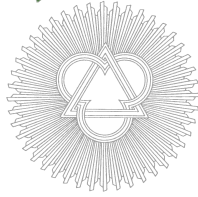

Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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My dear Catholic people,

A small controversy arose recently about the recitation of the Fatima prayer after each decade of the Rosary.

I have been reticent about using it for a number of reasons which I will explain here.

In the first place, I never saw this prayer used in public recitation of the Rosary until the late 1960's. In my Catholic grammar school which I attended from 1956 to 1963, there was a very strong devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. We used to recite the Rosary publicly in the classroom, and then sing a hymn to Our Lady of Fatima. I can still remember the melody and the words.

Despite this devotion, never in my youth did I hear anyone recite the Fatima prayer at the end of each decade of the Rosary.

I have also noticed that in a 1955 book of Catholic devotions, containing a section on how to say the Rosary, there is no mention of the Fatima prayer.

All this leads me to believe that the recitation of the prayer was not approved by our diocesan bishop.

The first time I heard the prayer was while I was reciting the Rosary with some lay persons in the late 1960's, well after Vatican II. At the time, I did not know even what the prayer was.

My next experience of it was at Ecône in 1971. The text of the prayer matched closely what is said in English now, with the exception that the phrase "lead all souls to heaven," was "take [French 'prenez'] all souls to heaven." I did not think much of it until one day the rector of the seminary at that time, Canon René Berthod, instructed us to change *prenez* to *conduisez*, which means to conduct or lead. He felt, I am sure, that the word "take" was in some way theologically inaccurate.

Another question I had concerning it was whether the addition of this prayer would nullify the indulgence attached to the recitation of the Rosary, for it seemed to be a significant change in the manner of recitation.

For all these reasons, I never used the prayer myself, and it is not used here at the seminary.

Recently, however, some research has been done concerning at least the indulgence question. In 1956, Pope Pius XII gave permission for the recitation of the Fatima prayer and said that it in no way annulled the indulgence. So that issue is no longer in question.

But there remain three other questions: (1) what is the actual text of the prayer, as there are many versions; (2) what the prayer is praying for; (3) which text, if any, was approved for use by the *true* authority of the Church? Let me explain these questions.

1. There are at least three different versions of the text of the prayer:

(a) *O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell; lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.* The French text matches this, with the exception that for "lead" is substituted "take."

(b) *O my Jesus, pardon our sins, save us from the fire of hell, have mercy on the souls in purgatory, especially the most abandoned.*

(c) *O my Jesus, pardon us, and save us from the fire of hell; draw all souls to heaven, especially those most in need.*

This third version is the one reported by William Thomas Walsh, a well-known Catholic author, who had a conversation with Sister Lucy on July 15th, 1946. I reproduce here the pertinent section from his book:

In many books about Fátima, the prayer Our Lady asked you to say after the decades of the Rosary is given in some such form as this: “O my Jesus, pardon our sins, save us from the fire of hell, have mercy on the souls in purgatory, especially the most abandoned.” Is that correct?

“No it is not,” she replied positively. The correct form is the one I have written in my account of the apparition on July 13: “O my Jesus, pardon us, and save us from the fire of hell; draw all souls to heaven, especially those most in need.” [In a footnote, the author provides the original Portuguese: “*O meu Jesus, perdoai-nos e livrai nos de fogo do inferno; levai as alminhas todas para o Céu, principalmente aquelas que mais precisarem.*”]¹

The problem presents itself: *Which is the correct text?* If (c) is indeed the authentic, then how did the other texts emerge? Or are there yet other versions?

The second text (b) is provided by the St. Anthony’s Welfare Center in New York during the 1950’s, with these slight variations: “*O Jesus forgive our sins, save us from the fire of hell! Relieve the Holy Souls in purgatory, especially the most abandoned.*”

I do not know the origin of the first text which is now used so commonly.

2. What is the prayer praying for?

Whose souls are we referring to here? The souls on earth? Those in purgatory? It would *seem* that the souls in purgatory are envisaged, as it would be unlikely to refer to living persons as “souls.” Furthermore the word “take” (Port. *levai*), in what is probably the authentic text, would be most appropriately used for souls who already have certitude of entering heaven. The word does not seem appropriate to use regarding those on earth who are still hoping for salvation, but have not yet achieved it, and far less appropriate for hardened sinners, atheists, and agnostics. One former Novus Ordo priest told me that many Novus Ordites, in saying this prayer, take it to mean that even the souls in hell will be released, which is a heresy. It is not to be forgotten that Bergoglio denied the existence of hell, and said that those who are really bad (like Hitler and traditionalist Catholics) simply get annihilated by God.

3. Which text, if any, was approved for use by the true authority of the Church?

To my knowledge, an authentic text was never approved by the true authority of the Catholic Church. I saw once that a bishop in Spain, before Vatican II,

did approve of the prayer, but which text? I do not know. Nor should the faithful think that this insistence on approval is nit-picking. All prayers to be recited by the faithful must be approved by the Catholic hierarchy. This is why you see, underneath prayers on the back of holy cards, the little note of approbation by some bishop. It is necessary since the law of prayer must establish the law of belief. This is the meaning of the famous axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi*, which means that the law of prayer — how we pray — must be the teacher of what we believe. The Church has been very careful to approve of every prayer which the Catholic faithful would recite. And so it is with this prayer. We see that there are significant differences in the text, and ambiguities in the meaning of the text.

Furthermore, the phrase “take all souls to heaven” can be understood in an orthodox way only if (1) it refers to the souls in purgatory; (2) it refers to the antecedent will of God which is the salvation of all men. “*Who [God our Savior] will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” (I Timothy: II: 4)

The Church, neither in her liturgical prayers, nor in her approved private prayers, ever prays, “*take all souls to heaven.*” Instead it prays for the remission of all sins and of all punishment due to them, which is the obvious condition of their going to heaven.

For these reasons, I have always refrained from using the prayer. In my opinion, these three uncertainties, and most especially the lack of an authoritative approval of the text of the prayer, render imprudent the recitation of the prayer. Since there is currently a lack of authority in the Church, we must wait a long time before this true authoritative approval can be obtained.

Apparitions and private revelations. I have noticed over the years that, as Rome is more and more occupied by modernist heretics, the faithful have taken a greater interest in apparitions and private revelations. They need to understand a few things about them, however:

(1) The difference between public and private revelation. *Public revelation* is that which was done in Sacred Scripture and Tradition up to the time of the death of the last Apostle. It is *of faith* that there is no more public revelation. *Private revelation* is any revelation that is made to a private person by a celestial person, and can come in various forms.

These private revelations are meant to confirm the existing public revelation. We can see this principle

¹ Quoted from William Thomas Walsh, *Our Lady of Fatima*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948) p. 225.

clearly in the apparition of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary Alocoque and of the Virgin Mary to Saint Bernadette. Occasionally messages concerning contemporary events could be revealed, as in the case of La Salette and Fatima.

The messages forthcoming from these revelations cannot be considered to be the object of *divine* faith, i.e., faith based on the authority of God revealing, but are accepted only on *human* faith by the Church, i.e., the testimony of the human seer. This is true no matter how reliable the human witness should be.

While the testimony of God is infallible, since He can neither deceive nor be deceived, the testimony of human beings is subject to error, even if there is no intention to deceive.

Furthermore, the seers of apparitions are not inspired sacred writers like those we find in Sacred Scripture. The special assistance of God, known as inspiration, not only preserved the sacred authors from error, but more importantly, inspired them to write what God willed. Hence, the content of Sacred Scripture is called the *word of God*, and rightly so.

The testimony of a seer of an apparition is merely human testimony, and is neither inspired nor preserved from error.

What is also true is that the *fact* of the apparition is also based on purely human testimony. The Church's attitude toward any alleged supernatural event, be it an apparition or a miracle, is to *presume that it is a natural event unless there is proof that it is a supernatural event*. In other words, the burden of proof is upon the supernatural.

When these events allegedly occur, the authorities of the Church do a thorough investigation and either conclude that the event is false or declare that, *in their best judgement*, it is a supernatural event. Here again, however, there is merely a question of human faith, not of divine faith. Consequently the Church's approbation of apparitions, and devotion thereto, is not to be placed on the same level as the canonization of a saint, for example.

Nor does the Church make judgments about the messages which are reported from these apparitions. They come under the category of what we call *pious belief*, that is, it is reasonable and prudent, based on the Church's approval, to assume that the apparition did take place, and that the messages, if authentic, are true.

I say "if authentic" because at least once the Church condemned an alleged message of an apparition, namely that of La Salette. The original version of the secret of La Salette was published in 1851. An ex-

panded version was published by the seer Melanie in 1879. This second version was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by Pope Pius XI on May 9th, 1923. Melanie is said to have lost her mind by 1879. It should be noted that one of the messages in the 1879 version, the one condemned by Pope Pius XI, contains the oft repeated prediction: "*Rome will lose the faith and become the seat of the Antichrist.*"

Note that the condemnation did not come until forty-four years after the expanded version of the secret was published. Thus those persons were deceived who placed excessive credence in the 1879 version.

I point this out simply to make the faithful aware that they must receive these messages with a certain reserve, and not as if they are necessarily of divine origin, or necessarily correctly recalled and/or transmitted by the seer.

A modernist inmate of the Vatican approves of transgender operations. Although Bergoglio is lying in a hospital at death's door, nonetheless his close associate has managed to destroy yet another moral dogma of the Catholic Faith.

Novus Ordo Cardinal Fernandez, the head of the so-called Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, said recently in a speech regarding transgender operations: "there are cases outside the norm, such as strong dysphorias that can lead to an unbearable existence or even suicide. These exceptional situations must be evaluated with great care...We don't want to be cruel and say that we don't understand people's conditioning and the deep suffering that exists in some cases of 'dysphoria' that manifests itself even from childhood."

While Fernandez did not come out and state clearly that a transgender operation would be permitted, he did so in so many words, as modernists always do.

In Roman Catholic teaching, a transgender operation would be against the natural law, inasmuch as gender is determined by the creation of the child by God. "*Male and female He created them,*" as it says in the book of Genesis. Consequently it is *intrinsically evil* to attempt to change one's gender, which, in fact, is physically impossible. Gender is stamped upon every cell by the genes in everyone's body.

What Fernandez is doing is to create a "hardship" exception. A "hardship" exception is absolutely forbidden in anything which concerns the natural law. It would be the same as permitting a spouse to murder his or her spouse because of "hardship." Just as nature is immutable, so the law requiring us to act according to nature is immutable and absolute in all cases.

Ratzinger, the darling of the Novus Ordo conservatives, permitted a similar exception to the natural law when he permitted prostitutes to use birth control devices in order to stop the spread of AIDS. Such a permission explodes the very foundations of Catholic morality. For what is good for the goose is good for the gander, as the saying goes. In other words, if it is permitted for prostitutes to practice artificial contraception because of a hardship, so it can be permitted to ordinary couples because of some “hardship,” e.g., to make mortgage payments on the dream house or the boat.

To admit an exception to something which is intrinsically evil is to destroy the very notion of the natural law. As nature never changes, so its law never changes. Now, with Fernandez’ veiled permission to have a transgender operation because of “dysphoria,” the gate is open wide for everyone to have one.

For the modernists, furthermore, morality is based on “human dignity,” and not on God’s law or the natural law, which is the same as God’s law. It is as if humanity is an idol to be worshipped, and consequently sin is defined as a violation of man’s “dignity.” Remember the chilling prediction of Msgr. Delassus: that the goal of the anti-christian conspiracy is to create a *dogma-less humanitarianism*.

The second worst enemy of the Catholic Faith. Certainly modernists the likes of Fernandez are the worst enemies.

But recently we heard that there is a beautiful church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which is serviced by the Fraternity of Saint Peter. On Sunday, we are told, there are about one thousand people. They offer four Masses — the traditional Latin Mass.

The people attending these Masses are certainly well-intentioned. They are, however, seeking the Catholic Faith in a place where it does not exist. What they are getting are the superficial trappings of the Catholic Faith, without the substance underneath. For the Fraternity of Saint Peter was established precisely for the purpose of drawing Catholics, disenchanted with the changes of Vatican II, into a Novus Ordo-sponsored traditional Latin Mass, conceded to them for a modernist reason. This age-old rite was permitted to them because of “their sensibilities,” and not because of their Catholic Faith. They had to accept Vatican II and the legitimacy of its reforms in order to obtain this concession, this crumb from the modernist table. The same is true of permission of the traditional Mass by Ratzinger in 2007. These Latin Masses “permitted” by

the heretics are merely a cloak of Catholicism draped over the heresy of Modernism. They are a sham. The traditional Latin Mass and all of its splendid accoutrements, such as vestments, altars, candlesticks, and so forth, are meant to express the Catholic Faith. When these trappings do not express the Catholic Faith, but the dogmatic pluralism of the heresy of Modernism, they are no better than the costumes of an opera house or of a masquerade party.

Those thousand people should be at our Mass in Harrisburg, humble though it is in its surroundings. But so was the crib of Bethlehem. Herod’s palace in Jerusalem was splendid, but empty of faith, indeed full of apostasy and the desire to kill Christ.

This tragedy of luring the anti-modernist faithful into the net of the Novus Ordo must be laid at the feet of the Society of Saint Pius X, which, since its inception in 1970, has constantly pushed for coexistence with the modernists as the solution to the Vatican II problem. There were only two short intervals in which this compromise with the Great Apostasy was abandoned: from 1976 to 1980, and then for a short time in 1988.

The Novus Ordo religion has all the characteristics of other false religions. Just as the Jews have their spectrum of beliefs and observances, divided into the Hasids, the Orthodox, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Reform, so does the Novus Ordo. The same comparison can be made to the protestants: fundamentalists, mainstream, and liberal. Take your pick.

The Catholic Faith, however, cannot tolerate such an array of contradictory beliefs. The very word *catholic* means “one thing applied to the whole.” Unity of faith is *essential* to Catholicism. Any diversity in belief and worship is a sure sign of a false religion. But this is exactly what organizations such as the Fraternity of Saint Peter are proposing to their faithful who are sheep looking to them as a refuge from the modernist wolves.

The second worst enemy of the Catholic Faith, therefore, consists of those who lure the sheep fleeing from the wolf right back into the jaws of the wolf.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Donald J. Sanborn
Rector