

# THE SERAPH

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*The Calling of St. Peter & St. Andrew*  
*Villa Castelveccchio di Cigoli*

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# BAPTISM

*Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD*

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“Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (St. Mark 16, 15).

The command of Jesus to His Apostles and their true successors has the renewal of all humanity for its goal. Just as in the beginning, God commanded Adam to increase, multiply, and subdue the earth, so the command is the same from Jesus to us. We are to increase and multiply by bringing those in darkness to the light of Jesus Christ. We are to subdue the earth by returning it to the original design of giving glory and honor to God. It is an expression of God’s Will that we all believe and lovingly work out our salvation. The means to eternal happiness is as simple and complicated as believing the Gospel and being baptized.

Believing the Gospel entails more than just faith because faith without works is dead (St James 2, 17). We must believe, follow, and live the Gos-

pel. In the baptism of infants, the faith of the Church fills this need. It is a matter of Faith that we must believe that “The Baptism of young children is valid and licit.” St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles frequently speak of the Baptism of a whole “household.” Any children present in the family are included.

Baptism is essential for the lawful reception of all the other sacraments. Before children are Confirmed or receive their First Holy Communion, their valid Baptism must be verified. Likewise, with marriage and the other sacraments. This is why those who move to another parish must obtain a currently issued Baptismal certificate before they are permitted to be Confirmed or married. Also, any impediments to the reception of the sacrament are noted on the Baptismal certificate. For instance, when a young person desires to be married, he must obtain a recently issued Baptismal certificate. This proves that he is genuinely baptized and able to receive the sacrament of Mar-

riage. The pastor issuing the certification must also note any known impediments that invalidate a marriage (previous marriage, religious vows, etc.).

The sacraments are only for the living. The dead cannot receive Sacraments. The Synods of Hippo (393) and of Carthage (397) prohibit the Baptism of the dead and the Communion of the dead. Our sympathies often reach out to those whose lives had ended before they had the chance to be baptized. What of the still-born child? The sudden loss of life in war or tempests? And even the lives of the children killed within the womb by abortion? Is there any chance for these or any hope for them? We know that those without the Sacrament of Baptism are stained with Original Sin. There can be no happiness for them in Heaven until this void (sin) can be filled with the love of God. Some theorize about another place of natural happiness in eternity, like the Limbo of the Old Testament, where the just awaited their release by the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. We do not believe this temporary place has become a permanent place for unbaptized children. Such a place cannot be a place of “natural happiness” because God made us to be with Him

in Heaven. As long as we are separated from Him, we cannot find completeness, fulfillment, or joy – even on a natural level.

This dilemma has plagued many over the years, especially with the countless abortions committed in our lifetime. A young philosopher/theologian proposed a theoretical solution. He suggested that because the soul is simple (it has no physical parts to break down), it can know and love God – even in the infant stage of life. It is possible that God could present the unbaptized infant with sufficient understanding and capacity to choose to love Him or not. These infants could choose as the angels in Heaven did before the fall of Lucifer and his followers. This theory seems plausible, but it is by no means the official teaching of the Church. Where the Church has not definitively spoken, we are somewhat free to form conjectures or theorize.

Baptism must be administered with water. The water must come into contact with the baptized person and flow. This water represents the washing away of sin. For this reason, the Church teaches that washing by dipping (immersion), pouring-on (infusion), or

sprinkling (aspersion) are all valid ways of administering the sacrament. The water and the washing are the remote and proximate matter for baptism.

The form of the baptism consists in the words of the minister, which accompany the administration of the baptism. For validity, the Trinitarian form must be used: “I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” The passages in Scripture that speak of baptizing “in the Name of Jesus Christ,” “in Christ Jesus,” etc., are understood to mean the baptism that Jesus instituted – the Trinitarian formula. “Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (St. Matthew 28:19).

There are three constituent parts to the sacrament – matter (water), form (words of baptism), and intention. Many Catholics are inclined to dismiss intent as trivial or unimportant. This is a very dangerous attitude. Theologians teach us that the minimum intention necessary is to do what the Church does. The person does not have to have the correct faith or any faith at all; he simply needs to have the in-

tention of doing what the Church does when She baptizes someone. The person administering the sacrament need not have any knowledge of Original Sin, grace, sacraments, etc.

This gives us an idea of how essential this sacrament is. To impress upon us this importance, we also know that anyone can baptize. While the priest is the ordinary minister of baptism, anyone can fulfill this duty in an emergency. The only requirement is that the person uses water and says the correct words with the minimum intention of doing what the Church does.

It is so simple that we might wonder how it could ever go wrong. When the matter and form are administered correctly, we may generally assume that the minimum intention was present. However, a person can go through the correct words and motions while deliberately forming a contrary intention. The person who baptizes while ignorant of Original Sin but intends to do what the Church does baptizes validly. The person who “baptizes” while refusing or denying any intention to wash away sin does not baptize validly. This “baptism” is antagonistic to what the Church does.

We are presented with many cases where it is claimed that baptizing ministers openly say they do not intend to wash away sin because a baby has no sin. Their only intention is to “initiate” the child into the Church. It seems clear that this intention is antagonistic or in opposition to the intention to do what the Church does. Such “baptisms” are invalid due to a lack of intention.

In the April 2022 issue of THE SERAPH (Vol. XLII, No. 8), we wrote about a modernist church scandal where an invalid form was used for many years. We noted then that the “Vatican II Council” appeared to promote experimentation with the form of the Mass and Sacraments. This change in the form necessitated that many were now forced to be baptized as adults.

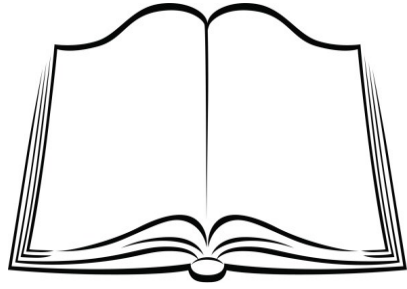
With such confusion and created chaos, many seek to rebaptize or conditionally baptize almost everyone. This becomes another snare for conscientious Catholics. Valid baptism imprints an indelible mark upon the soul. Rebaptizing amounts to a denial of this indelible mark of the Holy Ghost. We may only be baptized once. Every subsequent “baptism” becomes a mockery or insult to the Sacrament, the Church, and the Holy Ghost.

When infants are baptized in emergencies and a priest is unavailable, the infant is not subsequently rebaptized. As long as there are not any doubts that the infant was baptized correctly, the priest simply supplies the ceremonies that were not present at the baptism (prayers, exorcism, anointing, etc.).

Lastly, let us consider a quote from the Catechism: “Those who through no fault of their own have not received the Sacrament of Baptism can be saved through what is called **baptism of blood or baptism of desire**. Either baptism of desire or of blood entitles one to the possession of heaven, just as baptism by water. However, only baptism by water imprints a character on the soul, and so entitles one to the reception of the other sacraments. An unbaptized person receives the baptism of blood when he suffers martyrdom for the faith of Christ. An unbaptized person receives the baptism of desire when he loves God above all things, and desires to do all that is necessary for his salvation.”



# Just Stories



Winfried Herbst, SDS

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## ‘TEARS’

Before I forget it, I must tell you a story that is too good to be forgotten. Just listen with both ears and then lock it up in your heart. It's a little treasure.

A great, great sinner was once brought to a hospital, sick unto death. He had, alas! led a very wicked life; and now he was about to appear before his Judge, Christ Jesus, for whether we are good or bad we all must go back to God—we must die. And after death comes the judgment. We are lent to the earth for only a little while, in order that we may prove ourselves worthy of heaven.

Now, when this great, great sinner, who had committed murder and robbery and many other dreadful crimes, arrived at the hospital, the Sister who was given charge of him offered him a crucifix to kiss. Did he kiss it? Yes; he was

truly sorry for all his sins; he kissed it over and over again; he prepared for a happy death. And when he thought of how good God had always been to him and how bad he had been to God, he cried and cried as though his heart were breaking. And it really was! Such was the abundance of his tears that the Sister had to use one handkerchief after the other to dry them up. You see, he received the grace of the gift of tears—maybe because he was good to somebody at some period of his life.

Then he died, still weeping over his sins. Now, it happened that a holy man lay in a bed next to his. And when he saw the sinner die, he thought within himself, “Ah, what will the result of his judgment be?” And because he was holy, God let him have a vision. He saw that wicked man's judgment.

Yes, he saw an angel put all the sinner's crimes on one scale of a huge balance. Down it went, down to the very bottom, and up went the scale on the other end of the beam: the sins were so heavy. "Now," thought the holy man, "what can the angel put on the other side of the scales of justice that will as much as balance this fearful weight of crimes?" Thereupon he saw the angel put on the other side one little tear-soaked handkerchief that the Sister had used to wipe away the sinner's tears of sorrow. Scarcely had he placed it there when down it went and up came the other side, as though it were laden with a feather or nothing. Then the holy man understood. And he praised God's mercy and goodness.

What did he understand? Why, that tears of heartfelt sorrow for having offended the all-good God weigh more with Him than years and years of sin; that perfect contrition, which is sorrow and hatred for sin because it offends God Who is infinitely good in Himself and worthy of all our love, blots out all sin in the wink of an eye and causes the All-merciful to forgive and forget forever.

And remember this: they need not be real tears from the eyes. If only the heart weeps it is enough. When does the heart weep? When it turns in true love towards God with genuine sorrow for sin—because He is so very, very good.

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# DISCERNING VOCATIONS

*Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD*

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There seems to be a prevailing thought that religious and priestly vocations are much like choosing any other field of work. Many come to bishops thinking that because they have studied the history of the Church, have memorized some prayers in Latin, and have attended the Latin Mass, etc., they are now ready to be ordained. Many inquire about entering the religious life but soon turn away because they are told that they must complete a postulancy, novitiate, and temporary vows before they are permitted to make final vows. Just because someone has a secular degree in some area does not mean they can automatically advance to the higher levels of religion or priesthood.

Having read all the different lives of St. Francis of Assisi is far from qualifying to become a Franciscan. Going through a secular degree in philosophy does not mean your degree is acceptable to advance you to the school of Theology. We understand that students have worked hard in their studies, but we also understand that having a piece of paper does not necessarily qualify anyone.

The clerical and religious states require much more than knowledge or understanding of prerequisite courses.

Many think that they should be permitted to bypass the admittance process. Several (typically among those labeled “Traditionalists”) go from one group to another, desperately seeking someone to give them what they desire. They often become demanding and insistent that they be given what they want. They insist that it is God’s Will that they make vows in the religious life or are elevated to the priesthood – some even think they have a right to the episcopacy. What they fail to obtain in one place, they go somewhere else to find someone to give them what they want without questioning them.

We hear the constant refrain that in these unusual times, we need to relax the laws and disciplines of the Church. We need to make exceptions. Far from this, it is our humble opinion that we need to adhere ever more closely to the laws, traditions, and practices of the True Church. St. Paul warns

bishops not to ordain men lightly or carelessly. The rules and regulations of religious life demand that a vocation be tried and tested. There need to be postulants, novitiates, and temporary vows before one is accepted for life into this vocation.

The requirements for clerical or religious life are not difficult but essential. The person seeking entrance to these holy vocations must be of normal bodily and mental health; they must be of appropriate age (neither too young nor too old) though sometimes exceptions can be made if there are acceptable reasons to do so; they must also possess to some degree the traits of docility and humility. Candidates need to be able to receive instruction and implement it even before their formation begins.

Meanwhile, we are also looking for spiritual qualities. Humility, modesty, piety, etc., must be somewhat evident in the candidates. They need not be perfect, but they must have a desire and willingness to pursue perfection motivated by charity (love of God and neighbor). “Be ye perfect because your Father in Heaven is perfect.”

Once our religious or clerical formation begins, we face

many challenges. We must be willing to work hard and make great sacrifices for the love of God. One who has never learned to bow his head in obedience will never be fit to lead or command. One who has never labored is unfit to ask others to work. There is an old saying: “you cannot give what you do not have.” A leader should never ask someone to do something he isn’t willing to do himself. A priest who skips this formation process is unfit to direct others’ souls because he does not understand what he is asking others to do. Theoretical knowledge is not enough. First-hand experience struggling in the spiritual life gives us a better understanding of ourselves. Understanding ourselves allows us to understand others better.

The person entering religious life petitions to be accepted to a life of penance. We beg God through His representative to be found worthy to follow Jesus Christ in poverty, chastity, and obedience – that we may lovingly and willingly take up our daily cross to follow Him. We tell all Catholics that they should be worried if they find a day they do not have a cross to carry. Jesus asks His disciples to take up a daily cross, which surely means He will always have

one ready for us. We cannot follow Him or be His disciples if we don't have a daily cross. In general, what we say to Catholics applies even more to those who enter the religious life and vow to make this their life's goal.

Because our community is very small, there is usually plenty of physical work to be done in maintaining ourselves and the material things God has placed in our care. Those who believe that manual labor is beneath them need not apply. I think the Benedictines' motto also applies to all religious communities: "pray and work." We must be ready to rise from our sleep and pray before Our Lord in the Tabernacle, attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, meditate, study and perform our manual labors, which often appear to be menial. Our work and studies are punctuated with specific times of prayer throughout the day, and we must be ready to stop and put aside whatever we are doing to answer the call to prayer.

Clergy and religious pray many times throughout the day. It is our duty to pray for the Church in the name of the Church. We pray for the laity who cannot take the time to offer this worship to God. We

pray the Divine Office daily. The psalms offered to God fulfill our duty to worship Him and offer us constant instruction for our spiritual growth and development. They offer us encouragement and consolation. It is prayer that gives life and meaning to both the religious life as well as the clerical life.

While all this may sound difficult and even unpleasant, it is quite the contrary for those who have and cooperate with this special calling from God. If God does not call us to this life, it is difficult, if not impossible, to live it for Him. But if He has given us this vocation and we cooperate with His graces, we find unspeakable spiritual joys and consolations hidden in the pains, sacrifices, and sufferings. Jesus is faithful to His word. If we willingly take up our crosses to follow Him, He will make our crosses light, sweet, and joyful.

If we force ourselves into a vocation that God has not called us to enter, our lives become unbearable and often end in misery in this life and eternity. The person God calls to the priestly or religious life will never be happy in marriage or even in the single state. The person God calls to the married state will never be

satisfied in the religious or clerical state. Every state of life has its crosses, but if we are in the life that God wants us to be in and cooperate with His grace, we will find our crosses are great gifts from God and are the sources of true joy and happiness. In them, we find rest for our souls even here in this life.

It is our prayer, and we hope it is yours as well, that every young person seeks to find and follow God's specific will for himself. Let us encourage them to pray to God to direct them on the path He wants them to enter. Our choices in this life bear eternal consequences in the next life. We need to live this life correctly and not haphazardly.



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# THE COMMUNIST THREAT

*Father Joseph Noonan, OFM*

## *Part Sixteen: The Undermining of Education*

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*Note: The information in this article comes from **The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America** by Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt.*

**1974**

In 1974 **A Curriculum for Personalized Education** by Robert Scanlon, former Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, was published by one of the U.S. Department of Education research laboratories, Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Predicting the future, Scanlon stated:

The emphasis in schools in 1985 will be to free the individual from subject matter as bodies of knowledge and provide him or her with higher order skills. ... One type is values clarification.

In a speech given to and recorded by **The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development** in 1974, Dr. Leon Lessinger, superintendent of schools in Beverly Hills, California and former associate commissioner of

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education in the U.S. Office of Education, called for the implementation of Skinnerian behavior modification and discussed environmental influence when he said:

Would that we had such a system; a system of accountability. Do we have a hog cholera vaccine? Three ingredients of such a vaccine:

1. Target the experience in terms of outcomes;
2. Self-paced learning. We have the technology now. Modules. Small groups working on common learning targets. Free learner from having to be there always in front of teacher. If we know the target, we can do beautifully.
3. Use of contingency rewards. May make you feel uncomfortable. Does me, but he who shirks this responsibility does a disservice to the children of the United States. Behavior Modification is here. Better for us to master and use wisely. Powerful ... powerful... powerful.

Carolina Inn exists right across from my school. In the restaurant, rug is red; in the bar, rug is orange. I know that because I happen to pass by! ... Red in the restaurant — because you feel uncomfortable and it keeps you from dillydallying around dinner. Ah, but in the bar, it's [warm, comfortable] orange!

**Man, Education & Society in the Year 2000**, written by Grant Venn, Director of the Chief State School Officers Institute and professor of education at Georgia State University, was a report or summary of discussions which took place at the Fifth Annual Chief State School Officers Institute at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, July 25 – August 2, 1974. The report of the Institute was sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education in cooperation with the Council of Chief State School Officers, funded by the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. There is a notation on the back cover which states: "The availability of this report is limited. A single copy may be obtained free on request to the U.S. Office of Education as long as the supply lasts." Dr. Venn's best known publications are *Man, Education and Work* (1963) and *Man, Educa-*

*tion and Manpower* (1971). Excerpts from Dr. Venn's introduction to the Summary Report of the Institute follow:

Seven days of intensive study and discussion with the top leadership of the U.S. Office of Education and specialists invited to speak to the Chiefs reached an apparent consensus regarding issues that are facing Man, Education and Society: *The Year 2000*. ...

The seven topics chosen for study by the Executive Committee of the Council of Chief State School Officers, the U.S. Office of Education and the Institute Director... follow:

1. The Role of the Future in Education — Alvin Toffler
2. Education and Human Resource Development — Willard Wirtz
3. The International Situation: The Role of Education — Frederick Champion Ward
4. Economic Matters: Public Dollar Availability — Allan K. Campbell
5. The Shape of Democracy: The Citizen Role — Forbes Bottomly
6. The Public and Private Life of the Individual — Harold Shane

## 7. Energy, Natural Resources and Growth — Charles J. Ryan

Excerpts from the body of Dr. Venn's summary follow:

We have reached a point where society either educates everyone or supports them. ... Technological change has, suddenly and dramatically, thrown up a challenge to our nation's political, economic, and education institutions. If it is to be solved, it is going to demand a massive response on the part of American education. Technology has, in effect, created a new relationship between man, his education and his society. ...

The home, the church, and the school cannot be effective maintainers since the future cannot be predicted. ...

The clearest overall approach to finding better ways seemed to be a new role for the state departments of education. ...

From the question of finances to the question of values that should be taught in the schools, the consensus was that leadership and priority changing by state departments was the most important step to be taken. ...

After all the questions had been asked and all the dia-

logue ended, it appeared that the most difficult matter would be one of instituting new approaches to education.

...

Toffler's belief that the schools have been a "maintaining" institution for a static predictable society was not agreed to by all, but there was agreement that education for the future had to end its reliance on the past as predictor of the future. ...

The traditional cluster of knowledge, skills, values, and concepts will not help our young face the future in their private life, the international situation, their citizen role, their work role, nor in the area of energy, national resources or growth. ...

... Individuals need more learning about social process with a greater emphasis on participation in group decision making. Again we come face to face with the fact that many problems of the future must be solved based on values and priorities set by groups. Many of these values will have to be enforced by group action and will need the involvement of many individuals in order that hard decisions can be implemented. Many of the future problems cannot be solved by individual decision or action.

The heavy emphasis on individual achievement and competition may need to include learning about cooperation and group achievement. ...

As learning becomes more tied to the future, personal and societal change “values” come to the foreground. It is doubtful that we shall ever return to the concept of values in the same way we saw them in the past. ... Perhaps there is a need for the clarification of new values needed to solve future problems. They may become clear as we begin a deliberate search for values we wish to teach and provide experiences for our young in using these values in solving real problems. ...

It would appear that our young have become isolated from the “real work” of society and from the real decision making of society. Decision making [values clarification] may become the subject of the learning process if there are greater opportunities for “action learning” and group learning by teachers and students. ...

The over emphasis on knowledge, information, and theories have caused our youth to be freed from the testing of their beliefs in a non-

controlled environment — the real world. ...

## Conclusions

In addition to the three R's, the basic skills would appear to include group participation, environmental relationships and planning for the future! ... Organization, structure, role and purpose, methods, content, financing, relationships among school and society, leadership and time frames must all be evaluated and changed. The greatest danger seems to be that simple improvement rather than basic change might be attempted. ...

The following conclusions seem to be suggested as approaches which might bring about major change! ... The states collectively should establish specific minimal competencies in each of the basic tool skill areas and each state should make them the first priority for funding, staffing and organizing. ...

Annual state reports should be devised to replace the normative achievement test in the future with competency achievement. ... The states should convene a task force to study and report the ways that are being tried and ways that might be used to provide alternatives to earning the high school diploma. ...



Students achieving minimal credits ought to be encouraged to develop their unique aptitudes and to test these in the community, workforce, and the school systems. ... There should be a policy devised in each of the states that ends the long held basic of “time in place” [Carnegie Unit] as the evaluation of learning for credit.

Regulations must be developed which encourage the use of the community, adults, students and other learning sites than the classroom and teachers. ... Full-time attendance from grades one through twelve may have become a barrier to learning — what are the alternatives? ... Educational credit should be available to students for activities related to their studies in work, volunteer action, community participation, school volunteer programs and other programs contributing to the betterment of the home, school, community and society. ... The time traps of learning for the young, earning for the middle-aged and yearning for the retired must be changed to a concept of continuous learning [UNESCO’s lifelong learning, ed.].

Greater use of adults and students from other countries

and cultures should be emphasized. ... It is obvious that the schools alone cannot educate our youth. State Departments should encourage, through policies and financing, the use of other societal agencies and resources to be part of the planned educational program of high school and older youth. ... Since the future indicates a smaller share of the public dollar for education, states should develop regulations and policies which use the entire year and the entire society as educational resources. ...

The fifty states should organize a commission to establish the values that are significant in approaching problems that must be faced in the future. ... Since change is so great and problem solving the necessity of the future, the state should establish a study which would define the essential skills, understandings and approaches that our young should learn in order to participate in the social decisions that must be made in the future. ...

Knowledge and information is not the only basis for solving problems; our schools need to help our youth gain experience in group decision making as a basis for future citizenship. ... Each state ought to look at the

problem of the role of the school in making the entry job a means rather than an end. ... Would a placement function for the schools help motivate youth? ... Every high school student ought to devote a portion of their time to the development of a career related to the future and sensible public and private life. ...

Most research in education has looked at parts and pieces rather than the total relationship of man, education and society. The CCSSO should establish a long-range planning and policy group to look at societal issues and the implications for education. At present, there is no such body looking at this problem. Can the education Chiefs afford to let others do all the directing of the future?

**Charlotte Iserby's Note:** The reader cannot help but see that the above highly controversial recommendations made in 1974 have been implemented with hardly a hitch.

Professor Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development approach curriculum, "Ethical Issues in Decision Making," was developed in the early 1970s and was used extensively in law education courses in

public and private schools. In 1974 Kohlberg was still developing his classifications of "Stages of Moral Development" to include a Seventh Stage — that of "Faith." Kohlberg's program was listed in the National Diffusion Network's catalog Programs that Work as an exemplary program. Kohlberg's Moral Development Approach includes education in the following "stages of moral development":

Stage 1 — "Avoid punishment" orientation: decisions are based on a blind obedience to an external power in an attempt to avoid punishment or seek reward.

Stage 2 — "Self-Benefit" orientation: decisions are based on premise of doing something for others if they reciprocate.

Stage 3 — "Acceptance by others" orientation: decisions are based on whether or not their behaviors are perceived as pleasing to others.

Stage 4 — "Maintain the social order" orientation: decisions are based on fixed rules which are "necessary" to perpetuate the order of society as a whole.

Stage 5 — "Contract fulfillment" orientation: decisions

are based on the individual respecting impartial laws and agreeing to abide by them while society agrees to respect the rights of the individual.

Stage 6 — “Ethical principle” orientation: decisions are based on “conscience” and respect for each person’s individuality is paramount with the values believed to be valid for all humanity. After Stage 6, the individual experiences despair. He or she has developed principles of justice, yet is faced with an unjust world. Moral philosophy cannot solve the problem.

Stage 7 — “Faith” orientation: decisions are concerned with “what is the ultimate meaning of life?”

This “Faith” orientation stage does not conflict with the principles developed through the first six stages; rather, it integrates those stages and provides a perspective on life’s ultimate meaning. In Stage Seven the individual advances from an essentially human to a cosmic point of view. With Stage Seven there is a modification to a wider view of life. Emphasis changes from the individual to the cosmos.

**1975 will follow in the next issue.**

*To Be Continued*

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# THE LITTLE CATECHISM OF THE CURÉ OF ARS

*Selected passages from the  
writings of  
St. John Marie Vianney*



## CHAPTER EIGHT CATECHISM ON PRAYER

See my children; the treasure of a Christian is not on the earth; it is in Heaven. Well, our thoughts ought to be where our treasure is. Man has a beautiful office, that of praying and loving. You pray, you love — that is the happiness of man upon the earth. Prayer is nothing else than union with God. When our heart is pure and united to God, we feel within ourselves a joy, a sweetness that inebriates, a light that dazzles us. In this intimate union God and the soul are like two pieces of wax melted together; they cannot be separated. This union of God with His little creature is a most beautiful thing. It is a happiness that we cannot understand.

We have not deserved to pray; but God, in His goodness, has permitted us to speak to Him. Our prayer is an incense which He receives with extreme pleasure. My children, your heart is poor and narrow; but prayer enlarges it and renders it capable of loving God. Prayer is a foretaste of Heaven, an overflow of paradise. It never leaves us without sweetness. It is like honey descending into the soul and sweetening everything. Troubles melt away before a fervent prayer like snow before the sun. Prayer makes time pass away very quickly, and so pleasantly that one does not perceive how it passes. Do you know, when I was running up and down the country, at the time that

almost all the poor priests were ill, I was praying to the good God all along the road. I assure you; the time did not seem long to me.

We see some persons who lose themselves in prayer like a fish in the water, because they are all for God. There is not division in their heart. Oh, how I love those generous souls! St. Francis of Assisi and St. Colette saw Our Lord and spoke to Him as we talk to each other. While we, how often we come to church without knowing what we come for, or what we are going to ask! And yet, when we go to one's house, we know very well what we are going for. Some people seem to say to God, "I am going to say two words to Thee, to get rid of Thee." I often think that when we come to adore Our Lord, we should obtain all we wish, if we would ask it with very lively faith, and a very pure heart. But alas! we have no faith, no hope, no desire, no love!

There are two cries in man, the cry of the angel and the cry of the beast. The cry of the angel is prayer; the cry of the beast is sin. Those who do not pray, stoop towards the earth, like a mole trying to make a hole to hide itself in. They are

all earthly, all brutish, and think of nothing but temporal things, . . . like that miser who was receiving the last Sacraments the other day; when they gave him a silver crucifix to kiss, he said, "That cross weighs full ten ounces." If there could be one day without worship, it would no longer be Heaven; and if the poor lost souls, notwithstanding their sufferings, could worship, there would be no more Hell. Alas! they had a heart to love God with, a tongue to bless Him with; that was their destiny. And now they are condemned to curse Him through all eternity. If they could hope that they would once pray only for one minute, they would watch for that minute with such impatience that it would lessen their torments.

"Our Father who art in Heaven!" Oh, how beautiful it is, my children, to have a father in Heaven! "Thy kingdom come." If I make the good God reign in my heart, He will make me reign with Him in His glory. "Thy will be done." There is nothing so sweet, and nothing so perfect, as to do the will of God. In order to do things well, we must do them as God wills, in all conformity with His designs. "Give us this day our

daily bread.” We are composed of two parts, the soul and the body. We ask the good God to feed our poor body, and He answers by making the earth produce all that is necessary for our support. . . . But we ask Him to feed our soul, which is the best part of ourselves; and the earth is too small to furnish enough to satisfy it; it hungers for God, and nothing but God can satiate it. Therefore, the good God thought He did not do too much, in dwelling upon the earth and assuming a body, in order that this Body might become the Food of our

souls. “My Flesh,” said Our Lord, “is meat indeed. . . . The bread that I will give is my Flesh, for the life of the world.”

The bread of souls is in the tabernacle. The tabernacle is the storehouse of Christians. . . . Oh, how beautiful it is, my children! When the priest presents the Host, and shows it to you, your soul may say, “There is my food.” O my children, we are too happy! . . . We shall never comprehend it till we are in Heaven. What a pity that is!



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# ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

## *An Autobiography*

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### CHAPTER EIGHT

#### PROFESSION OF SÆR THÉRÈSE

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Shall I tell you, dear Mother, of the retreat before my profession? Far from feeling consoled, I went through it in a state or utter spiritual desolation — seemingly abandoned by God. Jesus slept in my boat, as was His wont. But how rarely will souls allow Him to sleep in peace! Wearied with making continual advances, our good Master readily avails Himself of the repose I offer Him, and in all probability will sleep on till my great and everlasting retreat; this, however, rather rejoices than grieves me. Such a frame of mind is sufficient to show that I am in truth no Saint, for I ought not to rejoice in my dryness of soul, but attribute it rather to my want of fervor and fidelity. I suppose I ought to be distressed that I so often fall asleep during meditation and thanksgiving after Holy Communion, but I reflect that little children, asleep or awake, are equally dear to their parents; that to perform operations doctors put their patients to sleep; and finally, that “The Lord knoweth our

frame. He remembereth that we are but dust.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet apparently barren as was my retreat — and those which followed have seemed no less so — I received unconsciously many interior lights on the best means of pleasing God and practicing virtue. I have often observed that Our Lord will never give me a store of provisions but nourishes me at each moment with food that is always new. I find it within my soul without knowing how it has come. I believe, quite simply, that it is Jesus Himself, hidden in my poor heart, who is mysteriously at work inspiring me from hour to hour with whatever He wishes me to do.

Just before my profession I received the Holy Father’s blessing through the kindness of Brother Simeon, and I am certain that this precious blessing helped me through the most furious storm of my whole spiritual life.

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. cii. 14

On the eve of the great day, usually so full of sweetness for a novice, my vocation suddenly appeared to me as unreal as a dream. The devil — for it was he — assured me that I was wholly unsuited for the Carmelite life, and that by entering on a way to which I was not called I was deceiving my superiors. The darkness became so intense that one fact alone stood out clear — I had no vocation and must return to the world. I cannot describe all I went through. What was to be done in face of such a difficulty? Happily I chose the right course, and decided to tell our Novice Mistress about the temptation without delay. There and then I called her out of the choir, and, full of confusion, revealed the state of my soul. Fortunately, her insight was clearer than mine, and, laughing at my fears, she completely reassured me. The devil was put to instant flight by this humble avowal; what he wanted was to keep me from speaking and so draw me into his snares. But it was now my turn to ensnare him, and to complete my humiliation I also told everything to Mother Prioress, whose consoling words dispelled the last shadow of doubt.

Next morning, September 8th, my soul was flooded with

heavenly joy, and in that peace “which surpasseth understanding”<sup>2</sup> I pronounced my holy vows. Many were the graces I asked, and feeling myself truly a “Queen” I took advantage of my title to beg from the King all possible favors for His ungrateful subjects. No one was forgotten. I longed that every sinner on earth might be converted, all captive souls in Purgatory set free, and on my heart I bore this letter containing what I desired for myself:

“O Jesus, My Divine Spouse, grant that my baptismal robe may never be sullied. Take me from this world rather than allow me to stain my soul by committing the least willful fault. May I never seek or find aught but Thee alone! May all creatures be as nothing to me and I as nothing to them! May no earthly thing disturb my peace!”

“O Jesus, I ask for peace . . . peace, and above all, LOVE . . . love without limit. I ask that for Thy sake I may die a martyr — give me martyrdom of soul or of body. Or rather give me both.”

“Grant that I may fulfil my promises in all their perfection; that no one may think of me, that I may be forgotten

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<sup>2</sup> Phil. v. 7



and trodden underfoot as a grain of sand. I offer myself to Thee, O my Beloved, that Thou mayest ever perfectly accomplish Thy Holy Will in me without creatures placing any obstacle in the way."

When at the close of that glorious day I laid my crown of roses, as was usual, at Our Lady's feet, it was without regret; I felt that time could never take away my happiness.

Was not the Nativity of Mary a beautiful feast on which to become the spouse of Christ? It was the little new-born Mary who presented her little Flower to the little Jesus. That day everything was little except the graces I received, except my peace and joy as I gazed when night came down, upon the glorious star-lit sky, and thought that before long I should take flight to Heaven, and there be united to my Divine Spouse in eternal bliss.

On September 24th, I received the veil, but this feast was heavily veiled in sorrow. Papa was too ill to come and bless his "little Queen," and at the last moment Mgr. Hugonin, who should have presided at the ceremony, was prevented from doing so; for other reasons, too, it was a day of gloom. And yet through it all, my soul was profoundly at peace. It pleased Our Lord,

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however, that on this occasion I should not be able to restrain my tears . . . and they were not understood. True, I had borne far harder trials without shedding a tear, but then I had been helped by special graces, whereas on that day Jesus left me to myself and I soon showed my weakness.

Eight days after I had taken the veil our cousin Jeanne was married to Dr. La Neele, and at her next visit I heard of all the little attentions she lavished on her husband. I was greatly impressed, and I determined it should never be said that a woman in the world did more for her husband than I for my Beloved. Filled with fresh ardor, I strove with increased earnestness to please my Heavenly Spouse, the King of kings, who had deigned to honor me by a divine alliance.

When I saw the letter announcing our cousin's marriage, I thought I would amuse myself by composing an invitation which I read to the novices in order to bring home to them what had struck me so forcibly — that earthly unions, however glorious, were as nothing compared to the titles of a Spouse of Christ.

God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, and the

Most Glorious Virgin Mary, Queen of the Heavenly Court, announce to you the Spiritual Espousals of Their August Son, JESUS, King of kings, and Lord of lords, with little THERESE Martin, now Princess and Lady of His Kingdoms of the Holy Childhood and the Passion, assigned to her in dowry by her Divine Spouse, from which Kingdoms she holds her titles of nobility — OF THE CHILD JESUS AND OF THE HOLY FACE. It was not possible to invite you to the Wedding Feast which took place on the Mountain of Carmel, September 8, 1890 — the Heavenly Court was alone admitted — but you are requested to be present at the At Home which will take place tomorrow, the Day of Eternity, when Jesus, the Son of God, will come in the clouds of Heaven, in the splendor of His Majesty, to judge the living and the dead. The hour being uncertain, you are asked to hold yourselves in readiness and to watch.<sup>3</sup>

I prepared myself by a fervent novena for the retreat in the year following my profession, as I anticipated that it would be a time of severe suffering. I usually find preached retreats most trying, but this one proved an exception and brought me great graces. We

had heard that the priest who was to give it understood better how to convert sinners than to direct nuns. If that were so, I must have been a great sinner since God made use of him to bring me such consolation.

I had previously been a prey to all kinds of interior trials which I had found it impossible to make clearly known. But now I was able to unburden myself in a most marvelous way, so that the Father understood me completely, and even divined the state of my soul. He launched me full sail upon the ocean of confidence and love which had so long attracted me, but over which I had scarcely dared venture. He also told me that my faults did not grieve Almighty God, adding: "At this moment I hold His place, and I assure you on His behalf that He is well pleased with your soul."

### *To Be Continued*

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<sup>3</sup>This letter, the style of which may sound strange to English ears, is modelled closely on the somewhat quaint letters whereby French parents of the better class announce the marriage of their children. Such letters of "*faire-part*" are issued in the name of relatives to the third or fourth degree. (Rev. Thomas N. Taylor, Editor)



# FRANCISCAN SAINTS

NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

**Blessed Helen Enselmini**  
*Virgin, Second Order*

Helen, a member of the ancient noble family of the Enselmini, was born in Padua in 1208. Early in life she entertained an ardent desire to become a bride of Christ, and so, when St. Francis established a convent of Poor Clares in her native city in 1220, she received the habit of St. Clare from the hands of St. Francis himself. St. Anthony of Padua was her director, and under his guidance the young novice advanced rapidly in religious perfection.

In order to purify His spouse thoroughly, Our Lord began to visit her with grievous and painful maladies when she was but eighteen years of age; she became lame, blind, and dumb, and remained thus until her death. She bore this trial with heroic constancy and perfect surrender to her suffering and crucified Savior.

But as a recompense she was also strengthened and enlightened with abundant heavenly consolation. In spirit she saw the glory of the blessed in heaven, especially that of our holy Father St. Francis and all the religious who were faithful to their vocation. God permitted her also to behold the sufferings of the souls in purgatory, in order to encourage her to pray the more zealously for them and to bear her own sufferings with still greater patience.

Finally, on November 4, 1242, the Heavenly Spouse called her to her eternal home. She was thirty-four years old and had spent twenty-two years in religion. Her body has remained incorrupt to the present day, and numerous miracles have been wrought at her intercession. In 1695 Pope Innocent XII approved the public veneration tendered her.

## ON PATIENCE IN TIME OF SICKNESS

1.) If you are visited with illness, reflect that it has been sent you by God, for, without the will of our heavenly Father, not a hair falls from our head. Our Lord Himself assures us of this. Perhaps you have been the cause of your illness: through want of precaution, immoderate exertion, intemperance, or other sins. But even then, it is God's hand that sends you the sickness as a penance, and you can do nothing better than accept the penance for the amendment of your life and bear it patiently. — Examine yourself and see whether you have borne bodily sufferings in this spirit in the past. Offer them up henceforth, but especially during the octave for the poor souls, who must suffer more severe penance in purgatory.

2.) But sickness is not always a punishment for sins committed. When the disciples saw the man born blind, they asked our Lord: "Master, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Our Lord replied by saying that neither the blind man nor his parents had caused the blindness by their

sins, but that it was permitted "*that the works of God should be made manifest in him*" (John 9:2,3) So, with the innocent soul of Blessed Helen: she was visited with sickness so that the power and grace of God might be made manifest in her, and her virtue be proved in patience. — If Our Lord permits you to be visited with illness, perhaps it is because He wants to try you to see whether your piety is genuine, whether your love of God will continue also in the time of suffering. If, with the grace of God, you stand the test in patience, you promote the glory of God and ensure your salvation. — Have you stood the test in the past?

3.) Consider that even if sickness comes from God, it is not contrary to God's will that we apply the proper remedies to restore our health. We may, and we should even, call in a physician when the sickness is serious. Holy Scripture says: "*The most High hath created medicines out of the earth, and a wise man will not abhor them*" (Ecclus. 38:4). It is part of patience in illness willingly to take the prescribed medicines, to follow the directions of the physician, and not to become im-

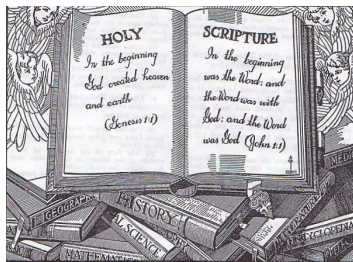
patient even if there is no improvement. Moreover, it is not contrary to patience if we pray and ask others to pray for the restoration of our health. Nor is it wrong to speak of our sufferings and pains. If that is done in a simple and truthful manner, it is better than if the patient does not complain from the hope of being admired and pitied

all the more; such silence is rather disguised love of praise and vanity. Be unassuming and forthright in days of sickness as well as in days of good health. Accept whatever God sends you; apply the proper remedies and then leave everything in His hands. In this way you will merit His good pleasure and work out your salvation.

## ***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH***

*O God, Thou strength of those who are in health and remedy of the sick, who didst adorn Thy virgin, Blessed Helen, with marvelous strength in illness and with innocence of life, grant us at her intercession patiently to endure sickness and vicissitudes, to amend our lives and attain to everlasting happiness in heaven.  
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

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# AMONG INFIDELS -

## BY DIVINE GRACE

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*Father Louis Vezelis, OFM*

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### *Chapter Eighteen — First Traditionalist Encounter*

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It was the winter of 1976-77 when I saw the ad in the local paper announcing that a “Father Francis Fenton” was going to speak in Rochester, New York. He was going to address such questions as Communion in the hand, altar girls and the many other things that made a large number of Catholics irate. I was very interested in hearing what this clergyman would say on these matters. It was, after all, the first time that I had heard of a Catholic priest actually speaking out against the things that were going on.

When I arrived at the motel where the lecture was scheduled, a small number of people were already gathered. I met another priest there who had come in his usual attire: a business suit. I could not place his interest in something that was supposed to be conservative, considering how very liberal he was.

Before sitting down, some local newspaper reporters approached us and wanted to

know our opinion of what Father Fenton had to say. My answer was that I did not know what Father Fenton had to say and therefore could not make any comment until I had heard him speak. A little while later, as I sat and waited for the lecture to begin, a man with a TV cameraman accompanying him approached Father Fenton and apparently asked for an interview. I assumed that this was the case because I over-heard Father Fenton crossly crackle at the man: “I don’t give interviews to the kept press!” This was a very odd attitude, I thought, for a clergyman to take toward these people. But, after the lecture, I would be surprised at the crudeness with which this man addressed the audience.

Although the talk was quite interesting, Father never really touched on the subjects mentioned in the ad. However, what I found most curious was that a layman with a name like ‘cinch’, ‘pinch’ ...or ‘finch’ came forward and introduced Fr. Fenton. It was very peculi-

ar because he said that this lecture was being sponsored by the “John Birch Society”. I wondered what this Society was. The man explained that the John Birch Society was not a Catholic organization but that it sponsored worthwhile causes. This sounded suspicious because I have yet to hear of any group that is not Catholic wishing to help the Catholic Church in preaching Her truth.

After the talk, there was a question period. There was a first question from a young man who accompanied the business suit-wearing priest. He asked: “When will full color, life-size pictures of yourself be available? I'd like to get one!” It took me a few seconds to understand the gist of the question. But, meanwhile, Father Fenton leaned over the podium, glared at his interlocutor and said: “You're a clever jerk, aren't you?!” This type of response did not seem proper for a priest who should have enough composure to handle hecklers. Be that as it may, other questions were not much more intelligent.

When all was said and the audience started leaving, a young man who had met me came and asked if I would like to be introduced to Father Fenton. I gave him a positive nod and he

took me over where Fr. Fenton was standing in the center of a crowd of admirers. There is nothing wrong in having admirers. But what struck me as again very strange was that Father Fenton had distinctly mentioned that the greatest problem his organization known as the ORCM (Orthodox Roman Catholic Movement) lacked was enough priests to bring the Mass to the hungry people, and yet, he did not even take the time to speak to me. He simply smiled, shook hands, and melted away with his bevy of friends like a queen bee surrounded by workers. I said nothing. There was nothing to be said. But I thought about it: if he was so interested in recruiting priests, he certainly did not show it.

This was my first contact with what would be called “traditionalists”. I returned home with a feeling of content that I had heard a priest say things in public that I had not been able to express. At the time, however, I knew very little of the details of what had taken place in Rome, of what the Novus Ordo Mass was really all about. I had just recently returned from the Far East Missions and could not properly evaluate the present scene. Meanwhile, I did the best I could by reading all available literature. On the following

Christmas Day, I went to the motel where a Polish priest, Fr. Victor Mroz, was saying the Latin Tridentine Mass for a small group of people. I thought that if I could meet this priest and talk with him, I might get some insight on what was really happening. All that I read pointed to a very serious situation. It was so serious that I did not want to believe it. The consequences were very grave. And so, I went to the motel to meet Father Victor.

Father Victor was a gentle man. He impressed me as a pious man, too. He was a Conventual Franciscan and I felt that there would be a closer bond between us. I asked Father if he could speak with me for a few minutes. He graciously agreed and we sat for some minutes until he had to leave. I felt that this priest would not be doing the things he was doing if he felt they were incorrect or morally wrong. More than anything else, Father Victor was instrumental in convincing me that the Novus Ordo was wrong. He said he had all kinds of information to prove his position, if I would come to his home. I felt that this man would not deceive me in such an important matter. His age and experience counted for something.

Soon after, I went to visit Fr. Victor in Buffalo, NY. While there, this man who introduced himself as a representative of the John Birch Society showed up. Father had been urging me to go to Stratford, CT in order to meet Father Fenton. I had said that I foresaw a need to go to New York City on some mission business and would take the opportunity to pay a visit to Father Fenton then. Father Victor urged me to go immediately, without delay. I didn't think that there was such a rush about it all, but I allowed myself to be persuaded to go within the next few days. Everything was arranged. I flew down to New York and a young man who accompanied Father Fenton on his tours met me at the airport. I had come with a Korean gentleman who was aiding me in my work with Korean immigrants. We had business, as I said, in New York City for the mission and took this opportunity to do both. The young man who met us was very polite and kind. He would drive us all the way to Connecticut. On the way, we spoke of many matters relating to the Church. Later on, this young man who obviously had done much to help Father Fenton and who, it appeared, had become a kind of "lay chancellor" was later abandoned by Father Fenton. This was very sad because with proper super-



vision this young man could have done much good. This was the weak link in the entire chain: there was no priestly leadership in this ORCM. There was a figurehead, nothing more. The whole operation was run by laymen who knew not the first thing about dealing with clergymen, nor of church protocol. The next day, I believe, I went to visit Father Fenton.

On the face of it, the ORCM presented a plausible but temporary solution to the situation in the Catholic Church. Would I join it? Mr. Fenton had my name already typed up on an insurance program for members. I wanted to know more about this organization before signing my name to anything. Nevertheless, I agreed to help with the Mass while considering the entire matter. It was a difficult decision to make because there was little information given wherewith to make a judgment. The decision not to involve myself with the ORCM was made in a very unusual manner. I had been trying to get some kind of objective picture of what this ORCM was all about, and without success. This puzzled me. If this was an organization that upheld tradition, then it seemed to me that this tradition would be obvious, or at least clear when pointed out. It was neither ob-

vious nor could anyone be found who would point it out clearly. God works in strange ways, and His ways are not always ours. What actually happened is not very important. What is important is the peculiar character trait of the individual who was the leader of this organization. If rash judgments merited trophy, this man would get the prize each time. There is no doubt in my mind that the primary cause for the general disaster among remnant Roman Catholics, both clergy and laity, lies in the incompetency of leadership as manifested by men whose credentials for priestly ministry leave much to be desired. It simply defies comprehension to learn that the leader of these “traditionalist” Catholics is unable to offer Mass for the people whom he expects to support him; who hides from contact with other priests. Mickey Mouse never had it so good!

I did not join the ORCM because there was nothing Catholic about it. Rather, I concluded that this organization was of such a nature that no Catholic, priest or laity, could belong to it. It was run by a young man while its titular head hid in his apartment; the priests involved seemed to have been enticed and then reduced to economic dependency upon those who held the

money-bags — a typical Trusteeism situation. All in all, my limited contact with these odd traditionalists was a source of great enlightenment. With time I would learn of the hidden links in the John Birch — ORCM — Lefebvre *anschluss*. My first contacts with those who claimed to be for tradition, was a very traumatic one. However, by this time I had observed sufficiently that any compromise with the Conciliar

Church was impossible, while on the other hand, it was imperative to avoid suspicious front organizations which pretended to Catholic tradition but were only front organizations for dubious political activists with roots in Freemasonry.

*To Be Continued*



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