

# MANCIPIA

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THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



Sister Mary Bernadette, M.I.C.M.  
January 8, 1920 – December 16, 2011

# TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:



Br. Andre Marié, M.I.C.M., Prior

## TRADITIONALISM IS AN AFFIRMATION

One of the most important things for a person to have is an identity. This is why names are so important to us. Adam was given power to name things in the Garden of Eden, showing that he had dominion over the rest of creation, including Eve, whom he named. When a child finds out that a large, strange-looking

animal has a name, he finds comfort in the fact, knowing that if it has a name, and if Daddy can identify it, the thing must not be all that terrifying. It is *known*.

Traditional Catholics, or traditionalists, name themselves thus because of their embrace of the traditions of the Church. That they do so in the face of large-scale abandonment of those traditions by hierarchy, clergy, and faithful alike is why the name “Catholic” is not always adequate, though it should be. Beyond that very generic concept of what traditionalism is, there are manifold and disparate understandings of what exactly defines the identity of the traditionalist. Avoiding a rigid

dogmatism where the Church has given us no dogmatic definition — we must be willing to die for Catholic dogma, but not for our own opinions — I would like to consider what traditionalism is in its essence.

Contrast clarifies the mind, so I will begin with what traditionalism is *not*. Traditionalism is not a negation. It is not a denial. It is not a finger-pointing followed by a “you’re wrong!” There is a name for that ideology: Protestantism. Protestantism is not a content, but an anti-content. It is not an affirmation, but a negation.

Certainly, the Catholic must assent to the Church’s

condemnations as well as to her definitions, but a condemnation’s existence is contingent on two things: the truth that came first, and an error that denies the truth. In other words, a condemnation, though good and necessary, only arises because some villain (perhaps Satan himself) concocted a denial of God’s truth. But God’s truth came first.

The texts of the Council of Trent provide us with an illustration of this. Trent affirms Catholic truth in its decrees, which are comparatively lengthy texts that explain Catholic doctrine

in detail. At the end of those content-rich decrees, the Council then condemns various errors in its brief canons.

So, the short answer to the question concerning a traditionalist’s identity is that he is a Catholic who affirms the dogmatic truths, moral teachings, and liturgical traditions of the Church. This is *substantial* and *primary*. That he does so in the face of opposition, not only from the world, but from others calling themselves Catholic, is *secondary* and *accidental*. Let us not invert that order, lest we allow the enemy to dictate our identity to us.

A word about the quest for an identity: I believe it is a very modern thing, a product of the rootlessness of modern culture, which severs us from our traditions, our land, and our people. Modernity homogenizes us all, effectively uprooting local customs and cultures. The Catholic is a member of the universal Church, but he is not thereby a citizen of the universe. He is localized, and his encounter with the Faith is in the context of place, language, and custom. A Catholic from fourteenth-century France and his co-religionist from fourth-century Egypt possessed the same faith, morals, and religion (with priests, bishops, Mass, sacraments, etc.), but the variety of language, ritual, and custom was great.

That is as it should be. We receive the Faith locally. We live it in our families. We utter it in our own tongues. We practice it in *this* church building, with people from *this* community. (The Italian notion of *campanilismo*, “the spirit of the bell tower,” and the Spanish Carlist conception of *fueros*, “local rule,” are cultural and political expressions of this.) The living-out of the true Faith is what produces a Catholic culture, and that culture is what ought to impress itself on our young, forming their convictions, eliciting their actions, commanding their reactions. An identity — a genuine one, anyway — is forged in this organic fashion. We don’t put them on and take them off as an indecisive college student does his major. That is what the rootless, restless modern man does, and this is one cause of his insanity.

In our day, of course, the Faith is not being lived in places where it used to be. The Italian bell towers, that give those in their hearing a sense of home, still toll, but they often herald the offering of a bizarre liturgy, the preaching of a watered-down doctrine, and a religiosity of conformity to the standards of this world. So “the spirit of the bell tower” does not fully represent what it once did. The same is true elsewhere in the

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universal Church. Thus is it that traditionalists travel, sometimes great distances, for a traditional Mass, with the catechesis and culture that go with it.

But we can still do very much to live the Faith in our families and our communities. In doing so, we must resist the temptation to make traditionalism into an ideology, a reaction, or a negation of what other people do. Traditionalism is what we *are*, what we *know*, and what we *do*. Here, then, I will catalog some of the things traditionalists affirm, or ought to affirm:

- We affirm the Catholic *Credo* in all its integrity.
- We affirm that the Catholic Church is the one bride of Christ, and that its Faith and its religion are the only divinely revealed ways to believe in and serve the living God. Consequently, the Catholic Church is the only path to salvation.
- We affirm that divine truth is assailed by enemies of God's Church, and that Catholics must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).
- We affirm the supernatural constitution of the Church, the natural hierarchy of the family, and the rule of Christ the King in society. To what degree we can, we will work to preserve or restore these things in our own families and communities, for the the world, the flesh, and the devil are undermining this order established by God.
- We affirm that the Church's public worship of

God, her liturgy, has been handed down to us with great care by our fathers in the Faith. This has been done in a beautiful variety of rites. It is wrong to cast off these treasures of centuries of careful development under the protection of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, we will practice them, honor them, love them, and teach them to our children.

The authentic response to evil is a life of Christian virtue and holiness, which is none other than the faithful response to one's primary vocation (the baptismal call to sanctity), lived according to the mode of his "secondary vocation" (i.e., priesthood, religious life, marriage, the

single state in the world).

There is much that is dark and evil in life, but if we choose to allow ourselves to be consumed by it, then shame on us. Saint Paul notes that what we lost in Adam is far exceeded by what we gained in Christ (cf. Rom. 5:15ff). One need not have faith to see wickedness and despair; they are too evident to the senses. The real marvel is the amount of good that actually exists, and that does take faith to see: water regenerating sinners as God's children and heirs to Heaven, God Himself coming down on our altars in the appearances of bread and wine, the Gospel being preached to the poor.

And that Gospel itself, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is the "Good News": *good* because it comes from the good God, and *news*, because it needs to be told.

We have a treasure in the Church's traditional liturgy. We also have great commentaries on it, none better than Dom Guéranger's *Liturgical Year*. We also have holy scripture, the writings of the fathers and doctors, and great intellectual and artistic monuments of Catholic culture that were born of Christian societies. This we do have, plus God Himself, the angels, the saints, and a promise of future glory if we persevere! And let us not forget that we have Our Lady, the "Cause of All our Joy."

If, with all that, we need to go in search of an identity, or define it in purely negative terms against some other class of people, then we really have no clue what tradition is. ■

*Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.*



A traditional sung Requiem Mass was offered at Sister Mary Bernadette's funeral



## CONVENT CORNER



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,  
Prioress

### THE ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

All the world's a stage  
And all the men and women  
merely players:

They have their exits and  
their entrances;

And one man in his time  
plays many parts. . . .

**H**ave you ever known anyone who has actually been spotted by a Hollywood talent scout? More

than twenty-five years ago I met just such a special person. For the last quarter of a century I have lived under the same roof with her, watching her perform as my sister, then my mother, then my daughter. And what was it that brought us together so long ago? — Was it long ago?

Well, three-quarters of a century is even longer ago, and it was then that Sister Mary Bernadette came to Saint Benedict Center, only she wasn't called Sister Mary Bernadette back then. Drawn by the priestly zeal of Father Leonard Feeney, Mary Maluf, her husband, Fakhri, and their five little children built their lives around the vibrant center of Catholicism they had found in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

When the little oasis of Catholicism at Saint Benedict Center bore fruit in too many converts, the embarrassment and ire of the liberal hierarchy were aroused, and the cause of the death spiral in the Church and in the world's society was suddenly and painfully discovered. Salvation made the headlines all over the world, and for the first time it became clear that there was a cancer of sentimental theology that had already spread through the Mystical Body. The need of being a living member of this Mystical Body, the Catholic Church, for eternal life was not only forgotten but denied universally. As Saint Athanasius was "against the world," so too, ironically, were Father Feeney and the faithful Catholics at Saint Benedict Center against the entire hierarchy by believing and proclaiming that indeed no one at all is saved outside of the Catholic Church, nor

without personal submission to the pope. And this doctrinal battle brought on the birth of our crusade — Our Lady's crusade, I should say, Our Lady's holy war for the salvation of souls through the clear proclamation of all the truths of our holy Faith, especially the necessity of belonging to the Catholic Church if one hoped for salvation.

A firestorm of persecution from the benighted hierarchy drove the faithful and docile Catholics at the Center into the last redoubt. When even their means of livelihood and parochial sources for the sacraments were being taken away, they were forced to become either extremely selfish or extremely generous. Along with about a dozen other devoted couples, Mary and Fakhri decided to be extremely generous, and so, in 1949, Mary and Fakhri selflessly contributed to the spiritual munitions of the crusade by each making the ultimate sacrifice of the heart. They mutually decided to join those few heroic souls in history in sacrificing their married life by agreeing to live as brother and sister for the rest of their lives, and they became two of the first members of our Order, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

That was 1949, and God treasured that loving sacrifice through the "diabolical disorientation" that later erupted in the pandemic revolutions of the 60s and 70s, both in the Church and in the world.

Then, in 1987, I became convinced that God was calling me to His Mother's crusade and in it to give my entire self



Sister Mary Bernadette in 2009

through the vows of holy religion. At that time, Sister Mary Bernadette became my sister in religion. We prayed, did missionary work and household tasks, studied, and did our best to help each other grow in virtue, as sisters will do. Since Sister was in her sixties and I in my twenties, when we went out to do missionary work together, I enjoyed the excitement while she endured the martyrdom. When we opened our new house here in Richmond, New Hampshire, and started our school, she added to her tasks that of being the vice principal and a teacher. When our spiritual mother, Sister Marie Louise, died in 1996, Sister went from being my sister to being my mother in religion, and I took a more active role as a teacher. A few more years flew by and, in 2001, I was made the subprioress with all the duties of the

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mother superior but wisely without the title. As happens with an elderly parent and her daughter, the roles and titles are gradually exchanged, and I was eventually given the title of prioress. From that moment I began to grow in my appreciation of Sister as my daughter, and as I attempted to nurture the life of God in her, I became aware of the exquisite virtues that she had been growing in for so many decades. Betrayals, persecutions, physical ailments, and heroic sacrifices, had so matured our dear Sister Mary Bernadette that her entrance into “second childhood” was not merely a physical one but also a spiritual one: “Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of God.”

When Sister turned ninety, I asked her if it seemed as though she had been alive for a very long time. She assured me that time had flown by and that it felt very short indeed. Last fall, when she contracted pneumonia, it soon became evident that this would be her last illness. Two weeks before she died, as we cared for her ailing body, she expressed some of her discomfort. I reminded her that she had so very little time left to gain merit, and she responded with a very determined and loving nod.

During her last two weeks many visitors came to see Sister and enjoy her holy and inspiring company one last time. Among these visitors were her own five children who

brought her much joy. Many of the little children from our lay community also visited Sister with their parents.

She eagerly awaited Father Phillipson’s visits bringing Our Lord, and Our Lord’s visits to her heart in Holy Communion. When He came to her in the Blessed Sacrament on the morning of December 16, He insisted on remaining with her in His sacramental disguise for a remarkably long period of time. No amount of water or swallowing was sufficient to hasten His departure. Of course, He knew, although we didn’t, that it would be the very last time that He would visit her and lovingly unite Himself with her in sacramental Communion on earth. As she had prayed a few days before when she still had the use of her voice, I am sure she prayed again in her heart, “Jesus, make me love You more and more and more and more. . . .”

That evening she courteously waited for her children, all the

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Fakhri and Mary (Healy) Maluf, at the time of their wedding in 1943

## FOUNDERS' COLUMN



Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

### SAINT JEROME AND THE VULGATE BIBLE

**S**aint Jerome (c. 341-420) is both a father and a doctor of the Church; and he has, through the centuries, been a great light and inspiration to the whole world. We are convinced that we need him now more than ever and in a very special way, facing as we are the present crisis of faith, and the multitude of rampant heresies devastating the vineyard of the Lord.

The root cause of this crisis, according to a great leader in the Church, Cardinal Paul Taguchi of Tokyo, can be traced to false biblical studies. Let us give the exact words of the cardinal:

“The root causes of this new slant on sacred scripture studies are to be found among those that underlie all of the present doctrinal confusion. Firstly, there is the influence that liberal evolutionist rationalism has had on theological thought; secondly, the sway of ‘modern philosophy’ based on subjective premises, which has penetrated various areas of thought, even in the field of theology. Both of these have favored a gradual impoverishment of Christian life in general, even to the stage where a sense of faith and of the supernatural is entirely lost.”

In the face of this crisis of faith, which is generally admitted, we feel we must resort to the great Saint Jerome: we must raise him up for an example, and must seek him for intercession.

#### The Vulgate Bible

Saint Damasus commissioned our saint to do the great work of his life, to review and revise the different Latin versions of the Bible, comparing them with the existing ancient codices and the Greek Septuagint. It did not involve the translation of the entire Bible from the original languages in which it was revealed (namely Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic — sometimes called Chaldaic). There already existed versions in Latin of most books of Holy Scripture. We know that the saint was already versed in Greek and Latin. But in order to qualify for his assignment he had to achieve mastery of Hebrew and Aramaic. He describes for us in tragicomic terms the excruciating experience he underwent in trying to master those harsh, guttural, Oriental sounds, so strange and foreign to

the Western ear. He describes his experience in a letter to a friend:

“When my soul was on fire with bad thoughts, that I might subdue my flesh, I became a scholar to a monk who had been a Jew, to learn of him the Hebrew alphabet; and after I had most diligently studied the judicious rules of Quintilian, the flowing eloquence of Cicero — I inured myself to hissing and broken-winded words. What labor it cost me, what difficulties I went through, how often I despaired and left off, and how I began again to learn, but I myself can witness and those who lived with me. And I thank Our Lord, that I now gather sweet fruit from the bitter seed of those studies.”

We see from this letter that he started to learn Hebrew from a Jewish convert who was a monk with him in the desert. Later on, when he was in the Holy Land, he hired a Jewish scholar by the name of Bar Ananias who came to teach him by night, lest the Jews should know about it.

We know that most of the Old Testament was inspired in

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Saint Jerome, Father and Doctor of the Catholic Church



Hebrew, some books in Greek, and some parts in Aramaic. In the New Testament, Matthew was in Aramaic, and all the other books in Greek. That is why a mastery of these three languages was necessary for the work he was assigned to do by the pope.

It is by such labor that we now have the Vulgate (the name comes from the Latin word *vulgus* which means “the people, the great multitude, the public.” A good rendering for it in English would be to call it “the popular version” — not the vulgar!). The Vulgate version proved to be a great gift to the Church and to all succeeding generations, and will be so to the end of time.

The work, as we said, was commissioned by the great pope, Saint Damasus I. Another pope, Clement VIII, believed that the saint was divinely assisted in translating the Bible. And in our own century, Pope Benedict XV, on the occasion of the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of the saint’s death, proclaimed in 1920:

“The Church venerates in Jerome the greatest doctor given her by heaven for the interpretation of Holy Scriptures.”

Furthermore, the Holy Council of Trent had declared the Vulgate edition of the Bible to be authentic in these words:

“Moreover the same sacred and holy synod taking into consideration that no small benefit can accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which one of all the Latin editions of the sacred books that are in circulation is to be considered authentic, has decided and declares that the said old Vulgate edition, which has been approved by the Church itself through long usage for many centuries in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, be considered authentic, and that no one under any pretext whatsoever dare or presume to reject it.”

We now return to Bethlehem, the saint’s last abode.

Here he continued to labor in order to complete and perfect the great work of his life, the Holy Bible in Latin, together with commentaries on its different books. Besides the many qualifications with which Divine Providence fitted him for this work, his linguistic skills, his literary ability, and his tenacious scholarship, Jerome had the advantage of living and working in the land of the Bible, at the very place where its events occurred.

Somehow he and Bethlehem were mystically connected. By his great devotion and loyal defense of their various perfections, he entered into the intimacy of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the Holy Family, who had sanctified that site. Bethlehem, which means “house of bread,” was prophesied to be the birthplace of the Messiah, who called Himself the “Living Bread which has come down from heaven.” It was also where Saint Jerome last partook of that Bread. This same quiet little spot where the eternal God entered time, was the place where Saint Jerome entered eternity.

To the very end of his life our saint was never free from trials and persecutions. In 410, Rome, the Eternal City, was sacked by the Arian barbarian Alaric. The terror and slaughter produced crowds of refugees who fled to the East, even to Bethlehem. Of these pathetic masses the saint writes: “Who would have believed that the daughters of that mighty city would one day be wandering as servants and slaves on the shores of Egypt and Africa? That Bethlehem would daily receive noble Romans, distinguished ladies, brought up in wealth and now reduced to beggary? I cannot help them all, but I grieve and weep with them, and, completely given up to the duties which charity imposes on me, I have put aside my commentary on Ezechiel and almost all study. For today we must translate the words of the Scriptures into deeds, and instead of speaking saintly words we must act them.” ■

(Excerpts from Brother Francis’ article in *From the House-tops*, 1996, Volume 38)

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Mr. Brian Kelly

## OUR LADY'S MAGNIFICAT: HYMN OF THE INCARNATION

*Editor's Note: The following meditations are taken from a talk I prepared five years ago on Our Lady's Magnificat. That talk, which included only a fraction of the material prepared, became a ten-thousand-word essay that was published on our website in August 2007. What I decided to do for this Mancipia was condense the article into two parts for our*

*readers. Part I, brief meditations on the first seven verses of the Canticle, follows. Part II, thoughts on the remaining seven verses, will be in my column for the next issue.*

There are only four occasions when the Blessed Virgin Mary's words are recorded in holy scripture: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple, and the wedding at Cana.

On each of these four occasions, our Blessed Mother's words teach us magnificent things about God. This is especially true of the *Magnificat*, a canticle inspired by the Holy Ghost, and composed by Him through the mind of His immaculate spouse. It is a hymn of thanksgiving sung by Mary to her Maker who has looked with favor upon the humble state of His handmaid. The canticle stirred in Mary's heart as a response to the reverent greeting that she received from her cousin Elizabeth. "Whence is this to me," Elizabeth protested, "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43)

Our Lady's exquisite hymn of praise, personalized and more exalted as it was, echoes something of the theme of the canticle of Anna, the mother of the prophet Samuel, which begins: "My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord" (1 Kings 2:1). The *Exultavit* of Anna is called the *Magnificat* of the Old Testament. There are also a couple of similarities to the canticle of Moses and, as we shall see, to the Psalms of David.

The *Magnificat* bridges both testaments; it closes the old while it opens the new. It is the hymn of the Church, the Body of Christ, the New Israel. It is, after the Lord's Prayer, the most highly honored prayer of the sacred liturgy. Since the Middle Ages when it was chanted in the divine office at Vespers, religious communities would rise to sing it and the smoke of incense would waft from thuribles.

### *My soul doth magnify the Lord*

Mary loved the Lord her God with her whole soul (mind, heart, strength) and, therefore, she lets her soul speak in the first person. And what a soul is this! This was a spotless soul that had pleased God in its every act. She alone, of the race of man, fulfilled perfectly that first com-

mandment, which Our Lord insisted upon as fundamental in His answer to an inquiring scribe: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind and with thy whole strength" (Mark 12:30). Mary is the Mirror of Justice.

What is this magnification that her soul gives to the Lord God? First, it is a response to the praise she just received from her cousin. "You praise me, Elizabeth, but I magnify the Lord."

Mary's soul was full of grace from the moment of her conception and with every act of love she magnified God's likeness in her to a brighter and brighter degree — to such a degree that she magnified God more than all saints and angels put together. She made God larger, not intrinsically in His nature of course — for God is an infinite Spirit — but by magnifying His divinity extrinsically, by the extension of His own divine activity within her soul. One of the Marian doctors said that Mary magnified her Son more in receiving Him in Holy Communion than in bearing Him in her womb!

### *And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior*

Our Lady distinguishes here her spirit from her soul. Her will, that is, her *spirit*, rejoices in Him whom her soul, that is, her *intellect*, magnifies. "May the soul of Mary be in each one of us to glorify the Lord," exhorts Saint Ambrose, "and may the spirit of Mary be in each one of us to rejoice in God." This



The Visitation, by Domenico Ghirlandaio



quotation is often employed by Saint Louis de Montfort in his writings. He counts the *Magnificat* among the prayers that best characterize true devotion and perfect consecration to Mary.

But, what is this? She, who was without any sin, has called God her “Savior”? Jesus, in the Hebrew tongue, means “savior.” From her own language, Mary’s song would be literally rendered: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Jesus*. The prophet Habacuc spoke similar praise: “But I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in God my Jesus” (Hab. 3:18).

*Behold! The handmaid of the Lord delighting again to confess her nothingness before her Lord and Master, His handmaid.*

Jesus was both Our Lady’s Savior and Redeemer. Redemption and salvation are, of course, related, but they are distinct acts. By Our Lord’s death on the cross the price of our redemption was paid by which man could be restored to the state of grace and friendship with God, which had been lost to all men in Adam’s sin. By union with the Redeemer, through baptism, the effect of Christ’s redemption is applied

to a man, although he is not yet saved. Our Lady’s preservation from original sin at the moment of her conception was a *singular privilege* that had to do with the manner in which she was uniquely redeemed. Our Lady’s “ransom” was paid by the blood of her Son, but she was not bought back from the devil, but

prevented from ever falling under his power. The Church calls this singular privilege “preventive redemption.” Thusly it was foretold in Genesis, when God cursed the serpent: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gen. 3:15). That “heel” would never be under, but always over, the head of the devil.

### How is God Mary’s “Savior”?

Lest this become an exercise in theological polemics I will simply say that God is Mary’s Savior on account of His being salvation itself. For, the good are not only saved from something evil (i.e., sin and hell), but saved in something Good (the Mystical Body of Christ and God’s eternal life). In this latter sense, most truly, God the Father is His immaculate daughter’s Savior, God the Son is His Mother’s redeeming Savior, and God the Holy Ghost is His spouse’s sanctifying Savior.

### *For he hath regarded the humility of His handmaid*

*Behold! The handmaid of the Lord* delighting again to confess her nothingness before her Lord and Master, as *His handmaid*. To “regard” in the sense of the inspired Greek word, *epeblepsin*, means “He has looked favorably upon.” What is this humility of which the Virgin Mother speaks? Is it her low estate? Or the virtue itself?

Some fathers have held that Our Lady here was speaking of her own family’s seeming insignificance in comparison to more prominent and wealthy Israelites. But this is an unlikely interpretation, for Mary knew more than anyone how God loves

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## Host a Talk

by Brother André Marie

Brother André Marie is available to speak to groups on a variety of topics of Catholic interest: dogma (including “no salvation outside the Church”), Catholic America, Marian consecration, evangelism, prayer, vocations and states in life, etc.

If your parish, chapel, men’s group, sodality, or conference would like a Catholic speaker, please contact Saint Benedict Center to arrange a presentation: (603) 239-6485 or [bam@catholicism.org](mailto:bam@catholicism.org).



and favors the poor and simple, and is no respecter of persons.

No. I think we must take the words in their most literal sense. For the essence of humility is not low self-esteem but a knowledge of one's self as seen in the light of God's truth. It is the virtue that compels its possessor to acts of charity, both routine and, when called for, magnanimous. *Tapeinos* is the inspired Greek word, which the Latin renders as *humilitas*. When Our Lord said, "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29), the same Greek word *tapeinos* is used in the language of the inspired scripture, and coming from Our Lord, the King of kings, it can only mean the virtue.

***Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed***

Gabriel the Archangel has led the way for all generations and Saint Elizabeth has seconded the acclaim: "Blessed art thou among women" Luke 1:28,42). This is the will of God that the Mother of His Son should be so honored. This is the will of Christ, the Child of Mary. "Let this mind be in you," exhorts Saint Paul, "which is also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

"...it is a very great thing for her to be a virgin and the Mother of God; but what surpasses all else is that, great as she is, Mary considers herself as if she were nothing."

How glorious is this word "blessed"! In the highest sense, the "blessed" are those whom God has made holy — those who are now, or who will be, in the eternal blessedness of beatitude, the beatific vision.

Among all these, Mary is the

Most Blessed. When uttered as a beneficent prayer by someone in the state of grace, the very sound of the petition, "May God bless you" seems to almost effect what it signifies.

***For He that is mighty has done great things to me and holy is His Name.***

What are the "great things" that God the Mighty has done for His handmaid? First, and foremost, in view of her Divine Maternity, He has preserved her from all sin. This is why Jesus praised His mother in the gospels more for "keeping the word of God" than for bearing Him. Outside of the life of the Blessed Trinity, no divine act could be greater than the Incarnation of the Son of God, and no elevation of a creature could be greater than the Divine Maternity. This is God's greatest act of omnipotence in the created order, His greatest act of "Might," if you will.

The Latin term for "great things" is *magna*. Towards the

end of the hymn Mary praises the *bona*, the "good things" with which God feeds the hungry soul, but here, in her own regard, she cannot but speak in superlatives of the "great things" God has worked within her, things that are unknown as of yet to others.

Saint Bede the Venerable: "It is a great thing for the Queen of Angels to be a virgin; it is a great thing for her to be a mother; it is greater thing for her to be a mother and a virgin at the same time; and it is a very great thing for her to be a virgin and the Mother of God; but what surpasses all else is that, great as she is, Mary considers herself as if she were nothing."

If we examine the Greek word for "holy," *hagios*, the word literally means "separated from the earth." But we cannot define God as "He who is separated from the earth," and "holiness" is an essential attribute of God. If we affirm, then, that God is separated from the earth (creation), which He is (*contra* pantheism), we must mean in His essence, because spatially speaking, there is no place where God is not present. This essential "separation," this *a-gios*, is the principle of all divine attributes and it is God's self-existence, His *aseity*. "I am who am," is how God identified Himself to Moses.

***And His mercy is from generation unto generation on those who fear Him.***

"But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear him" (Ps. 102:17).

***Fear of the Lord***

What is this fear of the Lord that Mary lauds? "It is," says the Psalmist, "the beginning of wisdom" (110:10). There is no virtue more often praised in the Bible, especially in the wisdom books, than the fear of the Lord. It is a dominant theme, with over two-hundred verses applauding its importance in establishing virtue. This one truth alone, i.e., the equating of the gift of wisdom and fear of God, is repeated three times in the Old Testament. A few lesser-known verses from Ecclesiastes are well worth underscoring: "How great is he that findeth wisdom and knowledge! but there is none above him that feareth the Lord" (25:13); "He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid for he is his hope" (34:16); "The fear of God is the beginning of his love" (25:16).

Our Lady is not making any distinctions concerning the fear of the Lord in her *Magnificat*. She is praising the virtue as a salutary thing in itself. Whether it be servile or filial, the mercy of God will be upon those who fear Him. Having no original sin, and therefore none of its disorderly effects on her soul, Mary could only fear offending God by pride. This "gift" of her Spouse the Holy Ghost, the fear of the Lord, together with His wisdom, is what made the "handmaid of the Lord" so humble. ■

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## CONVENT CORNER

### THE ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

*continued from page 5*

brothers and sisters, and Father to gather. After we had recited the joyful and sorrowful mysteries and sung a few hymns, Father began the Litany for the Dying. In the middle of this holy litany, she breathed her last, and we kept praying for her, knowing that her soul might linger a while. We finished the Litany of the Dying, the glorious mysteries, and the Office of the Dead as we knelt around her body and her soul was embraced by Our Blessed Mother.

What a beautiful and holy death! What a perfect “last performance”! Why was it so peaceful, so tranquilly ordered in every way? Do you remember that there was a sacrifice made long ago? Do you remember that it was a sacrifice of love in the highest degree? And now I’ll tell you that she was faithful to that sacrifice and to that purpose for which she made it. She had sacrificed her all so that the Faith would again be proclaimed without compromise, so that the hierarchy would again recognize and act upon their graces as representatives of



Fr. Phillipson offered Sr. Mary Bernadette’s requiem Mass with Fr. Lamothe attending in choir. All of the brothers served.

the unique Bride of Christ, the one Ark of Salvation, outside of which no one at all is saved. And over the years she expressed her fidelity, both militantly and lovingly, if perhaps desperately, whenever she had occasion to hear of a bishop or pope undermining, or denying, or ignoring the defined dogma concerning the necessity of belonging to the Catholic Church for salvation.

Perhaps it will help you to understand Sister’s loving fidelity just a little when I describe how she paid her respects to her husband when he died. About an hour after Fakhri (Brother Francis) died, we came to pay our last respects. Sister reverently kissed his cheek and forehead and said with strength in her voice, “Brother Francis, pray for us! and pray for the Church!” When a couple days before her own death we asked her if she would remember us when she got to heaven, she said very definitely that she would. Shortly thereafter she reminded us to be faithful to the crusade so that we could meet her in heaven.

Sister Mary Bernadette no longer requires our care, but we need hers. She has joined that “cloud of witnesses” and is keeping her promise to remember us. Our crusade is not yet won. May such an heroic sacrifice not be in vain because of our lack of fidelity in our daily battles.

All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,....

Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
*Sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* taste, *sans* everything.

Sister Mary Bernadette outdid Shakespeare in her last performance. Instead of being bleak and empty, it was very full of beauty, peace, and joy. And so as we have our various exits and entrances in our duties and relationships to others, may we always be preparing, as Sister Mary Bernadette did, for our “last performance.” ■

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...Father began the Litany for the Dying. In the middle of this holy litany, she breathed her last, and we kept praying for her, knowing that her soul might linger a while.



# SPECIAL FEATURE

## CIVIL ALLEGIANCE (PATRIOTISM)



Eugene DeLalla

Webster's defines a patriot as someone who loves and defends his country.

Let us examine the first part of that definition: what love of country is or seems to be in today's world.

If someone were asked what love of country means, the response might seem obvious.

In fact, one might find it irksome that such a question would be asked in the first place. It might be taken as if their love or fidelity to the fatherland were being questioned. Perhaps so. But here is what the *Catholic Encyclopedia* has to say on the question of our allegiance to the State:

"By civil allegiance is meant the duty of loyalty and obedience which a person owes to the State of which he is a citizen. The word *allegiance* is a derivative of *liege*, free, and historically it signifies the service which a free man owed to his liege lord. In the matter in hand its meaning is wider, it is used to signify the duty which a citizen owes to the state of which he is a subject.

"That duty, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, rests on nature itself and the sanctions of religion. As nature and religion prescribe to children dutiful conduct towards the parents who brought them into the world, so nature and religion impose on citizens certain obligations towards their country and its rulers. These obligations may be reduced

to those of patriotism and obedience. Patriotism requires that the citizen should have a reasonable esteem and love for his country. He should take an interest in his country's history, he should know how to value her institutions, and he should be prepared to sacrifice himself for her welfare. In his country's need it is not only a noble thing, but it is a sacred duty to lay down one's life for the safety of the commonwealth. Love for his country will lead the citizen to show honour and respect to its rulers. They represent the State, and are entrusted by God with power to rule it for the common good. The citizen's chief duty is to obey the just laws of his country."

Who among us will gladly "lay down his life for the safety of the commonwealth"?

These weighty words conjure up the ultimate sacrifice that one can make, but we are not robots without opinions and feelings. We cannot do what we are told to do without taking into consideration our Faith and traditions according to what the Church teaches. In a nutshell, "The citizen's chief

duty is to obey the just laws of his country." If one truly loves his country, then he will also be willing to defend his country from all enemies both foreign and domestic.

For those in the military service, the obligation to defend their country rests on the fact that he took an oath to do so. However, for the Catholic member of the military — and for all members that adhere to the natural moral law — there is the onus to distinguish between what orders issued by their superiors are, in fact, just and moral.

Being a combat veteran myself, I understand that the process of questioning and then deciding what orders to follow puts that soldier in a dicey situation at best, and, at worst,

True love of country means rising above the prevailing unjust and immoral attitudes of the day and bucking the system for the ultimate good of one's country and one's fellow citizens.



US Marines enter one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Baghdad, Iraq

a potentially mutinous position. This type of action can, and usually does lead to loss of rank, a ruined career, imprisonment, and/or a dishonorable discharge.

In light of the way the military has and is being used around the world these days, one cannot help but think that a Catholic soldier must decide if the best interests of his country are being served, in defending against imminent attack or in defending others unable to defend themselves. He must also decide if the progenitors of certain domestic or foreign policies indicate a pattern of hegemony or empire building.

To put it plainly: one must have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and act in accordance with a rightly ordered conscience.

With the recent despicable changes to the military's Uniform Code of Military Justice regarding one of the sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, as well as other changes too foul to mention here, the option of serving the country by wearing the uniform is, in my opinion, not an option for the practicing Catholic.

For the civilian patriot, there is more "freedom" to decide what laws to obey and what laws not to obey. But in the end,

the epithet of "outlaw" may be applied to those Catholics who realize many of the laws of our beloved country are counter to the natural and moral law and the teachings of Holy Mother Church. To make the conscious decision to disobey said laws, however, can lead to the destruction of one's reputation as well as loss of income and home in the face of a society hell-bent on keeping the Church separated from the State at all costs — one of the chief causes of the current national morass.

Of course, if one attempts to "buck the system," then that individual can be, and usually is, designated something less than patriotic. But herein lies the contradiction: true love of country means rising above the prevailing unjust and immoral attitudes of the day and bucking the system for the ultimate good of one's country and one's fellow citizens. That is real love of *patria*, the fatherland, which is rooted in the virtue of piety.

Nevertheless, no matter how bad things get in these United States of America, nothing can stop us from offering the greatest gift we have to our American neighbors. And that ultimate gift is nothing short of the one, true, Catholic Faith. This is the highest form of loving thy neighbor as thyself; this is true patriotism. ■

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# EXPRESSING THE DARK SIDE OF THE MIND: THE CONTROLLED INSANITY OF FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

The mind, what a terrible place to be — alone,” is a saying I frequently employ when considering the grief and tragedy which consumes our present world, for, as St. Augustine states, “Thou has created us for Thyself, and our heart is not quiet until it rests in Thee.” Supernatural grace is the great and only liberator of every soul and not to possess it will eventually turn that soul to the chaotic dark side of the mind.

In every man’s memory there are things which he does not reveal to everyone, but only to his friends.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s domain, his place of rest or unrest as the case might be, was in this very sinister world. In his short story, *Notes from Underground*, the main character states,

“I had a love of secrecy. I was terribly afraid that someone might see me, meet me, recognize me,” and again, “In every man’s memory there are things which he does not reveal to everyone, but only to

his friends. There are also other things he does not reveal to his friends, but at best to himself and only under a pledge of secrecy. And finally there are things which man hesitates to reveal even to himself.”

It is impossible to speak of Dostoyevsky’s genius without confronting the word “criminal,” for his insight into the criminal mind was astounding, and his laying bare of criminal impulses cuts to the secret heart of all his readers. I may make bold to say that after reading Dostoyevsky an examination of conscience before confession would be redundant. In all his novels the haunting themes abound but are never isolated from the main characters’ quest for God. His realism and personal experience prevent him from airbrushing the ugliness of evil and the terrible sufferings of the innocent, and while reading his more invasive works one wonders if he should even be doing so, for one can not but thoroughly enjoy them. The hypnotic trance that overcomes the reader while immersed in the author’s intense, psychological studies of the human soul is best expressed by Virginia Woolf, “The novels of Dostoyevsky are seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts which hiss and boil and suck us in. They are composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul. Against our wills we are drawn in, whirled around, blinded, suffocated, and at the same time filled with giddy rapture.”

Fyodor was born in Moscow, the second of seven children to Mikhail and Maria Dostoyevsky on November 11, 1821. The family lived in a small apartment located in one of the city’s worst areas, which was close to the Marinsky Hospital grounds, where, for his future

“inspiration,” there happened to be a lunatic asylum and an orphanage for abandoned children. Although forbidden by his parents to visit these places, young Fyodor would slip away to the hospital garden so he could converse with the inmates and listen to their stories, an influence that would manifest itself years later in all his works. Like many of the characters portrayed in his novels, Fyodor’s father comes to us as an enigma, for, depending on which historian you prefer, he was either a loving, caring man solicitous for his children’s welfare, or a despotic drunkard who was murdered by his own serfs, an event characterized in one of Fyodor’s greatest novels, *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is certain, however, that his father sent him to private schools, and eventually he attended the Nikolayev Military Engineering Institute where he received a commission in 1841. Upon leaving the Institute, Fyodor became involved with the Petrashevsky Circle, a group composed mainly of writers, teachers, and students opposed to the tsarist autocracy and Russian serfdom. The purpose of the group was to study western philosophy (mainly Hegel) and literature banned by the government. The whole group was arrested for subversive activities, and after going through an “execution ritual,” a mere formality to denote the seriousness of their crimes, they were sentenced to hard labor in Siberia. Fyodor was sent to the Katorga prison camp, a brutal, inhumane camp

There are also other things he does not reveal to his friends, but at best to himself and only under a pledge of secrecy.



Dostoyevsky’s mock execution in 1849



where they were stacked “like herrings in a barrel — in summer, intolerable closeness; in winter, unendurable cold with no room to turn around, with fleas, lice, and black beetles by the bushel.” This experience inspired him to write *The House of the Dead* which, when published, brought all Russia to tears. He was incarcerated for four years and released in 1854; afterwards, he was required to serve in the Siberian regiment as a private.

Dostoyevsky’s experiences in prison drastically changed his political and religious convictions to the point where he began to repudiate Western European philosophical trends and focus on traditional Russian values. His writing centered on the virtues of humility, submission, and suffering, resulting in his conversion back to the Orthodox Faith. It is at this point that Fyodor bursts forth in the titanic, voluminous novels that has made him known by various critics as the first psychology novelist, the forerunner of literary symbolism, and one of the fathers of existentialism. His short story, *Notes from Underground*, is considered by many the founding work of existentialism, wherein he asserts “that war is the people’s rebellion against the idea that reason guides everything, and reason is not the ultimate guiding principle for history or mankind.”

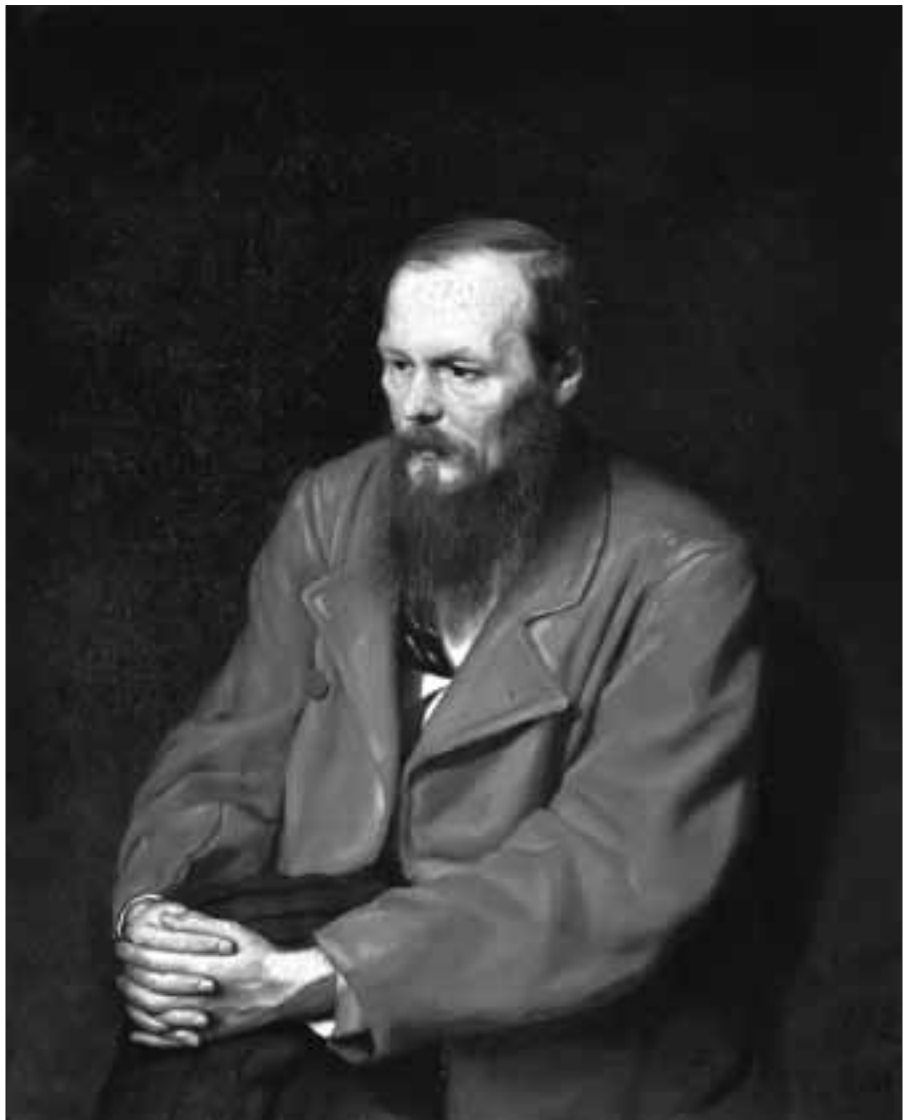
The extraordinary, creative mind of this complex man was heightened by what the Russians call the “sacred disease,” epilepsy. It began at the age of nine, and continued throughout his life, sometimes once a month, at times more frequently. He used this first-hand experience of the “falling sickness” in several of his characters, most notably Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* and the nihilist fanatic Kirilov in *The Possessed*. In researching Fyodor’s life and illness, I was fascinated to learn that the epileptic attacks progress through predictable cycles. They differ by degree in individual cases, but the first warning that the seizure is coming begins, Dostoyevsky says, with “the incomparable sense of rapture, of inner enlightenment, of harmony, of highest ecstasy,” then followed by a horrible sense of depression, grief, spiritual ruin, and guilt. This one description alone explains the tortured, complex characters he created, colored with psychological insight, woven into a pattern of hidden guilt, culminating in the brooding, menacing, and sometimes horrible creatures of his pen. Nevertheless, he once exclaimed that he would not give up five seconds of this ecstasy for years of mental agony.

As Nietzsche colorfully put it (he had a dis-

ease with similar symptoms), “Exceptional conditions make the artist: all conditions that are profoundly related and interlaced with morbid phenomena; it seems impossible to be an artist and not to be sick.”

In the biographies I researched, I could find no mention of the disease playing a profound and, I would say, formative development of his complex mind during his adolescence. These early years of any child are so impressionable as to form an outline of future thought and behavior. And there was Fyodor, at the age of nine, undergoing epileptic fits, heightened to ecstatic realms, all the while listening to the stories of inmates at a lunatic asylum! So, in the future editions of this publication I will attempt to analyze this great Russian author by scrutinizing his characters as they walk in the dark side of the mind. ■

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Fyodor Dostoyevsky in 1872

## A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen. Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, Raccolta No. 579).

## EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

*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).

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