THE ATHANASIAN

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Euthanasia And Assisted Suicide: Dual Depravities

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Man is the only creature upon whom the Almighty has bestowed the gifts of reason and free will. It is these faculties, along with the possession of an immortal soul, that distinguish man from beast as being made uniquely in the image of God.

Along with this great blessing came the awesome responsibility to use these higher powers always in the service of the Creator. Reason cannot, therefore, be used in a manner that violates *moral law*. Through the transgression of our first parents the penalty of death and its pursuant suffering befell the human race. "Wherefore," writes Saint Paul, "as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Romans 5:12) In like manner, death is the great reckoning in the life of each and every descendant of Adam and Eve, for so it is written: "...it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church has always been that, while the thought of death should be a sobering one, it ought not be such as to throw man into morbidity and despair. The Catholic who reaches life's end, provided it is reached in a state of grace, may justly boast with Saint Paul: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (I Corinthians 15:55) The Church has always admonished the faithful to reflect often on death and the judgment and to ever pray for the crowning grace of final perserverance (without which no man is saved), for it is *God* who appoints the hour of death.

The foregoing summary will be familiar as basic Catholic thinking on the question of death. So, too, is the prohibition of the taking of innocent life, whether in abortion, murder, suicide or euthanasia ("mercy killing"). Aside from the morally allowable deaths resulting from war, self-defense and capital punishment, the Church condemns the willful slaying of one human being by another, affirming that, as it is God who gives life, it is also He alone who has the prerogative to take it.

The Suicide Epidemic

And yet it comes as no surprise that there is a growing movement in America to acknowledge suicide, assisted suicide and euthanasia as *rights* and to legalize them. This is, after all, a logical step in the humanistic march to efface from society any vestige of fidelity to the Commandments of God and to natural law. When a nation legally sanctions the slaughter of the unborn and sends aid to a nation (Red China) that practices infanticide, can the passage of such laws be far behind? Pro-life advocates have warned about such dangers for years, only to be ridiculed for using the "slippery slope" argument, that is, that the devaluing of prenatal life will, of necessity, lead to a sliding away of respect for the sanctity of *all* life. But abortion foes need make no apology because there is an expanding body of evidence to show that such is the case and that, unless the forces of light mount a successful effort to restore a sure ground underfoot on these issues, the fall of America into a bottomless pit of utter darkness is certain to occur.

In recent years suicide has become an alarmingly popular method of "solving one's problems." Statistics tend to be on the conservative side simply because the nature of the act is usually private and not always accompanied by a suicide note. The figures may likely be increased by some "accidental" drug overdoses, drownings, traffic fatalities, etc. The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in 1989 suicide ranked as the twelfth leading cause of death in the U.S., with 27,800 Americans dying by their own hands, but as early as the mid-1970's the American Association of of Suicidology (yes, there really *is* such a group) was estimating that the figure was closer to 35,000 and calling it the tenth leading cause of death. Others place the total at closer to 100,000, and the Center for Disease Control estimates that there are as many as 500,000 *attempts* made every year. Ironically, the most significant increase in any age group has been among teens and young adults, the very segment of the population that should be vibrant in the springtime of life. So serious is this that suicide is now listed as the third leading cause of death (after accidents and homicides) among young adults, the second highest among college students and the *number-one killer* overall of those between the ages of 15 and 24. Since the mid-1950's, the incidence of suicide in this age group has more than tripled.

Last summer the bookstores and libraries of the nation introduced a new volume to the reading public — *Final*

Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance & Assisted Suicide for the Dying. Derek Humphry, its author, is an expert on the subject. Not only is he the cofounder (in 1980) and president of the Hemlock Society (named after the poisonous plant from which the drink was made that Socrates was forced to consume), a group that advocates euthanasia and assisted suicide, and the author of other defenses of these practices (*Jean's Way* and *Let Me Die Before I Wake*), but, according to an article in *Time*, "(he) proudly asserts that he has assisted three family members in ending their lives when they faced intolerable pain or debilitation..." (William A. Henry, III, "Do-It-Yourself Death Lessons," August 19, 1991, p. 55)

What is both strange and disturbing is the fact that this ghastly work, *Final Exit*, is now said (as of December, 1991) to top the *New York Times'* bestseller list for how-to books. *Newsweek* aptly described it as "the weirdest summer-reading hit in memory," and Humphry himself bills it as "a nuts-and-bolts book on how to end your life" (*nuts* might be a suitable representation of the author and his select clientele). The macabre excitement generated by *Final Exit* has spilled over libraries as well. When research for this article was being collected, several attempts were made to procure a copy from a large metropolitan library (over 2 million volumes), but all to no avail. The main library and two branches were contacted but all copies were out. A librarian on the information line said it was on the "hot list," meaning that demand for the book was overwhelming. One branch had three copies but all were then on loan — and there were four people already on the waiting list!

Just who are the people reading *Final Exit*? The same sort of gawkers who rubberneck to view the carnage at a fatal car crash? Or perhaps those who look upon it as a kind of black comedy, like *The Addams Family* movie, no more to be taken seriously than that film's graveyard humor? In other words, it is reasonable to assume that many of its readers have no intention of doing themselves in, but are merely curiosity seekers, Still, these people run the risk of having a seed planted in their minds that may one day yield pestilent weeds.

Many may fall into that category, but not all, and Humphry's hellish analysis of the ways and means of self-destruction provides the suicidally inclined with what is needed to push them over the edge. Reviews of the book indicate just how chilling are its contents: charts specifying lethal doses of drugs, methods of mixing the drugs in food to assure they won't be passed from the body, tips on how to prevent family and friends from knowing about the suicide in time to stop it, and suggestions on suicide notes and "etiquette" (or the "Emily Post-mortem," as Father Joseph Collins has wryly put it). The tragedies this book has and will engender are evident from the letter sent to Humphry by a man whose ailing, elderly parents used his book in their successful suicides. It read in part: "For what it is worth, we thank you for providing accurate information and advice." (Cited, Katrine Ames, et al, "Last Rights," *Newsweek*, August 26, 1991, p. 41)

If Derek Humphry and his Hemlock Society were the only voices calling for "death with dignity" and the "right to die," there would be little reason for concern, but they are but part of a larger movement. As early as 1935, the Euthanasia Society of London was formed and, three years later, the American Euthanasia Society was founded. Concerning the latter, "right to die" proponent Dr. O. Ruth Russell writes: "In early 1975, the Society was reorganized as the Society for the Right to Die with Dr. Joseph Fletcher as president." (*Freedom to Die: Moral & Legal Aspects of Euthanasia*, rev. ed., New York, 1977, p. 359)

The connection of Fletcher, a minister who taught at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the issue is most revealing. This is the same Joseph Fletcher who became famous (or rather, *infamous*) for his espousal of the immoral theory of "situation ethics," in which he revised the Ten Commandments to read: "Thou shalt not covet, ordinarily. Thou shalt not kill, ordinarily. Thou shalt not commit adultery, ordinarily." (Cited, John A. Stormer, *The Death of a Nation*, Florissant, Missouri, 1971, p. 102) And it is also the same Joseph Fletcher noted in testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1953 by FBI undercover agent Herbert A. Philbrick. Testifying about clergymen in the Boston area who were involved with the Communist cell he had penetrated, Philbrick included:

> The Reverend Joseph Fletcher, F-l-e-t-c-h-e-r, of the theological seminary, Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Mass., is another. Joe Fletcher worked with us on Communist Party projects and an enormous number of tasks. (Cited, *ibid.*, pp. 101-102)

It is the Euthanasia Educational Council, a sister group of Fletcher's Society for the Right to Die, that is responsible for the drafting and dissemination of the so-called "Living Will," in which a person authorizes euthanasia in the case of his or her own irreversible "physical or mental disability." (By 1973, 250,000 copies of the "Living Will" had already been distributed.) (Russell, pp. 181, 359 and, cited, 296)

Other pro-euthanasia groups will be familiar to readers — many of them "mainstream" Protestants and secular humanists. Regarding the latter, the American Ethical Union, the American Humanist Association in the U.S., the National Secular Society and the British Humanist Association in the U.K. have been vocal advocates. In 1973, Humanist Manifesto II called for "recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia and the right to suicide." (Cited, Gerald A. Larue, *Euthanasia and Religion*, Los Angeles, 1985, p. 131) As will be shown presently, these are open issues in the Conciliar "Catholic" Church.

"Doctor God" And His Suicide Machine

Decades of erosion on basic religious concepts such as the transcendence of God and the sanctity of human life — due, in no small part, to the tireless propaganda of those mentioned above — have led to an increase in support of these formerly taboo issues. Consider the following indicators:

* In 1975, a Gallup Poll showed "only" 41 percent favoring the "right" to suicide for someone in great pain "with no hope of recovery"; by 1990, the figure had risen to 66 percent. Also in 1990, some 84 percent agreed that treatment should be withheld from a person on life support with no chance of recovery.

* Dr. Timothy Quill, a Rochester, New York internist, wrote an account in the March, 1991 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* that describes how he helped a leukemia patient stockpile barbituates with which to kill herself. A grand jury refused to indict him on criminal charges in July.

* The appearance on ballots in the State of Washington last fall of a referendum, Initiative 119, that sought to give physicians the legal right, upon the request of terminally ill patients, to administer lethal doses of morphine or some other "painless and humane" method of liquidation. Despite the fact that polls indicated a 60 percent approval rating for the plan and that proponents, such as the Hemlock Society, collected up to ten times more in donations than its foes, the measure was voted down. The pro-death lobby hopes to succeed this year in California.

* The federal government got into the act in December when the so-called Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 went into effect. Thereafter, all hospitals receiving Medicare or Medicaid funding must ask incoming patients if they have "advance directives" (for example, the "Living Will").

Although Derek Humphry and his book gained the most attention on this front in 1991, a more significant story emerged out of Michigan. On October 25 in an isolated cabin in a recreational area 40 miles north of Detroit, retired pathologist Jack Kevorkian assisted two middle-aged women to commit suicide. He had done the same for another woman suffering from Alzheimer's Disease the year before. Commenting on the more recent deaths — a 43-year-old multiple sclerosis victim and a 50-year-old with a pelvic disorder — State Senator Fred Dillingham cautioned: "Here in this state, he is referred to as Dr. Death. We're looking at someone who wants to be Dr. God. It's a very scary concept. He violated a court order, violated medical ethics, then turns around and broadens it to the chronically ill. It makes me wonder what's next if we don't get him checked in this state." (Cited, Isabel Wilkerson, "Opponents Weigh Action Against Doctor Who Aided Suicides," *New York Times*, nat. ed., October 25, 1991, p. A-10)

Kevorkian, who used homemade "suicide machines" to carry out his grim tasks, has received more criticism than just from Dillingham. "He is a man with a cause," stated Arthur Kaplan, director of the Center for Biomedical Research at the University of Minnesota, "and the cause is immoral, unethical and very dangerous." (*Ibid.*) The Rev. John J. Paris, professor of medical ethics at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts, described the incidents as "bizarre," adding "what he's doing is precisely what will happen with the passage of Initiative 119." (*Ibid.*) But ultimately it was Dillingham who came down hardest and whose words are applicable to the entire euthanasia/assisted suicide movement as well: "My feeling is we need to punch Kevorkian's lights out right now. He's proven himself to be a danger." (*Ibid.*)

Which Mercy — God's Or The World's?

It is completely fitting that the world should take to heart assisted suicides and "mercy killings." Just as it permits and even encourages abortions as the "solution" for couples who don't wish the "burden" of another mouth to feed, so too it is reasonable that one should seek the "final exit" if life itself becomes a burden. When one cannot enjoy the comforts and pleasures of this world, it counsels, what value is left in a life? How vastly different is the teaching of the Church.

The notion of suicide has always been so unthinkable to the Catholic mind that the victim of self-destruction is generally regarded to have not been in full command of his or her faculties. Only if it is demonstrable that the contrary was true, that there was sufficient deliberation before the

act took place, would the act be regarded as gravely sinful. (Such proof of intent would include prior threats, suicide notes, and the like.) Father H. VanderVeldt and Dr. Robert P. Odenwald, who at the time of their collaboration were professors at the Catholic University of America, observe in their discussion of severe mental disorders:

> ...suicide committed by persons in any of those mental conditions is presumed not to be a grave sin. This consideration is important in treating the question of burial in consecrated ground. Most psychiatrists go further and are of the opinion that suicide is always an act of insanity. From that opinion it would follow that any Catholic who commits suicide should be allowed an ecclesiastical burial. However, the Church is of a different opinion, for she lays down the rule (*Codex Juris Canonici*, Canon 1240, Sect. 1, No. 3) that ecclesiastical burial should be refused to persons who commit suicide with malice aforethought (*"deliberato consilio"*). (*Psychiatry & Catholicism*, 2nd ed., New York, 1957, p. 304)

Turning to euthanasia, it ought first be noted that in many of the modern instances, such as those of Quill and Kevorkian, the notion is intertwined with that of assisted suicide, since the victims who viewed their conditions as agonizing and hopeless were given the means by these "doctors" to perform "mercy killing" upon themselves. In the late 1940's, Father Joseph V. Sullivan did an intensive investigation of euthanasia for his doctoral dissertation and among his observations is the following:

> The tradition of the West is, therefore, sternly set against any form of direct killing of the innocent. It is true that the Western tradition does not explicitly condemn merciful euthanasia, because there was no need to do so, since no one conceived the idea under a Christian civilization to kill the suffering in order to relieve them of their suffering. But by condemning all forms of direct killing of the innocent the tradition does implicitly condemn euthanasia, for euthanasia, whether voluntary or compulsory, is direct killing of the innocent. A patient is an innocent person. The fact that the patient is incurably ill, wills euthanasia and is useless to the community, does not in any way change the fact of the person's innocence. For a man to take the life of an innocent person directly, even his own life, for any reason whatsoever, apart from a divine command, has always been against the conscience of the West. (Cited, Father Gerald Kelly, S.J., *Medico-Moral Problems*, Part III, St. Louis, 1951, pp. 5-6)

The most common use of the term euthanasia involves the administering of drugs to the terminally ill, either simply to help lessen the pain or, as is now more often the sense, to *permanently* put the patients out of their misery. Clearly, as has been shown, the Church categorically condemns the latter as a violation of the Fifth Commandment, but what about the former?

The use of drugs to reduce suffering is, of course, permissible, in the hour of death as at any time in life. However, it is the clear Catholic position that certain qualifications are to be made involving the use of drugs for the terminally ill. The principle of double effect is present here: drugs may be given to the dying *only* if the aim is for the slackening of pain and that death, should it come as a "side effect," must not have been sought. Pope Pius XII, in 1957, told a group of anethesiologists that respirators, being "an extraordinary measure...need not be used to prolong life." The use of feeding tubes, though, is considered an ordinary measure that cannot be interrupted. The overriding reason that the Church gives for condemning the use of drugs, whose character is such as to render the sufferer senseless at "the supreme hour of human life," is the danger to that soul's salvation that such a condition of reduced reason necessarily brings. Father Joseph F. Delaney writes that "this practice deprives a man of the capacity to act meritoriously at a time when the competency is most necessary and its product invested with finality. It is equally obvious that this space is immeasurably precious to the sinner who still has to reconcile himself with his offended God. ("Euthanasia," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. V, New York, 1913, p. 630) Satan, as every Catholic is aware, makes his greatest efforts to steal souls from God in their final hour.

And devilish, too, is the mentality behind the mercy killing slogan, "death with dignity," for the greatest indignity is to die without God's friendship, deprived forever of *divine mercy*. Father Gerald Kelly confirms this when he notes:

> ...the entire philosophy behind the euthanasia movement is anti-Christian. It likens man to a mere animal; it makes pain the greatest evil in the world. It ignores the fact that no one suffers save through the will of God; that through suffering a man can beautify his character, atone for his sins, take a special part in the sublime work of the Redemption, and win for himself an eternity of glory. This does not mean, of course, that Christians deify pain and sit idly by while men suffer. There is also something Christlike in alleviating pain, in helping the sufferer, and in trying

to conquer the disease. But there is nothing either Christian or Christlike in killing the sufferer to relieve his suffering. (*Op. cit.*, p. 6)

Likewise, Pope Pius XII cut through the movement's fraudulent use of words like "mercy" and "dignity" when, in 1947, he asked: "Is it not false pity which claims to justify euthanasia and to remove from man purifying and meritorious suffering, not by a charitable and praiseworthy help but by death, as if one were dealing with an irrational animal without immortality?" (*Papal Teaching: The Human Body*, Boston, 1960, pp. 90-91)

Although the Conciliar Church has made statements condemning euthanasia, the fact remains that one may be publicly outspoken in favor of it and still be a member in good standing of that body. Dr. O. Ruth Russell lists a number of "Catholic moral theologians in America today" who are doing just that. Among those were Father John Reedy, C.S.C., and Father Richard A. McCormick, the latter urging that the "idolatry of life" must be rejected. (pp. 210 and 212) Another "Catholic" cited is Marquette University theology professor Daniel C. McGuire who, in his 1973 article, "The Freedom to Die," rejects Catholic moral teaching by asserting: "We can proclaim moral freedom to terminate life directly in certain cases." (pp. 209-210. McGuire is also the author of the pro-euthanasia book, *Death by Choice*, Garden City, New York, 1974, in which he observes that "suicide may at times be moral." p. 221)

A Matter Of Life And Death

Early in *Final Exit*, Derek Humphry offers a surprisingly candid bit of advice to prospective readers: "If you consider God the master of your fate, then read no further." If a note left behind by Humphry's second wife Ann is any indication, then he has appointed himself master of the fate of *others*. When the 49-year-old cofounder of the Hemlock Society, distraught over Humphry's affair with another woman, took an overdose of pills last fall, she wrote to her ex-husband, "you have done everything conceivable to precipitate my death." A copy was sent to her friend Rita Marker, head of the Anti-Euthanasia Task Force, to which was added a postscript concerning Humphry's first wife, Jean (the subject of *Jean's Way*, an account by Humphry and Ann of how he put drugs in the coffee of the cancer-stricken woman to bring her life to an end). "Derek...is a killer," read her note to Marker, "I *know* Jean actually died of suffocation. I could never say it until now; who would believe me? Do the best you can." (Cited, Patrick J. Buchanan, "Suicide unveils dark side of euthanasia," (Jacksonville) *Florida Times-Union*, November 2, 1991, p. A-11)

Whether or not Humphry actually did murder his wife (Ann's note could be the product of an embittered spouse striking back the only way she was able), it still indicates one of the dangers in the legalization of euthanasia/assisted suicide, that it may be used to conceal acts of murder. And where will it end? "Mercy killing" for babies born with birth defects? The mentally retarded? The handicapped? The possibilities are unlimited when man presumes to play God. One may even wonder if the day is fast approaching when the government will take an active part in such "services." In *Lord Of The World*, a novel written in 1907, Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson told of the state of the world at the time of the Antichrist. He accurately predicted airliners, high-speed trains and a bomb powerful enough to destroy a city. He also wrote of government "ministers of euthanasia" who dispatched their "patients" with a "box (from which) emerged a white flexible tube with a broad mouthpiece out of which a lethal gas came." One of the women who died with Kevorkian's aid last fall succumbed after "a gas mask carrying carbon monoxide from a cannister was put to her nose and mouth." (Wilkerson) A coincidence, to be sure, but it is no coincidence that Monsignor Benson chose to make euthanasia an officially performed act of a nation that was ripe for the Antichrist, for it is to just such a level that society must sink, with total disregard of the sovereignty of Christ and the sanctity of life, before the Man of Sin can make his appearance.

However near or far that day does not matter one iota to the traditional Catholic for the obligation to oppose the merchants of death remains the same. The battle against the evils of euthanasia and assisted suicide must be fought against with all the force that is now being used on the abortion front for, if the sanctity of life is attacked at one stage, it is in truth being attacked on all others as well. In this fight, which ultimately is being waged on the spiritual plane, our prayers and penance are essential and, perhaps beyond this, even greater sacrifices, for of paramount importance are the eternal lives and deaths of *immortal souls*. And let all Catholics who *do* regard God as the Master of their fates take heart in His word: "With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death, he shall be blessed." (Ecclesiasticus 1:13) May, please God, the Quills, Humphrys and Kevorkians of the world turn from their wickedness and denounce the evils that they have striven so mightily to proclaim! †

CAPSULE COMMENTS

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

As of this writing (December 16, 1991) the persecution and destruction being inflicted by the Communist Yugoslav People's Army upon Catholic Croatia continue. Glaringly revealed in this ongoing tragedy is Communism's burning hatred of the Catholic Church. Thus far, some 10,000 Croatians have been killed, hundreds of thousands are homeless, hospitals have been bombed and many scores of churches have been demolished. And the reason for this horrendous and appalling situation? The objective can only be the annihilation of the Catholic Church in Croatia and the obliteration of Croatia as a Catholic country. And, with all of the apparently tremendous influence "our" President exerts on the world scene, what has he done to date to bring this horror to an end? Nothing, to my knowledge. Nor will he, I submit, unless to do so would be politically expedient and would significantly advance the goal of the One World Order. Meanwhile, the gradual abolition of Catholic Croatia may well go on unabated. On whose side, would you guess, are George Bush and the amoral and atheistic United Nations — the side of Communist Yugoslavia or that of Catholic Croatia?

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The USA is finished as a free and sovereign nation. All current signs strikingly indicate this to be the case, so much so that I, for one, cannot imagine that any intelligent, well-informed individual could honestly doubt or question it. America is today subservient to the power and authority of the United Nations and the formation of the One World Order proceeds as planned. While America's military arsenal is being dismantled at an alarming rate, Russia maintains the largest and most powerful armed force in the world — and one which it continues to enlarge. And so, with each passing day how increasingly practical and necessary to emphasize the warning: Don't give up your guns!

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In so-called conservative publications aligned with the non-Catholic Conciliar Church, how often I read the weak attempts of some of those journals to excuse this or that heretical statement or subversive action of one or another of that Church's bishops. Well, you know, the bishop in question is simply confused or misguided or he made a mistake. Nonsense! Perhaps in a rare case, yes, such an excuse may be a legitimate one but, in general, the men who form the body of Conciliar Church bishops in America, I submit, know very well what they have been and are doing. Their atrocious record to date speaks for itself. As a consequence of their abominable words and actions (or silence and inaction) over the years, the Conciliar Church is a shambles and the Faith has taken a tremendous beating. To contend or to imply that those bishops really have good intentions is absurd. Thank God, they're not Roman Catholics!

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Although the observation has been occasionally made in past issues of this newsletter, it is, I believe, well worth repeating: In the 13 years in which John Paul II has been posing as Pope, he has never once, to my knowledge, even so much as mentioned, much less condemned, either Communism or Freemasonry. Some "Vicar of Christ"! †

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CHRIST OUR KING

Fr. Oswald Baker (England)

Daniel O'Connell was the Irish statesman and orator to whom the Catholics of Britain and Ireland were indebted for the Act of Catholic Emancipation of 1829. For this reason he became known as "the Liberator." By reason of his achievements for Ireland he was called also the "uncrowned King of Ireland." Assuredly, no statesman in Irish history was ever loved so widely. He died at Genoa in 1847. On his deathbed, the last wishes he expressed were, "I will my soul to God, my body to Ireland, my heart to Rome." His body was brought back to Ireland, to Glasnevin cemetery. His heart was embalmed and taken to Rome to be placed in a sarcophagus in the church of the Irish College.

When Cardinal Bourne was dying, in London, in 1934, he asked that after his death his heart be sent to St. John's College, at Wonersh in Surrey, the seminary of which he was the first rector. His wish was carried out. His heart was placed in the wall of the college chapel.

There have been other instances of the enshrinement of the hearts of prominent men in gold and marble. The heart is the central organ of a man's physical and emotional life and so has come to be regarded as standing for the entire man, the most expressive symbol of his life, his thoughts and aspirations, and all that make him worthy of respect and homage. It is thought fitting to pay honour even to the dead hearts of great men.

The Heart of Christ our King is a living Heart, organ and symbol of thoughts and sentiments which surpass in dignity and value the sum of those of all creatures, bearing an infinite love for all mankind, a love governing and directing a Kingdom more widespread, more durable, more securely founded than any earthly kingdom. Millions of souls have responded and submitted to His dominion, whose keynote is love. The entire earthly course of Christ our King was an exposition of His love. Love induced Him, as God, to come into the world, to win us to Himself. Love moved Him to work as a carpenter, that work might be sanctified, the daily toil of the artisan raised to a new level of dignity. His whole life was an eloquent declaration that God loves the world with a boundless love. It was His manifest loving compassion that secured the allegiance of His followers. Christ our King demands difficult tasks of us but He performed them first Himself. Our difficulties in overcoming temptation He could not, of course, experience. The essentially identical pain in asserting the Will of God against the will of Satan He did experience in a literally infinite degree.

The moral standards established by Christ our King are absolute, unchangeable and rigorous. To maintain them is not easy. So long as they are acknowledged and accepted, they at least serve as a curb on human passions. The disquieting feature of our own age is the open revolt against standards themselves, a rejection which brings rapid decadence. Very widely now, some, at least, of former moral standards have been completely abandoned, especially concerning marriage and delicate matters. It is not uncommon to condone in some countries what is condemned in others. It is the purpose of the Kingdom of Christ on earth to preserve us from dishonest, selective indignation and to preserve permanent moral ideals. Our Lord Himself anticipated the modern heresy that love for Him is more important than keeping His laws, that charity is more important than chastity. He was adamant. No such distinction is possible. "If you love me, keep my commandments."

The rewards for faithful service to our King may not be received in this life, but they are sure and they will be for eternity. †

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Grave Concern, Yes — Despair, No

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

The state of extreme degeneracy and corruption almost everywhere manifest on the American scene today is both mind-boggling and a source of exceeding anxiety and sorrow to all intelligent men and women of principle and character, with this reaction perhaps being generally more pronounced and acute among the more senior members of the population. In just about every walk of life and field of activity deterioration, degeneration, decadence are the order of the day. While the so-called American way of life of generations past was never all that great and fell far short of any ideal, it was one of high quality indeed in comparison to the utterly horrendous and repugnant condition of our present time. Especially is this evident in the area of religion and morality as, for example, the pathetic state of the Conciliar Church; the ever escalating sellout (treason) of the USA by its civil leaders; the steadily increasing acceptance of immorality of all kinds as merely so many optional life-styles — such as the utterly revolting sin of sodomy. (In this country alone there are presently some 200,000 cases of AIDS; an estimated one million have the HIV virus and tens of thousands have already died of the disease.) Well, there is no need to provide any extensive gruesome list of examples of the moral decadence of the USA with which we are surrounded. We are all very vividly and mournfully aware of it.

As to the root cause of this moral chaos, what else is it but the wholesale rejection of God and His eternal law on the part of multitudes of the American people? While this observation has been made from time to time in past issues of this newsletter, its stark truth becomes ever more obvious with each passing day. God has been effectively banished from the public domain — albeit but temporarily — and His sovereignty usurped by man on a massive scale. The sworn enemies of God (militant atheists, secular humanists, Christ-haters, etc.) have long been with us, to be sure, but not until fairly recent times have they fully surfaced in all of their ugliness and antagonism towards Christianity in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular. Today the immoral and amoral anti-God, anti-Christ forces are riding high, so much so that they seem to be, for all practical purposes, in complete control of just about all the major areas of influence in this country — the communications media, education, politics, etc. Since religion and the moral law of God are no longer a dynamic force on the American scene, almost nothing remains sacred and the powers of hell reign supreme. Nor is there an end in sight. Indeed, the current scene is, in my opinion, but a prelude, a foretaste of what is in store when the diabolical One World Order is in place down the road by way of the godless United Nations.

But, regardless of how exceedingly distressful as is the all but incredible state of our nation and the world in this our day, it is imperative to guard against the real danger (at least for some) of becoming despondent, of giving in to any temptation to despair. And, in view of the tragedy that, humanly speaking, has befallen the Roman Catholic Church over the past three decades or so, especially is this caution applicable to traditional Roman Catholics. However mentally and emotionally disturbing the present situation may be for us, we must never consent to the slightest temptation to despondency but rather resist it with all firmness. Such is the will of God. Nor will His grace be lacking to us.

There is no doubt whatsoever but that we are living in an age when the strength of our faith and our loyalty to our beloved Church are being tested to the utmost. Never before has the Church been in more dire straits than it is today and, because this is so, never before has there been a more desperate need for truly heroic Roman Catholics of the mold and character of which martyrs are made. Such is the challenge before us. We have in traditional Catholicism the greatest thing in all the world, our Roman Catholic Faith. How exceedingly grateful, then, ought we to be to the good and gracious Lord for this supreme treasure! How fervent and zealous we should be in the living of that Faith in our daily lives and in our militant defense of it whenever we have the opportunity to do so! And how ready and willing we should be even to die for that Faith if God so wills! And whenever we may be tempted to despondency and despair, let us but turn to our divine Lord, the God of all consolation, and sincerely and fervently beg of Him the grace and the strength to remain ever loyal to Him and to persevere till death in His glorious friendship. "Come to Me all you who labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." (Matthew 11, 28) †

"The unholy trinity":
George Bush
Mikhail Gorbachev
John Paul II