



The Catholic Voice

A quarterly newsletter of the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics, produced under the patronage of St. Joseph.

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Mead, Washington 99021 USA

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Excommunications Lifted; Will “Reunification” Be Next On The List?

By REV. KEVIN VAILLANCOURT
For *The Catholic Voice*

Toward the end of January, 2009, announcements were made by the public media that Benedict XVI had lifted the excommunication levelled against four bishops of the Society of St. Pius X in 1988 due to their consecration as bishops by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre without the approval of modern Rome. Soon, other messages were sent out through various sources to confirm that what the secular media had reported was true. Indeed, what was done by the Vatican on January 21, was publicly announced on January 24.

Before commenting on the far-reaching effects of this decree, issued by Cardinal Re of the modern Congregation of Bishops, let’s review some of the history behind the excommunications, as well as some very recent occurrences and other reactions to this event.

The history in brief: In June, 1988, Archbishop Lefebvre was involved in detailed discussions with members of the hierarchy of Rome over the announcement that he planned to consecrate four priests of the SSPX as successors to his work without seeking permission from Rome. The “need to preserve Tradition,” he said, warranted this action. The end result of these discussions was that the Archbishop signed a document of submission to modern Rome (a “protocol”) before returning to Switzerland, saying he would not proceed with the consecrations. However, within a day of returning to Econe, the Archbishop renounced the document he had recently signed and said that the planned consecrations would go forward as scheduled. When news of this reached John Paul II, he dispatched Cardinal Ratzinger to Econe to try to convince the Archbishop not to go ahead with the ceremony. Ratzinger’s efforts were in vain, and the consecrations of Fathers Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerias, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galaretta as Roman Catholic bishops took place on June 30. Archbishop Lefebvre was assisted in this ceremony by Bishop Castro Meyer of Brazil.



A solemn moment at the ceremonies of the consecration of the four bishops in 1988.

Rome’s response to the consecrations was swift. The next day — July 1, 1988 — all six bishops were formally excommunicated, causing a rupture within the Society by both clergy and laity. Many priests left SSPX, only to found the Fraternity of



These six were excommunicated on June 1, 1988, for conducting traditional episcopal consecrations without the approval of modern Rome. Over twenty years later, the excommunications have been lifted with an eye toward reconciliation.

St. Peter (FSSP) under the authority of modern Rome. Archbishop Lefebvre and the others continued to function as bishops despite what modern Rome said. You see, for years, reports came from Rome about the validity (and sometimes even *invalidity*) of the excommunications and the status of the superiors of SSPX. For their part, the SSPX superiors issued numerous rebuttals to the excommunications, their status in “working for Tradition,” and more. Before the death of John Paul II, and while “negotiations” were going on between officials in Rome and some of the hierarchy of SSPX about a reconciliation, two requests were made by the superiors of SSPX of the Roman officials before they could begin “serious talks” about a reconciliation: the first was to give all priests throughout the world the right to offer the Tridentine Latin Mass (which was accomplished in 2007 when Benedict XVI issued his Bull *Summorum Pontificum*). The second “demand” was to formally lift the excommunications of the four bishops of SSPX as a sign of good faith. As we know, this was fulfilled late in January. However, according to the *Media Information Brochure* made available on the SSPX web site on the occasion of the withdrawal of the excommunications, the Society did not believe the penalty of excommunication truly existed, despite the July 1, 1988, decree. Citing the 1983 Code of Canon Law (#’s 1321 and 1323), we read that Archbishop Lefebvre’s actions to consecrate the bishops was “his duty before God . . . to ensure the continuance of the Catholic priesthood.” Since the canons cited above make it clear that “A person who violates a law out of necessity is not subject to a penalty,” then the “accusations of excommunication were illegitimate and thereby always null and void.” Since this has been the position of SSPX regarding the excommunications for years, why insist on a formal lifting of

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STRC News: Beginning Our Twenty-Fifth Year Of Publication

The following are some important announcements of interest to those who support the work of the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics.

Twenty-Five Years Since Our Work Began

A Tridentine Latin Mass of Thanksgiving will be offered on the feast of St. Joseph (March 19) in gratitude for his continual patronage for our work over these past twenty-five years. Ours was a humble beginning, but with great designs. Disturbed by what we saw taking place among Catholics in the Carolinas and other parts of the Southeast section of the United States, a few daring souls embarked upon a plan to educate Catholics about the true Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the inroads false ecumenism was making in the area. Our bold plan was to offer a newsletter — maybe a *quarterly* newsletter, if funds allowed — that would be sent to Catholics in our area with no set fee. All we asked was that people who benefitted from this work send in a donation to cover the costs of printing, postage and other materials. St. Joseph came into play because we promised him that, as money allowed, we would publish a newsletter on these subjects as long as we had the money to publish it. In the beginning, our newsletter did not go out as frequently as we hoped, but as the funds came in, we got to work on the next one, and then the next, until finally we find ourselves where we are

today. Please God this will continue as long as our humble work is still beneficial for souls.

The work of the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics primarily consists at this time in publishing *The Catholic Voice* and sending it, not only to the Southeastern U.S., but all throughout our land, and into many countries throughout the world, even the Vatican itself! Projects we undertook through the years had to go by the wayside due to a lack of funds and/or personnel. Thank God (and our readers) that we have been able to keep our newsletter alive because it continues to be our best means of assisting Catholics to grow in proper knowledge of the true Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, how to better assist at it, and how to recognize the false worship of the *Novus Ordo Missae*. In addition to this, we work to expose the errors of the “new evangelization” concocted by the Modernists and to pray for true Christian unity among all peoples, especially among Catholics faithful to Tradition. If we ever hope to see the destruction of Modernism and the restoration of the public authority of the Roman Catholic Church with its love for those magisterial teachings handed down from Jesus to the Apostles and from the Apostles to us. This daunting task will be best accomplished by Catholics who are knowledgeable about their Holy Faith and whose spiritual life is daily fed by the real Holy Eucharist as given by God to us in the traditional Latin Mass.

We wish to thank all who have donated to us over these years to help keep our work alive. Ours is a true non-profit organization under the banner of St. Joseph and ever trustful in Divine Providence and our Blessed Mother. May God bless you for all your help, and may He continue to bless the work of STRC. †

Several Important Reprints:

The Mysterious Mysteries of the Rosary:

Reasons for rejecting the “Luminous Mysteries”. By James De Piante

A Catholic Reading of the Declaration *Dominus Jesus*

by Paula Haigh

Summorum Pontificum: Is It Traditional Teaching? and NEW -- Exploding The Myth: Traditional Mass vs. Novus Ordo -- both by Fr. Kevin Vaillancourt

Critical reviews of the motu proprio on the Latin Mass

Minimum donation: \$5.00 each, includes postage.



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Past Articles Of *The Catholic Voice* Available As Reprints

Are you a new reader of *The Catholic Voice*? Do you want to know where we're “coming from”? Or, would you like more ammunition in the fight to defend the Tridentine Latin Mass? Whatever the case, we have reprinted several articles for those involved in the Traditional Movement. We now have these articles available:

1. Defending The Tridentine Mass

Our case regarding the invalidity of the Novus Ordo fully explained.

2. The Sky Grows Darker Yet

The text of a speech by Patrick Henry Omlor. A great summary.

3. The Ecumenist Heresy

A very important work by Patrick Henry Omlor.

4. The *Special Edition* of *The Catholic Voice*

A perfect introductory piece, produced specially by STRC for distribution among Catholics not familiar with the Traditional Movement of the Roman Catholic Church.

All of these reprints are available for a donation. Please request the article by name. For quantity discounts, contact us by mail at the address on Page 1. †



The Catholic Voice is a publication of the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics, and is published quarterly, as funds are available. There is no subscription fee, but donations are requested to help us continue our work. Board Officers of the STRC are Larry Martin, *President*, James De Piante, *Secretary*, Jim Callahan, *Treasurer*, Fr. Kevin Vaillancourt, *Newsletter Editor*, and Don Donadio. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but are subject to the editorial policy of the STRC Board of Directors. There is no stipend paid for unsolicited manuscripts, and material submitted cannot be returned. *Pro Multis* pins supporting our work can be obtained from STRC for a minimum donation of \$5.00.

Why Is The Canon Recited In Silence During The Tridentine Mass?

By REV. DR. NICHOLAS GIHR
From *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*

The manner in which the Canon is to be recited, that is, silently, deserves special notice and explanation. It is a strict ordinance of the Church that the Canon be said silently (*secreto*), namely, in a voice so subdued that the celebrant may hear himself, but not be heard by those around him. Historical testimonies and reasons drawn from the nature of the thing justify the most general assumption, that it has been a custom from the earliest times to pronounce the words of Consecration, together with the Canon, in silence (excepting, of course, the case of *concelebratio*). Still it is not merely the Church's scrupulous solicitude with which she preserves the original traditions in performing the Sacred Mysteries, but there are other reasons besides, weighty indeed, that move her to adhere so earnestly to the precept, that the Canon be said in silence, and that the Eucharistic Sacrifice be enacted in speech wholly secret. We will here cite the chief reason that demonstrates not the necessity, indeed, but the expediency and appropriateness of the recitation of the Canon in silence.

a) The silent recitation of the Canon betokens the Consecration and Sacrificial Act to be an exclusively priestly function. The prayers of the Canon being liturgical, are, therefore, to be recited not merely mentally, but also vocally (*vocaliter*), that is, the words must be pronounced with the mouth. But this recitation of the Canon must be made softly, that is, be so constituted as to be inaudible to those who are around, and yet audible to the priest himself. This last circumstance is to be noticed, since it makes a difference in the recitation of the Canon and the Divine Office, for in the recitation of the latter it is not necessary that he who prays should hear himself. The silent recitation is in contrast to the loud. Now while the loud tone of voice invites those present to join with the priest, and reminds them that the prayers are said in common, the silent recitation appropriately indicates that there is question of a mystery, which it is for the consecrated priest alone to accomplish, and not the people. Such is the case with respect to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. To consecrate the material elements, to offer the Body and Blood of Christ, is a priestly privilege: the congregation present can contribute nothing to the accomplishment of the Sacrificial Act. This is symbolically indicated by the silent recitation of the Canon. The priest does not here, as in the other portions of the Mass, commune with the people; he has entered into the Holy of Holies, there to commune with God alone and to pray and sacrifice for the whole Church. "Moses was alone on the top of the mountain; he conversed with God and God answered him." Thus does the priest stand alone at the altar, when, as the representative and minister of Christ, the eternal Highpriest, he accomplishes and offers up the Holy Sacrifice for the entire Church.

b) The silent recitation of the Canon text harmonizes very beautifully with the accomplishment and the essence of the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. — The material elements are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, without the senses perceiving it, of the created mind being able to comprehend

it; the real presence and sacrificial life of the Saviour under the sacramental species is concealed beyond all discernment. In every Host there are miracles, as numerous as stars in the firmament, — yet not the slightest trace of the wonders appears externally. With all this the ecclesiastical rite harmonizes perfectly. The holy silence is quite suited to indicate and to recall the concealment and depth, the incomprehensibility and ineffableness of the wonderful mysteries that are enacted on the altar.

c) Silent prayer is related to religious silence, and, therefore; expresses the humility, reverence, admiration and awe wherewith the Church administers and adores the Mystery of the Altar. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him!" The sight of the priest at the altar, communing amid profound stillness with God alone, is, therefore, also an excellent means afforded to arouse and promote in those who are present the proper dispositions, with which they should admire, adore and offer along with the priest so grand and sublime a Sacrifice. — *Quam terribilis est haec hora!* — thus does the deacon cry out to the people in the Syrian liturgy — "How terrible is this hour!" While the tremendous Sacrifice is being accomplished on the altar, all present should be immersed, in silent contemplation and in devout meditation of the Divine Mysteries. Now, precisely this mute silence that reigns at the altar during the most sacred moments of the Sacrifice and directs attention to the mysteriousness of the sacrificial act, forms the loudest summons to enter silently into ourselves, to be recollected in mind and to stir our hearts to devotion. The silent recitation of the Canon disposes the faithful to interior adoration and reverent concelebration of the heavenly mysteries wherewith God so graciously favors and blesses us poor mortals.

d) In addition to the principal reasons quoted, it must be remarked that the foreign language and the silent recitation serve to withdraw the sacred words of the Canon from the ordinary intercourse, and to protect them against every desecration.

e) Finally, a mystical reason may be alleged. The priest at the altar is the representative and image of the praying and sacrificing Saviour. Now, as on the Mount of Olives and on the Cross, Jesus prayed not only in loud tones, but also in a low voice and in the silence of His heart to His Father, so also it is proper that the priest should even herein resemble His Divine Model, when representing and renewing the Sacrifice of the Cross. — The altar becomes not merely the Cross, but also the crib; for at the moment of Consecration the marvels of Bethlehem as well as those of Golgotha are renewed. Whilst deep silence pervaded all things and the night was in the midst of its course, the Almighty Word of God descended from His royal throne in heaven to the crib of Bethlehem; in like manner, does the King of Glory at the consecration come down upon the altar, amid the most profound silence. †

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“Full Union” With Modern Rome Comes With Full Acceptance Of Modernism

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these excommunications before normal talks of reconciliation could begin? In short, the excommunications needed to be lifted so the public perception of the schismatic state of SSPX as an organization would start to go away, and a future reconciliation with modern Rome would be acceptable to all in the modern church, as well as within the Society itself.

To use a colloquialism, modern Rome now sees the ball in the court of SSPX to make further progress toward unification. As they see it, modern Rome has done its part to open the door; now Bishop Fellay and the SSPX must walk through it. It is Benedict XVI's desire that following the lifting of the excommunications, a more serious discussion will take place between both sides that will culminate in “full union” — the return of SSPX under the structure of the modern church, with the *full fledged acceptance* of the activities of the “new evangelization” as a living expression of the teachings of Vatican II. Thus false ecumenism, questionable sacramental rites, *communicatio in sacris* (active participation in non-Catholic rites as a form of worship) and other public associations with those outside the Church and more must be accepted, along with the magisterial nature of the documents of Vatican II — even the outright heretical ones — before this “full union” can be accomplished. Incidentally, this notion of “full union” is another “Vatican II-ism,” since before the Modernist upheaval, one was either *in communion* with the Catholic Church or *one was not*. This notion of “full” and “partial” communion started with the promulgation by Paul VI of the Vatican II “Dogmatic Constitution,” *Lumen Gentium*, paragraph 15, in 1964.

The requirements of the modern church in these discussions have been known for a long time, and no one from the Vatican has ever backed down from them. In fact, we see in recent “full union” announcements made by traditional groups coming over to the “other side,” that their reconciliation consisted, not merely in a corporate union of bodies, but also one of wills with a public profession of a new faith in Vatican II. Such groups as the Society of St. John Vianney (Campos, Brazil), the Transalpine Redemptorists (Scotland) and even the group of Sisters who departed CMRI (Spokane, Washington) to unite under “full



Bishop Bernard Fellay greets Benedict XVI.

union” with the modern church in the Diocese of Spokane are just a few formerly traditional Catholic organizations who have learned the price of “full union.”

At What Price Does This Reunification Come?

For a long time, the SSPX superiors issued statements that they would not comply with the “demands” of modern Rome, saying (in one area) that they would only accept Vatican II “in the light of Tradition,” and that there were many sections in the Documents of Vatican II that were “ambiguous” and irreconcilable with traditional Catholic teaching. This became SSPX's *line in the sand* in discussions with modern Rome on unification, along with concerns about being required to say the *Novus Ordo Missae*, that their chapels throughout the world would come under the supervision of the local (Modernist) bishop, and so forth after a reconciliation. Bishop Fellay, the SSPX Superior General, did write to Benedict XVI in July, 2008, expressing that he and his organization are “at the service of the Church of Our Lord, Jesus Christ,” and that “we accept her teachings in a filial spirit.” The contents of this letter were the impetus for lifting the excommunications because “obedience and submission” to the modern hierarchy were clearly expressed. Yet, such statements appear to some as tap dancing around the real issues so that “full union” will take place nearly at all costs, but on the Society's own terms, even as an independent organization within the modern church, subject to no one but Rome itself. It is clear that if “full union” does take place, many throughout the world who have embraced the Modernist practices since Vatican II will have nothing of it. They are afraid that this sort of “full union” will eventually lead to an end of the “new evangelization.” Even Rabbi Yehuda Levin, a prominent Jewish rabbi who represents over 1,000 rabbis in North America, issued a warning on February 10, 2009, that the negative media reaction to the lifting of the excommunications is a concern “about the influx of morally conservative Catholics into the mainstream of the Catholic Church.” There are many — Catholic and non-Catholic alike — who do not wish to go back to the pre-Vatican II teachings, especially on the nature of Church established by Christ and the

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Nota della Segreteria di Stato

A seguito delle reazioni suscitate dal recente Decreto della Congregazione per i Vescovi, con cui si rimette la scomunica ai quattro presuli della Fraternità San Pio X, e in relazione alle dichiarazioni negazioniste o ridu-

dispensabile il pieno riconoscimento del concilio Vaticano II e del Magistero dei Papi Giovanni XXIII, Paolo VI, Giovanni Paolo I, Giovanni Paolo II e dello stesso Benedetto XVI.

Come è già stato affermato nel De-

On February 5, 2009, the Vatican Secretary of State issued a “note” explaining everything that would be required of the four bishops and SSPX as a whole before “full communion” could take place. Among these is the full recognition of the Second Vatican Council with no more hiding behind the words: “interpreted in the light of Tradition.”

The Spirit Of False Ecumenism Is Still Very Much Alive

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necessity of all to belong to it for salvation. In reality, they need not worry. Even the casual observer can see there is a sort of dualism going on here, where it appears that some traditional practices of the Church will be accepted to appease those “sentimentally attached to them,” while at the same time giving full embrace to the Modernist errors as expressed at Vatican II and implemented in the modern churches of the world. For example, one of Benedict XVI’s first announcements after being elected was to declare that the “goal of ecumenism” was still in full force. This is still his personal goal, for announcements made at the Vatican (even two days after the lifting of the excommunications) triumphed the progress of “ongoing ecumenism” with such organizations as the Methodists, the Baptists, the Eastern Orthodox and many others. It seems, then, “full union” will come at the price of mandatory acceptance of the “new evangelization,” or this much-ballyhooed reconciliation will not take place at all. In fact, it was because of reactions like these that the Vatican Secretariat of State had to issue a clarification (A “Note”) on February 4, 2009, explaining the nature of the remission of the excommunications, the conditions under which “full union” can take place, and reparation needed for certain “negationist” or “reductionist” statements made by Bishop Williamson regarding the Holocaust (or the “Shoah”). As to the first point, this “Note” made clear:

The removal of the excommunication released the four bishops from an extremely grave canonical censure, but has not changed the juridical position of the Fraternity of St. Pius X which, at the current moment, does not enjoy any canonical recognition by the Catholic Church. Not even the four bishops, though released from the excommunication, have a canonical function in the Church and they do not exercise licitly a ministry in it.



The price of “full union”: Pictured above is a former traditional religious Sister who, with a number of others, left their community of many years to embrace “full union” in the modern church. Even though these Sisters were allowed to adopt a traditional-style habit, their Rule and way of life had to conform to post-Vatican II practices. Among these is “communion in the hand,” an action previously repudiated by these nuns.

As to the conditions that must be met by SSPX for reconciliation, they are summarized this way in the “Note”:

For future recognition of the Fraternity of St. Pius X, the full recognition of the Second Vatican Council and of the Magisterium of the popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II and the same Benedict XVI is an *indispensable* condition (emphasis mine. FKV).

Statements Of Bishop Williamson: Hindering “Full Union”?

The third section of the “Note” addresses a firestorm created by certain comments made by Bishop Richard Williamson during an interview with a Swedish television station (Sveriges Television AB) that called into doubt the reality of the Jewish Holocaust and the gassing of six million Jews. This interview aired the same day as the lifting of the excommunications and then has been posted on the station’s web site and *YouTube* for all to see. These comments immediately provoked angered responses from leaders of the Jewish religion, as well as those who are working for “full union” with the Jews based on the teachings of *Nostrae Aetate* of Vatican II. Below is a chronology of events (up to press time) that will help demonstrate the escalation of troubles following the airing of the television interview:

January 21 – The penalty of excommunication is officially lifted from the bishops of SSPX by a decree under the signature of Cardinal Re of the Congregation of Bishops.

January 21 – Sveriges Television Ab in Sweden airs the interview with Bishop Williamson despite a written request by Bishop Bernard Fellay to Sveriges (dated this same day) not to air the interview that included certain “private opinions” of Bishop Williamson.

January 24 – A public announcement is made regarding the lifting of the excommunications a few days before. As this story appears in the secular media, details of the Swedish television interview are also published.

January 26 – Bishop Fellay writes to Benedict XVI denouncing statements made by Bishop Williamson that are not shared by himself or SSPX.

January 28 – Bishop Williamson writes a letter to Cardinal Hoyos, the “ambassador” between SSPX and modern Rome, in which he apologizes for the trouble he has caused for Benedict XVI because of his statements. However, he does not say he is apologizing for the statements themselves regarding the denial of the Holocaust, a fact not lost in many areas.

January 31 – Bishop Williamson is relieved of his duties as rector of the seminary in Argentina. He has also been forbidden to speak of these matters in public by SSPX superiors.

February 2 – Fr. Stefan Frey, the rector of the SSPX seminary in Zaitzkofen, Germany, cancels a previously agreed to event where Bishop Williamson would have ordained men preparing for the Diaconate at the seminary on May 30. This comes as various novus ordo bishops in and around Germany forbid the Bishop’s entrance into any of their churches.

February 7 – *Der Spiegel* publishes an interview with Bishop Williamson in which he claims he will apologize for his statements

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Modern Rome Has Set Its Own Guidelines Which SSPX Must Follow

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if he finds out he is wrong. "I ask everyone to believe me that I did not deliberately say something false. I was, on the basis of my research in the 1980's, convinced of the accuracy of my comments. Now I must examine everything again and look at the evidence."

February 9 – Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, comments about research they have done into SSPX and material on its web sites: "We urge the Catholic SSPX to complete its removal of all conspiratorial teachings and postings that in the past have demonized the Jewish people and contributed to anti-Semitism and genocide."

February 9 – Bishop Williamson loses a case in court in which he was seeking an injunction against any further distribution of the Swedish television interview by any medium, including the Internet.

February 10 – Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, remarked in an interview with Cardinal Kasper: "We want the Vatican to realize that by accommodating anti-Semites like [Bishop] Williamson, the achievements of four decades of Catholic-Jewish dialogue since the 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate* will be put into doubt. We now believe that our message has been understood. The controversial debate of the past three weeks has had a positive impact."

February 11 – *Der Spiegel* publishes an interview with Bishop Fellay in which, as the Superior of the Society, he told Bishop Williamson that his comments regarding the Holocaust were "nonsense" and that he should retract them.

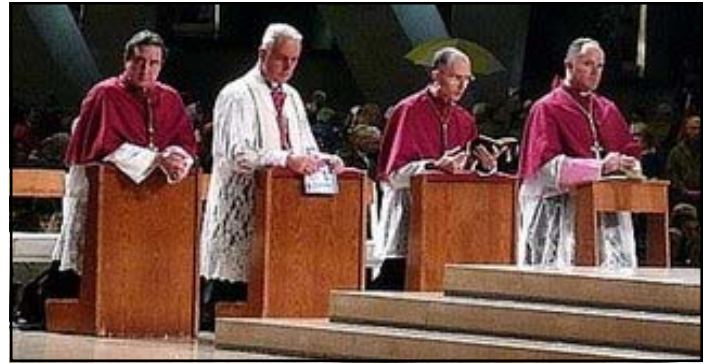
February 19: Bishop Williamson is ordered out of Argentina by the secular government with worldwide Jewish approval.

This is by no means a complete list of all that resulted from the Williamson firestorm. However, it does put into perspective the third part of the "Note" that pertains to this whole event:

The positions of Mons. Williamson on the Shoah are absolutely unacceptable and firmly refuted by the Holy Father, as he himself remarked on the past 28 January . . . Bishop Williamson, for an admission to the episcopal functions in the Church, will also have to declare, in an absolutely unequivocal and public manner, distance from his positions regarding the Shoah, unknown to the Holy Father in the moment of the remission of the excommunication."

What Lies Ahead?

It appears that the reconciliation of SSPX with modern Rome is not, as they say, a "done deal": while modern Rome seems to be hurrying along this quest for "full union," some of the bishops are clarifying their position, and saying that any "negotiations" will most likely last a long time. We have read the conditions laid down in the "Note" whereby modern Rome will grant the reconciliation of the SSPX bishops. There were reports that the Williamson firestorm has delayed — and perhaps modified — this event, as well as a "meeting of the minds" regarding the status of Vatican II and some of its more thorny documents. Giacomo Galeazzi, reporter for the Italian daily *La Stampa*, says that Benedict XVI still remains resolved to settle this matter sooner than later:



In the "anti-schism plan," the feast of the Purification of Mary (February 2) had been informally indicated as the "key date," but the reestablishment of full communion and the removal of the suspension *a divinis* could require a "supplementary clarification" between the Holy See and the stronghold of Ecône, particularly on the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, dedicated by the Council to the Jews, the Muslims and other faiths. The "full recognition" of Vatican II remains the knot to be untied by [Cardinal] Dario C. Hoyos.

The modern church has not given up its teachings based on Vatican II, so is it possible that "Tradition" will align itself with Modernism so quickly and go down without a fight? Some reports from "Vatican sources" are applying lessons learned through its "negotiations" with other religions. They want to take charge of these "negotiations" by changing the definitions of certain terms found in the Documents which now cause division. Once this is done, then - tadah! - acceptance should magically follow. You see, since the Documents of Vatican II are the chief dividing points against "full union," then if the definition of the binding *nature* of these documents changes, then all should be well. In fact, according to some recent progressive speeches from Benedict XVI and others, we are told these documents have *no* dogmatic binding force because they never changed the dogmatic belief of the Roman Catholic Church(!), even though Paul VI and many others over the years have assured us they do. Rome believes that the reunion is nearly complete because the argument about the errors of Vatican II can be nearly eliminated, or at least marginalized. In a February 11 interview with the French weekly *Famille Chretienne*, Bishop Fellay says that he does not reject the Council completely, but only a "dangerous spirit that runs through the whole Council" that caused a break with centuries of Roman Catholic tradition. Of Vatican II he said:

One cannot approach it in a dogmatic way and say "amen" to everything. This approach is completely wrong. There are different domains, themes and degrees of authority. . . . In my opinion, many of the problems we point out can be resolved by distinctions, and not by absolute acceptances or rejections."

Since this interview, others have appeared by the SSPX bishops explaining how they plan to resist Vatican II and the errors it spawned. At the same time, Bishop Williamson has been told to recant his views or be forced to leave SSPX. As it stands, some trying times are ahead for the superiors of SSPX and the laity dependent on them. We promise our prayers. ☩

What Role Do Parents Play In A Child's Religious Vocation?

From: THE CATHOLIC WORLD, 1950
By Fortunata Caliri

On the morning of the day that Kathy O'Connor was to enter the novitiate her father left home and did not return to see her off. Kathy has been a novice now for two years and in that time her father has never visited nor written to her.

When Rita Catano announced her intention to enter a convent her mother went on a hunger strike. After Rita went, under protest, her family created such a disturbance that Rita was sent home after a few days.

When Betty Flynn went to the convent her entire family, parents, brother and sister, disowned her. Six years after her profession her father died, and shortly after that her mother visited her for the first time.

During the first year of her novitiate, Mary Sheehan's father visited her faithfully every visiting day, but he brought along her empty suitcase each time. He placed it conspicuously in front of him so that it was always the first thing Mary saw upon entering the room. Each time he asked her to come home.

Helena Petroska's parents objected so violently to her becoming a nun that Helena had to make whatever plans she could in secret. Her first attempt to go was frustrated. The second time, unable to store any part of the required trousseau in her home, and without funds of her own, she walked out of her house one afternoon with only the clothes she had on her back, and having told her family she was going to the movies with her girl friend, entered the novitiate instead.

You don't believe it? These are all true stories. I could tell you more, and also the unhappy sequels of some of them. The sad part of it is that the families mentioned above, the O'Connors, the Catanos, the Flynns, the Sheehans and the Petroskas are all what are known as "good Catholic people." They sent their children to Catholic schools, including in some instances, college.

Nowadays we hear a great deal about the shortage of religious vocations, particularly among the Sisterhoods. As a result of this shortage, "vocation conferences" and various vocation programs have been arranged to foster vocations among boys and girls. Still the shortage continues. There are



No one will deny that there is a great dearth in religious vocations, especially to the Sisterhood. But how many will admit that parents, unfortunately, share the blame for this?

many reasons for this, but I am concerned with only one here, as you may have guessed from the stories cited at the beginning: Parents.

Perhaps in this disorder the doctor is treating the wrong patients. Perhaps vocation conferences should be for parents instead of for children. Any program to foster vocations can only have a partial success when it is applied only to a part of the problem. The very fact that such conferences have been found necessary points to a lack in the home training. The remedial work must therefore be done in the home, with the parents.

We need to take a more realistic view of parents. Too many sins have been committed in the name of the "parents-are-always-right" legend. Just because they say nuns and priests are "wonderful" they do not mean it would be "wonderful" for one of their daughters to become a nun; they only mean it is wonderful for Mrs. Kelly's daughter.

It is not true that all so-called "good Catholic parents" are elated when their children announce, usually out of the clear blue sky, that they are going to the seminary or to the convent? This is especially true with the convent-bound girl.

Parents may send their children to Catholic schools, but they
(Continued on Page 8)

GOD GAVE THREE VOCATIONS... TO WHICH IS HE CALLING YOU?

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Parents Could Be the Best Salesmen for God That There Ever Were

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never think of the nun-teacher as a human being who was once a member of a family, and probably the most attractive member at that. The child consequently thinks of the nun-teacher as something that just happened to grow there and in that particular way. No one ever tells a child how or why the nun is what she is and where she is.

If the child is a girl and still very small she passes through the stage of dressing up like a nun and fancying that she will be one when she grows up: it is all just a matter of putting on a long skirt, a turkish towel wrapped around the head, and a rope or piece of string around the waist. Her family smiles and says, "how cute," but that's all. It couldn't happen here.

Parents may be enthusiastic about the woman next door who has three girls who are nuns and a boy with the Jesuits—just imagine! But it is no occasion for enthusiasm when their own daughter announces that she wants to be a nun. Parents may tell the world—and their parish priest, because it is "expected"—that they are happy about their Mary going to the convent; but that isn't the way Mary herself hears it at home. With this attitude of parents, what happens when a child goes to a religious vocation conference? She listens to the priest, or nun, and is attracted by what she hears; but she is also puzzled by the contradictions she has heard at home. Mother, for instance, tells Mrs. Kelly how wonderful it is that her three daughters are nuns, but frivatesly, in her own household, Mother confides that they "must be peculiar," or "selfish to leave their parents like that."

In the formative years, when a boy or girl has been taught that parents are always right, what happens when what the priest tells them is in direct contradiction and opposition to what their parents tell them? Here is the priest, the teacher, whom the boy and girl has been taught to love and believe as another Christ, telling of the glory of the religious life. And here on the other side are mother and father, whom the child also must believe are always right, telling them just the opposite and threatening all kinds of calamities. Who needs the instruction, the parents or the child?

As the program exists now, it is confusing not only to the children, but to the parents as well. Most lay people have a very simplified and perhaps superficial conception of a religious vocation.

We have been told that it is a special invitation extended by God to the one He chooses, and therefore no human agent or agency may interfere with that invitation. Parents feel that if this is so, if they may not interfere (though they will, being parents), then neither may any other human agent or agency try to "talk their children" into religious life.

They do not understand why priests and nuns should be "organizing" to "drum up" religious vocations just as if they were drumming up an ice-cream trade. Thus the wall of resentment, doubt, suspicion, and even violent opposition is built up, and it is not the nun or priest but the child who has to fight it. To many parents this organized campaign is a wicked conspiracy, like the advertising tactics of unscrupulous business men. God has nothing to do with religious vocations after all; that's a hoax. It's just the nuns and priests who want more grist for their mills.

I am not discussing the logic—or rather illogic of such an attitude. I recognize the errors just as clearly as anyone else; but I do not think it should be shrugged off as it seems to be. In a matter that concerns parents very intimately, their good-will and understanding should be cultivated first. The condition of hostility, which I have described only in its barest outlines, exists, and exists more widely and disastrously than many religious realize.

As a result of this attitude, the home influence, where religious vocations should originate, is all in opposition, and confusion and divided loyalties take their toll in young minds. The children are not remiss in their business, but they are getting the correctives instead of the parents who need them more. Human nature does not like to be "talked into" anything; and parents do not like to feel that anyone has talked their children into any course of action, let alone one which they

themselves do not approve of or understand, and even fear. If there is any "talking into" to be done, they want to do it themselves. So why not let them talk their own children into religious vocations? With the right approach, they could be made to be the best salesmen for God that there ever were.

If parents could be taught the true meaning of vocation, if they should be made to realize the importance of including the religious life among the various vocations in which they try to interest their children, vocations would come from home, where they belong, and all this stupid fear and unhappiness resulting from false notions would vanish. Convert the parents first, then let them take over from there.

Most parents, I think, have been misled in the meaning of religious vocation by loose terminology, for one thing. Religious themselves speak of the vocation as "a call from God." Advertisements appear in Catholic periodicals, showing a finger pointing out at the reader who is asked: "Is God calling *YOU?*" Too many people take these things literally, and when daughter Mary says she wants to go to the convent Mother and Father immediately want to know what priest or nun has been "at her." They know that Mary has not had any "call" from God; certainly

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Many parents who would be proud to have a son enter the seminary, refuse to hear of a daughter's entrance into the convent.

Can Parents Sin by Omission in Neglecting to Foster Vocations?

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she has had no private revelations, nor public either; not visions or voices. She has not been knocked out of her seat as Saul was thrown from his horse; nor has Christ come personally as He did to “call” the sons of Zebedee.

If, in the jargon of the day, which she has picked up without really knowing its meaning, the child tries to explain that she is called, she is either suffering from the heat or some priest or nun has little to do but try to be God Almighty and Mother and Father is going right down there to tell them a thing or two. So long as these, and all sorts of incredible mistaken ideas about vocations exist in the minds of parents, religious vocation conferences for children will fail to produce the desired results.

A religious vocation is not extraordinary: it requires no miracles. It is no different than any other vocation. For instance, God chooses certain people to get married and He gives them the necessary means and graces for that life. Likewise with a girl who wants to be a nun. God chooses her, and gives her the necessary graces for the life. There are certain physical, intellectual and moral requirements for marriage; there are certain physical, intellectual and moral requirements for the religious life. No miracles are required. That physical, intellectual and moral fitness plus the graces God gives constitutes vocation, any vocation. In the case of a religious vocation, that fitness plus grace plus acceptance by lawful religious authority constitute the “call” that parents misunderstand because it is not accompanied by a miracle—or, selfishly, because they did not think it up themselves.

Many boys and girls have this basic fitness who will never be priest or nuns for the simple reason that God does not want them to be priests or nuns. This does not relieve the parents of the obligation of bringing the religious life to the attention of these potential candidates. That is the great sin of omission among parents. The omission will not be corrected by religious vocation conferences for children.

At the present time home is the last place where religious life, especially for girls, is ever mentioned. There is a certain glamor about having a priest in the family. Even the parent who would object violently to having a daughter go to the convent would be delighted to have a son go to the seminary. There is Ordination to look forward to, and the glory of the first Mass in the home parish where all the family and friends may participate.

The priest in the family comes home and keeps his contacts with his family and friends, and there is always the possibility of his rising to high ecclesiastical honors, or at least a parish of his own. But the girl who goes to the convent is “lost.”

So it seems to me a serious effort should be made to find out why children do not hear about religious life in their own homes; to root out all crazy misconceptions and apply the remedy where it is most needed and will do the most good.

Closely related to the misunderstanding about vocation, and equally responsible for the failure of parents to recommend to the religious life to their children is their misconception of the meaning of children. Children do not belong to parents, as so



Children do not belong to parents. They belong to God and are on loan to parents until He asks for them back again.

many parents seem to think. They belong to God and are on loan to parents until He asks for them back again. If every parent could be made to realize that, there would be no need for vocation conferences for children; there would be no shortage of vocations to the religious life.

The work of the conferences as they exist now cannot and should not be minimized. Not all children who attend the conferences and various other vocation programs will become nuns or priests; but they will be exposed early enough to the truth about vocations so that when the time comes that their own children announce their intention of entering a convent or seminary there will be no wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Even more important than the number of immediate vocations that might result from any number of such conferences and programs will be this insurance of future vocations stretching ahead in an unbroken tradition.

These future parents must learn early the meaning of vocation and the true meaning of their own parenthood. Once they grasp these everything else will follow, even though as it is God will have His way. They must be taught above everything else that children are given them in trust, not as possessions, and that in asking for His son back again God is offering a free gift and not bestowing a rebuke or an insult or an injury.

They must realize that religion is as much a vocation as any one of the professions which they urge upon their children. Those children who marry will be prepared to extend the tradition of vocations by educating their children to think of the religious life as a vocation for themselves; they will add another to their solemn nuptial vows: to keep all children that God sends them only long enough to give them back to Him whenever and however He shall ask for them. †

The Necessary Rigor of Traditional Practices During Lent

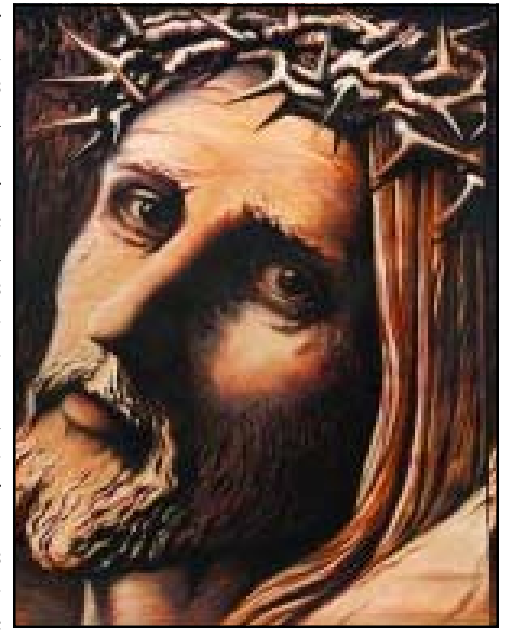
By ABBOT GUERANGER, O.S.B.
From *The Liturgical Year*

Having spent the three weeks of Septuagesima meditating upon our spiritual infirmities and upon the wounds caused in us by sin, we should be ready to enter upon the penitential season which the Church has now begun. We have now a clearer knowledge of the justice and holiness of God, and of the dangers that await an impenitent soul; and, that our repentance might be earnest and lasting, we have bade farewell to the vain joys and baubles of the world. Our pride has been humbled by the prophecy, that these bodies would soon be like the ashes that wrote the memento of death upon our foreheads.

During these forty days of penance, which seem so long to our poor nature, we shall not be deprived of the company of our Jesus. He seemed to have withdrawn from us during those weeks of Septuagesima, when everything spoke to us of His maledictions upon sinful man, but this absence has done us good. It has taught us how to tremble at the voice of God's anger. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'; we have found it to be so: the spirit of penance is now active within us, because we have feared. And now, let us look at the divine object that is before us. It is our Emmanuel; the same Jesus, but not under the form of the sweet Babe whom we adored in His crib. He has grown to the fulness of the age of man, and wears the semblance of a sinner, trembling and humbling Himself before the sovereign Majesty of His Father whom we have offended, and to whom He now offers Himself as the Victim of propitiation. He loves us with a brother's love; and seeing that the season for doing penance has begun, He comes to cheer us on by His presence and His own example. We are going to spend forty days in fasting and abstinence: Jesus, who is innocence itself, goes through the same penance. We have separated ourselves, for a time, from the pleasures and vanities of the world: Jesus withdraws from the company and sight of men. We intend to assist at the divine services more assiduously, and pray more fervently, than at other times: Jesus spends forty days and forty nights in praying, like the humblest suppliant; and all this for us. We are going to think over our past sins, and bewail them in bitter grief: Jesus suffers for them and weeps over them in the silence of the desert, as though He Himself had committed them.

No sooner had He received baptism from the hands of St. John, than the Holy Ghost led Him to the desert. The time had come for showing Himself to the world; He would begin by teaching us a lesson of immense importance. He leaves the saintly Precursor and the admiring multitude, that had seen the divine Spirit descend upon Him, and heard the Father's voice proclaiming Him to be His beloved Son; He leaves them and goes into the desert. Not far from the Jordan there rises a rugged mountain, which has received, in after ages, the name of Quarantana. It commands a view of the fertile plain of Jericho, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea. It is within a cave of this wild rock that the Son of God now enters, His only companions being the dumb animals who have chosen this same for their own shelter. He has no food wherewith to satisfy the pangs of hunger; the barren rock can yield Him no drink, His only bed must be of stone. Here He is to spend

forty days; after which, He will permit the angels to visit Him and bring Him food. Thus does our Saviour go before us on the holy path of Lent. He has borne all its fatigues and hardships, that so we, when called upon to tread the narrow way of our Lenten penance, might have His example wherewith to silence the excuses, and sophisms, and repugnances, of self-love and pride.



The lesson is here too plainly given not to be understood; the law of doing penance for sin is here too clearly shown, and we cannot plead ignorance: let us honestly accept the teaching and practice it. Jesus leaves the desert where He has spent the forty days, and begins His preaching with these words, which He addresses to all men: 'Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Let us not harden our hearts to this invitation, lest there be fulfilled in us the terrible threat contained in those other words of our Redeemer: 'Unless you shall do penance, you shall perish.'

Now, penance consists in contrition of the soul, and mortification of the body; these two parts are essential to it. The soul has willed the sin; the body has frequently cooperated in its commission. Moreover, man is composed of both soul and body; both, then, should pay homage to their Creator. The body is to share with the soul either the delights of heaven or the torments of hell; there cannot, therefore, be any thorough Christian life, or any earnest penance, where the body does not take part, in both, with the soul.

But it is the soul which gives reality to penance. The Gospel teaches this by the examples it holds out to us of the prodigal son, of Magdalene, of Zaccheus, and of St. Peter. The soul, then, must be resolved to give up every sin; she must heartily grieve over those she has committed; she must hate sin; she must shun the occasions of sin. The sacred Scriptures have a word for this inward disposition, which has been adopted by the Christian world, and which admirably expresses the state of the soul that has turned away from her sins: this word is conversion. The Christian should, therefore, during Lent, study to excite himself to this repentance of heart, and look upon it as the essential foundation of all his Lenten exercises. Nevertheless, he must remember that this spiritual penance would be a mere delusion, were he not to practice mortification of the body. Let him study

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Dispensations from the Lenten Fast Must Be Supplied By Other Practices

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the example given him by his Savior, who grieves, indeed, and weeps over our sins; but He also expiates them by His bodily sufferings. Hence it is that the Church, the infallible interpreter of her divine Master's will, tells us that the repentance of our heart will not be accepted by God, unless it be accompanied by fasting and abstinence.

How great, then, is the illusion of those Christians, who forget their past sins, or compare themselves with others whose lives they take to have been worse than their own; and thus satisfied with themselves, can see no harm or danger in the easy life they intend to pass for the rest of their days! They will tell you that there can be no need of their thinking of their past sins, for they have made a good confession! Is not the life they have led since that time a sufficient proof of their solid piety? And why should anyone speak to them about the justice of God and mortification? Accordingly, as soon as Lent approaches, they must get all manner of dispensations. Abstinence is an inconvenience; fasting has an effect upon their health, it would interfere with their occupations, it is such a change from their ordinary way of living; besides, there are so many people who are better than themselves, and yet who never fast or abstain. And, as the idea never enters their minds of supplying for the penances prescribed by the Church by other penitential exercises, such persons as these gradually and unsuspectingly lose the Christian spirit.

The Church sees this frightful decay of supernatural energy; but she cherishes what is still left, by making her Lenten observances easier, year after year. With the hope of maintaining that little, and of seeing it strengthen for some better future, she leaves to the justice of God her children who hearken not to her when she teaches them how they might, even now, propitiate His anger. Alas! these her children, of whom we are speaking, are quite satisfied that things should be as they are, and never think of judging their own conduct by the examples of Jesus and His saints, or by the undeviating rules of Christian penance.

It is true, there are exceptions; but how rare they are, especially in our large towns! Groundless prejudices, idle excuses, bad example, all tend to lead men from the observance of Lent. Is it not sad to hear people giving such a reason as this for their not fasting or abstaining—because they feel them? Surely, they forget that the very aim of fasting and abstinence is to make these bodies of sins suffer and feel. And what will they answer on the day of judgment, when our Savior shall show them how the very Turks, who were the disciples of a gross and sensual religion, had the courage to practice, every year, the austerities of their Ramadan?

But their own conduct will be their loudest accuser. These very persons, who persuade themselves that they have not strength enough to bear the abstinence and fasting of Lent even in their present mitigated form, think nothing of going through incomparably greater fatigues for the sake of temporal gains or worldly enjoyments. Constitutions which have broken down in the pursuit of pleasures which, to say the least, are frivolous, and

always dangerous, would have kept up all their vigor, had the laws of God and His Church, and not the desire to please the world, been the guide of their conduct. But such is the indifference wherewith this non-observance of Lent is treated, that it never excites the slightest trouble or remorse of conscience; and those who are guilty of it will argue with you, that people who lived in the middle ages may perhaps have been able to keep Lent, but that now-a-days it is out of the question: and they can coolly say this in the face of all that the Church has done to adapt her lenten discipline to the physical and moral weakness of the present generation! How comes it that, whilst these men have been trained in, or converted to, the faith of their fathers, they can forget that the observance of Lent is an essential mark of Catholicity; and that when the Protestants undertook to reform her, in the sixteenth century, one of their chief grievances was that she insisted on her children mortifying themselves by fasting and abstinence?

But it will be asked: 'Are there, then, no lawful dispensations?' We answer that there are; and that they are more needed now than in former ages, owing to the general weakness of our constitutions. Still, there is great danger of our deceiving ourselves. If we have strength to go through great fatigues when our own self-love is gratified by them, how is it we are too weak to observe abstinence? If a slight inconvenience deters us from doing this penance, how shall we ever make expiation for our sins? For expiation is essentially painful to nature. The opinion of our physician that fasting will weaken us, may be false, or it may be correct, but is not this mortification of the flesh the very object that the Church aims at, knowing that our soul will profit by the body being brought into subjection? But let us suppose the dispensation to be necessary: that our health would be impaired, and the duties of our state of life neglected, if we were to observe the law of Lent to the letter: do we, in such a case, endeavour, by other works of penance, to supply for those which our health does not allow us to observe? Are we grieved and humbled to find ourselves thus unable to join with the rest of the faithful children of the Church, in bearing the yoke of Lenten discipline? Do we ask of our Lord to grant us the grace, next year, of sharing in the merits of our fellow Christians, and of observing those holy practices which give the soul an assurance of mercy and pardon? If we do, the dispensation will not be detrimental to our spiritual interests; and when the feast of Easter comes, inviting the faithful to partake in its grand joys, we may confidently take our place side by side with those who have fasted; for though our bodily weakness has not permitted us to keep pace with them exteriorly, our heart has been faithful to the spirit of Lent.

How long a list of proofs we could still give of the negligence, into which the modern spirit of self-indulgence leads so many among us, in regard of fasting and abstinence! Thus, there are Catholics to be found in every part of the world who make their Easter Communion, and profess themselves to be children of the Catholic Church, who yet have no idea of the obligations of Lent. Their very notion of fasting and abstinence is so vague, that they

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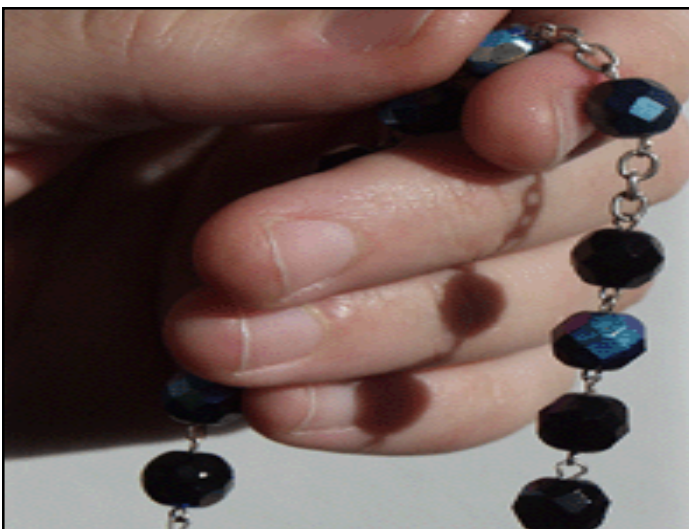
Fasting is One of the Three Good Works Prescribed for Lent

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are not aware that these two practices are quite distinct one from the other; and that the dispensation from one does not, in any way, include a dispensation from the other. If they have, lawfully or unlawfully, obtained exemption from abstinence, it never so much as enters into their minds that the obligation of fasting is still binding upon them during the whole forty days; or if they have had granted to them a dispensation from fasting, they conclude that they may eat any kind of food they wish upon any day. Such ignorance as this is the natural result of the indifference wherewith the commandments and traditions of the Church are treated.

So far, we have been speaking of the non-observance of Lent in its relation to individuals and Catholics; let us now say a few words upon the influence which that same non-observance has upon a whole people or nation. There are but few social questions which have not been ably and spiritedly treated of by the public writers of the age, who have devoted their talents to the study of political economy; and it has often been a matter of surprise to us that they should have overlooked a subject of such deep interest as this: the results produced on society by the abolition of Lent; that is to say, of an institution which, more than any other, keeps up in the public mind a keen sentiment of moral right and wrong, inasmuch as it imposes on a nation an annual expiation for sin. No shrewd penetration is needed to see the difference between two nations, one of which observes, each year, a forty days' penance in reparation of the violations committed against the law of God, and another, whose very principles reject all such solemn reparation. And looking at the subject from another point of view—is it not to be feared that the excessive use of animal food tends to weaken, rather than to strengthen, the constitution? We are convinced of it: the time will come when a greater proportion of vegetable, and less of animal, diet will be considered as an essential means for maintaining the strength of the human frame.

Let, then, the children of the Church courageously observe



Besides fasting, our Christian duties during Lent include prayer and almsgiving.

the lenten practices of penance. Peace of conscience is essential to Christian life; and yet it is promised to none but truly penitent souls. Lost innocence is to be regained by the humble confession of the sin, when it is accompanied by the absolution of the priest; but let the faithful be on their guard against the dangerous error, which would persuade them that they have nothing to do when once pardoned. Let them remember the solemn warning given them by the Holy Ghost in the sacred Scriptures: 'Be not without fear about sin forgiven!' Our confidence of our having been forgiven should be in proportion to the change or conversion of our heart; the greater our present detestation of our past sins and the more earnest our desire to do penance for them for the rest of our lives, the better founded is our confidence that they have been pardoned. 'Man knoweth not,' as the same holy Volume assures us, 'whether he be worthy of love or hatred'; but he that keeps up within him the spirit of penance, has every reason to hope that God loves him.

But the courageous observance of the Church's precept of fasting and abstaining during Lent must be accompanied by those two other eminently good works, to which God so frequently urges us in the Scripture: prayer and almsdeeds. Just as under the term 'fasting' the Church comprises all kinds of mortification; so under the word 'prayer' she includes all those exercises of piety whereby the soul holds intercourse with her God. More frequent attendance at the services of the Church, assisting daily at Mass, spiritual reading, meditation upon eternal truths and the Passion, hearing sermons, and, above all, approaching the Sacraments of Penance and the holy Eucharist—these are the chief means whereby the faithful should offer to God the homage of prayer, during this holy season. Almsdeeds comprise all the works of mercy to our neighbour, and are unanimously recommended by the holy doctors of the Church, as being the necessary complement of fasting and prayer during Lent. God has made it a law, to which He has graciously bound Himself, that charity shown towards our fellow-creatures, with the intention of pleasing our Creator, shall be rewarded as though it were done to Himself. How vividly this brings before us the reality and sacredness of the tie which He would have to exist between all men! Such, indeed, is its necessity, that our heavenly Father will not accept the love of any heart that refuses to show mercy: but, on the other hand, He accepts as genuine and as done to Himself the charity of every Christian, who, by a work of mercy shown to a fellow-man, is really acknowledging and honoring that sublime union which makes all men to be one family with God as its Father. Hence it is that almsdeeds, done with this intention, are not merely acts of human kindness, but are raised to the dignity of acts of religion, which have God for their direct object, and have the power of appeasing His divine justice.

Let us remember the counsel given by the Archangel Raphael to Tobias. He was on the point of taking leave of this holy family, and returning to heaven; and these were his words: 'Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold: for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which

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Worldly Amusements Are Contrary to the Spirit of the Lenten Season

(Continued from Page 12)

purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.' Equally strong is the recommendation given to this virtue by the Book of Ecclesiasticus: 'Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins.' And again: 'Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil.' The Christian should keep these consoling promises ever before his mind, but more especially during the season of Lent. The rich man should show the poor, whose whole year is a fast, that there is a time when even he has his self-imposed privations. The faithful observance of Lent naturally produces a saving; let that saving be given to Lazarus. Nothing, surely, could be more opposed to the spirit of this holy season, than keeping up a table as richly and delicately provided as at other periods of the year, when God permits us to use all the comforts compatible with the means He has given us. But how thoroughly Christian is it that, during these days of penance and charity, the life of the poor man should be made more comfortable, in proportion as that of the rich shares in the hardships and privations of his suffering brethren throughout the world! Poor and rich would then present themselves, with all the beauty of fraternal love upon them, at the divine Banquet of the Paschal feast, to which our risen Jesus will invite us after these forty days are over.

There is one means more whereby we are to secure to ourselves the great graces of Lent; it is the spirit of retirement and separation from the world. Our ordinary life, such as it is during the rest of the year, should all be made to pay tribute to the holy season of penance; otherwise, the salutary impression produced on us by the holy ceremony of Ash Wednesday will soon be effaced. The Christian ought, therefore, to forbid himself, during Lent, all the vain amusements, entertainments, and parties of the world he lives in. As regards theaters and balls, which are the world in the very height of its power to do harm, no one that calls himself a disciple of Christ should ever be present at them, unless necessity, or the position he holds in society oblige him to it: but if, from his own free choice, he throws himself amidst such dangers during the present holy season of penance and recollection, he offers an insult to his character, and must needs cease to believe that he has sins to atone for, and a God to propitiate. The world (we mean that part of it which is Christian) has thrown off all those external indications of mourning and penance, which we read of as being so religiously observed in the ages of faith; let that pass; but there is one thing which can never change God's justice, and man's obligation to appeases that justice. The world may rebel as much as it will against the sentence, but the sentence is, irrevocable: 'Unless you do penance, you shall all perish.' It is God's own word. Say, if you will, that few nowadays give ear to it; but for that very reason many are lost. Those, too, who hear this word, must not forget the warnings given them by our divine Savior Himself, in the Gospel read to us on Sexagesima Sunday. He told us how some of the seed is trodden down by the passersby, or eaten by the fowls of the air; how some falls on rocky soil, and is parched; and how, again, some is choked by thorns. Let us be

wise, and spare no pains to become that good ground, which not only receives the divine seed, but brings forth a hundredfold for the Easter harvest which is at hand.

An unavoidable feeling will arise in the minds of some of our readers, as they peruse these pages, in which we have endeavoured to embody the spirit of the Church, such as it is expressed, not only in the liturgy, but also in the decrees of Councils and in the writings of the holy fathers. The feeling we allude to is one of regret at not finding, during this period of the liturgical year, the touching and exquisite poetry, which gave such a charm to the forty days of our Christmas solemnity. First came Septuagesima, throwing its gloomy shade over those enchanting visions of the mystery of Bethlehem; and now we have come into a desert land, with thorns at every step, and no springs of water to refresh us. Let us not complain, however; holy Church knows our true wants, and is intent on supplying them. Neither must we be surprised at her insisting on a severer preparation for Easter, than for Christmas. At Christmas, we were to approach our Jesus as an Infant; all she put us through then were the Advent exercises, for the mysteries of our Redemption were but beginning.

And of those who went to Jesus' crib, there were many who, like the poor shepherds of Bethlehem, might be called simple, at least in this sense, that they did not sufficiently realize either the holiness of their Incarnate God or the misery and guilt of their own conscience. But now that this Son of the eternal God has entered the path of penance; now that we are about to see Him a victim to every humiliation, and suffering even a death upon a cross, the Church does not spare us; she rouses us from our ignorance and our self-satisfaction. She bids us strike our breasts, have compunction in our souls, mortify our bodies, because we are sinners. Our whole life ought to be one of penance; fervent souls are ever doing penance: could anything be more just or necessary, than that we should do some penance during these days, when our Jesus is fasting in the desert, and is to die on Calvary? There is a sentence of our Redeemer, which He spoke to the daughters of Jerusalem on the day of His Passion; let us apply it to ourselves: 'If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?' Oh, what a revelation is here! And yet, by the mercy of Jesus who speaks it, the dry wood may become the green, and so not be burned.

The Church hopes, nay, she is laboring with her whole energy, that this may be; therefore, she bids us bear the yoke; she gives us Lent. Let us only courageously tread the way of penance, and the light will gradually beam upon us. If we are now far off from our God by the sins that are upon us, this holy season will be to us what the saints call the purgative life, and will give us that purity which will enable us to see our Lord in the glory of His victory over death. If, on the contrary, we are already living the illuminative life; if, during the three weeks of Septuagesima, we have bravely sounded the depth of our miseries, our Lent will give us a clearer view of Him who is our light; and if we acknowledged Him as our God when we saw Him as the Babe of Bethlehem; our soul's eye will not fail to recognize Him in the divine Penitent of the desert, or in the bleeding Victim of Calvary. ✠

*Letters To The Editor***More Churches Closing; False Ecumenism And The Darwin Conference?****Another Round Of Church Closures**

Editor, *The Catholic Voice*:

Once again, the news of another round of church closures and mergers is in the news, and this time it is happening in our diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania. In our case, nearly half of the churches in our diocese are closing. This means the numbers will be reduced from 209 to 118. We were told that this "restructuring plan" will affect those churches remaining open in one of three ways: One is by "partnership," where parishes retain their own pastors, but work in cooperation with neighboring groups. Another is to have a "linked" parish, where two or more parishes are "linked" together by the common bond of one pastor. The third is the formation of a "consolidated" parish, which will combine two (or more!) into one.

When the announcement came about these parish closures/mergers, we were told the bishop had no choice but to follow this plan because of the declining number of priests to service each church as well as dwindling financial resources to keep them all active.

I have heard of such closures for years, and never thought it would happen here. Who knows? In time, every part of our country will have to suffer the same fate.

K.L.

Athens, PA

Editor's Note: Yes, church closures have been around for many years in the aftermath of Vatican II and its "spirit." After the churches are stripped of their statues, and the altars are either removed or destroyed, these formerly consecrated buildings are placed up for sale, and most of the time there is little care who the buyers might be. Over the years we have heard of churches being sold to become houses of false worship by nearly any denomination of non-Catholic, while others are sold to be used as restaurants, day care centers or even storage places. How can this happen? If you listen to some of the public relations coming out of the modern church, we are told that attendance at churches is improving across the country, that more men are being ordained as priests, and that most churches are financially stable by themselves. Yet, from what is reported in this locality (and elsewhere) it seems that the opposite is true. Would it not be better if those responsible for closing these churches would expound on the reason why attendance is down in the modern churches? Why is the modern church and its "relevant" liturgy not able to attract and keep people? Let them be honest about these facts and then all will see that the modern church cannot attract the heart of man to the true worship of God because of its departure from traditional teachings. Thus it must close its buildings.

**Why Is Charles Darwin Being Honored In Rome?**

Editor, *The Catholic Voice*:

I know this is not a topic I see addressed in *The Catholic Voice*, but I wanted to ask you about it because I respect your honesty and research.

On several occasions I've heard news reports about efforts made by various religions to open up relations with those who promote the works of Charles Darwin under the guise of saying religion needs to demonstrate to evolutionary science that religion is not its enemy. I've also heard that there will be a conference in Rome, sponsored by the Vatican, to honor Darwin on the anniversary of the publication of his *Origin of the Species*. Is this true? How can the Church be involved in such things?

G.S.

Online message

Editor's Note: Thank you for the vote of confidence regarding our work. We do make an effort to present the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church over private opinions in the works we offer our readers. Your inquiry about the Vatican's sponsorship of a conference honoring Charles Darwin is not far off the mark of what we study in these pages. In fact, the chief error of Modernism, as described by Pope St. Pius X, is its embrace of evolution -- first the evolution of dogma, naturally leading to the species within themselves. This conference is based on an evolutionary interpretation of the Scriptures. Notre Dame University, Rome's Gregorian University and the Pontifical Council for Culture are collaborating in sponsoring a conference in Rome in March on "Biological Evolution, Facts and Theories." It will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of "Origin of the Species." Commenting on this conference, Jesuit professor Marc Leclerc tells us this conference "is not in the least about a celebration in honor of the English scientist; it's simply about analyzing an event that marked for all time the history of science and that has influenced the way of understanding our very humanity."

Catholics and non-Catholics alike have labored hard to demonstrate by the Scriptures, by natural reason and by true science that the evolution of species as described by Charles Darwin is simply not true. In fact, those who accept the Scriptures are confident that this "thesis" was introduced to cause people to lose confidence in the account of Creation as found in Genesis, no longer attributing the true origin of species to the creative power of an Almighty God. Instead, genetic mutation and natural selection of forms of life are supposed to explain life as we have it today. It was John Paul II who first embraced the acceptability of Darwin's origin of species when he spoke to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on October 22, 1996. He told those present (among other things) that the convergence of "scientific progress" (!) since the time of Darwin "is, in itself, a significant argument in favor of this theory." At that time, he told the Academy that Pope Pius XII, in his time, supported Darwin's theory. This is a gross and grievous error, for even a cursory review of Pius' encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950) reveals a teaching quite opposite this view. It is an offense against our Faith that this conference is held in Rome.

Want To Contact Us? Here's How:

By Letter:	P.O. Box 130, Mead WA 99021-0130 USA
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Blessed Palms: An Important Sacramental In The Catholic Liturgy

Adapted from **THE LIFE OF CHRIST**
By Rev. John E. Mullett

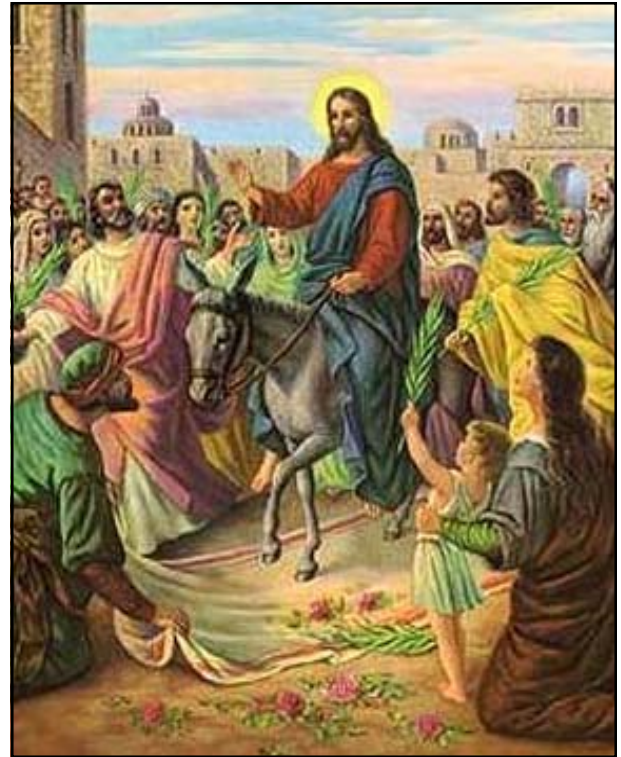
The crowd waved olive-branches and palm-leaves over the head of Jesus as He proceeded through the streets. Is there any mysterious meaning in the waving of these fresh green boughs? In the first place, these sappy and fragrant branches are symbolical of good works, especially of that love and good will toward our neighbor, which we hope to practice with and in Christ, and to hold before Him green and fragrant on the day of judgment. The palm branches signify the glorious victory of Christ, and our victory through Him, over sin, death, and hell. The olive-branches remind us of the sweet and happy peace which Christ, by His atonement, obtained for redeemed and reconciled creation. Such, too, is the triple meaning of those green branches, blessed by the Church each year, on Palm Sunday, with great solemnity and lengthy prayer, to be afterward reverently borne in procession, and then kept in the homes of the faithful, as an effective protection against the dangers of soul and body.

When taking part in the ceremonies of Palm Sunday, we should direct our closest attention to the deep instruction and suggestive meaning of the ritual. Human life is a pilgrim's progress, in the course of which the Christian should be carefully active to enrich himself with good works, as symbolized in the green boughs. While holding the blessed palms, he should remember that he is to strive for the attainment of victory over sin and hell, of which victory palm is the universally accepted emblem. As he kisses the palm branch, he should excite in his heart a practical longing for heaven's happiness and peace, as symbolized by the palm branch. The three loud raps made with the cross upon the church-door should remind him that admission to heaven is to be secured only by virtue of the three hours of sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross of Calvary. While retaining in his home the green twig of blessed palm, he should remember for what end and purpose the Church blessed that palm, when she pronounced the prayer, "Bless, O Lord, and sanctify these branches, that those who receive them may thereby receive protection for soul and body, and an efficient sign of grace; that in whatsoever place they may be retained, the inhabitants thereof may enjoy Thy blessing and be guarded by Thy right hand."

Those who accompanied Jesus from Bethphage, or who met Him on the way, raised their voices in His praise, singing hosannas. This Hebrew word is at once an exclamation of joy and an expression of good will, respect, and love for the person to whom it is addressed. And is not every religious procession such a hosanna? The man who, with proper dispositions, takes part in a religious procession, professes aloud and fearlessly before the eyes of the world his belief in Jesus Christ and his willingness to serve Him in love, joy, and gratitude. Although incredulity, religious indifference, and worldliness find fault with this public manifestation of homage and faith, a believing people will be as little affected by such strictures, as were the honest disciples by the pitiful remarks of the Pharisees.

The words "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord," are taken from the 117th Psalm, the same that contains

the remarkable prediction concerning Jesus: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the Head of the corner." This psalm was sung every year, when the paschal lambs were led in solemn procession into Jerusalem five days before the festival of the Passover. And Jesus, on this same fifth day before the great feast, is conducted as the true Paschal Lamb into the same city of sacrifice. It is surely by an interposition of the Holy Ghost, that the people salute Him in the same words in which but a few hours before they saluted the paschal lambs when led in by their keepers to be slain in the solemn sacrifices. †



On Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, as the week of Our Lord's Passion is called, branches of palm trees, and other trees, are blessed. These branches are carried in procession, and held during the Mass like the candles; and some of these are afterwards burned, to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday of the following year. Devout people like to keep blessed candles and palm branches in their houses. It gives a sense of the protection of God to their families and dwellings, and it is, in reality, an act of faith in the efficacy of prayer, and of faith that God will, in some degree, at any rate, grant that special protection for which the Church has prayed. There is something of this feeling left amongst miners who are out of the Church. I have been told that, in mining districts, the Protestant miners come in crowds to get the "blessed palms" on Palm Sunday, with the feeling that these will preserve them from danger at their work. In their case, it would easily degenerate into a superstition; but such a feeling, grounded on confidence in prayer, is a most legitimate and devout one.

Taken from *The Threshold of the Catholic Church*

By Rev. John F. Bagshawe

Statement of Purpose

The CATHOLIC VOICE is the newsletter of the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics, a non-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina.

The Society is a Catholic Apostolate, of both laity and clergy, established to work for the full restoration of traditional Catholic rites and teachings, most especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass of the Council of Trent, the ancient Latin Mass.

We, the directors and officers of the Society, pledge our fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church and to her teachings as handed down by the Sacred Magisterium through the centuries. We dedicate ourselves and the works of our apostolate to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

We place our efforts under the patronage of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, and offer all we do in the name of Jesus Christ for the greater honor and glory of God. We invite all Catholics to join in our work.

From The Traditional Roman Catholic Calendar

These are only some of the special liturgical feasts we will celebrate in the next few weeks. A complete list of all the liturgical feasts is listed in the calendar which is distributed every year by the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics.

- St. Thomas Aquinas March 7
- St. Patrick March 17
- St. Joseph March 19
- Annunciation BVM March 25
- Passion Sunday March 29
- Palm Sunday April 5
- Holy Thursday April 9
- Good Friday April 10
- Easter Sunday April 12
- St. George April 23
- St. Mark April 25
- St. Joseph the Worker May 1
- Finding of the Holy Cross May 3
- St. Pius V May 5
- Sts. Philip & James May 11
- St. Robert Bellarmine May 13
- Ascension Thursday May 21
- Pentecost Sunday May 31
- Trinity Sunday June 7
- Queenship BVM (*transferred*) June 8

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