

MANCIPIA

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THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



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TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:

IS THE CHURCH A “HARLOT”?



Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

Archbishop of Bologna and a scholar of no minor accomplishment.

There seems to be no end to the tonnage of collective guilt heaped upon the Church herself for the crimes (real and supposed) of her children. Not only do secular journalists, entertainers, and social commentators of all sorts engage in this fashionable slander, but Catholic notables gladly join their voices to the raucous chorus. The Cardinal’s small study — a redacted lecture — is one response to this plethora of craven protestations of the Church’s “guilt.”

Oft times, the “experts” who urge churchmen to these corporate *mea culpas* make the claim that the Church is at the same time a saint and a sinner. Some of them boldly assert, with the effect of arresting all objections, that “the Church Fathers” lend their weight to the opinion by calling the Church “a chaste whore.” (Cardinal Biffi cites a passage from the arch-villain Hans Küng doing just that.) Cowed into submission by the cult of experts, the ill-informed go with the flow and call the Church dirty names.

Enter Biffi. He shows that *it can in no way be said* that “the Fathers” generally used this term. It is of very rare coinage. In fact, only one father used it: Saint Ambrose. Conveniently, Cardinal Biffi is not only a native of Milan — the episcopal see of the Honey-Tongued Doctor — but he is also an Ambrosian scholar; he was a principal collaborator in the publication of the *Opera Omnia di S. Ambrogio*.

Fully qualified to get to the heart of Saint Ambrose’s use of this poetic oxymoron, His Eminence puts the phrase in its

Alright, this is a very provocative title, I admit, but the name of the book about which I here write is even more so: *Casta Meretrix*, “*The Chaste Whore*.” *An Essay on the Ecclesiology of St. Ambrose*. This long and jarring appellation bedecks a Spartan little volume, sadly out of print, by Cardinal Giacomo Biffi, formerly the

On the cover: IHM School’s Professor C. Brad Grinstead addressing the audience at our 12th annual conference in Nashua, NH.

context: “Ambrose did, in fact, use the expression in question once and once only, in his meditation on Rahab, the woman of Jericho who is mentioned in the book of Joshua” (p. 17).

So, we are speaking in terms of typology; and in typology (as the Cardinal points out), we must not be too eager to transpose all the qualities of the type to its antitype. Otherwise, Our Lord would bear the moral failings of Solomon, David, Abraham, and all the other Old Testament types of the Messias; while the Immaculate Virgin would carry guilt akin to that of Eve’s transgression. These are unthinkable conclusions.

Here is Saint Ambrose’s context for the “chaste whore” comment. To understand this passage, it is important to be familiar with the biblical passage in question, Josue 2, which would not take too long to read:

“Rahab — who as a *type* was a prostitute, but as a *mystery* is the Church — showed in her blood the future sign of Universal Salvation amid the world’s carnage; she does not refuse to unite herself with numerous fugitives, and is all the more chaste in the extent to which she is closely joined to the greater number of them; she is the immaculate virgin, without a wrinkle, uncontaminated in her modesty, plebeian in her love, a chaste whore, a barren widow, a fecund virgin” (*In Lucam* 3:23).

In his use of Old Testament typology, Saint Ambrose has made use of the “accommodating” character of the prostitute — she gladly receives all comers — but he has stripped it of its sexual impurity and made it “chaste.” In fact, he calls the Church “immaculate,” something incompatible with the moral character of an actual harlot.

Here, I quote at some length from the book, for the typology of Rahab

interests us for more than one reason (the **bold emphasis** is mine):

Ambrose says that she “as a type was a prostitute but, as a mystery, is the Church, united now to the Gentiles by the sharing of the sacraments.” . . .



Saint Ambrose

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CONVENT CORNER

CONSIDERATION



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

Consideration is the heart of charity.” This can be applied to how we treat our fellow man and also how we treat the mysteries that God has revealed to us. Another name for consideration in this case is meditation. Here is what Our Blessed Mother says about consideration: “Whoever shall recite my Rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consider-

ation of its sacred mysteries, shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice; he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just, he shall remain in the grace of God and become worthy of eternal life.” Saint Louis Marie says that praying the Rosary without meditating on the mysteries is like having a body without a soul. In this issue I want to share with you some hints about how to make meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary a delight so that you can receive all of the tremendous benefits of praying your daily Rosary properly.

Hopefully you have been praying your Rosary every day as Our Lady asked at Fatima, so you have already been announcing the mysteries. Perhaps you have been using some pamphlet to help you think about the mysteries. A few of you may even have spent a little extra time reading a more sizable book on the mysteries, which may have included the passages from holy Scripture, verbal pictures of the scenes, meditations on some aspect of the mysteries, poems, or various related quotes from holy Scripture. In doing this you have been filling up your mind and heart with a reservoir of good thoughts and affections to draw from whenever you pray the Rosary. Some

form of collecting good thoughts about the mysteries is essential for each person who wishes to benefit from the Rosary. You cannot consider or meditate upon something of which you know next to nothing. In fact, if you try to pray the Rosary and find your mind on other subjects, it may very well be that you have not put enough good thoughts on the mysteries into your memory so that your poor mind is then meditating on something else which you know and love better than these mysteries.

One of the most delightful ways to meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary is to relate each mystery to some other thought. This could be the liturgical feasts of the year, or one’s personal situation, or the virtues of the saint for the day, or even to take two Rosary mysteries and to think about them simultaneously—in short, to take two thoughts and to have them perform a mental ballet which ends up bringing out the hidden beauties of the mystery. For example, the month of October is dedicated to the holy Rosary and to the holy angels. If during each of the mysteries you try to discover how the holy angels are involved or if there is any relationship at all between the Rosary mysteries and the holy angels, you will be very surprised at the beautiful lights and graces you will obtain. By the way, there are angels in every mystery of the Rosary. In seven mysteries they are actually visible! But consider the holy angels and the Presentation where the angels are not visible. Do you have any thoughts on this? Ask yourself, for example, is there any relationship between what the angels are doing in the temple around Our Blessed Lord and what they are doing simultaneously in heaven? Also, each person in the temple has his own guardian angel. As the Holy Family entered, what kind of inspirations were they giving to their charges? Don’t you find this a delightful method to think about the mystery of the Presentation?

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The Blueberry Jammers performing at the Blueberry Fiddle Festival.



IHM Brigade at the 13th annual Auriesville Pilgrimage for Restoration.

PREFECT'S COLUMN



Tertiary* Br. John Marie Vianney

A PARENTAL BLESSING IN A CHRISTIAN HOME

BY AN ANONYMOUS BENEDICTINE MONK

I would like to encourage all of our readers and, especially, our Third Order members to institute the following salutary practice in their own homes. Br. John Marie Vianney, M.I.C.M., Tert.

Can anything in a Christian family equal in beauty the sight of children who, from the youngest to the oldest, present themselves each

night with reverence before their father and mother to receive their blessing before retiring to rest? This touching ceremony ennobles a family and consecrates authority; natural affection ignites a spark of the love of God, and the domestic hearth becomes a threshold of Heaven! God grant that this pious custom may be ever maintained where it already exists, and be adopted where, either through neglect, or the chilling effect of a Protestant atmosphere, it has hitherto not been practiced!

A blessing imparted in the name of God is more than a good wish: it is also a prayer. Such a solemn invocation of the authority of God, made by a parent for his children, cannot fail to be efficacious. The Holy Ghost Himself makes Ecclesiasticus say: "The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children" (ch. 3:11).

The Sign of the Cross was still unknown in the time of the Patriarchs.

The day had not yet dawned when the God-Man, by dying the ignominious death on the Cross, was thereby to change that sign of foolishness into one in which the great St. Paul, and all Christians after him, were to glory. The Patriarchs of old, in blessing their children, extended their hands over their heads. With such a rite did Abraham bless Isaac, and Isaac his son Jacob, and Jacob his twelve sons. Under the Old Law, only the fathers had seemingly the privilege of giving their blessing to their children; but under the New Law — ever since, through Mary, women have been raised to a loftier condition; and ever since one of their sex, "blessed among all women" (Luke 1:28), was found worthy to become the Mother of God, the right of blessing their children has been conferred also upon mothers.

The history of parental blessings presents many edifying examples for our admiration and imitation. The fathers and mothers of the martyrs used to give their blessings to their sons and daughters as they lay in chains in their prisons; and these blessings filled them with a renewed courage to suffer more for Christ.

* Third Orders, whose members are called "tertiaries," are associations of the faithful established by religious orders. Most M.I.C.M. tertiaries are lay folk.

In the history of the Fathers of the Church, we read that the saintly Macrina daily blessed her grandsons: one lived to become the great St. Basil, and the other, St. Gregory of Nyssa. Nonna, the mother of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, also blessed her son; and from a child she consecrated him to Jesus Christ, by placing his little hands on the sacred scriptures.

St. Louis, King of France, when about to die on the African coast, addressed the following words to his son, who stood by his deathbed:

"My dear son, I give you all the blessings which a good father can give to his son."

The young John Gerson, who in later-life became the Chancellor of the University of Paris, daily headed his eleven brothers and sisters to receive the blessing of their father and mother.

St. Francis of Sales reverently knelt every night at the feet of his parents to receive their blessing; until the day, when, after he had received the episcopal consecration, these

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FOUNDERS' COLUMN



Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

THE WISDOM OF THE SAINTS

FROM CHAPTER ONE OF *PHILOSOPHIA PERENNIS*

Wisdom is twofold to us men. There is a supernatural wisdom which can only come from God, and a natural wisdom, one that could be achieved by the good use of our minds. We should all try to acquire these two types of wisdom.

Supernatural wisdom is contained in Holy Scripture and in the traditional teachings of the Church. All of Holy Scripture may be considered as a book about wisdom, because all of its seventy-two books talk more about wisdom than any other subject. Moses pointed to the Scriptures and said to the people of Israel: “This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations” (Deut. 4:6). So the people of Israel received a wisdom that can only come from God, and can only be received through a supernatural act of Faith. This is supernatural wisdom; and while our present course is primarily about philosophy or natural wisdom, we must first give the honor of place to the wisdom revealed by God.

There are seven books in the Old Testament; namely, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, called in a very special way Books of Wisdom in order to distinguish them from other books that specialize in sacred history or in prophecy. And in the New

Testament, there are twenty-one books called doctrinal or wisdom books. They are the fourteen epistles of St. Paul and the seven epistles by other Apostles. It would, then, be true to say that while the seventy-two books of the Bible are about wisdom, there are twenty-eight of them that major in it.

We will examine a few lines from one of these doctrinal books, namely, the Epistle of St. James. In his capacity as first Bishop of Jerusalem and apostle to the Jews, St. James addressed

his famous epistle to the Jews in the Diaspora (i.e. those Jews who left Palestine and spread throughout the world). In this inspired epistle we get a good taste of Divine Wisdom. This is how the Epistle of James begins:

Moses pointed to the Scriptures and said to the people of Israel: “This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations” [Deut. 4:6].

“James the servant of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing. But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly” (James 1:1-5).

St. James was writing to the Jews in the Diaspora, but the Holy Ghost, who is the principal author of the epistle, was teaching, through this message to the Jews, all generations everywhere. So let us pretend to be the Jews of the Diaspora and appropriate the epistle as if it were addressed to us.

It is not easy to rejoice when you get trials. But St. James, or rather, the Holy Ghost, is telling us that if we are truly Christians and truly have the Faith, we should be happy when God sends us trials. And trials seem to be a necessary adjunct of having the Faith. This is especially true in times when one has to fight for the Faith. One should count it all joy because, whether we like it or not, that is part of true wisdom.

St. James also recommends patience. “To fight for the Faith in our time, you need the patience of Job,” was the favorite saying of a wise man of this century. If we receive our trials with joy, we will have patience, and patience hath a perfect work (James 1:4). Patience is the virtue of perfection. Every good artist knows that to be true. It is supremely true in that greatest of all arts: the art of becoming a saint.

The inspired author of the epistle goes on to say: But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God (James 1:5). Evidently St. James did not believe that too many people want wisdom. Yet all who read this Introduction presumably want wisdom, otherwise (we think), it would go unread. So let the reader pay good attention to the Scripture, and seek wisdom prayerfully of God. This book cannot give anyone wisdom; however, if the reader prays enough, our course could be God’s tool in showing where and how to seek for it. God is generous: He giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not (James 1:5). All He asks is that we ask for it — and seek earnestly.

Wisdom is the most perfect knowledge of the most important truths in the right order of emphasis, accompanied by a total, permanent disposition to live accordingly.

“To fight for the Faith in our time, you need the patience of Job,” was the favorite saying of a wise man of this century.

KELLY FORUM



Mr. Brian Kelly

FOR MY NAME'S SAKE

In the news recently (June 16) there was a bite about Elian Gonzales, the Cuban boy who was at the center of an international custody battle eight years ago. He was eight years old when the boat in which he and his mother were escaping from Cuba sank off the Florida coast. The mother drowned but Elian survived. He was denied the asylum that his relatives in

the United States sought in order to keep him here, and he was deported back to Cuba at the behest of his father. Now sixteen, he recently joined the Young Communist Union along with a supposed 18,000 other teenagers, a victimized pawn for Marxist propaganda. Having read this, I prayed for, and to, his mother, who, along with thousands of other Cubans, thought that sailing for freedom in a makeshift dinghy across ninety miles of open sea was worth the risk.

I also thought of the heroic poet, Armando Valladares, about whom I had read many years ago in *Readers Digest*. The article was written by Sheldon Kelly and titled "The Prisoner Castro Couldn't Break." It was a story not only of a man's valiant faith and incredible endurance, but also of a woman, Armando's wife Marta, and her agonizing patience and her fidelity to the man she loved.

As Armando prayed he began to turn his prayers into poetry, writing lines extolling the virtues, especially faith and hope. He would write on anything that would take ink . . .

Armando Valladares' troubles began in 1960 after Castro had ceased rattling his rosary beads and wearing the mask of some kind-hearted modern Robin Hood. The impostor had been gradually manifesting his real political colors, blood red, Communist to the core. As a postal bank inspector, our hero was ordered by some cadres of the revolutionary

new government to replace the nameplate on his desk with another, which read: "If Fidel is a communist, then put me on the list. He's got the right idea." When Armando refused, it was duly noted. Then, on Christmas Day of that year, the dictator decreed, in conformance with the party line, that religious worship was "counter-revolutionary." Armando disagreed — so much so, that he decided to defy the insane edict and the spying informers, and go to church to pray. It was the feast of

La Navidad de Nuestro Salvador and the church was nearly empty.

Three days later, in the middle of the night, the Valladares home was invaded by police. One of them put a machine gun to the young man's head pressing it into a pillow as he lay in bed. Then they ransacked the place, terrorizing Armando's parents as they searched for anti-government material. The young postal inspector had none. That didn't matter; he was arrested as potentially dangerous. At a mock trial on January 15, 1961, Armando was sentenced to thirty years in the notorious Isla de Pinos prison for "offenses against state authorities." He was allowed no visitors, no mail, and often deprived of

his scanty ration of boiled oats or corn mush. Too, there was a daily ritual of beatings. Such was the lot of anyone the officials considered a *plantado*, one who refused "rehabilitation."

One day a very devout fourteen-year-old schoolgirl came to the prison to visit her father, also jailed for political reasons. She was impressed with the handsome *plantado* who, despite his suffering, spoke of *esperanza* to other cellmates unjustly detained. This was Marta Lopez, the future Señora Valladares. Sometime later, when she heard that Armando had attempted an escape and been caught, her heart went out to him. She prayed for his safety. And, she prayed that they would meet again.

In punishment for his run, our hero was thrown naked into solitary without any sanitation. Rats, infesting the little dungeon, gnawed at his fingers and chewed away the tips of them. An ankle that he had broken during his brief escape was left untreated. It was black and swollen. Sores covered his body. This but scarcely describes the emaciated condition of the man whom the guards returned to the common prison on December 25, 1961. "Give me strength, O Lord," he prayed, "on this day of your blessed birth."

As Armando prayed he began to turn his prayers into poetry, writing lines extolling the virtues, especially faith and hope. He would write on anything that would take ink or lead, be it tissue or cigarette paper. Some of his poems were even illustrated — these he managed to send to Señora Lopez by way of an underground postal system, which was run by anti-Castro inmates and a few sympathetic guards. The poet had become an inspiration and a leader to the other inmates.

If they could not break him with physical torments, they would try stroboscopic brain-washing techniques and drugs. Nothing worked.

Marta was able to visit Armando only six times when, in October 1964, he proposed marriage to her: "You are with me always, sustaining life." She consented, upon her father's blessing.

The example of Valladares and his encouraging influence on the other prisoners began to disturb the authorities so much that they tried a different tactic to silence him. No, they did not want to just kill him — for that would make a martyr out of him in the eyes of the other inmates — no, they would sell him his freedom. All that he had to do to buy it was renounce the Catholic Faith. His response to that was unhesitatingly crisp — "Never!" This holy spunk won him another transfer, this time to *La Cabaña*, a remote tropical gulag otherwise known as the "Widow Maker." A hell-hole made to house thirty inmates, Valladares shared this rancid dungeon with 350 others. The prisoners slept on pallets in shifts. Overflowing toilet buckets drew flies and mosquitoes; leeches dropped from walls; cockroaches shared their meager rations; and rats had the run of the place. Outside the barred windows was the *paredon*, the bloodstained wall of the firing squad.

Communist strategy in whatever country they take over is to use Catholic holy days for their blitzkrieg purges or to enact some oppressive new measure. On Christmas Day, 1967, officials ordered all *plantados* in all prisons to take off their yellow fatigues and put on the blue uniform of the "rehabilitated." Nine hundred refused. (Of the approximately 80,000 political prisoners incarcerated since 1959 in Castro's gulags 70,000 "agreed" to participate in the Communist "re-education" program rather than undergo the "or else.")

By now, Valladares' reputation had become legend. He was transferred again, this time to a remote re-education outpost called *Boniato*. If they could not break him with physical torments, they would try stroboscopic brainwashing techniques and drugs. Nothing worked. He was returned to *La Cabaña*.

In their determination to undo the obstinate poet, officials



Armando and Marta Valladares

decided to try a completely different tactic — accommodation. They moved him back to *La Cabaña* and gave him special privileges; they even allowed Marta to visit. When he asked if he and his fiancé could marry, permission was granted. A civil ceremony was performed in the bloodstained courtyard.

Now his enemies had a wedge. Surely, they thought, he would wear blue if he wanted to ever see his wife again. When they asked, *el plantado* answered, "Never!" He was immediately beaten and returned to *Boniato* and put in a special cell with windows sealed up with iron sheets. The beatings were more savage: he was poked with bayonets and his scalp was slit open with a blow, probably from a rifle butt. He woke up soaked in blood. It was February 1970.

Back again at *La Cabaña*, he somehow continued to write letters, prayers, and illustrated poems. The theme was always *esperanza*. Then, the guards found his pens and pencils.

*They do not want me to write
They took away the pens
the pencils,
but I still have life's ink,
my own blood
and with it I can write poems*

At some point, Armando convinced Marta, for her own safety, to immigrate to Miami. Four years passed by. One day, in 1974, all the *plantados* at *La Cabaña* who refused to change into blue — forty-four of them — were thrown into a dungeon where they were to be starved into submission. On account of this hellish treatment the poet was stricken with a nervous disease and his legs paralyzed in atrophy. On the forty-sixth day of this slow death, they ended the torture and pulled the survivors out. Valladares' naked and emaciated body was dragged in front of the other prisoners as a warning.

It was a miracle that he lived. These verses describing the tortures were smuggled out to Marta:

*The prisoners were taken out
one by one,
kicked and shoved by rifle butts
beaten like animals . . .
Everything was done with perfect order
The dead were perfectly murdered
The wounded perfectly wounded
The heads perfectly broken.*

There were more tortures to come. In January, 1977, Armando was relocated to a new maximum security "detention." He was again put in solitary in a sealed room; the beatings continued; his rations reduced. But he would not die. Nor would he despair. Nor would he hate. God had another plan for Armando, and for his wife.

A letter from Marta with incredible information made its

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TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE: IS THE CHURCH A “HARLOT”?

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The “typical” use of Rahab — a contradictory character, to whom was attributed both an unworthy profession and a praiseworthy and providential action — was already a classic in Christian literature.

Matthew’s Gospel has recalled her in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5). The Letter to the Hebrews had featured her as an example of the faith which saves (Hebrews 11:31). St. James, concerned with other aspects of theology, had emphasized her justification obtained through works, *i.e.*, through the good deed that she did for the Hebrew scouts (James 2:25). Clement of Rome, almost as though trying to synthesize and reconcile the two texts, had written, “Through her faith and her hospitality, Rahab the prostitute was saved” (*I ad Corinthios* 12:1).

After Clement, who dwells a long time on the episode of Joshua 2:1-21, reading it in the light of the Redemption worked by Christ (cf. *I ad Corinthios* 12:1-8), a definite ecclesiological interpretation of the figure of Rahab is clearly delineated — from Justin to Irenaeus, to Origen, to Cyprian. **Indeed, it is through reflection upon the “house of the prostitute” — the only house in Jericho which preserved its occupants from death**

— that the famous principle emerged of *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*.

“No one could be deceived in this regard,” writes Origen, “no one could be mistaken; outside of the house, that is to say outside of the Church, there is no salvation” (*hom. in Josue* 3:4).

Cyprian in turn writes, “Do you think that you can live if you detach yourself from the Church, building yourself other houses and different dwelling places, when Rahab, prototype of the Church, was told

that anyone who left the door of her house would be guilty?” (*De unitate ecclesiae* 8).

[In a footnote, His Eminence adds:] “In Cyprian, the principle of ‘*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*’ is linked to the truth of the maternity of the Church: ‘no one can have God for a father who does not have the Church for a mother’ (*De unitate ecclesiae* 6) [p. 17-18]. There’s that dogma again!

“In Cyprian, the principle of ‘*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*’ is linked to the truth of the maternity of the Church: ‘no one can have God for a father who does not have the Church for a mother.’”

In the book’s development, Cardinal Biffi explores the ecclesiology of Saint Ambrose by citing from many of that father’s works. The net result is to prove with scholarly agility that the doctor from Milan never intended, and could not have considered without contempt, the insult that modern progressivists regularly direct toward the Church.

His Eminence does, with the help of Saint Ambrose, wrestle with the great mystery of a sinless Church made up of sinful members, but space does not allow me to pursue this investigation. Suffice it to say that he handles the issue with aplomb. Whatever the crimes of her children may be, the Church herself remains the immaculate bride of Christ.

So, far from being a protestation of the Church’s guilt, the phrase “chaste whore” emphasizes the Church’s immaculate nature as well as her necessity for salvation.

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.

Whatever the crimes of her children may be, the Church herself remains the immaculate bride of Christ.

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KELLY FORUM

FOR MY NAME'S SAKE

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way through the underground post. Armando's cell writings had been published in the United States. The poem about one massacre at the *Boniato* outpost was being quoted worldwide. For our hero, this was victory. He redoubled his literary productions. In 1979, in France, his poetic accounts were published under the title, *Prisoner of Castro*.

News of this, no doubt, prompted Castro to order Valladares' transfer to the Havana Orthopedic Hospital. After enduring eighteen years of the worst kinds of abuse, the forty-one-year-old poet began receiving medical treatment for a host of consequent ailments. Afterwards, they would still not release him. In fact, when news came that he had received a Freedom Prize from an international writers' organization and that a second book, *The Heart with Which I Live*, had been published, he was returned to solitary confinement and submitted to more torture, more brainwashing tactics. Once he was beaten unconscious for refusing to pose for a pro-Castro propaganda film.

The following words were written on blank prescription paper, using a sliver of wood and mercurochrome as ink:

"For months I have been living on a concrete slab 2 ½ feet wide by 6 feet long . . . but the narrower my physical space, the broader my spiritual horizons. The greater the repression

and torture, the firmer and more resistant my internal framework. My situation is difficult, but I feel and am a free man."

Marta never ceased in her efforts to have Armando freed. She used every diplomatic channel and every human rights organization she could to apply pressure on Fidel Castro. Forty-seven U.S. senators signed a letter urging the dictator to release Valladares and all other *plantados*. France's President Mitterand also protested. Finally, by mid-1982, after eight thousand days of torment, the poet was sent back to the hospital. After intense treatment he was able to stand on his feet and shuffle along. Then, he was perfunctorily taken to a police station and given his exit papers: he was ordered to leave the country. The police even gave him a ride to the airport where he was put on a plane to Madrid. Castro could wash his hands now, for one prisoner that is. Meanwhile Marta, who was staying in France, waited for him at the final destination, the Paris airport. On October 22 the lovers were reunited in a guarded room at the terminal. "We have done it, Armando, my darling," cried Marta, "our prayers have been answered." Husband and wife were married sacramentally at St. Keiran's Catholic Church in Miami on December 18.

"The narrower my physical space, the broader my spiritual horizons.... My situation is difficult, but I feel and am a free man."

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Will you help us? All *Patrons* receive: 1) a framed, autographed picture of the students and faculty of Immaculate Heart of Mary School; 2) an annual subscription to the school newspaper, *The Queen's Quarterly*; 3) a remembrance in certain special daily prayers; and 4) our eternal gratitude!

Fill out the reply form on page 15 or call Sister Maria Philomena at (603) 239-6495 to sign up or for more information.

*I will come to you . . .
The bayonets in the horizon
beyond my back
will no longer matter
nor the hills
where the barbed wire flourishes
as if suspecting the joy
of our meeting.*

Valladares' memoirs, *Against All Hope*, details the horror of his twenty-two year incarceration. After reading this book, President Ronald Reagan appointed Valladares to serve as the US ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. As Head of the U.S. Delegation, he successfully brought Cuba before the Commission for its human rights violations. President Reagan would later confer on him the nation's highest civil honor, the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Currently, Valladares is President of the Valladares Project, an international non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of children. He is also Chairman of the Human Rights Foundation. He now lives in Miami.

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE CAN MAN'S WOMAN BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

It is said that behind every good man there is a good woman. Certainly, it is so in my case (the good woman part, that is), but also especially so in my father's life. Her maiden name was Regina Eva Sirois, and incredibly, like my father, her ancestry was traced up that Catholic vine through Canada and over to France where we find that she was also of the lineage of the family of St. Joan of Arc. She was all of four feet, nine inches tall (and I may be stretching that height), but her feet were well grounded in her dedication to fulfilling the vocation she had chosen in the sacrament of matrimony.

The mother of thirteen children, her life was one of constant toil (she would call it "service") in maintaining her household. I was number eleven of thirteen, so the stories I have of this woman's early years are recounted by my older siblings. It seems that their memories are not all pleasant, and — not being in their shoes — I cannot pass judgment on their feelings during those early years. My mother's pregnancies came early and often, and, shortly after the fifth or sixth child, she suffered a nervous breakdown; not the type that lands one in an institution, but the kind that arises out of stress and indefatigable work in the performance of one's duties. This crisis resulted in three of my older brothers being placed temporarily in a Catholic orphanage until her strength was restored. The situation finally resolved itself and the family was reunited, but my older siblings still carry mixed emotions on that dark episode in their life. Being the father of eleven children, I have witnessed much the same thing in my own household; that is, my dear wife experiencing these breakdowns over the years in her courageous performance of her vocation. In my mother's day, when Catholics accepted the children that God presented them, the understanding and support were greater than it is today. My mother's crisis must have been very severe for my father to have to have resorted to this drastic measure.

I would venture to say that not much has changed for Catholic mothers over the years — that is, those Catholic mothers who still accept all the children that

God sends them — and in fact, it has gotten even tougher. The world is against them; they are mocked in public for saying yes to life; and, what is worse, their own families ridicule their Catholic lifestyle. Add to this the fact that their husbands are out in a co-ed work force striving to support a large family and, upon returning home after a hard day, they find little time to spend with their children. It is no wonder that God-fearing mothers suffer this periodic breakdown. Today, the bulk



of the Catholic upbringing falls upon the women's shoulders and if they persevere in their duties their reward in heaven must surely be beyond imagination. I truly fear for myself and for other Catholic fathers who will be judged for not giving our all in sacrifice the way our wives do.

I find it amazing that most of the memories I have of my youth are of my father. This should not be so. All those meals prepared, all those band-aids applied, all those comforting hugs, all those interventions on my behalf with my father when I was in trouble, all the sewing and patching of torn clothes — were not these the deeds of my mother — times thirteen? I should have been more attentive to her loving personality. Sadly, in fact, I really didn't come to know my mother as a grateful son until after I had left home and started a family of my own. I came to know her through my wife — by watching my wife preparing those meals (and in our early years it was a marvel to see what she could produce with the ingredients I provid-

All those meals prepared, all those band-aids applied, all those comforting hugs, all those interventions on my behalf, all the sewing and patching of torn clothes — were not these the deeds of my mother?

ed), by watching her curing those hurts, giving comforting hugs, intervening with me on our children's behalf, sewing the clothes and tending the garden: yes, these are the loving deeds of my wife as well as my mother. I guess I always took my mother for granted – sort of a wallflower silently fixed in the background – always there, but never truly appreciated. Sad to say, the fondest memories I have of my mother were during her final illness.

She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease some time in her eighties and silently drifted away into that strange and

I always took my mother for granted – sort of a wallflower silently fixed in the background – always there, but never truly appreciated. Sad to say, the fondest memories I have of my mother were during her final illness.

lonely world. Sometime before that, her oldest son, my brother Robert, had died of the same disease and Mom suffered so much watching him fade away. It was very sad to see this valiant woman slowly slipping into that same void. As the cell lights of her brain grew dim, she would struggle to recall what she had just said, to remember to whom she was talking, to recognize even her own children or her surroundings. After several years of this debilitating disease she quietly faded away into her own world and one would think that she had lost all powers to communicate.

She would just sit in her chair and constantly move her hands in a very peculiar motion. This puzzled us all until my sister hit upon the idea of putting some cloth in her hands, which my mother promptly folded and set upon the table. She was folding our laundry again – times thirteen. It was during one of these visits that my wife, Judith, placed rosary beads in her hands and she proceeded to finger them slowly without skipping a bead.

You could see in my mother's eyes attempts to communicate and she struggled mightily to do so. During one of these struggles, she grabbed the arms of my sister, who had moved into the house to take care of her, and blurted "Thank You," then immediately slipped back to where she had been. A humorous instance occurred when my brother, who is known for his non-stop talking, visited her and proceeded to harangue her for a while. After he had left, my sister went to my mother and said, "Ma, that was Richard who just visited," whereupon she raised one hand, cupped it and uttered, "Yak, yak, yak," and faded away again. A dear moment came when my daughter visited my mother with her own newborn daughter whom she had named Regina in honor of my mother. We told her that her namesake grandchild was here to visit her and she imme-

diately stretched out her arms. We gave her the child and she held it as she must have held all her other babies – firmly, with great tenderness.

She died in her ninety-fourth year as she had lived, steadfast, enduring, and obscure. It is only now that I realize the tremendous love that she had for her children – a love she hid in the "little way" of her life. My mother, the wallflower, was truly a rose.

Email Russell LaPlume at rlp@catholicism.org.

Join the Team! Be a Queen's Tributer

Just as a family has to budget its monthly income in order to pay the bills, so do the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The advantages of giving monthly are many:

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Queen's Tribute donors receive all our mailings. More importantly, every month the traditional Latin Mass is offered for all our benefactors.

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The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

LOCAL NEWS:

TWELFTH ANNUAL SAINT BENEDICT CENTER CONFERENCE

There was an impressive turnout for both the Thursday Open House and the Conference in Nashua — better than expected, considering the cost of traveling today. Inspiring and very informative presentations by the thirteen speakers made the sacrifice well worth it.

Here at the monastery in Richmond, Dr. Maike Hickson, Joseph Topalian, and Third Order Prefect, Brother John Marie Vianney, M.I.C.M., Tert., gave inspiring talks on their respective topics. Mrs. Hickson, with her husband and their newborn, Isabella Maria, in the audience, whetted the listeners' appetites for good Catholic literature. Mr. Topalian provided a fascinating tour of his own eventful life, filled with adventure and challenge in the navy during World War II; in an eastern-rite seminary; and as a Catholic Armenian in America. The Tertiary Prefect spoke about the most holy and most intimate of all "unions," the holy "Communion" that is achieved by the Son of God and the members of His Mystical Body through the worthy reception of the Blessed Sacrament, which, the speaker stressed, ought to be our "daily Bread." Guests were served a delicious pork roast dinner afterwards.

The lineup of speakers for the three days in Nashua provided an impressive variety of expertise. Host Gary Potter challenged the theme of the Conference that *these days* are "the darkest of times" by highlighting *days not long gone past* where horrific crimes were committed against Catholics on account of their Faith. Gary's point was that the light of Faith shines more brilliantly and the charity of the just radiates more intensely when fueled by persecution.

All of the speakers, from a variety of angles, contributed magnificently to the theme of the Conference by demonstrating, either through examples in the lives of the martyrs or through instructive knowledge concerning the incorporation of Catholic principles in family and social life, that no matter how evil the age nothing can stop one from being a light in the darkness. The presentations, as can be seen from the titles of the Conference recordings that we are offering, cover a wide range of Catholic erudition, all of which can equip us to confront more powerfully the wiles of Satan, the grand architect of today's pervasive confusion.

Lastly, lest we imagine that evil can ever really triumph, or that suffering accepted in hope is not a means of perfect purification, Saint Paul was inspired to write these assuring words: "[W]e know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints" (Romans 8:28). May the Holy Ghost sear this divine truth into our hearts.



Phil Lawler speaking on the collapse of Catholic culture.



Part of our conference is wholesome entertainment, a hit with folks.



Dr. Maike Hickson spoke at the Open House on three Catholic novels.

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A PARENTAL BLESSING IN A CHRISTIAN HOME

continued from page 4

Christian parents knelt in their turn before their son, to receive his blessing.

The biographer of St. Jane Frances of Chantal, speaking about the manner in which she educated her children, proceeds thus: "Shortly after supper, this pious mother used to withdraw with her children to make them say their night prayers, of which a *De Profundis* for the soul of the late Baron, their father, formed a part that was never omitted. After a few moments devoted to the examination of conscience, she made them say aloud and all together the short prayer:

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum — Into thy hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23: 46) — after which she blessed each with Holy Water and the Sign of the Cross, and made them undress with modesty."

The writer of the life of Blessed Sir Thomas More makes the following remark: "In our country, children are wont to ask on their knees, at morning and at night, the blessing of their fathers and mothers. This is the common usage in England. But I must confess that when grown up, married, or raised to some high dignity in the Church or in the State, children generally give up this pious practice, or at least it is retained by but few." The more remarkable in this respect was the

During the whole of his father's lifetime, and even when he was holding the office of Chancellor of England, Sir Thomas never failed to come every night to ask him reverently for his blessing.

faithfulness of Sir Thomas himself. During the whole of his father's lifetime, and even when he was holding the office of Chancellor of England, Sir Thomas never failed to come every night to ask him reverently for his blessing.

In monasteries at night, at the hour of Compline, ere the monks are dismissed to their cells, the Abbot, who stands to his subjects as a true father, making the Sign of the Cross over them, pronounces the words: "May the Almighty and merciful God, Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost, bless and guard us." And in like manner, in the morning at the hour of Prime: "May the Lord bless us and defend us from all evil and lead us to eternal life."

This parental blessing instills into the hearts of children a greater and purer love for their parents. Their filial affection daily grows by this impressive rite, in which the parent stands before the eyes of his children as the representative of God, and as the minister of His Divine Blessing. He performs essentially an act of authority. This cross, which you have traced on the forehead of your children, O Fathers and Mothers! changes

their natural love for you into a more spiritual dutifulness, and helps to insure forever their respect and veneration for you.

Under the influence of your blessing, the child will also learn to treat his body with respect. May it not suggest, in a critical moment of temptation, that it would ill become this brow, which but this morning, or this night, was blessed with the Sign of the Cross, to have reason to blush under the silent, but scrutinizing look of a father or a mother, when the time for the next blessing has come round? The time of this blessing is also a most favorable time for acknowledgment of faults, for pardon, for solemn and serious advice; the blessing

The time of this blessing is also a most favorable time for acknowledgment of faults, for pardon, for solemn and serious advice.

should be withheld in case no signs of repentance are shown for some fault committed in the course of the day.

Finally, this blessing is not without its beneficial effects upon him who confers it, for it must needs make him better, more Christ-like, more holy. When a parent sees his children bowing down before him, it brings home to him the great fact that he, also, as well as the bishop of his diocese, or the priest of his parish, has in a certain sense the care of souls, and that he owes his family the good example of a lively and practical Faith, and that he must be to them the pattern of all Christian virtues; for it is written: "The just who walketh in his simplicity shall leave behind him blessed children" (Prov. 20:7).

Let, then, this blessing recover the place of honor it held in all Christian times! Fathers and Mothers! confer it in the simplicity of the rite of old, and of better days. When after night prayers, or before retiring to their rest, your children are come to you to wish you a good night, place for an instant your left hand upon their heads, and with the thumb of the right hand trace the Sign of the Cross upon each forehead, saying either silently, or aloud: "May God bless you, my child"; or, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It is the "Good-night" of the Christian, a good-night eminently religious, which brings to their minds the wholesome thought of eternity!

Perhaps you are not rich; it may be you have no great fortune to bequeath to your children; but what you have at least to bestow upon them is the inheritance of your blessing: and far more profitable than riches is eternal salvation.

Imprimatur +Michael Augustine, Archbishop of New York 1897

Email Brother John Marie Vianney at toprefect@catholicism.org.

THE ALTAR

BY FATHER THOMAS BUTLER FEENEY*

The altar looked from golden eyes
And wept with silent, slow surprise,
Wondering who could be to blame
That no priest came.

The candles, whispering softly, died;
The cruets wine and water dried;
Some quiet children, kneeling there,
Grown tired of waiting, tired of prayer,
Arose and, genuflecting, went
Into the dark, and were content.

Then drop by drop, the voided room
Fell dull and dreamless as a tomb.
On wings of wind a whimpering moan
Came up and kissed the altar stone;
And once, and once (it was not well),
A brown rat struck the silver bell.

So now from dry and sightless eyes
The altar gapes with no surprise
Through age on age by worlds and suns, —
Oh let us pray, forsaken ones,
For him or her who was to blame
That no priest came.

**The late Father Thomas Feeney was the brother of our founder, Father Leonard Feeney.*

Correction: The picture in last issue of the Mancipia was not Padre Pio's actual face but a mask. He's not incorrupt.



Brs. Louis Marie and Maximilian Maria professed final vows on Oct. 12.



All Saints Day party: St. Hubert trying to stump the panel.



IHM Brigade after walking 65 miles on the 2008 Auriesville Pilgrimage.



Most of Saint Joseph's Brigade at the 2008 Auriesville Pilgrimage.

CONVENT CORNER

CONSIDERATION

continued from page 3

What if you have a very pressing difficulty in your personal life, such as a test that you are about to take? If you take a minute, can you think of any of the mysteries that show Our Lord distressed over taking a test? How about the First Sorrowful mystery? Can you see that He would have had any of the same feelings and sentiments that you are going through right now? And how about the virtues that He then practiced? Perhaps you will feel inspired to ask Him to help you to do the same or even to give you the merits of His own virtues in your situation.

And now for the ballet of the mysteries themselves. The way to propel this ballet is by way of starting to ask the questions

who, what, where, why, when, and how as you mentally place two mysteries next to each other. You will be acting somewhat like a detective, and this activity on your part will assist you in paying attention during the Rosary. If you layer one set of mysteries over another, you can get a beautiful kaleidoscope of meditations. So, for example, you could be thinking about the Birth of Our Lord and the Crowning with Thorns at the same time. Perhaps you see His meekness come out more convincingly when you note that He has taken the trouble to show it as an infant and as an adult. (There was no room for Him in the inn.) Or perhaps you are remembering that He is indeed a King and it was first said in adoration, "Where is He who is born King of the Jews?" and thirty-three years later, "Hail, King of the Jews" in mockery.

So now do you share my enthusiasm for this method of Rosary meditation leading to contemplation?

If you find this method helpful, please share it with others, and by so doing you will be able to get the benefits of another promise of Our Lady: "All those who propagate the Holy Rosary will be aided by Me in their necessities." And if you get any special lights on the mysteries, I would be very interested in hearing about them!

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org.

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EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

Ex Cathedra: “There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved.” (Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.)

Ex Cathedra: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302.)

Ex Cathedra: “The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes, and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.” (Pope Eugene IV, the Bull *Cantate Domino*, 1441.)

CALENDAR NOTES:

- The Chair of Unity Octave is from the feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome (January 18) to that of the conversion of St. Paul (January 25). Please contact us if you would like the prayers.

OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

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Our congregation website:
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Our bookstore website:
www.store.catholicism.org

And our conference website:
www.SbcConference.com

Slaves of the
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The site is very easy to navigate, even if one has only basic computer experience. Check it out today and let us know what you think. The more familiar one gets with the new site the more easily one discovers the treasures awaiting each click of the mouse.

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