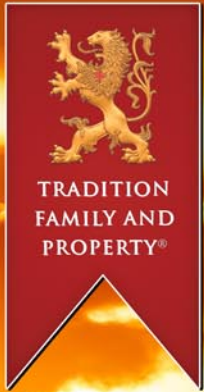


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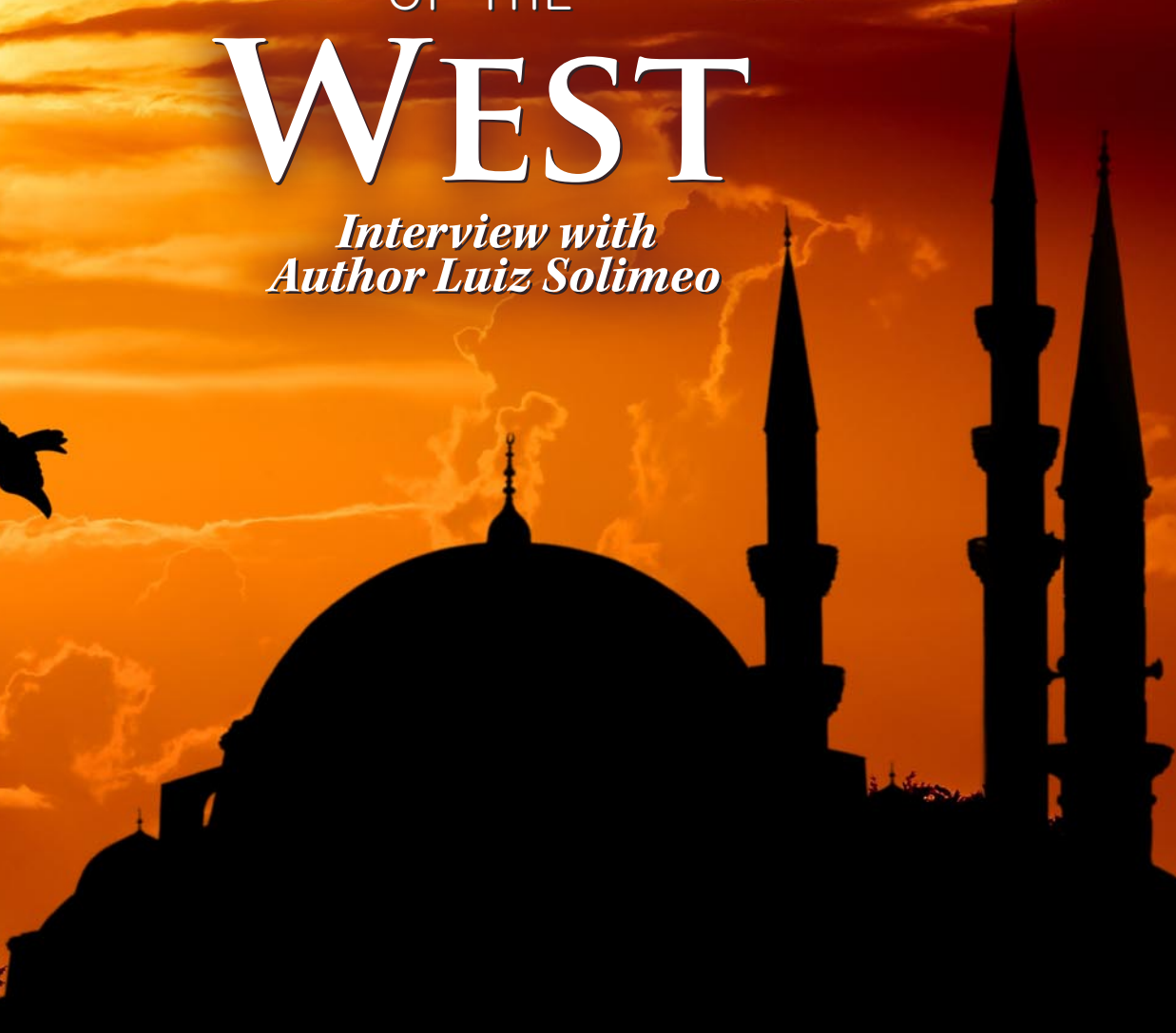
May/June 2019

MAGAZINE



ISLAM AND THE SUICIDE OF THE WEST

*Interview with
Author Luiz Solimeo*



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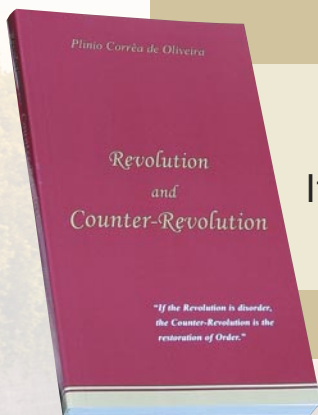
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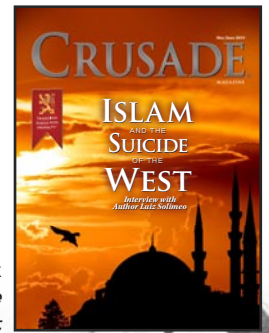
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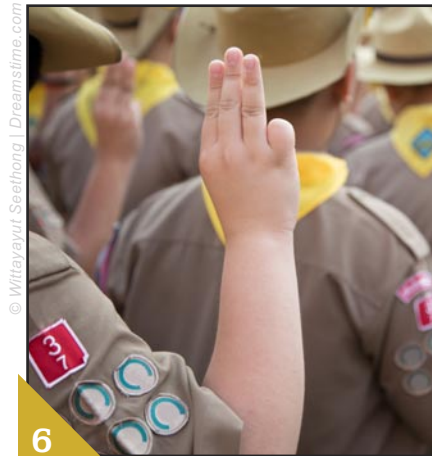
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CRUSADE

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THE AMERICAN TFP

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is an organization of lay Catholic Americans concerned about the moral crisis shaking the remnants of Christian civilization. Its earliest origins date back to January 1971, when the first TFP members started to group around the publication *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*. It is a civic, cultural and nonpartisan organization which, inspired by the traditional teachings of the Supreme Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, works in a legal and peaceful manner in the

realm of ideas to defend and promote the principles of private ownership, family and perennial Christian values with their twofold function: individual and social. The TFP's words and efforts have always been faithfully at the service of Christian civilization. The first TFP was founded in Brazil by the famous intellectual and Catholic leader Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in 1960. His work inspired the formation of other autonomous TFP sister organizations across the globe, thus constituting the world's largest anticommunist and antisocialist network of Catholic inspiration.



IN BRIEF

Studies Show Conservatives Tend to be Happier Than Liberals

While division and hostility are spreading in America, study after study shows that when it comes to personal happiness and well-being, conservatives have the edge over liberals. One recent study by the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey found that 52 percent of married, religious, politically conservative people with children considered themselves “very happy” versus only 14 percent of single, secular, liberal people without children.

A study published in the *Elsevier Journal of Research in Personality* hypothesizes that this “happiness gap” is caused by conservatives placing greater value on personal control, social responsibility, a positive outlook on life and transcendent moral beliefs. Conservatives believe in the individual’s ability to get ahead on the basis of personal and family merit, while liberals are more likely to see

people as victims of circumstance and oppression and doubt whether individuals can succeed without government intervention.



China’s “One Child” Policy Backfires as Government Now Pays Couples to Have Children

Forced abortions and sterilizations for decades in China have resulted in a population disaster. Despite the relaxation of their one-child policy, China is still plagued with a huge gender imbalance and continued discrimination against women and girls. Government leaders are now trying to reward families financially to encourage them to have more children. A report from LifeSiteNews.com said that there are even discussions to abandon the government’s limit on family size altogether to address the worsening population crisis.

Transanity: Athlete Shunned for Disagreeing with Men in Women’s Sports

On February 19, 2019, Athlete Ally, an organization that promotes LGBT athletes in sports, officially removed tennis champion and homosexual activist Martina Navratilova from its advisory board. Her crime? She dared to question allowing men who identify as women to participate in female sports. On February 17, 2019, in the *Sunday Times*, Navratilova argued that it was unfair for so-called transgender women to compete in women’s sports because they possessed natural physical advantages over females. “To put the argument at its most basic: a man can decide to be female, take hormones if required... win everything in sight and perhaps earn a

small fortune, and then reverse his decision... It’s insane and it’s cheating,” she wrote. In recent years, transgender athletes have beaten biological women and won medals in track and field, wrestling, weightlifting and cycling. In 2014, a transgender MMA fighter caused major controversy when he overpowered his female opponent and beat her to the point of fracturing her skull.

Studies Reveal Harmful Effects of Deviant Lifestyles

Two studies, one from the *American Journal of Men’s Health* and the other from the American Academy of Pediatrics, recently revealed the devastating effects of transgenderism and homosexuality. The studies reported that nearly half of men in same-sex relationships have been abused by their partner by physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse and controlling behavior. On the other hand, more than half (51%) of transgender male teens have attempted to end their lives at least once. The suicide rate among transgender teen females was at 30%.

Businessman Closes Store in Protest Against Signing of New York Abortion Law

A New York bookstore owner decided to let customers know that he’s not happy with the new radical abortion law signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on January 23, 2019. The law legalizes abortions up to birth. Jon Speed posted a sign on his bookstore window on the day of the signing that said: “Closed Today. This is a day of mourning in New York State. We will not collect sales tax today for a tyrannical government that murders babies. We will resume regular business tomorrow, collecting taxes under duress. End abortion now.”

Verona, Italy, Rejects Abortion, Declares Itself a “Pro-life” City

On the 40th anniversary of abortion legalization in Italy, the northern city of Verona decided to take a stand by officially declaring itself a “pro-life city.” On October 4, 2018, the city council voted twenty-one to six to approve “an initiative to prevent abortion and promote motherhood,” which includes giving public funds to pro-life groups and encouraging women who have an unplanned pregnancy to place their babies for adoption rather than having them aborted. The motion was backed by mayor Federico Sboarina and by the leader of the center-left Democratic party, Carla Padovani. Italy has one of the lowest abortion rates in Europe, and the number of abortions in the country continues to decline.



Teaching Your Child Social Responsibility

PART ONE



BY FATHER RAUL PLUS, S.J.



To awaken the child to solicitude for the poor and the needy is a splendid thing. However, parents do not fulfil their whole duty, if they fail to give their child a sense of responsibility for the common good and a true concept of cooperation.

Instinctively the child refers everything to his own small personal interest. If he is not taught very early to have concern for others, the child will be in danger of becoming narrow and selfish, of being forever oblivious to the general welfare, in other words, of never achieving a social sense.

While the child is very young this training will not consist in formal instructions, but rather in a constant directing of attention on a thousand different occasions to the fact of having to be concerned about others. For example, a child can be taught to go upstairs without making a noise because mamma is resting; not to slam the doors because little brother or little sister is asleep; not to play noisily near papa's study. The child will learn very early in this way the social consequences of his actions.

By way of further example, a child may be with the whole family to meet someone at the station; the parents will have a fine opportunity to show her how selfish it is to stand directly in doorways and passages, since that obstructs the entrances and exits for people coming in from trains or those who merely wish to leave that way. If a little girl accompanies her mother on a shopping trip, she can be taught not to play with the merchandise as it will all have to be refolded and replaced after she leaves.

At basketball or football, it is not so important to be a star player oneself as to bring the team to victory. It is true sportsmanship and true nobility to renounce a personal triumph by passing the ball to a fellow player who will assure the victory because he is in a better position or better qualified. "Point out to us the lessons of the football game," a young sportsman asked his older friend. And he gave the one that extols the virtue of renunciation: "I will pass my chance to him"—the sacrifice of selfish or vain calculating with a view to the result for the whole.

The child can be shown that when there is a question of committing an infraction of discipline in school, he ought to avoid it not so much because of the effect on the teacher—"He who budges will have to deal with me"—but rather the disturbance it causes for his comrades whose attention is distracted and progress delayed. Discipline was not invented for the comfort of the teacher, but for the good of the pupils. In



Whether at home or among friends, the virtue of teamwork should be instilled in children at every opportunity.

this way, theoretical teaching is preceded by forming the practical background of the child in an

atmosphere of cooperation, and a willingness to help.

An international problem arises: Selfishness or mutual help? What does the Church say on this point? What does the Gospel say? Or perhaps it is a problem of relations between employer and workers, a strike in the father's factory or in the city. Here too, what does the Church say? What does the Gospel command: Selfishness or reciprocal understanding? Trained in this fashion the young will be ready and quick to understand the social or international doctrine of the Church when they are old enough to be taught it academically. Shown at an early age how to be socially responsible, they will not oppose correct principles, as they only too often do with a wall of prejudices or pseudo-traditions, when their religion or philosophy teachers explain them. ■



Whatever Happened to the BOY SCOUTS?

BY EDWIN BENSON

Until recently, the Boy Scouts of America was adamantly resistant to change. This was especially true in its response to the homosexual lobby's demands that they accept that homosexual inclinations be viewed as normal. However, beginning in 2013, the Boy Scouts' leadership started to give in to those demands. More recently, they announced that they are considering declaring bankruptcy as they grapple with the expense of settling claims of abuse, declining membership and other issues.

A Code of Honor

One traditional Scout goal is to build character. This is expressed at every meeting when each scout repeats the Boy Scout Oath and the Boy Scout Law. The oath and law below are from the first (1911) edition of the Boy Scout Handbook. The words remain unchanged:

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the scout law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

The combination of honor and cleanliness obviously extended to sexuality. This was the sense of the phrase

“morally straight.” Any sexual activity outside of marriage was both dishonorable and unclean. That code of conduct also extended to scoutmasters and their assistants.

Social Deterioration

The sexual revolutionaries of the sixties and seventies proclaimed that “it is forbidden to forbid.” Many organizations adopted this new non-standard of behavior. The Boy Scouts were not among them. The nature of the Boy Scout program puts boys under the supervision of scoutmasters that spend days or weeks together—sharing tables, toilets, and tents. Such a program could not function well without a high degree of trust and morality. To give in on these points would ruin the program.

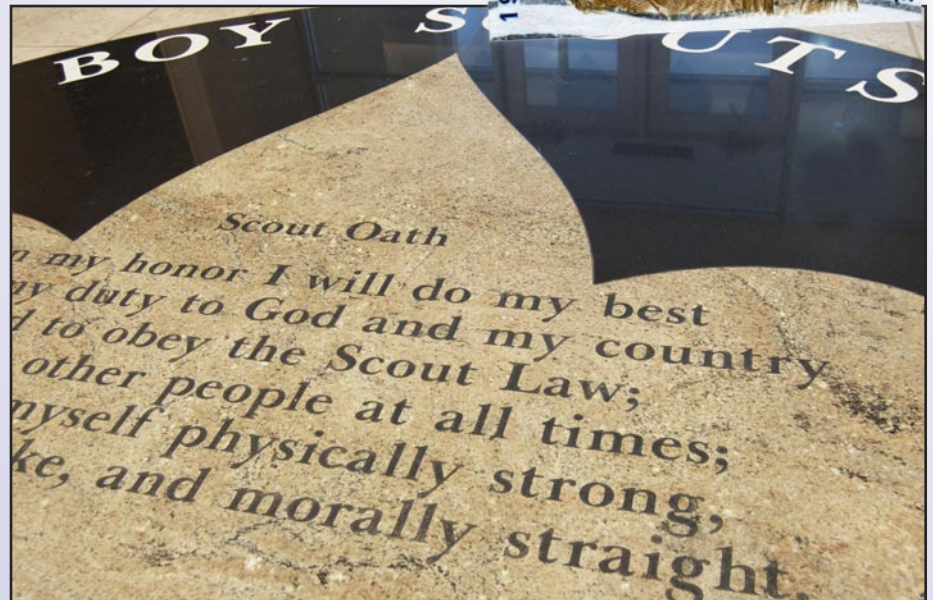
The left-wing intelligentsia ridiculed the Boy Scouts' “para-military” nature. Meanwhile, everyone else changed. The Girl Scouts became feminists. The Boys'

Clubs renamed themselves the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and the Campfire Girls became simply Campfire. The YWCA had programs for boys, and the YMCA allowed girls. The Boy Scouts stood firm.

Such firmness was intolerable to the left. Its first attack was on the Boy Scouts' funding.

The Initial Attack

Individual troops operated on very small budgets, provided by the boys or the troop's sponsor. However, each Boy Scout Council had to oversee the whole program in a given geographic area, which entails administrative expenses.



The Scout Oath, which has been in use for 108 years and reflected the values of Christian civilization, is being abandoned for political correctness, much to the detriment of society in general.

In most places, those expenses were funded by affiliating with the United Way. Contributors helped the Boy Scouts by making a single contribution to United Way, often deducted from their paychecks. It was a workable and efficient system until politics interfered.

Liberals on local United Way agency boards soon accepted complaints about the “exclusionary” practices of the Boy Scouts against homosexuals. The United Way began excluding the Boy Scouts from their funding.

This actual effect was surprisingly small. Many people contributed more to the Scouts as a means of supporting the Scouts’ principled stand.

The Attack Moves to the Courts

Thwarted in this initial attempt, the left took its battle to the courts. The Boy Scouts made the news by holding firm despite the threat of prohibitive legal fees to defend themselves from the activists.

The activists found openings in states dominated by liberal state court systems. In 1990, a New Jersey assistant scoutmaster and admitted homosexual, James Dale, was directed to leave the Scouts. Mr. Dale was an Eagle Scout, the organization’s highest rank, Eagle. After turning eighteen, he became an assistant scoutmaster. He argued that he was qualified and that his inclinations did not affect his role in leading the troop. The New Jersey Court agreed.

The Boy Scouts’ leadership appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a 5-4 decision, the high court overturned the New Jersey decision. Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote in his opinion that, “public or judicial disapproval of a tenet of an organization’s expression does not justify the State’s effort to compel the organization to accept members where such acceptance would derogate from the organization’s expressive message.”

Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory

Since that landmark victory, a new generation of leaders has taken over the

Scouts. In May 2013, the BSA announced that homosexual teens would be admitted as members. The *New York Times* reported “More than 1,400 volunteer leaders from across the country voted, with more than 60 percent approving a measure that said “no youth may be denied membership on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.” The issue of adult leaders was not yet discussed.

Membership numbers went



To deny young men the opportunities for development offered by the Boy Scouts of America can only contribute to the crisis in masculine identity found throughout America today.

down by six percent in 2013 and by another 7.4 percent in 2014, according to *Reuters*, to a new total of 2.4 million.

In July 2015, the Boy Scouts bowed to activists’ pressure, by allowing openly homosexual scoutmasters.

The erosion slowly continued. In 2017, the Boy Scouts decided to further modernize by accepting girls as members in October. Perhaps to fix the contradiction of having girls as boy scouts, the BSA announced in May 2018 the official name would be changed to the supposedly more inclusive “Scouts BSA.”

Now the Scouts are on the verge of bankruptcy. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, the possible bankruptcy is the result of, “multiple lawsuits that al-

with the left. Many think that the modern world will tolerate them if they “become less rigid” on certain moral issues. This approach can never work since the liberal goal is not compromise but surrender. Some conservatives are fooled by the incremental steps of this surrender. They find out the hard way that giving up on virtue does not bring acceptance, only the demand for more change. Moral bankruptcy will lead to financial bankruptcy.

The Boy Scouts represented resistance to the left’s radically egalitarian and permissive view of the world. Leftists made war on the Scouts to eliminate this resistance. The case of the Boy Scouts shows that the politics of appeasement does not work. When the Scouts fought back and were true to their Code, they experienced victory. It is a lesson that all those who fight the Culture Wars need to learn. ■

Moral bankruptcy will lead to financial bankruptcy.



COMMENTARY

One Woman's Heroism; an Example of Honor for All

BY NORMAN FULKERSON

While we are constantly reminded that humanity seems to be morally spiraling out of control, once in a great while someone's actions stand out in the darkness and shed a great light of hope. One of these remarkable people is Jamie Schmidt.

Monday, November 19, 2018, might have seemed like a normal day for Jamie Schmidt. Little did she know when she entered Catholic Supply, a religious goods store in suburban St. Louis, Missouri, that this ordinary day would be her last. Nor did her family ever dream her life would come to a heroic end with her being compared to Saint Maria Goretti.¹

* * *

In many ways, 53-year-old Jamie Schmidt could be considered an average Catholic lady, which only serves to make her final moments more outstanding. She was a mother of three who married her high school sweetheart. She sang in the choir at her parish church, Saint Anthony of Padua in High Ridge, Missouri. Friends described her as a giving person: someone who was always there if you needed help. She was also a devotee of Our Lady who actually made and distributed rosaries.

We know this because her reason for stopping at Catholic Supply was to purchase material for her rosary-making apostolate. There were only two other people in the store—both female employees—at the time of her arrival at 3:30 in the afternoon.

Moments later, Thomas Bruce entered. He looked around a bit then explained he was going to make a purchase but needed to get a credit card from his car. When he returned, he had a gun, and the three women were faced with their worst nightmare.

"In the Name of God..."

After forcing the ladies into a corner of the store, he proceeded to sexually assault the two employees. He then turned the gun on Jamie with the intention of doing the same to her, but she had other plans.

What happened next was an act of Christian testimony one would only expect to find among early Church martyrs in the Roman Coliseum, not from a twenty-first century Catholic lady in a modern American city.

Thomas Bruce turned to Jamie and from what we know of the exchange that followed, ordered her to disrobe. In such a situation, she could have responded in a way that might pacify her assailant. One can only speculate as to what was going through her head at that critical moment.

However, when one considers the perverse acts she was forced to witness, it is likely Jamie understood there would be no reasoning with such a man. The thought also might have occurred to her that God had placed her in that situation because He wanted to test her fidelity to Him. While this is pure conjecture, her categorical response, as recounted by the two employees, is a documented fact.

"In the name of God," she said, "I will not take my clothes off!" Using that type of phraseology was the equivalent to taking an oath before her Creator. It was thus an unequivocal, categorical no, an absolute refusal to a man with a loaded gun who was clearly not going to accept opposition.

A Glorious End

Sadly the outcome was what one would expect under the circumstances. She was shot at point-blank range. As she lay mortally wounded on the



floor, for what would turn out to be her last moments on Earth, she was in need of immediate spiritual strength and touchingly turned to God. As life drained from her body, the two employees could hear her murmuring the Our Father, the prayer composed by Our Lord Himself, in a faint voice.

The assailant fled the scene but was later apprehended. Jamie lived long enough to be taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital. However, she did not cease praying and with her dying breath was heard whispering that same prayer as her short life came to a glorious end.

It would be reasonable for a person who relishes the memory of this brave lady's heroic sacrifice to ask, why does such a story move us so much? It is because what we see with Jamie's heroic defense of purity is the overarching luminosity of that which was best in her: honor.²

A World That Is Devastated and Without Honor

This forgotten quality has several defining characteristics. First of all, it is the virtue whereby we esteem that which is excellent. This is not a difficult thing to do in the soul-stirring case of a Catholic wife and mother who looks down the barrel of a loaded gun and unhesitatingly chooses death to dishonor.

Secondly, honor is also the quality that drives a person to live up to that excellence in all things. For example, those who care about their honor will not only maintain their purity, they will also seek to practice all virtues because of the love of principle, whether it is convenient to do so or not.

Finally, there are moments in a person's life that could be defined as an "H-hour" or the all-or-nothing moment. It is a circumstance that asks a person to go above and beyond what they, or anyone who knows them, think they are capable of achieving. When faithful in those moments, the fullness of honor is seen, and along with it, a series of other qualities and virtues appear in the background, as it were, like an angel.

It is for this reason that Jamie's heroism is particularly refreshing. The days we live in are not much different from the world defined in the Book of Maccabees as being "devastated and without honor." Therefore, it is in licentious and self-centered days like our own that honor has more brilliance for the simple fact that it stands in stark contrast to the decadence that surrounds us.

Bypassing the Pleasures of Life to Do God's Will

America should be very grateful to Mrs. Schmidt for her outstanding example of purity, so very

needed in our dissolute times. With her last act, she provided a breath of fresh air in an ugly world. Although she might have been just an "average" lady leading up to the tragic events of November 19th, in one monumental and decisive moment she was catapulted into the pantheon of greatness. It is for this reason that she has been likened to Saint Maria Goretti, the 12-year-old girl who also chose death rather than submit to an equally perverse proposition.

Sadly there are those who, upon hearing Jamie's story will callously ask, "What was it all worth?" She missed the opportunity to enjoy Thanksgiving with her family and the joyous season of Christmas. She will not see her children grow old nor will she ever be able to caress her grandchildren. While these heart-wrenching



In the face of certain death, it takes the courage of a martyr to sacrifice oneself for the virtue of purity (stock photo).

considerations are legitimate, especially for mothers reading this article, the all-important lesson of Jamie's life could be lost. Her final words, while succinct, were at the same time a manifesto on the obligation we all have of being faithful to God's will, no matter how painful it may be.

However, there are those who will discard such reflections and look upon Jamie as the defeated one who lost out on life's pleasures. We can thus contrast this attitude with that found in the poignant letter of French King Francis I to his mother after suffering a crushing defeat during the Battle of Pavia in 1525. He had lost militarily but maintained that which he considered most precious.

What the king reputedly said in that letter can be aptly applied to the unforgettable Jamie Schmidt. From the place in eternity she now occupies, Jamie can justly say to those she left behind, "All is lost, save honor." ■

Notes:

1. <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/will-this-be-the-first-american-born-martyr>
2. The concepts of honor given here were developed by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in a series of meetings on the subject given in 1976.

ISLAM AND THE SUICIDE OF THE WEST

Interview with Author Luiz Solimeo



Courtesy of Michael Gorre

The author, Luiz Sérgio Solimeo, is a scholar, researcher and educator who has written numerous books, articles and essays on the effects of religion on culture.



In the name of the right to immigration, the West has been inundated by waves of Muslims whose belief—Islam—is seen by some as a “religion of peace.” However, as this interview clearly shows, a “jihad” (Muslim holy war) has been declared against the Western Christian world with a boundless hatred for the Catholic religion, as the “tolerant” Koran prescribes: “Kill the idolaters, the polytheists.”

Since Islam is so often in the news, *Crusade* interviewed author, Luiz Sérgio Solimeo, who has just published a timely book on Islam dealing with its current expansion in the West, its doctrines and origins.

The work is titled *Islam and the Suicide of the West: The Origin, Doctrine, and Goals of Islam*. It is published by the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP). The preface was written by Admiral James A. Lyons, a former commander of the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet.

Crusade: The title of your work is very suggestive. Could you explain it to our readers?

Mr. Luiz Solimeo: Gladly. How is the

West committing suicide? Today we are witnessing a real invasion of Europe and the West by masses of Muslim immigrants and “refugees.” According to statistics, most of these are young men of military age. This constant migratory flow together with the brutal decline in the birth rate in European countries makes the future of Christianity in Europe very gloomy. It is estimated that around 2030 (within only 11 years!) Muslims will make up almost 10% of the population of Western Europe. This fact should alarm governments, religious authorities and responsible sectors of society. Unfortunately, there is a great lack of reaction to this threat.

Crusade: How do you explain this lack of reaction?

Mr. Solimeo: It is partially because Western nations suffer from moral decadence, a loss of identity and failure to uphold principles. They also lack knowledge about Islam and its expansionist doctrine, at the heart of which is hatred of the Holy Trinity.

Crusade: What has been the attitude of the European bishops?

Mr. Solimeo: Regrettably, Catholic bishops have generally supported this mass immigration of Muslims in the name of interreligious dialogue. Some go even further and support the construction of mosques and Islamic cultural centers. Others allow Catholic schools to reserve rooms for Muslim prayer where they permit wearing the hijab (a cloth covering the head). If all this is not a suicidal attitude, I don't know what else to call it.

Crusade: Someone could object: The United States has received large numbers of immigrants from all over the world, and this immigration has been very beneficial... What makes Muslim immigration any different?

Mr. Solimeo: The difference is huge! The immigrants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came to the United States and the Americas in general seeking to integrate into the life of their new countries, assimilating its culture and contributing to its progress.

However, this does not happen with the new Muslim immigrants in Europe. They do not want to integrate with Western Christian civilization. Instead, based on Islamic tenets, they want to destroy this civilization and impose their own doctrine and sharia law on the world.

In this sense, consider the testimony of Burak Bekdil, a journalist residing on the island of Lesbos, a gateway to Europe from the Middle East. When asked why he had left Turkey that had welcomed him, and decided to go to Western Europe, he replied, "I want to go to Europe to increase the Muslim population there." Another immigrant added, "One day, we good Muslims will conquer these lands from the infidels."

Crusade: Playing the role of "devil's advocate," what about the right to immigrate? Don't these people have this right?

Mr. Solimeo: According to Catholic doctrine and natural law, just as people have a right to immigrate, countries also have a right to regulate immigration



The claim that Islam is a religion of peace is a lie that helps anesthetize the Christian West to the growing Muslim danger.

according to the conditions in their respective territories. Nations must safeguard the rights of their citizens and their identity, culture and religion. Otherwise, immigration would become an invasion in which outsiders would impose their law. It would give rise to all kinds of conflicts. In fact, just look at what is happening in Europe now.

Crusade: The media have been reporting on continuous attacks by Islamic immigrants in Europe. This does not prevent many—including Catholic bishops—from claiming that, although terrorists act in the name of Islam, such attacks are marginal and do not reflect Islam as a whole. They insist that it is a "religion of peace."

Mr. Solimeo: It is quite true that not every Muslim is a terrorist. Stating this would be an absurd exaggeration. However, an even greater exaggeration is to claim that Muhammad's religion has nothing to do with the attitude of these radicals. This is why it is so important to see whether Islamic doctrine—as stated in the Koran, in the traditions of Muhammad (hadith) and the life of the "prophet" of Islam (Sirah)—allows or condemns the conquest of the world for Allah by the sword.

Crusade: From the history of Islam, we can see that its expansion throughout the Middle East and North Africa was done through military conquest.

Mr. Solimeo: Right. This also happened in Spain and southern France, where the Islamic threat was stopped by Charles Martel. We see this later in Sicily, Greece and the Balkans. In the seventeenth century, Turkish troops arrived at the gates of Vienna.

Crusade: Returning to doctrine, do the sacred books of Islam sanction imposing Muhammad's religion upon others through war?

Mr. Solimeo: More than that. This is prescribed in the Koran and other Muslim texts. Let us look at some passages from the Koran (the first number refers to the chapter and the second to the verse):

"And slay them [the idolaters] wherever ye catch them" (2:191).

"Fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem [of war]" (9:5).

"O ye who believe! Fight the unbelievers" (9:123).

"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book [Christians and Jews]" (9:29).

"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger.... is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land..." (5:33).

Crusade: But the media hardly mention these things... Did Muhammad also act this way?

Mr. Solimeo: The Egyptian Jesuit Fr. Henri Boulad, an expert on Islam, provides the following data, taken from Muslim sources (in parentheses is the classical Islamic author and the number in which the quote occurs):

Muhammad had slaves and traded them (Sahih Muslim 3901), and commanded his followers to stone adulteresses (Muslim 4206).

He decapitated 800 Jewish men and children (Abu Dawud 14:2665), ordered the death of women (Ibn Ishaq 819, 995) and killed those who insulted him (Bukhari 56:369, 4:241).

According to Muhammad, the Jihad ["holy war"] on the path of Allah raises someone's position in Paradise one hundred times (Muslim 4645).

In the last ten years of his life, Muhammad led 65 military campaigns and attacks (Ibn Ishaq) and killed captives taken in battles (Ibn Ishaq 451).

He encouraged his men to rape and enslave women (Abu Dawood 2150, Quran 4:24), and ordered them to kill "apostates."

After Muhammad's death, his followers attacked and conquered the population of twenty-eight countries and declared holy war against peoples of the world's five greatest religions.

Another specialist is Prof. Richard A. Gabriel, a military historian at the Royal Military College of Canada. In a well-documented study on Muhammad as a military chief, he shows that "in the space of a single decade, [from 624 until his death in 632] he fought eight great battles, led 18 attacks, and planned 33 other military operations."

Crusade: These facts about Muhammad are not known. Was he the one who initiated the concept of Jihad? By the way, could you define this expression, which is so used today when it comes to Islamic terrorism?

Mr. Solimeo: A very well-documented book by a great expert on Islam, Robert Spencer, has just been published. The

title says it all: *The History of Jihad: From Muhammad to ISIS*. Muhammad preached Jihad not only with words but also deeds. He was the first Jihadi. As for the meaning of the word "jihad," Fr. Samir Khalil Samir, S.J., one of the greatest Catholic specialists on Islam, explains that in the Koran "the word 'jihad' is always used to mean 'fight for God'... it is translated into European languages by 'holy war.'"

Crusade: Returning to the link between Islamic doctrine and terrorist movements acting in the name of Islam, to what extent are these movements being faithful to the doctrine and example of Muhammad?

Mr. Solimeo: While insisting once again that every Muslim cannot be regarded as a terrorist, one cannot deny that Islamic doctrine leads to terrorism. Prof. Marie-Thérèse Urvoy, of the Catholic University of Toulouse, is categorical: "The terrorists apply the Koran and the prophetic traditions literally. Each act of ISIS [the Islamic State Organization] can be linked to one Islamic source or the other. In their own eyes, these fanatics do nothing but obey a divine order." This is also the opinion of Professor Bernard Haykel of the University of Princeton, one of the greatest experts on the Islamic State. According to him, ISIS leaders have made imitating Muhammad a strict duty and revived traditions that have been inactive for hundreds of years. "What impresses is not only the literal way but also the seriousness with which they read these texts," says Haykel. He concludes: "Theirs is an assiduous and obsessive seriousness that Muslims usually do not have."



Hamid Mir

Crusade: From a religious, let's say, theological standpoint, what is the main difference between Islam and Christianity?

Mr. Solimeo: The main difference is so great that it eliminates any accidental similarity. It is their concept of God. According to Divine Revelation, God is One and Triune. This is the dogma of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If you deny this fundamental dogma, there is no Christianity. That is because, with no Trinity, there can be no Incarnation of the Word or the Redemption. Mary Most Holy would no longer be the mother of God, and the Church would lose all meaning.

Instead of disregarding the existence of the Trinity as do other pagan religions, Islam takes note of and fights against it, calling it tritheism (worshipping three gods) or polytheism. The profession of Islamic faith, the shahada, which all Muslim must make, states: "There is no other god besides Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a renowned Koranic translator and commentator, makes it very clear: "The doctrines on the Trinity... are repudiated as blasphemies."

Crusade: Can you give some examples of these condemnations of the Trinity?

Mr. Solimeo: The Koran ridicules the Holy Trinity by saying that Allah is omnipotent and does not need other gods. It also says he could not have begotten a son because he was not married and did not have a wife. Let's see some quotes:

"Do not say Trinity: Give up, it will be better for you because Allah is a God" (4:171).

"And they [Christians] say: Allah

In an open letter to America after the 9/11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden stated, "The first thing we are calling you to is Islam." The letter ends with threats of destruction should America refuse to submit to Islam. Photo: Osama Bin Laden with his lieutenant, the Egyptian doctor Ayman al-Zawahiri, in November 2001.

has begotten a son! Glory be to Him! Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him” (2:116).

“They [Christians] say: ‘ (Allah) has begotten a son! ‘ —Glory be to Him. He is self-sufficient!” (10:68).

“How could he have a son without a companion [a wife]?” (6:101).

“He did not take unto himself a companion [a wife] or a son” (72:3).

Crusade: It is nonsense to suppose that God needed a wife to generate a son!

Mr. Solimeo: That is precisely what Saint Thomas Aquinas says in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* by pointing out that this assertion comes from a merely carnal, human conception of God that disregards His purely spiritual nature. Moreover, the Koran absurdly accuses Christians of worshipping Our Lady as part of the Holy Trinity:

“And remind them of when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary! You told men: ‘Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?’” (5:116).

Crusade: What are the practical consequences of this Muslim conception of the Most Holy Trinity as polytheistic?

Mr. Solimeo: Every Muslim persecution of Christians stems from the concept that Christians are “associators” (*mushrikun*), that is, they associate other gods with Allah because they believe in the Holy Trinity. For Islam, polytheism is the most serious sin, for which there is no forgiveness. The most immediate consequence of this erroneous view of the Trinity is the persecution and even killing of Christians, according to the verse called “The Sword: Kill the idolaters wherever you find them, catch them and arrest them, and keep a watchful eye for them wherever they may be” (9:5).

Crusade: If Muslims deny the Holy Trinity, what is their conception of God?

Mr. Solimeo: Islam considers God to be



In the famous July 1212 battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, four Catholic kings defeated the Caliph al-Nasir. It was one of many battles between Christian and Muslim forces during Spain’s Reconquista that spanned eight centuries.

pure omnipotence, an absolute power stripped of wisdom or love. The foundation of Islam is not love for God, but fear, submission, as expressed by the very name of Muhammad’s religion. Islam means *submission*. God is reduced to a pure arbitrary will, with the consequence that Pope Benedict XVI mentioned in his famous speech in Regensburg, Germany, in 2006: “For the Muslim doctrine, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not linked by any of our categories, even that of rationality.” He “is not bound even by his own word.”

Crusade: So do Muslims then believe that God can say one thing today and the opposite tomorrow?

Mr. Solimeo: Exactly. Thus, in the Koran, which is said to have been revealed by Allah, there are contradictory statements proper to a god without wisdom, who can negate himself. For example, the Koran says: “For any verse we abrogate or forget, we will make one better or equal. Do you not know that Allah, is omnipotent over all things?” (2:106).

Among the countless examples of contradiction, the Koran affirms that the Christians, Jews and Sabians will be saved in chapter 2:62, while in chapter 3:85 it states the exact opposite: “And those who seek a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted, and he, in the ultimate life, will be of the lost.”

Another example is about religious

tolerance. Reading chapter 2:256, we can conclude that Islam preaches tolerance: “There is no religious coercion.” However, we have just seen that the verse of the Sword (9:5) says to “kill the polytheists,” which, of course, includes Christians.

Crusade: How does a Muslim act in the face of such contradictory statements?

Mr. Solimeo: Based on a text of chapter 2:106, Muslim masters created the doctrine of abrogation. This means that when the verses revealed later, contradict previous verses, these latter ones cancel and abrogate the earlier ones. One of the consequences of the doctrine of abrogation is that all verses that preach tolerance have been abrogated by verses that preach jihad said to have been revealed later. This is the opinion of the authoritative professors Dominique and Marie-Thérèse Urvoy: “It is generally accepted that the 124 verses of the Koran, encouraging peace and forgiveness, are abrogated by verse 4 (on *jihad*) of *sura 47*.” Alexander Knysh makes the same statement in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’an*.

Crusade: Playing the role of “devil’s advocate” again, does the fact that Islam accepts Jesus as a prophet not bring it closer to Christianity?

Mr. Solimeo: On the contrary! This is

one of the consequences of its denial of the Holy Trinity. To reduce Our Lord to a mere prophet is to deny His divinity and therefore the whole Catholic doctrine. This also denies Divine Revelation, as found in the Gospels, in which Our Lord clearly affirms His divinity.

Crusade: In what sense does the Koran say that Jesus is a prophet?

Mr. Solimeo: The Koran recognizes the miracles of Jesus and even calls him “Messiah,” but not in the sense of the Redeemer of mankind, since Islam does not accept the doctrine of Original Sin. For Islam, Jesus is a lesser prophet who comes to announce Muhammad, the last and greatest of the prophets, and the one who was given the definitive revelation of the Koran. For example, in chapter 61:6, blasphemous words are attributed to Jesus with which the Savior himself “acknowledges” being only the announcer of the greatest of prophets: “And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad’” (61:6).

The difficulty for Mohammedans is that all Jesus announced in the Gospels in this regard was that false prophets would appear after his death... (Mt 7:15; 24:11, 24-25).

Crusade: They also say that Muslims venerate Jesus and His Blessed Mother.

Mr. Solimeo: Here is how Marie-Thérèse Urvoy summarizes the Christology of the Koran: “Koranic Christology, therefore, consists essentially of four values, presented in the form of absolute negations... *Jesus is not God* (5:72, 116) because He took food (5:75); *Jesus is not the son of God* (9:30; 19:34-35); *Jesus is not*



Above: Young Thai students reading the Koran in school. **Right:** The author, Luiz Solimeo, is interviewed by *Crusade Magazine's* correspondent.



the third part of a triad, as the Trinity is assimilated to polytheism (4:171; 5:73); finally, Jesus was not crucified (4:157)." Thus, there is nothing in common between Our Lord Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospels and as we profess in the Creed, and Jesus the “prophet” of Islam. Moreover, according to Muhammad, Jesus would return to Earth to destroy all crosses, the symbol of our redemption.

Crusade: From all we have talked about, Islam clearly represents a real danger both for the Faith and for freedom in Western countries. What can be done in the face of this?

Mr. Solimeo: In very complex situations, we need, first of all, to try to understand the problem well and analyze its causes. Then we can study possible solutions. The Islamic danger presents itself at a time when the West finds itself at the height of a destructive process that Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira called the Revolution (for clarification of this destructive process, order Oliveira’s seminal work: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, see page 2). We are in the midst of a crisis in which people’s minds are confused. There is a lack of

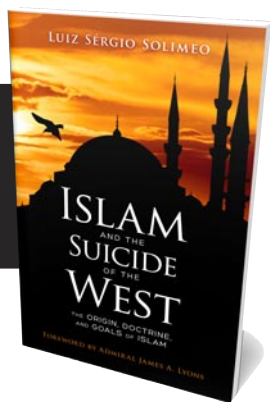
certainty and moral parameters.

In short, we are very close to chaos. However, on the horizon, there is a glimmer of hope that does not come from men, but God. It is Our Lady’s message at Fatima, in which she asserted that Russia will be converted, her Immaculate Heart will triumph, and the world will be given a time of peace.

Crusade: Is it possible to make a connection between the message of Fatima and Islam?

Mr. Solimeo: In my view, yes. For the Immaculate Heart of Mary to triumph and the world to have peace, the conversion of Russia and the end of communism alone are not enough. I believe that a victory of Most Holy Mary over Islam is also necessary. Indeed, how could the Immaculate Heart triumph over the whole world—which is the meaning of her message—if much of the planet is under the Muslim yoke and the rest is in danger of falling into its clutches? We need to remember that Fatima was the name of Muhammad’s daughter. Was it merely a coincidence that Our Lady appeared in a place with that name? I conclude my book with these considerations. I hope that this book will provide elements for a better understanding of the Islamic danger and help readers develop possible practical means to oppose it. It is also meant to give hope because without hope, people are discouraged, and the struggle becomes impossible. ■

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MAY/JUNE 2019

PROGRESS REPORT

America Needs Fatima Protests “Drag Queen Story Hour” in Reading, Pennsylvania

BY ROBERT NUNEZ

On Saturday, February 10, 2019, about fifty members and supporters of America Needs Fatima gathered in front of the Exeter Community Library in Reading, Pennsylvania to protest a “Drag Queen Story Hour” being hosted there.



Concerned Catholics gather in front of Exeter Community Library to oppose the Drag Queen Story Hours there.

“Drag Queen Story Hour” (DQSH), in which “gender fluid” drag queens read pro-homosexual/transgender books to preschool children at public libraries, represents the latest effort of the Sexual Revolution to target and indoctrinate children at the earliest age. In the words of the organizers, the goal is to:

“... [capture] the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models...”

“... kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real.”

“... Many children express gender fluidity. DQSH teaches children to embrace gender diversity in themselves and in others...”

Many parents were rightly scandalized by the library’s decision to abandon its educational principles in order to pander to this destructive agenda and showed up in force to voice their opposition. They were somberly reminded of the severe words Our Lord had for those who worked to corrupt the innocence of little ones: “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

As “Drag Queen Story Hours” continue to spread across the country, America Needs Fatima is mobilizing its national network of volunteers to resist this maneuver, peacefully but firmly. At the time this is being written, similar protests are taking place in the states of New York, California, Indiana, South Carolina and Louisiana. ■

The Clash of Two Queens

BY REX TEODOSIO

It was unreal. One moment we were peacefully praying the rosary, the next we hear scuffles by a statue of Our Lady of Fatima. We all turned. A woman came from nowhere and had lifted the statue up. We didn’t know what her intention was. She had her arms wrapped around Our Lady almost like a mother lifting a child up. Without warning and to our horror, she threw the statue down to the ground, breaking the base. The crown fell from her head and was bent out of shape.

This attack happened in Indianapolis at noon on February 23, 2019. We were holding a rosary rally against a Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) event at a bookstore called Indy Reads Books. We only found out about the event some days before, and thus invitations for the



protest went out late. Despite the short notice, cold weather and forecasted rain, about 25 people joined us and peacefully prayed around the statue.

We were heckled by a few advocates of the LGBT community right from the start. One man kept blaspheming against God and the Catholic faith. He told us to keep our faith in the church. A woman kept telling us that we were being un-Christian for judging and hating “queer” people. Ironically, she never realized that she herself was judging us.

The woman that attacked Our Lady came from nowhere. The sidewalk we stood on was actually a nature walk that had been busy all morning. However, no one caused any problem. We had not seen the attacker earlier.

One of the young ladies that was part of our protest filmed the episode. The video shows the attacker appearing out of nowhere and going straight to the statue without engaging anyone. She

grabs Our Lady and without hesitation, dashes her to the ground. Then she turns away and walks away calmly yet defiantly.

It was curious that she attacked Our Lady directly. Why the statue? The statue was not holding the banner, praying out loud, or debating with the counter-protesters. It was simply a statue of Our Lady of Fatima standing in a position of prayer.

Then the symbolism of the moment became evident. This was a clash of two queens. We were praying to our Heavenly Queen against a drag queen event. Inside the bookstore, a drag queen was being applauded surrounded by children. Outside, the Queen of Heaven and Earth was crowned solemnly also surrounded by children. Inside, the attendees hailed a drag queen in his ostentatious display of vanity and immodesty. Outside, the faithful sang praises to the Queen of Virgins.



Courtesy of Rex Teodosio

The statue of Our Lady of Fatima suffered damage after being attacked by a passerby.

Our Lord told Sister Lucy, the Fatima seer, that one cause of the thorns that injure the Immaculate Heart is the hatred towards her statues. Clearly, this was an event of extreme hatred that pierced the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It only seemed proper that we offered acts of reparation to her in response to this horrific attack. ■

Traditional Marriage Rosary Rallies and the Fatima Message

BY ROBERT RITCHIE

Thanks to the heroic commitment of Our Lady’s rally captains, America Needs Fatima continues to oppose the LGBT revolution with its effective Saint Joseph Rosary Rallies for Traditional Marriage, held each year on the Saturday closest to the feast day of Saint Joseph. As this issue of Crusade goes to press, over 900 rallies are scheduled to take place all across America on March 23rd at noon local time.

Our Lady of Fatima’s prophecy on the clash over marriage and the family was related in a letter from Sister Lucy to Cardinal Carlo Caffarra: “A time will come when the decisive battle between the kingdom of Christ and Satan will be over marriage and the family. Those who will work for the good of the family will experience persecution and tribulation.”

Sister Lucy added: “But do not be afraid, because Our Lady has already crushed his head.”

Today, we live in the age Our Lady warned was coming, and we are seeing its damaging effects everywhere. The homosexual movement, emboldened by the legalization of



Across America, many children of Our Lady rose up to defend the sacred institution of marriage, which is being brutally maligned in our day.

same-sex “marriage,” has proven that it will stop at nothing until it has imposed its agenda on every aspect of society. A particularly salient example is the targeting of young children through the introduction of “Drag Queen Story Hour” and mandatory LGBT indoctrination in public schools.

Never before has it been so necessary to defend the beautiful, life-giving cause of traditional marriage, and yet never has it been so abandoned by Catholics as it is now.

In response to this indifference, America Needs Fatima continues to take to the streets, signs and rosaries in hand, to make a public stand for true marriage before God and men. Under the protection of Saint Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, courageous Catholics throughout the country will proclaim that the battle for traditional marriage is far from over. Rather than being discouraged, they are confident that their participation will further hasten the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the crushing of the devil. ■



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G U S T O D I A N ' S

A Curious Muslim Meets Mary

BY MICHAEL CHAD SHIBLER

Fatima custodians often meet people who know little or nothing about the Catholic Faith. A few years ago I had such an experience in Florida.

Upon arrival at the home of my hosts, an elderly grandmother with a group of young children and teens met me at the door. Oddly enough, the group was sullen as I brought in the statue, set up the projector and began the introduction. Unknown to me, I was speaking to a Muslim family.

At a certain point, one of the teens vehemently objected to the phrase “Mother of God” and accused me of blasphemy since Jesus was not God. Quickly the visit became an interesting defense of the Catholic Faith. After answering several more objections to the best of my ability, my Islamic hosts allowed me to explain the Rosary. With that, surrounded by an attentive audience, I proceeded to pray alone.

After I finished the rosary, the hostess stood and began to speak. The attendants and I listened as she explained why she had assembled the family for the visit. Several months beforehand, she had been hospitalized for a serious illness. She felt alone and abandoned until one day a stranger walked in with a bouquet



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of flowers, placed it by the bedside and stayed to listen to all of her concerns. The stranger returned repeatedly to renew her flowers, fix her pillows and talk to her.

After several days of this, the hostess questioned the stranger’s motives, explaining that her own family had not visited her. The stranger replied that she was a Catholic and Catholics are encouraged to visit the sick. Requesting more information about the Catholic Faith, the stranger calmly replied that it was against hospital policy to discuss religion and therefore the Muslim woman would have to search for information on her own.

Upon her release from the hospital, my hostess entered a nearby Catholic church and found an America Needs Fatima flier about Our Lady of Fatima. She called the number and set up a home visit to which she then invited her family. I may never know what has happened to the family, but I regularly pray that their interest in Catholicism has brought them into the folds of the Catholic Church. Of one thing I am certain: Our Lady will never abandon those who invite her into their homes. ■

To schedule a
Fatima visit in
your home, call
(888) 460-7371.

A Magdalene of Our Times

BY GARY ISBELL

Eve Lavallière, the stage name of Eugénie Fenoglio, was born in Toulon, France, on April 1, 1866. The second child and only daughter of Emile and Albanie Fenoglio, she later described her painful youth: “As a child, I knew not what the love and care of a mother was. My life was tears and suffering from the time I reached the age of reason.”

Her father, a tailor, alcoholic and libertine, often gave himself over to jealous brooding and fits of rage. Her mother often had to flee with the children, seeking refuge in relatives’ homes, until her husband had calmed down. This continued until one day he shot and killed his wife, pointed the pistol at his daughter but did not shoot, and then shot himself.

Eve lived a life of privation and suffering until entering a theater company. Her beauty, voice and poise took her to the best theaters in Paris. She became the foremost actress in France and the idol of the multitudes. The entire world viewed her coiffures and clothing as models and ran after perfumes, soaps and cosmetics “à la Lavallière.”

King Carlos of Portugal, King Leopold II of Belgium, King Edward VII of England, Henry of Bavaria, diplomats, magnates, and princes all came to hear and applaud her. Dazzled by glory, she threw herself “into the vast sea of sin.”

“Gold ran through my hands,” Eve confessed. “I had everything the world could offer, everything I could desire. Nevertheless, I regarded myself the unhappiest of souls.” Despite living in a rich palace in Paris, surrounded by luxury, with a carriage and even an automobile—then very rare—at her disposal, she felt tortured by remorse. More than once she attempted suicide, even once after a

magnificent performance in London.

On Her Way to Damascus

In June 1917, Eve wanted to rest far from the world’s agitation to prepare the repertoire of songs and pieces she was to perform in the United States. So she rented the palace of Porcherie in Chanceux, near Tours. She retired there with Leonia, a young Belgian refugee she had met in Paris in 1915 and who accompanied her as a lifelong confidante. The trustee of this palace was the parish priest, Father Chasteigner, a simple, austere and pious man, genuinely solicitous for his parishioners’ souls.

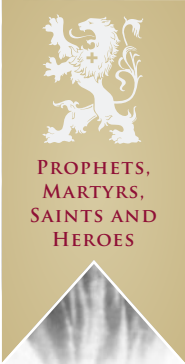
The day following Eve’s arrival was a Sunday. Father Chasteigner, noting her absence from Mass, called upon her to express his concern. Eve promised him she would not miss Mass again, and on the following Sunday, when the good pastor preached on the great converted sinners, she attended the Mass with a frivolous attitude.

Returning to the palace that afternoon, the pastor commented to Eve, “What a pity that you have no faith!”

“But what is faith?” replied Eve, in the tone of one who has permanently lost it.

She then told him of her experiences with Spiritism, in which, she said, the devil took part. “I took advantage of the occasion to ask him to restore my youth, which was what I most desired, and to cure me of enteritis. Satan promised he would do so on the condition that I would become his. I accepted, adding that my lifestyle was perfect for gaining him many adepts. Obviously



**PROPHETS,
MARTYRS,
SAINTS AND
HEROES**

quite content, he disappeared.

“Some days later I was at another session, with a new presence of the devil. I denounced him for failing to fulfill his promise. In reply, he guaranteed that he would grant what I asked, but under one more condition: that I not bless myself when I encountered a funeral. That was the only vestige of religiosity that remained in me.

“But Satan still did nothing for me. In the following session, filled with indignation, I called him an impostor and a cheat. By then I had concluded that Spiritism was nothing but a farce and that the devil did not exist.”

“Well, I assure you that he exists,” the good priest said, and with that, he mounted his bicycle and left without further ceremony.

Eve, struck by his conviction, began to think. “If the devil exists, God also exists. And if God exists, what am I doing in this world? What am I doing with my life?”

One Priest’s Persistence

Eve’s confidante, Leonia, recalled that on the following morning they were

walking in front of the château when the pastor appeared.

“Mademoiselle,” he said, “what you told me yesterday disturbed me. I confess that I spent the better part of the night in prayer, asking God to inspire me in your regard. I also celebrated Holy Mass for the same intention. Here, I brought you *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene*, by Father Henri Lacordaire. Read this book on your knees and you will see what God can do with a soul such as yours.”

“After lunch,” Leonia continues, “Eve settled down near the kitchen and, opening the doors so that the servants might hear, began to read in a loud voice. Enthusiasm seized her. Never had I heard her read with such conviction. Sitting at her feet, I began to cry. The servants were likewise moved. Eve continued reading, her voice broken by sobs.”

Eve and Leonia spent the rest of the week in piety and recollection.

“Sunday arrived, the tenth of June,” says Leonia. “We went to Mass, but Eve’s disposition differed completely from that of the previous Sunday. It was on this day, during lunch, that I ventured to say to her, ‘I would like to make my first Communion. I have reached 23 years of age without ever receiving, but I want to do so.’”

Eve was quite moved. Not only did she encourage Leonia, but offered to make the necessary arrangements and affirmed that she too would receive Holy Communion with her. At the same time, she told her, “From now on do not address me as ‘my lady.’ Simply call me ‘Eve,’ for you are my sister and I am yours.”

When the pastor arrived later and learned of Leonia’s resolve, he promised to assist her. Since she first needed instructions, he said he would provide her a catechism. The priest then prepared to leave, but Eve detained him.

“And I, Reverend Father?”

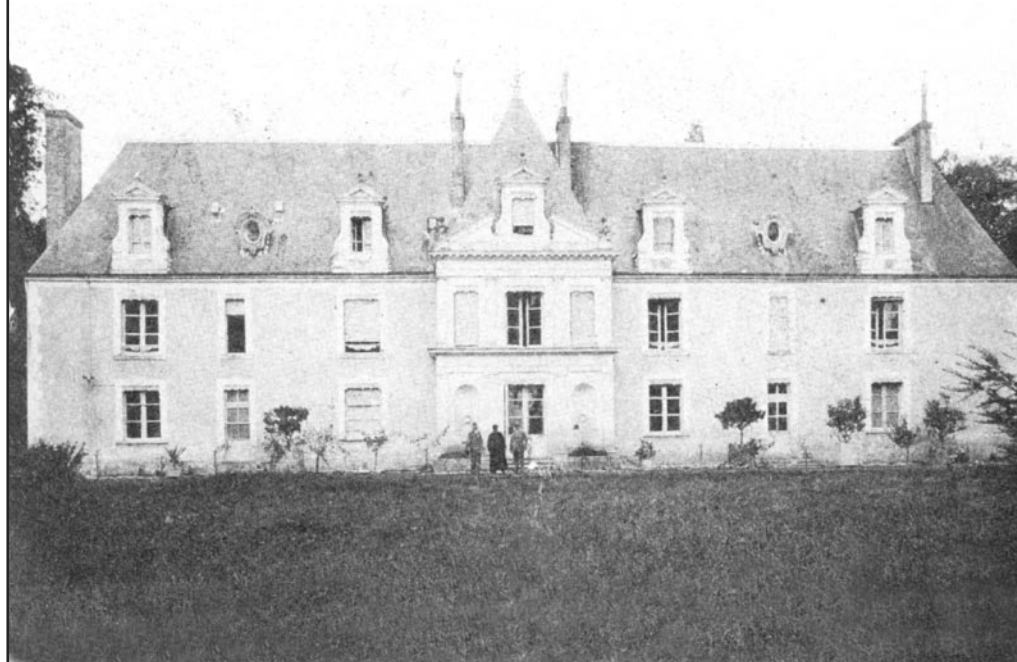
“You?”

“Yes, me! I promised this little one that I would help her, be her sponsor, and receive Holy Communion with her.”

“But . . .”

“Yes, I know well. I am a sinner and have not lived as a Christian, but even so, I hope I still have the right to return to God.”

Leonia writes, “I can still see Eve on the



The château of La Porcherie where Eve Lavallière converted on June 7, 1917.

main avenue of the palace, walking decisively at the pastor’s side and, in a loud voice, accusing herself publicly of her sins. The good priest seemed embarrassed.”

“Wait! Wait a moment!” he protested. “And above all, don’t shout so loud!”

“Wait? Wait for what? Can Leonia’s happiness not also be mine?”

“It’s just that . . . it’s that, compared to you, Leonia is a child. Her case is simple. You, you are Eve Lavallière. . . you are well known. . . your life is public. I cannot treat you in the same manner. Moreover, you gave yourself over to Spiritism. We are talking about a reserved sin.”*

“Oh, my God! How unhappy I am! God does not concern Himself with me because I am such a sinner.”

“Be calm, Mademoiselle! God does love you, and to prove that, I shall leave immediately for Tours, to request the necessary permission.”

“And if they do not wish to grant it?”

“They will. What motive would they have for refusing? Mademoiselle, I will be back in less than an hour, and I will come with all the powers.” With that, the good priest disappeared on his bicycle. Eve remained in a state of anxiety, lamenting and weeping.

Confidence in Our Lady

Eve’s sole consolation amid her sorrow, from Leonia’s account, was her confidence in Our Lady. “How good it now feels to think of her. In times past I used to love her, and I never completely forgot her. I

used to send her the flowers they offered me. She will have pity on me!”

Nevertheless, as she waited, Eve’s anxiety grew. Despair nearly took hold of her. Falling upon her knees, she raised her hands to Heaven. Bathed in tears, she exclaimed, “Lord, take me! Send me death, I can endure no more!”

Just then, Leonia, peering through the window, shouted, “Good news! I see him, I see him at last! He is pedaling with all his strength!” Eve rushed out to meet him.

“For the rest of my life,” writes Leonia, “I will never forget her great cry of joy. I will ever see her there, kneeling on the grass, expressing to God her happiness and gratitude.”

“The peace of the Lord be with you, my daughter!” said the priest, leaping from his bicycle. “The Vicar-General immediately gave me all the authorizations requested.” Eve stood up, calmed, transfigured. With what attention and gratitude she heard those words of peace!

For an entire week the two friends prepared themselves for confession and Holy Communion. They walked through the wheat-covered fields each morning to the rectory. There they sat side-by-side on the old sofa in the parlor and, like two well-behaved children, recited their catechism lesson. In the afternoon, Father Chasteigner would go to the palace to speak of Heaven and the things of God. Father Chasteigner gave each of them a rosary, and it was Eve who taught Leonia how to pray it.

Preparing for their general confessions, "We wrote out our sins on sheets of paper so as not to forget anything," said Leonia.

On the afternoon before the important day, the two were in Eve's room saying their prayers aloud. Eve said, "When I was a child, on the day before First Communion day, we used to ask forgiveness of our parents for the faults we committed against them." Then, throwing herself on her knees at Leonia's feet, she implored, "Forgive me, Leonia, for the bad example I have given you and all the affliction I have caused you." Leonia, in turn, did the same, and afterwards they retired to await the great day.

Dead to the World

Morning finally dawned. It was overcast and raining. "Naturally," said Eve, "today you have precedence, for you are making your First Communion. Confess and receive Holy Communion ahead of me."

They found the church draped in mourning, for a Mass was going to be offered later for a soldier killed in the war. "They are preparing for a funeral," declared Eve. "And on this day, Leonia, we will also bury our life of sin."

"Father Chasteigner was waiting for us in the deserted church," Leonia recalls. "He lit a candle before the image of the Most Holy Virgin and entered the confessional. I went in first and knelt down. After I had confessed, Eve took her turn. After her confession I had the impression that she had already received Holy Communion, such was the purity of her countenance and so great her recollection."

Father Chasteigner returned to the sanctuary. Eve and Leonia knelt expectantly at the Communion rail. "While lighting the altar candles, the Reverend Father's eyes were bathed in tears. As it had been agreed, I received Communion first and Eve right after. The priest's hand trembled upon giving her the Sacred Host. She was white, as if dead, upon receiving her God. Returning to



Eve, shortly after her conversion.

my place, I remained only a short time in recollection, for prolonged prayer was not for my temperament. But Eve seemed in another world.

"We had been invited to have brunch in the rectory. At a sign from the Reverend Father, I called Eve several times. But she, deeply absorbed, heard nothing. Finally, Father Chasteigner went and roused her himself and she returned to earth.

"What a joyful and radiant celebration! Afterwards, we returned on foot through the sun-drenched fields, the sun having overcome the clouds and rain. Eve was exultant with joy. 'Does it not seem to you, Leonia, that the fields have prettier tones and that the flowers today are more beautiful than ever?' We felt ourselves as delicate as shadows.

"Eve always considered that day, June 19, 1917, as the most special day of her life. She considered it the day her life really began. She renounced the theater forever, canceled her contracts, rid herself of her jewels, and repudiated all that reminded her of her worldly life. After her conversion, she was to affirm, 'It was the devil that led me to God!'

"My resolution is made," Eve wrote. "From now on, only Jesus has a right to my life, for He alone gave me happiness and peace."

A True Repentance

She left Paris in order to be safe from its dangers, distributing her immense fortune

to the poor, the missions, and religious houses, and went to live in remote locales. She asked of God much suffering in order to atone for her past sins and ascend to the heights of contemplation, virtue and sanctity.

The Divine Majesty granted her request for suffering in a variety of ways. For example, she desired to enter a convent to expiate her sins and to labor for the conversion of sinners. Notwithstanding her great ability to love and her purity of heart, she was repeatedly rejected on account of her poor health and notoriety. It was a trial that she fully accepted, realizing it to be God's will.

For four years she devoted seven months a year serving on a lay-missionary nursing team in Tunisia, but poor health and periods of depression forced her to give up this work and return to France. There, with Leonia, she led a life of prayer, meditation, almsgiving and much suffering from illnesses.

She, who had been the toast of Paris, faced extreme suffering at the end of her life. There was not one of her once-beautiful features that did not become a means of expiation, sanctification and apostolate. Rendering gratitude to God, Eve herself said, "I have sinned through these faculties, good Lord. Now I thank Thee for permitting me to expiate my sins through this suffering."

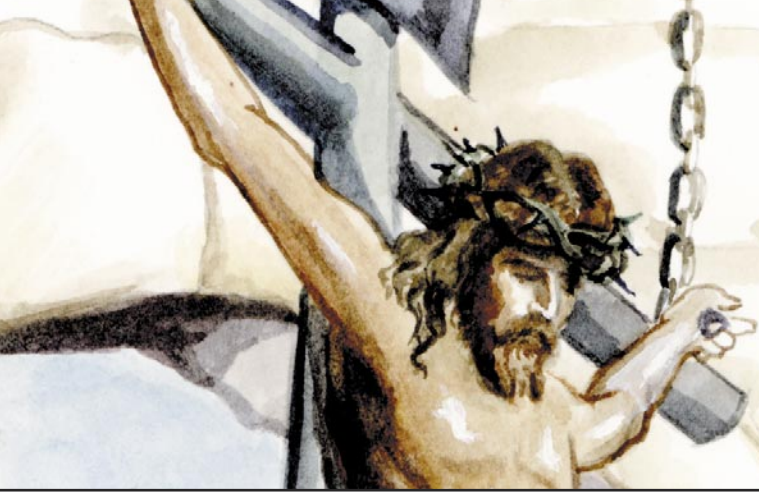
In her last letter she wrote, "All my being and all my will are turned toward this last end: to love God, Who loves me so much in spite of my past and present miseries."

She died on July 10, 1929, at the age of 63. On her grave was placed a simple cross with these words, engraved according to her request:

I left everything for God;
He alone is enough.
O Thou Who didst create me,
Have pity on me. ■

*"Reserved sins" are those that a confessor cannot absolve without special authorization of the bishop or the Pope. This permission is always granted when requested.

"I left everything for God; He alone is enough."



The Weight of the Cross

BY MICHELLE TAYLOR

In a sunny town of Andalusia, Spain, preparations for war were underway. Don Mancio, the lord of the castle, led his men out to fight the Moors. That winding train of Spanish warriors going forth to battle for the Christian cause was a scene to behold: helmets reflecting the sun, plumes tossing in the air, magnificent Arabian steeds reeling in anticipation of battle.

Don Mancio's home could still be seen through the trees and olive groves. As he rode, the knight thought of the wife and child he left behind. It was four years since he had brought his noble bride to that home, and his son was now three years old. But the hour of pain, the hour of trial, had sounded, and how fairly both had stood the test.

The medieval portico at the castle gate framed the scene in his mind's eye: Don Mancio's wife stood in the opening, young, fair, and full of dignity, her pale face showing signs of her profound grief. She held her son's hand amid the folds of her dress while the child looked up at his mother and father with the big, wide, and steady eyes of innocence, which see all and understand much. He knew that something very important was happening.

Don Mancio, clad in chain mail, hugged his wife and son one last time. Then off to fight the infidel Moor for his Lord Jesus Christ and his beloved Spain!

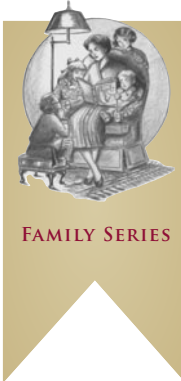
"'Tis well," his young wife had said, holding back her tears. "My knight goes forth to battle for the Cross, and for no earthly prince's paltry strife. God bless you, Mancio; may He keep you safe. And if you fall in His good cause, Jesus, Your will be done."

And so Don Mancio had set out for battle, and such was the picture that remained with him.

"Alas," he thought, "it may be I shall never see them again! Good God and Lord," he prayed, "keep them in Your care!"

The day finally dawned upon the battlefield and Don Mancio's Spanish blood seethed in his veins at the sight of the waving crescent. His red cross burned upon his chest, and his sword, raised in the air, was ready to meet the scimitar. And then the great clash came, Christian and Moor in bloody strife.

The fighting was fierce, and by nightfall many a Christian



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warrior had met the God of battles face to face. Many others, Don Mancio among them, had been taken prisoner by the ruthless Moors. The captives escaped death only to meet the cruel torments of prison.

As the slave ship carried them away to the deserts of Africa, Don Mancio watched the disappearing coast of Spain and thought of that last scene under his castle's gate, wondering what would become of his wife and child.

Captivity and a Divine Friend

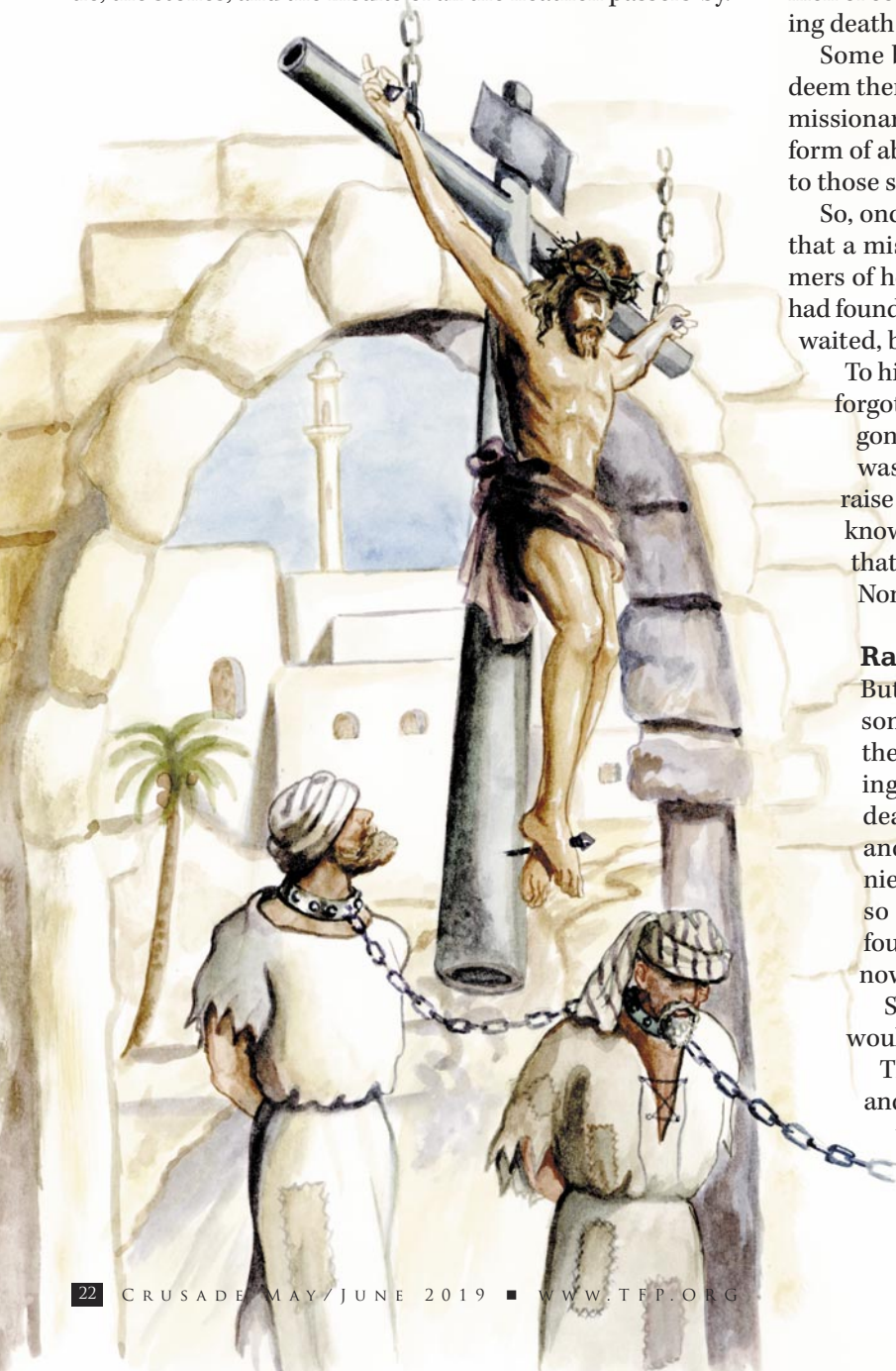
In Africa, Don Mancio toiled day after day under the burning sun and the merciless Moor. But he bore his lot manfully, and patiently. It was only then that he came to know that mysterious joy that only a few men know: the joy that patient suffering can bring forth. Few know its taste because few bear its agonizing pain with a willing heart for Him who died to show the way to joy through the thorny paths of woe.



For ten years Don Mancio suffered under the lash and the weight of chains. And during all those years not a single word came from home.

The daily toil, the stripes, the lash, the scanty food, and everything else, were far easier to bear than this total silence from home. This slow starvation of the heart, this burning need to hear at least a word about his loved ones... but, nothing. Were they alive, were they in Spain, or had they moved away? Did they think him dead? Had they learned of his fate? These burning questions racked his brain.

Alone in his captivity, he found only one kind Friend, and he learned to love Him in suffering as he had never done in comfort. That Friend he saw every day as he passed out of the city gate to the fields of toil. Hanging above the city gate was a life-size crucifix of our Sweet Lord that had been stolen by the Moors from some beautiful Spanish church they had ruined. There it hung in scorn for the purpose of receiving the foul spittle, the stones, and the insults of all the heathen passers-by.



Don Mancio's blood boiled in his veins.

"Oh," he thought, "if only my hands were not in chains and my sword were hanging by my side! How I would avenge my Savior's honor!"

But, alas! There was nothing he could do.

In his heart he vowed a solemn promise: If by God's will he gained his freedom, never would he rest until he had rescued that crucifix and set it in a shrine where love and honor would wipe out the shame of all those years of insult and scorn.

This was his dream by night, his thought by day, while those sad features of the Crucified grew into his heart, imprinting themselves as they had once before on the veil of Veronica.

Thus passed the dark night of his terrible imprisonment. Ten full years now. Little did he know that the dawn was near.

Nevertheless, his darkest hour was still to come, his test of fire before he could see the light.

At times, from across the sea came Spanish missionaries, men of courage and zeal to minister to the poor captives, braving death and danger.

Some brought gold sent by the prisoners' families to redeem them from the Moorish chains. But gold or no gold, the missionaries always brought the comfort of the Faith in the form of absolution and, O joy, the balm of the Holy Eucharist to those starving souls.

So, once in a while, when word spread through the camps that a missionary was in their midst, Don Mancio felt glimmers of hope kindling within him. Perhaps, perhaps his wife had found the means to rescue him. Don Mancio watched and waited, but in vain.

To him no rescue came. Only the questions came: Was he forgotten? Was his young wife dead? Year after year had gone by, and not a word from her. He knew the ransom was large. But at any cost, for any sacrifice, she would raise it. Ah! She must be dead! Or, perhaps she didn't even know the place of his captivity, for none of the ransomers that had come had known Don Mancio or his family. None had come from his region of Andalusia.

Ransom...

But at last, one day his name was mentioned! A ransomer had arrived asking for Don Mancio. And this is the story he told: Until now his wife had learned no tidings of his fate. At times she had thought him surely dead on the battlefield. But on and on she had toiled and investigated and, above all, had suffered and denied herself and her son almost the very means of life so as to raise a ransom for him in case he was ever found. And, lo! chance had revealed his dungeon, and now the ransom was here.

So, just one more night in chains and tomorrow he would be on his way home to Spain!

That night Don Mancio laid his head on his hard cot and felt nothing of its hardness. A few more hours, he thought, a few more hours and his ransom would be laid on the scale and his way home assured! Tomorrow the slave-master will receive his price in gold!

Don Mancio's heart beat fast, his eyes brightened, he saw his wife, his son, heard their words of welcome, felt their arms around him. Was it a dream? How many times have such dreams mocked his loneliness with visions of home? But this time it was no mocking dream, he had seen the Franciscan friar who brought his ransom. Yes, tomorrow, tomorrow he would be free!

Suddenly, a thought crossed his mind like a lightning bolt. The crucifix! In his imagination he sees that sacred form hanging from the iron cross above that infamous gate. He sees that sacred countenance looking down on him, that face which had grown into his heart to the point that it had been engraved there. It had been dimmed for a moment by his new-found bliss, but it was still the Master and Ruler there. He seemed to hear an infinitely majestic and sweet voice: "Mancio, will you forget Me in your joy? Will you go back and leave Me?"

"O my God! what can I do? I have no money—none! When I go, my heart's first sacred business will be Your ransom."

"When I go. But can you go and leave Me?"

Then before him flashed a thought that quivered in his heart like the thrust of a sword.

"My ransom money! That would buy the Cross!"

But could he face that fearful life in prison again and rob his wife and child of happiness?

"Oh, my God! You cannot ask this sacrifice!"

But again that voice asked, "Will you go and leave Me?"

Don Mancio knew no sleep that night. A fearful battle raged in his soul. Two loves met face to face, the love of home and kin and the love of Jesus crucified. "O Lord," he sobbed, "I am not willing, save me from myself by Your own bitter Passion, by Your Cross, have pity on me. Let this chalice pass."

But that voice—that awful pleading voice—yet repeated in the depth of his soul, "Will you go and leave Me here alone?"

Within his heart a louder voice answered: "Can you remain and send in your stead that crucifix, that heavy iron cross, to crush the heart that awaits you, that counts the days and hours? Think of her lonely widowhood, of the days and nights she has spent weeping. Will you revive them all? Ah, pity her, if not yourself!"

Yet again that other voice, weaker and fainter now, but still distinct: "He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me!"

"O God," Mancio cried, "have pity! Spare me! Let this chalice pass!"

Then, in that dread hour his anguished soul beheld a lonely garden and in that garden a God-Man sweating blood. He, too, had known the cost, the bitter cost of bringing grief on all who loved Him. He, too, had endured this heartache and had shrunk before the pain. Slowly, Mancio's grief grew tranquil in the light of that mysterious agony of God.

"My God, my God! I cannot, I will not go and leave You in Your shame."

As dawn broke, he rose up invigorated, the battle was over.

The dawn of that day he should have been free. Today the ransom money would be paid, but not for him. He would still be a slave, yet he was not sad. He was strangely peaceful. Did not Our Lord say that His cross brings forth joy? It is the joy known only to brave souls like Mancio's:

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel shall save it" (Mark 8:35).

The marketplace was crowded. The busy murmur of voices filled the air. Moor and Christian, master and slave, thronged to witness a strange scene. The news had spread that one of those whose ransom had arrived from Spain just yesterday had given up his hoped-for freedom and exchanged himself for that old crucifix that for so long had hung in scorn above the gate.

He must surely be mad, this Christian nobleman, to send his wife a worthless piece of iron in his place while he remains a captive till his death! It is said that the Moor demands for that huge iron cross its weight in silver ducats and that he will take no less. The massive cross is all wrought in iron and life-size!

Lo! They come to weigh it now! Christians and Moors crowd round to see; the Moors with jeers, the Christians with astonishment, edification, and prayers.

What sort of man is this who would thus

sacrifice himself to share the heavenly folly of the Cross?

"Think well, my son," says the Franciscan father, as strong men slowly lower the heavy cross on the scales. "Think well, my son; the ample store of money I have brought to ransom you will scarcely meet the weight of that large crucifix. Your wife has spent long years in gathering it, and it may be more long years, if ever, before she can send a similar sum again. Have you measured the full cost?"

For one brief moment a thick mist formed up before Don Mancio's eyes, but quietly yet firmly he answered, "My Father, I have measured the cost and I am ready."

"Be it so, my son."

On the scales the heavy cross was laid, and one by one the silver coins fell. Men held their breath, counting the ducats as they rang against each other in the silent air, but still the heavy cross lay motionless. "One, two, three, twelve, twenty," the Father counted, praying all the while that these would be enough to outweigh the cross.

But when, when has it ever been known that our dear Lord and Master did not pay back a hundred-fold every act of love? Just thirty silver pieces had fallen on the scale when, lo! The scale that held the crucifix rose high in the air as the other scale went down. O miracle! The cross had been out-weighed by just thirty silver ducats! He who long ago had been sold for thirty pieces of silver, today wished to be ransomed for the same sum to set His servant free.

Mancio, too, is ransomed, for there still remains an ample number of coins to satisfy the Moor. Mancio's Lord, his only Friend during his years of captivity, will not go and leave him here a slave.

Both the Ransomed and the ransomer are free. ■

THE WALLS OF AVILA

BY THOMAS RYDER

What is a wall? A wall is a structure of at least a certain height which is built for the purpose of separating, preserving and in some cases protecting a group of people or anything that is deemed valuable. Thus a wall provides security.

A wall has great symbolic power. Its mere existence proclaims that there is a problem; its presence is a command to stop, to halt. It is an obstacle for some and protection for others. By its very nature a wall is divisive, much like the Son of Man was divisive when He proclaimed, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt 10:34).

On a metaphysical level, the human spirit would prefer to be free of walls and thus enjoy a friendly social interaction with all mankind. This is what our social instinct seeks and enjoys. Perhaps, if Adam and Eve had not sinned, we never would have had the need to build walls. Once man turned away from God however, by default he turned to himself and walls became a necessity.

A wall can be a construction *non grata*, especially for those who have difficulty accepting that evil does indeed exist. With the introduction of sin into the world, evil became a stark reality and a wall may be an unwelcomed reminder.

The wall in this photo is one of the most beautiful



examples of a wall. It was built to surround the ancient city of Avila in Spain. It was from these walls that the great Saint Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church, left one day to pursue the reformation of the order to which she belonged.

The great walls of Avila stand tall, robust and impressive. They greet the visitor with a serene and non-oppressive majestic superiority. They impose great respect and generate a sense of total stability. And even in the twenty-first century when the original purpose of the wall is no longer at play, the inhabitants of Avila sleep all the more soundly. ■

