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EDITORIAL

On Reviling and Backbiting

The angry soul knows no peace nor rest until it ends in despair, whence the Devil has been silently leading it. From despair, there is a short distance which ends like Judas Iscariot.

Since spiritual people refrain from backbiting and reviling, these words are seldom found in their vocabulary. On the other hand, those of the world who do not live by supernatural grace are quite familiar with the deed if not the word.

We can turn to St. Thomas Aquinas – that light of the Dominican Order – for some interesting information on this subject that has become the lifestyle of some people. He places these acts among injuries inflicted by words uttered “extra judicially” because they constitute sins against justice and are more common than things said or done in a court of law.

In the first place, St. Thomas places “reviling”. He asks the

question: “Whether reviling consists in words?” That there are many who think their words do not carry consequences, he answers the question in this way:

“Nothing, save words, is perceived by the hearing. Now reviling is perceived by the hearing according to Jerem. XX.10: ‘I heard reviling (contumelies) on every side’. Therefore, reviling consists in words.”

He then goes on to explain: **“I answer that, reviling denotes the dishonoring of a person, and this happens in two ways: for since honor results from excellence, one person dishonors another, first, by depriving him of the excellence for which he is honored. This is done by sins of deed, whereof we have spoken above (QQ. LXIV, LXV, LXVI). Secondly, when a man publishes something against another’s honor, thus bringing it to the knowledge of the latter and of other men. This is reviling properly so called, and is done by some kind of signs. Now, according**

to Augustine, ‘compared with words all other signs are very few, for words have obtained the chief place among men for the purpose of expressing whatever the mind conceives.’

Hence, reviling, properly speaking, consists in words; wherefore, Isidore says that ‘a man is said to be inclined to revile (contumeliosus) because he is hasty and bursts out (fumat) in injurious words.’ Since, however, things are also signified by deeds, which on this account have the same significance as words, it follows that reviling in a wider sense extends also to deeds. Wherefore a gloss on Rom.1,30, ‘contumeliosus, proud,’ says: ‘Revilers are those who by word or deed bring reviling and shame on others.’

Is reviling a mortal sin? St. Thomas answers: **Nothing but mortal sin deserves the eternal punishment of hell.** Now railing or reviling deserves the punishment of hell, according to Matthew 5,22: ‘Whosoever shall say to his brother...Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.’ Therefore, railing or

reviling is a mortal sin.”

What, then, must be said of such people who seek to destroy the good name of another? Such people are in a state of mortal sin. Repentance and restitution can only be possible in the interior forum of the Sacrament of Penance and appropriate restitution. No one without authority given by one’s bishop can absolve such mortal sins. And, if the reviling is done against a bishop what then? It is the Holy Ghost who says: **“Touch not my anointed one!”**

What then of those who dare to contradict the Holy Ghost? Their punishment is eternal hell fire. Unfortunately, such individuals are already under the influence of their Father – the Father of lies. The reviler destroys only himself – and this for all eternity.



The Bishop Speaks

THE REMNANT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAINST THE DEMONIC DISORIENTATION OF TRADITIONALISTS McKenna the “Theologian”

How do you catch a chameleon? A chameleon has that peculiarity that permits it to take on the color of its surroundings so as to protect itself from predators or being seen.

In his July 1986 newsletter optimistically called CATHOLICS FOREVER which would more appropriately be titled CATHOLICS NEVER, McKenna makes another one of his “accidental discoveries” that “force him to change his radical view of “Sede Vacantist” to a new and improved version of his views regarding the papacy. One painfully recalls his public display in front of a large group of people in Dallas, TX. After a meeting of just a few clergymen during which the papal question was discussed and no conclusion drawn, this man was the first to take the floor and enthusiastically pronounce that **“We are in a state of Sede Vacante!”** much

to the dismay of those of us who were not as yet convinced of this reality. Then followed his friend, Vida Elmer who, too, publicly pronounced what I and others did not wish to do until further evidence could be provided in order to make an honest and firm judgment. This was in 1982.

In July of 1986, we find Fidelis McKenna using the papal first person plural “we” and “our” to impose upon those dependent upon his liturgical services a new and improved **theory** to explain the simple fact that because of heresy, all those men following the death of Pope Pius XII cannot be valid popes and are, therefore, antipopes. Truth is never complex and vague, subject to change at the whim of an individual. The situation is much like the question: What came first, the chicken or the egg? Normal people would say the chicken came first; but people like McKenna would say the egg came first. Whichever “theory” one would espouse, the simple truth is that we will continue eating chickens and eggs.

McKenna opens his newsletter (July 1986) with a question: **What does it mean to have a Pope materially but not formally?** Now, setting aside all Scholastic philosophy to the contrary, he is going to expound the bizarre theory concocted by the retired Dominican and former Thomist theologian, consecrated by Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, Mgr. Guerard des Lauriers, O.P.

The readers are expected to make the connection between Guerard des Lauriers and McKenna by this statement: **“That such is the case with the Church today – and has been since II Vatican Council and the papal promulgation of teaching clearly contrary to the infallible Magisterium – is the thesis of Mgr. Gerard (McKenna’s spelling) des Lauriers, O.P.”**

McKenna has just admitted that the occupants of the Vatican are heretics by declaring that heresy is being promulgated and promoted from the very top of the hierarchy. It is now in view of des Lauriers’ **theory** that McKenna changes his mind from Sede Vacantist to whatever new fanciful label he may choose: **“In the light of it your editor**

has been forced to abandon his own opinion favoring the sedevacantist position that there is no Pope at all.” He then refers the reader to “our” May Issue 3.

I would like to emphasize here the constant shifting of “opinions” in a matter so important to the faith – the validity or invalidity of a person presented to the believing world as the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Now, I do not know how others may feel about this kind of toying with the papacy, but I for one am not inclined to give any kind of trust or credence to people who are bouncing around like a ball in matters so vital to our Catholic faith.

I want to know, plainly and simply: Were those men whom we thought were Popes and the one occupying the Chair of Peter, Joseph Ratzinger, **real Popes or not?**

McKenna tells us that he was “forced to abandon his own opinion” regarding this important question. What kind of “force” was so strong as to change his former “opinion”? What was the motive? Was it really some kind of “light” that

blazed upon the mind and said: “This is the new and improved version. Believe it!”?

But, what was just stated about being forced to abandon his position, will now undergo further fashioning: From forced abandonment to “modification” – how does one perform this mental magic? First you are forced to abandon – this means you reject, you no longer hold or keep this view; then, you “modify” what you have abandoned. Which is it going to be? Here, McKenna begins his use of “Papal politeness” and uses “we” and “our” instead of “I” and “my” – unless, of course, he is once again “presuming to speak” for those who could not care less for his “opinions” or who have never appointed him as their spokesman. He writes: **“Or may we say, modified our stand?”** He is now going to give his “reason” for this new position by rash judging those who are labeled “sedevacantists”: **“For the arguments used by the sedevacantists serve not to prove a Sede vacante or papal vacancy but rather, if you will, an Officio vacante - a vacant office rather than, strictly speaking, a vacant chair or**

throne.”

The sedevacantist is talking about the chicken; McKenna is talking about the egg! However, it should be pointed out that while the so-called “sedevacantist” is logical and consistent, McKenna and his “adopted” theory are illogical and inconsistent. While the “sedevacantist” is and remains a genuine, loyal Roman Catholic – McKenna and his crew have long ago ceased to be genuine Catholics “forever” because of their plain-as-day spirit of disobedience to any kind of visible Church authority. For, this is what it has all degenerated into: despicable anarchy thinly-coated with Catholic terminology. “By their fruits you shall know them”.... said Our Lord.

What really seems to strike fear in the vain and ambitious heart of McKenna may be deduced from his next statement: **“Yes, there is a difference! In practice not much, but theoretically important for what potentially the difference may lead to disastrously doing: the attempt to elect a Pope and fill a chair not in fact empty! The result would**

be simply schism and a woeful complicating of a situation already unprecedented in the history of the Church and too much for the average Catholic to believe.”

This paragraph is fraught with unfounded and gratuitous assumptions, subjective prognostications and sheer lunacy. He suggests in a declarative sentence that there is no other alternative than somehow electing a true Pope. But, one can just as easily posit another alternative which he somehow fails to see: It is entirely possible that there will never be another true Pope in view of the Great Apostasy and the nearness of Christ’s return to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire. This, too is a far more reasonable supposition than anything McKenna can dream up.

McKenna - as we will see - has accused his past “popes” and the present one, Ratzinger, of “supernatural insanity” without realizing that he is mirroring himself in those whom he so labels.

You may wonder what “supernatural insanity” might

mean. As always, it is not our intention to put words into another person’s mouth. Traditionalists are especially fond of this tactic.

Let’s see what McKenna means by his uniquely coined “terminology”.

Some one had written a book entitled **HAS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH GONE MAD?**

McKenna bravely sallies forth to “defend” the Church. He answers the author of the book: **“No, the Catholic Church, the one true Church of God, has NOT gone mad, but the POPE has. In the words of Sacred Scripture, cited by Our Lord Himself, ‘I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered’.”**

And he continues with his explanation:

“Not that the Popes of (or since) Vatican II have been (or are) insane on the NATURAL level but, certainly so SPIRITUALLY speaking, or on the SUPERNATURAL level. To deny this is to say that the Catholic Church is not infallible as she before

claimed to be; that she can make mistakes in teaching and guiding men – mistakes now being corrected by and since Vatican II.”

So, what he is saying, is that we must not deny HIS statement because if we deny it, we are guilty of saying the Church is not infallible. It means that HIS statement of “supernatural insanity” must be true. But, if his statement carries any kind of truth, we would have to agree with him. What exactly are we agreeing to? “Supernatural” can only be said of the life of grace. Supernatural grace IS our life and is LOST with every mortal sin. There cannot be any such thing as supernatural “insanity” because grace can never be “insane” or “unhealthy”.

Furthermore, when he uses the phrase “**spiritually speaking**” and then says “**or, on the supernatural level**” the intelligent reader immediately sees some sort of “distinction”. The statement that McKenna would have us accept is totally nonsensical, totally absurd and nothing more than a sophism. “Spiritual” and “Supernatural” are not the same thing. True, at

times the terms are used in the same meaning to express the reality of a life of grace.

However, there is too often confusion here. “Spiritual” can apply to anything that is not “material” – such as “pure spirits” (angels and devils) or the human soul with its three faculties of memory, intellect and will. None of these is necessarily “supernatural” because the good angels, besides their spiritual nature, are also living a supernatural life of grace while the devils, although essentially spiritual (without a body) do not have a supernatural life.

If we are in the state of sanctifying grace, **we are living a supernatural life as opposed to our natural life. There is no middle existence between life or death of the soul. A person is either supernaturally alive, or supernaturally dead – empty of supernatural life. EVERY MORTAL SIN DESTROYS THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF THE SOUL.**

As a good example, I would refer the reader to the editorial dealing with detraction. This is a most vicious habit that most

often ends in mortal sin. Such as those who deal in detraction are certainly guilty of mortal sin which, by definition, destroys the supernatural life of the soul.

Also, McKenna violates the Principle of Excluded Middle that states: **A thing either IS or it IS NOT.** There is no “in-between”.

The implications and consequent conclusions of his statements fills the heart with pity and the mind with the misery of having to “undress” this man before the mini-world of those whose souls are in serious jeopardy.

Observe: He uses the word “potentially” suggesting far more than the word implies. Perhaps he fears that someone may just follow through and proceed to the election of a valid Pope? That would place McKenna in a very difficult position: He refused obedience to a bishop; now he would be faced with an even greater difficulty: He would have to somehow explain away a valid Pope! Would he have the courage and humility to obey another person? If past performance is any indication, the chances are not very good.

An analysis of his words and an effort to make sense of his thinking poses more problems than it solves. First of all, he has no grounds to speak of any kind of “potentiality” because the whole idea of something being “potential” is missing. “Potentiality” means having the aptitude or possibility of doing something or becoming something. Going from “potentiality” to “actuality” is the same as “matter” coming into existence with some kind of “form”.

But, there is no evidence that such a thing would become an act. There is yet another possibility that is overlooked: It is not beyond the realm of possibility that in view of the Great Apostasy and the nearing of the Second Coming of Christ, perhaps there will never be another valid and legitimate Pope. This is a distinct possibility. But, to go from possibility to actuality is the same as going from potentiality to actuality. McKenna’s presumptions always seem to mask something he is never willing to say or admit.

The next absurdity is the idea of a “**schism**” that would “**woefully complicate**” things for him. It is a legitimate question to ask: “Schism? Schism from WHAT!?” He must be saying that it is schism to separate oneself from a heretical hierarchy. But, is this not what he has been doing all this time? Or, are we to accept the absurd conclusions of his new-found “theory” that heretics are O.K. as long as they are only “material” heretics but not “formal” heretics.

I was once asked by a man suffering the usual conflict of faith and practice: Would it be permissible to attend the Modernist non-Mass and the True Mass? My answer was simple: “It does not make any difference which side of the bridge you jump off – the Modernist heretic and the Conservative heretic both end up below.”

The true Church cannot be in schism with herself. If this were possible, then it would be the same thing as saying that the Church is disobedient to the truth She upholds, yet is still the Church.

One possible motive: since

there was no one who would consecrate him this side of the Atlantic, he had to go to France and endear himself to Msgr. Guerard des Lauriers and embrace des Lauriers’ absurd theory. The next strongly possible motive for maintaining a “paper Pope” is that he is the Religious window-dressing for the “ORCM” which is a John Birch Society front to recruit unwary conservative Catholics into that organization founded by Freemasons in Indianapolis, Indiana.

But we cannot dismiss the fact that McKenna is not a valid bishop by force of his own words. He had stated that he would not accept episcopal consecration unless there were three bishops. He also seemed to indicate, following loyally the teaching of St. Robert Bellarmine, that a papal mandate was essential for the consecration. Failing to achieve either one of these essential (Required by “divine” will) elements, his “consecration” would be invalid.

Furthermore, if one were to somehow recognize his validity, he would be nothing more than a “material bishop” and further,

he would be an intruder and usurper of episcopal authority by brazenly ignoring the authentic bishop already consecrated by three bishops.

As a matter of fact, what is really the crux of the matter in all this superficial theological ping pong game is this: All properties presently held by either laymen or “independent” priests must be turned over to the Bishop who is the administrator of Church property.

As it is, none of these “Traditionalists” are willing to do this. If McKenna managed to legally lay claim (Albeit simply because the judge was ignorant of the true situation of these people and their empty claims) to any kind of physical property, he can only expect support from the members of the John Birch Society who would most likely stop their financial support if he maintained the position of the genuine Catholics. As the “Chairman” of the ORCM (Acronym for “Orthodox Roman Catholic Movement”) two things are accomplished: The Birchers have their Catholic “window-dressing” liturgist and McKenna has at least a partial gratification

of being the head of something.

As a Roman Catholic bishop, there is no need for fictitious distinctions that are at best dishonest. The duty of the bishop is clear. It was for this anticipated circumstance that the public statement was made, namely, that no one consecrated after August 24, 1982 would be recognized as a Roman Catholic bishop in whose election I had no say.

The prudence of this position has been amply proven by the rash and impetuous “material” consecrations that have spawned the most bizarre aberrations. One of the most recent fiascos is the “consecration” of one clergyman by the name of Slupski. Slupski was consecrated by Old Catholics whose consecration the Catholic Church would recognize as valid. Yet, McKenna blindly “consecrates” this man and then nine years later “repudiates” his handiwork. Of what use is a “repudiation” of one’s handiwork viewed from the continuous consequences? Can he “take back” what he has done? Washing one’s hands like Pontius Pilot and trying to walk away from the consequences of

one's actions is useless.

One is reminded of the mad woman in Macbeth trying to erase the blood stain from her hand: Out, damned spot! But to no avail. "Out, damned spot!" And their conclusion: "All the perfumes of Arabia cannot erase the spot". So, too, neither the perfumes of Arabia nor a "Jimmy Swagger" public confession can undo what has been done. Even when McKenna has been judged by a Just Judge, his folly will continue to bear evil fruit.

Even after painstaking evaluation of all the evidence regarding the invalidity of Marcel Lefebvre's ordination and consecration by the Freemason Lienart, and all those who have descended from Lefebvre, McKenna has paid no heed at the seriousness of this matter.

Not without good reason has someone dubbed him: "The salt of the earth, because it goes with everything."

On the contrary, he has attempted to consecrate some of those who were "ordained" by Lefebvre.

Not unlike the late Abbe de

Nantes, McKenna pretends that heretics are still in the Church and that even their election would be valid, despite the fact that Pope Pius XII clearly stated that heretics and schismatics ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH..

McKenna says that ever since the Second Vatican Council and the papal promulgation of teaching clearly contrary to the infallible Magisterium, that there is a "material" Pope but not a "formal" Pope. This is the "thesis" of Mgr. Guerard des Laurier, O.P. These are McKenna's own words:

"What does it mean to have a Pope materially but not formally? That such is the case with the Church today—and has been since II Vatican Council and the papal promulgation of teaching clearly contrary to the infallible Magisterium – is the thesis of Mgr. Gerard des Lauriers, O.P."

He is saying that those in the Vatican are promoting formal heresy. Incidentally, what would "informal heresy" be? If a skunk came into your house

and squirted you, would that be a “material squirt” and not a “formal squirt”?

I would think that it made no difference whether it was only a “material” squirt and not a “formal” squirt. And if that skunk kept right on squirting, what would you do? You would say: “Stop squirting!” and then what? Where would he go? Would you keep him there knowing that he will just keep on squirting?

We are talking here about heresy and those who promote it loud and clear. Did McKenna not say this himself by saying that “...since **II Vatican Council and the papal promulgation of teaching clearly contrary to the infallible Magisterium**” heresy has been coming down from the Vatican?

If someone holding an office of teaching or having some kind of influence over other members of the Church falls into heresy, he is deemed to tacitly resign that office. But, was he not a heretic **before** the operation of law went into effect? Let’s keep the horse in front of the cart, if you don’t mind.

Why would McKenna be so concerned about this minor distinction? He does what he does best: **He assumes!** He makes the claim that this difference between “sede vacante” and “officio vacante” is very important. Why? Because, according to him (If you can make sense out of his convoluted sentence) it is this: “...**for what potentially the difference may lead to disastrously doing: the attempt to elect a Pope and fill a chair not in fact empty! The result would be simply schism and a woeful complicating of a situation already unprecedented in the history of the Church and too much for the average Catholic to believe.**”

The entire paragraph is nothing more than a faintly hidden concern: Someone other than McKenna might just possibly be elected Pope. Here he goes into his typical evasiveness. He is setting up the scene to protect himself from possibly having to deal with someone actually superior to him. This his megalomaniacal mentality simply cannot tolerate. He fails to even consider another possibility not outside the realm

of reality: It is entirely possible – and more than probable – that there will never be another valid Pope. But there is more to his sudden journey into groundless “distinctions”. This was more evident in his statements published in a newsletter called **FROM THE PULPIT.**

Here is the chameleon *par excellence!* *Here is the cowering hirling!* We have seen his declarative statements above that suddenly turn into opinion. Now let us see his endless “back-tracking” just to keep his “job”. And, that is what it really is at bottom: Fear of losing his paycheck.

We have already seen his efforts to persuade priests from their duty to be under the new bishops, consecrated by Archbishop Ngo to continue the unbroken line of successors to the Apostles.

McKenna, the hireling: He admits having been **“summarily and publicly dismissed from the ORCM (or supposedly so) by its lay board of trustees. for endorsing the sede vacante view of the papacy and showing sympathy for the new bishops consecrated by the Vietnamese**

Archbishop Thuc.” He goes on to say: **“Am I, like it or not, now in the condition and state of schism for – the words of the sermon which gave so much scandal – ‘agreeing with the new bishops that John Paul II is not the pope’?”**

Apparently, that is exactly what he did and that is why his handlers rushed to disassociate themselves from him. Observe the following statements made by him: **“The officers of the ORCM have fired me on the grounds of having (in their words) ‘publicly advocated’ the sede vacante position and made of it (no less) a ‘declaration’.**

Unless our understanding of the English language is miserably faulty, it seems that the term “fired” means, in the ordinary understanding of the word, a termination of a relationship between employer and employee.

Again, why the sudden back-tracking? He obviously laments having taken the position of the “sede vacantists” in order to please his masters: **“...the new bishops are condemned**

as schismatic because they do not recognize John Paul II as the legitimate pope. And for having ventured – very imprudently, I now see – to agree that the throne is vacant, I have lost my reputation.”

But in the “mini conclave” – as McKenna called it – he and the other members of that “mini conclave” not only accepted Bishop Musey as their bishop, but willingly voted on a candidate among them to be consecrated a bishop. If this action were the result of a mere “opinion,” what must we think of his and their other “declarative opinions”? What kind of credibility could they have in the eyes of any thinking person? And as for his “faithful followers”, it is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility that his “followers” were more interested in being able to attend Mass and receive the Sacraments – not bothering to make certain that they were valid and fruitful.

That is truly a strange statement. Having been so eager to declare – excuse me, to opine – that the See of Peter was vacant despite the fact that some of the priests in a Dallas, TX meeting chose

to await more evidence before making a declaration concerning the validity or invalidity of the “pope,” this man threw his “opinion” into the face of the people and priests to state that **“We are in a state of sede vacante!”** Now, however, we hear a tune to which it is difficult to dance. Apologetically (As so often to cover his blunders) he thinks it enough to admit his imprudence.

Well, it would seem to make good sense to question the mental state of such a person. And this, especially when he himself hurls the accusation of mental instability upon those who hold to the simple logic of evidence. He goes so far as to imply that Archbishop Ngo must be deranged to make such a “sweeping declaration”: **“Why am I, for my part, not allowed the liberty of an opinion in the matter and accused of ‘advocating – that is, ‘pushing’ or promoting – sede vacantists? Why am I charged with ‘declaring’ it? Archbishop Thuc may have done so, but I am not Archbishop Thuc. Am I thought to have become so deranged as to think I have authority to make such**

sweeping declarations?”

As a matter of fact, yes, he is deranged. But not for agreeing to the obvious truth, but because of his constant back-tracking. As one man said: “He’s not playing with a full deck.”

These modern day Pharisees (hypocrites) play games with terms that have lost their true meaning. For example: Philosophically speaking, there is no such thing as “material heresy” because heresy is in the intellect and not in some material thing. Heresy is an **erroneous idea** and an idea is not a material something. An idea is a spiritual thing, the stuff of thinking; it is not something one eats or catches as a virus...

Traditionalists are both: Heretics and schismatics. McKenna is a heretic and a schismatic not for the reasons his employers suggest, but because he twists reality to serve his perverted WILL.

When his employers, the “trustees” holding the legal deed for the real estate in Monroe, Ct wrote in the By-laws of their organization that they would

hand over the properties to a true bishop, they balked until, ironically, they were forced by a court order to turn the property over to a false “bishop” rather than to the true bishop who is the author of this article.

He is again making declarations that have no foundation in reality: If the entire Vatican is in heresy and therefore in schism with whatever divinely instituted authority is left, how could there be danger of schism? The Church cannot be in schism with itself. But that is what McKenna seems to imply.

Would the election of a Pope really create a “woeful complication”? And what kind of “disaster” would there be – assuming his “patron’s” theory is debunked? Must the world wait for McKenna to lead us all into Paradise, or, might some of us use our God-given intelligence to see the truth and follow it plainly and simply?

One would be justified in laughing this man to scorn who inserts his sophisms and twisted logic and yet would have others believe that they simply don’t have the good sense of

understanding the situation as well as he does. More, we are apparently invited to bow in humble obeisance to him and his “mentor” from whom he cannot withhold the highest praise. He says:

“And to fully (if possible) comprehend the stupendous situation in the Church today, how many distinctions must be ferreted out! How many ambiguities lie in ambush! It is in the failure to make necessary distinctions (if nothing else) that men are divided in their search for truth, and that among philosophers and theologians different “schools of thought” arise. Blessed are we traditional Catholics, in the humble opinion of this writer, for having with us, ‘yet a little while,’ the light of a consummate Thomist in the venerable Bishop and worthy son of St. Dominic, Mgr. Guerard des Lauriers.”

What may slip the observation of the reader of these words is the fact that HE, McKenna is the only competent leader of “traditionalist Catholics” since his latest “idol” – des Lauriers – was not long for this world.

Now this “expert in distinctions” is going to give us some more of his “distinctions” – whether they are in conformity with St. Thomas and the rest of the Scholastic Schools or not.

If I recall correctly, it was St. Dominic who said that his Friars should seek to convert others not so much by their learned discourses, but by their humble example as they go **barefoot** through the world. It seems that McKenna is unable to get out of that broken record repetitive cant: “traditional Catholics”. His “tradition” is no more Catholic than the tradition of Satan. We ought not lose sight of the fact that there are two traditions: The tradition of the world (The City of Satan) and the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church (The City of God) – according to St. Augustine.

Now anyone with even a slight knowledge of theological or philosophical questions knows that a thesis is only as sound as the arguments supporting it. And we are talking here about a **thesis – an unproven position no better than an opinion.**

Saccharine adulation stinks. Bombast has no place in discussing serious questions. Let's cut out all that supercilious clap trap that serves no other purpose than to smoke screen reality.

What are the grounds and source for all this foolishness if not the knaves themselves?

Try to comprehend the following statement: **“To quote the words of my disputed sermon, I said in answer to the question posed as to whether we in fact have a true Pope in John Paul II, ‘I for one priest agree with them (the new bishops) that he is not.’”** McKenna then proceeds to excuse himself by making his statement an opinion. If he agrees with the new bishops, his agreement cannot be understood as a mere opinion.

“He is not a true Pope” is the meaning of his statement. This is not an opinion, it is a declarative sentence. When we speak of “formal heresy,” we mean the external expression of error obstinately embraced and promoted. It may justly be asked: “How many heresies does one need before the heretic can

be called a heretic? The answer is: Only ONE!

I do not know any respectable Catholic who is convinced of the evident formal errors promoted by the antipopes as “crying out” – as if irrational and merely emotional individuals. Truth needs no gimmicks, no “cards” to be “played”. Life is real and life is earnest. Life is changed at death, it is not taken away. Heaven or Hell awaits everyone without exception.

(To be continued)



**Sermons and Addresses
OF
HIS EMINENCE
WILLIAM CARDINAL
O'CONNELL
ARCHBISHOP OF BOSTON**



THE EARLY CHURCH

**A SERIES OF FIVE
CONFERENCES
DELIVERED AT THE
CATHOLIC SUMMER
SCHOOL,
PLATTSBURGH, N. Y., 1895**

**THE CATACOMBS,
THE SHELTER**

(Continued)

The word cemetery, at least in Rome, comprehended the whole place of burying, as well under as above the ground, including also the houses built thereupon, and the basilicas, oratories, and dwellings found there. When, therefore, we read in the Liber

Pontificalis, for example, in the life of Liberius, that "Constantius sent messengers to recall Liberius from the cemetery of Agnes where he lived," or again in the life of St. Boniface, that he lived in the cemetery of St. Felicitas, we must not suppose that these popes lived under the earth in the catacombs, but in the basilicas, oratories, and dwellings which were erected in that place or tract of ground under which were the sepulchers, now called catacombs

The form of the sepulchers was different in different places, according as they were above or under the earth. The subterranean burial-places were great galleries or corridors, which in Rome went by the name of cuniculi, or were also called crypts, and the whole subterranean part of the cemetery was called arenarium. The part above the ground was called the field or the gardens.

In the underground sepulchers, the bodies of the faithful were placed in niches dug out of the galleries, and these today are called by the archeologists, loculi, which according to their depth or capacity to contain two or three bodies were called bisomi or trisomi. These were closed

up with bricks or by slabs of marble, according to the wealth and condition of the owner; and these slabs were called *tabulæ* if placed vertically over the tomb, or *mensæ*, if horizontally.

If these sepulchers had the form of an arch enclosed by a tablet and were surmounted by an arched niche, they were called *archisolia*. At times, also, bodies were buried beneath the pavement of this galleries, just as we see them still in the churches of Europe; and upon these tombs, covered with slabs of marble, sometimes epitaphs were engraved; sometimes they were left uninscribed. The rooms or places called *cubiculla*, which are found at intervals in the catacombs, were excavated in various forms and dimensions. Some are rectangular, some oblong, some polygonal. To give air to the rooms and passages, shafts were cut in the earth which were sometimes vertical, sometimes oblique; and for the entrance of light to the underground passages, *luminaria*, that is lanterns, namely openings reaching to the outer air, were dug, and the rooms and passages were designated with reference to their position regarding the *luminaria*.

These subterranean galleries were frequently excavated to a remarkable depth, and were reached by means of stairs which connected with the various stories into which the catacombs were divided. These steps or stairs may be classified into two categories, — those prior to the Peace of Constantine, and those later than that time. The first kind were very narrow and steep, and penetrated into the various regions of the subterranean cemetery. But after the peace which the Church enjoyed during the reign of Constantine, other stairs were cut out of the earth, easier of descent, and leading generally to the crypts of the more venerated of the martyrs; sometimes, too, being connected with the basilicas and oratories built above the cemeteries. The name given to these steps is *catabaticum*.

It would not be correct to imagine that all the cemeteries of the Christians were catacombs, that is, subterraneous. It is a fact demonstrated by recent discoveries that above most of the subterranean cemeteries of Rome, were established and preserved other burial-places. The most

illustrious of these was the Vatican cemetery, where was buried the body of St. Peter. In 1883 was discovered another similar burial-place over the Catacombs of St. Callistus, on the Appian Way, and many others, traces of which were discovered by the Jesuit Father Marchi, by de Rossi, and Armellini.

The early Christians, as we of today, planted above the graves of their dead, shrubs and flowers, turning the graves into little gardens, as a sign of the gardens of Paradise, where now those blessed souls enjoyed eternal peace. The guardians of the cemeteries were the grave diggers, whose office was accordingly held in very high repute and honor. In some of the earliest writings they are named after the sub-deacons, and St. Jerome calls them clerics. De Rossi demonstrates that in the Christian speech the word *bene facere* signified the burying of the dead; and so the grave diggers came to be known as benefactors.

As many of the subterranean cemeteries of Rome have been discovered to be connected with each other by passages in the tufa, or rocky earth, it was believed

in the sixteenth century that the catacombs were not excavated by the Christians, but that they found them already dug and turned them to their own use, but Professor Armellini, in his work on the Roman Catacombs, combats with solid argument this opinion, and demonstrates that, granted that this fact were true of one cemetery, it certainly does not apply to the rest.

And now comes the question, natural enough, how could the Christians, constantly persecuted and harassed through the first three centuries of the Church, excavate such immense cemeteries and bury there the blessed remains of the Christians and martyrs. De Rossi answers this question thus: Although the Roman laws allowed no tolerance or peace to the Christian religion, nevertheless, by force of a common law due to the natural reverence for the places of the dead, the cemeteries, no matter to what sect or religion they belonged, were always considered inviolable, and the ground or earth in which the dead were buried was by that very fact considered sacred, and most severe penalties were sanctioned against those who dared to violate

the burying-places of the dead, punishing this crime even by banishment. Not only that soil was considered sacred where the body of the dead was placed, or above which was raised the sepulchral monument, but all that tract of ground surrounding it, which the founder of the sepulcher considered annexed to it. Hence we find sepulchral areas 2400 feet long and 2000 wide.

Since, therefore, these areas around the tomb enjoyed the privilege of inviolability, it is easily understood that the catacombs and Christian cemeteries could be excavated with security in the private property of a Christian family, and that the dead Christians were sure of a quiet resting-place, protected by the laws of the same government in death which had allowed them no rest while living. This we learn from a law of Marcus Aurelius, who decreed that all bodies who had received "just burial," that is, been consigned to the earth, could not be disturbed in their repose. Therefore, it is not difficult to see how the Christians of the early ages dug this city of the dead even during the times of the fiercest persecution.

When, in the third century, the multitude of the faithful increased to great numbers, the private sepulchers were no longer sufficient to contain the dead, and it was necessary to enlarge them. It was in precisely this time, as de Rossi observes, that a great number of burial associations were formed, allowed by the law to possess places of sepulcher; and the Christian Church, though proscribed by law, could nevertheless legally form such an association. It was then that the pagans were enraged to see this privilege accorded to the Church, which, like any other burial society, was allowed to possess her public cemeteries, and there in secret offer solemn prayers for the repose of the faithful departed. Again and again they attempted to deprive the Christians of this legal right, but the law always sustained them, and the Christian Church, under the guise of a funeral association, enjoyed the privileges accorded to any other corporation of the pagans, and so, as Allard writes, the Church in the third century found herself in a double and contradictory situation. As a religion she was illegal and punishable; as an association she

was licit and free; in the same way that St. Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen and insisted on their being respected, though as a Christian he was put to death.

The Christian sepulchers which belonged to a private family, or to an association, were composed of three principal parts: the monumentum, the area, and the crypt. The monumentum was the visible part, the sign or index of the burial-place; the area was the tract of ground which was considered a part of the cemetery; the crypt was the subterranean room or chamber, in the walls of which were cut the niches which received the bodies; and these niches were called Columbaria, because they looked like dove-cots. Frequently the whole sepulcher was called the monumentum from its principal and visible part.

The question has been asked, why are the catacombs always found outside the walls of the city. The answer is that, by the Roman law, burial within the city limits was prohibited, and the Christians naturally obeyed this law. However, the distance of the cemetery from the city wall was never great, in order that they might have less

difficulty in transporting thither the bodies of the Martyrs, and that by their proximity they might serve as convenient places of meeting. The cemeteries which we find more than two or three miles beyond the city did not belong, properly speaking, to the Roman Christians, but to the little settlements of the faithful scattered through the Campagna. The ancient documents and especially the itineraries give us the precise number of the Roman cemeteries, and the greater number of them correspond to the number of the ancient titles of the parishes of the city, which in the third century numbered 25 or 26. Of these we may here only notice four of the greater catacombs, those of Callistus, Priscilla, the Ostrian, and the Vatican.

One of the first great cemeteries legally established by the Roman Church is that which is commonly called the cemetery of Callistus on the Appian Way near the Basilica of St. Sebastian. In the Philosophoumena, we read that Pope Zephyrinus, toward the year 197, gave to Callistus, one of his deacons, the care and administration of this cemetery, hence called the cemetery of Callistus. This catacomb, as

modern archeologists prove, is the combination of many smaller cemeteries, namely of the crypt of Lucina, a matron of apostolic times, of the Caecilia, of St. Soter, and finally of the cemetery of the apologists.

In the crypt of the Cecilian family was buried the glorious Virgin, St. Cecilia of that family. The Popes of the third century, from Zephyrinus to Miltiades, were buried there together with other bishops and personages and Martyrs, and among these the acolyte St. Tarcisius.

Pope St. Damasus has left us a beautiful eulogy on this glorious martyr, which illustrates the story of the Martyrs, of the Holy Eucharist there consecrated, of the rite of carrying it to the absent, of the violence of the pagans against the faithful, and of the discipline of the secret.

This cemetery of Callistus can with justice be called a museum of sacred archeology and the summary of the ecclesiastical history of the first centuries of the Church and of the various rites and observances which were practiced by the early Christians. There are still found images of the

saints, illustrating the truth of the veneration of holy persons by the Church; the symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist; frescoes illustrating the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, the primacy of St. Peter, the resurrection of Lazarus, the story of Jonah; inscriptions of St. Damasus which illustrate the questions of the fallen; the sepulchers of many popes, among others, Anterus, Fabians, Luctus, Eutychanus, and many other monuments which incontestably prove, as if by living witnesses, the story of Christ, the Gospel and the truth which the Church believes today, as it was believed when those images, monuments and inscriptions were first placed on the walls of the catacombs.

The cemetery of Priscilla is situated on the Via Salaria, and is so named from the Priscilla the mother of Pudens, contemporary of the Apostles, who was there buried. Here also were the tombs of Prudentiana and Praxedis; and of Prisca and Aquila, named by St. Paul and St. Luke in the Acts, and here also was laid the body of St. Justin the Apologist, with a multitude of unknown martyrs who perished in the days of Diocletian. Here afterwards, too, in the days of

peace, were buried Sylvester, Liberius, Siricius, and Vigilius, popes. This cemetery of Priscilla is connected with the cemetery Novella, whose historical origin was first revealed by the distinguished professor of the University of Paris, Duchesne, in his studies on the *Liber Pontificalis*. This Necropolis is excavated in two stories, in both of which we trace the vestiges of a remote antiquity. Nearly all the sepulchers of this cemetery are dissimilar to those of the other catacombs. Inscriptions are painted in ink. The language used is generally Greek, the text most simple, being for the most part merely the name of the defunct, with the apostolic salutation *Pax tecum*, or simply *Pax*. For example, the sepulcher of the virgin and martyr, St. Philomena, discovered in 1802, was decorated with the following inscription:
Pax tecum Philomena.at

It is also a specialty of this cemetery that herein is most frequently found the name *Petrus*, and this frequent repetition, as de Rossi observes, demonstrates the relations which the apostle had with the family of Pudens, buried in this cemetery.

Among the beautiful pictures which we here admire is that of the Blessed Virgin, with the infant Jesus at her breast, the star over her head, and a prophet with a scroll in hand opposite to her. In another place is represented the Adoration of the Magi, and a scene of the Passion of Christ; and in another still is depicted St. Peter, who receives the new law from the Hands of Christ, represented as sitting upon the world as the King of the universe.

Among the inscriptions most important is one attributed to Pope Liberius, well known up to the end of the seventh century, then lost, and re-discovered by de Rossi in the imperial library of St. Petersburg, and represented also by Duchesne in his *Liber Pontificalis*. This splendid collection of monuments and inscriptions make this cemetery of Priscilla one of the most important of all the catacombs.

The Ostrian cemetery, however, is of no less value, especially on account of the knowledge it brings us of the Prince of Apostles. The origin of this cemetery on Via Nomentana, dates to the epoch of the first visit of the apostle to

Rome. Up to within a few years it was believed to be a branch of the cemetery of St. Agnes; this, however, is proved to be false. It is a distinct and independent cemetery, and has no connection with that of St. Agnes. The ancient ecclesiastical documents have preserved to us the various names by which this cemetery was called; among others are those of "greater," "*ad nymphas*," "*ad capream*," and finally "*Ostrianum*"; and this last name we know was a corruption of the name of Ostorius, one of the most ancient Roman families of the first centuries of the empire.

That St. Peter administered here the Sacrament of Baptism, we gather from the ancient monuments

of the Roman cemeteries, where the Ostrian catacombs are called the cemetery of St. Peter's font; and in the Acts of the Martyrs, Maurus and Papirius, under Diocletian, we read that their bodies were buried "on the Via Nomentanum, in the place called *ad nymphal*, where Peter baptized." We find the same testimony in the Acts of Liberius, in which, speaking of this same cemetery, he says: "the place where the apostle Peter administered baptism." Though these Acts are apocryphal, it cannot be supposed that their compiler invented a fact already well known in the Roman tradition; besides, recent discoveries amply prove this tradition to be true.

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Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

THE ROSARY

During the holy seasons of Lent and Advent it is the custom in many Catholic homes for the members of the family to come together at night and recite the Rosary. The beautiful devotion of the Rosary usually forms part of the Lenten services in our Catholic churches. Could you explain its meaning to an inquiring non-Catholic?

The name is derived from the Latin word *rosarium*, which signifies a “garland of roses.” Fervent Catholics have a great love for the Rosary. It is dear to us because it brings vividly to mind fifteen principal scenes of our Redemption, and inspires us with sorrow for sin and a deep gratitude to God for the mercy He has shown the human race. The Rosary is no mere mechanical recitation of prayers.

It is a meditation. We are led from the distracting world about us to the Holy Land: back through the centuries to Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Temple of Jerusalem; to Gethsemane, the court of Pilate, the streets of Jerusalem, and Calvary. With Christ’s sweet Mother, Mary, we witness various

scenes of our Lord’s life. We partake of her joys and sorrows. We share our Savior’s love for her, and we accompany the Angels to Heaven itself and witness her glory.

Mechanical prayer? The Rosary, when understood, is a poem, with the emotion and the feeling of the most sublime of poetry. The “Our Father,” the “Hail Mary,” and the “Glory be to the Father” are but the expression of emotion, of deep love for God, and of confidence in the power of our Lady’s intercession for us. It is not strange, then, that non-Catholics who grasp the meaning of the Rosary practice this beautiful devotion.

How do we use the Rosary beads? As we hold the little crucifix in our hand and gaze at the figure of our crucified Savior, we recite the “Apostles’ Creed” as a profession of faith. On the first large bead we say the “Our Father,” the prayer that Christ taught us, and on each of the three smaller beads, the “Hail Mary,” followed by the “Glory be to the Father.” The Rosary proper now begins. It consists of five joyful, five sorrowful, and five glorious mysteries of Christ’s life.

The first joyful mystery is the Annunciation. We try to picture the scene and to be present in spirit as the Angel announces to Mary that she has been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus. While meditating on the scene as it takes place, we recite on the large bead the “Our Father” and on each of the ten small beads the “Hail Mary.” These repetitions of the Angel’s salutation are a colloquy or conversation with the Blessed Mother, and we ask her to “pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” It is customary to end each decade with the “Glory be to the Father.” The second joyful mystery is the Visitation of Mary to St. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist; the third, the Nativity of our Lord; the fourth, the Presentation in the Temple; the fifth, the Finding in the Temple. In each mystery, the large bead calls for the recitation of the “Our Father,” while each small bead slipping through our fingers reminds us to say a “Hail Mary.”

The five sorrowful mysteries are: The Agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion. The glorious mysteries consist of the Resurrection, the Ascension of our Lord into Heaven, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption of our Lady into Heaven, and

the Coronation of our Lady in Heaven. It is customary to say the joyful mysteries on Monday and Thursday, the sorrowful on Tuesday and Friday, and the glorious on Wednesday and Saturday. Many change the mysteries on Sunday according to the ecclesiastical season of the year: the joyful being chosen during Advent and after Christmas; the sorrowful during Lent; and the glorious after Easter. Others always use the glorious on Sunday.



The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

Of the third and most perfect state, and of reason, and of the works done by the soul who has arrived at this light. And of a beautiful vision which this devout soul once received, in which the method of arriving at perfect purity is fully treated, and the means to avoid judging our neighbor is spoken of.

“Those who belong to the third state, which immediately follows the last, having arrived at this glorious light, are perfect in every condition in which they may be, and receive every event which I permit to happen to them with due reverence, as I have mentioned to you when speaking of the third and unitive state of the soul. These deem themselves worthy of the troubles and stumbling-blocks caused them by the world, and of the privation of their own consolation, and indeed of whatever circumstance happens to them. And inasmuch as they deem themselves worthy of trouble, so also do they deem themselves unworthy of the fruit

which they receive after their trouble. They have known and tasted in the light My Eternal Will, which wishes naught else but your good, and gives and permits these troubles in order that you should be sanctified in Me. Wherefore the soul having known My Will, clothes herself with it, and fixes her attention on nothing else except seeing in what way she can preserve and increase her perfection to the glory and praise of My Name, opening the eye of her intellect and fixing it in the light of faith upon Christ crucified, My only-begotten Son, loving and following His doctrine, which is the rule of the road for perfect and imperfect alike. And see, how My Truth, the Lamb, who became enamored of her when He saw her, gives the soul the doctrine of perfection. She knows what this perfection is, having seen it practiced by the sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son, who was fed at the table of holy desire, seeking the honor of Me, the Eternal Father, and your salvation. And, inflamed with this desire, He ran, with great eagerness, to the shameful death of

the Cross, and accomplished the obedience which was imposed on Him by Me, His Father, not shunning labors or insults or withdrawing on account of your ingratitude or ignorance of so great a benefit, or because of the persecutions of the Jews, or on account of the insults, derision, grumbling, and shouting of the people. But all this He passed through like the true Captain and Knight that He was, whom I had placed on the battle-field to deliver you from the hands of the Devil, so that you might be free, and drawn out of the most terrible slavery in which you could ever be, and also to teach you His road, His doctrine, and His rule, so that you might open the Door of Me, Eternal Life, with the key of His precious Blood, shed with such fire of love, with such hatred of your sins. It was as if the sweet and amorous Word, My Son, should have said to you: 'Behold, I have made the road, and opened the door with My Blood.' Do not you then be negligent to follow, laying yourselves down to rest in self-love and ignorance of the road, presuming to choose to serve Me in your own way, instead of in the way which I have made straight for you by means of My Truth,

the Incarnate Word, and built up with His Blood. Rise up then, promptly, and follow Him, for no one can reach Me, the Father, if not by Him; He is the Way and the Door by which you must enter into Me, the Sea Pacific.

"When therefore the soul has arrived at seeing, knowing, and tasting, in its full sweetness, this light, she runs, as one enamored and inflamed with love, to the table of holy desire; she does not see herself in herself, seeking her own consolation either spiritual or temporal, but, like one who has placed his all in this light and knowledge, and has destroyed his own will, she shuns no labor from whatever source it comes, but rather enduring the troubles, the insults, the temptations of the Devil, and the murmurings of men, eats at the table of the most holy Cross, the food of the honor of Me, the Eternal God, and of the salvation of souls; seeking no reward, either from Me or from creatures, because she is stripped of mercenary love, that is of love for Me based on interested motives, and is clothed in perfect light, loving Me in perfect purity, with no other regard than for the praise and glory of My Name, serving

neither Me for her own delight, nor her neighbor for her own profit, but purely through love alone. Such as these have lost themselves, and have stripped themselves of the Old Man, that is of their own sensuality, and, having clothed themselves with the New Man, the sweet Christ Jesus, My Truth, follow Him manfully. These are they who sit at the table of holy desire, having been more anxious to slay their own will than to slay and mortify their own body. They have indeed mortified their body, though not as an end in itself, but as a means which helps them to stay their own will, as I said to you when explaining that sentence that I wished few words and many deeds, and so ought you to do. Their principal desire should be to slay their own will, so that it may not seek or wish anything else than to follow My sweet Truth, Christ crucified, seeking the honor and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. Those who are in this sweet light know it, and remain constantly in peace and quiet, and no one scandalizes them, for they have cut away that thing by which stumbling-blocks are caused, namely their own will. And all the persecu-

tions, with which the world and the Devil can attack them, slide under their feet, standing, as they do, in the waters of many tribulations and temptations, and do not hurt them, for they remain attached to Me by the umbilical cord of fiery desire. Such a man rejoices in everything, nor does he make himself judge of My servants, or of any rational creature, but rejoices in every condition and in every manner of holiness which he sees, saying: 'Thanks be to You, Eternal Father, who have in Your House many mansions.' And he rejoices more in the different ways of holiness which he sees, than if he were to see all traveling by one road, because, in this way, he perceives the greatness of My Goodness become more manifest, and thus, rejoicing, draws from all the fragrance of the rose. And not only in the case of good, but even when he sees something evidently sinful, he does not fall into judgment, but rather into true and holy compassion, interceding with Me for sinners and saying, with perfect humility: 'To-day it is your turn, and tomorrow it will be mine unless the Divine Grace preserve me.'

“Enamor yourself, dearest daughter, of this sweet and excellent state, and gaze at those who run in this glorious light and holiness, for they have holy minds, and eat at the table of holy desire, and, with the light, have arrived at feeding on the food of souls, that is, the honor of Me, the Eternal Father, being clothed with burning love in the sweet garment of My Lamb, My only-begotten Son, namely His doctrine. These do not lose their time in passing false judgments, either on My servants or the servants of the world, and they are never scandalized by any murmurings of men, either for their own sake or that of others. That is to say, in their own case they are content to endure anything for My Name’s sake; and when an injury is done to some one else, they endure it with compassion of this injured neighbor, and without murmuring against him who caused the injury, or him who received it, because their love is not disordinate, but has been ordered in Me, the Eternal God.

“And, since their love is so ordered, these souls, my dearest daughter, never take offense from those they love, nor from

any rational creature, their will being dead and not alive, wherefore they never assume the right to judge the will of men, but only the will of My Clemency. These observe the doctrine which, as you know, was given you by My Truth at the beginning of your life, when you were thinking in what way you could arrive at perfect purity, and were praying to Me with a great desire of doing so. You know what was replied to you, while you were asleep, concerning this holy desire, and that the words resounded not only in your mind, but also in your ear. So much so, that, if you remember truly, you returned to your waking body, when My Truth said, ‘Will you arrive at perfect purity, and be freed from stumbling-blocks, so that your mind may not be scandalized by anything?’ Unite yourself always to Me by the affection of love, for I am the Supreme and Eternal Purity. I am that Fire which purifies the soul, and the closer the soul is to Me, the purer she becomes, and the further she is from Me, the more does her purity leave her; which is the reason why men of the world fall into such iniquities, for they are separated from Me, while the soul, who, with-

out any medium, unites herself directly to Me, participates in My Purity. Another thing is necessary for you to arrive at this union and purity, namely, that you should never judge the will of man in anything that you may see done or said by any creature whatsoever, either to yourself or to others. My will alone should you consider, both in them and in yourself. And, if you should see evident sins or defects, draw out of those thorns the rose, that is to say, offer them to Me, with holy compassion. In the case of injuries done to yourself, judge that My will permits this in order to prove virtue in yourself, and in My other servants, esteeming that he who acts thus does so as the instrument of My will; perceiving, moreover, that such apparent sinners may frequently have a good intention, for no one can judge the secrets of the heart of man. That which you do not see you should not judge in your mind, even though it may externally be open mortal sin, seeing nothing in others, but My will, not in order to judge, but, as has been said, with holy compassion. In this way you will arrive at perfect purity, because acting thus, your mind will not be scandalized, either in Me or in your

neighbor. Otherwise you fall into contempt of your neighbor, if you judge his evil will towards you, instead of My will acting in him. Such contempt and scandal separates the soul from Me, and prevents perfection, and, in some cases, deprives a man of grace, more or less according to the gravity of his contempt, and the hatred which his judgment has conceived against his neighbor.

To be continued:



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