THE ATHANASIAN

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NEWS FROM OUR OFFICE

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Much of importance to our readers has happened since the last issue of *The Athanasian*. Of foremost concern is Father Fenton's health. As it now stands, he is, from all appearances, in a weakened but stable condition. He is in good spirits, all things considered, and is mentally sharp. But Father has not improved to the point where he can return to the office, and it remains to be seen when he will be able to. He is living now in a retirement home. Many thanks to all who have included Father in their Masses, rosaries, novenas and other prayers, and who have called or written to express your concerns and offer your encouragement for his recovery. It means a great deal to Father Fention to know that so many of you are thinking of him. Please continue to remember him in your daily intentions.

My apologies for the lateness of this issue. Several factors conspired to set back the publication date, not the least being some personal reasons, including a move I recently made and some health problems of my own. The illness was severe enough to so impair my powers of concentration that I could not write for days at a time. In addition, there has been some uncertainty about the future of *The Athanasian*, given Father Fenton's absence.

Now that I am starting to settle in after my move and am feeling much better after some treatment and megadoses of vitamins, the next issue should be fairly well back on schedule. As for the newsletter's future, I am happy to report that most of those readers expressing an opinion have enthusiastically supported its continued operation and some new readers are subscribing. Please help us go forward with your renewals, gift subscriptions *and* donations — remember, the subscription rate is barely enough to keep the office open, the printer paid and each issue mailed, so donations over and above this really help us keep afloat. Any amount you can spare to help sustain this apostolate is deeply appreciated. Even small offerings can help defray costs for stamps, envelopes, etc.

As for the promised change in format from newsletter to magazine, it, too, has been delayed for the same reasons as given above. But to give you a taste of what to expect in the magazine, I have included in the current issue a few (but not all) of the features, that are to appear regularly in *The Athanasian* magazine. Briefly, the new features are: "Rome Has Spoken" — a selection from the perennial wisdom of the Popes, beginning this issue with Saint Pius X teaching on the meaning of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; "Food For Thought" — some adages and short quotations designed to stimulate thought and fuel conversations; and "The Lighter Side Of Life" — contributions from a quality often in too short a supply among traditional Catholics... *humor*.

Another "new" item you will find here is a reprint of "The Remnant Of The Remnant In Traditional Catholicism," an article by Father Fenton that originally was published in the December 1, 1982 issue and has been included without changes. This piece touches on matters every bit as relevant as the day it was written — considering that the apostate Vatican II sect is as strong today as it was back then and that it still falsely claims to be the Roman Catholic Church — and "authentic warriors for the Faith — those who are truly soldiers of Christ — are precious few indeed, a small minority at best, a remnant of the remnant."

No one has ever become a saint through halfhearted commitment to God, but only by surrendering to Him, in the words of Saint Ignatius of Loyola's prayer, "my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my will." It is a sad but all too evident fact that we Catholics have *not* done enough for God and, in large part, this is because we have not really heeded or else have forgotten the bedrock truth Father Fention expressed, when he wrote that "the preservation and propagation of our divine Faith is the greatest cause in all the world..." I pray that Father's article will elicit much serious reflection and soul-searching among our readers, and spur them to redouble all their personal sacrifices to our Lord. More than anything else, news that greater numbers of Catholics are committing themselves to actively fight the good fight (in accordance with their various stations in life) is the kind of tonic Father Fenton needs to reinvigorate him — and it is something we can all do to help.

It is my intention to carry something of Father Fenton's in every issue: new material if, God willing, he recovers sufficiently to contribute again, but reprints until such a time. I feel it is beneficial to include these; for one reason, because I want to give new readers the opportunity to become acquainted with the writings of one of the truly original pathfinders of traditional Catholicism, without whom many souls might still today be searching for a way out of the Novus Ordo sect. But *The Athanasian* stalwarts, who might remember when the articles originally came out a decade or so ago, will find them surprisingly fresh to reread. And *anyone* reading them can gain insights and inspiration sure to renew or fortify their zeal and dedication for the cause of Catholic tradition. †

Dangerous Waters For The Barque Of Peter

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Between the toe of Italy's boot and the island of Sicily lays a narrow body of water called the Strait of Messina. From ancient times it has been a most treacherous passage for sailor to negotiate, and the site of many sinkings. What makes it particularly dangerous is that at one point mariners face a large rock — *Scylla*, as it has been named — jutting off the Italian coast, while opposite it on the Sicilian side is a whirlpool — *Charybdis*. The life-and-death problem for navigators is how to avoid one hazard without falling prey to the other. So perilous was this area to those in pre-Christian times that Scylla and Charybdis entered the mythology of the Greeks as monsters.

The expression "between Scylla and Charybdis" has come to mean a situation where one is placed at risk by two equally deadly threats, and so one must exercise extreme care to pass through it unscathed. Alternate renderings of it include "to be between a rock and a hard place," "... between hammer and anvil" and "... between the devil and the deep blue sea." In common usage it has come to mean being faced with a pair of intolerable alternatives.

Today, traditional Catholics are faced with such a dilemma. Having fled the religion spawned by the Second Vatican Council, they sought a safe haven, one in which they could ride out the storm until it pleased God to show them the rainbow. While the Protestantized "new Mass" is the imposture that sent many of them scurrying from Modernist churches, the two crucial issues have compelled them to stay out of it have been the pseudo-orthodoxy it has sought to impose in the name of Catholic authority and the false unity it seeks with non-Catholics. Paradoxically, they now find themselves faced with rather similar difficulties that also parallel the dangers found in the Strait of Messina.

On the one hand, they are confronted with certain Catholics I'll call the *exclusionists*, who, much in the fashion of the Scylla, set themselves up as some exclusive rock of orthodoxy. These Catholics spend much of their time paring down the remnant Church to those who fall in line with their interpretation of orthodox doctoring: *Do it their way or not at all*. For the exclusionists, great emphasis is placed on an ironclad reading of church law; even the slightest deviation may be construed as tantamount to a denial of the Faith or evidence of subversion. They have determined that only they possess the capability of knowing the mind of the Church in the practical application of these teachings and disciplines and respond with great rancor should anyone dare to suggest another approach may be possible. From their standpoint, the remnant more accurately resembles a handful and even those modest numbers are fast shrinking away.

Across from Scylla is the ecclesiastical version of Charybdis, here in the form of *pantraditionalists*. Where the exclusionists place heavy burdens on their followers, the pantraditionalists offer open arms to anyone who favors the Latin Mass and rejects Vatican II (or, at least, decries its abuses): *The enemy of my enemy must be my friend*. There must be broad leeway given the faithful because of today's confusion (pantraditionalists maintain); let us not cause them further disturbance by making trivial distinctions between traditional groups or arguing about unimportant issues. And, like the eddy they resemble, those drawn to them are sucked into a mentality that says: "All are welcome here; leave your differences at the door."

Where the exclusionist is an ultraconservative, the pantraditionalist is an arch-liberal; where the former is rigorous and unbending, the latter is lax and carefree; there the former veers uncomfortably close to Jansenism, the latter careens toward the open-house "ecumenism" of the Conciliar Church; where the former errs by overemphasizing order and justice, the latter strays from the safe path in the opposite way, stressing charity and liberty; where the former refuses to accept that the Church makes exceptions regarding Canon Law in times of emergency, the latter twists those same exceptions to be used in instances where they do not apply. These extremes — or at least tendencies toward them — are not at all uncommon in the traditional movement. Actually, every one of us has inclinations in one or the other direction that need to be kept from getting off line. While those at one end look with horror at the activities of those at the other, and *vice versa*, there is really nothing for us to choose from, since deviations in either direction are equally to be avoided and deplored. The following observations are offered to show where the roots of these problems originate, to further identify the inherent dangers, and suggest the eventual solution to them.

Where Is The Catholic Church?

Amidst the myriad well-publicized outrages committed by those churchmen imbued with the spirit of Vatican II, there is a kind of damage that, though as widespread as the better known examples, is often overlooked in this regard, and that is its negative impact on the traditional Catholic movement. This goes far beyond the obvious disruption caused by Catholics being forced out of neighborhood churches. *All* problems unique to the traditional movement can be traced with

certainty to the Conciliar revolt, and this is because they all revolve in one manner or another, around the question of what to do and think in the absence of any truly Catholic teaching authority — most especially in the absence of a Pope. (In general this happens to be true regardless of whether or not one happens to be sedevacantist in outlook, since many of those who accept the legitimacy of John Paul II's claim to the Holy See do so in word only. In their ongoing disobedience toward him they clearly show an attitude that does not honor him as such and is more consistent with a vacant see in Rome. For all intents and purposes, they *behave* as if the Church is presently without a Pope — which, of course, it is.)

The post-Conciliar years have been a time of learning for Catholics, whose awareness of the full implications of the "reforms" has only increased in slow increments. In 1965, there were very few who categorically rejected Vatican II as non-Catholic. True, there were a few bishops and priests who started to take exception (sometimes publicly) with certain of its pronouncements, but even they did not see the profound rupture with tradition that these decrees actually represented. Still, their voices alerted faithful Catholics that something was wrong.

By 1969, for example, two members of the Curia, Cardinals Alfredo Ottavini and Antonia Bacci, endorsed a *Critical Study* of the "new Mass" composed by some Roman theologians that spoke, among other things, against the rite's ability "to gladden the heart of the most modernist Protestant" and its "insinuations or manifest errors against the integrity of the Catholic Faith." Although this document, having been signed by two of the Church's highest authorities, is even today one of the most important documents incriminating the false orientation of the new religion, and has led to more intensive analyses of the pseudo-Mass, it falls short of anything approaching a categorical denial and neither cardinal ever took the step of clearly disengaging from this new church. The charitable view is that they simply failed to see the extent of the revolt, reaching even to the highest places in the Church. How culpable they were in this negligence is a matter of debate that I am not interested in pursuing now, since my purpose here simply is to show the planned confusion that has bewildered Catholics for the past thirty years. (The mere fact that the cardinals dared to commit such an act of "treason" against the Conciliar Church ought to count for something to the Faithful — excepting, of course, those self-appointed watchdogs who keep a nervous finger perched at all times over the *anathema* button.)

Following closely after this was the establishment of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), and its affiliate seminary in Econe, Switzerland, by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. Again, the parameters of the Catholic Church *vis-a-vis* the Conciliar Church were then ill-defined. The Archbishop's purpose was to form a kind of theological seawall against the crashing waves of the neo-Modernist deluge (for example, the universal corrupting of the seminaries) to which Vatican II opened the floodgates, until the hierarchy of the Church regained its senses. As we know, although the outline of the subversion became more and more evident, Archbishop Lefebvre continued a course of negotiations with those same people he sometimes referred to as Modernist Rome. He felt compelled to seek permission from Paul VI — *the very man who had given final approval to the same abominable, un-Catholic Conciliar documents that the Archbishop rebelled against.* And while Archbishop Lefebvre would later ordain priests against Paul IV's express "command" and consecrate bishops against John Paul II's, he still regarded each of them as "the Holy Father" (publicly, anyway) and urged that his followers do likewise.

Many Catholics who today have sounder views about the crisis came to traditionalism through the SSPX or were for a time affiliated with it. Yet the group's fantastic theory regarding the Conciliar Church's identity — essentially, that it is still the Catholic Church, but with a Jekyll-and-Hyde split personality — not only is offensive to pious ears, but has exacerbated the confusion, rather than alleviated it. It has produced the utterly un-Catholic practice of professing quasi-allegiance to the Conciliar "hierarchy," which it says is to be obeyed when functioning in accord with Catholic teachings, but not when following the Modernist line. Hence, for example, the Conciliar version of the Code of Canon Law is picked apart by the SSPX; only those canons it accepts as orthodox are followed.

Again, questions have been raised about Archibishop Lefebvre's degree of responsibility for failing to take a stronger, unequivocal stand against the counterfeit religion. Few traditional observers, save SSPX stalwarts for whom the late prelate could do no wrong and who still largely hold to his views, deny this failure. Today, the Society is still frozen in a mentality that was understandable in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but now is untenable given subsequent evidence that clarifies the situation. John Paul II is a mystery it has yet to solve. For this reason, the Society today continues to be the embodiment of the confusion wrought by the Council.

It is this uncertainty generated by the SSPX position that has compelled a number of priests (including groups of clerics in Italy and the United States) to take hard-line stands, which eventually lead to their separation from the Society. Even here, however, there has been a divergence of stands. While all of them have in one way or another stood against the Vatican II changes, at least three different postures have emerged: (1) a modified SSPX policy that tolerates attendance at Conciliar "Indult Masses"; (2) a "middle-of-the-road" stand that, while

more openly critical of the new church, reduces many important questions about it to a "personal opinion" status; and, (3) a tough, no-nonsense position that openly and unequivocally opposes the Conciliar religion. (Number three, of course, is most consistent with our position at *The Athanasian*; regrettably, few priests to date do so. Pray God more will find the courage to stand up and be counted.)

But even this is not the end of the confusion engendered by Vatican II. In addition to the SSPX's declaration that members of the Conciliar hierarchy are legitimate — if unworthy — successors to the Apostles, is the counterclaim that those sees (including the Holy See) are occupied by apostates and, hence, are vacant. These *sedevacantists*, as the latter have come to be called, have their own disagreements. Some, who may be called absolute sedevacantists, argue that the false occupants are bereft of any title to the offices, while others, though equally rejecting the false authority held up by Conciliar prelates, argue that they have a "material" — though not "formal" claim to the sees. Betwixt those two are less certain Catholics who lean toward one position or another.

The reason for this digression is to point out the very important fact that, for all the reams written about this or that aspect of the present cisis, the *central problem* is one yet to be fully resolved; namely: *Where is the Church?* The obvious answer is: *Wherever you find Roman Catholics*. In practical terms, however, even this has become a subject of controversy. It is a question that has caused the great divisions among those generically known as "traditional Roman Catholics," and it will continue to cause rifts until a cogent solution is presented (more on this at the conclusion of the article). It is the loophole that allows the traditional Scylla and Charybdis to endanger the remnant.

Hazard Number One:
Scylla — "I'm Catholic And You're Not!"

This error would reduce the *remnant* to an *iota*. Quick to judge, slow to reflect, is the fallacy here. Most of us traditionalists would readily acknowledge that the unprecedented crisis the Church now suffers through has raised countless equally unprecedented situations that are by no means simple to resolve, yet the Scylla exclusionist contends that all is crystal clear. He begins with a valid premise: Vatican II is a war against orthodoxy cloaked in the *vestments* of the Church; therefore, all Catholics must be on guard againt the mere *appearance* of orthodoxy. Unfortunately, this super zealot begins paring down even the smallest details in the thinking of other traditional Catholics, ever suspicious of even the slightest miscast phrase.

At his very worst, he can act quite viciously toward those who see things differently, since, in this mindset, there is no such thing as an honest difference of opinion; if anyone so much as *seemingly* fails — that is, according to Scylla's "expert" determination of what Church teaching means and how it should be applied — to dot all their theological *is* or cross all their canonical *ts*, there is ample reason for Scylla to conclude that said individual is a conniver against all that is holy. It never fazes Scylla that attacking the motives of other Catholics without proof is *rash judgment*; he operates as though his judgment is nearly infallible. The exclusionist intuits that he possesses a mastery over all phases of theology; hence consultation with others is irrelevant or only discussed with those who appreciate the excellence of his "wisdom."

Around fifteen years ago a seminarian at Econe is reported to have declared of Archbishop Lefebvre: "He's the closest thing we have to infallible." While neither Archbishop Lefebvre nor the SSPX represent the exclusionist stand as is being discussed here, the quotation is indicative of how elements of this mentality are commonly found in traditional circles. The Scylla "theologian" has, more or less, given himself the same false aura that the impressionable seminarian once bestowed upon his bishop, claiming exclusive rights to the "Catholic position." He may appear in the form of priest or layman, but the common denominator is his resolute assurance that he possesses alone the truths that other traditional Catholics must profess. Hence, if anyone dare broach the possibility of an alternate solution, a no-holds-barred vilification of the skeptic is likely to ensue.

Should a group or individual fall under his condemnation, ashes and sackcloth represent the only acceptable manner of reparation. But, even then, this may not suffice, since the exclusionist is not easily humored. What is confronted here, then, is one who (consciously or not) regards himself or herself as a "super Catholic" to whom the other faithful had better listen if they know what is good for them.

Some lay members of this extreme position have gone so far as to declare all sacraments to be off limits. Why? Priests have no bishops over them, and, therefore, no jurisdiction. Basing this on a rigid reading of Canon Law, they conclude that the Masses are as illicit as the priests who say them. They then solemnly pronounce that Catholics must stay at home, content with their Rosaries and Brown Scapulars. These believers are variously known as "minimalists" (that is, using the "bare minimum" to save their souls), "home aloners" or "Rosary Catholics." (For the record, not every minimalist is an exclusionist, and *vice versa*. Some, in fact, have stopped going to church simply out of disgust for all the infighting, scandal, and controversy among priests.)

What motivates Scylla's adherents? First, as has already been mentioned, something *positive* — a love of orthodox

Catholicism. Like others who have resisted the changes, they recognize the paramount need to hold fast to the perennial traditions of the Church. They take this far beyond their dominion, however, by dogmatizing their interpretations. This is a result of the other *negative* factor in this mix: *Hubris*. This all-too-human component of pride (entering, perhaps, through the back door, so to speak) distorts the zeal for orthodoxy by targeting allies for destruction: The zeal for saving souls is largely smothered by the zeal to be *right*.

Hazard Number Two:
Charybdis — "I'm Okay; You're Okay!"

Steering clear of Scylla's dangers, some Catholics are drawn to what they mistake for a safe haven — the pantraditionalists of Charybdis. The siren call that attracts them is another partial truth, this one being the notion of unity — Catholics must be united if they are to effectively stand up against the Vatican II usurpers. But in the case of pantraditionalists, this laudatory aim has gone tragically awry.

The peril of Charybdis is the "open door" policy to any group or individual that calls itself "Catholic" (and a few that *do not*). One pantraditionalist, paraphrasing Lenin, has declared that *traditionalists must have no enemies on the right*. Unlike the ironfisted dictums of Scylla, Charybdis coaxes Catholics with dulcet tones of soothing conciliation, assuring them that all is well under their ill-defined "traditional" umbrella. While orthodoxy is not entirely set aside, it is made to take a place behind the policy of "ecumenical" togetherness.

The pantraditionalists are all "hearts and roses," the embodiment of a confused charity. It is no more true Catholicism than the syrupy sentimentalism of a cherub on a Valentine's Day card (which it closely resembles). If there is a way that principle can be circumvented to "accommodate," rest assured they will find it. In the popular parlance this is known as "looking the other way." Priests of this persuasion have been known to advise traditional Catholics that they may take part in Novus Ordo "Indult" and Unitate (Eastern Rite) Masses, Old Catholic Masses, or Eastern Orthodox Masses, if no other Masses are available. So, in total disregard to the perennial discipline of the Church — Catholics are forbidden to worship with schismatics — these liberals, usually in the name of "charity," put souls in harm's way.

And make no mistake, the Old Catholics in particular are looking for any way to tap the traditional movement for new followers to fill their ever dwindling membership rolls. Karl Pruter, a bishop in the sect, in his 1983 *The Old Catholic Sourcebook* is clearly hoping for such a day when he writes:

> [T]he Roman Catholic Traditionalist future will be changed appreciably if Archbishop Lefebvre consecrates a successor. If he does, his successor will unquestionably be separated from the Roman Catholic Church, and Traditionalists can gravitate to him. If Lefebvre does not leave a successor, as he shows no sign of doing, the Traditionalist Movement will either die after this first generation (from lack of new recruits who remember a Latin mass), or it will turn to Old Catholicism for an episcopacy and be absorbed by the Old Catholic movement.

Obviously, in this passage Pruter shows himself to be ignorant about a great many aspects of the traditional movement, since few Catholics would ever knowingly involve themselves with his sect. But what recruits he and other Old Catholics *are* able to extract from our ranks will be precisely those whom the pantraditionalists unwittingly sent them. (The problem is compounded when it is remembered that the sect's chapels have no scruples about hanging a "Traditional Catholic" sign outside their door.)

In a sense, Charybdis is the subtler, more seductive of the errors, because of its easygoing style. It is the easier path to take, yet no less dangerous. Instead of crashing into a rock, one simply disappears into an all-encompassing whirl of water. Instead of being shredded by an *ad hoc* "magisterium," one simply blends into an amorphous body of "Catholics."

Again, though far less apparently (even, perhaps, to its originators), the ultimate trouble involves pride. With Scylla, the problem is with the assertion of its heads that a definitive judgment can be established against its "enemies"; with Charybdis, it involves the suspension of judgment regarding its "friends." Whatever their differences, each hazard ultimately mirrors the other in its unwavering conviction that it is on the side of truth: Scylla, by writing people out of the Church, and Charybdis, by writing them into her. (This mirroring also sees some exclusionists involved in activities with those of dubious Catholicity, while certain pantraditionalists can match their counterparts in the bitter denunciation department — a choice slur is to accuse anyone who crosses them of being "uncharitable" or even "pharasaical.")

"Bickering Priests"

I am hardly the only one who has noticed with growing uneasiness the ongoing formation of the two extreme positions. In the January-February 1994 isue of *Catholic Restoration* an article by its editor, Father Donald Sanborn, touched on the dangers. (Ironically, a recent newsletter from a pantraditionalist church actually touted his "excellent article," despite the fact that they are a prime example of one of the dangers he condemns. But that is another matter.) Entitled "Bickering Priests," the article focused on the inability of traditional clerics to resolve their differences in various controverted issues; the underlying reasons for these priestly

disputes; the impact such conflicts have on achieving the goal it is presumed they all share; and, suggested ways to find common ground. While continuing to lament Father Sanborn's unfortunate support for a controversial "episcopal consecration" last autumn in Cincinnati, I have elected to put our differences aside for the sake of unity and offer a few passages from it to better illuminate the present study.

Although Father Sanborn's terminology is different from mine — in place of *exclusionist*, he writes of "surrogate authority," and refers to "free-for-all" instead of *pantraditionalist* — the concepts are essentially the same (if not exactly so in all the details). And the basic cause behind them is the same. He states that "without the operation of the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, the Catholic becomes incapable of deciding *with certitude of faith* what should be thought about a particular point of doctrine or moral teaching." But are not these teachings self-evident? Anticipating such questions, he adds:

> True, there is the entire deposit of faith, the pronouncements of Popes and councils. About these things there is no dispute and no lack of certitude. *Where the problems arise is in the interpretation of and application of what has already been set down.* Thus we have seen a great deal of dispute about what to think about Vatican II, about whether the post-Vatican II Popes are true Popes or not, about whether to accept the new Code of Canon Law or not, about whether to accept Novus Ordo marriage annulments or not, about the validity of Novus Ordo sacraments or not, and so forth.

In the traditional movement as elsewhere, nature abhors a vacuum, so "many have sought refuge in the *surrogate authority* solution; that is, they have assigned the teaching and disciplinary authority of the Church to someone else besides John Paul II. In this context, Father Sanborn specifically mentions the Society of St. Pius X and Archbishop Lefebvre, who, the Society maintains, "had... an extraordinary mission from God, different from and independent of the mission confided to the successor of Saint Peter, whereby the Archbishop would filter or sift the teachings and disciplines of the Vatican II religion, selecting what was Catholic, rejecting what was non-Catholic or harmful to souls." Others have taken a similar position, he writes: "[T]he telltale characteristic of such groups are the fulminations against those who disagree with them, as if the dissenters were in some way opposing the authority of God or of the Church."

And then there is the laxist error. This position, too, is neatly defined by Father Sanborn:

> Opposite to surrogate authority is the *free-for-all* solution. Aware of the absence of authority, some priests adopt an "anything goes" attitude, as if no order or reason should prevail. Assuming everyone is in good conscience, no matter what error they profess or disciplinary aberration they practice, they become "ecumenical" with all. This position has often been described as "pantraditionalism." In this system, all that counts is some vague common denominator: usually that you are for the traditional Mass. All other considerations, such as what Church you belong to, who is the Pope or who is not, who is validly ordained, whether Vatican II is acceptable or not, what conciliar reforms you accept or reject, what you think about the New Code, whether you are *una cum* or not — to mention only a few major points — become meaningless trifles which are distracting. Unlike the surrogate authority approach which seeks unity through dogmatism, this solution seeks unity through antidogmatism, as if the Church itself had no dogmas, no disciplines, and no morals. This solution is obviously unacceptable, since it seeks not to dispel the chaos of lack of authority, and severely compromises the unity and sanctity of the Catholic Church by the recognition of error in both the speculative and practical orders.

Given the current woeful lack of authority, it is necessary, he concludes: "[To] strike a balance between the need, on the one hand, to maintain order in the Church and to avoid, on the other, claiming a false, nonexistent authority..."

The Lessons To Be Learned

And yet, as important as it is that these problems be resolved, the root cause is such as to greatly diminish the prospect of settling them in the foreseeable future. For it is, once again, a cause that reverts back to Vatican II itself — the nearly universal defection from the Faith by the putative successors of the Apostles. Given this fact, Catholics are pained to seek a way out of our difficulties and wonder who is to mediate between rival traditional factions that sometimes scandalously resemble Old Catholics in their inability to stay united or to be kept from heaping condemnations upon each other's heads. Intimately related to a question asked earlier, the crucial mystery upon which we all routinely ponder may be summed up as follows: *Where is the Catholic hierarchy?*

No matter what the trouble — Scylla or Charybdis — one chooses to address, it is ultimately a mere symptom of the sickness the Church is suffering: lack of a valid, functioning hierarchy. If one seeks to challenge Scylla's charges that a given group or individual is not Catholic, where can he find a competent authority to investigate the charges and make an official ruling? Similarly, if one is leery of Charybdis' claim that there is nothing to fear from certain of its "Catholic" associates (in some cases, perhaps, even the same group or individual condemned by Scylla!), where can he locate a bishop with the jurisdiction needed for a definitive determination? The answer, of course, is precisely the same in each instance: *nowhere.* ✠

(Nowhere, in the sense that any truly Catholic prelates with such authority have yet to stand up and speak out against the crimes of their supposed counterparts in the Conciliar Church.)

Readers of this study may well conclude that the adherents of Scylla have an immediate need for more charity and less of an urge to go rashly damning *presumed* heretics and schismatics. Likewise, readers may feel devotees of Charybdis need a solid dose of prudence in choosing those beside whom they kneel in worship. And, in both instances, the readers would be right.

In the former case, *Scylla* Catholics would greatly benefit by considering how, given the confused state of affairs, a degree of leeway (though not the thoroughfare of the pantraditionalists must be allowed in certain controverted issues. At one time or another during the crisis, all thinking traditional Catholics (*including* Scylla polemicists) have, to some extent, revised or modified their opinions. The diversity of views mentioned earlier is proof positive of the enormous difficulties that must be surmounted by anyone who seeks to decipher exactly why this *inconceivable* tragedy has befallen the Church and to delineate precisely the scope of the devastation. Such a fact should humble all but the most smugly arrogant of pontificators, who deny the fact that the Church has made allowances to the faithful in times of crisis. On the other hand, *Charybdis* Catholics, no less dedicated to the cause, reverse the problem, and continually run the risk of blindly embracing every "Catholic" that comes their way. If the charge of *false polemics* can justly be leveled against Scylla for magnifying minor differences out of proportion in the name of "orthodoxy," that of *false irenics* is equally applicable to Charybdis for reducing critical distinctions to the status of mere trifles for the sake of "unity."

But the criticisms I have raised in this article suffer the same fate as the subjects they cover, and that is the lack of any force of authority behind them. And this is true of every problem in the traditional movement. If there is anything for Catholics to learn from this continuing crisis, it is that there will continually be unresolvable disputes between traditional Catholics and the danger of further division, because no Church authority superior to them is present to settle the differences. Only when the hierarchy is restored, will we be able to at last find peace regarding these dilemmas.

We must take care not only to exercise caution in how we disagree with other Catholics, but prudence in how we choose our associates. The Church teaches that we are always to take the safer course, when uncertain how to proceed — the "golden mean" of the ancients. All of us, but especially priests, who are to set the ideal examples for the rest of Catholics, really need to ask God for increases in charity, humility, and prudence, since no one can ever have too much of these virtues. *Most critical is charity. If we cannot be charitable to others in the household of our own Faith, then we are no better than the atheists and all our efforts are for naught.*

Pray For A Pope!

It is given to the Roman Pontiff to tell the spurious and adulterated from the pure and orthodox belief, and to teach without alteration the faith of our forefathers. There is no one but the Pontiff to whom we can turn for help. (Saint Basil the Great)

This quotation from a Doctor of the Church reflects very well on the problems of traditional Catholics, as well as the root cause, and also points to how the answers for them will, in God's good time, be found. It also brings to mind a conversation I had a few months ago with a priest about the woeful situation in which the Church finds herself. I emphasized how I always add special intentions in my prayers that God deliver her from her plight and how crucial I feel is the need for all Catholics to commit themselves to such prayers. All that is fine, he said; but, even more than that the faithful ought to be praying specificaly for a Pope (as in: pray that we *get* a Pope). Nothing is really solved until the Church is again governed by a true Pope, he explained, and once she has one *all* of these problems will be quickly solved.

The more I have considered his statement, the more I see how eminently sensible it is. However one views this or that traditional bishop, there is not a one of them (no matter how personally gifted or holy he may be) who has the capacity to settle these problems in any binding way. Even if a bishop from behind a "former" Iron Curtain country came forth and could prove he had jurisdiction, he could not, by such a fact alone, settle them definitively. At best, his public denunciation of the Novus Ordo sect would simply be an important first step for the Church's eventual recovery. Not even a group of such bishops could do so on their own.

No, the only way to finally resolve our differences in a way agreeable to all those of good will is to have a Pope back at the helm of the Barque of Peter to steer it safely through these turbulent times. The words of Pope Pius IX are significant in this regard, when he writes that "without the Pope there is no Church, and no Catholic society without the Holy See..."

In the Gospels, an incident is recorded that parallels the current difficulties for the Church. Christ was asleep in a boat with his disciples, when a great storm came and threatened to capsize the vessel. Fearful, they awoke Him, crying: "Lord, save us, we perish." Calming the sea, He rebuked them for their lack of faith. (Matthew 8:23-27) Let us, then, not tire in our prayers, confident that our Lord will provide a pilot to navigate us through the tempest and into safe harbor. †

Traditional Catholics of America

Post Office Box 38335 † Colorado Springs, Colorado 80937 † 719-636-1575

May 9, 1994

Dear Subscribers:

After this issue of *The Athanasian* went to the typesetter, Traditional Catholics of America, Inc. decided to close the TCA office, effective Tuesday, May 31, 1994. Please use this letter as a guideline for sending correspondence and donations until the end of May.

As usual, you are receiving the white contribution envelope. We would appreciate it if you would make a final contribution to the TCA so that we have enough funds to close this office. Make your checks payable to Traditional Catholics of America. After May 31, 1994, there will not be anyone in the office to answer correspondence.

Father Fenton has been approved for Colorado State Medicaid and will no longer accept assistance. Therefore, effective immediately, we would appreciate it if you would stop sending donations made out to him personally.

Father Fenton would very much like for John K. Weiskittel to continue publishing *The Athanasian* from Florida. Those of you who need to renew your subscription will receive a blue envelope with Mr. Weiskittel's address on it. Please make your renewal checks payable to *The Athanasian* and mail them to the Florida address.

Thank you for your gracious support of Father Fenton, who remembers you and your kindness.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Board of Directors

The Remnant Of The Remnant In Traditional Catholicism

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

In current usage traditional Catholicism and the Roman Catholic Faith mean the same thing. Both terms signify the totality of religious truths or the body of religious doctrine taught by the Church and accepted by all who are in communion with the Church. Prior to Vatican Council II the word "traditional" would have been redundant in referring to a Roman Catholic for the simple reason that all true Catholics were by that fact traditional. With the advent of the Conciliar Church upon the world, however, as a consequence of Vatican Council II, it became necessary to distinguish between authentic Catholics and those members of the Conciliar Church who persist to this day in calling themselves such. Hence, the use of the term "traditional" to identify with the former, that is, the genuine Roman Catholic.

A traditional Catholic, then, is one who firmly believes that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true Church and who professes, believes in, accepts in its entirety the doctrinal and moral teaching of that Church. He will, of course, have no part of the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church because, if he is rightly informed on the subject, he understands that that Church simply is not Catholic. Either the Roman Catholic Faith here and now is, and is found in, traditional Catholicism or that Faith has ceased to exist. There is no other alternative. But, since we have the word of the Son of God Himself that His Church will live forever, then it follows that that Church today is traditional Catholicism which alone possesses, preserves and teaches the fullness of the Faith, pure and undefiled.

But there are many who, while they profess to be traditional Catholics, do not manifest any genuine appreciation of the Faith they profess. In other words, they firmly believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true Church; they fully accept its teachings and honestly strive to live their daily lives accordingly, but their dedication to the Faith still leaves much to be desired. They are lacking, that is in any significant zeal or apostolic spirit. The impression they give is that, while they are obviously concerned about their personal spiritual well-being and that of their families, they seemingly care little for the preservation and propagation of the Faith otherwise. Indeed, it is my strong conviction that the large majority of traditional Catholics fall short in varying degrees of the level and quality of dedication to the Faith demanded of them in this our day. Such individuals are traditional Catholics, yes, but they assuredly are not apostolic or truly dedicated ones.

How explain this? To say that so it has ever been is not, to my mind, an adequate answer in the present situation. I well realize from my own experiences as a parish priest for many years that it has always been the few who were dedicated, hard-working, self-sacrificing. But the Church situation is so drastically different today from what it was a mere generation ago. As a result of the several subversive and satanic forces to which it has been systematically and so successfully subjected by its enemies for so long a time, the Roman Catholic Church has been reduced to a remnant — and that remnant is traditional Catholicism. One, then, might logically expect to find practically *all* of the Catholics who are a part of that remnant to be the best in terms of their love for and dedication to their God-given Faith. After all, are not these people traditional Catholics because they are well aware of what has happened to their beloved Church and are determined to retain their total fidelity to it at all costs? In a word, are not traditional Catholics "the real thing," men and women who ardently strive to live their Faith to the fullest and who, if needs be and by the grace of God, are willing to die in testimony to it? Indeed, do not they represent the sole human hope and promise for the Church's survival in this our day?

Until the past few years I would probably have replied to the above question with an unqualified "yes." But not so today. Assuredly, traditional Catholicism is today the Roman Catholic Church. Such a positive blanket statement, however, cannot be made in truth about traditional Catholics. Rather must a distinction be made between those who are fully dedicated, unreservedly hard core, truly apostolic, and those whose traditionalism is of a limited or restricted nature. In all of my many dealings and contacts in recent years with traditional groups across the country, I have observed everywhere how few are the number of truly dedicated traditional Catholics, say, perhaps, some ten to fifteen percent of the total. The remainder just more or less go along. A typical individual in this category, which is the vast majority, is a devout person, never misses Mass, receives Communion regularly, recites the

rosary each day, etc. In other words, he does a highly commendable job in the matter of his own spiritual welfare. This same type of individual, however, is likely to be one who does little or nothing for the cause by way of his time and labor unless shamed into doing so; whose efforts are promoting or propagating the Faith are minimal at best; and who is — in the matter of financial support — likely to be plain miserly. How hopeless would be our efforts to preserve the Faith if all traditoinal Catholics were of this kind! Thank God they are not! Just most of them are!

But, to return to a thought previously expressed in this article, why make an issue of a situation, however regrettable it is, which is found in every movement, in every organization committed to the pursuance of some ideal or devoted to the advancement of some noble cause? Has it not ever been so? Have not the great feats of history been invariably accomplished by the relatively few? When have self-sacrificing and courageous and dedicated people ever been in the majority? Why, then, expect any difference in traditional Catholicism?

The answer is that traditional Roman Catholics are those who — in the face of the massive destruction inflicted upon the Church over the past twenty years or so and despite the defection of multitudes of the former fellow Catholics from the Faith — have supposedly remained unyielding and steadfast in their loyalty to the Church. Although their churches have been occupied by the enemy and, in many instances, they have been alienated from their families and friends for the stand they have taken, yet they have adamantly refused to compromise or to have any part of the non-Catholic schismatic Conciliar Church. Whatever the sacrifices involved, and in some cases they are considerable, these people are fully determined, with the grace of God, to retain the totality of their precious Faith and to practice it as best they can in the particular circumstances in which they find themselves. Whatever the cost, traditional Roman Catholics are unreservedly committed to the preservation of the Faith not only for themselves and their own locality but universally, and will do all they can to help their fellow traditional Catholics in other areas. In other words, their outlook in matters pertaining to the Faith is not a provincial or parochial one because such an outlook is not Catholic.

Such, then, is the caliber and character of those individuals to be found, with rare exceptions, in the ranks of the traditional Roman Catholic movement. Right? Wrong! Because the Roman Catholic Church is what it is and because the preservation and propagation of divine Faith is the greatest cause in all the world, one might certainly expect that practically all of those who are affiliated with traditional Catholicism would be of the kind described in the preceding paragraph. Are they not the remnant, the informed and dedicated minority of true Catholics who, in these days of unprecedented crisis for the Church, have committed themselves to work and to pray and to fight and, if need be, to die for the Faith. Well, while one may reasonably expect this to be the case, the reality is something else. However frequently I wish that it were otherwise, the distressing fact is that the large majority of traditional Catholics are *not* truly dedicated, courageous, apostolic. Rather they are, in varying degrees, provincial, self-centered, selfish. Of this I am thoroughly convinced because I have observed it in many forms and on innumerable occasions. In the remnant which is traditional Catholicism, authentic warriors for the Faith — those who are truly soldiers of Christ — are precious few indeed, a small minority at best, a remnant of the remnant.

And so it is, a situation one would not logically anticipate, a condition distressing to realize, that in the ranks of traditional Catholicism are found so relatively few who are of the caliber one would expect to find therein in the overwhelming majority. But, because the Roman Catholic Church is today traditional Catholicism, the traditionalist movement will survive, dependent, under God, for the survival upon those relatively few who comprise the hard core within the movement. As for the others, well, I fervently hope that at least some of them will in due time begin to realize that attending Mass, receiving the Sacraments, saying the rosary, and leading morally good lives, as vital as these are, are not enough. The crisis in the Church demands that such traditional Catholics become crusaders, warriors, well-informed activists in the defense and promotion of the Faith. Frankly though, I do not think this will happen. In my opinion, it is the remnant of the remnant of traditional Catholicism through whom, under God, will be accomplished the preservation of the Faith. †

This article originally appeared in the December 1, 1982 issue of The Athanasian.

The enclosed white envelope is for the convenience of those who may wish to send a donation to the TCA. If a blue envelope is also enclosed, that is to be used for subscription renewal.

SUBSCRIPTON RENEWALS

The date on the envelope address label indicates the month and year in which the recipient's subscription is due for renewal. At the proper time, a subscription envelope will be enclosed with the newsletter. One may enter a new subscription at any time, of course, and will then receive the four following newsletter issues.

The Lighter Side Of Life

You know you're in a tough neighborhood when you walk into the confessional and there's graffiti on the wall.

A radio announcer is a person who works for the love of mike.

Lawyer: Occupation?
Witness: Housewife.
Lawyer: Husband's occupation?
Witness: Manufacturer.
Lawyer: Children?
Witness: No, electronics.

Minutes at the table don't put on the weight — it's the seconds.

Baby... A loud noise at one end and no responsibility at the other.
Monsignor Ronald Knox

By the time we have all the furniture paid for, we'll have genuine antiques.

It will soon take only two hours to go around the world — one hour for the flying and one hour to get to the airport.

The most expensive vehicle to operate, per mile, is the shopping cart.

A pessimist is a good person to borrow money from — he never expects to be repaid.

If the mind goes blank, be sure to turn off the sound.

My neighbor accuses his wife of spending money like a drunken sailor. But is that any worse than spending like a sober congressman?

I won some stock in a company that pays quarterly dividends. Every three months, they send me a quarter.

A modern artist is one who throws paint on a canvas, wipes it off with a cloth, and sells the cloth.

The Eiffel Tower is the Empire State Building after taxes.

Television is an invention that permits you to be entertained in your living room by people you wouldn't have in your home.
David Frost

Nowadays, a dollar saved is a quarter earned.

To err is human, but when the eraser wears out before the pencil, you know you're overdoing it.

Teenagers express their burning desire to be different by dressing exactly alike.

A man has reached middle age when he is warned to slow down by his doctor, instead of the police.

A bird in the hand is bad table manners.

"I know it sounds nutty, doc," the patient said to the psychiatrist, "but I can't shake the belief that I'm a goat." "Oh," asked the psychiatrist, "what makes you think a thing like that?" "Well, for starters," the patient bleated, "whenever someone makes me angry, I have a very strong desire to butt him with my head; and I've grown this goatee just so I would resemble one." "Hmm, most interesting," the psychiatrist said; "is there anything else?" "Yes, as a matter of fact, there is something; when I go to the supermarket, I am irresistibly drawn to the canned food aisle — I could care less about the contents — it's the *cans* that make me hungry!" "Extraordinary!" exclaimed the psychiatrist; "and how long have you felt like you were a goat?" From the couch came the reply: "Ever since I was a kid."

The father of the bride should realize that he isn't losing a daughter, but gaining a bathroom.

Bad luck is bending over to pick up a four-leaf clover and being infected by poison ivy.

Having a big family is a good way to make sure there will always be someone around to answer the phone — and forget the message.

Then there was the fellow doing his income tax return who, for the line marked "Dependents," printed: "Federal Government."

Bigamy is when two rites make a wrong.

After looking at the bill for my surgery, I now understand why doctors wear masks in the operating room.

These days there doesn't seem to be any arrest for the wicked.

Show me a twin birth and I'll show you an infant replay.

A baby boomer is a man who hires someone to cut the grass so he can play golf for the exercise.

Celibacy Conflict

Fr. Oswald Baker (England)

A poll among priests in France some time ago revealed that only one-third of them are in favour of the ordination of women. The other two-thirds must be motivated by prejudice. They are all of the Conciliar Church, whose "priesthood," together with that of the Church of England, has no theological reason for the exclusion of women. Whereas, the admission of women to the Catholic priesthood is a sheer impossibility. A much higher proportion of the French clergy, 83 percent, favour the ordination of married men. The authentic Catholic Church, needless to say, insists on the traditional celibacy for priests, and has not experienced, within the Church, any opposition to the rule for a thousand years. What we call the Iron Age in history, or Dark Age, was a period of about two hundred years, from the ninth to the eleventh century, when Europe was in a state of frightful disorder. Until our own day, it was the saddest phase in the history of the Church. Vikings from Scandinavia were raiding all Europe's coastline, from Norway to Italy. Barbarian hordes were invading and pillaging Germany. Civil war raged in France. In Italy, Popes were imprisoned and even murdered. It was an age of blood and iron. Such was the violence and devastation that civilization all but disappeared. The powers that took over were robber barons, ruling in the ruins, governing vast territories. As time went on, in the tenth century, these barons began to rule the Church also, largely by force of circumstance. If amid the general desolation the poor people wanted a church, it was the baron who had to build it. When they wanted a priest, it fell to the baron to procure one, and maintain him. In the same way, higher barons would appoint bishops. Then the barons began to demand payment before the installation of bishops. Before long the appointment to a bishopric went to the highest bidder. And so it went until eventually men of brutal nature and unbridled passions became bishops, giving the very worst example to the clergy over whom they ruled. Members of such a degenerate hierarchy were not the sort likely to observe the law of celibacy and chastity.

The times produced a crop of writers, pamphleteers, demanding permission for priests to marry. The campaign was supported by the barons, led by the German King Henry IV. If the Church insisted on celibate, mortified priests, the barons feared a lower income from their auctioneering. But the professed reasons for an end to the rule of celibacy were just the same as those being urged in our own day: the need for more priests; priests should be natural and like other men; the time has come for wider freedoms; matrimony is a holy state; etc. In the eleventh century the opponents of priestly celibacy formed the greater part of Christendom. Those in favour of the law of celibacy were a minority of the laity, fervent, high-principled, militant. Priestly celibacy became a pressing issue in those times, and the array of forces involved was very one-sided, when, in 1903, a Pope was elected who was a genius and a saint, a born leader and an administrator. His name was Hildebrand. He became Pope Gregory VII.

Pope Gregory VII promptly took the offensive in the conflict. He forbade all priests who had married to function as priests, and forbade the laity to accept their ministrations. Where he could not trust bishops to carry out his orders, he sent his own legates. He excommunicated Henry IV of Germany. The result was that married priests broke into open rebellion in various parts of Europe. They instigated riots, in which papal legates were beaten up, and loyal celibate priests and bishops were stoned and slaughtered. Mobs even murdered laymen who defended the Pope's decree. All this occurred about 1080 A.D. Never at any period has such a high proportion, the majority, of members of the Church sunk to such degradation. After years of violence and plundering, Henry IV's army marched on Rome. Pope Gregory took refuge in a castle on a rocky crag overlooking the sea at Salerno where he died May 25, 1085.

Hildebrand's influence endured, and brought about a profound and widespread change of outlook. Within a few years the ideal of priestly celibacy was revitalized, and the rule has prevailed ever since. In 1123, the First Lateran Council decreed:

> We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, or subdeacons the intimacy of concubines and of wives, and cohabitation with other women, except those with whom for reasons of necessity alone the Nicene Synod permits them to live, that is, a mother, sister, paternal or maternal aunt, or others of this kind concerning whom no suspicion may justly arise.

Not all shepherds of the flock are required by Our Lord to lay down their lives, but they are all called to a life of self-sacrifice. We do not find in the Gospels any precept of compulsory celibacy for the priesthood, but we find ample warrant in the language of Our Lord for regarding dedicated celibacy as the fitting state for priests. It establishes the dominance of the spiritual cover over the material element in human nature. Marriage is a state of such devoted love that a husband and father must give his first affection to wife and children. The priest sacrifices the joy of children of his own that he may give all his human affection to his people. If the rule of celibacy were to go — if the priest could no longer point to the personal sacrifice he makes at present — his influence would be gone; it would be all over with him and the cause he represents. Priestly work for souls demands a consecrated, single-hearted attachment of self to Our Lord that is ideally verified only in a state of detachment from marital and domestic ties, that the shepherd may tend the flock with an exclusive, affectionate concern for their well-being. †

Food For Thought — Selected Adages & Quotations

Make up your mind to become a saint. *Saint Mary Mazzarello*

If God allows you to suffer much, it is a sign that He has great designs for you, and that He certainly intends to make you a Saint. And if you wish to become a great Saint, entreat Him yourself to give you much opportunity for suffering; for there is no wood better to kindle the fire of holy love than the wood of the cross, which Christ used for His own sacrifice of boundless charity. *Saint Ignatius Loyola*

He who lends to the poor gets interest from God. *German Proverb*

If anyone shall say that because of scientific progress it may be possible at some time to interpret the Church's dogmas in a different sense from that which the Church understood and understands, let him be anathema. *First Vatican Council*

One of the most important news stories of the twentieth century continues to receive little attention from America's news media. It is easily demonstrated that Communism has been sustained for all its existence by the Free World. *John F. McManus*

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God, cannot long retain it. *Abraham Lincoln*

When liberty destroys order, the hunger for order will destroy liberty. *Will Durant*

The family is the most ancient institution that God founded in paradise, when He called the first pair of human beings into existence. The first blessing that God gave was for the well-being of the family. With family life the history of the world commences. *Saint John Vianney*

The unit of the American life is the family and the home. Through it vibrates every hope of the future. It is the economic unit as well as the moral and spiritual unit. But it is more than this. It is the beginning of self-government. It is the throne of our highest ideals. It is the center of the spiritual energy of our people. *Herbert Hoover*

It is easier to abstain than restrain. *French Proverb*

The test of good manners is to be able to put up pleasantly with bad ones. *Unknown*

The prevailing spirit of the household corresponds with the literature in the home. Salacious novels, magazines, and newspapers which offend our moral sense, are too often mental food in many homes. Alas, how many hearts have been poisoned in their youth by obscene literature. Do not permit anything of the kind to be brought into your home. *Saint John Vianney*

Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family. *Saint Angela Merici*

The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful, and has nobody to thank. *Dante Gabriel Rosetti*

It is necessary to fight Freemasonry with those weapons of divine faith which in past ages vanquished paganism. *Pope Leo XIII*

Let us abandon even the thought of being Christians if we tremble before the threats or traps laid for us by perverts. *Pope Clement XIII*

If God permitted a Pope to be notoriously heretical and contumacious, he would cease to be Pope, and the Apostolic Chair would be vacant. *Saint Alphonsus Ligouri*

How can they be in the Catholic Church who have shaken off the Apostolic faith and become authors of fresh evils. *Saint Athanasius*

Without a shepherd, the sheep are not a flock. *Russian Proverb*

The martyrdom of the heart is no less fruitful than the shedding of blood. *Saint Therese of the Child Jesus*

Always keep your words soft and sweet — one day you may have to eat them. *Unknown*

A fault once denied is twice committed. *Unknown*

Freedom suppressed and again regained bites with keener fangs than freedom never endangered. *Cicero*

If we possessed every virtue, but lacked humility, those virtues would be without root and would not last. *Saint Vincent de Paul*

The Continuing Attack On America's Christian Values

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Around the beginning of this year two Michigan judges scheduled to hear separate cases against Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the retired pathologist whose assistance at an estimated twenty suicides has led to his ghoulish nickname, "Dr. Death," declined to pursue the indictments. (A third judge, however, has chosen not to dismiss other charges stemming from his crimes.) They justified their decisions on grounds that laws criminalizing suicide are "unconstitutional."

By what logic do the magistrates arrive at this conclusion, throwing out as they do over two hundred years of judicial precedent? One of them actually speaks of the Constitution guaranteeing Americans a "right to die." The other judge decries the desire by some citizens to "legislate morality" by enacting laws based on "religious values." Now, of course, there *is* no pro-death provision in the Constitution, and the idea of including one would surely have seemed absurd to the Founding Fathers. (Jefferson, for example, though not someone we usually approve of, once accurately asserted that "the chief purpose of government is to *protect* life. Abandon that and you have abandoned all.) [Italics added.] Likewise, the establishing of laws — *any* laws — presupposes the notion of morality, for they owe their very existence to the fact that some individuals and groups do not respect the rights of others.

Then there is the related contention that religious values have no place in legislative deliberation, and, hence, render "unconstitutional" any statutes influenced by them. A similarly argued ruling was made during a 1991 Florida murder trial, when the presiding judge ordered that a framed copy of the Ten Commandments be covered so the jury not be "unduly influenced" by religious teaching. And this past March a Massachusetts judge decreed that organizers of Boston's annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade could not "discriminate" against homosexuals who wished to participate. (To their credit, organizers of the parade canceled it, but replaced it with a legal — and gayless — motorcade.) These sorts of decisions are happening all over America with increasing frequency. They are being defended by liberal justices on the principle that "separation of church and state" demands *complete* religious neutrality.

In reality, they reflect the thinking of the atheistic "religion" of secular humanism and represent a particularly effective line of attack in its cultural war against the remaining remnants of a rapidly dying Christian social order. One need only read the "catechisms" of the humanists, such as their "Manifestos," to see how these judicial attacks on God's Commandments and the natural law are perfectly in keeping with their godless agenda. Abortion, birth control, suicide, euthanasia, divorce, public nudity, legalized prostitution and pornography, homosexual "rights," and other forms of "sexual freedom" are among the humanistic "religious values" that are being foisted on communities throughout America — all under the guise of religious neutrality.

One Nation Under *Men*?

The enemies of Christ are so emboldened by recent successes as to publicly declare war on all things Christian. Atheist author Gore Vidal, who two years ago published a novel, *Live From Golgotha*, that depicted our Lord as obese and mentally ill and Saint Paul as a tap-dancing homosexual, is one of the most vocal belligerents. And what Vidal says *is* important, at least in terms of America's cultural and political elite, because he is widely regarded as our finest living writer and because he happens to be the cousin of Vice President Al Gore. In his political essays, Vidal has promoted a revamped Constitution, "gay" rights (long before it was fashionable to do so), and a world government he calls the Authority, which among other things would decide who will or will not be permitted to be parents, so that "planned" (and perhaps anonymous) "breeding will eliminate the family as we know it..." (*Reflections Upon A Sinking Ship*, Little, Brown & Co., 1969, p. 248)

In 1992, Vidal wrote an article, "Going South," for the November issue of *GQ* (formerly *Gentlemen's Quarterly*), in which he gave his grudging support to the Clinton/Gore presidential ticket. There, he says that Clinton was the best candidate because his "greatest asset is his perfect lack of principle" [!], urges that the U.S. have "economic union" with Russia, scoffs at "the sacredness of the fetus," and calls God "the Great Baron Frankenstein of the Sky." Even more revealing, however, was an article that had appeared four

months earlier in the ultraleftist pulp weekly, *The Nation*. In "Monotheism and its Discontents," an adaptation he had given at Harvard that April, Vidal climbs the soapbox to inveigh against "[t]he great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture... monotheism."

He argues there that the candidacies of the New Age Democrat, Jerry "Governor Moonbeam" Brown, and traditionally oriented Conciliar Republican, Pat Buchanan, are the outer manifestations of a polarizing of political parties — one, "the party of man," and the other, "the party of God" — that will end in some undefined open conflict between the two. And Vidal *welcomes* it: "I preach, to put it bluntly, confrontation." (In an interview the same year he said, of the so-called party of God: "I'm for all-out war. I'm taking them on.") And he is equally open about the goal: "[to] achieve a nation not under God but under men — or shall I say our common humanity?"

When we see the damage done daily to the nation's moral and ethical bases in all phases of society, it would be foolish for us to dismiss Vidal's challenge too lightly. Especially sobering is the realization that he was given the podium at America's most prestigious university to lecture her "brightest and best" in virulently anti-Christian rhetoric. These, after all, will be many of the future leaders of our country. (For those wondering: Yes, Vidal's address *was* an official university-sponsored event.)

Rounding Up The Usual Suspects

Anyone familiar with the history of the euthanasia/assisted suicide movement is aware that there is much more to it than Kevorkian, *Final Exit* author Derrick Humphrey, and their supporters in the Hemlock Society. The American Humanist Association made the "right to die" a plank of one of its Manifestoes. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has been in the forefront of the fight for legalization. And other assorted militant anti-Christians have pitched in their support.

This pattern of a "united front" to war against the social kingship of Christ is evident with abortion, feminism, "gay" rights, etc. It is also a strategy that has long been used to destroy society. Over one hundred years ago, Pope Leo XIII, writing in his anti-Masonic encyclical *Humanum Genus*, warned:

> Today evildoers all seem allied in a tremendous effort inspired by and with the help of a society powerfully organized and widely spread over the world; it is the Society of Freemasons. In fact, those people no longer even try to dissimulate their intentions, but they actually challenge each other's audacity to assail God's August Majesty.
>
> It is now publicly and overtly that they undertake to ruin the Holy Church, so as to succeed, if it is possible, in the complete dispossession of Christian nations of all the gifts they owe to Our Savior Jesus Christ.

The hidden hand ultimately manipulating the various elements of the present culture war is made clear in the same place, when Pope Leo writes that Masonry's goal is "the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced, and the substituion of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which the foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere naturalism." What expression better describes the ideology behind the relentless decay of our nation's values than *mere naturalism*?

The lower court rulings mentioned above are reflections of the judicial thinking that has constantly emanated from the United States Supreme Court, since its 1941 *Everson vs. Board of Education* decision emphasized the continuing need for "a wall of separation between church and state." Since that time American society has plummeted with increasing speed toward ruin. Concerning the significance of *Everson* in subsequent Supreme Court actions, Paul A. Fisher writes as follows in *Behind the Lodge Door: Church, State & Freemasonry in America* (TAN, 1991):

> As a consequence, the high bench: outlawed released time for children to attend religious classes within public school buildings; declared atheism and secular humanism to be religions protected by the First Amendment; prohibited recitation of prayer in public schools, even though the prayer in question was approved by leaders of the three major faiths in the United States; and oral Bible reading as religious exercises in public schools.
>
> Related cases denied State funds to religious-oriented schools for teaching aids, periodicals, maps, etc.; banned singing of Christmas carols in public schools; prohibited public school teachers from teaching in religious schools; and held that a law permitting employees to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest impermissibly advanced a particular religious practice, and thus violated the religion clause. (pp. 2, 3)

Although the national values have never been strictly Christian, the legal system of our country goes back to the English common law tradition, which in turn can be traced to eleventh century *Catholic* England. Common law is largely based on Biblical precepts. In fact, before the Supreme Court

turned radical, it acknowledged as much. In an 1944 decision it declared: "Christianity is part of our common law. Its divine origin and truth are admitted and therefore it is not to be maliciously and openly reviled and blasphemed against, to the annoyance of believers or the injury of the public."

Seeing Through The Neutrality Myth

"Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." (Isaias 5:20) Thus the Prophet warned the worldly among God's Chosen People, to whom a verse later he refers as "wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits." How readily these words also apply to the self-worshiping humanists of today. Basing their values on some imagined self-sufficiency of Man, they live in the fashion expressed by a character in Dostoyevsky's famous novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*: "If God does not exist, everything is permissible."

For anyone to hold such an empty philosophy is bad enough, but, as we have seen, the militant humanists are intent on imposing their values on the rest of us. This is a concerted drive to supplant God with man, and the Commandments with the "wisdom of the day." And it is a drive that is gaining momentum through the courts and other branches of government, schools, the news media, liberal churches, Masonic lodges, and other tainted fonts of popular culture.

Do not allow the lie of neutrality to go unchallenged. When the court rulings deal with issues involving ethical precepts, *someone's* values are being imposed. The lie called "a right to die," like all the others mentioned above, is humanist and, consequently, absolutely contrary to Christian principles. It *cannot* be put into practice, *except as a denial of the sovereignty of God.* The courts choose which values they wish to advance, and at present those values are anti-Christian ones.

In the 1880s, French diplomat Joseph de Maistre wrote: "The attacks against the Catholic edifice *always* grow stronger; one is *always* mistaken when one says that things can get no worse." And so it continues. We must not give up the fight, but use every morally permissible weapon at our disposal. It is not a war for the faint of heart, but to be waged in the same way our Lord teaches us to pray — *always*. Again, to quote Pope Leo XIII: "The people have heard quite enough about what are called the rights of man. Let them hear about the rights of God for once."

PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF FREEMASONS

O Lord Jesus, Christ, Who showest forth Thy omnipotence most manifestly when Thou sparest and hast compassion, Thou Who didst say, "Pray for those who persecute and calumniate you," we implore the clemency of Thy Sacred Heart on behalf of souls, made in the image of God, but most miserably deceived by the treacherous snares of Freemasons, and going more and more astray in the way of perdition. Let not the Church, Thy Spouse, any longer be oppressed by them; but, appeased by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Thy Mother, and the prayers of the just, be mindful of Thy infinite mercy; and disregarding of their perversity, cause these very men to return to Thee, that they may bring consolation to the Church by a most abundant penance, make reparation for their misdeeds, and secure for themselves a glorious eternity; who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.
(One hundred days, once a day.) (*The Raccolta*, eighth ed., p. 410)

ROME HAS SPOKEN

A true devotion to the Mother of God is one that springs from the heart. Thus, bodily actions, if separated from the acts of the soul, are worthless and useless. The united actions of soul and body must strive to make us obedient in all things to Mary's divine Son. If that love is real which unites wills, our will must certainly be united with the Most Holy Mother's in this total dedication of ourselves to Christ the Lord. For that reason the Virgin Most Prudent speaks to us today in the same manner she spoke to the servants at the marriage in Cana: "Do whatever He tells you." Now Christ's command is simply this: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Everyone, then, can be certain that if this devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin does not keep him from sinning and does not inspire him with the desire of abandoning his evil ways, his devotion is deceptive and false since it does not produce in him the effects it should. (Pope Saint Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum*, 1904)

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