THE ATHANASIAN

A publication of Traditional Catholics of America, Inc. Editor: Fr. Francis E. Fenton, STL

Vol. II, No. 1 Jan. 15, 1981

ABORTION IS THE ISSUE

- Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Direct killing means that the intention or purpose of an action is to terminate life. With this understood, the direct killing of an unborn child or direct abortion is murder and, as such, a grave violation of the moral law of God. Nor are there any exceptions whatsoever to this. Regardless of the stage of development of the child in the womb and regardless of the alleged reason for the killing, abortion (by which term direct abortion is meant in this article) is still murder. Does this hold true in such cases as rape or incest? Absolutely! But what if the continued presence of the child in the womb will cause the death of the mother? Surely then, in order to save the mother's life, it is morally permissable to terminate the life of the child? By no means! Before God the lives and souls of both are equally precious, and so it is as grave a sin to kill the unborn child to save the mother as it would be to kill the mother in order to save the child.

Such, in brief, is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the subject of abortion - and it is a very clear and simple teaching indeed. Intentionally to terminate the life of an unborn human being for any reason whatsoever is murder. That's it. Nor, it should be noted, do all the appeals in the world to sentiment and emotion change one iota the moral law in this matter. Sentiment, emotion, feeling have their place in human life, to be sure, but they cannot make morally permissible an act that is intrinsically evil. And the direct killing of an unborn child is intrinsically evil, which is to say that such an act can never be morally justified under any circumstances.

The foregoing contains nothing with which those who know the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church are not already familiar. That teaching cannot be emphasized too strongly though because abortion is the paramount crime of our day,

some ten million of which having been committed in this country alone since the utterly abhorrent decision of the Supreme Court eight years ago this month. Surely there is no single act of immorality more detestable in the sight of God and which cries more loudly to Heaven for retribution than the deliberate termination of innocent human life. And how, pray tell, can we expect God's blessing on a nation which so wantonly engages in the wholesale slaughter of the unborn? If this killing continues to say nothing of the many other grave and widespread violations of the law of God which today contaminate our land - America will be deserving of whatever dire fate may befall it as a consequence of this abominable crime.

Abortion - not the economy, not government bureaucracy, not even the ever increasing threat of Communism - abortion is the number one issue of our day! Can any rightly informed person honestly deny this? How can any issue prevail in urgency and importance in the minds of the responsible leaders of a nation over that of the murder of some 11/2 million innocent human beings each year within that nation? And yet, in the widely heralded debate that took place between the two major presidential candidates a week or so before the elections last November, I do not recall the subject of abortion so much as mentioned, much less cited as a major issue. Further, I wonder how many individuals there will be in the 1981 U.S. Senate or House of Representatives who are totally opposed to abortion, that is, opposed to it even in cases of rape or incest or when only an abortion will save the life of the mother. For the record it might be well to note that Mr. Reagan is pro-abortion, albeit less so than his predecessor in the White House. In other words, Mr. Reagan advocates murdering less unborn children than does Mr. Carter!

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THE AMERICAN CONCILIAR CHURCH BISHOPS AND COMMUNISM

- Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Some two months ago (November, 1980) the bishops of the Conciliar Church in the USA held their annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Not expecting much of that meeting, I was not disappointed. While one or another of the bishops, as quoted in the press, made an occasional statement with which a genuine Catholic would not quarrel, the vast majority of them ran true to form as leaders of the "new Catholic" or Conciliar Church.

Although the Roman Catholic Church teaches the morality of the death penalty for the commission of certain crimes, the Conciliar bishops voted overwhelmingly (145-31) for its abolition. According to the news release of the United Press, the bishops linked their position on this with their opposition to abortion. If so, it is their apparent contention that, since they are opposed to the murder of unborn infants, they should likewise be against capital punishment. Never mind that in the one case an innocent human being is the victim, while in the other the person to be put to death has been convicted of a specified crime to which the death penalty has been attached by lawful authority. It escapes me why opposition to direct abortion calls for opposition to capital punishment.

At this same meeting in which the Conciliar Church bishops voted for the abolition of capital punishment, press reports stated that they also approved changes in the Mass (that is, the Novus Ordo service) which would eliminate "sexist" language. Among several such approved changes the most significant involved the words "for all men" in the "new Mass" formula for the "consecration" of the wine. While "for all men" is itself, as is well known, a mistranslation of the Latin "pro multis", the bishops ("men" being a "sexist" term, you know) decided to change "for all men" to "for all" - and this by the lopsided vote of 211-35. Even though many of us have long since come to expect to read or hear almost anything crazy from or about the Conciliar Church, I still find some difficulty in bringing myself fully to realize that this or that actually happened. Imagine! Here we have an assembly of bishops - a body of men for whom I and all genuine Roman Catholics once had much esteem and respect - knuckling under to the pressure of radical feminists to the extent of "desexing" the prayers in the Novus Ordo service! Are these the men who are actually the spiritual leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in the USA? Of course they are not because the Conciliar Church

which they represent is **not** the Roman Catholic Church. As I have occasionally observed in recent years in public speeches and in writing, I have little doubt but that some, perhaps many, of these bishops have simply lost the Faith. I now begin to wonder about their sanity as well.

But it is the document (pastoral) on Communism which came out of this November, 1980 meeting which no body of true Roman Catholic bishops would ever produce. Overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 236 to 17, it constitutes yet one more piece of evidence that the Conciliar Church, again, is **not** the One True Church of Christ. One thing that this pastoral on Communism does manifest very clearly and that is the true colors of those who issued and approved it - pink, red or yellow. Although space does not permit a detailed rebuttal of this horrible document, a few observations follow.

- (1) The pastoral contends that the Communist threat to this country is not a significant one. The truth of the matter is, as any honest, informed person well knows, that the threat posed to the USA by Communism - both internally and externally - has never been greater than it is here and now.
- (2) The pastoral, according to those who put it together, is an attempt to promote dialogue with the Communists. For many years now American government leaders - many of them, or course, promoters of the New World Order, Communist sympathizers (and worse), etc. have been dialoguing with the Reds, making innumerable concessions to them and supporting them in countless ways. While the dialogue has gone on and on, the Communists continue their drive toward their ultimate goal: world domination. Any authentic Communist has absolutely no regard for truth. He is an inveterate liar. How does one profitably dialoque with such people? The record of the free world's dealings with Communism incontestably proves the futility of this.
- (3) The pastoral ignores the utterly inhuman record amassed by the Reds, a record which, in terms of the totality of victims and forms of savagery, is without parallel in all history. Millions and millions of human beings have been imprisoned, starved, tortured and murdered by the Communists in country after



A HELL THERE IS



The subject of hell is a most unpleasant and unpopular one. So much so that it seems to have become a nonentity in the "new Catholic" or Conciliar Church. True, that Church has not, to my knowledge, officially abolished it, but mention of it is a rarity in the preaching and writing of the Novus Ordo clergy. Indeed, the impression, I understand, is clearly conveyed in the Conciliar Church liturgy for the deceased that everybody goes to Heaven. If so, then hell must be out. Presumably purgatory gets the same treatment.

But the existence of hell as a place of eternal punishment for those who die in mortal sin is a divinely revealed doctrine. So teaches the Roman Catholic Church. Both Sacred Scripture and tradition abound in testimony to the reality of hell. In fact, it is safe to say that there may well be no doctrine of our Faith for which the New Testament offers more ample proof than the doctrine of hell. So, like it or not, hell exists; it is a place of indescribable punishment; and that punishment is eternal.

But how can an all-just and all-merciful God consign anyone to hell? The answer is that He doesn't. God "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2, 4). To everyone is given by God sufficient grace to save his soul. Hence, no man goes to hell except through his own fault. If this were not true, if it were possible that a person, though invincibly ignorant, could lose his soul, then, indeed, the Almighty would not be God of infinite mercy - and that's a contradiction.

But, while it is beyond our intellectual capacity to reconcile the perfection of divine mercy with that of divine justice, the fact is that God is also infinitely just. And in God's economy of salvation divine justice demands that mortal sin, by its very nature. is eternally punishable in hell for one who departs this life in that most abject state of soul. So, mortal sin is the greatest evil in the world. To be guilty of such requires sufficient knowledge and full consent of the will. There is, subjectively, no such thing as an unintentional grave sin or, in other words, there is no such thing as a person in good faith being guilty of mortal sin. Invincible ignorance excuses from sin. Because, however, mortal sin, properly understood, is a grave offense against God, its evil is, we may say, infinite in character and, hence, justly punishable eternally by God - if, that is, one dies without contrition and forgiveness.

Such is divine justice. Again, God condemns no one to hell. Whoever goes there has, in effect, chosen it.

One of the various objections raised by non-Catholics against the Roman Catholic Church has always been that Roman Catholics are more motivated by fear than by love in their worship and service of God; that the incentive which moves them to avoid evil and do good is their fear of hell rather than their love of God. Well, God alone knows what percentage of Roman Catholics at any given time may be motivated to forego the commission of mortal sin from fear of eternal punishment rather than out of love of God. There is certainly no question but that the latter is a far more noble motive than the former. But what, pray tell, is wrong about the fear of hell as a motive for shunning mortal sin and its proximate occasions? Again, both the New Testament and tradition very clearly teach the existence of hell and the eternal suffering there endured by all who depart this life bereft of sanctifying grace. So, for example, many Catholics may attend Mass on Sundays and holydays or avoid this or that mortal sin not primarily because of any burning love for God but because they have a salutary fear of hell. Would that all of us led virtuous lives because we were deeply in love with God! But far better the fear of hell as an effective motive for doing God's will and keeping His Commandments than no motive. How many hardened sinners, Roman Catholic, there have surely been who, having long ago lost all sense of love for God, have eventually been brought back or returned to the Sacraments and to a virtuous life because they feared the eternal punishment of hell, were they to die in mortal sin. Yes, love of God is the supreme motive for avoiding mortal sin and for leading a good and holy and Christ-like life. But there are others, and one of them, a proven powerful one, is a sound and salutary fear of hell. Let no one, Catholic or non-Catholic, disparage it for it is a God-given motive for working out our eternal salvation "in this vale of tears".

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 24, 41). Christ Himself has said that these are the words He will utter at the General Judgment against the unjust, the unrepentant wicked. Terrifying words indeed - but unmistakeably plain. Yes, a hell there is, the stark fact of which cannot be dispelled by either the disbelief of the world or the



OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



– Teresa L. Benns

The crisis in the Church has made life increasingly difficult for the traditional Catholic family. A truly Catholic education is no longer readily available in most localities, and Catholic communities are rare. Only a relatively few traditional schools exist in this country today, sometimes necessitating a move for a family which may be ill-advised financially in today's uncertain economic climate. Consequently, many Traditionalists, myself included, send their children to public schools and endeavor to supplement their education with instruction in the appropriate Balitmore Catechism. But we parents often fail to recognize the very real occasions of sin to which we expose our children daily in these schools. No amount of religious instruction could adequately compensate for the harmful influences they encounter there. Yet the public schools are "free" as few things are in these inflationary times. When husbands are often forced to work ten to twelve hours a day just to provide the essentials, only to be eaten alive by taxes, that private school education can seem like one more dizzying spin on a downward spiral. But that "free" public school education is almost certain to be spiritually damaging to your child, even though it may not be all that apparent to you. While we should, then, make every effort to locate near a traditional chapel or Mass center where there is also a truly Catholic school, too often it is exceedingly difficult or impossible to do so.

In some instances there can be an alternative. Certain states (Colorado is one) now allow parents to teach their children at home as long as the correspondence course is state-approved and/or monitored by local school officials. (A discreet check with the Board of Education in your state will ascertain this.) While not religiously oriented for the most part, these courses can afford the parents an opportunity to supervise, direct and supplement their children's education in whatever way they choose. Tuition and book costs can run as little as half that of private schools, and the undesirable atmosphere so common in most public schools can be avoided altogether. Questions might be raised concerning the proper "social development" of the child, this being the major concern of most humanistic teaching in the public schools nowadays. But then social development was seldom a serious consideration in the Catholic schools of a generation ago, where education was the primary consideration. Of course the correspondence course method would simply not work for those mothers who hold jobs outside the home, for a parent

without a true appreciation of (Catholic) education, or for a mother either unorganized or poorly motivated. But for those parents who insist on a quality education and religious training for their children, with God's help a way can always be

There are definitely advantages to being under thirty and the mother of a pre-teen. For example, I can clearly remember my high school days. After eight years of Catholic schooling, it was quite a shock to observe at close quarters the "real" world, or what passed for it then. Being an extrovert, I desperately wanted to be accepted by my fellow classmates. Being Catholic, many of the conditions for that approval were taboo. My parents forbade dating until sixteen, the wearing of heavy makeup, unchaperoned parties, and "going steady". The tug-of-war that resulted between home and school nearly ruined my relationship with my parents. And it definitely made being a good Catholic more difficult. Thanks to my upbringing, drugs and alcohol never interested me, although both were readily available. Neither did the wild parties held until the wee hours of the morning. I'm certain my parents never realized the pressure I was under, nor the many occasions of sin I (barely) avoided. And I could not tell them; they would have been dumbfounded, unbelieving. After all, the amount of godlessness and immorality must have increased tenfold from their generation to mine.

The situation is surely far worse now. I married while still in high school. Thank God, my marriage has persevered. But countless other teens have not been so lucky. And "youth marriage" is only one of many escape routes that young people, totally bewildered by permissive social mores and socialistic curriculums in their schools, choose to take. Others include alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and even suicide. They are practically taught the specifics of each in their classrooms. And yet parents are often totally unaware of their children's terrible struggle, while many who are seem unwilling to do anything to alleviate the situation.

In years past, many Catholics put little value in a new or newer home, stylish clothes, or an active social life. Today, so many consider these things essential to "happiness". But what of salvation? What is earthly happiness compared to salvation? Our children are our most valuable resource and

"soft-pedalling" of it by the Conciliar Church. To deny the existence of hell is to deny a doctrine taught by the Roman Catholic Church as divinely revealed. To believe in it while living as though it did not exist has to be the absolute in foolishness and a form of insanity - and would appear to me one sure way of going there! "... it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebr. 9, 27).

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country throughout the world - a minimum of 34 million put to death in Red China alone - and all this is ignored by the once-Catholic bishops of the Conciliar Church. Apparently, bringing up this unpleasant fact would adversely affect dialogue with the murderers!

- (4) The pastoral speaks of the appeal Communism still has for so many people, including the clergy. Wow! With the exception of those amoral characters in the high echelons of the Communist conspiracy and those knowingly collaborating with it for repulsive reasons of expediency, no sane person who knows the awful truth about Communism is attracted to it or would have any part of it. Communism is utterly ruthless; it is amoral; it is satanic. It is the duty of every honorable person to fight it in every morally lawful way he can.
- (5) The pastoral also subtly downgrades those who attempt to inform and educate their fellow men on the evils of Communism.

Much more could be written in criticism of this abominable document but the foregoing should suffice as an indication of how the Conciliar Church bishops are "opposing" Communism. With such opposition the Reds have it made. In his great 1937 encyclical, Atheistic Communism, Pope Pius XI wrote: "Communism is intrinsically evil and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever." That statement very concisely expresses the mind of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to Communism. The November, 1980 pastoral on Communism of the American Conciliar Church bishops is a dishonorable document. It is a revealing commentary on the calibre of the body of men who gave their approval to it.

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Published by Traditional Catholics of America, Inc.

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- Miss Ellen W. Soisson, Secretary

Eight issues a year: (Jan. 15, Mar. 1, Apr. 15, June 1, July 15, Sept. 1, Oct. 15, Dec. 1)

Subscriptions: \$ 6.00 per year (via First Class Mail) for the USA, Canada and Mexico

\$10.00 per year (via Air Mail) for all other countries

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40 or more copies to same address: 30 cents each (all prices include postage)

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(In view of the somber and sorrowful subject matter of the other articles in this issue of the newsletter, perhaps the following may be especially welcome.)



Christian Joy



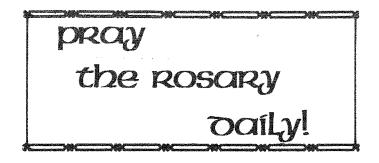
Ever since the fall of our first parents sorrow and suffering have been and, until the end of time, will continue to be the lot of every human being born into this world. They are part and parcel of human life. As always, so now, some people experience more difficult trials than others, some live lives of almost continual hardship, some endure their troubles unknown to any but God - but everyone suffers in one form or another. Such is life.

Now, is genuine happiness possible despite all this? Indeed, not only is it possible but the cultivation of such happiness is our Christian duty. And how can this be? Simply because our Catholic Faith is a Faith of joy because its sources of joy in Christ are completely independent of human sorrow and pain and misery and wretchedness.

Take the New Testament. It opens with a burst of joy over the birth of the Saviour. It closes with a picture of countless multitudes singing in the heavenly courts of the just. Almost anywhere you open it, amid all kinds of circumstances, you can nearly always find some note of happiness. Even at the Last Supper, on the eve of His Passion and Death, the Apostles hear Jesus saying to them: "These things have I spoken to you that your joy may be full". After Christ had ascended into Heaven and His Apostles were left alone to carry on His work, we read that they continued daily in the temple and "took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2, 46). And when the Apostles were scourged and tortured for preaching the doctrines of Christ, Holy Scripture describes them as "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5. 41). No matter how sad and distressing were the conditions in which they found themselves, almost always the disciples of Christ would inject some note of joy. And why? Because there is no room for prolonged sorrow in the Catholic Faith, because our religion is a religion of joy, for behind and within it stands the joyful personality of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And so, any Catholic who has a real and strong faith and who firmly believes in the goodness and mercy of God will be joyful even under the most trying conditions, for such a person has perfect confidence that Almighty God will bring forth victory in His own good time. It is a contradiction that any genuine follower of Christ become discouraged and lose heart because of the sufferings which are his. The servant is not greater than the Master and the Master first suffered and died for us.

Ideally then, we Catholics should be joyful always, with a joy arising from the conviction that this short life is merely a period of probation and trial and that eternal happiness in God's glorious Kingdom of Heaven awaits those who remain faithful. We Catholics should cultivate an abiding spirit of joy as our Christian duty, a joy which is beyond the world and the hardness of circumstances as was that of our divine Model. He Who could say to His beloved followers on the eve of His crucifixion: "Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world!". And whenever we tend to become sad and depressed, Christ's words of encouragement to His Apostles at the Last Supper should renew in us a joyful spirit: ". . . you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no one shall take from you" (John 16, 22).



The subject of abortion offers one of the best examples to confirm the necessity of an authority which teaches infallibly the revealed truth and moral law of God. Is direct abortion forbidden, and under all circumstances, by the Fifth Commandment of God, "Thou Shalt Not Kill", or isn't it? Is abortion murder or isn't it? As in so many other matters of divine truth and moral law, did God leave it up to the finite judgment of man to decide whether and when abortion is murder? Hardly, But unless there be a religious authority in the world today which teaches unerringly and infallibly the revealed word of God, how is man to know for certain that the direct killing of the innocent unborn is always murder? There is, of course, such an authority, as there has been since the first Pentecost, and it is the Roman Catholic Church. To hold that there is no such authority is to say, in effect, that Almighty God revealed an objective and (necessarily) unchangeable body of doctrine and a moral code upon the acceptance or rejection of which would depend man's salvation or damnation - and then left the interpretation of that doctrine and moral code up for grabs. Since common sense tells us He couldn't have done that, and since the innumerable contradictions in belief and in matters of morality among non-Catholic religious bodies (including the Conciliar Church) confirm this, where else is religious certainty to be found except in the Roman Catholic Church? If it isn't to be found there, then it isn't to be found anywhere and this is simply inconceivable.

If the widespread disregard in public life for the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the subject of abortion reflects a similar disregard in other areas of morality - and it does - then the influence of the moral teachings of that Church on the American scene is presently a very minor one indeed. And such is the case. Due to the massive and continuing destruction to which the Church has been subjected over the past nearly two decades now, traditional Catholicism - that is, the One True Church - today exerts no significant impact upon the moral standards of America. Sad but true, a stark fact to which rampant immorality, and of the grossest kind, bears incontestable witness.

(As to what the Conciliar Church may be doing these days to raise the level of morality in the USA, I just don't know. At the most recent national meeting of that Church's bishops, they did vote to abolish the death penalty - a very questionable contribution to the betterment of American morals. At that same meeting, incidentally, they also

approved the elimination of certain "sexist" language in the Novus Ordo service! And isn't that something! One encouraging note: the American Conciliar Church bishops as a body are still opposed to abortion. I wouldn't make any bets though that this applies to all of them without exception.)

Because it involves the taking of innocent and utterly defenseless human life and because of the vastness of the scale on which this abhorrent crime is committed, abortion is - or, rather, should be the principal issue of the day. Literally thousands of unborn children are murdered daily in this country alone. What other issue, then could possibly be more urgent and more demanding of a solution than this? What other issue more pointedly reflects the moral rottenness of America than this? Can this nation survive, much less be victorious over its enemies, if this wholesale slaughter of the innocent continues? Are the slave labor camps and torture chambers of Soviet Russia and Red China more condemnable before God than the abortion mills of the USA? How long more before the just and terrible wrath of God descends upon this nation in retribution for this unspeakable crime of abortion? According to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church the civil power has the right to take human life for certain grave crimes - capital punishment. I can't imagine anyone more deserving of capital punishment than one who knowingly and willingly murders an innocent, defenseless human being!

"Hope" continued from page 4

the hope of the future. Upon their shoulders rests the responsibility for the survival of the Faith. We will be held accountable before God for the sins of our children if those sins arise from our negligence, our failure to protect them from occasions of sin or our failure to arm them with the truths of our Faith. We love our children; we want the best for them. But true parental love and concern must be directed, first and foremost, to the state of their immortal souls, the nourishment of their spirituality. We cannot measure love and concern according to the false maxims put forth today by the humanists. If we do so, what answer will we have for Him who commanded us not to scandalize His little ones?



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Jan. 18, Feb 1.

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OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL (303) 348-5454 Call for time of Mass Feb. 1

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Mass at 6:00 p.m. on 2nd and 4th
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OUR LADY OF SORROWS Quality Inn Midtown (504) 454-3449 or 834-0730 Call for date and time of Mass

MINNESOTA

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OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL 5820 Viola Road, NE (507) 282-5163 or 289-8522 Mass at 11:00 a.m. Jan. 18, Jan. 25, Feb. 8, Feb. 22

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IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHAPEL 2020 Second Avenue North (406) 452-8826 Mass at 11:00 a.m. Feb. 8, Feb. 22

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Mass at 10:00 a.m.
Jan. 25, Feb. 8

UTAH

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP Hilton Inn 154 West 600 South (801) 278-7501 Mass at 11:00 a.m. Jan. 25 Mass at 5:00 p.m. Feb. 8

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OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL 5217 Futura Avenue (804) 737-8211 or 262-4354 Mass at 11:00 a.m. Feb. 1, Feb. 15