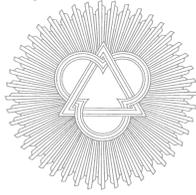


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# Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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My dear Catholic people,

The season of Lent is once again upon us, an unwelcome time for the body's desire for gratification. Our Catholic Faith, however, teaches us that this annual chastisement is something quite necessary for salvation. Saint Paul says in I Corinthians IX: 27: "*But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.*" If Saint Paul could fear for his salvation, unless he did penance, then who are we to shrink from these salutary rules?<sup>1</sup>

Concerning Lent we should consider two great quotations of two great saints. I will paraphrase. Saint Augustine says that the only reason why God keeps evil people alive is *in order to exercise the virtues of the just*. Saint Alphonsus says that the only reason why God keeps us (the just) alive in this world *is to bear crosses*.

If we think a long time about these two statements, we begin to see our existence in this world in its proper perspective.

The world in which we live is so affected by original sin and actual sin, that we could almost say that it is defined by it. What I mean is that the moral condition of this world cannot be considered without a reference to its sinfulness: the original sin of the first parents and the constant commission of actual sins.

The sinful condition of man leads necessarily to his moral corruption and degradation. This can be seen in the history of mankind before the Redemption: a world of appalling ignorance, error and superstition, particularly about religion, and of nauseating immorality, not

only in the form of sexual promiscuity, but in cruelty as well.

Sin also brought to man his physical corruption and death. Man's principal element is his soul, which by nature can never be corrupted, can never die, because it is not composed of matter. Our material bodies, before the fall of man, were not subject to corruption, *although by nature they are so subject*. God preserved us from death by a special gift whereby the body would follow the immortality of the soul. Original sin changed all that, and now the human being must be subject to the natural corruption of his body because, precisely, he chose diabolical naturalism as his "wisdom" in the test of love to which God subjected him.

Although modern science has indeed stretched somewhat the lifetime of man, it has not improved the quality of his old age. Many are living well beyond their normal lifetimes — given their health problems — only to find themselves to be living in misery. For although their bodies continue, many times their minds break down, or they become immobile, or blind, or deaf, or diabetic, or arthritic, or all of these things. A trip to a nursing home would be for anyone a sad reminder of the fall of man, as old people languish in loneliness and confusion, many times abandoned by their loved ones, or just too old to have any friends or relatives left to care about them. Through birth control many have deprived themselves of children, or a sufficient number of children.

This world, then, is something from which we need to be saved. We need to be saved from its moral corrup-

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<sup>1</sup> This verse, by the way, is an answer to protestants who claim that they are saved, and they have a reservation in heaven, i.e., that they have certitude concerning their salvation because they have faith (for them confidence) in Christ the Savior. The Catholic Church says: Who would have had more faith than Saint Paul? But here Saint Paul says that he is not certain of his salvation, and furthermore, that he must do the good works of fasting in order to be saved.

tion, and we need to be saved from its physical corruption, both of which are the effects of sin.

It should also be pointed out that most of the sadness of this life comes from sin, either our own sins, or the sins of others. Consider the incredible and mind-boggling amount of suffering which has come to the human race through war, which is caused by someone's sins, sins of selfishness, cruelty, greed, lust for empire, national pride (in the bad sense) and other equally iniquitous motives. Consider the suffering brought on by divorce, many times leading to the most brutal sins of murder. Consider the suffering caused by the mental sickness of young people, starved both for truth and for the love of their parents, and addicted to weird and twisted ideas, leading to the mass murdering of their schoolmates. I mention only a few of the miseries caused by sin.

Because we need to be saved, the world needed a Savior. People on a sinking ship have a single thought: *How will I be saved? How will I get off this ship which will bring me to certain death?*

So also the human race should be obsessed with this very thought: How will it escape sin and the misery of sin and death?

The possibility of salvation was given to us by God Himself, sending, in His infinite mercy, His Only-begotten Son to pay the price of sin — death — and thereby to free men from sin and the effects of sin.

In order to achieve this salvation which is offered to us, we must attach ourselves to the Savior, becoming part of His Mystical Body, and must conform our wills to His will. This means that we must profess our faith in what He has taught, receive Baptism, and enter thereby the Church which He has founded, which is the Catholic Church. We must also keep the commandments of God, in which consists conformity to the divine will.

By doing these things we receive sanctifying grace, a participation in God's life. Should we die in this grace, this friendship with God, it would be impossible that sin ever again have dominion over us, or even threaten us in any way. Even the souls in Purgatory, paying as they are for past sins and attachments to the things of this world, are assured of their salvation and have the consolation of knowing that they belong to God forever.

The Savior in His mercy imparts to the world every day and all day and many times a day something we call *actual grace*. Actual grace is a momentary urge to do something supernaturally good. To the sinner it is given for his repentance and conversion. To the just it is given for resistance to temptation and progress in virtue.

The flow of actual graces into the world, according to divine providence, is through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For although the Savior merited all the graces necessary for the salvation of all mankind, He wished

that the *application* of these graces be done through the ministry of priests in the Church which He founded.

All of these considerations bring us back to the reason for Lent. Because holiness consists in conformity to the divine will through obedience to the commandments, it is necessary to remove from ourselves any obstacles to that obedience. These obstacles are manifold. Many pertain to our worldiness, gluttony, and lust. Others pertain to the pride of our minds and wills.

Lent, therefore, is a time for a general spiritual overhaul. It is a time of self-examination and penance.

Many see Lent only in a limited and negative light. They see it as a time in which we merely give up some pleasures of the table for forty days, as if going to prison for some past overindulgence, only to get out on Easter Sunday with a return to the same old vices.

While it is accurate that the hardships of Lent are meritorious satisfactions for past sins, to confine them to this one purpose would be an error.

The overall purpose of Lent is to abandon habits of sin and to progress toward perfection in the spiritual life. The Lenten fast is there primarily in order to *discipline the will*, so that it is able to say "no" to temptation. The strongest desire in us is not the desire for sexual pleasure, as some may think, but the desire to *eat*. If we should go even twenty-four hours without eating, we would become very uncomfortable and could think only about one thing: getting something to eat. If the shelves in stores should ever be empty one day, we would see rioting and violence in the streets as people would do practically anything in order to get something to eat.

Holy Mother Church, therefore, knows where to strike — at the table.

The principal activity of Lent, however, should be increased prayer. For prayer is the key to all sanctity, and it is the *only* remedy to pride, which is the source of all sin, ultimately, and certainly the source of our worst sins. People convert from sins of pleasure much more easily than they convert from sins of pride.

In Lent, as well, we should renew the sacrifice of our daily crosses, those arising from illness, infirmity, old age, mental disease, birth defects, loneliness, marriage difficulties, poverty, and many other sources.

**Saint Augustine and Saint Alphonsus.** Now let us return to the original quotations. Saint Augustine says that the only reason why the evil people of this world are kept alive is to exercise the virtues of the just.

This, of course, makes sense, since there would be no other reason to tolerate them. This truth tells us that the purpose of this life is to increase in virtue, *and that it is the only purpose of this life*. When we consider the amount of evil which God tolerates, we understand

how important it is in His mind that we increase in virtue. If we place on one side of the scale the moral evil of human beings, which is incalculable, we understand the importance which God places upon our spiritual perfection.

Why, for example, will God permit the Antichrist to come? For a single purpose: in order to confirm the faith of the just and draw them into martyrdom. I believe that He permits the present occupation of the Vatican by heretics for the same reason, which is to strengthen the faith of Catholics through their resistance to Modernism and their rejection of the Modernists.

Saint Alphonsus says that the only reason why God keeps us alive is to carry crosses. Again we learn from this one comment the whole purpose of human life on earth: *to bear the cross*. The business of this life, in other words, is primarily and essentially to bear the cross, and in so doing to merit our salvation. Human beings have no other purpose for existence. It is a sobering thought.

**The inherent contradiction of pagans, atheists, and free-thinkers.** If anyone lacking the Catholic faith were to read these lines, he would no doubt be horrified at the world-view of the Catholic Church, and especially the necessity to carry crosses as the defining element of human existence.

They deny original sin and the effects of sin. In fact, sin for them is a meaningless thing, since there is no God to offend.

Nonetheless, these unbelievers do have a sense of right and wrong. In fact, they yearn to make the world a better place to live in. They are obsessed by this goal, and it has become for them a very strong religion-substitute.

Many pagans and atheists are and have been very active in movements of socialism and communism, seeing it as a way to make things better in the world. In many cases these “socialists” live in luxury homes and drive luxury cars, bearing up with the “evils of capitalism” as best they can. Little do they realize that socialism would strip them of their posh life-styles, and make the world around them a hellhole of misery, particularly for the lower classes. Let them see the remnants of socialism in eastern Europe, or let them visit Cuba or Venezuela, if they want to see how socialism has benefited the little man.

Most of these pagans are very ardent supporters of some charity or another. They are typically excited about world peace or global warming.

If we accept, however, the tenets of pagans, atheists and free-thinkers, then we should care nothing about these things. If humans are completely material beings, if their intellectual activity is merely the effect of highly developed brains, then there is no reason to desire or hope for anything except selfish gratification.

For justice, charity, peace, love, generosity, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and all of the other ingredients that make the world “a better place in which to live” are immaterial things which can only be known and understood by an immaterial principle, namely a spiritual soul.

It is true that these immaterial good things are expressed in material acts, but the material acts would never take place unless there were a spiritual soul which could appreciate these immaterial goods. How, for example, could we understand the balancing of the scales of justice without understanding equality? But equality is not a material thing. Someone shows mercy and forgiveness to another because he perceives that such acts constitute a *higher good* than the exaction of justice and revenge. But how can anyone even compare the levels of goodness, which itself is immaterial, without a spiritual principle, i.e., the soul?

The pagans, atheists, and free-thinkers condemn us to a world, logically, of dog-eat-dog animality and selfishness, one in which there is no recognition of right and wrong, but merely a world of brutes. If there is no Creator, and we are merely glorified gorillas, then why is there any morality at all? Why do we care about the environment or global warming? Do gorillas care about these things? Do they care about breast cancer and socialized medical insurance?

So while the modern pagans ridicule the christian doctrines of sin, redemption, the Cross, penance, salvation, and eternal life, they lead lives of complete and utter absurdity. They hand us a credo that is too absurd to recite, namely that we must believe that the world in which we live was designed and created by *no one*, but that it all came together by chance, that it holds together by chance, and that human beings, although as material as rocks, can know spiritual things, and that they become saddened and depressed if they are deprived of these spiritual things.

A child is interested in his mother’s love — an immaterial thing — and has no interest at all in the \$500,000 emerald necklace which she might be wearing.

**More about Bergoglio.** Recently Bergoglio received at the Vatican a transgender, that is, a female that has attempted to make herself a male.

He did this in reaction to the condemnation of this act pronounced by a priest in Spain where the transgender attends Mass. It was an obvious repudiation of the priest’s action.

The only way in which a Catholic priest should receive a transgender is for the purpose of hearing his confession, in which he promises to return to his God-given gender and live in accordance with the laws of chastity.

Bergoglio received this person as an approval of her gender change.

To choose to have such an operation is a very grave sin for two reasons: (1) it is a mutilation of the body without a sufficient reason; (2) it is a mutilation for the express purpose of committing sins against nature.

Catholic moral teaching permits the mutilation of the body only in order to preserve the life of the whole body. A cancerous lung may be removed in order to preserve the rest of the body from the disease.

What makes the case of changing gender far worse is that *it is undertaken in order to commit sin*.

Once again, Bergoglio's "pastoral approach" has contradicted Catholic moral teaching.

**The Bergoglio effect?** Most of the time this term refers to the expected filling of the churches as a result of Bergoglio's approval of sodomy, adultery and fornication.

We know from the polls, however, that from this point of view he is a big flop. Numbers still continue to decline. Even in South America, where the Novus Ordo sees its last great bastion of "belief," the numbers are swiftly dropping, many Novus Ordites passing over to protestant sects. So the Youth Day in Brazil, with all the idiotic episcopal hand waving and rock music, came to nought, although with a thirty million dollar price tag.

The *real* Bergoglio effect, however, is the rise in sedevacantism. I would not say that people are breaking down our doors, although we have seen a significant increase in interest. Where this Bergoglio effect is most noticeable is among the Novus Ordo conservatives, who up to now have regarded our position as a taboo, an unthinkable conclusion. Cardinal Burke, for example, recently said in an interview that if Bergoglio persisted in his policies concerning matrimony, he would resist him. While this is not yet sedevacantism, he is nevertheless already positing its principles. Why resist except if the command is sinful? But if the command is sinful, is not the doctrine behind the command a heresy?

Professor De Mattei, a prince among the Novus Ordo conservatives, was recently seen on the blog *Rorate* citing the historical example of John XXII in the fourteenth century, who was accused of heresy. (He retracted). More importantly, the same professor was giving a historical summary of *Cum ex apostolatus officio*, the bull of Pope Paul IV in the 1540's declaring that a heretic cannot be the pope, *even if the whole Church had recognized him as pope when he was elected*. Even Pat Buchanan said a few months ago that if Bergoglio persisted in his campaign to change the Church's teachings, it may become necessary to listen to the sedevacantists.

The danger in all this, however, is that the reaction to Bergoglio is limited to Bergoglio. Most of these people would be dancing for joy if Ratzinger were to return. They do not understand that the real problem is Vatican II, and that Bergoglio is merely applying Vatican II according to all of its logical conclusions.

John XXIII's *aggiornamento* — updating — which was the guiding principle of Vatican II, hitches the Church inexorably to the modern world. Wherever the modern world goes, the Church must follow. It is subject to a daily evolution. Ratzinger said about twenty years ago: "*For the time being, I do not dare suggest any concrete, possible and imaginable realizations of this future church.*"

**A note to the Marianne's of this world.** Some may have been taken aback by my January newsletter, in which I pointed out that the symbol of revolutionary France was *Marianne*, and that this name commonly stood to mean a harlot in eighteenth century France.

It is truly horrid that this beautiful name, which combines that of the Virgin Mary and her mother, was defiled in eighteenth century France by attaching it to a harlot. I have no idea how this attachment came about. Probably there was some prominent person of this kind in Paris.

The only reason that I mentioned it is to point out the radicalism of the French Revolution, namely that the revolutionists would resort to the image and name of a harlot as their national symbol. The idea was to portray France as a woman who was rejecting all the rules. It should be remembered that a woman of the same profession was fetched by Robespierre to be the "Goddess of Reason," dressed like the Virgin Mary, and enthroned in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Religious homage was paid to her. On the altar there were busts of Franklin, Voltaire, and Rousseau.

At times history is brutal. I have read much history, and there are some pages I wish I had never read.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn  
Rector