must *question* whether or not to trust this "sacrament" of the "Catholic Church" — *even when it is conferred by the "Pope" himself!*)

Father Casavantes for a time assisted at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Chapel in Vienna, Ohio, a suburb of Youngstown. When that chapel continued negotiations with the local diocese for incorporation into the Conciliar Church, he and between 150 and 200 parishioners formed a breakaway chapel. At last report, he is still functioning there. He returned during Lent 1993 to substitute for Father Berry. But in the months since his earlier visit he had become a sedevacantist, and now *omitted* John Paul II's name in the Canon. By this time, however, some fourteen people who had regularly attended Father Berry's Masses in Aurora and Colorado Springs had stopped going to them.

The Aurora affair parallels the SSPV ordinations, but with important differences. In each case, the faithful were kept in the dark about the affiliation/orientation of the visiting cleric, *since the beliefs of the visitor were markedly different from theirs*. And no pre-conditions were placed on the visitor to conform to the prevailing beliefs by the traditional priest. However, Bishop Mendez was (and, presumably, still *is*) comfortable with his retirement niche in John Paul II's church, while Father Casavantes has made an odyssey to traditional Catholicism (for which Father Berry, among others, deserves some of the credit). While the SSPV was aware that the bishop was frozen in the conservative fringe of Conciliarism, Father Berry saw the direction in which his brother priest was moving. As mentioned, Bishop Mendez is listed in the official Conciliar *Directory*; Father Casavantes is not.

A Question Of Trust

The Conciliar "Catholic" Church embodies a vastly successful plot by the enemies of Christ to subvert the ecclesial structures of His Church in the hope of destroying it from within. This is all that needs be known about it to not only avoid any and all contact with it, but to actively and openly oppose it with all one's might. Hence it is impossible for traditional Catholics to have any sort of religious involvement with its adherents. As is well stated in the "Statement of Principles," there are sufficient grounds for "refusing ecclesial communion with them."

Yet in the practical order, many of the priests who penned that document are woefully inconsistent in how they implement its positions. (To our knowledge, not one of the twelve who signed it has ever repudiated it, and *The Roman Catholic* even saw fit to reprint it in the October/November 1990 issue.) They averred that a new church was formed at Vatican II, which Catholics must avoid. Yet this avoidance must include members of its hierarchy. Likewise, a Mass said in union with the cult's leader, John Paul II, is deeply offensive to traditional Catholics and an insult to God.

On a spiritual level, the present crisis is the equivalent of a world war, and such involvement amounts to collaborating with the enemy. This is not, of course, to say that Bishop Mendez is a conscious foe; indeed, he has demonstrated real friendship to the traditional cause. Yet such a soldier needs to do more, by tearing the opponent's uniform from his back and deserting its ranks. And he, as an officer, will bring some from the lower ranks with him by his act. Father Casavantes' position was more akin to a soldier in no-man's land, who for a time saluted the enemy general, but then finally worked his way into our camp.

The issue here is *trust*. Traditional Catholics do not travel (in some cases *more than one hundred miles*) to go to a Mass that is said by either a priest who rejects their thinking as pertains to the Church, or by one who is tacitly in union with a bishop who is aligned to another church. They have a God-

given *right to know* the *true identity* of their clergy, both by name and affiliation. Likewise, they have a *right to know* that they are not taking part in a Mass said in a manner they consider sacrilegious. Anything short of this must fairly be construed as something of a *sham*. The central matter here concerns John Paul II and the church he represents. It is patently absurd that Catholics worthy of the name will have *anything whatsoever* to do with this illegitimate and criminal cult.

This message needs to be sent loud and clear to these priests. In the view of *The Athanasian*, the best way to accomplish this is for the faithful to *avoid their Masses and sacraments* until such time as they are prepared to make amends. Read the prayers from the missal, say the rosary, and practice other devotions at home, until such time (pray God) as such errors are corrected. If enough of the faithful are willing, out of principle, to make what is admittedly a sacrifice, then that time may be quick in arriving.

How can the damage be undone? For the priests of the SSPV, either corporately or individually, it involves a public disavowal of the irregular ordinations. This would apply also for Fathers Baumberger and Greenwell. And Father Berry can correct the situation by a similarly open renunciation of his using an *una cum* priest, and a simple pledge not to do so again. And so parishioners will not have any qualms about future visits from Father Casavantes, a statement clearly outlining his stand on John Paul II and the Conciliar Church should be made available. If the priests in question place the good of souls ahead of personal feelings, as we believe they do, they will see that what is being asked of them is hardly too much under the circumstances.

Let us pray that these priests be given the humility to acknowledge their errors; that Bishop Mendez and others who are still in some way encumbered by the shackles of a pseudo-Catholic Church find the divine strength to break free from it, as Father Casavantes *may* have done; and that the Church *in all ways* more vigorously denounce the spirit of compromise and relativism, which deters the time of her glorious resurrection and of her triumphant restoration! *Veni, Sancte Spiritus!* †

CAPSULE COMMENTS

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

The "ecumenical" extravaganza of "Pope" John Paul II is due to arrive in Denver, Colorado, on August 12 for a four-day stand. With literally hundreds of thousands expected to attend the show, the event will further promote, as intended, at least two objectives: the unceasing effort to destroy the true Church and the advancement of the universal "religion" of the godless New World Order. It remains to be seen whether or not the "Vicar of Christ" will participate, as he has done elsewhere, in heretical religious ceremonies and pagan rites. One thing is for sure: the heresy of religious indifferentism will receive yet another tremendous boost from this bogus Pope of the Conciliar Church during his visit to Denver. Imagine: multitudes will assemble on that occasion to see and hear a man they believe to be the Pope — and he isn't even a Catholic!

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Although still called the United States, this country is now in the incipient stage of becoming a full-fledged police state, a grim reality of which many of the subscribers to this newsletter are well aware. It is today in large part a socialist country substantially under the control of the Insiders and their allies who are hell-bent on assimilating it into the New World Order by way of the United Nations. Some members of what was formerly the American military now wear U.N. uniforms and are fighting under its command in various areas of the world. These lines are being written a couple of weeks before America's annual observance of Independence Day. While the term certainly retains its historical significance it is no longer applicable otherwise for America is no longer an independent nation.

But, apart from divine intervention, is there anything which will at least slow down the ever accelerating pace of the U.N.'s takeover of this country and its incorporation into the New World Order? Well, in my opinion, yes there is -- and that is the estimated 200 million firearms currently in the possession of the American civilian population. For the U.N. and the "American" government (ever more and more identical) to confiscate that amount of firearms is bound to take some doing and so will likely prolong to some extent the ultimate takeover. Not exactly a cheerful observation, to be sure, but perhaps worth noting.

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Questions And Answers

Fr. Oswald Baker (England)

Question:

Is it necessary to believe that Catholicism is the only way to God, and that all other religions are false?

Answer:

When we affirm that Catholicism is the only way to God, we mean that there is no other religion *through* which a soul can go to heaven. Only one path leads to heaven: that ordained by Jesus Christ, which is Catholicism. All other religions are of merely human foundation. The Christian sects familiar to us contain some of the truth taught by Christ, distorting the integral truth by their selectivity. Non-Catholics who sincerely strive to know religious truth and to do God's will are thereby related to God's one true Church and thereby *can* be saved. If a man is not a Catholic, his denominational allegiance has no bearing on his salvation. To the non-Catholic mind this is intolerable arrogance. To the Catholic mind it is common sense.

Question:

What is the meaning of the statement in Saint Luke's Gospel that "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and with men." (Saint Luke 2:52)?

Answer:

If Jesus was God, how could He advance in wisdom? The word translated "advance" is elsewhere used to mean "pioneer," "take the lead," "show the way," a translation which eliminates all difficulty. The usual interpretation, however, is that, as Our Lord grew into youth and manhood, He increasingly manifested His wisdom. Saint Luke cannot have meant that Our Lord acquired more wisdom, for he had just stated that the boy Jesus was "filled with wisdom" (Saint Luke 2:40).

Question:

Just how is it that a priest can be dispensed from his vow and allowed to marry, while a woman who has had a disastrous marriage and has had to separate cannot be dispensed to marry again?

Answer:

Marriage is, by the law of God, a contract of mutual commitment until death, divine law precluding a simultaneous second marriage. The priesthood excludes marriage, not by divine law, but by a disciplinary law of the Church's own making, a law from which, therefore, the Church has the power to dispense. But the Church never exercises this power, *never* dispenses a priest to marry. (We have always to keep in mind that what emerged from the Second Vatican Council was no longer the Catholic Church, but what can only be called the Conciliar sect. Consequently, it has no legislative or other authority.)

Question:

Is it possible to state briefly the Church's teaching on artificially produced embryos and associated experimentation?

Answer:

Yes. Marriage is a contract and status designed by God. Marital rights are laid down by God. They are permanent, they are exclusive to the two parties reciprocally, and they are limited. The purpose of marriage is primarily the procreation and education of offspring, secondarily the mutual happiness of husband and wife. Marital union is the only occasion of the lawful exercise of the sexual faculty. The marriage contract confers the right to sexual union. It does not confer the right to offspring. The procreative right of husband and wife is limited to the mutual act of procreative union. Marital union is by the natural law the sole legitimate means to conception and birth. It is a union of love and fulfillment, of desire and satisfaction, and the entire natural course, from desire and union to conception and birth, is a sacred unit which morally admits of no interference whatever. God is directly involved with the procreation of each human being. The soul is not transmitted by the parents, but is a new and distinct creation, destined to know and love God for eternity. It follows then that an embryo may never be artificially produced, and may never be made a mere object in a scientific laboratory.

Resignation To The Will Of God

Sin alone is permitted by God. Whatever else happens in life is willed by Him. This is universally true even though the divine will is often obscure to us in particular situations. Suffering of any kind then, however intense and prolonged it may be, is the will of God. Such is the teaching of the Church regardless of how ludicrous that teaching may appear in the eyes of the world. Only one thing is evil and that is immorality or sin. If physical pain of any kind were evil, would the Son of God have undergone His passion to redeem us? No, suffering is not an evil — to be avoided if at all possible and, if unavoidable, merely to be accepted with bitterness and resentment. On the contrary, borne out of love for God and in atonement for personal sins and those of our fellowmen, suffering contributes as nothing else can to God's honor and glory and to our sanctification and salvation.

Whatever form it may take (physical, mental, emotional), suffering, one of the consequences of original sin, is part and parcel of human life from which no one is exempt. It is our attitude toward it that makes all the difference. In the lives of the martyrs we read that some of them sang hymns of praise to God as they went to their deaths. The martyr, Saint Lawrence, actually joked as he was being burned to death for his loyalty to Christ. And we read in Holy Scripture that the disciples of Christ rejoiced because they were found worthy to suffer persecution for Him. The saints, not content with the trials and tribulations that were theirs in the course of their daily lives, voluntarily sought out suffering to manifest their love for God and for their precious Faith. The annals of Church history abound with the inspiring stories of courage and perseverance and supernatural love of the saints and martyrs whom the Roman Catholic Church has produced throughout the Christian centuries.

But, you may say, these men and women, boys and girls, were saints and so of a different mold than we are. Not so. They were human beings, flesh and blood just as we are. They were not born saints but they worked hard to become such. And so we too can become saints. In fact, if we would attain heaven we must become saints.

Granted, all the above is far easier to write about than to put into practice. And yet, whatever God wills He gives the grace to accomplish, a truth which we should strive to indelibly impress upon ourselves so that it becomes a firm and unshakable conviction. The signs are increasingly clear that persecution lies ahead for Christians in general and for traditional Roman Catholics in particular. To some extent it is already present but that is but a mild prelude to what is down the road. The opportunity of martyrdom for the Faith is, then, a distinct possibility or, more accurately, probability. However, rather than presuming to predict just when widespread physical persecution — for the "crime" of believing in god and of being a member of the One, True Church — will be a reality, suffice it to say for now that religious persecution will almost certainly become commonplace in the forseeable future.

But, if such be the will of God, then, again, whatever God wills, he gives the grace to accomplish. The key is resignation to that divine will, not halfheartedly but totally, bearing in mind the words of Christ: "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Let us pray for the singular grace of final perseverance. And if, please God, the glorious crown of martyrdom should one day be our lot, how wondrous a gift, how sublime a blessing — to give our lives in testimony to Christ and to our beloved Faith! †

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