

November/December 2019

CRUSADE[®]

MAGAZINE



TRADITION
FAMILY AND
PROPERTY[®]



Mystic OF *Mercy*

The Story and Mission of
Sister Josefa Menéndez



John Russell Spann: “A Just Man”

Members of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP), and its twenty-eight sister associations throughout the world mourn the passing of John Russell Spann on July 28, 2019. He will be remembered as a man with boundless enthusiasm for the traditional Magisterium of Holy Mother Church. He devoted over fifty years of his life to the defense of Christian civilization.

It was fitting that Mr. Spann, an ardent devotee to Our Lady, was born on the feast of her Assumption, August 15, 1931, in Morristown, New Jersey. He was the fourth of eight children born to Paul Joseph and Josephine Eble Spann.

Man Meets Vocation

While visiting Buenos Aires in 1968, Mr. Spann heard the shouts of young men off in the distance. He looked up and saw the ruby red standard of the TFP emblazoned with the golden lion and was drawn to the scene. Seeing this American anxiously approaching, the Argentinians figured he was just another tourist and told him to wait in a nearby coffee shop. Everyone was surprised several hours later to see him waiting patiently to speak with them. Mr. Spann could hardly contain his enthusiasm for what he saw that day.

Passionate Love of Souls

Mr. Spann would eventually return to the United States in the early seventies and become a founding member of the American TFP. He served on its Board of Directors and as president for many years. He held various positions, including speaker, teacher, author, and translator.

Mr. Spann traveled extensively abroad to numerous countries in South America. His love for Asia would eventually take him to the Philippines, helping to lay the foundation for the current Filipino TFP. After his death, the American TFP received numerous condolences from people around the world who were beneficiaries of Mr. Spann's unbounded kindness and affectionate attention.

The Final Moments

His many labors, health problems, and open heart surgeries took their toll on Mr. Spann's body. The first death knell came on Saturday, July 20, when his heart went out of rhythm. A second such episode occurred in the afternoon of the following Tuesday; his doctors requested the following morning that he be taken directly to Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Father Modestus arrived at the hospital the following Saturday, and Mr. Spann received Our Lord for the last time. On Sunday morning, his health deteriorated rapidly. Father Modestus visited a final time to provide last rites and an apostolic blessing.

After the prayers for the dying, TFP members sang one last hymn, the *Salve Regina*. It was one of Mr. Spann's favorites. As the hymn's melody began, Mr. Spann took one last breath and was gone. It was 5:52 pm.

Every man has an *unum*, a single defining characteristic, and so did Mr. Spann. The facts above might perhaps help explain a comment about him made by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira. A Brazilian TFP member recalled a lengthy conversation between Mr. Spann and the TFP founder during one of his many visits to South America. Professor Plinio referred later to this conversation by saying, “Spann is a just man!”



August 15, 1931
to July 28, 2019

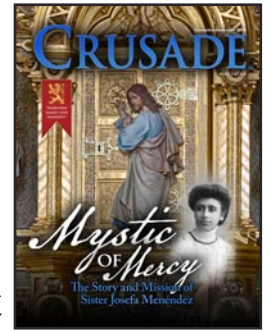
In lumine tuo
videbimus lumen.

In Thy light we shall see light.

PSALMS 35:10 - VULGATA

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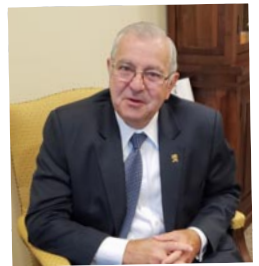
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THE AMERICAN TFP

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

Catholics in California Help Preserve Seal of Confession

A proposed bill that required California priests to break the seal of confession was withdrawn by its sponsor, Sen. Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo. According to the California Catholic Conference, tens of thousands of Catholics in California expressed their opposition to the measure. If passed, S.B. 360 would have required priests to alert local law enforcement about knowledge or suspicion of child abuse while hearing the confession of any penitent, including other priests.

LGBT Population Largely Overestimated

According to a Gallup poll reported by LifeSiteNews.com, 90 percent of Americans wrongly believe that 25 percent of the total U.S. population is homosexual, bi-sexual or transgendered. This may be due to the aggressive marketing efforts of LGBT lobbyists and their allies in the media. In reality, only 4.5 percent of the population is homosexual.

Truth about “Green New Deal” Revealed

The true motivation behind Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s (D-NY) bold \$93 trillion proposal to address the so-called climate change “crisis” was recently divulged by her former chief of staff, Saikat Chakrabarti. According to *Washington Post* reporter Sam Ricketts, he was quoted as saying, “Do you guys think it was a climate thing? Because we really think of it as a how-do-you-change-the-entire-economy thing.” The Green New Deal would transition the U.S. economy entirely away from fossil fuels within ten years. It would also implement “social, economic, racial, regional and gender-based justice and equality and cooperative and public ownership,” all part of an aggressive socialist agenda. For more about the socialist agenda within the “Green Movement,” see *Crusade Magazine*, September/October 2019.

“Millennial Nuns” on the Rise

In a recent report by Newsbusters.org, an article published by *Huffington Post* claims that there is a dramatic rise in “millennial nuns,”—young conservative women who choose a religious life. According to the

article, a decade ago the average age of those entering religious life was 40 years old. Now, it’s 24. The author of the

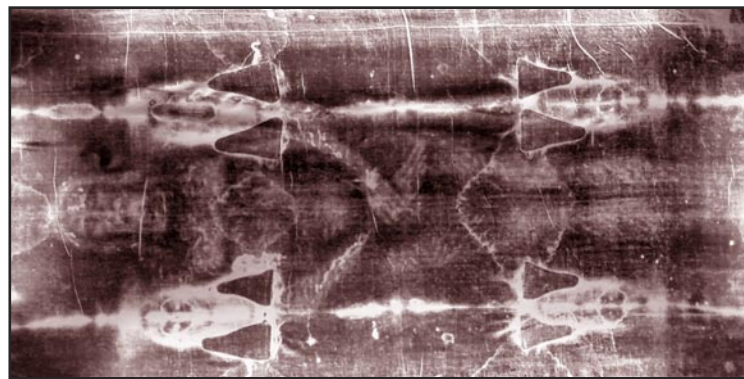
article noted that “young Americans are often more likely than their elders to believe in core elements of traditional religious belief like heaven and hell, miracles, and angels.” She added, “young religious people are more likely than elder ones to assert that their faith is the ‘one true path to eternal life.’”

Bunker Mentality Goes Mainstream

A growing number of Americans are preparing for “social, economic and environmental collapse.” A burgeoning middle-class prepping movement made up of highly-educated, well-paid professionals is taking shape in the largest survival shelter community in the world called Vivos xPoint. It’s a community of 575 bunkers designed to accommodate 5,000 people in a former army munitions site in South Dakota. A 650-square-foot bunker costs \$25,000 and can survive water, air and gas penetration and significant internal and external explosions. The owner of Vivos xPoint has built bunker communities in the United States over the past 10 years, as well as luxury facilities in undisclosed locations catering to the ultra-rich.

Reported Shroud of Turin “Hoax” Disproved by Scientists

A new study recently published by Oxford University using archaeometry (the use of physical, chemical, or mathematical procedures in the study of archaeological artifacts, materials, or data) revealed that the test samples used as a basis for the claim that the shroud is a



“medieval hoax” were invalid. This was the result of a re-analysis of the test samples conducted by a group of researchers that found that “the tested samples are obviously heterogeneous (many different dates), and there is no guaranty that all these samples, taken from one end of the sheet (shroud), are representative of the whole fabric. It is therefore impossible to conclude that the Shroud of Turin dates from the Middle Ages.” This was according to the researchers’ team leader, Tristan Casabianca of *L’Homme Nouveau*.



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Teaching Your Child Social Responsibility

PART FOUR

BY FR. RAUL PLUS, S.J.



We have not done everything when we have given children the idea and the desire of going to the aid of the poor. There is something even better yet to be done. That is to teach them gradually to try to prevent misery from invading the poor world. We shall never succeed completely in checking it, but what a beautiful work it is to try to spread more happiness among men and women!

As children grow and reach an age of keener perception and of deeper reflection we ought to show them that the problem involves both the relations of social classes with one another and the relations of nations toward one another.

Within a single country, there are those who have what they need, those who have more than they need, and those who have not even the essentials.

Is it not fundamental to establish a condition in the world in which the fewest people possible lack the necessities of life or, better, in which the most people possible can attain a sufficient possession of the goods of the earth, the culture of the mind and the knowledge of supernatural riches? To the degree in which we are impregnated with the spirit of the Gospel, we will desire that our brothers about

us are not only cured of their wounds, but preserved as far as they can be from possible wounds and established in a state of adequate human development, and of adequate divine development.

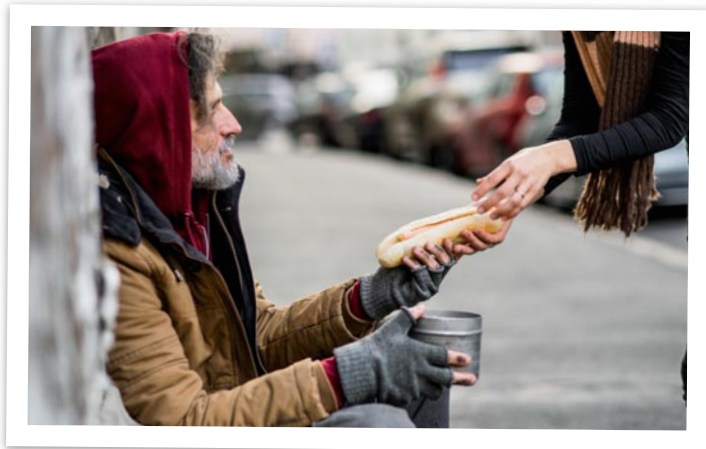
To dress a wound that has been infected is a good deed; to prevent a wound from being inflicted is a better deed. To prearrange indemnity for those who fall into unemployment is good; to strive for a status of work in which unemployment is prevented is better.

Now the conditions of modern living, the economic equipment of society, have thrown a whole section of society into a situation in which life has become very hard, in which "earning one's living" has become a terrible problem. Young boys and girls must be taught to realize these facts as they grow up. They must open their minds to an understanding of the social problems in their most agonizing aspects; they must prepare themselves to work to the best of their ability to counteract these evils.

When the social questions are concerned with relations between peoples of different nations, then how many problems crop up! Wars, even after treaties have been signed, leave hearts embittered. New difficulties arise. A very correct idea of patriotism is of capital importance!

Is periodic war between nations justifiable? Ought we not do everything in our power to constitute a state of peace in the world by an honest agreement between nations? What procedures should we follow that these desirable understandings be effective? What virtues must be developed in order to reconcile at one and the same time concern for national dignity, love of peace, brotherhood according to God. How can we get different peoples to live together side by side without the grave interests of any group suffering even though each nationality remains deeply concerned for its own greatness?

It is answers to these questions that must be sought in every generation. And for the correct answer to be reached, a whole education on these points must be given, beginning with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. ■



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Extending a hand to help the poor is good; teaching our children to gradually extend their minds to prevent misery is even better.



Four Reasons Why I Never Tried Marijuana

BY JOHN HORVAT II

As someone who has never tried marijuana, many would disqualify me from having an opinion. I cannot say how it affects the mind. I cannot calibrate the intensity of the experience nor compare it with smoking or alcohol. Thus, many would say that I am a killjoy who has no right to deprive others of an experience they seem to enjoy.

As a baby boomer, I certainly had every opportunity to try marijuana. It was everywhere at the public school and university I attended. I knew others who indulged and saw them high. I know well the acrid smell of the weed. And yet something held me back. As a result, I never smoked—or inhaled.

Thus, I would like to suggest that the reasons why I did not indulge can be the same as those that can be employed to explain why marijuana should not be used. In adopting this negative approach, I will not bring up the classical arguments that are normally raised. I will not enter into the health risks since I was never threatened. I will not mention it as a gateway drug since I never crossed that threshold.

Indeed, my reasons have nothing to do with marijuana. I will merely recount why, through no special merit of my own, I did not try it.

Marijuana Is Illegal

The first reason why I never tried marijuana is one

that is fast eroding, but it did play a role in my reluctance. I was taken aback by the fact that marijuana was illegal.

In my case, I sensed that doing something illegal would commit me to acts that would erode an order to which I belonged. Developing an illegal habit would wear away my sense of right and wrong. Not even the rebelliousness of youth could convince me to overcome the bad feeling that comes from deliberately breaking the law in a major way.

The secret nature of these acts only served to underscore that they were wrong. By accepting to smoke this illegal weed, I would have been entering into a world that disregarded the law. This world beckoned me to live a double life where I would put on the façade of someone who lived by the law, while behind the scenes I violated it. I did not want to live this false life.

I also did not want to disrespect the law because, in those turbulent times, the law represented some kind of order. I could not help but associate the defiant act of smoking pot with the college radicals (whom I opposed) who wanted to destroy the America I loved.

Surrounded by Strong Social Institutions

My second reason for refusing marijuana involved the social institutions that surrounded me. These influences played a major role in creating expectations and tempering my passions, both of which kept me from indulging.

A strong Catholic family life played an enormous role in this decision. The family creates an intense social atmosphere that diminishes the desire for extreme and powerful outside stimuli. Thus, I believe the affection and activities of the family helped engage me in fulfilling activities far from the “mind-blowing” weed.

A strong social institution, such as the extended family, is an organic deterrent to drugs and other addictions prevalent in our current fractured society.



My family also had expectations for me that would have been jeopardized by my indulgence. If caught, I felt I would have brought dishonor to my family and disappointment to my parents. These sentiments were a strong discouragement. Their positive expectations were also a strong encouragement to engage in other, more constructive behaviors that were incompatible with pot use.

Similarly, institutions such as the school, youth group, community, parish, and others had analogous effects upon my decision. This influence impacted and saved me even though the institutions themselves were being destroyed during the 1960s.

The sixties taught people to “do your own thing.” Thankfully, in my life, there were those from these social institutions who pointed out another way—beyond self—to “do the right thing.”

Attachment to a Culture

There was a cultural reason that prevented my trying marijuana. It is more than just a consumer choice. When confronted with the decision, I vaguely perceived that marijuana was attached to a culture that I was not willing to join.

Like everyone in my generation, the pop culture had already pushed me in the direction of pot with its music, fashions, art, and the examples of rock stars who glorified its use.

The promises of pleasure were immense. By taking the step of smoking marijuana, I knew I would instantly catapult into a fantasy world. It would facilitate the immoral relationships of the sexual revolution then raging. It could immerse me, if I so desired, in an “anything goes” culture in which I would not need to respect any law save my own.

A culture surrounded pot usage. That culture included those who became brain-fried potheads. It led to the hippy lifestyle that dictated a manner of being, dressing, and living. I realized that I would then be giving up the remnants of the Christian culture I enjoyed. Thus, I did not take the plunge.

A Religious Reason

Finally, there was a religious reason why I did not try marijuana. It involved my precarious link with God and the Church that managed to survive the sixties. I cannot help but feel the protection of Providence kept me from so many dangers. When confronted with the temptation to indulge, the voice of grace directed me elsewhere.

The 1960s were times of immense gratification of all passions—and marijuana was part of that idolization of the pursuit of fun, pleasure, and excitement. The 1960s were also times of in-

credible spiritual devastation. I suspect this devastation led some to escape spiritual affliction by resorting to drugs.

Marijuana can indeed provide pleasure, but it can never offer the meaning and purpose that the soul intensely craves.

Thus, I sensed, but did not feel, the great affliction—despair even—of an empty, God-forsaken culture. In that spiritual wasteland, I saw many who suffered from lives without meaning or purpose. Fortunately, by the grace of God, I found solace in the Church that teaches us how to suffer and deal with life. An intense spiritual life centered around the Blessed Mother, the sacraments, and Our Lord offers infinitely more than anything the pop culture can offer—including marijuana. I saw the futility of seeking after those empty pleasures that marijuana tries to supply.

The Most Effective Way to Fight Against Drugs

These are the four reasons why I never tried marijuana. They may not have been as clearly thought out in my mind at the time. Not everyone will have traveled the same road as I did. Not all who have tried marijuana will have suffered the final consequences that I foresaw. However, the marijuana culture remains and has even become mainstream.

By listing these reasons, I hope to show that the use of marijuana is above all a moral issue which creates its own culture. Opposing this culture will involve legal, social, cultural, and religious institutions inside society that would govern our acts and passions.

The most effective way to deal with the issue is not through laws, although they may be needed. Real solutions involve the culture. The best way to deal with marijuana is to cultivate those moral values and essential institutions that would empty out the desire for strong external stimuli. These same means would help in the building of networks of affection and support for the lonely individual who often resorts to substance abuse when forced to deal with a cruel world. Above all, real solutions call for rejecting the “Do your own thing” paradigm. More than that, they call for a turning to God. After all, we were created to know, love, and serve Him. ■

Fortunately, by the grace of God, I found solace in the Church that teaches us how to suffer and deal with life.



America's Catholic Youth are Called to Chivalry

BY ROBERT NUNEZ



"Viva Christo Rey!"

Such was the call to action that inspired thousands of Mexican Catholics to take up arms in defense of the faith during the bloody persecution against the Church in Mexico in the 1920s. Brave Catholics uttered the same cry moments before being executed by the tyrannical government, filling the ranks of heaven with a new generation of martyrs.

That generation of Catholic heroes, the Cristeros, has passed away, yet the persecution of the Church continues in our day, and a new generation of young Catholics at the 2019 TFP-Louisiana Call to Chivalry Camp has stepped forward to fight for Christ the King. From July 2-8, dozens of young men and their fathers gathered to learn how to defend the rights of the Church as their Cristero forebears did; their cry was the same as the martyrs of Mexico who came before them: *Viva Cristo Rey!*

One of the goals of the Call to Chivalry Camps is to enrich the intellect with a profound knowledge and admiration for the faith, chivalry, and Catholic culture. In a

nod to this year's camp theme, lectures and presentations focused on the Catholic history of Mexico. The participants learned how Hernan Cortes conquered the mighty Aztec empire for cross and crown, paving the way for the conversion of the Indians through the marvelous apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Several talks recounted the heroic resistance of the Cristeros against the anti-Catholic regime of Plutarco Calles. The boys learned about Blessed Miguel Pro traveling throughout Mexico in disguise, secretly administering the sacraments until he was eventually caught and martyred, calmly facing the firing squad and shouting *"Viva Cristo Rey!"* There was also the inspiring story of another valiant Cristero martyr, the 15-year-old Saint Jose Sanchez del Rio, told through an artfully performed play.

In the cultural sphere, the boys were treated to a delicious Mexican dinner graciously provided by several of the Mexican mothers. The menu included three different kinds of enchiladas, Mexican rice, and refried beans.

Between talks the boys rushed outside to compete in shield-ball, French-football, dodge ball, paintball, swimming, rock-wall climbing, and archery. In a further test of wits and endurance, the boys were divided into two teams and sent on a treasure hunt. Victory went to the team that showed the most teamwork, strategy, and

sportsmanship. After the sun set, they played "prison-break" in the dark.

Honoring Our Nation's Birth

Because the Ten Commandments of Chivalry call us to love the country in which we were born, the Fourth of July has always been marked with special solemnity. After the usual wake-up and inspection of bedrooms, participants formed outside for a solemn raising of Old Glory while the TFP band played the *Star Spangled Banner*. For lunch, several dads cooked a delectable barbecue.

At the end of the day, a parade was organized to the retired Navy destroyer USS Kidd, moored on the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge, to watch a fireworks display. Dressed in heraldic scapulars, marching in cadence to the shrill notes of bagpipes and beating of drums, and with a large American flag in lead, the sharp display drew eager applause from bystanders.

Spiritual Exercises

Another major highlight was the Vigil of Arms. Once everyone was formed in the meeting room, a relic of the True Cross was solemnly brought in, escorted by TFP members in their ceremonial habit. After a short meditation, everyone had the opportunity to venerate the relic, repeating *"Viva Cristo Rey!"* as they genuflected.

Everyone took turns spending half an hour in prayer before the sacred relic of the True Cross throughout the night.

On Sunday, after attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at Saint Agnes, the young men took a stand for moral values by participating in a pro-life



Authentic Mexican cuisine was served up to, and appreciated by, all in attendance.

campaign in Baton Rouge. Forming on a busy street corner under the hot sun, participants prayed the rosary while holding signs encouraging vehicles to honk against abortion. Many cars honked enthusiastically, while a few malcontents shouted or cursed.

“The chivalry camp is a nightmare for cultural Marxists,” one observer said, “because it trains the boys to be real men, great debaters, great leaders, and fearless fighters.”

Medieval Games and Banquet

On the final day, the participants divided into two teams for the much anticipated medieval games, each with their own scapulars, battle cry and patron saint. Through the afternoon, they competed in a large field marked with red TFP standards and colorful medieval pennants as relatives and parents cheered them on.

Having showered and put on their best apparel, boys and parents alike participated in a final rosary procession, which meandered its way solemnly to the banquet hall. Fr. Keenan Brown blessed the food, and trumpets sounded the entrance of a mouthwatering Cajun-style roasted pig borne on the shoulders of four lads. The castle cake dessert, a striking representation of the Alcazar of Segovia, Spain, was also solemnly brought in to “oohs!” and “ahs!” A team of dedicated



Above: putting their heads together, these lads eagerly participate in the annual treasure hunt.

Upper right: In a solemn and ceremonial manner, camp participants lead the rosary procession. **Lower right:** Plenty of time was set aside for fun and frolic.



moms put days of work into this culinary masterpiece.

At the conclusion of the banquet, TFP-Louisiana volunteer Cesar Franco addressed the young men, challenging them to put the lessons they had learned into practice, even when it means “going against the grain” of our wayward culture.

Each participant received a handmade

souvenir as a memento of the graces they received at the camp: a wooden plaque displaying a Cristero soldier kneeling in prayer before Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was evident that the battle cry of those valiant heroes, etched on the plaque, was very much alive in the souls of a new generation of boys who attended this camp:

“Viva Cristo Rey!” ■

As with the Call to Chivalry Camps that came before, in 2019 the boys experienced a well-balanced week of prayer, play and pageantry.





Mystic OF Mercy

*The Story and Mission
of Josefa Menéndez*

BY T. M. SALAMIDA



From the Editor

We live in times where “celebrities,” whose personal moral lives are nothing other than a long sequence of scandals and bad example, are considered to be the “stars” simply because they appear in movies or have millions in their bank accounts. However, God, Who is the One with the final word, sees and judges us differently. Our cover story is the story of Josefa Menéndez, a real star in the eyes of God. We invite you to prayerfully read and meditate on her story. We hope it will help all of our readers reject the lies and maxims of the world, while at the same time focus on the eternal Truth and the realities we will all face in the arduous, but eternally rewarding, work of our salvation and that of others.

From all outward appearances, there was nothing special about Josefa Menéndez. Certainly she showed no signs that she was in any way fitted for so high a mission as to bring forth a message of Jesus to the world.

Josefa Menéndez was born on February 4, 1890 in Madrid, Spain, to a profoundly Christian family. At the age of twenty she decided to enter among the religious of the Sacred Heart, but due to economic problems she had to remain with her family. On February 5, 1920, at thirty years of age, she entered the novitiate of the Society of the Sacred Heart in Poitiers, France. Two years later she professed her religious vows. She was a religious sister for only three years before her death, never attaining any higher rank in the community than that of a mere novice.

Sister Josefa’s nature was reserved; she loved to hide away in quiet places. And she never did learn, or even attempt to learn, the French language spoken by those around her. All these hindrances combined would at first sight appear insurmountable to the proclamation of a message that would make Satan tremble.

God’s Ways Are Not Our Ways

In reality, however, these apparent weaknesses were signs of God’s predilection. Though she was but a simple novice, often reserved and quite meek, she would show later an unconquerable strength of will. In the blinding light of divine revelations, she only crept deeper into her littleness, and the closer God drew to her the more she humbled herself. Her superiors had rarely met with a more obedient and docile subject, or one more eager to submit to their authority, more ready to sacrifice herself.

In her devotions, as in everything else, there was no exaggeration; she was sincere, straightforward and simple. She was mentally healthy and had a well-developed spirituality and devotion. The supernatural graces and gifts, whose weight was often crushing, purified her to the depths, though her spiritual equilibrium was at times shaken by the supernatural communications that she received. Often consisting of visions of a descent into hell and all the physical sensations that accompanied them, these supernatural occurrences required an almost super-

human endurance. All this was in reality the best guaranty to her superiors that her communications were divine in origin.

Her daily life within the convent was very ordinary as she carried out her humble tasks and chores with grace and humility. She preferred sweeping to any other chore for its simplicity and opportunity for recollection. All the while, God was bestowing unknown graces upon His humble servant. It was because of the ordinariness of her life that Our Lord said to Sister Josefa:

“You yourself shall be My sign... I will reveal to you the burning secrets of My Heart and many souls will profit by them. I want you to write down and keep all I tell you. It will be read when you are in Heaven. Do not think that I make use of you because of your merits, but I want souls to realize how My Power makes use of poor and miserable instruments.”

Sister Josefa Menéndez died a holy death at age 33 on December 29, 1923. It was not until after her death that her fellow religious sisters heard of all the extraordinary graces that God had bestowed upon her.

The Way of Divine Love

“I want you to write down and keep all that I have told you.” When Our Lord spoke these words to Sister Josefa, she did just as she did with any direction given by a superior. She obeyed. The fruit of her efforts is a work of spiritual depth rarely seen. Entitled *The Way of Divine Love*, her writings consist largely of the contents of her notebooks, which she had filled under obedience to Our Lord with the revelations of His Sacred Heart, plus portions of her biography.

On November 13, 1923 shortly before her death, Jesus had said to Sister Josefa: “My words will be light and life for an incalculable number



When attending to the most menial of tasks, Sister Josefa's expression reflects the divine truth that joy and simplicity often go hand in hand.

of souls, and I will grant them special graces of conversion and enlightenment.” These words have been verified, for as soon as the first volume of Sister Josefa's writings appeared, it was eagerly read and promulgated, and was quickly reprinted several times, while letters from all parts of the world gave testimony to the profound impression it created and to the signal graces that followed on the delivery of the message. Within a few months the book had been translated from the original Spanish into French, then into Portuguese, Italian, English, Chinese, and Hungarian, thus helping to fulfill Our Lord's wish that His call to the way of love and devotion to His Sacred Heart should be known everywhere.

The Fatima Message and the Mystic of Mercy

At the time of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, Sister Menéndez was receiving her own messages from Jesus. Our Lady appeared to the Fatima children from May through October in 1917. On the day when the greatest miracle of modern times—



“Do not think I make use of you because of your merits, but I want souls to realize how My Power makes use of poor and miserable instruments.”
Jesus to Sister Josefa

The city of Poitiers, France, where Sister Josefa served as a novice for three years.

the Miracle of the Sun—occurred, Sister Menéndez was only a little over 370 miles away, perhaps sweeping the floors of her home. She would have been roughly 27 years old at the time.

At Fatima, Our Lady told the children to make sacrifices for the souls of poor sinners. On July 13th, the Blessed Mother of God even showed these young children a vision of hell “where the souls of poor sinners go who have no one to pray for them.” The vision was terrifying. This is what Lucia, the eldest of the three seers, wrote about the vision she saw that day:

“Our Lady showed us a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium, and amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repulsive likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent. This vision lasted but an instant. How can we ever be grateful enough to our kind heavenly Mother, who had already prepared us by promising, in the

first apparition, to take us to heaven. Otherwise, I think we would have died of fear and terror.”

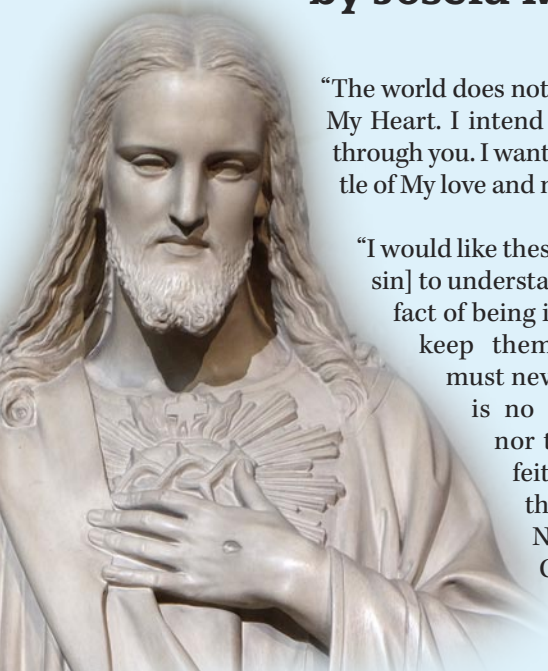
Compare this report of Hell with the one found written by Sister Josefa. More than once, she was taken to Hell to witness and feel the suffering of damned souls firsthand.

In September of 1922, just five years after the Fatima apparitions, she writes this in her notebook:

“My soul fell into abysmal depths, the bottom of which cannot be seen, for it is immense. . . ; Then I was pushed into one of those fiery cavities and pressed, as it were, between burning planks, and sharp nails and red-hot irons seemed to be piercing my flesh. I felt as if they were endeavoring to pull out my tongue, but could not. This torture reduced me to such agony that my very eyes seemed to be starting out of their sockets. I think this was because of the fire which burns, burns. . . not a finger nail escapes terrifying torments, and all the time one cannot move even a finger to gain some relief, not change posture, for the body seems flattened out and [yet] doubled in two. Sounds of confusion and blasphemy cease not for an instant.

A sickening stench asphyxiates and corrupts everything, it is like the burning of putrefied flesh, mingled with tar and sulfur. . . a mixture to which nothing on earth can be compared. . . although these tortures were terrific, they would be bearable if the soul were at peace. But it suffers indescribably. . . All I have written is but a shadow

Excerpts from *The Way of Divine Love* by Josefa Menéndez



“The world does not know the mercy of My Heart. I intend to enlighten them through you. I want you to be the apostle of My love and mercy.”

“I would like these [those living with sin] to understand that it is not the fact of being in sin that ought to keep them from Me. They must never think that there is no remedy for them, nor that they have forfeited forever the love that once was theirs. No, poor souls, the God who has shed

all His Blood for you has no such feelings for you!”

“Come all of you to Me and fear not, for I Love you all. I will wash you in My Blood and you shall be made whiter than snow. All of your offences will be submerged in the waters in which I myself shall wash you, nor shall anything whatsoever be able to tear from My Heart its Love for you.”

“Oh, all you who are steeped in sin, and who for a time more or less long have lived as wanderers and fugitives because of your crimes. . . if the offences of which you have been guilty have hardened and blinded your hearts. . . if to grant satisfaction to one or other of your passions you have sunk into evil ways. . . Ah! when the motives or accomplices of your sin have forsaken you, and you realize the state of your soul, oh then, do not yield to despair! For as long as a breath of life remains a man may have recourse to mercy and ask for pardon.”

“If you are still young, if already the scandals of your life have lowered you in the eyes of the world, do not be afraid. . . Even if there is reason to treat you as a criminal, to insult and cast you off. . . your God has no wish to see you fall into the flames

of what the soul suffers, for no words can express such dire torment.”

The Story of One Soul Saved

Never one to propose a problem without also offering a solution, the Blessed Mother taught the children at Fatima the power of sacrifice to liberate souls from damnation. Likewise, Sister Josefa was shown the same “economy of grace” by Our Lady.

From her diary (July 27-31, 1921) we find narrated an episode regarding the souls in Purgatory. Mary Most Holy said to Josefa, “You may suffer to save one of my dear daughters. . . Jesus wanted her for Himself, but she did not respond to the Divine call, she will be dying tomorrow. What a consolation for my maternal heart if she will not fall into Hell!”

Josefa prayed all night and the next day she was terrorized by infernal noises. Shocked and frightened, she took refuge near the statue of Our Lady. Suddenly everything became calm, Our Lady, smiling, placed her hand on the head of Josefa, saying, “She has already accounted for her life; poor little one, what a battle she had to endure! When the devil saw that her soul was fleeing him, he tried to take away her peace and how he made her suffer! He was furious against you, because you were helping me to pull her away from him. She died much repented and her end was serene; now she is in Purgatory.”

The following night Josefa was awoken and heard a voice saying, “I am the soul who Our Lady has asked you to save.” Josefa replied, “What devotion to Our Lady did you cherish to obtain her protection?”

“From the time that I had abandoned myself to sin my only devotion has been to recite every Saturday one Hail Holy Queen.” Three days later that soul ascended to Heaven, thanks to the supplications of Josefa.

Sister Josefa’s Role in the Church

The ultimate mission Our Lord had for Sister Josefa could be summed up in this message to her:

“It is My intention also, to show souls that I never refuse grace, even to those who are guilty of grave sin; nor do I separate them from the good souls whom I love with predilection. I keep them all in My Heart, that all may receive the help needed for their state of soul.”



Standing within the convent walls, Sister Josefa humbly obeys the order to pose for this photo.

of hell. On the contrary He ardently desires you to come to Him so that He may forgive you. If you dare not speak to Him, at least look at Him and let the sighs of your heart reach Him, and at once you will find His kind and fatherly hand stretched out to lead you to the springs of pardon and life.”

“Should it happen that you have spent the greater part of your life in impiety and indifference, and that the sudden approach of the hour of death fills you with blinding despair. . . Oh! do not let yourself be deceived, for there is still time for pardon. If only one second of life remains to you, in that one second you can buy back eternal life!”

“The case is the same for a soul that has been faithful to the observance of My law from childhood, but who has gradually cooled off into the tepid and unspiritual ways of an easy life. She has so to say forgotten her soul and its higher aspirations. God was asking of her greater efforts, but blinded by habitual failings, she has fallen into tepidity worse than actual sin, for her deaf and drowsy conscience neither feels remorse nor hears the voice of God.”

“If your whole life has been spent in ignorance and error. . . if you have been a cause of great evil to other men, to society at large, or to religion, and if through some set of circumstances you have come to realize that you have been deceived. . . do not allow yourself to be crushed by the weight of your sins and of the evil of which you have been the instrument; but with a soul penetrated with deep contrition throw yourself into an abyss of confidence, and hasten to Him who awaits your return only to pardon you.”

“But listen rather to My voice, and let Me tell you how to act: As soon as your soul is touched by grace, and before the struggle has even begun, hasten to My Heart; beg of Me to let a drop of My Blood fall on your soul. . . Ah! hasten to My Heart. . . and be without fear for the past; all has been swallowed up in the abyss of My mercy, and My love is preparing new graces for you. The memory of your lapses will be an incentive to humility and a source of merit, and you cannot give Me a greater proof of affection than to count on My full pardon and to believe that your sins will never be as great as My mercy, which is infinite.”

Through her writings in *The Way of Divine Love*, she was to show the world the power of God's mercy for the truly repentant. The devil hated Josefa for this; he knew how many souls would ultimately be saved on account of her work. Her mission was actually entirely accomplished after her death, as very few people really knew what messages the Lord was giving to her. These messages, however, would soon be published and even supported by the recommendation of the future Pope Pius XII.

Today, the critical role that Sister Josefa played in the divine plan has almost faded from memory. Nevertheless, the Lord remembers the heroic sufferings she endured to make known His Message of Mercy. As a reward for her abject humility, the Lord has given her a special intercessory power, just like Saint Jude, the Patron of Desperate Cases. She has been proven to obtain great favors for anyone who will call upon her, especially those souls with exceptional needs. As of yet, she has not enjoyed the popular adulation, as say Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Yet, she is reserved for the dear friends of Christ, and those with the most desperate needs.

Those who want to experience the miraculous power of Sister Josefa should turn to her with tender confidence. She can give consolation almost instantly in little things if one would take some time, and quietly recollect oneself in a spirit of prayer to her. In a sweet and gentle voice, she can console you with an answer, or grant you peace. If your case is more desperate,

your prayers must be more serious and diligent; you might pray the wonderful novena provided here.

Like Jacinta of Fatima, she is extremely powerful against the temptations or torments of the devil. Turn to her if you are being tempted or tormented, tell her that the devil is attacking the kingdom of her Lord Jesus (aka, your soul). She will provide help for you almost immediately. Just thinking about calling upon Josefa causes the devil to flee.

Finally, talk to Josefa like you would to a dear friend. Her spirit is kind, gentle, and very compassionate. She really will help you in miraculous ways! Please, remember to fittingly thank her for any favor she obtains for you. ■



Novena Prayer

O Jesus, full of Grace and Charity, Victim for sinners, so impelled by Love for us that You willed to die on the Cross, I humbly beseech You to glorify in heaven and on earth the Servant of God and Victim Soul, Sister Josefa Menéndez, who faithfully participated in Your Passion and shared Your Sufferings, to prepare the way for devotion to Your Mercy, for the salvation of souls, and for the Glory of Your Heavenly Father. With confidence I beg You to grant me, through her intercession, the Grace of:

_____.

Followed by one decade of the rosary for the cause of Sister Josefa Menéndez.



At the age of 32, Josefa Menéndez stands with her mother and sister Angela on the day of her first vows.



AMERICA NEEDS FATIMA[®]

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

PROGRESS REPORT

“To Change One Generation”

José Ferraz has been a member of America Needs Fatima for decades and many know him as a Fatima Custodian. Mr. Ferraz is now the organizer of the *Battlelines* program which aims at motivating other members and friends to opposing blasphemy, Satanism and more recently the Drag Queen Story Hour phenomenon. We sat down with Mr. Ferraz and asked him a few questions regarding America Needs Fatima's fight against the DQSH.

Crusade Magazine: What is the Drag Queen Story Hour (referred to as DQSH) all about and how much has it spread in our country?

Mr. Ferraz: The DQSH is something which began much earlier than most people imagine. Beginning in 2015, these “story hours” were promoted by the LGBT movement to push their agenda in California.

These stories are told to children as young as 3 years old. I saw parents bringing their children 3, 5, 6 years old and one time, a 6-month-old child strapped to the mother's back. In addition, during the story hour they will dress the boys as girls and girls as boys and try to make it all look very natural. And all of this being done in public libraries with our tax dollars.

The agenda of the LGBT in promoting the DQSH is clear; to remove from the child any clear notion as to the distinction of the sexes and in their own words, “To change one generation.”



Kansas City, Missouri

Crusade: Do you reach out to the people in charge of the libraries?

Mr. Ferraz: We involve the local citizens not only in the protest but we also encourage them to contact the library authorities in a respectful manner. I have to say that in some cases the library authorities end up suspending the DQSH.

As a consequence, the issue ends up being addressed during city hall meetings and in some cases cities have decided to close the events. I am recalling at the moment two of the city hall council meetings with a participation of more than 300 people each. In other words, this is a topic which is concerning a lot of people.

I repeat, this is paid by our tax dollars which is something that gets a lot of people upset. So once the awareness has been created, we end up with all sorts of situations and at times this includes interventions in city hall meetings where

it causes a good amount of discussion.

We need to keep in mind that evil likes to advance unnoticed. So by provoking awareness we create many discussions which is a healthy thing.

Crusade: And what is America Needs Fatima doing to further oppose the DQSH?

Mr. Ferraz: Most of the time our campaigns consist of protests and prayer rallies in front of the libraries as this is taking place. We invite our local supporters and friends, we go with signs and banners and in a very peaceful and orderly way we take a stand, at the same time bringing awareness to the public.

During our protests, we will bring a large statue of Our Lady of Fatima and we pray the rosary. We also are joined by many groups of Protestants who protest against the DQSH.

Some groups oppose the DQSH with violent methods, but we insist that such



protests will not reach any solution. Our method is a peaceful, prayerful act of reparation where we try to explain to passersby why they should stand up for the innocence of their children.

Crusade: Do you have any repercussions from your protests you can share with our readers?

Mr. Ferraz: I recall one of the protests where we had nearly 500 people protesting and where at least 80% of the people were in favor of our protests, honking against the DQSH. And some of them would stop and join our protest.

In South Carolina, where we held an important protest, a state representative is proposing a law to prohibit DQSH in public libraries.

In Ohio, state legislature passed a law prohibiting DQSH to take place. And all this is a consequence of the campaigns against the DQSH.

We have a case in Texas where two of the story tellers were pedophiles, child sex offenders. These are people who obviously are not supposed to have contact with young children. This episode created a very big reaction all over the country.

Crusade: So far, how many protests has America Needs Fatima organized against DQSH?

Mr. Ferraz: I believe the number is close to 100. These would be the ones we organized directly. But on top of this there are protests that others are doing on their own.



Fall River, Massachusetts



Bay View, Wisconsin

Crusade: So are other people leading their own protests?

Mr. Ferraz: Yes. We see a lot of this. We have many friends and supporters of America Needs Fatima. And this is why we created the *Battlelines* newsletter and a commission to help people react and organize their own protests.

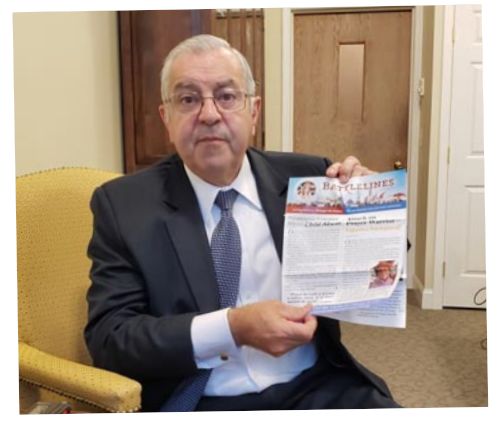
People want their children to be safe which is only natural. These are good parents who want to do something, but they don't have leadership. They are afraid. And the media gives the impression that they don't have the right to stand up.

In fact, we have not only the right, but we have the obligation to oppose this most corruptive show aimed solely at the destruction of children's innocence.

Crusade: You mentioned the *Battlelines* newsletter. Is that part of your mobilization effort?

Mr. Ferraz: *Battlelines* is a small newsletter aimed at mobilizing our Rosary Rally Captains and other good Catholics to unite and protest horrible things. With the newsletter, we are able to tell stories of Rosary Captains who have held protests in their own cities and how successful they were. And in this way, we inspire others to do the same. So what we accomplish with *Battlelines* is to give hope to everyone and show them a solution.

Crusade: What would you say the impact of America Needs Fatima's action has been on the DQSH.



José Ferraz displays the latest issue of *Battlelines*.

Mr. Ferraz: Besides having some of these events shut down, we also see the DQSH "hiding"; they are now being very careful in how they announce their events.

I could give you many examples, but I will tell you of what I experienced in the area where I live. A DQSH was being planned and I simply could not find it advertised anywhere. So it goes without saying that if I had a hard time discovering it, I had to really dig, this means they are afraid of the opposition and many people are not finding the ads. So we are having protests all over: Alaska, Miami, Carolinas, California. I am remembering the story of a lady from Boston who did a protest with 50 participants and after it was done I thought that was it. But later I found out that the same lady had done 10 more protests! This is very encouraging.

Essentially, people are seeing that when they react, when they get out in the street and pray and protest, they are beginning to sense what Our Lady promised in Fatima that, finally, her Immaculate Heart will triumph.

We have the obligation to fight and, with her help, we will win. ■



HIS Grandmother's HOUSE

BY TONIA LONG



One rainy afternoon in July, my son Joshua pulled up in a rental car, loaded my bags, pointed the car north and we left the familiar town of Geneva, New York. We were on our way to Québec, Canada and our mission was to deliver 11,739 prayer intentions from friends of America Needs Fatima to the miraculous Shrine of Saint Anne de Beaupré. This was my first visit to a place I had heard wonderful things about and I was very excited.

Before too long, we were driving through the Adirondack Mountains, God's green cathedral in upstate New York. The pines pointed heavenward, making a jagged silhouette against a gray and cloudy sky. The road wound in a serpentine fashion up hill and down; Joshua enjoyed putting the Dodge Charger he had rented through its paces. At one point we crossed over the magnificent Hudson River. I could not help but think that the Black Robe missionaries who first traveled here to bring Christ to the Native Americans did not have it so easy.

We crossed the Canadian border at dusk and soon all that there was to see were the exit signs. Even those proved uplifting. This area of Canada was settled by French Catholics, so almost every town is named after a saint. Simply by reading the exit signs felt much like praying a litany of the saints: Saint Julie, Saint David, Saint John, Saint Pierre (Peter), Saint Charles (this was a river), Saint Jeanne d'Arc, Saint Edmond...pray for us.

A Candlelight Procession

The next morning, Joshua decided he wanted to get some

photographs of the shrine on a day that wasn't too busy. Since the candlelight procession would begin at 8:15 that evening, we left the hotel room late in the afternoon and headed toward the shrine. As we pulled off the expressway we noticed right away the glistening white spires of the shrine looming large against a sapphire blue sky. A cluster of modest homes opened to the spacious courtyard graced with a statue of Saint Anne. She presided over all her grandchildren atop a beautiful fountain, with the cathedral behind her.

While the cathedral itself is large and splendid in its grand proportions, the aura within was one of gentleness and patience. I immediately felt welcome, just as I did as a child entering my own grandmother's home. Standing in the middle of this holy place, my thoughts were whisked back to my childhood visits with my Grandma Mary. She was always happy to see me, but never encouraged any foolishness; she kept a clean and orderly house! The devout and the curious milled about, respectful and quiet. Even the many children were less than rambunctious.

As the 8:00 hour drew near, the Blessed Sacrament was processed out for Adoration. All the lights went out, as candles were lit one by one throughout the entire house of God. As the procession began, a song that I was not familiar with was sung, its verses alternating between French and English. We left the shelter of the church and walked out into the chilly Canadian air and I noticed that those in wheelchairs

were being lovingly tucked under blankets by their caregivers. I was given the grace of watching a young boy with jet-black



On the evening before the feast of Saint Anne, pilgrims assemble for a candlelight procession while praying the Most Holy Rosary in French and English.



hair wrap his grandmother in a red and black checked blanket. Their eyes met in silence and they smiled at one another. I could just imagine a tender moment like this passing between Jesus and Saint Anne.

As the procession drew to a close, we gathered in the courtyard to pray a litany and adore the Blessed Sacrament raised above the crowd in blessing. All those in wheelchairs, and there were many, lined up in front to receive a special prayer for healing. As a final farewell to Saint Anne, those who held a candle raised it high as her statue was brought back into the cathedral. Everyone slowly dispersed, drinking in the graces of the night spent with Grandma Anne.

The Feast Day of Saint Anne

Early the next day we returned to the shrine. Had the building not been the same and we had not heard the GPS declare, “you have reached your destination” we would have questioned whether we were truly in the same place as we had been the night before. Busses were pouring in, belching out a steady stream of visitors. There was a great hustle and bustle and the calm of the previous evening had all but evaporated. I found myself thankful for my son’s foresight to take his photographs the day before. Our only objective on this day was our greatest—to finally deliver into the hands of Saint Anne on her feast day the prayer petitions sent to America Needs Fatima from our friends and supporters across the country.

As we made our way into the shrine, I was again impressed by the two pillars near the entrance that were covered in old canes, crutches, and other medical paraphernalia that had been left by those who no longer required their assistance. These devout pilgrims had entered the shrine crippled and



Crutches, canes and other medical devices bear silent testimony to the many miracles of healing that took place here at the shrine of Saint Anne de Beauré in Québec, Canada.

had left whole. These crutches, et cetera, of course only represented physical healings. Who knows how many visitors went home with hearts and souls made whole through Saint Anne’s intercession.

With this thought in mind, I walked to the left, in the direction of a side altar we had observed the night before. On it reposed an amazing relic of Saint Anne’s arm bone. Imagine, the very arm that held the Blessed Mother as Saint Anne went about her daily chores. Years later, this same arm would reach down to take the Hand of the Divine Savior, the very Hand that would one day be pierced by my sins. This was indeed the best place to carry out our last duty.

Many others knelt at the foot of this holy place and it was filled with bouquets of flowers that had not been there fourteen hours earlier. To the left of the relic I saw a small golden statue which

had long ago been donated by Saint François de Laval, the first bishop of Québec. Against the base of this statue I laid the envelope containing 11,739 heartfelt prayers and petitions. Kneeling beside my fellow pilgrims, I made a final prayer to Grandma Anne asking her to take these to the throne of her Divine Grandson. For who can deny a request made by their grandmother?

Relieved that the serious obligation of delivering the petitions safely to their destination had been fulfilled, I looked one last time at the crowds around me. I saw young and old alike, of various skin color and social class. So many eager faces. So many looking for help; help from their grandmother and mine. I left the Shrine of Saint Anne de Beauré that day confident that their prayers and mine would be answered. ■



Right: The author stands before the shrine of Saint Anne on the morning of her feast day with over 11,000 petitions.

Far Right: The intentions are placed as close to the holy relic of the arm of Saint Anne (upper center of photo) as the railing, and proper church decorum, would allow.





Our Readers Write



True Devotion to Mary

"You wouldn't believe the timing of my receiving this book. Suffice it to say, I consider it as a gift directly from Our Lady to me. Thank you! And may God bless you."

D. D., Maple Shade, New Jersey

"I'm a disabled Vietnam vet who is going to take time every day to read your book!"

J. W., Spokane Valley, Washington

"Thank you for sending me *True Devotion to Mary* by Saint Louis de Montfort, it is truly a spectacular book with such an important message. I consecrated myself to the Blessed Mother a few years ago and it has led me on such a beautiful path. I am currently a seminarian with the Archdiocese of Baltimore studying at Saint Mary's Seminary and University. At 47 years old, I have completely changed my life around and praying that I am currently following the path of the Lord. This has only been possible with the help and grace of Our Lady."



J. L., Baltimore, Maryland

"I had recently been reading another book to prepare to make my consecration to Mary. That text, however, has not engaged me fully. Perhaps Mary's intercession has brought *True Devotion to Mary* into my hands! I hope to be able to read it faithfully and meditatively, and be able to truly consecrate myself to our Immaculate Mother!"

B. H., Lowell, Massachusetts

"I've read this book years ago, made the Consecration to Mary, and passed the book onto friends. I am DELIGHTED to see and re-read *True Devotion to Mary* again!"

Dr. K. S., High Point, North Carolina

America Needs Fatima Apostolate

"I'm sorry we are late in mailing back the candle you sent to us. I know that you will be sending more candles to Fatima, and we will be grateful if you would include our candle with the others that you will be sending, even if it's next year. Our intentions are for our grandchildren. We have seven girls and 1 boy, ranging from 27 to 6 years old. They think that if they just "believe," that is all that matters. They don't go to Mass on Sundays; they don't even have their children baptized! We keep praying for them. I feel good just talking to you about it; I feel like someone else is helping. Thank you for all you are doing there. We are glad to be part of Our Lady's mission, that of America Needs Fatima."

R. O., Ventura, California

"Thank you, I love the picture you sent me of Our Lady of Fatima. It's even better than the statue I see at a church here. I pray God go before you in all that you do for the glory of His name, and for the salvation of souls, and for the cause of good on earth."

L. I., Saint Louis, Missouri

The Youth Reach Out to ANF

"I want to thank you for the Fatima Anniversary Rosary and this new book *True Devotion to Mary*. I really liked this new book you sent me by Saint Louis de Montfort! And I ended up giving my Fatima rosary to my sister because her name is Jacinta. I really like what you are doing there and I would like to help financially, but I actually just turned sixteen. But I have started saying two rosaries a day, and since I don't have a job yet, I hope you will accept them as "payment" and that they will do some good on your behalf!"

G. J., Cornell, Wisconsin

"Thank you so much for this beautiful book. It is just what I need to grow ever more closer to Our Lady. I am so grateful for your inspiring ministry and I always look forward to all your gifts. I love and treasure them. All are lovely!"

G. D., Cherry Hill, New Jersey

"My brother wanted it so much so I gave it to him. You made him extremely happy!"

P. B., Seattle, Washington



Have something you'd like to share? Send us your feedback by writing to Crusade@TFP.org



COMMENTARY

The Little Sisters of the Poor Deserve Mercy!

BY NORMAN FULKERSON

Many atrocities occurred during the French Revolution, but certainly one of the most shocking executions was that of four young sisters, Gabrielle, Marguerite, Claire and Olympe Vaz de Mello. Their only “crime” was that they exercised a “baneful influence over their countrymen.”¹

After the death of their parents, these pious ladies devoted their lives to caring for the sick and downtrodden. In spite of their goodness, or rather because of it, they were dragged before the revolutionary tribunal.

“The Poor Are Our Lord”

Jeanne Jugan was but a child at the time of this atrocity. While she survived the bloody eighteenth century Revolution, the religious order she founded might not be spared its more legalistic, twenty-first century version.

Jeanne was born on October 25, 1792, in Cancale, France. She was the sixth of eight children born to Joseph and Marie Jugan. They were a devout Catholic family that lived in the region of Brittany where the great Marian apostle Saint Louis de Montfort preached a century before.

In 1839, she encountered a poor, destitute blind woman that changed her life forever. Very much like the “good Samaritan” in the Gospel, Jeanne carried the woman to her home and cared for her as she would one of her own family.

Thus began her life’s mission, which eventually led to the founding of an order now known the world over as the “Little Sisters of the Poor.” Jeanne was canonized in October of 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI. Her spiritual daughters have earned a reputation of being faithful examples of compassion, much like



Foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, Jeanne Jugan, born October 25, 1792.

the Vaz de Mello sisters. Their exemplary conduct in caring for their charges can only be fully understood when one considers the solemn promises they make upon entering the order.

Besides the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the Little Sisters also take a fourth vow of hospitality. Spend time with them, as I have had the privilege to do, and you will see how this is by no means a light obligation, but rather their ability to see Christ in their neighbor. Indeed, it was their saintly founder who counseled her nuns to “Never forget that the poor are Our Lord. In caring for them say to yourself: ‘This is for my Jesus—what a great grace!’”

While the Little Sisters do have paid workers, the professed nuns carry out their tireless work without any financial recompense. Their pay is not measured in dollars and cents; they store up their treasure in Heaven. This abnegation should be enough for them to receive all the support possible to continue their important labor. However, there are

those that apparently do not agree and are now continuing a persecution they have endured for four years.

“Flying Below the Radar” Not Allowed in Our Revolutionary World

On May 21, the “Little Sisters” were dragged into court by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro who wants to force them to include contraception in their employees’ health plan. This demand is but the continuation of a religious persecution, which began with the infamous 2015 HHS (Health and Human Services) Mandate. While the Sisters were given an exemption by President Trump in 2017, this did not stop the browbeating of Mr. Shapiro.

To force a group of nuns who take a vow of chastity and wear a virginal white habit to provide contraception for those unwilling to be faithful to the sixth commandment is absurd. It is simply not right to oblige those exercising restraint—in this case, the Little Sisters—to provide means for others to transgress a commandment of God. Nicole Russell of the Washington Examiner put it best: “It’s like suing Alcoholics Anonymous for refusing to pay for their employee’s vodka while the liquor store sits open down the street.”

There is another thing about the Little Sisters’ persecution, which should make us all sit up and take notice. As Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira notes in his masterly work, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, there is a historic process destroying the remnants of Christian civilization which he calls the Revolution. The present stage of this Revolutionary process no longer allows one to “fly under the radar.”

Indeed, the Little Sisters are the furthest thing from being activists against this process that you can find in the world today. They don't protest on the steps of the Supreme Court against homosexual "marriage." They don't pray the rosary outside abortion clinics, nor do they decry the environmentalists' claims that we are destroying our planet. Yet this is not enough to keep the wolves away. Those imbued with the Revolutionary spirit are not content to leave a group of sweet nuns alone.

Perhaps it is because their admirable example of virtue is as loathsome to Revolutionaries today as that of the Vaz de Mello sisters during the bloody days of the Terror at the time of the French Revolution.

There is no other way to make sense out of the fixation, which liberal Democrats like Josh Shapiro have for these marvelous nuns. This should cause holy anger and righteous indignation in anyone paying attention to the desperate plight of our dear Little Sisters.

The Little Sisters Don't Retire, They Just Fade Away

Perhaps my anger at this gross injustice is because I have had the honor of staying with them at their home in Louisville, Kentucky. I have seen them—up close and in person—as they carry out their daily tasks.

It is nothing less than inspiring. The first impressions as you walk in the front door is the immaculate cleanliness of their facility and the cheerfulness that welcomes you as if you were part of the family.

The residents of the home are treated in a way that few humans would consider possible in our secularist world. This entails their physical care, which includes an in-house therapy room. There is also an activities center where residents take part in arts and crafts, which provides rest for both soul and mind.

Most importantly, they have a chapel with daily Mass, which gives residents the spiritual arms to live and eventually die well. It is not uncommon to see residents sitting quietly in the presence of Our Lord murmuring Hail Marys as they roll their

beads between their aged fingers.

Those visiting the home will notice the very young nuns who energetically move about the home but pay attention to the older ones. These nuns move slower, but they continue to assist the residents, serving them their daily meals, for example, even when they themselves are reduced to the use of a walker. Little Sisters do not properly "retire" as other mortals. Their time of rest comes when they are confined to a bed where they prepare their souls for God. In a way, they are like the "old soldier" of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. They don't die, they just fade away.

You will also notice something different about the employees who seem to have imbibed the order's spirit of hospitality. This might leave a visitor to wonder if there even exists a paid employee who is capable of shamelessly demanding that such employers as these nuns provide them with contraception.

"Mercy! Mercy!"

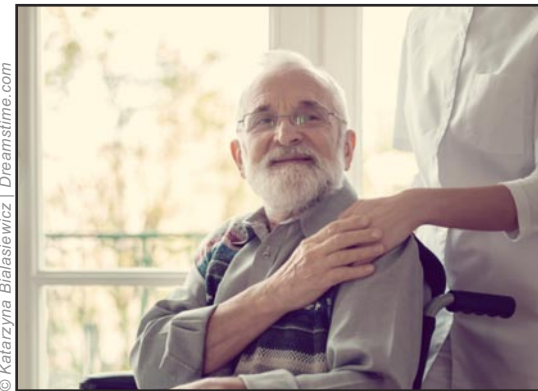
If the Little Sisters are one day forced to close their doors, who will provide the care for those in their rest homes spread throughout the country? It will certainly not come from state-run institutions that have all the material resources but lack the key ingredient they provide called love of souls.

Thus, we should turn our attention back to the Vaz de Mello sisters. After the insensitive executioner subjected Gabrielle, Marguerite and Claire to the guillotine, it was Olympe's turn. She was only seventeen, but when she mounted the steps of the scaffold, her countenance shone with an angelic glow as if already beholding the Beatific Vision. The raucous crowd took notice of this. They had witnessed with utmost indifference the butchering of countless of their fellow Frenchmen. But when they beheld the supernatural countenance of this child, and the three that came before her, they cried out, "Mercy! Mercy!"

Much to the surprise of all present, the girl denounced the Revolution, crying out, "Long live the King!" In his book, *The War in La Vendée*, George Hill described how the executioner with a sigh, seized his victim and put her to death.

"The man of blood, whose very calling was murder, and who with the utmost indifference had put so many innocents to death, could never efface from his mind the death of that young girl. The next morning he was absent from his post, and in a few days he died."²

We can make a comparison between the Little Sisters of the Poor and this young Catholic martyr. Like her, their only "crime" is to stand out from an impure world as examples of chastity and charity. Like her, the Little Sisters are persecuted by someone who seems to be indifferent to the injustice he is attempting to carry out.



If the Little Sisters are forced to close their doors, who will provide loving care for those in their rest homes across the country?

This is not surprising since Josh Shapiro is a militant supporter of the LGBT cause. He helped the first homosexual couples to get "married" in Pennsylvania and thus paved the way for marriage "equality."³ Mr. Shapiro is, therefore, capable of fighting for the supposed rights of others.

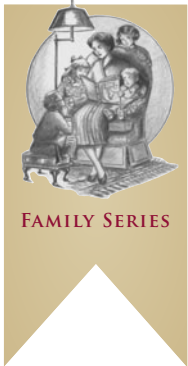
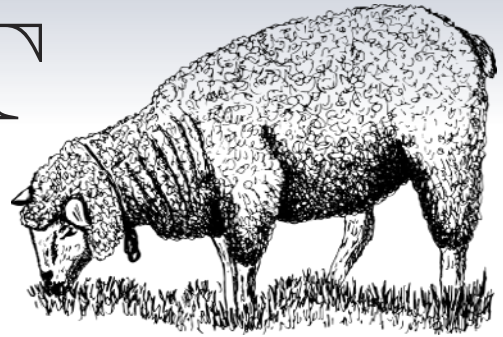
Why, then, does he show such hardness of heart for these simple nuns who lead a life of prayer and devote their energies toward the tender loving care of the aged and infirm? They want to be left alone so they can fulfill their God-given vocation. For the love of God, Mr. Shapiro, Mercy! Mercy! ■

Notes:

1. George J. Hill, *The War in La Vendée* (London: Burns and Lambert, 1856), p. 128.
2. Ibid, p. 130.
3. <https://www.joshshapiro.org/2016/04/lgbt-groups-across-pennsylvania-endorse-josh-shapiro>.

The HOLLY NIGHT

BY SELMA LAGERLOF



It was a Christmas day and all the folks had driven to church except Grandma and me. We had not been permitted to go along, because one was too old and the other was too young. And we were sad, the both of us, because we had not been taken to early Mass to hear the singing and to see the Christmas candles.

But as we sat there in our loneliness, Grandmother began to tell a story.

“There was a man,” said she, “who went out into the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. He went from hut to hut and knocked. ‘Dear friends, please help me!’ said he. ‘My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one.’”

“But it was way in the night, and all the people were asleep. No one replied.

“The man walked and walked. At last he saw the gleam of a fire a long way off. Then he went in that direction, and saw that the fire was burning in the open. A lot of sheep were sleeping around the fire and an old shepherd watched over the flock.

“When the man who wanted to borrow fire came up to the sheep, he saw that three big dogs lay asleep at the shepherd’s feet. All three awoke when the man approached and opened their great jaws, as though they wanted to bark.

But not a sound was heard. The man noticed that the

hair on their backs stood up and that their sharp, white teeth glistened in the firelight. They dashed toward him. He felt that one of them bit at his leg and one at his hand and that one clung to his



throat. But their jaws and teeth wouldn’t obey them, and the man didn’t suffer the least harm.

“Now the man wished to go farther to get what he needed. But the sheep lay back to back and so close to one another that he couldn’t pass them. Then the man stepped on their backs and walked over them and up to the fire. And not one of the animals awoke or moved.

“When the man had almost reached the fire, the shepherd looked up. He was a surly old man, who was unfriendly and harsh toward human beings. And when he saw the young man coming, he seized his long spiked staff, which he always held in his hand when he tended his flock, and threw it at him. The staff came right toward the man, but before it reached him it turned off to one side and whizzed past him, far out into the meadow.

“Now the man came up to the shepherd and said to him, ‘Good man, help me and lend me a little fire! My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one.’”

“The shepherd would rather have said no, but when he pondered that the dogs couldn’t hurt the man and that the sheep had not run from him, and that his staff had not wished to strike him, he was a little afraid and dared not deny the man that which he asked.

“Take as much as you need!’ he said to the man.

“But then the fire was nearly burnt out. There were no logs or branches left, only a big heap of live coals; and the stranger had neither spade nor shovel, wherein he could carry the red-hot coals.

“When the shepherd saw this, he said again, ‘Take as much as you need!’ And he was glad that the man wouldn’t be able to take away any coals.

But the man stooped and picked the coals from the ashes with his bare hands, and laid them in his mantle. And he didn’t burn his hands

when he touched them, nor did the coals scorch his mantle; but he carried them away as if they had been nuts or apples.

“And when the shepherd, who was such a cruel and hard-hearted man, saw all of this he began to wonder to himself: ‘What kind of night is this when the dogs do not bite and sheep are not scared, and the staff does not kill or the fire scorch?’ He called the stranger back, and said to him: ‘What kind of a night is this? And how does it happen that all things show you compassion?’

“Then said the man, ‘I cannot tell you if you yourself do not see it.’ And he wished to go his way that he might soon make a fire and warm his wife and child.

“But the shepherd did not wish to lose sight of the man before he found out what all this might portend. He got up and followed the man till they came to the place where he lived.

“Then the shepherd saw that the man had not so much as a hut to dwell in, but that his wife and babe were lying in a mountain grotto, where there was nothing but the cold and naked stone walls.

“The shepherd thought that the poor and innocent child might freeze to death there in the grotto; and, although he was a hard man, he was touched, and thought that he would like to help

it. He loosened his knapsack from his shoulder, took from it a soft, white sheep skin, gave it to the stranger, and said that he should let the child sleep on it.

“But just as soon as he showed that he, too, could be merciful, his eyes were opened and he saw what he had not been able to see before.

“He saw that all around him stood a ring of silver-winged angels, and each held a stringed instrument and sang in loud tones that tonight the Savior was born who should redeem the world from its sins.

“Then he understood that all things were so happy this night that they didn’t want to do anything wrong.

“And it was not only around the shepherd that there were angels, but he saw them everywhere. They sat inside the grotto, they sat outside on the mountain and they flew under the heavens. They came marching in great companies, and, as they passed, they paused and cast a glance at the child.

“There was such a jubilation and such gladness and songs and play! All this he saw in the dark night, whereas before he could not have made out anything. He was so happy because his eyes had been opened that he fell upon his knees and thanked God.”

Here Grandmother sighed and said, “What that shepherd saw, we might also see, for the angels fly down from heaven every Christmas Eve, if we could only see them.”

Then Grandmother laid her hand on my head and said, “You must remember this, for it is true, as true as that I see you and you see me. It is not revealed by the light of lamps or candles, and it does not depend upon sun and moon; but that which is needful is, that we be merciful. Only then our eyes will open as to see God’s glory.” ■

“What kind of a night is this? And how does it happen that all things show you compassion?”



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