

MANCIPIA

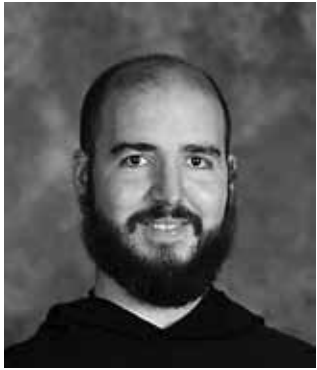
May/June 2012

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER



Sister Maria Rosaria (second from the left) and Sister Marie Gabrielle (right) professed final vows on March 25, 2012. There are more pictures of the grace-filled event throughout this issue.

TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE:



Br. Andre Marié, M.I.C.M.,
Prior

US BISHOPS TO OBAMACARE: *NON POSSUMUS*

ObamaCare, the epic and malign intrusion of the Nanny State into the lives of the American populace, has caused a rash of legal reactions, including no less than six cases in the Supreme Court, and legal challenges in various district federal courts across the country.

These suits attack the constitutionality of ObamaCare for various reasons, including the notion that the government can force citizens to buy insurance. EWTN has filed suit in a US District Court in Birmingham, Alabama, challenging the ObamaCare “contraceptive mandate,” which stipulates that employers, including religious institutions, provide their employees with insurance coverage for contraceptives, sterilizations, and specific abortifacients such as Ella and Plan B. The network was joined in the suit by the State of Alabama itself, whose Attorney General, Luther Strange, stands by his very name as a symbol of a pragmatic alliance between Catholics and conservative Protestants on this violation of fundamental freedoms.

Separately, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) filed suit on behalf of a Missouri business owner, a Catholic named Frank O’Brien. Mr. O’Brien thus became the first private business owner to file suit against the mandate, which highlights the fact that it is not only religious institutions, but also private citizens, whose rights are being violated.

From Pope Benedict XVI’s *Ad limina* address to bishops of the United States, January 19, 2012:

Of particular concern are certain attempts being made to limit that most cherished of American freedoms, the freedom of religion. Many of you have pointed out that concerted efforts have been made to deny the right of conscientious objection on the part of Catholic individuals and institutions with regard to cooperation in intrinsically evil practices. Others have spoken to me of a worrying tendency to reduce religious freedom to mere freedom of worship without guarantees of respect for freedom of conscience.

Here once more we see the need for an engaged, articulate, and well-formed Catholic laity endowed with a strong critical sense vis-à-vis the dominant culture and with the courage to counter a reductive secularism which would delegitimize the Church’s participation in public debate about the issues which are determining the future of American society.

Thankfully, the US bishops have spoken out, in some cases quite vociferously, against the administration’s violation of the rights of Catholics. Manchester, New Hampshire’s Bishop Peter Libasci denounced the measure, saying “The federal government, which claims to be ‘of, by, and for the people,’ has just dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people — the Catholic population — and to the millions more who are served by the Catholic faithful.”

Cardinal Raymond Burke asserted very strongly that Catholics can not cooperate with the mandate, should it become law. Asked if paying for such illicit “benefits” were a forbidden kind of cooperation with sin, His Eminence said, “This is correct. It is not only a matter of what we call ‘material cooperation’ in the sense that the employer by giving this insurance benefit is materially providing for the contraception **but it is also ‘formal cooperation’** because he is knowingly and deliberately doing this, making this available to people. **There is no way to justify it. It is simply wrong.**”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a blunt threat of civil disobedience: “It is a sobering thing to contemplate our government enacting an unjust law. **An unjust law cannot be obeyed.** In the face of an unjust law, **an accommodation is not to be sought**, especially by resorting to equivocal words and deceptive practices. If we face today the prospect of unjust laws, then **Catholics in America, in solidarity with our fellow citizens, must have the courage not to obey them.** No American desires this. No Catholic welcomes it. **But if it should fall upon us, we must discharge it as a duty of citizenship and an obligation of faith.**” (Emphasis mine.)

It is good to see the bishops challenging such a dreadful injustice.

Two thoughts want to be developed before I end these comments. The first is that contraception is not, *per se*, a Catholic issue, but a natural law issue. The second is that the Church in America has, by various historical failures, brought this situation upon herself; this crisis may be God’s providential way of waking her out of her slumber.

While it is absolutely true that the Health and Human Services mandate’s governmental coercion is a violation of the rights of Catholics, we must go further: It is also a violation of the rights of everyone else, too.

“An unjust law cannot be obeyed. In the face of an unjust law, an accommodation is not to be sought, especially by resorting to equivocal words and deceptive practices.”

Rights flow from duties. Contraception being against the natural law — it is not a *Catholic sexual hangup* — everyone has a duty to avoid contraception, its use, and its funding. The issue is not even up for debate. Since everyone has a duty to follow God's law, then everyone has a right not to be forced by the government to violate God's law. (Just as a soldier commanded by a superior officer to shoot a non-combatant *must* — and therefore *may* — disobey, since the command is an order to commit murder.)

Therefore, in this present unlawful usurpation by the Obama administration, everyone's rights are being violated, first God's, then ours, whether we be Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jew, Muslim, Jainist, Mormon, Buddhist, Druze, B'hai, Shintoist, Hindu, Sikh, agnostic, atheist, etc.

It is the duty of the Church to preach the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ to all the nations. It is also her duty to teach God's natural moral law to all men. Let us focus on God's rights first, then our duties before Him, which have their origin in His rights. When those things are more jealously guarded, our rights will be secured.

This brings me to the second point. As bad as this situation is, it is a teachable moment for American Catholics. For, if the Church had fulfilled her evangelical mission here, this would not be an issue. Instead, we have been content with a place at



Alabama Attorney General, Luther Strange

the American pluralist table; we have refused to make America Catholic, have become ourselves infected by the plague of contraception, and have consequently lost our savor.

We learned from a 60 Minutes/*Vanity Fair* poll that sixty-five percent of US Catholics agree that the world is a better place because of "religious diversity," while *only fifteen percent thought that Christianity should be the one world religion*. Earlier research, from the Guttmacher Institute, had revealed that most Catholic women in U.S. use birth control.

These two issues are not unconnected; they are as interrelated as Catholic faith and morals.

If we are not inclined to believe everything 60 Minutes, *Vanity Fair*, and the Guttmacher Institute say, we certainly cannot claim that these polls are off the mark. (A few conversations with your mainstream Catholic friends and family would reveal similarly abysmal results, wouldn't they?) Catholic religious instruction being in a deplorable condition for decades

continued on page 11



Center: Bishop Peter Libasci, Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire

CONVENT CORNER



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

THE DESERT

I went on a private, one-day retreat this past September. What a blessed gift of consolations and lights on God's Will was mine! I was reminded of a couple of scriptural quotes, "I will lead her into the desert and I will speak to her heart" and "My beloved is a garden enclosed." Dear Reader, I wish this same blessing of peace for you! In describing my retreat, I hope

to make you desire to go on retreat yourself.

On the morning of the retreat, I attended Holy Mass at our own convent chapel because I knew that it would not be available at the retreat location. Then, I prayed the Rosary as I drove to the blessed spot. Though I had been longing for a retreat for months, ironically, I was having no consolations at this point! In fact, for several weeks I had been suffering much anxiety at the thought of this day. With effort, I often resigned myself to God's Will and renewed my consecration to Our Blessed Mother, asking her to take possession of me and saying, "Whatever you want, Blessed Mother."



Sister Marie Gabrielle professing final vows

Having arrived at the retreat location and walking from the parking lot over the grounds to the location at which I would stay for the day, my feeling of dread had to be kept in check by frequent acts of resignation to God's Will and renewal of my consecration. I can't over-emphasize the lack of consolation I had at that point.

After visiting with the people on the grounds, I went to my little hut. I sat in my hut, leaned my elbows on my knees, joined my hands, put my head down and closed my eyes. Ah! Paradise! I began to pray. And now, Dear Reader, I wish presently to have you with me on my retreat.

My Guest — Guests — in my soul are indeed with me. Their presence is so great and loving, that the incredible noise of the world and its follies fades and becomes a distant background hum. In fact, it seems to be this very din that is helping me to flee into the inner chambers of my heart. I am conscious of this. It is as though there is no one else in existence but me and this loving Guest, in whom I am plunged as in a warm ocean. I really have no reason to have anxiety after all... and now I find that I don't have anything but consolation and peace. I am alone with God.

A poem I once knew comes to mind. "Alone with God! Oh, who can say, the mysteries deep these words convey. It fills the

"Alone with God!
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soul with love and
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feel that God is
near."



Sister Maria Rosaria signing her vows on the altar after professing

soul with love and fear, to know and feel that God is near.”

It is easy for me to associate with my dear guardian angel now. He is my dear friend and companion. We speak together and also to my Mother, and my dear father, St. Joseph; my sisters, Saint Thérèse, Saint Cecilia, and Saint Philomena. Then we, together, salute all of the guardian angels and patron saints of those persons who are in any proximity to us.

It is lunch time. My angel and I recite the Angelus, as I never have before. Then we recall the sacramental visit of Jesus this morning and ask Him to come again now spiritually, which He does. And now I can eat my earthly food. I don't notice the flavor or texture, but I know God wants me to nourish my body, so I do.

Ah, blessed retreat! Is there anything that the world could possibly offer that would give such peace and consolation! My soul is filled with gratitude which bursts from my heart like a fountain to God.

I have brought with me a copy of Saint John Neumann's penny catechism. After asking my angel to guide me, I randomly open it. The truths I am reading appear new, and I slowly take time to appreciate these great realities in His presence.

Time must have passed, and now, I am starting to notice the sound of the world a little ...and a little more. Ah! Someone is knocking on my door. I feel as though I am swimming up from deep under water to answer it. It is someone who saw me in my habit and was drawn to ask me about the Faith. He

hasn't been to the sacraments in many years. I console and gently challenge him by describing the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion which I have just been relishing in the catechism. He thanks me as I give him a Rosary pamphlet I have. He seems to be thinking thoughts of long ago as he waves goodbye, thanks me, and disappears as I close my door again. And I find myself alone with God in this blessed place. Back, back to the exclusive Company I have been enjoying ...and I continue to relish the realities in the penny catechism.

Hours of enjoyment and consolation follow, interrupted briefly by other souls seeking God. What an encouraging thought to know that God is making use of me to help bring souls to Himself! The little that I notice of the world when the door opens, only makes me value it less and my Guests more. Ah, blessed consolations of God!

Hours? As I notice the darkness spreading, I look at my watch. Hours! It is time to leave my hut, my place of consolation! My retreat is over. Blessed be God! I will bring Him with me in my heart — in Mary's Heart. My hut is within me.

All of my foolish fears are gone, and the world looks brighter, more transparent, now that higher realities are breaking through my consciousness. ■

Nota Bene: For a special surprise and a secret about the retreat location, please email me.

Email Sister Marie Thérèse at convent@catholicism.org.



All of the Sisters at the reception following the profession Mass on March 25, 2012. Emily is staying with the Sisters and teaches in our school.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN



Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

BROTHER FRANCIS' OFFICIAL ANSWER TO THE HOLY OFFICE LETTER OF 1949

As head of the Holy Office in 1985, then-Cardinal Ratzinger asked Brother Francis to write a response to the 1949 Holy Office Letter to Archbishop Richard Cushing dealing with Saint Benedict Center and Father Leonard Feeney. The response was to be addressed to the Cardinal's Scot-

tish secretary, Monsignor Henry Docherty, with whom Brother had already met for a scheduled appointment. Brother had only two days to hand in the response since he wanted to hand-deliver the document before leaving Rome. Bear in mind that he only had a manual typewriter. The following is abridged from that letter. What appears in brackets was added by me to insure the text flowed after cutting it down somewhat in order to fit in this *Mancipia*. — The Editor

Msgr. Henry Docherty
Congregation of the Holy Office
1-00120 Vatican City

June 28, 1985
Vigil of St. Peter

Dear Monsignor Docherty,

Our defense of the dogma *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* has continued now for over forty years. As loyal children of the Church, neither we ourselves, nor certainly Father Leonard Feeney, our founder, would ever for one moment cling to a doctrinal opinion in opposition to the Solemn Magisterium.... [W]e assure you, that you will see that we are nothing more than an echo of the Faith of the centuries, reverberating as *ecclesia discens* what we have learned from the universal teaching (in time as well as place) of *ecclesia docens*. Permit us in what follows to explain rather concisely in the three numbered points what we hope will be the subject of a more detailed dialogue.

1. In respect to the Letter of Cardinal Marchetti-Selvaggiani (July, 1949) addressed to then-Archbishop Cushing of Boston, the following considerations ought to be made:

A. The letter of the Cardinal is divided into three parts, two doctrinal and the last part disciplinary. We submit our mind and hearts to the affirmations of the Holy Office expressed in the first few paragraphs of the document wherein the Cardinal states most clearly that the dogma *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* is an infallible dogma found in both Scripture and tradition and defined by the Solemn Magisterium. ...

Many priests are now openly teaching that dogmas do change and the reason they give to substantiate this view is precisely because — to use their words — “the

Church has changed her teaching in regard to *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*.” The word *extra* in the formula has been changed to [mean] *sine* [without], that is, a drastic change from a specific, very clear definition to a more general truism that any Christian could interpret his own way, and any non-Christian would scarcely be moved to any salutary fear by God's grace nonetheless will perform its saving work, but it seems that in our time the Church herself is placing an obstacle to the gospel message by this ambiguity. The point is that when this dogma is uttered it is never [proclaimed] by way of a profession or declaration the way dogmas are meant to be. ... It is not just that all disciplinary action is taken against us for emphasizing the literal meaning of the dogma, while those who deny it outright continue to be in good standing.

B. The media considered the Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter to be a denial of the dogma on salvation. ... The headlines for the *Worcester Telegram*, a widely read Massachusetts newspaper, declared on September 2, 1949, the following:

VATICAN RULES AGAINST
HUB DISSIDENTS
Holds No Salvation Outside
Church Doctrine to Be False

Many other newspaper, radio, television, and even pulpit reports gave similar misinformation. The inspired word of St. Paul, “If a trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” is applied by interpretation not only as to its discouraging effect upon the soldiers on the side of the sad trumpeter, but also for its encouraging effect upon the enemy, rallying them to confidence in their assault upon perceiving this sign of weakness.

C. The Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter is not an infallible pronouncement, and therefore, since it concerns us so intimately, we are obliged to examine it very carefully. Before we treat of the second part of the Letter, wherein the document speaks of an “implicit desire” to belong to the Church being sufficient for salvation, we wish to conclude our observations of part one by stressing the fact that this decree was almost universally taken by the Church's children to mean that the dogma *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* was no longer acceptable teaching by Rome. ...

D. Concerning part two of the Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter, we cannot [now] go into detail over such issues as membership by explicit/implicit desire in the Catholic Church and invincible ignorance. We have publica-

tions and documents treating of these issues, which we are anxious to present for your consideration. ... Most important of all, we wish to draw your attention in this second doctrinal part to the following relevant, but not enough emphasized passage:

“Nor must it be thought that any desire whatsoever of entering the Church suffices for men to be saved. For, it is required that the desire, by which someone is ordained to the Church, should be informed by perfect charity; nor can an implicit desire produce the effect, unless the person have supernatural faith.”

We find in the very last words here of the letter the very position we have been trying to defend. The question [hypothetical, at best] being tossed back and forth is this: Can salvation be gained by a vague implicit desire to know the true God while leading a naturally virtuous life? Or is an explicit act of Faith in the Incarnate Savior necessary? As is generally understood by the Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter, it would at first seem that the Holy Office is saying that an implicit desire to know of the Savior would be acceptable as a condition for salvation; but as can be clearly seen in the last analysis, where the traditional doctrine is upheld, supernatural faith is necessary. The Church’s teaching (St. Augustine against the Pelagians, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Trent, etc.) has always been that the supernatural order cannot be implied in the natural order, though other supernatural truths can be implied or implicit in the acceptance of the fundamental supernatural truths, i.e., the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Redemption. Our position has never been any different than that of the defining councils and of the Doctors of the Church.

E. Therefore, in conclusion, we respectfully ask for a clarification of that part of the Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter that, in using the expression “implicit desire” in an unqualified sense, lends itself to misinterpretation by opening the door for the opinion now rampant that salvation can be achieved by natural virtue alone, or even by subjective sincerity.

2. We feel that the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, which was written after the Marchetti-Selvaggiani Letter, did refer to and reprove the liberal interpretations of the salvation dogma then, as also now, in vogue. However, the encyclical did not state how to prevent these dangerous novelties from spreading. It seemed that the Pope left it to the theologians to expose those who were “reducing to an empty formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church for salvation.”

Then, too, the Center’s doctrinal stand was personally defended at the time by Cardinal Segura of Spain. The Cardinal related this fact himself to an intimate associate of

the Center while he was visiting the prelate of Spain. Segura was shocked that the position defended by Father Feeny was being challenged by the American hierarchy, and he expressed his dismay about the situation to the Holy Father. Our friend was told by the Cardinal that Pope Pius XII did not consider Father Feeny in error, and that the Pope had assured him that he was going to clarify the matter in his next encyclical. That was, of course, *Humani Generis*.

3. We have written abundantly on all the issues concerning the interpretation of this dogma. If we are in error we ask with docility that these errors be specifically pointed out. But if we, in any of our publications, present a theological opinion not defined [but taught by a number of fathers and Doctors of the Church], we request the liberty to defend it until it be further clarified by the Holy See.

The Center has literally thousands of supporters throughout the United States, and they could be a prudent and valuable force in converting America. In this light, it is important for the Sacred Congregation to know and rest assured that we of Saint Benedict Center do not, as has been falsely attributed to us, presume to pass judgment upon the eternal destiny of any man. We balance our defense of the Church’s doctrine on salvation with her other teaching that neither the mercy nor the justice of God would allow that anyone who perseveres in his cooperation with God’s graces could be damned. But we affirm that actual graces (or as Vatican II says, “lights”) are abundantly given to all by God so as to conduct one to the supernatural order wherein alone he will find salvation.

All therefore, that we ask, is that this cloud of “suspicion” be lifted from over us, so that our brothers can be ordained and our books and our [other] apostolic endeavors be accepted for what they are — Roman Catholic.

Respectfully submitted by Your son in Christ,

Bro. Francis, MICM
Brother Francis, M.I.C.M. ■

The headlines for the *Worcester Telegram*, declared on September 2, 1949, the following:
VATICAN RULES AGAINST HUB DISSIDENTS Holds No Salvation Outside Church Doctrine to Be False



Mr. Brian Kelly

OUR LADY'S MAGNIFICAT: HYMN OF THE INCARNATION (PART TWO)

These meditations continue from those of the first part of *The Magnificat* which appeared in the last issue of the *Mancipia*.

He hath shown might in His arm.

This verse and the following are coupled as fact and illus-

tration. "Might in his arm" is a Hebraic idiom using anthropomorphic analogy. This is very commonly done in the Old Testament and it in no way implies that the ordinary Jew did not know God to be a pure Spirit who is present everywhere. In its literal and historical sense the metaphor recounts the stupendous and miraculous interferences of God in protecting His people from their enemies and bringing them into the Holy Land. But it also refers to the awesome chastisements by which He humbled His own chosen people when they abandoned His law.

The "great prophet" (Ecclus. 48:25) Isaias, whose revelations read as a Gospel in their vivid portrayal of the Christ to come, calls out to God to send His Holy One, the Messiah, using this

same metaphor: "Arise, arise, put on strength, O thou arm of the Lord, arise as in the days of old, in the ancient generations. Hast not thou struck the proud one, and wounded the dragon?" (51:9) Since the Incarnation is God's greatest act of omnipotence, the strength of God's arm is the advent of His Son as man.

Then, too, says Saint Augustine, "The conversion of a sinner into a just man is a greater exercise of God's power than is the creation of the world out of nothing." Why? Because of the very nature of the spiritual soul, which He created out of nothing, and

in His own image — that being, in the faculty of the will, its power to choose the good freely and to do it.

He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts.

As the fog is dissipated by the warm rays of the sun, so are the proud scattered by Christ and His saints. *Superbus* (pride) in Latin is the antithesis of *humilis* (humility).

Who are the proud whom Mary praises God for scattering? Are they the cruel pagan despots who have attacked the true religion throughout the ages? Yes, but not primarily if we are to interpret the *Magnificat* in the Incarnational and eschatological sense. The proud are all those who work in any capacity against the kingdom of God.

"Why have the gentiles raged [infidels and pagans], and the people devised vain things [sectarians and heretics]. The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together [all the Pilates and all the Herods to come] against the Lord and against His Christ [in His Mystical Body]" (Ps. 2:1).

He hath put down the mighty from their thrones and ex- alted the humble.

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Not as a passive spectator did He watch the ouster of the arch demon from the celestial paradise — no, for His *seeing* was His *doing*. This expulsion by the Creator of a creature required nothing but an act of God's will. However, there would be a victory to come wherein the Incarnate Son of God would crush the power of the devil over men, a victory that would require an act of His arm far more mighty than the tossing of wicked angels into hell; this victory would require an agony, i.e., a *battle*. It is the victory of God in His human nature over the empire of Satan. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out," Our Lord told His apostles just prior to His passion (John 12:31). It is the victory of the Cross.

"He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause he has exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend..." (Phil. 2:8-9). He must first be "bruised for man's iniquities" before He is exalted in glory. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" the risen Christ asked the two dejected disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:26).

Our Lady of Sorrows, the most humble handmaid, would enter, too, into her glory through the crucible of interior agony. She is now exalted beyond words, Queen of heaven and earth. Her glory outshines all the saints and angels put together. It began with her glorious assumption and will continue until her final exaltation, which will be the triumph of her Immaculate Heart as she prophesied at Fatima.

Who are the proud whom Mary praises God for scattering? Are they the cruel pagan despots who have attacked the true religion?

He hath filled the hungry with the good things.

[H]e hath filled the hungry soul with good things (Psalm 106:9).

What are the good things that Mary speaks of as she quotes this verse of the Psalm 106? Why has this verse struck her heart so favorably?

Our Lady speaks here of God's gifts of grace, the "good things" that draw "hungry souls" to Him. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill" (Matt. 5:6). Justice, in its highest sense, means holiness, rendering to God the things that are God's, even ourselves, body and soul.

No one was ever more hungry for God than His handmaid and Mother. No one was ever more filled with His good things. So full was she with holiness that the angel was compelled to address her, not as Mary, but as "Full of Grace." What prompted this salutation? The angel's beatific knowledge. Having been "sent" to the Virgin Mary from God, he found God already there: *Dominus tecum*. It was a statement of fact.

That the Holy Eucharist is the highest fulfillment of this divine nourishment of which Our Lady speaks is strongly suggested in the Roman liturgy. Just prior to reciting the *Pater Noster*, there is a short prayer, bursting with Eucharistic exultation, which the priest utters as he holds the consecrated host in his hands and blesses It three times. It is a continuation of the doxology at the end of the litany of saints in the *Nobis Quoque Pecatoribus ... Per quem haec* prayer, which follows the Memento of the faithful departed: "By whom, O Lord [Christ], Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and bestow upon us all these *good things*."

There is nothing more mighty than the Blessed Eucharist. This is the ultimate execution of the "might of His arm" before which the proud are scattered and the devil vanquished.

Eucharist means "good thanks." Let the hungry soul partake. Those false Christians who are ungrateful and do not hunger and thirst for justice, who snub the Prisoner of Love present in the tabernacle, will they not hear from Christ at their particu-

lar judgment those dreadful words: *I never knew you?* To rouse them let us boldly proclaim the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Let us employ the words of Saint John the Baptist by way of invitation: "There hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not" (John 1:26).

And the rich He hath sent empty away.

Why hath the rich been sent away empty? The rich in this context are those who not only have worldly riches, but hoard them in avarice, and refuse to acknowledge their own poverty of soul. These are not hungry for the good things, so they will remain unsatiated, restless, and unhappy.

Our Lord did not love the poor simply because of their poverty, but because of their manly humility and rugged detachment. "What did you go out [into the desert] to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings" (Matt. 11:8).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

He hath received Israel His servant mindful of His mercy

This verse introduces the last part of the *Magnificat*, which praises God for His fidelity to His promises. Although the more common meaning of *suscipere* is "to receive," it can also mean to "lift up" or "rescue." In this God is always mindful of His mercy to Israel. The Church is the New Israel. *Suscipiat*,

continued on page 10



Our first Saint Joseph's altar, for his feast on March 19, in Saint Joseph's Hall. The altar was quite beautiful.

KELLY FORUM

OUR LADY'S MAGNIFICAT: HYMN OF THE INCARNATION (PART TWO)

continued from page 9

Domine, hanc ecclesiam tuam. Let us take solace in this verse of hope, given to the Church by our Mother.

*...even as He spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his seed forever.*

“And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Matt. 3:9).

It is so important in our day to stress this truth. Our union with the Blessed Seed of Abraham, Christ, spiritually through faith and baptism, and concorporally through Holy Communion, makes His members in the Mystical Body the children of Abraham in every sense of the word.

However, “If you be the children of Abraham,” Our Lord warned the boasting Pharisees, “do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39).

What are the works of Abraham? For the patriarch? Faith in Christ to come, to come of his seed and his son Isaac's. For the Pharisees? Faith in Christ who is speaking to them. “You claim to be children of Abraham, and you seek to kill me. ... Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day: He saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). It was in the final word of this exchange that Jesus identified Himself with the Eternal God: “Before Abraham

was, *I am.*” So they took up stones to cast at Him.

Forever

“Give praise to Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. 117:1). In the most tender communication of Our Lady with Saint Juan Diego we see the *Magnificat* translated into incarnational terms. By exercising the “might of His arm” in becoming man, taking His flesh wholly from the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and immolating Himself on the cross for our salvation, Jesus was also able to give His members in the Church His own Mother as their mother forever.

Behold thy Mother! Mark the words of Mary as she magnifies the Lord in all who will respond to her maternal solicitations:

*My dear little son, Juan Diego,
Listen and let it penetrate your heart. Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need? ■*

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org.

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TO FRIENDS OF THE CRUSADE

US BISHOPS TO OBAMACARE: *NON POSSUMUS*

continued from page 3

now — all throughout the era of the sexual revolution — it is perfectly sensible to expect that Catholics would be clueless on such issues. As for the question of religious pluralism versus Catholic conversion, the denial of *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* and the embrace of a counter-missionary ecumenism have ensured that Catholics by and large believe the Catholic Faith to be but one among many — a nice choice, perhaps, but not terribly unique, and not necessary for salvation, in any sense.

Let's call the Obama administration's brazen act what it is: an in-your-face offensive against Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. It is my belief that this is a wake-up call to the Church in America. We were supposed to convert this nation, but instead we slouched into liberalism, Americanism, Pelagianism, indifference, and plain-old fat-and-happy consumerism. The fact that the government is assailing our institutions on the question of *contraception* is condign justice. Consider the failure of Catholic institutions at every level to uphold the Church's teaching on birth control and you will see what I mean. The complicity of such institutions as the Archdiocese of Boston and Notre Dame University in *advancing* the contraceptive agenda have been well documented. Particularly worthy of note is Cardinal Cushing's deplorable role overturning a Massachusetts anti-contraception law. As *Boston College Magazine* put it, "When the Massachusetts legislature voted in 1966 to end the last all-out ban on contraceptives in the nation, it was with the approval and assistance of the Boston Archdiocese."

Note well: the same liberal hierarch, who persecuted Father Feeney and publicly scoffed at a defined dogma of the Church in the forties and fifties, *personally helped ensure* that the Massachusetts legislature voted in 1966 to end the last all-out ban on contraceptives in the nation.

I know a Catholic woman who, after giving birth to one of her numerous offspring, was handed birth control promotional literature while she was checking out of a Catholic hospital. When she arranged a meeting with the local bishop to bring the matter to his attention, this successor of the Apostles told her, "Grow up, girlie!"

Such stories are legion.

If you think Catholic universities are bad — and you would be right in so thinking — Catholic hospitals are even worse. The same institutional rot, caused by the aforementioned *-isms*, is to blame in both cases.

The lesson? If you don't think it is necessary to convert your erring countrymen, you may become just like them. Our Lord said it better: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men" (Matt. 5:13). Salt enhances and preserves the thing it is put on. That is what we have failed to do.

If that judgment of mine sounds harsh, consider the recent words of New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who conceded

that the Church has "an internal catechetical challenge — a towering one — in convincing our own people of the moral beauty and coherence of what we teach." Noting the failure of the clergy to preach clearly about contraception, he said "We have gotten gun-shy," and added that the shame and embarrassment of the clerical sex abuse crisis "intensified our laryngitis over speaking about issues of chastity and sexual morality."

The present HHS ruling seems to be the mighty hand of God coming upon us. I do not want to overestimate his importance, but, in his own way, President Obama is the Attila, the Mohammed, the Turk, the Vandal, the barbarian, or any other "scourge of God" sent to punish and humble bad Christians, just as God used the Philistines, Amalecites, and others to afflict the people of the Old Testament when they were unfaithful. The good thing is that God loves us enough to afflict us, to chastise us, to give us negative incentives and even "painful graces" for our conversion and growth.

This could be a time of visitation for the Church in America: "Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation: Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

If we get back to Catholic faith and morals, wonderful and strange things could happen.

But for the time being, what will happen? With the majority of American Catholics contracepting, will the faithful be marching behind their bishops, when those bishops lead the charge against the evil Nanny State? The results could be embarrassing, but we cannot rule out the effects of grace.

One thing is certain. There is no salvation in politics. Politics, the way men ought to be governed, must take its lead from ethics. Without the law of God that it is the exclusive prerogative of the Catholic Church to preserve, ethics is rudderless.

Pray for our bishops, that they be given the grace not only to defend the conscience rights of Catholics and our institutions, but that they proactively advance both the conversion of America to the Catholic Faith and the reign of Jesus Christ the King in these United States.

The best defense is, after all, a good offense. ■

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org.

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PREFECT'S COLUMN



Br. John Marie Vianney,
M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

NOVENAS: BLESSED TO THE NINES

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* tells us a novena is a “nine-day private or public devotion in the Catholic Church to obtain special graces. The octave has more of the festal character; to the novena belongs that of hopeful mourning, of yearning, of prayer. ‘The number nine in Holy Writ is indicative of suffering and grief’ (St. Jerome). The novena

is permitted and even recommended by ecclesiastical authority, but still has no proper and fully set place in the liturgy of the Church. It has, however, more and more been prized and utilized by the faithful.”

There are novenas of Masses, of prayers, of litanies. There are novenas to the Holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost, Our Lord, Our Lady, Saint Joseph, Saint Francis Xavier, and other saints. Novena intentions often include requests for physical and spiritual healing, obtaining employment, discerning a vocation, a good marriage, a holy death, or any number of other needs. Here at Saint Benedict Center in Richmond we quarterly pray a novena to Saint Philomena for the Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

Novenas, including yearly novenas, actually go back to pagan Rome and they involved supplications for favors from the false gods. In the Middle Ages there were novenas of Masses for popes, aptly called the Pope’s Novena. Although not common today, there are novenas of Masses for departed religious, which were popular in past centuries. Many of us have heard of the Christmas Novena. It appears the reason for this novena may have come as a way to honor the nine months Baby Jesus spent in the womb of the Blessed Mother, from the Incarnation to the Nativity.

A novena is a “nine-day private or public devotion in the Catholic Church to obtain special graces.”

Novenas are among the most opportune means to obtain heavenly graces through the intercession of the saints. They are prayers which, if recited piously and faithfully for nine consecutive days, include a promise of being heard. Perseverance and confidence are the two key qualities for saying a good novena as they are for saying any worthy prayer.

The Catholic Encyclopedia tells us the best example of a novena was provided by Jesus to the Church in the first Pentecost novena. “He Himself expressly exhorted the Apostles to make

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this preparation. And when the young Church had faithfully persevered for nine full days in it, the Holy Ghost came as the precious fruit of this first Christian novena for the feast of the establishment and foundation of the Church. If one keeps this in mind and remembers besides that novenas in the course of

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time have brought so many, even miraculous, answers to prayer, and that finally Christ Himself in the revelation to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque recommended the special celebration of nine successive first Fridays of the month in 1906, one must wonder that the Church waited so long before positively approving and recommending novenas rather than that she finally took this step.”

The Saint Francis Xavier novena (perhaps the most powerful of all), the “Novena of Grace,” originated in 1633 when a dying Jesuit priest,

Father Mastrilli, who was very devoted to the great missionary, was visited by the saint on his deathbed. Saint Francis promised him a cure if he would devote the rest of his life to the missions of the Indies. As recounted in the novena article in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Father Mastrilli then “made a vow before his provincial that he would go to the Indies if God spared his life, and in another apparition (3 Jan., 1634) St. Francis Xavier exacted of him a renewal of this promise, foretold his martyrdom, and restored him to health so completely that on the same night Father Mastrilli was in a condition to write an account of his cure, and the next morning to celebrate Mass at the altar of the saint and to resume his community life. He soon set out for the Japanese missions where he was martyred, 17 October, 1637. The renown of the miracle quickly spread through Italy, and, inspired with confidence in the power and goodness of St. Francis Xavier, the faithful implored his assistance in a novena with such success that it came to be called the ‘novena of grace.’ This novena is now made publicly in many countries from 4 to 12 March, the latter being the date of the canonization of St. Francis Xavier together with St. Ignatius.”

At Saint Benedict Center, third order members and the religious pray the following four novenas in common during the year. They are:

1. The Novena of Grace, March 4 — 12.
2. The Novena to the Holy Ghost, Friday after Ascension Thursday to Saturday, the vigil of Pentecost.

3. The Novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, August 14 — 22.

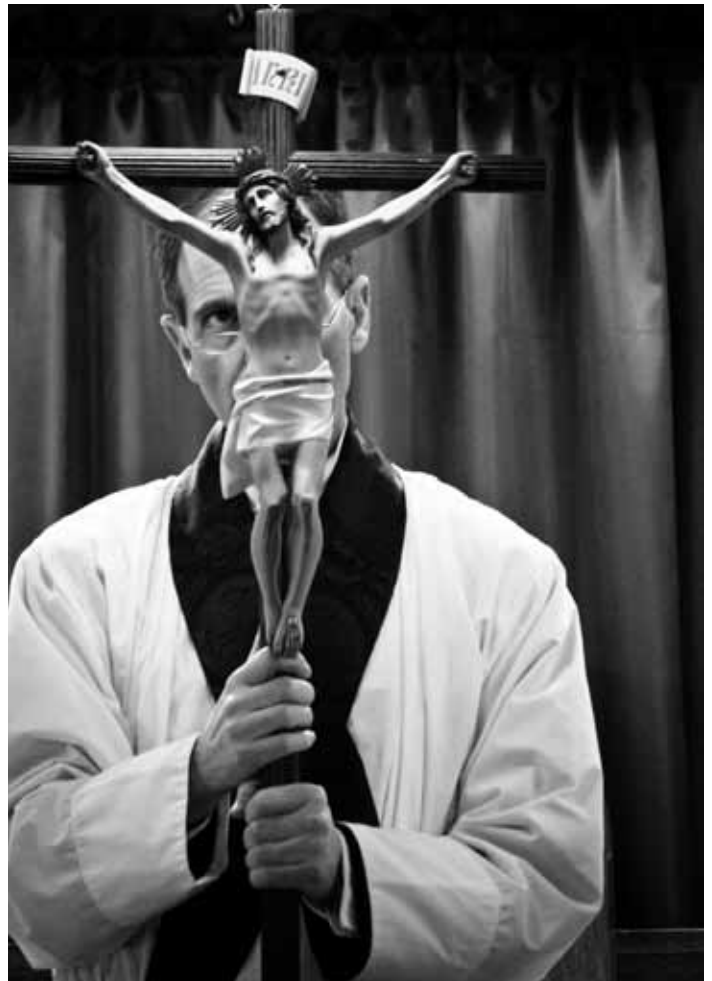
4. The Novena to Honor Christ the King, October: Saturday before the second-to-the last Sunday until the last Sunday of the month.

In addition, we also keep the Chair of Unity Octave, from January 18 to January 25.

These prayers can be found in the *Syllabus* of The Saint Augustine Institute of Catholic Studies and on our website. (The *Syllabus* is available through our Third Order Prefect at his email address below.) If you like, I will email you a reminder about the novenas just before each begins and the public intention of the novena for that year. (This does not preclude your private intentions.) See my address below.

I have a request. I have begun an email list to alert tertiaries as to important SBC events and other updates. Please send me an email if you would like to be included. I do not send out very many emails to the list. ■

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



The exaltation of the cross during the Good Friday service, 2012

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY — “NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND” — THE ENIGMA OF THE RUSSIAN SOUL BY RUSSELL LAPLUME

There is a dirge written by Robert Burns in which he uses the phrase “man’s inhumanity to man,” and indeed, the short novel by our celebrated author, *Notes from Underground*, expresses this truism factually. There is another saying from Edmund Bergler, a noted theoretician of Freud, which states, “Man’s inhumanity to man is equaled only by man’s inhumanity to himself,” and this concept best portrays the

tortured soul depicted by Dostoyevsky in this short novel.

I am convinced that this novel is a disguised autobiography of Dostoyevsky himself.

I am convinced that this novel is a disguised autobiography of Dostoyevsky himself. It is written in two parts; the first, a lengthy third-person dialogue directed to the reader in which you feel that you have been pinioned to a chair and must listen without interruption. The sensations you experience: spite, revenge, honor,

guilt, honesty, vice, self-deprecation, pride (are there any sensations one does not feel in this novel?), make you want to flee, to escape not only from the book, but from your conscience. But you cannot flee, for you are riveted in place, drawn back by your morbid curiosity of what does, or might, take place in your thoughts. The second part of the novel deals with some of the author’s life experiences that support the whirlwind of thought brought out in the first part. It is this first part I will briefly attempt to analyze.

How does one attempt to write a book review on something so discomfiting as his own conscience? Dostoyevsky has done so under the safety of an anonymous third person. But what about this reviewer? Would I not be disclosing my own particular passions in giving the account? I am not ready, as Saint Augustine does in his *Confessions*, to reveal my inner hidden faults, especially since my wife still walks this vale. So, you will have to settle for vagaries and probable doubts that it “might be so” in my case. The very first sentence of the novel sets the tone: “I am a sick man. I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man.” (In my case, all true, except for the unattractive part, of course.) Dostoyevsky’s “underground” is a very personal place, drawing the reader in, in spite of himself, and thereby making it next to impossible to describe to one who has not encountered the same ordeal — that is, of seeing one’s own psyche in a fictional character. One has to read the book to understand the dilemma. Nevertheless, I will try to account for Dostoyevsky’s mindset that led him to create this haunting character, which really could be a self-depiction (Dostoyevsky’s, that is).

He sees Russian thought being affected by French and German influence, namely liberalism and rationalism, and what is

more, the perversion of the Russian youth, mostly the young nobles, who have visited the notorious salons of France where free-thinking is idolized. These youths will import this thinking into their own clubs at home, and with the indulgence of the nobility, who see them only as amusement, will eventually poison the Russian culture leading to the suicide of 1917. To Dostoyevsky, the true Russian is able “to understand everything, to see everything, and to see it often incomparably more clearly than our most realistic minds see it.” And again, “their many-sidedness is remarkable. And what a faculty they have for the most contradictory sensations. Yes, it is only among us that the most incorrigible rogue can be absolutely and loftily honest at heart without in the least ceasing to be a rogue.”

The character in this novel is truly a rogue possessing the very traits quoted above. His vices are as great as his virtues, but his vices are expressed outwardly, while his virtues are suppressed inwardly. He offends easily, but, when offended, plots for years to revenge the supposed insult, and when the moment of satisfaction finally arrives, he shies away exclaiming, “I have never been a coward at heart, though I have always been a coward in action.” He constantly wars against reason, as the scientists and behaviorists see it; that is, once man has been analyzed and all his behaviors categorized, then a system of politico-economical formulas, such as prosperity, wealth, and freedom can be put in place as a guide for man to obtain earthly peace. He insists that there is one ingredient missing to the formula, the most important one, that of “one’s own free unfettered choice, one’s own caprice... is that very most advantageous advantage... which comes under no classification and against which all systems and theories are continually being shattered to atoms.” And then he astoundingly declares, “What does reason know? Reason only knows what it has succeeded in learning.” There is so much more to be gleaned from our author.

In reading Dostoyevsky’s major novels, I always wondered what the Russian soul was. What formed this Russian enigma of contradicting passions — of excessive cruelty, of exceeding compassion. It was in reading *Notes from Underground* that I finally glimpsed some of that enigma when he says, “I will ask on my own account here an idle question: which is better — cheap happiness or exalted sufferings? Well, which is better?” ■

Email Russell LaPlume at rlp@catholicism.org.

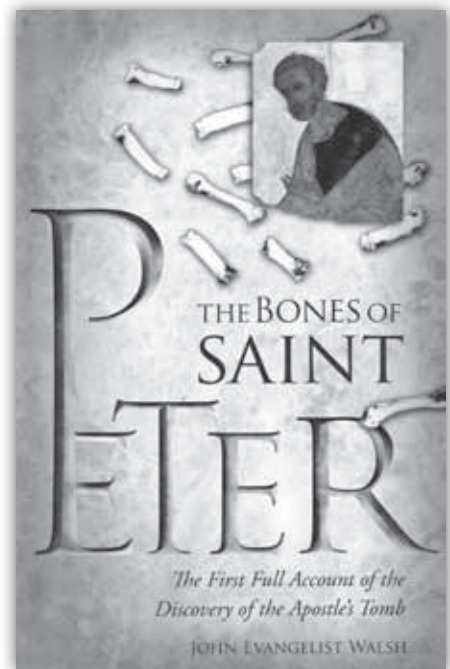
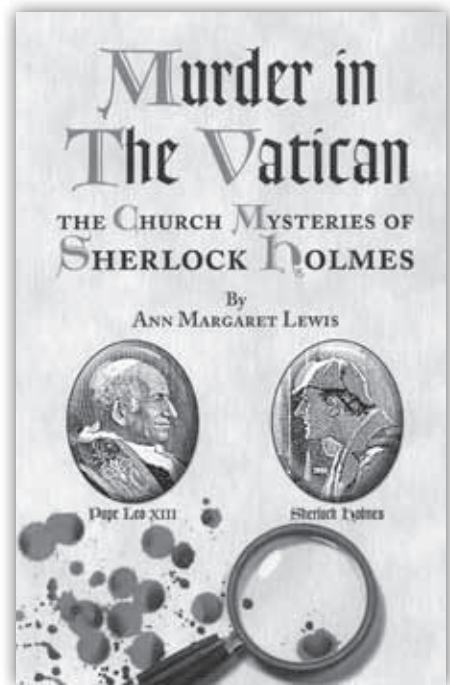
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EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

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).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- The novena to the Holy Ghost begins Friday, May 18 and ends Saturday, May 26.
- Saint Benedict Center Conference: Friday and Saturday, October 5 and 6, 2012. The theme is “Concerning Heroes and Heroines.” It will be held at SBC grounds in Richmond, New Hampshire. More details to be announced.
- The 17th annual Auriesville Pilgrimage for Restoration is scheduled for Friday through Sunday, September 28–30 in upstate New York. Visit www.national-coalition.org/pilgrim/ for details.

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