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EDITORIAL

Satan On A Rampage

The ancient Romans were not all that devoid of reason even in things of the spirit. It is from them that we received the saying: **“Whom the gods would destroy, they first drive mad”**. What is true of days gone by and thoughts buried in the dust bin of history, is also true of our times. In fact, the presence of devils in society is more prevalent today than at any other time in human history.

One reason is that apart from the fixed number of angels that rebelled against God, there are the great multitudes of human beings that have filled the pages of written history who have been possessed by devils. These departed human beings readily account for the vast number of devils that inhabit places, things, animals and finally, other human beings.

Modern psychology does not deserve the name “psychology” because it is nothing more than a study of animal behavior and then applied to that part of the human species that resembles

the animal, leaving out the important part of that which makes us humans different from our pet dog, cat, bird or reptile.

All counseling that is now part of a school’s staff is nothing more than the implementation of B.F. Skinner’s animal “psychology”.

One need only ask someone who has been forced to submit to such “counseling” as to the value received for the high cost of such a charade. When we leave aside the real cause of our ills, we end up with half-truths and solutions that merely increase the problems. Good parents have more sense than college-created mini-psychologists. I remember one such “psychologist” working at our summer camp in Maine. His “solution” for a mixed-up boy was to punish him by making him stand an hour or two in the blazing noon day sun. Is it any wonder, then, that there are more psychologists and psychiatrists in mental institutions than any other profession?

The Devil’s most effective weapon is that of getting people

to think he does not exist. Rather than blame these evil spirits, most people have been conditioned to believe their problems are due to “bad luck”. The voice of the Church echoes the words of Sacred Scripture which is inspired by the Holy Ghost: **“Brethren, be sober and watchful; because the Devil, who is your enemy, goes about roaring like a lion to find whom he may devour; but you, strong in the faith, resist him!”** These words are from St. Peter and are repeated every evening by those who recite the Divine Office at the last hour of the day, Compline.

Blessed Maximilian Kolbe wrote the following many years ago: **“Modern times are dominated by Satan and will be more so in the future. The conflict with hell cannot be engaged by men, even the most clever. The Immaculata alone has from God the promise of victory over Satan. However, assumed into heaven, the Mother of God now requires our cooperation. She seeks souls who will consecrate themselves entirely to her, who will become in her hands effective instruments for the defeat of Satan and the**

spreading of God’s kingdom upon earth.”

There are individuals living among us who not only have devils in them, but also the fallen human beings in Hell, Ananias and Sapphira. St. Peter accused them of sinning not against him, but against the Holy Ghost.

In cases of casting out devils, an exorcist demands the devils to reveal their names. On more than one occasion do they tell us they are Ananias and Sapphira!

Marks of the Satanic are lying and murder. The possessed or oppressed by evil spirits very often take what is said in truth about them, and turn the same words against the ones trying to help them. This is what may well be described as the “mirror effect”. The possessed recounts what has been directed to the evil spirit and repeats it as if looking in a mirror and describing the other personality in him or her. Then this is applied to the victim.

More will be said of these things in the following article regarding McKenna’s “exorcisms” the likes of which gave fuel to the enemies of the Church to subtly

The Bishop Speaks

Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM D.D.

THE REMNANT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAINST THE DEMONIC DISORIENTATION OF TRADITIONALISTS

McKenna the “Exorcist”

Most Catholics know little about their faith other than the very basic elements of doctrine and a smattering of Church discipline as it affects them. Thus, apart from physically attending the Sacrifice of the Mass, peremptorily going to “Confession” and making a “firm purpose of amendment” that lasts about ten minutes, more or less, and mechanically receiving Holy Communion, they see themselves as “good Catholics” and desire nothing more. They become easy prey to “visionaries” because their faith is weak and they are only too eager to have someone “tickle their ears”. The daily life of the believer is filled with opportunities to practice virtue of every kind. But, virtue is not easy and often boring – like the preparation of a canvas before

painting a beautiful picture. Or, comparing the spiritual life to gardening, there is a lot of perspiration that goes into making a nice garden. Whatever the analogy, it all comes down to a struggle to keep on the narrow path that leads to salvation rather than getting side-tracked into the broad path that leads to perdition. That’s the one, as Our Lord tells us, is the most traveled.

They will eat meat on Friday wondering why a bit of a burger is enough to send them into eternal hellfire, not realizing that it is not the meat itself that is sinful, but the act of disobedience that is at stake. A priest asked me if I thought there were any souls in Hell because they ate meat on Friday, I answered that “Yes, there are many.” His reply startled me even more than the question.

He said: “You are the first priest that I’ve heard say that.” That was some response!

I then pointed out to him that the physical act of eating meat on Friday was not the issue, but

that the simple act of obedience was. The act of disobedience to the simple command of God to the first woman was enough to turn all of created nature into upheaval. Where once all nature obeyed Adam and would have continued to obey all his descendants, it now rebelled against him as he and his “help-mate” rebelled against God. And this is likewise the cause of the conflict within each and every human being: The flesh (body) was to obey the soul (spirit) and the spirit was to obey God. Now, the entire order was thrown into reverse. The upward movement now turned downward – from being heavenward, it now became hellward. From closeness to God, man turned away from God and turned to nothingness because outside of God there is nothing.

Now, there is a good reason why the Church requires that even those who have the supernatural power to cast out devils may not use this power unless having the permission of one’s bishop. Anyone going against such a determination risks siding with the Devil rather than casting him and his gang out of anyone.

Very few people have ever
4

witnessed any kind of ordination. Except for immediate members of the family of the candidate for Holy Orders, the majority of people witnessed the results of an ordination, namely, the First Solemn High Mass of the newly ordained priest.

This is true of priestly ordinations. How much more so is it true of the consecration of a bishop? Because it was becoming more and more common to publicize these ordinations, appropriate translations in the vernacular were being provided along side the Latin text of the Ritual. In an introduction to the Ritual for the consecration of a bishop we read:

“The fact that five thousand copies of this little manual have been sold is an indication of the service it has rendered in enabling the laity to understand better the sublime function whose ceremonies it describes. The many letters of congratulation received upon this attempt to present in an attractive form this portion of the liturgy is at once a satisfaction and an incentive. The mere reading of the ceremonies and prayers

will throw light upon the symbolical meaning where disquisitions would be dry and meaningless. It is not deemed necessary, therefore, to enlarge upon the ceremonies further than to call attention to the principal divisions.

The function may properly be divided into the preliminary examination, the consecration proper, and the investiture. The first part includes the form of ascertaining solemnly that the Bishop Elect has the right to Episcopal consecration; of receiving his oath of submission to the Holy See, the centre of unity; and of inquiring into the orthodoxy of his faith. The form of oath embodied in this manual is that prescribed for the Bishops of the United States in the Second Council of Baltimore. In the examination the Bishop Elect is made to profess categorically his belief in the different matters of faith that have been particularly attacked by heretics, especially the doctrine of the Incarnation. These preliminaries having been duly gone through with, the Mass is begun, its simultaneous celebration by Consecrator and Bishop Elect

betokening the unity of their faith.

Immediately after the Gradual and Tract, the Consecration ceremony begins with the solemn announcement by the Consecrator of the awful duties of a Bishop. The different rites and prayers sufficiently indicate their purpose. The majesty of the plain chant in the Litanies, the Veni Creator, and the Preface is perhaps unsurpassed by any other portion of the liturgy.

The Consecration ceremony proper being finished, the new Bishop is invested with the crosier and ring proper to the Episcopal order, the prayers and admonitions accompanying the investiture clearly indicating their uses and purposes.

The Mass proceeds with the Consecrator and new Bishop celebrating in unison at the same altar. After the Communion (the new Bishop communicating both of the Sacred Host and Precious Blood) the new Bishop receives the mitre and gloves, which have been solemnly blessed by

the Consecrator. Then with the utmost pomp the new Bishop is enthroned on the Episcopal seat while the magnificent *Te Deum* is intoned. During the hymn he is led between the two assistant Bishops around the church, blessing the people as he goes. Afterward he is received by the Consecrator to the kiss of peace, and the function is ended.

Those only who appreciate the hierarchical importance of the Episcopate will thoroughly understand the sublimity of the whole ceremony.”

Feast of St. John de Matha, 1894.

We have here perhaps for the first time a more public presentation of how a priest is elevated to the rank of Bishop. And in view of the constant attack of false Catholics upon the episcopacy with a view to expressing in word and deed the demonic declaration of Lucifer “I will not obey” it is deemed necessary to remind Catholics of the sublimity, dignity and authority of a genuine successor of the Apostles, without whom there would no longer be a Roman

Catholic Church.

Among other duties of a Bishop, the following must be kept in mind by everyone, priest or laity, regarding the Bishop: **“A bishop judges, interprets, consecrates, ordains, offers, baptizes and confirms.”** This is the admonition made by the Consecrator to the Bishop Elect.

And what do we see in our days of social unrest and religious anarchy? We find ex-seminarians (Perhaps of ONE year of Minor Seminary equivalent to the first year of High School) pompously pronouncing anathemas against genuine bishops; we find ex-drummers – fugitives from the Modernist Mess – suddenly catapulting themselves (drum sticks and all!) into a self-defined authoritative position of more than just a “bishop” – more likely a pope. We see clergymen of mature age but immature emotion and reason establishing themselves as the unchallenged “leaders” of scattered flocks while brazenly administering fruitless Sacraments to unsuspecting or willing laymen. There is no end to this mockery of what is supposed by them to be the “Roman Catholic Church”.

Yes. And it all starts with the clergy who have prostituted their priesthood for the sake of filthy lucre (as St. Paul calls it). This is the sad picture of these so-called “Traditionalists” whose hypocrisy only encourages laymen of the same cloth to pontificate to their everlasting condemnation to the fires of Hell.

And where does all this begin? It begins when a simple act of disobedience blinds the intellect and corrupts the will.

With these prefatory observations, let us proceed to examine McKenna and his widely publicized “exorcisms”.

It had already been mentioned in previous articles of this unfortunate soul’s sudden switch from a seeming “obedient” priest to a determined promoter of anarchy among priests within his circle and among the people whom he had stolen from their rightful shepherd.

Shortly after my consecration by three bishops, McKenna seemingly did what any good priest would do: He placed

himself under me as his bishop. This should surprise no one who is an intelligent Catholic. The reason is that I and our Franciscan community placed ourselves under Bishop George Musey as soon as we learned that he was a valid bishop.

This is where the similarity ends. Shortly thereafter, McKenna approached me with a veiled request to be given permission to perform exorcisms. This far was proper. But this is as far as he was apparently willing to go. For, despite the fact that *I did not give him that authorization* he boldly sought to undermine the authority of the bishop and placed himself between the people and their bishop and proceeded to perform exorcisms. As anyone can read by going back to past issues of this publication, there was a constant thread of disobedience to any kind of visible authority. Now, every Catholic knows – or should know – that the supernatural authority given a bishop by the Holy Ghost as a successor of the Apostles is for the building up of the Church.

Furthermore, it was already indicated what the general duties

of a bishop are. He realizes in himself the three-fold powers of Jesus Christ to teach, sanctify and rule the Catholic Community.

It is because the Bishop judges, that so many unscrupulous individuals rush to reject the Bishop and usurp his position; it is the Bishop who interprets, and that is why those who are always studying but never learning try to eliminate the Bishop by usurping his power to interpret. It is the Bishop, finally, who governs the Catholic community entrusted to him; that is why the incompetent and ambitious always try to ignore or revile the Bishop.

Blinded by the spirit of vanity and envy, these types are to be found everywhere. A good tree does not bear bad fruit; nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

Every genuine exorcist will tell you that it is essential to have his Bishop's permission to perform public exorcisms.

Public exorcisms are those done in the name and by the authority of the Church.

The Law of the Church (Canon

Law) states clearly in Canon 1151¶ 1: **“No one endowed with the (Church’s) power of exorcising is allowed to pronounce an exorcism over possessed persons unless he has obtained special and express permission to do so from the Ordinary.”**

This is very important to understand correctly. This law applies to public exorcisms performed over *possessed persons*. Consequently, no permission is needed for solemn, public exorcisms over homes, animals or places. Thus, when McKenna asked for permission to perform exorcisms, his request was framed in such a way that he thought I would not realize what he was doing. He was indirectly trying to get me to give him permission to exorcise possessed persons. Permission which **I did not grant him.**

Rather, with the view of not embarrassing him with the plain truth, I gently suggested that if he meant blessing homes, etc. with greater solemnity, he could do so. But, as we have seen above, such permission was not required.

How did he react? It was not long after and he began to “doubt” the ordinary authority of the Bishop – the ordinary authority he had recognized prior to his request to be allowed to perform exorcisms over possessed persons.

We will presently see the ludicrous extent to which he carried his self-granted permission to exorcise persons supposedly and/or really possessed.

However, before presenting McKenna and his “entourage” of ghost busters – those who dabble in these matters imprudently – it is necessary to place this whole aspect of human experience in its proper perspective because we are dealing with something very real, something very pernicious, and something that reaches to the very bowels of Hell.

Evil spirits are very real. We find their existence and influence all throughout human history. Foremost in this area is the experience of missionaries in pagan lands. In the Orient, for example, the dragon is the symbol of “good fortune”. Yet, in the West, the dragon is the symbol of consummate evil, of

Satan himself. We are informed of this in the Apocalypse and we use this in addressing the Devil (Satan, Lucifer): Seize **“the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan,”** bind him and cast him into the bottomless pit... **“that he (may) no longer seduce the nations.”** (Apoc. 20, 2-3).

There are not many among our foreign missionaries – especially in the Far East – who are aware of the display of demons and their influence in the daily lives of the people they seek to bring to the light of the Gospel. “Good luck” is attributed to the dragon provided one “appeases” it.

This is reminiscent of the temptation of the Our Lord by the Devil: **Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And he said to Him, “All these things will I give to thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”**

If we wonder what has happened to the Catholic Church, we can easily find the answer not only in Holy Scripture, but also in all that is taking place around us:

Iconoclasm – the destruction of sacred images; the elimination of prayers on various occasions; no longer are homes blessed and dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the Rosary is practically non-existent in the Modernist Church, and if it is said, it is powerless to defeat Satan because the true Sacrifice of the Mass no longer exists in the those churches where there are no longer valid priests. There is a long list of all those things that once protected people from the influence of these evil spirits.

Where the Perpetual Sacrifice has been replaced by a hybrid “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” you may be certain that the merits of Christ’s passion and death no longer flow into all the other devotions. Since 1968, with the deliberate changes in the rituals of ordination and consecration, there have been no valid priests or bishops in what is perceived as the “Roman Catholic Church”.

The same is true among those who deceive themselves into believing that they are somehow “traditionalists” – meaning by this term, one supposes that

they adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church – just because they mimic the true Mass and Sacraments.

At this point it is worthwhile to reiterate the horrible deception of thousands by those false priests gathered together in the sect started by Marcel Lefebvre. Having the semblance of orthodoxy, these deluded souls believe they are priests and bishops, while the doctrine of the Church regarding the Sacraments says otherwise. The farce continues and extends to all those false clergymen who enter the homes of the unsuspecting who, because of their sins, are permitted by God to be deceived.

The Devil is clever and a master of deceit. He works on the senses and the imagination to bring about the eternal destruction of his victims. He is the Destroyer and the inspiration of all evil men who seek to destroy the works of God.

Satan is very much alive and successful in his work of destruction to a very high degree. Satan – Lucifer (The “light bearer”) – inspires vanity and envy in his victims who mirror

vice and think it is virtue. “We must walk in the light of truth” says the Devil as he calls light – darkness; and darkness, light.

The entire world is plunged in spiritual darkness and will continue in this direction until the end of time. Evil will continue to be called “good” and Good will be called “evil” in every field of human activity.

In the time of Our Lord, - the Gospels so teach us - the two dominant characteristics of the satanic were (and still are!) LYING AND MURDER.

Where lying fails, murder follows. And we ought not exclude murder from that very common and clean form of murder: *character assassination*. There are more people guilty of this form of murder than one would wish to think.

It is common knowledge that the easiest way to destroy the message is to destroy the messenger. This is the motive behind religious persecutions where the servants of God are brutally murdered in order to keep the message of salvation away from people. In England,

during the Protestant revolution of King Henry VIII, this former “Defender of the Faith” became the ugly “Destroyer of the Faith” by murdering anyone who disagreed with his greed. Priests were hunted down like criminals for offering the true Mass – the Tridentine Mass as it is now labeled.

Truly, where lying and deceit failed, violence took over. And it all can be traced back to Satan – the Adversary of Jesus Christ.

People are possessed by evil spirits and damned souls. How can we know if someone is possessed by evil spirits or not?

“By their fruits you shall know them,” said Our Lord. There are some principal signs which the Church uses and are mentioned in the Roman Ritual. These are: speaking unknown tongues or understanding them when used by another. Jimmy Swaggart is a good example of this when he seems to utter unknown languages in one of his fits of fanatic exuberance to enthrall his listeners; making known hidden and distant facts; showing strength out of proportion with one’s age and circumstances.

These are not the only signs. The Ritual states: **“These and other signs when they occur in great number are the surest indications of possession.”**

Experienced exorcists know that there can be cases of diabolical possession without any of the signs mentioned. We must understand that the Devil does not want to show his presence by speaking in tongues, or to betray his identity by marvelous signs. He prefers to remain hidden so as to strike from ambush.

“Yet, it is impossible for the devil to possess a person without giving some sign of his presence,” says Fr. Dominic Symanski, OFM Conv. **“If the devil is there he will act. He will assert his dominion over the body by tyranny and torture. He may be able to hide some signs of the possession but cannot hide them all,”** attests Fr. Symanski.

The only way to be sure that a person is possessed is to perform an exorcism. And very often, it takes a long time before certainty of possession can be established. We have been performing

exorcisms on several individuals daily and nightly for over one year now. The length of time is not important; but perseverance is. Once an exorcism has begun, it must be continued until the evil spirits are cast out – no matter how long it takes. Some exorcisms take a very short time, while others take much longer. There are times when exorcism does not relieve the possessed. Such are what we call “Victim Souls”.

In every case of possession, there is evidence of a dual personality: the person himself and the possessing spirit.

“The physical person,” says Fr. Symanski, **“will complain of the intrusion of the other and of the violation of his liberty. He will indicate how he is forced to act by that ‘something inside of him’ contrary to his own conviction and volition. The possessed person will desire to eat; something will stop him; he will desire to pray, and that other personality will interfere. These persons do not lose their minds; they know exactly what ails them; they are conscious of another intelligent force within them which interferes**

with their freedom. They need help, and that help should be given by those who have the care of souls. ...”

The problem arises when the devils arrange to create the illusion that there is no help by suggesting such thoughts that there is no one out there to help them. Isolated from the true Sacraments and other means of combating the Devil, these souls eventually become the instruments of their own destruction.

Fr. Symanski’s means for combating the Devil in whatever form he takes are precisely eliminated in the Modernist Church: Since there is no valid priesthood where the priest is given the power to bless, there is no chance of there being any sacramentals such as holy water, etc. How can there be recourse to the Sacrament of Confession if the new “priest” does not receive the power to forgive sin? And how, also, can anyone receive Holy Communion if the new “priest” does not receive the power to consecrate. Prayer and fasting are essential for protection against possession and as a means to cast out the

evil spirits as Our Lord said: **“These can only be cast out by prayer and fasting.”**

And finally, there is exorcism. Fr. Symanski sends out a warning again concerning exorcisms: This last means, exorcism of possessed persons: **This last we are cautioned to use prudently (i.e., exorcism) and only with the consent of the Ordinary (the local Bishop or a prelate possessing similar authority)....”**

Let us see McKenna’s approach. First of all, he repudiates the Bishop to whom he submitted previously. He therefore attempts to circumvent the need for permission from the local Ordinary.

He determines that a person is possessed or not based on the testimony of lay people who do not have the grace to discern such things. How does McKenna know when someone is possessed? Easy: **“I usually take cases that Ed and Lorraine Warren or John Zaffis brought to my attention, and they have thoroughly investigated the cases,”** says McKenna.

When asked if his exorcisms be “tiring” the answer comes back: **“Yes. You go at it with readings, prayers, and adorations for a good hour, and if there are no signs of any improvement, and if there’s any purpose for keeping on for two or three hours, then we do. We keep it up for signs that the devil’s weakening.”**

ONE hour?! Then, possibly TWO or THREE?! This “world renowned exorcist” must really be good if professional exorcists assure us that the only way to know if someone is possessed is to perform an exorcism. It is hardly something assuring to have “Ed and Lorraine Warren” to be the ones to make a determination of such great importance.

Observe that McKenna has just stated that his “exorcisms” last about one hour, or two to three at the most. In one hour, he determines whether a person is possessed. If he thinks the person is possessed, he continues for “two or three hours” – otherwise he gives up. An audio tape was made of one of his “exorcisms” and nowhere

does one get the impression that any kind of prayers or consistent following of the Roman Ritual are being used. To anyone with some experience in exorcisms, his entire procedure would be laughable if it were not dealing with something so serious.

Fr. Symanski (and we also) dedicate at least two hours at a time during a period of at least eight to ten hours *a day* - adding to this the prayers and fasting which Fr. Symanski says is necessary to cast out devils. Without prayer and fasting, it is impossible to cast out the devils from anyone.

True to form, McKenna leaps before looking. It is significant from his actions that he has been the cause of creating invalid priests and bishops who will continue his work of undermining the true Church. His dealings with serious questions of validity of Sacraments are appallingly superficial at best. His imprudent attempted “consecrations: of laymen posing as valid priests has added to the army of false teachers and preachers roaming the world like silent serpents or roaring lions seeking whom they can devour.

As a final observation concerning McKenna, there appears under the title: “PRIEST WHOSE EXORCISMS FAIL ADMITS: THE DEVIL WAS TOO STRONG FOR ME”

Although much more can be said, it is best to leave this unfortunate person to the judgment of God while making every effort to protect the unwary. Should this effort fail, there is always the truth in the saying: “Birds of a feather, flock together”....As ye sow, so shall ye reap. Or, to end on a humorous note: As ye leap, so shall ye fall...



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Discernment of Spirits

The appearance of this little work is most timely because there is such a proliferation of false visionaries and prophets who unfortunately succeeded in deceiving the uninformed.

A word of advice is in order. When we consider the seriousness of this present life and the eternal consequences we must inevitably face, there is no greater or more important knowledge that we should have than to know something about the workings of God's grace and the workings of Satan's wiles. Also, let the reader be persuaded that if the great fathers of the desert and other saints have been most cautious in judging spiritual matters how much more so those who have little or no experience in these things.

One day, the monks of the desert were gathered at a conference to examine which virtues merit the first place. Interestingly enough, the views were different. Since there were differing views as to which virtues were to be given first place, St. Anthony stood up and said: "All the means which you have recommended are useful and necessary for those who thirst for God and would find him; but the experience of many and the great number of failures does not permit us to believe that you have indicated that principle infallible way.

How many times have we seen religious observe vigils and rigorous fastings,

hiding themselves in solitude and depriving themselves of the least bit of the means to nourish themselves for a single day. They have practiced with great zeal all the works of charity and nevertheless fallen suddenly into tragic illusions. And, instead of terminating their task in fervor and holiness, have ended in a deplorable state. In order to understand the principle virtue, which leads to God, it suffices to find the cause of the illusions and falls of the solitaries. They practiced perfectly the virtues of which we have spoken. But, they lacked discretion and were unable to persevere to the end. If they have fallen, it is only because they have not listened to the teachings of the ancient Fathers. They do not know how to acquire this virtue of discretion, which leads between extremes and teaches religious to follow the royal road. *Neither losing themselves on the right by an excess of fervor nor falling into the folly of presumption nor allowing themselves to be enticed on the left by vices which lead to mediocrity and laxity under the pretext of preserving the body.*" (Cassien, Coll.2,c2)

Such a work on the discernment of spirits is most timely as was said because the traditional guidance once available from competent individuals is practically nonexistent. Even those who would pretend to guide others soon betray their incompetency. Modern errors can only breed errors

in spirituality. The accompanying false spirituality that is inevitable with Modernism is the Charismatic Movement. False philosophy and false theology can only lead to a false spirituality and clearly a false spirituality can only lead to eternal disaster.

The material presented in this booklet is based on the sound and approved principles of spirituality leading generous souls along the safe paths of authentic mysticism.

It is my sincere prayer and wish that all those who read and study to apply the principles collected in this little work might soon learn the peace and blessings of following Christ correctly.

Fr. Louis Vezelis O.F.M. D.D.

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**A SERIES OF FIVE
CONFERENCES
DELIVERED AT THE
CATHOLIC SUMMER
SCHOOL,
PLATTSBURGH, N. Y., 1895**

**THE CATACOMBS,
THE SHELTER**

(Continued)

In the days of St. Gregory the Great, here was venerated a chair of St. Peter, preserved in this necropolis with great honor, and before which lamps were kept burning constantly, as was the custom of that time with all the more noteworthy

relics; and indeed some drops of the oil used in the lamps were collected in a phial from the tomb of Theodolinda. This phial is now preserved in the treasury of Monza, and upon the papyrus attached to it are written these words: "Sedes ubi prius sedit sanctus Petrus," and in the Index of oils is registered this one: "Oleum de sede ubi prius sedit sanctus Petrus." This would seem to indicate that there were two different chairs of the Apostle, and indeed two different feasts of this chair were celebrated, — that of the Ostrian chair was celebrated the eighteenth of January, that of the Vatican chair the twenty-second of February.

The most notable relics of this cemetery are the epitaphs which are easily proved to be contemporaneous to the time of the Apostles. A crypt, discovered by Bosio and rediscovered again in 1876 by Professor Armellini, has the form of a little church. Here in an inscription much worn by time, and of which there remain but a few words, we read the names of St. Emerentiana and St. Agnes; and still is seen the column on which was placed the little basin filled with oil — the lamp which burned before the chair of St. Peter, preserved

formerly in this little church.

It is impossible to describe minutely all the pictures of this cemetery. The most celebrated of these is a representation of the Blessed Virgin with the head veiled, and her little Son at her bosom; in another place is depicted the scene of the Magi led by the star. Again, still plainly visible from the walls of this cemetery is the picture of the resurrection of Lazarus, the symbols of the Eucharist, the ichthus, and the monogram of Christ. Here, too, is represented the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, as a second Moses drawing water from the arid rock by the touch of his rod or staff.

Next in importance comes the cemetery of the Vatican. This is located in the valley which extended between the Tiber and the Janiculum hill. This region was called the Vatican, either because the pagan prophets there gave forth the oracles and their responses, or from the Etruscan divinity named Vaticanus, who was said to preside over the first wailings of all infants. St. Augustine accepts this second etymology of the word as we learn from his *City of God*, (book iv, chap. viii).

In this place were the gardens of Caius Cæsar, and it was here that Nero put to death the innocent Christians accused by him of setting fire to the city of Rome. It is not, therefore, strange that the Christians established here a vast necropolis, and archeological discoveries have proved that the apostle St. Peter was buried in this place.

The Vatican cemetery was not constructed of subterranean passages and catacombs; they were only a series of burial fields above ground, marked in some way by slabs or monuments. To these memorials it is evident that Caius, a priest of the Roman Church, alludes when he writes to Procul the Montanist: "I can point out to you the plainly visible trophies of the Apostles, for if you wander through the Vatican region or along the Ostrian way, you will find there the memorials of those who, by preaching and authority, established the Roman church."

As we learn from the *Liber Pontificalis*, it was Pope Anacletus who constructed the monument or tomb of St. Peter. This is called in that book *memoria apostoli*, which in the epigraphic language

signifies a burial chamber.

Near the tomb of St. Peter was established the burial-place of the popes; and Severanus narrates that when, under Urban VIII, the Confessional of St. Peter was reconstructed, several bodies were discovered in separate sarcophagi vested in pontifical garb; and though no names marked their tombs, it was believed to be most probable that they were the bodies of the ten holy pontiffs who immediately succeeded St. Peter in the See of Rome; for in that same place was found a tablet marked with the inscription St. Linus. These bodies were allowed to remain undisturbed in that same place.

Torrignus was an eye-witness of this discovery. In the ancient martyrologies we read that St. Linus was buried “*juxta corpus beati Petri in Vatican,*” “near the body of blessed Peter in the Vatican cemetery.”

This burial-place would have furnished us with most valuable testimony of apostolic times, but it was destroyed to make room for the basilica of Constantine, and so we lost forever this collection of archæological treasures.

These four catacombs just mentioned and briefly described are among the principal of the Roman catacombs, of which, in round numbers, there are about fifty. It is plain that we cannot linger further upon a more detailed account of individual cemeteries, but rather we must draw some conclusions from their general study.

They served in times of persecution as places of meeting, of prayer, and of worship. Here the Christians came to pray over the graves of their dead, especially on the anniversaries of their death. Here the martyrs were honored by special rites, and over their tombs, the Holy Sacrifice was offered up. Doubtless in times of persecution they served to some as a momentary refuge, but it is utterly groundless to suppose that the Christians lived in the catacombs; and if we read at times that such a Pontiff was called forth to death from his hiding in the catacombs, we must generally understand it in the sense of the writer, namely, that he was discovered in the houses or oratories built upon the ground above the cemetery, and not in the underground burial-place itself; though we do know that Pope Sixtus II, surprised

by the pagans during the holy functions, was decapitated upon his own episcopal chair, which was bathed with his blood; and at another time, a great number of Christians gathered in the cemeteries of the Salarian Way, were suddenly discovered and put to death. But this, it must be remembered, was while they were gathered for divine worship, not while living in the catacombs.

The graves of the martyrs are recognized by the presence inside the sepulcher of glass vases, and frequently added to the name upon the slab marking the tomb, is inscribed the palm, the sign of martyrdom, or even the word martyr.

The glasses which we find affixed to the external walls of the tomb are not of the same significance, but were used to contain balsams and fragrant liquids with which the body during sepulture was sprinkled. The first kind of vase we find during persecutions; the last in the times of peace; thus at once is established a sign between the martyr who lived in troublous times, and the Christian who was buried here in times of quiet to the Church.

The pictures which we find in

the catacombs can be divided into three distinct periods of time and art. The first period begins with that of excavation, and extends along through the end of the first till the end of the fourth century. The catacombs must be considered not only as the cradle of faith, but of Christian art. The second period extends from the epoch of peace under Constantine, when these sepulchers were changed into venerated sanctuaries, and when the enigma and mystery visible in the art of the first period flowered into a freer and franker representation of the subject. The third period may be called the period of decadence; this was the Byzantine epoch, during which, in the ninth century, the cemeteries were completely abandoned. Hence by the knowledge of the manner and style characteristic of these three periods, it can be known with certainty at what time the fresco was painted.

The most ancient pictures of the catacombs reflect all the indications of classicism; in the elegance of style, the simplicity of conception, and beauty of decoration, reminding us of the frescoes of Pompeii and of the baths of Titus.

The subjects are always sacred and religious, but the style of treatment is much the same, and the decoration even similar to the pictures of pagan painters of the same epoch. Among the pictures of the catacombs we discover a set system of symbols: the anchor, symbol of hope, is constantly met with, painted upon the walls, and cut upon the tablets. The fish, the accepted symbol of Christ, is one of the oldest symbols of the tombs; the dove, the symbol of the Christian soul, is another of these. The fish, coupled with the representation of bread, veils the mystery of the Eucharist; while a fountain signifies the sacrament of baptism. A bird with the olive branch in its beak signifies the passage to Paradise of the Christian soul; the lamb signifies one of the flock of Christ, and the horse alludes to our terrestrial wanderings; the ship expresses the voyage of life, and the lighthouse, shedding its light from afar, represents divine grace.

The most common allegory taught by the representations of the catacombs is that of the wandering sheep and the Good Shepherd. Among the most interesting frescoes of the catacombs are those which

represent Bible scenes, illustrative of an interpretation characteristic of the new Church. Thus, Noah's ark is represented as the Church, Moses is represented as striking the rock, but underneath the figure is written Petrus. In some places we see representations of liturgical scenes, such as the administration of Baptism and the consecration of the Eucharist, as well as a scene of holy ordination. The rarity of these is accounted for by the existence of the discipline, of the secret and the reticence of the Christians with regard to the sacred mysteries.

Nothing can be more certain than that the images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints were revered by the earliest Christians. We see constantly the figure of our Lord seated in the midst of His Apostles, receiving from them their homage and adoration.

In all these pictures St. Peter is placed on the right and next to Christ. Frequent, indeed, is the representation of the Blessed Virgin met with in the tombs and chapels of the catacombs, and from the style and representation is most manifest the honor in which she was held and the dignity accorded to her by the primitive

Church. She is depicted there as seated upon a throne holding the Infant Jesus to her breast; or erect upon her feet, her arms extended in the act of prayer and intercession. Again she is seated before the Magi, who come to offer gifts to her Divine Son. All these, by their style and composition, are easily traced to the first three centuries. Later, we find other representations in the Byzantine style. The covering, pose, and drapery are different, but the symbolism representing her position in the new faith is always the same.

From these pictures, too, of priests and pontiffs we gather the style of vestment used in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. From the inscriptions, too, which still remain legible and clear, we learn various indications of the character of the early faith. For example, take this one from the tomb of Basilla: "Domina Basilla commendamus tibi Crescentinum et Micinam filiam nostram." Is it not plain from this that the doctrine of invocation of saints was practiced in the primitive Church? And here is another from another tomb: "Spiritus tuum Deus refrigeret." What is this but prayers for the dead?

Upon the tomb of some is the word designating their office, and from these we gather that the orders existing in the early Church were precisely the same as those of the present day.

From one simple inscription is gathered the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ: "In Deo Domino Christo," "In Christ the Lord God." Most frequent is allusion made to the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the Unity of God; and the doctrine of the resurrection is also taught by the epitaphs of the catacombs. Then, too, we learn the worldly condition of the Christians of that time. It is plain from proofs which these cemeteries furnish that not only slaves, servants, domestics, and people of low condition were among the faithful professors of Christianity, but men and women of the highest dignity and social position, even of senatorial rank and blood relationship to the Emperors.

Therefore, to draw to a close this conference upon the Catacombs, we may remark that in confirmation of what history already knows of the Church's condition and character in the earliest times, these burial-places

of the dead have become the strongest possible witnesses. As day by day their study progresses, bringing to light more and more the richness and fullness of the records so providentially conserved to us in these hidden treasures, brighter and more potent must ever shine the true story of the Church's origin, condition, and present and constant apostolicity; so that any one who enters these tombs with an unbiased mind, open to conviction by scientific proof after he has wandered amid the burial places of those who, centuries ago, shed their blood for the faith; after he has stood in the corridors where our forefathers walked in fear, yet confidence; after standing within these sacred underground chapels, at whose altars priests and pontiffs offered up the Holy Sacrifice; after reading inscriptions which tell the truths they believed, and gazing upon the pictures which illustrate the doctrines and practices of their faith, he must finally be convinced that, aside from the conditions which arise from the diversity of circumstances, in all else the Catholic Church of 1895 is identical in belief, in practice, in ritual, in government, with the Church of the first, second,

and third centuries. Brief as this conference is, attempting merely to indicate in simplest outline the story of the origin and use of the Christian catacombs, and the value of the testimony they afford, in confirmation of historical documents, in tracing the doctrines and practices of the Church, and the customs and life of the early Christians, it may suffice to open up a subject which, to the student, will surely prove a field of wonderful attractiveness and interest. If I may hope to have aroused an increased desire to know more of this comparatively recent science of Christian archeology, my feeble efforts will have reaped ample fruit. In the works of John Baptist de Rossi, Prof. Armellini, and Messrs. Brownlow and Northcote, will be found a very mine of valuable information regarding the most important and most recent discoveries in this branch of knowledge, which daily grows to vaster proportions and is constantly attracting more respectful and universal consideration.

And so I beg to finish this series of conferences which has led us from the cradle at Bethlehem through the streets of Jerusalem, the paths and

by-ways of Judea, and along the banks of the sea of Galilee, into the garden of Gethsemane, up to the summit of Calvary, where for a while we rested under the shadow of the Cross. Thence, with the messengers of the new Gospel, we hastened along the huge thoroughfares that led to foreign lands and strange nations, arriving at last with the Prince of the Apostles in the very city of the Imperial Caesars. One by one, we have witnessed the Apostles giving testimony of the faith by their blood; we have seen the proud rulers of the earth lifting aloft their mighty voice and drawing the cruel sword against the converts to the Church, until all the world was filled with the cry of the Martyrs and the protests of apologists. Through three long centuries we have followed the spread of the Gospel, drawing to its sweet yoke in the face of unspeakable terrors men of every class and nation, until the very household of the Cæsars was filled with the confessors of Christ; who, not permitted to offer in the light of day the homage of their hearts and souls to Christ, their God, undaunted in times of bitterest persecution, gathered amid the tombs in the very bowels of the earth to

hear the voice of His ministers speaking in His Name, to offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass, and receive from the hand of the Christian priest and bishop the Bread of Life, their strength and consolation in all afflictions. At last a happier day arrives when a Christian Emperor sits upon the imperial throne; when from its hiding places the Church is summoned forth to triumph and honor. This is the sunshine which finally comes to brighten the period of gloom through which we have just passed. With the first streaks of dawn, tingeing the horizon with its rays of gold, and before our eyes the Cross of Constantine glittering in the clear sky above us, we say good-by to the story of this first sad period of the Church's life to greet the coming of a better day.



Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

MEDALS

The use of medals by Catholics is misunderstood by many outside the Church. Those unfamiliar with Catholic practices seem to think that we wear medals for the same reason that ignorant people carry in their pockets some so-called “good-luck charm.”

A medal may be defined as a small disc of metal bearing a device or inscription, usually commemorative or honorary. We find civil governments frequently using medals as memorials to commemorate the deeds of their citizens. Our own American Government bestows medals not only as marks of appreciation of valor, but also to teach us to imitate valiant deeds.

The Catholic Church, also, sanctions the use of medals. Thus we find medals being struck for jubilees, centenaries, and extraordinary events. Others are of a devotional character and are produced in honor of our Savior, His Blessed Mother, and the Saints. Just as the State sanctions the use of medals to instill a love of country, so the

Church approves of them to inspire her children with a love of our Savior, and to teach us to imitate the virtues of those who in life were dear to our Lord.

Certain medals receive a special blessing from the Church and have rich Indulgences attached to them for the users. Non-Catholics should not confuse our use of medals with the pagan custom of wearing amulets and charms as protection against danger and disease.

Catholics do not believe that the medal itself has any power whatever. A blessed medal is worn as a petition for Divine aid and Divine protection, and not as an amulet or charm. In the early Church it was necessary to combat the pagan custom of wearing amulets. The Church, in its wisdom, used an easy and natural remedy against superstition by teaching her children to wear some symbol of their religion, such as a cross, either as a confession of their Faith or as a prayer for Heavenly aid.

Thus -- in our day Catholics place

a Badge of the Sacred Heart or a medal of St. Christopher in their automobile. They use the Badge as a petition to Christ to guard and to protect them. They use the medal of St. Christopher to ask his prayers for them as travelers, for St. Christopher, a Christian martyr, according to a pious legend, accepted the task of carrying people, for God's sake, across a dangerous, raging stream.

The use of the scapular medal is now widespread. A concession

by Pope Pius X, in 1910, permits the wearing of a medal instead of one or more of the small scapulars, provided the medal receives a special blessing and represents on one side our Lord with His Sacred Heart and, on the other, the Blessed Virgin. The scapular medal must be blessed by a priest who has faculties to invest with the corresponding scapulars. This blessing consists merely of the Sign of the Cross. A separate blessing must be given for each scapular which the medal is intended to replace.



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The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

“A different reward is received by the soul who perceives only My will, which, as has been said, wishes nothing else but your good; so that everything which I give or permit to happen to you, I give so that you may arrive at the end for which I created you. And because the soul remains always in the love of her neighbor, she remains always in Mine, and thus remains united to Me. Wherefore, in order to arrive at purity, you must entreat Me to do three things: to grant you to be united to Me by the affection of love, retaining in your memory the benefits you have received from Me; and with the eye of your intellect to see the affection of My love, with which I love you inestimably; and in the will of others to discern My will only, and not their evil will, for I am their Judge, not you, and, in doing this, you will arrive at all perfection.

“This was the doctrine given to you by My Truth, if you remember well. Now I tell you, dear-

est daughter, that such as these, who have learnt this doctrine, taste the earnest of eternal life in this life; and, if you have well retained this doctrine, you will not fall into the snares of the Devil, because you will recognize them in the case about which you have asked Me.

“But, nevertheless, in order to satisfy your desire more clearly, I will tell you and show you how men should never discern by judgment, but with holy compassion.”

In what way they, who stand in the above-mentioned third most perfect light, receive the earnest of eternal life in this life.

“Why did I say to you that they received the earnest of eternal life? I say that they receive the earnest-money, but not the full payment, because they wait to receive it in Me, the Eternal Life, where they have life without death, and satiety without disgust, and hunger without pain, for from that divine hunger pain is far away, and though they have what they desire, disgust

is far from satiety, for I am the flawless Food of Life. It is true that, in this life, they receive the earnest, and taste it in this way, namely that the soul begins to hunger for the honor of the Eternal God, and for the food of the salvation of other souls, and being hungry, she eats, that is to say, nourishes herself with love of her neighbor, which causes her hunger and desire, for the love of the neighbor is a food which never satiates him who feeds on it, the eater being insatiable and always remains hungry. So this earnest-money is a commencement of a guarantee which is given to man, in virtue of which he expects one day to receive his payment, not through the perfection of the earnest-money in itself, but through faith, through the certitude which he has of reaching the completion of his being and receiving his payment. Wherefore this enamored soul, clothed in My Truth, having already received in this life the earnest of My love, and of her neighbor's, is not yet perfect, but expects perfection in immortal life. I say that this earnest is not perfect, because the soul who tastes it has not, as yet, the perfection which would prevent her feeling

pain in herself, or in others. In herself, through the offense done to Me by the law of perversity which is bound in her members and struggles against the spirit, and in others by the offense of her neighbor. She has indeed, in a sense, a perfect grace, but not that perfection of My saints, who have arrived at Me, Eternal Life, for, as has been said, their desires are without suffering, and yours are not. These servants of Mine, as I have said to you in another place, who nourish themselves at this table of holy desire, are blessed and full of grief, even as My only-begotten Son was, on the wood of the holy Cross, because, while His flesh was in grief and torment, His soul was blessed through its union with the divine nature. In like manner these are blessed by the union of their holy desire towards Me, clothed, as has been said, in My sweet Will, and they are full of grief through compassion for their neighbor, and because they afflict their own self-love, depriving it of sensual delights and consolations."

How this soul, rendering thanks to God, humiliates herself; then she prays for the whole world and particularly for the mysti-

cal body of the holy Church, and for her spiritual children, and for the two fathers of her soul; and, after these things, she asks to hear something about the defects of the ministers of the holy Church.

Then that soul, as if, in truth, inebriated, seemed beside herself, as if the feelings of the body were alienated through the union of love which she had made with her Creator, and as if, in elevation of mind, she had gazed into the eternal truth with the eye of her intellect, and, having recognized the truth, had become enamored of it, and said, "Oh! Supreme and Eternal Goodness of God, who am I, miserable one, that You, Supreme and Eternal Father, have manifested to me Your Truth, and the hidden deceits of the Devil, and the deceitfulness of personal feeling, so that I, and others in this life of pilgrimage, may know how to avoid being deceived by the Devil or ourselves! What moved you to do it? Love, because You loved me, without my having loved You. Oh, Fire of Love! Thanks, thanks be to You, Eternal Father! I am imperfect and full of darkness, and You, Perfection and Light, have shown to

me perfection, and the resplendent way of the doctrine of Your only-begotten Son. I was dead, and You have brought me to life. I was sick, and You have given me medicine, and not only the medicine of the Blood which You gave for the diseased human race in the person of Your Son, but also a medicine against a secret infirmity that I knew not of, in this precept that, in no way, can I judge any rational creature, and particularly Your servants, upon whom oftentimes I, as one blind and sick with this infirmity, passed judgment under the pretext of Your honor and the salvation of souls. Wherefore, I thank You, Supreme and Eternal Good, that, in the manifesting of Your truth and the deceitfulness of the Devil, and our own passions, You have made me know my infirmity. Wherefore I beseech You, through grace and mercy, that, from today henceforward, I may never again wander from the path of Your doctrine, given by Your goodness to me and to whoever wishes to follow it, because without You is nothing done. To You, then, Eternal Father, do I have recourse and flee, and I do not beseech You for myself alone, Father, but for the whole world,

and particularly for the mystical body of the holy Church, that this truth given to me, miserable one, by You, Eternal Truth, may shine in Your ministers; and also I beseech You especially for all those whom You have given me, and whom You have made one thing with me, and whom I love with a particular love, because they will be my refreshment to the glory and praise of Your Name, when I see them running on this sweet and straight road, pure, and dead to their own will and opinion, and without any passing judgment on their neighbor, or causing him any scandal or murmuring. And I pray You, Sweetest Love, that not one of them may be taken from me by the hand of the infernal Devil, so that at last they may arrive at You, their End, Eternal Father.

“Also I make another petition to You for my two fathers, the supports whom You have placed on the earth to guard and instruct me, miserable infirm one, from the beginning of my conversion until now, that You unite them, and of two bodies make one soul, and that they attend to nothing else than to complete in themselves, and in the mysteries that You have placed in their

hands, the glory and praise of Your Name, and the salvation of souls, and that I, an unworthy and miserable slave, and no daughter, may behave to them with due reverence and holy fear, for love of You, in a way that will be to Your honor, and their peace and quiet, and to the edification of the neighbor. I now know for certain, Eternal Truth, that You will not despise the desire of the petitions that I have made to You, because I know, from seeing what it has pleased You to manifest, and still more from proof, that You are the Acceptor of holy desires. I, Your unworthy servant, will strive, according as You will give me grace, to observe Your commandments and Your doctrine. Now, O Eternal Father, I remember a word which you said to me in speaking of the ministers of the holy Church, to the effect that You would speak to me more distinctly, in some other place, of the sins which they commit today; wherefore if it should please Your goodness to tell me anything of this matter, I will gladly hear it, so as to have material for increasing my grief, compassion, and anxious desire for their salvation; for I remember that You said, that, on account of the endurance and

tears, the grief, and sweat and prayers of Your servants, You would reform the holy Church, and comfort her with good and holy pastors. I ask You this in order that these sentiments may increase in me.”

How God renders this soul attentive to prayer, replying to one of the above-mentioned petitions.

Then the Eternal God, turning the eye of His mercy upon this soul, not despising her desire, but granting her requests, proceeded to satisfy the last petition, which she had made concerning His promise, saying, “Oh! best beloved and dearest daughter, I will fulfill your desire in this request, in order that, on your side, you may not sin through ignorance or negligence; for a fault of yours would be more serious and worthy of graver reproof now than before, because you have learnt more of My truth; wherefore apply yourself attentively to pray for all rational creatures, for the mystical body of the holy Church, and for those friends whom I have given you, whom you love with particular love, and be careful not to be negligent in giving them the benefit of your prayers, and

the example of your life, and the teaching of your words, reproofing vice and encouraging virtue according to your power.

“Concerning the supports which I have given you, of whom you spoke to Me, know that you are, in truth, a means by which they may each receive, according to their needs and fitness. And as I, your Creator, grant you the opportunity, for without Me you can do nothing, I will fulfill your desires, but do not you fail, or they either, in your hope in Me. My Providence will never fail you, and every man, if he be humble, shall receive that which he is fit to receive; and every minister, that which I have given him to administer, each in his own way, according to what he has received and will receive from My goodness.”

To be continued:



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