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# THE ATHANASIAN

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## IS THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ANTI-COMMUNIST?

*Fr. Francis E. Fenton*

**T**here is no question but that the rank and file of the American people are anti-Communist in varying degrees. If a cross section of average Americans were to be asked if they were opposed to Communism, they would undoubtedly reply in the affirmative without hesitation. As far as multitudes of these people are concerned, however, their anti-Communism is not an informed one. While their opposition is sincere enough, it is based primarily on sentiment or emotion rather than on a knowledge of Communism itself. Further, the vast majority of Americans are passive anti-Communists and, because they are, they pose no significant threat to Communism and its steady advance towards world domination.

The principal cause of this ignorance of Communism on the part of so many Americans is, far and away, the "conspiracy of silence" about Communism by the American press, the all but total control of the mass media in this country by hostile forces. The American people are not told the ghastly truth about Communism by the communications media because the powers that be therein do not want them to know the truth. What passes for news in relation to Communism (on TV and radio, in the daily paper and in weekly and monthly magazines of mass circulation) is usually comprised of half-truths, innuendoes, outright lies, false propaganda—but accepted without question by millions of the gullible public as gospel truth. Since they depend upon the mass media for their information then, there is no reason to wonder why Americans in general are ignorant of Communism. How vastly different, for example, is the stark truth about the criminal, murdering, barbaric Communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua from the media propaganda being fed to the American public. (The best example in recent times, I submit, of the lying, prostitute American press *has to be* the continuous, overwhelming, repulsive propaganda poured forth a few months back on behalf of pro-Communist Martin Luther King, Jr. Surely the American communications media reached a new low in that one. With a national holiday in his "honor" Martin Luther King, Jr., now has the same official recognition in the USA as the birthday of Jesus Christ!)

The average American actually believes that the government of the United States is anti-Communist. Nothing could be further from the truth. For the last several decades at least,

the American government has been pro-Communist and that pro-Communism has become more and more pronounced with each succeeding administration in Washington. But, with the "conservative" Mr. Reagan at the helm, is not the current administration an exception? Hardly. As any informed and honest person well knows, Ronald Reagan is neither an authentic conservative nor a genuine anti-Communist. Indeed, one wonders if international Communism would actually be in any worse position today if Mr. Carter were still in the White House. To be sure, President Reagan's anti-Communist speeches and comments are often gems of anti-Communist rhetoric but his lack of action belies his words. His lip service to the cause of anti-Communism is one thing; his dismal failure to follow through is something else. The Red menace has never been in a better position than it is today in its relentless drive towards world domination. It has never been closer than it is here and now towards the attainment of its prize goal, the conquest of the USA.

Apart from the American military action in Grenada some time back, just what has the Reagan administration accomplished of any substance to stop the Communist advance? To my knowledge, nothing. How many a nation over the past several decades has had the USA as an "ally" and has been taken over by Communism? As of this writing, Nicaragua is being given the treatment. Even though the Sandinistas in control there are out-and-out communists, the American government refuses to take effective action against them, a condemnable stand supported by many of the clergy (bishops and priests) of the Conciliar Church. One thing's for sure: as long as the Reds have enemies like the USA, they have no need of friends.

Those of us old enough to do so recall the days when the Roman Catholic Church was the great bastion against Communism. It was in 1937 that the classic encyclical of Pope Pius XI on atheistic Communism was published and wherein his oft-quoted statement appears: "Communism is intrinsically evil and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever." Who of us in those days could possibly have imagined the current situation in which the Conciliar Church is in fact a collaborator with Communism (a Church whose hierarchy includes, among many others, the likes of such as the deplorable Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, Peter Gerety of

Newark and Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit)? Who of us could possibly have dreamed that there would be countless "bishops" and "priests" and "nuns" openly and brazenly promoting Communist causes in a variety of ways? Who of us fifty years ago could possibly have foreseen the day when there would be sitting in the Chair of Peter a man who never so much as utters the word Communism, to say nothing of exposing and condemning it?

As for the government of the USA being anti-Communist, anyone who honestly thinks it is would be well-advised to start doing his homework because such a person is either woefully uninformed or living in a dreamworld. The shameful record clearly proves otherwise. If the USA doesn't stop Communism, what nation will or can? At what point will America go on the offensive at long last? Nicaragua would be a good place to start but it will take much more than a relatively paltry (under the circumstances) sum of money to do the job. And it most certainly is going to take a lot more than strong words from the actor in the White House to do the job. If those words are not backed up by proportionately strong action, the Red thugs in Nicaragua and elsewhere will assuredly not be deterred from pursuing their nefarious goals.

But our opposition to Communism must not be motivated solely by concern for our own preservation and survival. While such concern is very understandable, self-preservation being the first law of nature, yet to fight Communism merely because we will certainly be its victims if we don't is a far cry from the duty we have as followers of Christ in relation to this satanic menace. Communism is a criminal, militant, atheistic conspiracy. It is the incarnation of evil with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. Truly committed Communists are amoral, mass murderers, inveterate liars, godless. Even if Communism, then, were to pose no threat to us, we have an obligation to expose and to oppose it with every morally lawful means at our disposal. To do anything less is to be derelict in our duty to God and to be unworthy to be called Christians.

Nor must we forget or take lightly the responsibility which is ours towards those millions of our fellowmen who are enslaved under the ruthless tyranny of Communism throughout the world. To read of the utterly inhuman, revolting tortures being inflicted upon the native population by the Communist savages in Afghanistan alone should be enough to move even the hardest hearts to compassion and to a resolve both to pray for these poor people and to become activists in the fight against their brutish oppressors. And what is happening in Afghanistan is occurring in diverse ways and in varying degrees in every country in the world under Communist domination. The victims are our fellowmen, created by God and redeemed by His divine Son. We cannot ignore or abandon them.

(What, in view of the fact that Communists are definitely our enemies, what must be the spirit, the attitude towards

them of the true Christian, the genuine Roman Catholic? Why, we must love them and pray for them with a *supernatural charity* while at the same time being actively and unalterably opposed to the evil they represent. Love the sinner; hate the sin. Christ was crystal clear on this: "...Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." (Matthew 5, 44) Although it may well appear to be a contradiction to speak of loving and praying for our enemies on the one hand and, on the other hand, to speak of liquidating them, this is not a contradiction in reality. We are morally obligated to withstand the militant godlessness which is Communism. But militant godlessness is embodied in those who espouse it, in this case, the Communists. It follows, then, that, if we have the obligation to counteract this militant godlessness—and, of course, we do—then we have the obligation to take whatever morally justified action is necessary effectively to oppose the *militantly godless*.)

Please God, the day may not be far off when the government of this nation of ours will become an anti-Communist one; a government whose leaders are humble, God-fearing men of honor and principle and conviction and courage; a government which will take any and all morally permissible action required against the "evil empire" of atheistic Communism. Despite the depth of moral corruption of every imaginable kind in which this nation is presently wallowing, and despite the extent to which its enemies are already in control, and despite the pro-Communism of the body of Conciliar Church bishops—despite all of this and much, much more, the USA still has the capacity to stop and to reverse the advance of Communism and, in due time, decisively to defeat this utterly satanic evil. Whether it has the will to do so remains to be seen. †

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# THE FISH: RECLAIMING A CATHOLIC SYMBOL

John Kenneth Weiskittel

**Y**ou're stopped at a red light when you notice an emblem on the car ahead of you. There upon the bumper is a sticker bearing a fish design, perhaps with an accompanying "born again" Protestant slogan next to it. Or you see the same fish in an ad while thumbing through the Yellow Pages. Or in the Church Section of the local newspaper.

The use of this has become increasingly widespread among Protestants. They say they've taken an ancient Christian symbol and are employing it as a means of identifying themselves as Christians. The sign of the fish is indeed one that can be traced back to the earliest days of the Church—but *the Roman Catholic Church*.

## Catacomb Art

The development of the fish as a Catholic symbol goes back to the Roman persecutions of the first centuries A.D. and to the catacombs. Originally built beneath the city as primitive Christian cemeteries, the catacombs were a network of intersecting passageways, with recesses to the sides for tombs. Sometimes they would be expanded, one layer atop another "ranging from 22 to 80 feet below the surface." (Father Newman Eberhardt, *A Summary of Catholic History*, vol. I, p. 154) Though the most famous catacombs are in Rome, others were used by Christians "at Naples, in Sicily, at Alexandria, and throughout Northern Africa and Asia Minor." (*ibid.*) It was in catacombs that relics of the martyrs were first venerated.

In times when merely being a Catholic could endanger one's life, these subterranean systems took on another role. During these periods of crisis it became too risky to celebrate Mass in private homes, as was then the practice, so vaults were hollowed out in the catacombs to serve as chapels for secret ceremonies. (It is clear that the expression, "going underground," that is, a group or person who conceals identity and whereabouts to avoid detection by a government, literally comes from the catacomb Christians.)

Upon the torchlit walls of these burial chambers were sketched some of the first examples of Catholic art, art we cherish not so much for the skill of the draftsmanship as for "the dogmatic value of these drawings, (which) is immense for they provide lasting evidence of Christian beliefs... (*ibid.*) Among the Catholic motifs found are frescoes of the Nativity, the marriage feast of Cana, the raising of Lazarus, and of the Holy Eucharist such as pictures in the catacomb of Domitilla depicting the Good Shepherd carrying a pail of milk (the early Christian writer Clement of Alexandria wrote: "The Church nourishes her children with milk, and this milk...is the body of Christ.") In Saint Priscilla's catacomb there is the fresco of the *Fractio Panis*, the Breaking of the Bread, showing a priest consecrating an

offering at a table where sit six other people. But by far the best-known of these is the symbol of the fish.

The fish is one of many ancient emblems depicting Christ. Others still used today and familiar to Catholics include IHS (in Greek, the first three letters of the name of Jesus) and I.N.R.I. (the inscription atop the cross at Christ's crucifixion: the first letters of the Latin (I)esus (N)azarenus (R)ex (I)udaeorum—Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). As to the origin of the fish symbol, Monsignor J. D. Conway writes in *Facts of the Faith*: "The Greek word for fish was *ichthus*. And if we took all the letters of that word, they would stand in Greek for the name Jesus, or even more completely for Jesus our God and Savior." (p. 208) In Donald Attwater's *A Catholic Dictionary* we read that the fish was "the chief of the symbols of the early Church, representing our Lord, and, in association with loaves of bread, the Blessed Sacrament." (p. 205)

Concerning this last application, the Irish Archbishop M. Sheehan writes in *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* that, due to fear of desecration, "it was the custom among Christians during the first centuries, and particularly from the end of the second to the beginning of the sixth, to conceal from the heathen the more sacred and mysterious rites of religion and especially the real nature of the Blessed Eucharist." (part II, p. 160) He then cites:

*As an instance of the veiled language used, we may quote the following from an ancient inscription: "Take the food sweet as honey of the Saviour of the holy ones, eat and drink holding the fish in thy hands." The true meaning of this was plain to a Christian, but not to an unbeliever. The "fish" was the secret name of the Saviour. The "fish" is said to be held in the hands, because in those days the Sacred Host was received in the right hand supported by the left, and then conveyed to the mouth." (*ibid.*)*

The use of such a code was known to early Catholics as *Disciplina Arcani*—"the discipline of the secret." (Contrary to what modern Masonic writers have claimed in defense of Lodge secrecy, the discipline of the secret "does not imply" that within the Church as "an inner circle of initiates into esoteric knowledge."—Attwater, *op. cit.*)

## A Spiritual Copyright

"Fine," we might hear our Protestant friends respond, "we agree with what you've said about the history of the fish as a religious symbol, but we take exception to you classifying it as one that is peculiarly Roman Catholic. After all, we're Christians too. Do you have any evidence to show that the Roman Catholic Church should have any exclusive right in using it?"

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# THE MIDDLE AGES:

## DARK AGES OR THE AGES OF FAITH? (PART III)

*Jill Wiesner*

**I**n the cynical world of today there is still a yearning for the heroism of the knights of the Middle Ages. The word "chivalry" is a part of our language and is meant as a high compliment. But how many of those who speak of "knights in shining armor" are aware that what they find so admirable is entirely a Catholic institution? And how many Catholics understand what chivalry really is?

The feudal period was a time of rivalry among nobles and revolts against kings. In battle, quarter was neither asked nor given. The Church, unable to prevent the warfare, placed restrictions upon it. Battle was only justified in defense of the Faith, in defense of women and children or for some similarly just cause. The Christian knight was to be "sans peur et sans reproche" (without fear and without reproach). "Chivalry" was the name given to the ideals and principles according to which the true knight was to live. Though some knights slipped into cruelty, immorality and treachery, chivalry inspired nobility of character in many, and even those who betrayed its ideals were restrained by its influence.

Most of the warfare among feudal lords was to protect or to acquire property. The serfs who farmed the lands depended upon the knights for protection from invaders, as did the families of the nobles. As a result, the castle was a training academy for knights.

The sons of the nobility were chosen to serve as pages at the age of seven. The page was taught that it was his duty to serve God and his fellowmen. He waited upon the lord's table, ran errands, held the lord's and lady's horses while they mounted and accompanied them when they went hunting. The page was taught how to read and write and play a musical instrument and was instructed in manners and courtesy by the lady. The lord trained him in riding, hunting, boxing, swimming and use of the bow. Most important, the page was educated in the truths of the Catholic Faith. He assisted at Mass and religious ceremonies and was instructed in the lives of the saints and of heroic knights.

At fourteen the page became a squire, the personal attendant of a knight. He acquired skill with the lance, sword and spear while in this service. He polished the knight's armor, went with him to battle and cared for him if wounded, as a knight in heavy armor was unable to help himself when wounded.

A squire who had served well was eligible for knighthood

at the age of twenty-one. The knighting ceremony was long and solemn and was held on some great feast of the Church, such as Christmas, Easter or Pentecost. On the evening before the ceremony the squire donned a red garment, indicating his willingness to shed his blood for the Church. He then put on a white garment, symbolizing purity of mind and deed. Last, he clothed himself in a black garment as a reminder that all men must die.

Proceeding to the castle chapel, he knelt down and placed his armor on the altar steps as a sign that it would only be used for a just and holy cause. He then kept a nightlong vigil on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament, praying that God would help him to be a worthy and true knight.

In the morning the squire went to Confession and, at Mass, received Holy Communion. After Mass he took the oath of knighthood, a promise to defend the Church with honor; to protect the poor and oppressed; and to lead a life of purity. In the courtyard he put on his bright new armor and went before the lord, who tapped him on the right shoulder with the flat of his sword, saying, "In the name of God, of Saint Michael, and of Saint George, I dub thee knight; be brave, bold, and loyal."

Louis IX, King of France, was an example of a true Christian knight. His mother, Blanche, had educated him herself, giving him a proficiency in Latin, public speaking, writing and history. He was also instructed in the art of war and of good government. But most important to Queen Blanche was the purity of her son's soul. She often reminded him that, though she loved him "with all the tenderness a mother is capable of," she would "rather see you fall down dead at my feet than that you should ever commit a mortal sin." He remembered this admonition throughout his life.

Louis was an able ruler who maintained order in France in spite of a number of revolts among the nobles. His devotion to the Church did not blind him to the character of bishops who used their authority unjustly and he opposed them when necessary. He consistently sought the company of priests and religious and listened carefully to their advice. He set aside several hours each day for prayer and, when criticized for spending too much time at his devotions, replied that his critics would not fault him for spending that time in hunting, tournaments or plays.

Though he practiced rigorous self-denial, he did so quietly so as not to offend others, and he always had a cheerful



manner. At the dinner table he kept the conversation light, saying to those who tried to introduce serious subjects, "All things have their time."

His devotion to the poor was such that, in addition to helping them with all the facilities available to him, he often invited poor persons to dine at his table and served them himself with such sincerity and dignity that those who saw him were inspired to imitate rather than belittle his actions. Lewd behavior or language in any member of his court resulted in immediate banishment for the offender.

In the year 1242, a Mohammedan cult whose leader was called Prince of the Assassins sent agents throughout the world with orders to poison or to stab anyone judged to be an obstruction to the spread of Mohammedanism. Two of them were sent to France with orders to assassinate the king. The plot was discovered in time but the incident filled Louis with a zeal to join the Crusades, which had been undertaken to free the Holy Land from the yoke of Mohammed.

By 1245, he was able to form a Crusade and was joined by three of his brothers. When they reached the island of Cyprus, Louis sent the Sultan Saleh a message declaring war on the Saracens unless Palestine was freed. Saleh promptly dispatched agents to Cyprus to poison the provisions of the Christian army but the agents were apprehended. The English earl, William of Salisbury, with 200 knights, joined the French and Cypriot armies and on Trinity Sunday they set sail for Egypt.

On the Egyptian shore the sultan waited, his immense army arrayed before him. Louis calmly surveyed them and said that, as the Christian knights were there to do God's will, "we shall glorify Him either by the prosperity of our arms or by the sacrifice of our lives."

Under the leadership of King Louis the Christian army defeated the Saracen forces and took possession of the city of Damietta. Louis entered the city, walking barefoot and accompanied by the clergy. Giving thanks to God, they went to the principal mosque which the priests purified and dedicated to the Mother of God. Louis exhibited leniency to the prisoners and guarded them against the vengeance of some of his knights.

In the ensuing battles Louis and his knights were captured, his brother Robert was killed and the Christian army was ravaged by disease. Louis himself was stricken and, while he was incapacitated, some of his officers were tricked by the Saracens into surrendering. He recovered while in captivity and won the admiration of his captors with his patience and courage. He never complained or spoke in anger to anyone. With a quiet dignity and unmoved by threats of hideous torture, he told those who held him captive that, as they possessed his body, they were entitled to do with him as they pleased.

Though a ransom for the Christian knights was finally agreed upon, quarreling and assassinations among the Saracens delayed the release of the captives. Pope Innocent IV wrote Louis a letter of comfort, declaring:

*If this disgrace was a trial to render thy servants worthy of heaven, what thanks do they not owe thee for such a favor? If it be temporal chastisement, to preserve sinners from the more dreadful punishments in the other world, who will dare to call so advantageous a mercy severe?*

Upon their release Louis and his men returned to France where he had the image of his chains stamped into the coins of the realm. France again prospered under his rule but the depredations of the Saracens increased to the point that Louis was persuaded to march against them once more. On July 1, 1270, he set sail for northern Africa. It was not long, however, before the French army began to succumb to disease in the debilitating heat of the African desert. Louis' twenty-one-year-old son John was among the first to die. Louis and his eldest son Philip were also stricken. Philip recovered but the king grew weaker each day. Finally, he called Philip to him and gave him a list of instructions:

My son, before all things I recommend to you that you love God. Be always ready rather to suffer all manner of torments than to commit any mortal sin. When sickness or any other affliction befalls you, return thanks to God for it, and bear it courageously, being persuaded that you deserve to suffer much more for having served God ill, and that such tribulations will be your gain... Confess your sins frequently, and choose a wise and pious ghostly father, who will teach you what to follow, and what to shun; let him be one that will boldly reprehend you and make you understand the grievousness of your faults. Hear the divine office devoutly—meditate affectionately what you ask of God with your mouth; do this with more than ordinary application during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, especially after the Consecration... Love to converse with pious persons; never admit any among your familiar friends but such as are virtuous and of good reputation; shun and banish from you the vicious... Wherever you are, never suffer anyone to detract or to say anything sinful in your presence... Hinder, to the utmost of your power, all blasphemies, rash oaths, games of chance, drunkenness, and impurity...

The king then asked God to enlighten and have mercy on the Saracens and to guide his army safely back to France "without falling into the hands of the enemy, that none of them might be tempted through weakness to deny Christ."

On Sunday, August 24, he received Extreme Unction and  
*continued on page 8*

## HOPE: ONE OF THE GREATEST OF ALL VIRTUES

**T**ogether with faith and charity, hope is one of the three greatest virtues. It is that virtue whereby we firmly trust that God, who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, will in His mercy give us eternal happiness and the means necessary to obtain it. Through this supernatural virtue of hope, which all and only those possess who are in the state of sanctifying grace, we can with confidence look forward to Heaven as our final destiny through, as we recite in the Act of Hope, "the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer." At the moment of death all hope comes to an end for in Heaven our most ardent yearning and longing for happiness are realized to perfection, while in hell all hope is abandoned, forever lost.

The two chief sins opposed to the virtue of hope are presumption and despair. The first of these, presumption, has its origin in the capital sin of pride and consists either in a person's taking for granted that he will attain salvation with little or no effort on his part, that God will, in effect, take care of everything; or in a person's relying upon himself and his own efforts in the working out of his salvation while ignoring God and His grace in the process. In the one case the individual presumes on the goodness and mercy of God while conveniently forgetting that the Almighty is likewise all-just and that, as Saint Augustine put it, "although God made us without us, He will not save us without us." In the other case the individual arrogantly takes for granted that he can handle things pretty well on his own and really has little need for the help of God in the business of getting to Heaven. A presumptuous person has a tendency to make his own rules and to take portions of the moral law rather lightly if they happen to conflict with his own ideas. He undoubtedly prays from time to time but probably could never be accused of overdoing it. He loves God, yes, and he certainly wants to save his soul, yes, but he is content to work at these things in moderation, periodically assuring himself that God understands. And, like the vice of pride from which it proceeds, those who are most tainted with the sin of presumption may well be the least aware of it.

And then there is the sin against the theological virtue of hope which is despair, the giving up, or the loss of, confidence and trust that God will give to us all of the help necessary to do His will and to save our souls. But the fact is that, whatever we have a moral obligation to do, God gives us the grace to accomplish. If we fail to do God's will in a particular matter, it is simply because we did not, or did not sufficiently, cooperate with the grace of God in one way or another. And even if we fail habitually, it is assuredly *not* the will of God that we give up, that we become discouraged, that we lose heart. Such a reaction is or leads to despair and, if the conditions for mortal sin are present, the loss of the virtue of hope. Although temptations to despair may well come our way from time to time, never must we permit them to gain a foothold or to take root within us.

Whatever else may be involved in the solution in a particular case, let us when tempted to discouragement turn at once with humility and confidence to God in prayer who, as Saint Paul assures us, will never permit us to be tempted beyond our strength. Indeed, the words of Holy Scripture are very much to the point: "Pray always and *do not lose heart.*"

Now it may well be that the sin of despair or at least the temptation to despair is far more prevalent today than in various times past. The pathetic Conciliar Church, the innumerable difficulties and problems involved in the preservation of our traditional Faith, the gross immorality so rampant in our nation, the ever advancing threats of Communism and Freemasonry—surely all of these are cause for grave concern on the part of every informed, truly traditional Roman Catholic. And so, concern, anxiety, distress, yes, and it speaks very poorly for the standards and the sense of values and the sound judgment of any Catholic who would take these things lightly. But grave concern about such matters is one thing; despair is something else again. To give up, to abandon hope, to despair—the very thought of this, regardless of the situation, is to be shunned for deliberate despair is a sin against one of the greatest of all virtues, the supernatural virtue of hope. To be sure, in view of the number and gravity of the difficulties and problems confronting traditional Catholics today, temptations to despair, to succumb to a sense of hopelessness are bound to come. But the sound traditional Catholic, recognizing at once the danger of such temptations, will not allow them to linger but, by the grace of God, will dispel them without delay.

And so again, despite the very trying circumstances in which we traditional Catholics find ourselves today in our efforts to preserve our divine Faith, let even the mere thought of despair be far removed from us. Sad and sorrowful though we are at the present woeful plight of the Church, God forbid that our sadness turn to despair and thereby divert us, perhaps permanently, from the noble apostolate to which we are committed. Rather let us lift up our hearts and souls to the God of all consolation and take courage from the words of Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (8,18) that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come..." Fortified by the great virtue of hope, may we remain loyal and true to our beloved Faith until death! †

# The "Theology" of Subversion

John Kenneth Weiskittel

(An article with the above title dealing in large part with liberation theology was submitted by Mr. Weiskittel for inclusion in this issue of THE ATHANASIAN. Lack of space precludes our carrying it in its entirety. The following are a few excerpts from the article.—Editor)

**O**f all the disorders that have emerged in Catholicism as a result of Vatican II, it is safe to say that none has produced more confusion and controversy than so-called liberation theology. Equally safe to say, none likely has such far-reaching implications upon the course of world politics.

The tumult in Latin America over the past 20 years, culminating in the 1979 Sandinista conquest of Nicaragua, is traceable in large measure to the influence of liberation theology, an ideology that seeks to wed revolution and religion and that is being propagated mainly by the Conciliar "Catholic" Church. Proponents of this subversive "theology" are to be found at all levels of the Conciliar Church in Latin America, from cardinals to lay leaders of the "base communities"—the incubators of insurrection.

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In March a Nicaraguan named Aristides Sanchez Pavon appeared at a Capitol Hill press conference to appeal for aid to the Contras. He told of how he had been imprisoned by the Sandinista government for three years, during which he was "savagely treated" by his jailors. Pavon accused that regime of being "just a puppet of the Cuban government," saying "the communists talk about poor people but they live like rich people, like capitalists." He fled Nicaragua to the U.S. in 1982.

Pavon is a dangerous man as far as the Sandinistas are concerned and they are no doubt glad he's gone. His testimony is an embarrassment, a searing scourge upon them (perhaps more stinging than any other they've received) for Pavon is the grandson of General Augusto Cesar Sandino, the man after whom the Sandinistas are named. "My grandfather was never a communist," Pavon said (according to the March 14, 1986 issue of *The Washington Inquirer*, a conservative weekly). "He was against all foreign influences, including the Americans and the communists who tried to manipulate his movement. He would have been violently opposed to the Cuban and Soviet influences in our country today."

Other Nicaraguans are also stepping forward to denounce the junta. Managua's Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, a friend of the Sandinistas when they overthrew the government of President Anastasio Somoza, laments how there is now "persecution against the Catholic Church with worse

conditions than under the dictatorship of Somoza." Former Sandinista militant Humerto Belli has chronicled his disenchantment with the movement in *Breaking Faith: The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*. He reveals, in a section regarding how the party used rich and influential Christians, both the naivete of the Christians and the contempt the Sandinistas had for their benefactors:

I was pleased to see these Christians coming closer to Marx and revolution. In no way did I experience any encouragement from them to consider the validity of Christian views. It was not we Marxists who had the identity crisis. They did. And the fact that they were moving in the direction of our philosophy was one more piece of evidence of the soundness of our philosophy... There was no reciprocal process of conversion. Sandinista atheists were not becoming believers.

Thousands of refugees have similar stories, such as the Miskito Indians who have escaped Nicaraguan concentration camps.

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What a telling indictment of the U.S. House, the mass media and Church groups that they have been some of the staunchest defenders of Daniel Ortega's dictatorship in Nicaragua. Most sickening and reprehensible was a declaration of the pro-Sandinista Witness for Peace, signed by some 200 American religious figures, which reads in part: "The (U.S.) government's distortion campaign is to prepare the American people for further U.S. action in Nicaragua... A scaffold of deception is being constructed around Nicaragua." Among those signing was the ever-left bishop from Detroit, Thomas Gumbleton, who went so far as to appear on PBS's *MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour* to deny that the Sandinistas were guilty of human rights abuses and religious persecution, that they were anything other than a peace-loving regime that crossed its borders only to defend against incursions by the "terrorist" Contras and to deny that they were a Marxist state. If any "scaffold"-building is taking place, it seems Bishop Gumbleton is one of the main architects.

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The fall of the Ferdinand Marcos government in the Philippines was largely due to politicizing by Manila's Cardinal Jaime Sin. Whatever the faults of the Marcos regime, the rise of Corazon Aquino and her self-proclaimed "revolutionary government" is likely to be "out of the frying pan and into the fire" for the Filipino people. One of her first



official acts was to free all Communists jailed by her predecessor. (The Communists say they want to cooperate with her government.) Now, according to John Burgess of *The Los Angeles Times*, South Korea's Cardinal Stephen Kim is following suit and working for a constitutional revision that would likely topple the government of President Chun Doo Hwan. And black radical Jesse Jackson has publicly urged John Paul II to visit South Africa in the belief that such a trip would help put an end to apartheid (and freedom?).

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When Contra aid was sought by President Reagan in 1985, the United States Catholic Conference—including New York's "conservative" Archbishop John O'Connor (then chairman of its Committee on Social Development and World Peace)—opposed it as "immoral" and "illegal," and spoke of "a great vitality in the Church (in Nicaragua)."

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In his encyclical on Communism Pope Pius XI wrote: "The evil which today torments humanity can be conquered only by a worldwide crusade of prayer and penance." Such weapons are certainly still needed today but now the situation also calls for a worldwide awakening of the crisis through education and Catholic Action. The gravity of it is so profound that, if we do not expend ourselves today with enlightening and activating others, tomorrow we may well find our backs to the wall. *God help us if we fail!*†

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### *"The Fish" continued from page 3*

Fortunately we do, and some of this evidence can be found in the same catacombs in the form of representations of papal primacy. In *Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*, Catholic historian Arthur S. Barnes writes:

Of this class of representation a good many instances have come down to us. The most famous is perhaps the well-known sarcophagus which came originally from the Vatican Cemetery and is now in the Museum of Christian Antiquities at the Lateran. On this sarcophagus Christ is shown already ascended into heaven, but handing over to St. Peter as His visible

representative upon the earth the volume of the law of the New Dispensation. There is a painting on the same subject in the Catacomb of St. Priscilla, and on a gilded glass now in the Vatican Museum the volume actually bears the title, *Lex Domini* (i.e., The Lord's Law)... (quoted, Father Eberhardt, op. cit., p. 155)

So the Protestants can't have it both ways. It is not proper that they take a symbol that appeals to them without also acknowledging the symbol of papal primacy. And to acknowledge both of them should mean that they *cease being Protestants*.

The continued use of the fish by them, then, is every bit as misleading as for Anglicans to dub themselves *Anglo-Catholics*. In either case we are dealing with the unjust appropriation of something that belongs solely to the Church, which now exists only in traditional Catholicism. Although the spiritual "copyright" of this symbol is plain enough to see, such "trademark" protection isn't on the U.S. law books. This, of course, allows Protestants to display their falsely acquired property to their hearts' content.

What can we Catholics do in view of this? Well, we can inform people of what commentator Paul Harvey would call "the rest of the story." Specifically, we should see it as an opportunity to lead Protestants towards the Church by demonstrating to them that the catacomb heritage they so revere is an indisputably *Catholic* heritage. †

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### *"Middle Ages" continued from page 5*

insisted upon kneeling by his bed to receive the Blessed Sacrament. He died the next day, August 25, being 55 years of age. In 1297, in the reign of Philip the Fair, his grandson, Louis IX was canonized by Pope Boniface VIII.

Saint Louis IX, the ideal Christian knight, strived to live always in the presence of God. He kept our Lord constantly in his heart, loving Him above all else. In his time, the Age of Chivalry, the Catholic Church was the guiding influence. Today, amid the flagrant vulgarity and ugliness which surround her, the traditional Roman Catholic Church still stands bright and pure—the one, true and eternal Church\* which numbers among its many illustrious heroes down through the centuries the great Saint Louis IX, King of France. How sorely needed in our decadent day is another Age of Chivalry! †

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