

May/June 2021

# CRUSADE<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE



KING SAINT  
FERDINAND III  
*and His Conquests for Christ*

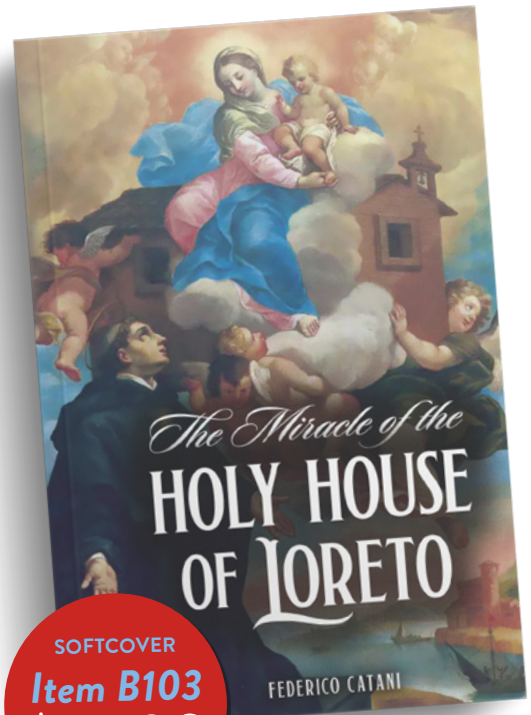
# A PERPETUAL MIRACLE *at Your Fingertips*

The Shrine of Loreto, as Pope John Paul II wrote, is the “first sanctuary of international importance dedicated to the Virgin Mary and, for several centuries, the true Marian heart of Christianity.”

It is also a perpetual miracle, which still raises questions and curiosity. How can one prove that the three walls are indeed those of the Holy Family’s house? How did they come from Nazareth to Italy? Was it the work of angels or crusaders? Did the House come directly to Loreto or did it stop in other locations? What miracles have occurred in connection with the Holy House of Loreto, and which saints and famous people have visited it?

*The Miracle of the Holy House of Loreto* will answer these questions and highlight this treasure chest of history, faith and tradition, which Italy has the grace to preserve.

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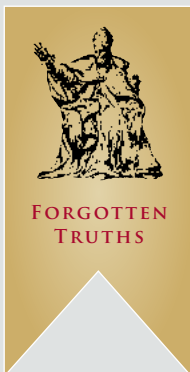


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## Glorious Chastity vs. Devastating Sex

BY LUIZ SÉRGIO SOLIMEO



In a statement by the Bishop of Tyler, Texas, “Glorious Chastity—One Bishop’s Reflection,”\* the Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland stated, “In the year 2019, we live in a world that’s off-kilter. One of the deepest roots of the present chaos is the lack of willingness to embrace Glorious Chastity.”

The adjective “glorious” was not chosen at random: “I specifically use the word ‘glorious’ because I believe it is God’s plan that obedience to His will with regard to this virtue is a key that will unlock God’s wondrous plan for every individual person and for all of humanity.

“God’s plan is for Glorious Chastity to always guide sexual desires along a path of accompaniment with His Divine Plan and the wondrous gift of participating in His creation. He has created us in His image.”

Conversely, when sexual pleasure is sought for its own sake regardless of its primary purpose of procreation, it becomes devastating, and the entire society suffers the consequences: “Rather than Glorious Chastity, the prevailing reality in today’s world is Devastating Sex. Once again, I specifically use a word as strong as ‘devastating’ because it describes what has happened to this

very human faculty which has been dehumanized in so many ways.”

In a hard-hitting paragraph, the Bishop of Tyler summarizes:

“Devastating Sex can be defined as any sexual expression, whether alone or with another person, that does not follow the narrow path laid out by God . . .

“Devastating Sex happens when a married couple interferes with the fertility of their love through contraception . . .

“Devastating Sex happens when a man and a woman engage in sexual activity outside the bond of marriage . . .

“Moreover, it happens when persons of the same sex engage in sexual activity . . .

“All these aberrations go to the heart of why God has created us male and female. He created us with real physical differences that complement each other when they are lived in the commitment of marriage.” ■

\*Bishop Joseph Strickland, “Glorious Chastity—One Bishop’s Reflection,” <https://bishopstrickland.com/blog/post/glorious-chastity-one-bishops-reflection>.

# CONTENTS

MAY/JUNE 2021

In Brief	4
Christ in the Home	
A Father's Letter	5
Return to Order	
Recovering a Providential Vision of History after the Election	6
Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira	
The Catholic Church Against Every Error: The Unending Conflict	8
Cover Story	
King Saint Ferdinand III and His Conquests for Christ	10
Prophets, Martyrs, Saints and Heros	
Saint Joseph: True Model of Fatherhood	16
America Needs Fatima Progress Report	
◆ Her Children Rose Up	17
◆ Battlelines Newsletter	18
◆ Our Readers Write	19
◆ Weapon for Our Times: Coast to Coast Rosary Rallies	20
◆ Wanted: Friends of the Cross	21
◆ <i>The Glories of Mary, Multiplied!</i>	21
Prophets, Martyrs, Saints and Heroes	
Marijuana Use: the Basis for a Godless Culture	22
Back Cover	
Village Politicians	24

*Crusade Magazine* is a publication of The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP). Direct all requests and inquiries to: *Crusade Magazine*, P.O. Box 341, Hanover, PA 17331 or email to: [crusade@TFP.org](mailto:crusade@TFP.org). Web: [www.TFP.org](http://www.TFP.org). Tel.: (888) 317-5571, Fax: (570) 450-6352. © 2021 by The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc. This publication may include images from iStockphoto™ and Dreamstime™ which are protected by copyright laws of the U.S. and elsewhere. ISSN 1096-3782 LCCN 98-641433

M-171 (FN2104)

## 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

Cover:  
In the painting by Carlos Múgica y Pérez (1821-1892), King Saint Ferdinand III holds an orb topped with a cross, symbolizing the triumph of Christ over the kingdoms of Spain.



The post-election Christian vision of events

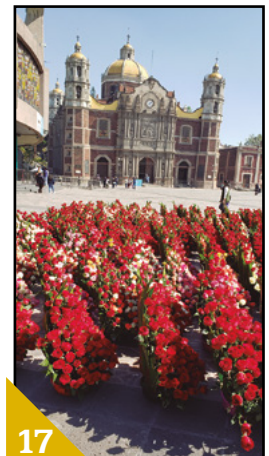


6



20

Rosary rallies take place across America



17

18,278 roses offered to Our Lady of Guadalupe in reparation for the sin of abortion

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

### “Father of the Pro-Life Movement” Dies

On January 18, 2021, legendary pro-life leader Joe Scheidler passed away in Chicago, Illinois at the age of ninety-three. Born in 1927 in Hartford City, Indiana, Scheidler served in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II and later entered seminary. Ultimately deciding to not enter the priesthood, he moved to Chicago, where he started the “Pro-Life Action League.” Over time, Scheidler built a reputation for his passionate and effective street activism, gaining him the title “godfather of pro-life activism.” His book *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* listed the many peaceful and legal pro-life tactics that would become the scourge of the abortion industry. His success soon incurred the wrath of the pro-abortion establishment when, in 1986, he was sued by the National Organization for Women, alleging violence had been used against abortion clinics. The case trailed him for twenty years as it worked its way through the courts, until he won a decisive victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2006.



### Irish TV Station Apologizes for Blasphemous Program

Over three hundred Catholics protested outside the headquarters of Irish media broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) in Dublin for their blasphemous portrayal of God as a rapist in their New Year’s Eve Countdown Show. The peaceful gathering on January 9, 2021 was spontaneous and leaderless, conforming to Ireland’s rigid COVID-19 prevention measures that banned any organized events, even public prayer. Seeing the massive reaction, RTÉ issued an apology in the following terms: “RTÉ acknowledges this did not show due respect to religious beliefs and was also unduly offensive to many viewers and RTÉ unreservedly apologises.”

### Trust in Mainstream Media Reaches All-Time Low

The 2021 edition of the annual “trust barometer,” compiled by Edelman and shared by Axios, showed that fifty-six percent of Americans agreed with the statement that “Journalists and reporters are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations.” Fifty-eight percent think that “most news organizations are more concerned with supporting an ideology or political position than with informing the public.” In all, only forty-six percent of Americans said that they trusted mainstream media and twenty-seven percent stated they trusted social media. Between political parties, the disparity was even greater, with fifty-seven percent

of Democrats stating they trust the media versus just eighteen percent of Republicans.

### Poland Protects Unborn Babies with Deformities

In January 2021, Poland enacted a new law banning the abortion of fetuses with health defects or deformities. The extensive ban took effect three months after the Constitutional Tribunal in Warsaw ruled that a law permitting abortions in cases of fetal abnormalities was unconstitutional: “In the opinion of the Tribunal, an unborn child is, as a human being—a person who enjoys innate and inalienable dignity, a subject who has the right to life; and the legal system must, according to Article 38 of the Constitution, guarantee due protection for this central good,” the court stated. The verdict was applauded by Catholics across Poland, who had denounced the abortion of babies with defects such as Down Syndrome as “eugenics.” Abortion advocates in the meantime responded with protests across the country, often marked by the disrupting of Masses, vandalizing of churches and statues, and attacks against clergy.

### The Philippines Commemorates Five Hundred Years of Catholicism

In April 2021, the Philippines commemorated the fifth centenary of the arrival of Catholicism in the country. Christianity was brought to the Philippines in 1521 when the Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, landed there, heading a Spanish expedition in an effort to reach the East Indies. The Philippines would eventually become a Spanish colony, allowing missionaries to settle there and convert the native population. Today, the Philippines is the largest Catholic country in Asia, with an estimated eighty percent of the population of one hundred million identifying as Catholic.

### Supreme Court Strikes Down California’s Rigid COVID Restrictions on Churches

The United States Supreme Court ruled 6–3 that California Governor Gavin Newsom could not ban churches from holding indoor religious services due to the pandemic. “Since the arrival of COVID-19, California has openly imposed more stringent regulations on religious institutions than on many businesses,” wrote Justice Neil Gorsuch in one of three concurring opinions. He continued: “California worries that worship brings people together for too much time. Yet... no one is barred from lingering in shopping malls, salons, or bus terminals.” Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco stated after the decision: “This is a very significant step forward for basic rights. This decision makes clear we can now return to worshipping safely indoors without risk of harassment from government officials.” While the decision lifts California’s ban on worship, it continues to allow attendance caps to stand as well as prohibitions of singing and chanting during services.

# A Father's Letter

BY FR. RAOUL PLUS, S.J.



Jean-Baptiste Racine (1639-1699) of France, the great classic dramatist, wrote a letter to his son urging him to practice complete fidelity in his religious duties and to develop a great love for the interior life.

“You beg me to pray for you. If my prayers were good for anything, you would soon be a perfect Christian, who hoped for nothing with more fervor than for his eternal salvation.

“But remember, my Son, that the father and mother pray in vain for their children

if the children do not remember the training their parents gave them. Remember, my Son, that you are a Christian, and think of all the obligations that come with that, all the passions it requires you to renounce.

“Would it benefit you to be esteemed by men, but jeopardize your soul? Nothing would make me happier than to see you working out your salvation. I hope for it by the grace of Our Lord.”

When Racine was thirty-eight and at the height of his career, his religious directors, through the misguided zeal of their Jansenistic\* spirit, had commanded him to give up writing for the theatre, which he did with inexpressible pain. So, when he spoke to his son of the practice of renunciation, he could speak with authority from personal experience.

Especially sensitive to physical suffering, he accepted sickness humbly and generously:

“I have never had the strength to do penance; what an advantage then for me that God has had the mercy to send me this.”

It is a great grace for children to have a father who teaches the divine law with firmness, and moreover, who lives this divine life, joining personal example to precept. Am I sufficiently attentive to give my children the supernatural equipment they need? Am I sufficiently careful about that still more important duty of giving them a good example always and in everything?

If there was too much severity in Racine's manner, it was

It is a great grace for children to have a father who teaches the divine law with firmness, and moreover, who lives this divine life, joining personal example to precept.



The positive influence of a father's investment in his child's formation can never be overestimated.

due to his own training at Port-Royal-des-Champs Abbey, the Jansenist center. When his brother Lionval was only five years old, he insisted that he would never go to the theatre for fear of being damned. Madelon, at ten years of age, had to observe Lent to the very end even though she felt ill because of it. The mother kept them in step; she once gave a good scolding to young Louis Racine, who had indulged in writing twelve stanzas of poetry on the death of a dog.

When authority is exaggerated, it is no longer Christian in character, but a flawed way of understanding the morality and perfection of the Gospel. A zealous will and courageous practice of generosity are essential for children. But we must always remember that they are children and not impose upon them too heavy a yoke, which would run the risk of giving them an incorrect idea of religion or of disgusting them even with its most balanced practice.

We must be mindful too that someday they will be confronted with fearful difficulties, perhaps in college or in the workplace. They will need a training that is not harsh but strong; otherwise we can fear shipwreck or at least fruitless returns.

By way of giving good example, if profession or health prevent us from fasting, be careful to get a dispensation and to substitute some other mortification for it, such as eating a less desirable food. We should practice moderation on all occasions—in general, a real detachment from food and bodily comforts, and deny ourselves amusements that might be dangerous. Your child may not listen to what you say, but he is always watching what you do. ■

\* The heresy of Jansenism essentially denied the necessity of free will in receiving and utilizing grace. Although the Jansenists hoped to counter the moral laxity of their time with moral rigorism, their denial of human free will actually had the opposite effect.



# Recovering a Providential Vision of History

BY JOHN HORVAT II

Recent election-related events only make sense when we have a Providential vision of history. Most people don't. As a result, many are confused and depressed now that things have taken a turn for the worse. They don't know how to deal with the very real evils that overwhelm us. There are even signs of despair.

Our problem is that we suffer from a naturalistic vision of life inherited from Enlightenment thinkers. This vision denies that events have any supernatural meaning. Science is deemed sufficient to account for all phenomena. Thus, we tend to interpret events as random sequences of actions, organized according to certain methods and processes.

Our naturalistic culture also teaches us that God is largely absent from the complex interplay of individuals and activities. At best, he is the absent clockmaker who wound up the universe and left it to run on its own.



Is God, the Divine Creator of all, no more than the talented clockmaker of the universe?

## Understanding Disaster

Thus, modern society evolves with no specific end. Inside this framework, our American way of life radiates optimism about progress and material prosperity. It might be likened to a cruise ship on a never-ending cruise.

When disaster strikes, everything is turned upside down. Thus, personal misfortune has no rational purpose in life. Political defeat is reduced to being the product of intrigue, fraud and conspiracies. With such an outlook, there is a constant attempt to escape from misfortune, engage in wishful thinking or eschew reality to embrace and believe in fantasy. When all else fails, we easily fall into despair and fatalism.

I fear that many now suffer the consequences of this vision after the election shipwreck.

## The Existence of Divine Providence

The Church's teaching on Providence is entirely different. It acknowledges the Creator's ordering action upon the universe, which we call Providence. The hand of Divine Providence coordinates the complex conditions by which individuals live together in society. Providence governs the universe and directs the course of affairs with purpose and benevolence.

We can define Divine Providence as "the plan conceived in the mind of God according to which he directs all creatures to their proper end." Thus, we can explain life with meaning instead of randomness; we can discern a purpose behind the misfortunes we suffer.

The proper end of all creatures is to manifest the glory of God in some way. We glorify God when society lives together in harmony and virtue. Evil, which exists because of our sinful malice, is permitted so that a greater good might come out of it. Even the evildoer eventually must give glory to God when punished by His justice.

The life of a Christian requires that we work with the action of Divine Providence, never against it. Mindful of man's free will, God requires our intelligent cooperation in carrying out His designs. He expects us to use the resources that in His Providence He places at our disposal. He assists us with His grace and supernatural gifts to aid us when disaster strikes.

## The Ways Providence Is Manifested

Providence is manifested in several ways. God often acts through secondary causes to order society when providing for the physical needs required for living together in community. Saint Thomas Aquinas says that humanity is directed to its end by the God-given means of the natural law, conscience and sanctions. Providence is not fate. God respects our free will so that we might change the course of history. God's Providence is thus manifested when He answers our prayers and supplications.

God even manifests Himself by permitting evil events to put us to the test as part of His Providential plan. "Almighty God would in no wise permit evil to exist in His work," says Saint Augustine, "unless He were so almighty and so good as to produce good even from evil."

The result of this Providential vision is that no matter what happens, everything proceeds with purpose toward its final end of glorifying God. Even in sad and dire times like our own, God always wins.

### Political Action Is Under God's Providence

This conclusion applies to politics, which is the art or science of governing. God's Providence governs all political action since it mirrors His own governing role. Indeed, the same Providence that directs the course of the affairs of each person with purpose and benevolence also directs and provides for the affairs of families, societies and nations.

Thus, all political events happen inside God's Providence. When the outcome of an election is good, then leaders and people can work together with God to further His glory by the practice of virtue and the development of a rich culture.

However, when a society falls into decadence, its people work against God's Providence and try to diminish His glory. God permits that the people suffer the natural consequences of their vices. Political elections will reflect this situation as people get the leaders they deserve. The nation will then be chastised with the scourge of godless leaders, who serve as instruments of God's justice to bring people back to Him.

### Providence and the Recent Elections

Thus, the general election must be seen from the perspective of God's Providence. There was a reason why it turned out the way it did.

Those who think America did not deserve this chaotic outcome need only reflect that we remain a very sinful nation. Many good things were accomplished over the last few years. However, what we needed was a moral regeneration to return to God. This did not happen. As a nation, we have fallen deeper into sin.

The nation's collective sins show no signs of abating as sodomy, blasphemy and Satanism are mainstreamed. The reactions are not proportional.

Our Lady's Fatima Message provided a blueprint for efficacious action that was largely ignored this election cycle.

Those who strive to be good were not good enough to change the downward spiral of our vices. Thus, God has delivered us over to the corruption and evils of the times. No amount of imagining otherwise can change the reality of the outcome...or our culpability.

The greatest of expectations were placed in strictly human, political solutions as if David, the Prophet-King, had never been inspired by God to write: "Put not your trust in princes: In the children of men, in whom there is no salvation" (Ps. 145, 2-3).

### Working with Providence

If we maintain the naturalistic vision of history, it will

necessarily lead to the scenes of desperation witnessed at the Capitol. We will try to find explanations for what went wrong in conspiracy theories, fanciful lies, apocryphal prophecies and wild rumors that will end in ruin. Nothing will make sense in the terrible days that await us. All will seem lost.

However, not all is lost. The same Providence, which permits evil things to befall us, is also with us. God awaits our repentance and cooperation so that our efforts might bear fruit and give Him glory. We can act with confidence, knowing that God has always come to the aid of His people when they call upon Him.

Our role now is to be attuned to the designs of Providence and act accordingly. Such action includes continued political efforts, which are undoubtedly important. However, we must



The result of this Providential vision is that no matter what happens, everything proceeds with purpose toward its final end of glorifying God.

watch for every opportunity that Providence puts in our path to live, promote and change society to glorify Him. We must work for that missing moral regeneration requested at Fatima that will return the nation to God. If this is done, we can expect much more than what we have lost.

In the naturalistic Enlightenment perspective, history is a random sequence of events, and there is little hope in times of misfortune.

In the Church's Providential vision of history, God provides in times of crisis. Above all, God always wins. ■



Russian nesting dolls portraying political figures.

# The Catholic Church Against Every Error: The Unending Conflict

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA



This article, taken from the newspaper *Legionario*, October 15, 1939, was written at the beginning of World War II in the face of the impending crisis. Although the world situation has changed since then and even worsened, the same “unending conflict” between the Church and her enemies continues.

“The Unending Conflict” is the title of an essay by Hilaire Belloc, a well-known English Catholic writer and intimate friend of the late Chesterton, published in the London journal *The Universe*. Belloc demonstrates that all controversies in these hectic times are basically reduced to only one: the conflict between the Catholic Church and Her enemies.

One most interesting aspect about our present times is that no one realizes the nature of the great struggle now involving all the nations of Europe, and some countries in America and Asia.

Everywhere you will hear that this is a fight between communism and what is commonly called “fascism.” Those same people who are quick to make this claim will say that the struggle is between a traditional old world and a rising brand-new world. Others, with a narrower vision, call it “a struggle between certain races or nations.” This latter claim is false since the struggle involves a universal movement. Still, others believe that it is merely a war between rich and poor.

All these explanations are imperfect to some degree, when not outright absurd. What we are witnessing is a conflict between the Catholic Church and Her enemies.

## We Are Headed for Chaos

Most of the more serious and intelligent observers of this fight certainly do not recognize this truth. However, it is the

central truth of this whole struggle. People do not perceive this because they generally look at the indirect effects of events. Since any social event originates from profound, underlying causes, they fail to see the first causes, because they are not easy to perceive.

We must understand that the present modern conflict revolves around the Faith. Our fight is yet another example of the struggle between the Faith and the world that has unfolded throughout the ages. Without understanding this, we will never comprehend the nature of the danger threatening the Earth. This is because the threat that weighs on the modern world is not the possibility of falling into the clutches of this or that race, or this or that philosophy. It is the danger of losing that which created our civilization.

Faith built our civilization. To the degree we lose the creative force of our Faith, our civilization will increasingly crumble. If this force is completely lost, our whole civilization will be lost, and we will move toward chaos.

## A Few Questions to Dr. Inge

English writer Dr. William Ralph Inge, an Anglican professor of theology at Cambridge, has written an extraordinary statement. He wrote that unless the world submits once again to the teachings of Our Lord, it is doomed to perish. “Nothing can save us,” Dr. Inge said, “but the laws and doctrines of Christ.” As everyone knows, he is a very intelligent person, and almost as important, an extremely cultured man. He got very close to the truth since his words certainly expressed truth.

However, Dr. Inge failed to add the one extra clause that would have given full meaning to his thought. He did not say that a particular institution has preserved an uninterrupted tradition of that Divine teaching which he rightly considers the only and most necessary remedy for modern evils. He did not say this because he does not believe it. Dr. Inge does not believe that the Catholic Church speaks with the voice of Christ or that She is the one who possesses the whole tradition of Christ. Yet, like any other man, Dr. Inge would be hard-pressed to explain who else in the entire world can lay claim to this title. It is only the Church that can do this, which according to Her own definition is One, Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic.

Consider any of the principal themes that have led men to

[T]he present modern conflict revolves around the Faith. Our fight is yet another example of the struggle between the Faith and the world that has unfolded throughout the ages.





Painting that depicts Saint John Bosco's dream of the two pillars through which the bark of Peter must sail—the Eucharist and Mary Most Holy. (Taormina, Italy.)

is to say, that human dignity must always be maintained. When economic pressure becomes oppressive, producing a situation “akin to slavery,” it is immoral.

The Church teaches yet more: Faith presupposes a stable society; therefore, it does not allow for unfettered or unrestrained competition. Church doctrine on private property rests on a whole network of interrelated propositions, which if applied entirely, produces a stable and happy society.

### The Family and the State

Let us look at another analogous point of contention. Does the individual exist for the State or the State for the individual? The conflict between tyranny and freedom revolves around this issue. The Church offers a perfectly clear answer.

The State exists for the family and to improve both the physical and especially the spiritual life of the individual. However, the State has the right to demand that citizens defend the nation from aggression and obey reasonable laws. Civil authority comes from God. The abuse of authority does not come from God. Indeed, when authority acts contrary to the law of God, it loses all its validity.

In Her long history, the Church has never produced or inspired a society that supported tyranny as a ruling principle, nor has She produced a society in which the authority of civil magistrates was denied.

At the root of the Church's entire policy and social teaching lies Her clear doctrine on the family, an institution created for the salvation of the individual.

### False Solutions

The tragic danger of our time lies in false solutions lacking effective authority to implement them. It also lies in false solutions based on insufficient principles, or false solutions springing from extremism that proposes to heal the mortal suffering that afflicts us all.

Thus, for example, some might say that man under industrial capitalism, is allegedly a victim of injustice. As a solution, those opposed to the Faith exclaim, “Let us end private ownership of the means of production, and this injustice will disappear!” However, this will only cause worse suffering; for slavery is the only possible alternative to private property as a social institution.

Married life always has some tribulations, and sometimes couples suffer tragic and almost unbearable trials. Those contrary to the Faith will exclaim, “Let us put an end to marriage through fast-track divorce, and then the evils of marriage will vanish.” Abolishing marriage will only give rise to far worse, inhumane evils because it will destroy the basic cell or unit of social life. This will soon result in the annihilation of society itself. ■

war, past, present or future. State these themes in the form of questions: “What is the true doctrine about private property, based on the authority of Christ?” Or, “What is the true doctrine on marriage?” Or yet, “What is the true doctrine on war?” From the authority of the Church, we find answers to these and all other questions we may ask. Outside the Church, we will obtain an assortment of contradictory assertions. No one can cite a final authority anywhere, except for Catholics when we state what we accept as a sound philosophy of life.

### The Church's Answer

Note also, that on every capital question in which an answer is indispensable to guide humanity, the Church's response is based on several principles that support Her position, and prevent both the falsehood of exaggeration or the fallacy of treating universal matters as if they were isolated subjects. Thus, for example, in relation to private property, the Church affirms the right of ownership. She does not say, like the Communists: “The ownership of the means of production is immoral.” Rather, She affirms that property is a moral institution both in relation to consumer goods and means of production.

The Church also affirms that every human being has the right to live according to human norms. Every human being is entitled to what the Church calls “human bread.” That

# KING SAINT FERDINAND III

## *and His Conquests for Christ*

BY STACIE HISERMAN



COVER  
STORY

It is a battle to remain faithful and strong. Saint Ferdinand III was a king, husband, father and warrior whose battle for his soul was just as vigorous as his renowned crusades against the Moors. His cousin, Saint Louis IX, King of France, is generally familiar to Christians and Catholics in the West, but King Saint Ferdinand's story could use a bit of dusting off. His practices as a man of faith are invaluable to men of any generation, for he combined the virtues of a saint with the courage of a soldier.

Saint Ferdinand III, King of Castile and León, was born in 1198 to Alfonso IX, King of León, and Doña Berenguera of Castile. Ferdinand's childhood was wrought with uncertainties. The marriage of his parents was annulled by the Holy Father due to the blood relationship between the spouses. With a broken heart but peaceful soul, Doña Berenguera was welcomed with open arms back into the court of Castile. Eventually, her happiness increased when her children were allowed to join her there.

Of all her children, Ferdinand held a special place in the mother's heart. When Ferdinand was around ten years old, he was consumed with such an extreme illness, that all believed death loomed over him. His devoted mother raced the child, accompanied by knights and ladies, to the chapel of Santa Maria de Oña, where the repulsive sores on his little body miraculously disappeared. After this episode, a change appeared in the boy. He was often found kneeling before an image of Our Lady, praying the Little Office. From this tender age, the future king began to recognize his God-given mission—to expel the Moors from Spain and to propagate the holy Catholic Faith within his beloved country.

### **A Quest to Reconquer Spain**

In the early eighth century, a major part of the Iberian Peninsula was taken from the Visigoths by the Moors. Not until the eleventh century were Christian kingdoms in Spain powerful enough to reconquer some of the lost territories.

However, much of the land still required liberation from the hands of the Moslems.

In 1212, Ferdinand's grandfather, King Alfonso the Noble of Castile, alerted Christendom that his kingdom was in imminent danger of Moslem attack. Heeding the call, Christian princes, Spanish and otherwise, rallied together to do battle against the Moors. Following this, Pope Innocent III extended the Crusades to Spain. The reconquering of Spain became known as the *Reconquista* ("reconquest").

Much to his shame and dismay, Ferdinand discovered that his father, King Alfonso IX of León, did not initially join the Crusaders. Instead, Alfonso took the opportunity to make war against other Christian kingdoms. His father's greed caused Ferdinand many sleepless nights. Then and there, Ferdinand resolved to never make war against another Christian prince. This promise, though tested countless times, he faithfully kept throughout his life.

### Seeking Out Suffering

Ferdinand's enthusiasm to reconquer Spain for Christ and Our Lady never faded, but it did mature. Now, as a young man, Ferdinand would close his eyes after receiving the Blessed Sacrament and ponder the great labors he would need—want—to suffer for Christ. He fearlessly told his mother: "I tell Him [Jesus] that He is my King and I am His knight, that I want to suffer great labors for Him in wars against the Moors, that I want to shed my blood for Him, and that His Glorious Mother is my Lady."

Growing up, Ferdinand encountered pious and courageous models, such as his grandfather and mother, and ones less so, such as his father. His eyes glistened with enthusiasm, as would be the reaction of many boys of today, when he listened to his grandfather's exhilarating stories of battle. But when he observed his father's failures, Ferdinand became fearful of falling into the same corrupt habits. Still, he obediently heeded his father's summons to the court in León. As all good men possess a plan of action on spiritual battlefields as well



By the time of King Ferdinand III, waves of conquests against the Moors had divided the Christian part of Spain into a patchwork of several different kingdoms.

as physical ones, the young man departed for León spiritually armed for battle. A man of balance, he lived not as a hermit isolated from society, but instead combined asceticism with the practical sense of the realities of his position.

To become accustomed to hardship, Ferdinand trudged through the fields of León in the rain and snow. When asked about his laborious excursions, he explained: "... Since in war I shall have to command many men who know how to suffer, and who will not appreciate it if I do not know how to suffer with them." He maintained silence about the private penances performed within the walls of his room. However, when he returned to Castile, a statue of Our Lady and a bloody scourge near his bedside wordlessly told his mother he had preserved his innocence within his father's court.

The young man's spirit of sacrifice never faded, for later during times of battle, King Ferdinand wore his armor day and night for the sake of both preparedness and sacrifice. Never did he order his men to do anything he would not do. For this reason, he would include himself in tedious duties, such as the strict nightguard rotation.

### A Crown for Christ

Sooner than expected, Ferdinand was called to implement his leadership capabilities. Upon the death of Henry I in 1217, Doña Berenguera was proclaimed Queen of Castile. Immediately, the Queen sent for her son and proceeded to renounce the crown, transferring it to the head of Ferdinand with the approval of the nobles present.

Before long, King Alfonso IX of León declared war on his son, with the intention of seizing Ferdinand's crown. His father's hostility was a blow and a true sorrow for Ferdinand. He often knelt alone at night in the palace chapel to pray.



Doña Berenguera abdicates the throne of Castile in favor of her son Ferdinand III.

He asked God to deliver him from a trial more fearsome than death, for he was repulsed at the idea of making war on his father. Always, he sought out his “Counselor,” Our Lord. He developed a habit of spending the night before every battle in prayer before an image of Christ. His confidence in God was so great, that all had developed a tremendous respect for his spirituality. His vassals were also proud of his strength and wisdom. He carefully listened and considered the opinions of all present, but when the time came, he would make a decision without hesitation. In the end, Ferdinand and Alfonso were reconciled, by virtue of Ferdinand’s refusal to attack his own father.

During the days Ferdinand was not at war, he devoted himself wholly and generously to the dry work of administration of justice. Lengthy hours were consumed in his private apartment, as he listened to complaining men and helpless widows. At that time, every city in Spain had a unique code of law, which made Ferdinand’s administrative tasks difficult. To improve the confused codex of laws for future generations, Ferdinand worked to compile them into one magnificent body of laws.

### Mary as Man’s Stronghold

King Ferdinand’s fidelity to his duties as king was akin to his total devotion to Our Lady, whom he tenderly called “My Lady.” This steadfast devotion to Our Lady is the most brilliant jewel in his spiritual crown. So captivated was he by the beauty of His Heavenly Queen, that no other woman had yet captured his interest. Thus he entrusted his mother, his closest advisor, with the task of finding for him a Christian wife, one who would graciously share his service to Our Lady rather than separate him from her. So it was that Princess Beatrice, daughter of Philip of Swabia, King of Germany, and renowned for her piety, purity, and beauty, entered Ferdinand’s life. Together, they produced seven sons and three daughters, two of the children dying quite young.

After their marriage, Beatrice bequeathed her royal husband and knight with a token of her virtue—a small ivory statue of Our Lady. From that time forward, Ferdinand fixed the statue to a hook on his saddle and carried Our Lady with him into battle. It is no wonder, then, that King Ferdinand III never lost a single battle.

### In the Heat of Battle

Besides Our Lady’s presence at his side, Ferdinand’s vigils before the Blessed Sacrament were also invaluable to his faith and his victories. These prayer vigils gave him a clear understanding of the vocation to which Christ was calling him: a life of renunciation of comforts. In the camp, he came to know what it was to be truly hungry and thirsty. Wars, sleepless nights away from home, wounds, and betrayals became his daily bread. Yet, he felt an eagerness to embrace all the crosses of the Crusade, both large and small. Ferdinand’s one solace lay in this: every morning, his battle tent became like a cathedral, complete with the reverent offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The sufferings of those arduous campaigns and constant danger of life did not fail to receive their earthly reward. Before long, the Moors and Moslem cities trembled at the sight of Ferdinand’s army. Fearsome as his warriors were, Ferdinand did not allow the power to cloud his just judgment. He believed that true masculinity is not to be paralleled with brute force, and so he gently spared the towns that offered tribute. He could not annihilate an enemy willing to surrender peacefully.

### Capturing Heart and Soul

One such example of King Ferdinand’s regard for justice is found in his meeting with King Zeyd of Valencia. Zeyd, a Moor, was frightened when notified that the mighty army from Castile had established its general quarters so near to his own frontiers. He swiftly sent an embassy to request a peace conference. Accepting the meeting,

Ferdinand guaranteed that the Moor would be respected within his Christian lands.



The Spanish kingdoms of Castile and León became united under the crown of King Ferdinand III.

© Espak1983 | Dreamstime.com

Everywhere Zeyd went, he was regarded with the honor due to his dignity as king. When the moment arrived for the Moor to appear in the Castilian's presence, Zeyd lowered himself to kiss Ferdinand's hand. Instead of complying, Ferdinand lifted him up and embraced him as a friend, offering the King a chair at his side under the canopy. Through this small action, King Zeyd became convinced that Ferdinand of Castile was courageous and good. Ferdinand not only won the Moor's heart, but also his soul, for the Valencian King was later baptized and dethroned by the Moors.

### Saints on His Side

The Communion of Saints supports its members, and Saint Isidore of Seville's aid to Ferdinand is no exception. It was Saint Isidore who guided the fortunes of Ferdinand after the death of his father King Alfonso IX. Much to his dismay and sorrow, Ferdinand was betrayed in his father's will when the kingdom of León was left to King Alfonso's daughters, Doña Sancha and Doña Dulche. Being daughters of a ruling monarch of Spain, the young women were known as the *infantas*. As a consequence, the young and rash Count Don Diego Lopez appointed himself protector of the *infantas*.

Recklessly, the Count invaded the church of Saint Isidore to use as a fortress. He forced the monks to support the cause of the *infantas*, when they preferred Ferdinand. Satisfied and vainglorious, Count Don Diego suddenly developed a strong headache, which soon became so intense that he was found moaning and crying out. Pale and with distorted features, he exclaimed: "San Esidro [Saint Isidore] is killing me!" His friends rushed him to the tomb of Saint Isidore, where he begged forgiveness and swore to leave King Ferdinand in peace. Amazingly, the Count was cured of his illness and the *infantas* soon relinquished the throne of León to their step-brother. Hence, the two kingdoms of Castile and León became united under King Ferdinand.

### Conquering Córdoba

As King of Castile and León, Ferdinand continued to gloriously reconquer lands for the Faith. It was well-known to the army of Ferdinand that the King could not bear to

place one of his vassals in greater danger than himself. This noble conduct rang true when the fearsome Christian army planned to conquer Córdoba.

Upon evaluating the best way to seize the city, King Ferdinand decided they would need to first seize a strong castle. Before that, they must seize the bridge, a dangerous feat. This task the King reserved for himself, which resulted in multiple disputes from his men: "You, Lord? Never do such a thing! Remember that a wide and deep river separates you from the army, and all the Moors are at your back. If they would attack, Lord, how could we come four miles to your aid?" The King ordered silence and reminded his men that Our Lord would defend him. That night, the Moors witnessed the purple flag of Castile and the Cross of Jesus Christ victoriously wave over what was once their tower.

After Córdoba was conquered, Ferdinand led a grand procession into the city, followed by several bishops, the clergy, and the military orders. In the mosque, which was purified and consecrated as a cathedral, Ferdinand discovered the bells of Santiago de Compostela. In 997, Al-Mansur had sacked Santiago and used the backs of chained Christians to carry the bells of the cathedral to Córdoba. Ferdinand promptly ordered the Moslem captives to return the bells to the Cathedral of Santiago, so they may once again give glory to God in the place they belonged.

### The Father: A Model of Manhood

Even back in Castile, Ferdinand desired to give glory to God through his family life. It was important to Ferdinand, to fulfill his strenuous duties well, that he balance them with enjoyable pastimes.

The King rarely went a day without hunting, and he encouraged his knights to participate in this agreeable sport. To the men, these games were future victories in battle. In the evenings, the music and jokes of the fools and jesters pleased the King and his family, as did extended games of chess and the like.

Ferdinand III receives the keys to Córdoba, gloriously marking the end of the Moslem rule over the city that had begun in 711.



Apart from enjoyable activities with his family, it was important to Ferdinand that his sons witness the spirit of sacrifice required of any man of virtue. The pious King was a model of manhood to his sons. Like all boys, Ferdinand's son Alfonso based his idealism on modeling himself after his father. Because of the courageous example set before him, Alfonso witnessed the harshness of the life of a crusader, but did not shy away from that life.

During the campaigns, Alfonso was told that his father slept in the open air, and sometimes in the rain and cold weather. Enthusiastically, the young boy threw himself on the ground that very night. Also like his father, the youth earnestly made his confession on the eve of battle.

Yet, Ferdinand's example of true masculinity to his sons did not end on the battlefield. In the evenings, when the King's children would surround their father, arranging themselves on pillows at his feet, Ferdinand would remind his sons, "Bring a stool for your sister, for you know that a good knight must always be courteous to the ladies." When he convalesced between battles, Ferdinand inspired his sons with story times of great heroes. Then, he would look for his young daughter Berenguera, for whom he held a special fondness.

As soon as Berenguera noticed him free of obligations, the girl hurried to find a place near her father. During their intimate talks, she listened with wonder to the examples of strong and saintly maidens set before her. With intense pain of separation but joy in the love of Christ, the King eventually escorted his cherished daughter into the Royal Monastery of Santa María de las Huelgas, where she fulfilled her dream of exchanging her rank and palace for humility and a hard, poor bed.

After the death of his first wife Beatrice, Ferdinand's mother worried for the young King and his many children, and desired to see him married once again. In 1237, Ferdinand wed Joan of Ponthieu, the virtuous, graceful and intelligent daughter of a Count. He developed a deep love for Queen Joan, who accompanied him to the encampments and earned the admiration of her people. Ferdinand enjoyed her confidence and said that to die a thousand times would be more preferable than to violate the trust of his wife.

### The Greatest Conquest

As appealing as life in Castile was to King Ferdinand, he yearned to purify the remainder of Spain. The siege of Seville proved to be the most challenging but most rewarding of all Ferdinand's conquests. As campaign life began for the three thousand men that comprised Ferdinand's army, there were so few of them that they had to simultaneously maintain a constant blockade on the city and guard the herds grazing

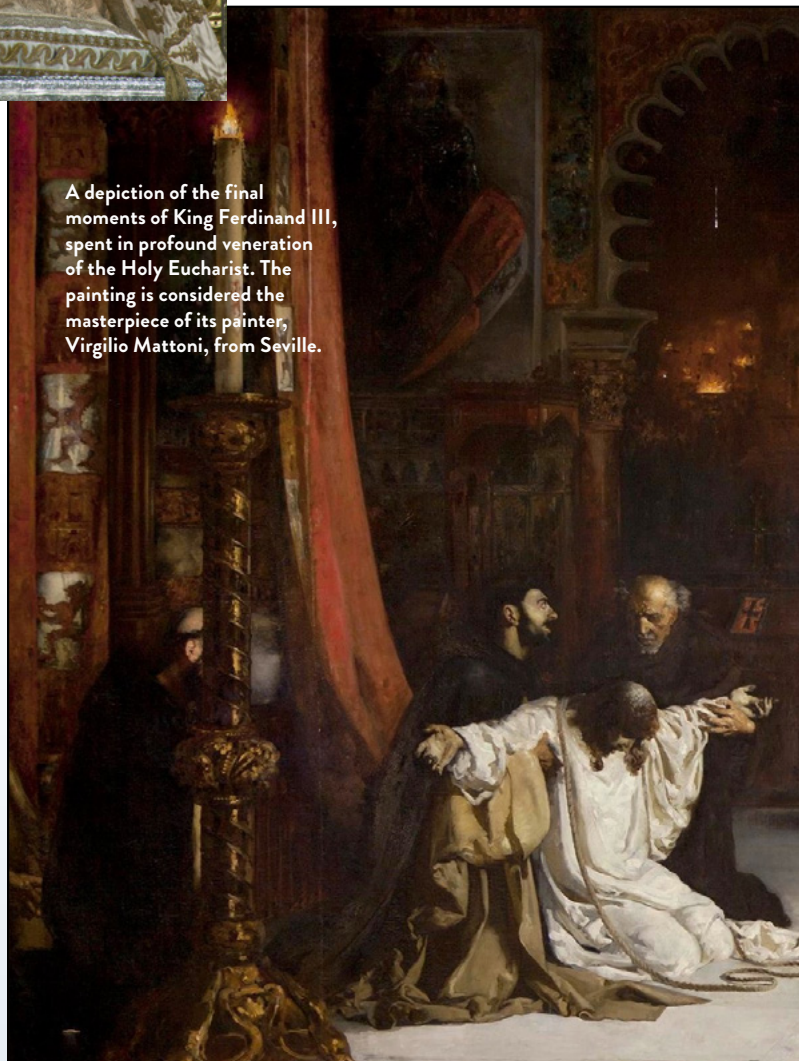
on the plains that supplied them with necessary food. Their manpower was also drained by their vigilance of two unconquered strongholds, Lebrija and Jerez, further down the river. By the end of October, as the result of six months without a drop of rain, the good men endured a severe drought with no harvest, and therefore nothing to eat for the Christian soldiers. Undeterred, the men continued to fight.

On the anniversary of his mother's death, Ferdinand concluded that he must leave for Alcalá de Guadaíra, to pray and do penance for rain. With only a piece of bread and some water, the King set off. Upon arrival, he laid aside his armor in exchange for a humble tunic and placed a cord around his neck, as was his habit during penitential practices. For two days, he prayed for rain, but not a small cloud formed.

Finally, on the third day, after the King had not eaten a crumb, his confessor, Don Remondo, intervened to convince Ferdinand to eat something. At almost midnight, the priest was en route to



The Virgin of the Kings, a surprise gift to Ferdinand from Queen Joan, who knew of her husband's tender devotion to Our Lady.



A depiction of the final moments of King Ferdinand III, spent in profound veneration of the Holy Eucharist. The painting is considered the masterpiece of its painter, Virgilio Mattoni, from Seville.

the King's quarters to recite matins when he heard the King exclaim: "Holy Mary! My Mistress and Mother!"

He ran to find Ferdinand kneeling, his arms in the form of a cross, while rain dripped steadily outside. In the strictest confidence, Ferdinand opened his heart to his confessor—he had seen a vision of Our Lady—and nothing could compare to the motherly smile she gave him. He would never forget it.

### Virgin of the Kings

During the conquest of Seville, Ferdinand, who was usually energetic and optimistic, became relentlessly oppressed by doubt and sorrow. He who had beheld the Blessed Mother and been told by Saint Isidore that he would reconquer Seville, began to fear he might die before that imperative victory took place. Despite Ferdinand's deep anguish, there was no discernable change in his appearance.

Only Queen Joan understood Ferdinand and remained within the camp to console him. She perceived the special tenderness her husband had for Our Lady and correctly deduced that he had seen her in a vision. He often complained that no artist could produce a life-like image of her, particularly her smile. Under cover of secrecy, the Queen commissioned artists to sculpt a true image of Our Lady. Meanwhile, aided by her ladies-in-waiting, the Queen sewed garments for the statue.

At last, the statue was complete. The next morning, when the King arrived in the chapel to recite Prime and attend Holy Mass, he was captivated as he beheld the exquisite beauty

of his Lady. "This is the Virgin of the Kings!" he blissfully exclaimed.

### Surrender and Sacrifice

After sixteen months of brutal warfare, the Moors, driven by famine within the walls of Seville, thrice attempted negotiations with King Ferdinand. Resolute, the King accepted no conditions, but demanded a total surrender of the city with complete evacuation. In November of 1248, Ferdinand's youthful dreams of fighting without truce or rest for a holy ideal were realized when the city of Seville surrendered.

Unlike the victories of other kings, Ferdinand's victory was not for his own honor, but for the glory of God and Our Lady. Humbly accepting the advice of a court jester, King Ferdinand remained in Seville and made the sacrifice of never returning to his beloved Castile, lest the Moors return to the "best city in the world," as he christened it.

At his deathbed in 1252, the King laid down his royalty before the divine royalty of Christ. His parting counsel to his son and heir was to, above all else, do good and save his soul. Atop the resting place of Saint Ferdinand III, King of Castile and León, in the Cathedral of Seville, is enthroned the Virgin of the Kings. Saint Ferdinand's body remains incorrupt to this day, for it is embalmed with the rich perfume of his virtue and faith. Of all earthly kings, only his majesty has not passed away like the things of this earth. ■





# Saint Joseph: True Model of Fatherhood

BY VINCENT GORRE



PROPHETS,  
MARTYRS,  
SAINTS AND  
HEROES

*Considering that this year (December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021) is dedicated to Saint Joseph, it is opportune to reflect on the critical role of fathers and fatherhood.*

## The Fatherhood of Saint Joseph

Although Saint Joseph was not the biological father of the divine Child, God gave Jesus to both Mary and Joseph as the fruit of their virginal marriage. The “Virgin Father” faithfully did his best to provide the divine Child with food, clothing and shelter. Jesus, in His human nature, was subject to and dependent upon His earthly father and mother, as is any other child.

According to Jewish custom, a male child remained in his mother’s care until he was five years of age, when the father took a more active part in his upbringing. When he reached the age of twelve, the child crossed the threshold from childhood to manhood. At this point, Jesus became His father’s carpenter apprentice. As head of the Holy Family, Saint Joseph shared God’s authority, as does any human father. But Saint Joseph’s legitimate authority was exercised with love—love of the Father whom he represented and love of his spouse and Son.

## Fathers are Key to a Stable Society

Since human fatherhood reflects the Fatherhood of God, a father is designed to be the pillar of the family. Therefore, the loss of esteem for fatherhood leads to the collapse of that pillar and to the dissolution of society itself, because domestic society—the family—is the basis for civil and religious societies and projects its influence over them. Good fathers that are faithful to their God-given duties and responsibilities are therefore critical to the stability of societies and to civilization.

The preceding principles are not just theories. Theology, reason, and mere common sense not only prove them true, but studies made by experts with real empirical data support them. In a lecture before Family Life International UK, Professor Patrick Fagan, director of the Marriage and Religion

Research Institute at the Catholic University of America, said that U.S. government data measuring family types against 153 outcomes including income, education, mental health, crime and addictions, found that the intact family that worships weekly comes out on top in every single outcome. He further stated that the father is the “keystone to the three great societies: the Church, the family and the nation. Remove that keystone, and the arch will fall.”

## The “Year of Saint Joseph”

Perfect role models for fathers do not come easy, but the Church has given us one. Saint Joseph was declared Patron of the Universal Church by Blessed Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1870.

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the proclamation, Pope Francis has issued a decree establishing the “Year of Saint Joseph.” Special indulgences are granted during this period. Specifically, a plenary indulgence shall be granted to Catholics “who recite any approved prayer or act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, especially on March 19th, the saint’s solemnity, and May 1st, the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker.”

Saint Joseph, Pillar of Families, pray for us! ■

## What Is an Indulgence?

Taken from *Handbook of Indulgences, Norms and Grants*, p. 19.

An indulgence is the remission in the eyes of God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose culpable element has already been taken away. The Christian faithful who are rightly disposed\* and observe the definite, prescribed conditions gain this remission through the effective assistance of the Church.

An indulgence is either plenary or partial, freeing a person either from all or from some of the temporal punishment due to sins. ■

\*Dispositions necessary to gain indulgences: (1) a complete and whole-hearted detachment from all sin of any kind, even venial sin (2) making a valid sacramental confession (3) receiving Holy Communion in the state of grace (4) praying for the intentions of the pope.





# AMERICA NEEDS FATIMA<sup>®</sup>

MAY/JUNE 2021

PROGRESS REPORT

## Her Children Rose Up

BY ANTONIO FRAGELLI

Our Lady of Guadalupe holds a special place in Catholic American hearts and the proof lies in these pictures.

With eyes fixed on the Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas and the Unborn, thousands of her faithful children sent a rose and their intentions to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, as a token of their love and reparation.

My colleague and I traveled to Mexico City in honor of the Feast of Saints Jacinta and Francisco of Fatima, on February 20th. Despite difficult circumstances due to COVID and bad weather, we were determined to make this sublimely fragrant delivery to Our Lady.

Between the months of January and February, America Needs Fatima promoted a campaign of reparation for the millions of deaths through abortion which take place in our country. The tremendous sin of abortion is perhaps the greatest stain on the American nation. Indeed, it is one that “cries to heaven for vengeance,” and it has been since the iniquitous *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.

To counter the sin of abortion, millions of Americans annually demonstrate rejection through an array of pro-life marches, vigils in front of abortion clinics, sidewalk counseling, in literature, prayer, legal efforts and much more. A very important aspect of this rejection is reparation to the Divine Justice, the Owner and Creator of those millions of children made to His image and likeness, who were destroyed by their own mothers.

When Our Lady appeared in Fatima, one of her very specific requests for the world was to practice the Five First Saturdays Devotion, in order to make urgent reparation for blasphemies and attacks on the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is pierced by thorns.

Where on one side there is immense sin, immense indif-



In reparation for the sin of abortion in America, a total of 18,278 roses were offered to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, in Mexico City on behalf of thousands of members and friends of America Needs Fatima. In addition 48 votive candles, representing 48 years since *Roe v. Wade*, were lit at the shrine in prayer for the end of abortion.



ference and immense hatred, there is on the other side light and life. This side couples an immense love of God with the obligation to repair unspeakable damage done to millions of innocent human beings, whose vocation in this life has been interrupted by sheer human selfishness and barbarism.

And so with the help of good friends in Mexico City, we presented to the Patroness of the Unborn a breathtaking offering of 18,278 beautifully arranged multicolored roses, together with thousands of personal intentions and petitions from friends and members of America Needs Fatima. May these offerings and prayers rise up to the Divine Throne as a confident plea for the urgent end to the twenty-first century massacre of the innocent.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe pray to her Divine Son for us and for America. And may she intercede for us, that we may see within our lifetime a return to His law, so that every human being will be given the chance to know, love and serve their Maker on this earth and be with Him for all eternity.



TAKEN FROM ANF'S PUBLICATION, *BATTLELINES*

**Joyfully Fighting Our Lady's Battles in Houston, Texas**

Every second Saturday of the month, seasoned Rally Captain Elyva of Houston, Texas, holds a rosary rally for Our Lady's causes. On December 12, 2020, she held a rally to remind the public to "Keep Christ in Christmas" and to keep the holy day sacred. In hopeful and cheerful spirits, she and twenty other faithful Catholics prayed fifteen decades of the rosary.



"We had a lot of support from drivers, some of them very enthusiastically sounding their horns for long periods of time, and one eighteen-wheeler very loudly . . . Many drivers were waving at us, smiling and giving us thumbs up," said Elyva. "At the end of the rally we sang Christmas carols, which put everybody in an even greater joyful mood."

**Opposing Satan in San Jose, California**

For the past three years, San Jose, California allowed the display of a satanic "Christmas" tree as part of its 'Christmas

in the Park' event. And this year was no different as local Satanists again decorated a tree with pentagrams, inverted crosses, demonic goats and other satanic items! Fortunately, Rally Captain Philip and his rally participants were willing to defend Our Lord at a rally of reparation on December 19. "Thanks to the grace of Our Lady, the rally went well," Philip said, "with good attendance of over forty people."

"Some rally-goers were Spanish, Portuguese and Vietnamese," the rally captain proudly reported, "People enthusiastically offered to lead decades in their native tongues." Inspired, one heroic attendee rode his bicycle seventy-five miles to the rally to make reparation for this attack on Christmas. Another prayer warrior announced her own rally would be December 22 to 'Keep Christ in Christmas.'

**Defending Our Children in Gambrills, Maryland**

On a chilly December 3, 2020, in Gambrills, Maryland, Rally Captain Patrick resolutely defended Church teaching alongside his dedicated prayer warriors. Most had traveled from miles away to pray the rosary in reparation at the School of the Incarnation, where a third-grader has decided that her new gender identity is male. They came to protest the Archdiocese's decision to treat the female student as a boy in the school.

Some rally participants took the time to speak patiently with parents about the Church's teaching on this issue. "They did this calmly and with respect," Patrick relayed proudly. "The fact that these people showed up to participate made the rally a big success! Parents and passersby saw us, they saw the banners, and they witnessed us say the rosary, boldly standing for Christ!"

*If you want to defend Our Lord and Our Lady like the Americans in this article, please contact Jose at (844) 830-3570 or e-mail [Protest@TFP.org!](mailto:Protest@TFP.org)*



## Our Readers Write

### St. Michael's Shield Campaign

Special Edition

**Note from the editor:** The following comments represent a small number of many such letters received from police chiefs across the country. For security reasons, we are not disclosing their initials or the towns from which they serve their fellow Americans.

"We appreciate the prayers and support that your organization offers to the law enforcement communities throughout the country."

*A police chief in Virginia*

"Thank you for your support and prayers. The police officers are God's answer to a troubled world."

*A police chief in New York*

"Police work continues to get more difficult, as each week passes. Thank you for all you do!"

*A police chief in New Jersey*

"I work in other departments here also and will be giving the medals out there as well."

*An officer in Pennsylvania*

"These medals are much appreciated and will be distributed to the officers of my District."

*A police lieutenant in Illinois*

"Thank you very much for the Saint Michael medals—we are blessed! Please stay safe and healthy!"

*A police chief in Delaware*

"Thank you so much for this! I would like to give medals to my reserve officers, too. Thank you for the fliers also!"

*A police chief in Iowa*

"Thank you for doing this. It means so much to us."

*From a police department  
in Wisconsin*

"Thank you for this uplifting message and the special issue of your Battlelines Newsletter. With so much negativity being directed our way, this support is greatly appreciated!"

*A police chief in Wisconsin*

"Thank you so much for your support!"

*A police chief in New York*

"We appreciate your thoughts and prayers during this most difficult year! Please stay safe; stay well."

*A police chief in Ohio*

"Thank you for remembering us with these medals, and please keep us in your prayers!"

*A police chief in Pennsylvania*

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart! This means the world to us!! God Bless & keep up the awesome work you are doing."

*A police chief in Arizona*

"Chief would like to give one of your medals out to each of our patrolmen."

*A police chief in Illinois*

"Thanks in advance. The guys and gals will like them very much!"

*A police officer in Oklahoma*



"Thank you for all you do & for your service to law enforcement."

*A police chief in Iowa*

"This is really appreciated. Great idea!"

*A police chief in Iowa*

"This is truly special and I am thankful to have people like you to remind me and my officers that God loves us."

*A police chief in Maryland*

"Thank you for your kind words. We have 35 officers at present in our department, and if you could spare the extra ones, I would love for all my officers to have one."

*A police chief in North Carolina*

"We are having a Blue Mass celebrated for the police, and will have these blessed. We will then distribute them to our officers."

*A police officer in Vermont*

"Thank you so much for reaching out! This will be a big morale booster for our officers!"

*A police chief in Washington*

"Thank you—I believe in Saint Michael."

*A police chief in Oklahoma*



Send us your feedback by writing to [Crusade@TFP.org](mailto:Crusade@TFP.org)



# Weapon for Our Times: Coast to Coast Rosary Rallies

BY STACIE HISERMAN

Wherever there is a clear need for prayer and reparation, Public Square Rosary Rallies sponsored by America Needs Fatima are more than likely to be active. For years now, dedicated volunteers with rosaries in hand have gathered from coast to coast for Our Lady and to take a public stand for the good and the true.

One such rosary rally group sought to lend support to those whose work is dangerous, yet thankless; those who daily put their lives on the line, but desperately lack support from the officials and public they protect—our police officers. Without them, there is no peace, especially in light of the rampant disorder in America today.

For this reason, Juan, a rally captain in Santa Clarita, California, leads a weekly rally in support of local law enforcement, military and first responders. The devoted group, which includes his friends, his children, members of his parish, Knights of Columbus and the Legion of Mary, meet in front of the Santa Clarita Sheriff’s Station each Saturday between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to pray the rosary several times during the three-hour rallies.

Juan noted the positive responses to the rallies: “Random people who see our display often stop and join us for a few minutes, and we give away rosaries, medals, scapulars and bottles filled with holy water.” The group has a flyer that lists all the dates and the location of the rallies. They ensure that the banners from America Needs Fatima are visible to traffic from both directions, often prompting a positive response from cars passing by. “It’s not hard at all,” Juan asserted. “It is a team effort.”



Sunrise, Florida

Francis. The attacker then set fire to the garden where the statues stood, finally throwing the shattered statues into a storm drain.

Francisco, one of the rally captains, stated, “Fortunately, a group of the faithful, indignant at such monstrosity, answered the call of Our Lady and America Needs Fatima.” On December 5, one group prayed at the intersection of University Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard. “We got many honks and thumbs up during the rally in that busy intersection,” he declared. That same day, devoted Catholics at Saint Gregory the Great parish held another rally of reparation.

The next week, a third rosary rally was held at Tropical Park. Fellow Rally Captain Sergio enthusiastically remarked, “Abundant honks and signs of approval came from the bumper to bumper traffic at the Park.” Rally Captain Francisco reported that these events brought several dozen faithful together in prayer.

Blessed are we, indeed, to have people like Francisco, Sergio, and all the prayer warriors of America Needs Fatima, who are willing to defend the glory of God, His Holy Mother and the Church!

These are just a few of the thousands of Public Square Rosary Rallies that have taken place nationwide. They are hopeful, and one by one, they are changing hearts. Our Lady is a powerful intercessor. At Fatima, she said, “Pray the rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.”

Are we not in need of Our Lady’s aid and graces now more than ever, during this crucial battle of good versus evil in America? More than ever before, we must take a stand for the good, with the power of the Holy Rosary at our sides. After all, if we do not do it, who will? ■



Santa Clarita, California

Meanwhile, in Sunrise, Florida, Catholics wished to make reparation for vile sacrileges in an age where violence has been deemed acceptable and even, at times, encouraged. Specifically, the group came out to publicly pray the rosary in reparation for the desecration at Saint Bernard Church, where an attacker smashed statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady and Saint



# WANTED: FRIENDS OF THE CROSS

BY T. M. SALAMIDA

In the wake of nearly one full year of the “new normal,” America Needs Fatima launched an intense Lenten campaign—The Friends of the Cross.

Based almost entirely on that great work of Saint Louis de Montfort, *Letter to the Friends of the Cross*, this 2021 e-mail campaign was designed to call friends and supporters of ANF to embrace those crosses placed upon their shoulders by Divine Providence with the same tender affection with which Jesus Christ embraced the hard wood of the Cross.

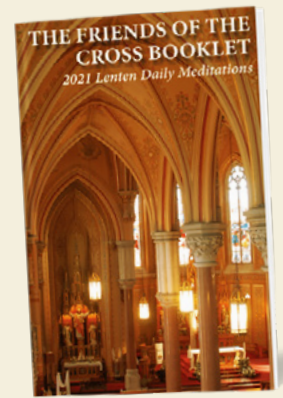
In the words of Saint Louis de Montfort:

“You are united together, Friends of the Cross, like so many crucified soldiers, to fight the world; not by fleeing . . . for fear of being defeated; but like valiant and brave warriors on the field of battle, without letting go of their feet and without turning their backs. Courage! Fight valiantly! Unite strongly with the union of minds and hearts.”

Towards this end, our writers and design staff diligently put together a powerful booklet of prayers, meditations and stories, a copy of which was mailed to 68,465 friends and supporters.

Using internet tech to spread the Gospel of Our Lord, this campaign was conducted through our e-mail outreach, resulting in 1,302,519 e-mails, inviting all to become true Friends of the Cross by practicing the disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving with renewed dedication during Lent of 2021. All those who rose to the challenge were invited to list their intentions to be offered during a special forty-day Novena of Masses said for them.

As always, ANF placed the Friends of the Cross campaign in the hands of Mary Our Beloved Mother. May she convert them to graces of immeasurable wealth with which to save us and our nation. ■



## The Glories of Mary, Multiplied!

America Needs Fatima is pleased to announce a record distribution of the classic Marian work titled *The Glories of Mary*.

Through the generous support received from friends and benefactors across the nation, ANF distributed a total of 240,000 copies of this book FREE to those souls who need Our Lady the most.

Written by the great Saint Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* is sure to ignite a greater love for Mother Mary in the hearts of all who read its inspired lines. There are no limits to the treasures of grace that result from establishing a tender devotion to Our Lady, as told in *The Glories of Mary*:

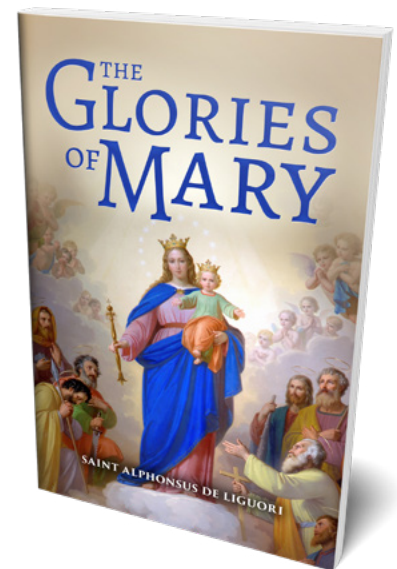
“When devotion to Mary begins in anyone, it produces the

same effect that Our Lady’s birth produces in the world: it ends the night of sin and leads a person along the bright path of virtue.

“You will find her hands filled with mercy and bounty. She longs to do you good much more than you could ever long to receive good from her.

“No sinner who turns to this compassionate Lady should ever be afraid of being spurned—she is the very Mother of Mercy and, because she is, it is her ambition to save the most miserable of all.”

With Our Lady’s help, may all hearts on fire with love for her multiply throughout America, preparing the way for the triumph of her Immaculate Heart, as she foretold at Fatima. ■



To order your copy of *The Glories of Mary*, please call 888-317-5571.

**B79 - \$8.00**



COMMENTARY

# MARIJUANA USE: the Basis for a Godless Culture

BY REX TEODOSIO

**M**any discuss the danger of marijuana, but few address how it can destroy Western Christian culture.

However, this harm is plausible, given the left's efforts to make the legalization of marijuana a vital part of its agenda. A decriminalization bill will soon be presented to the House of Representatives.<sup>1</sup> This past election, all the state referenda to legalize marijuana passed. Most states have legalized its medical and/or recreational use.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from growing legal acceptance, the left has succeeded in making the drug's recreational and occasional use very common. According to a poll in 2017, most Americans have tried marijuana, and of those, 44 percent continue to use it.<sup>3</sup> Over eleven million young adults have used marijuana in the past year. In 2019, 11.8 percent of eighth-graders, 28.8 percent of tenth-graders, and 35.7 percent of twelfth-graders reported marijuana use within the past year.<sup>4</sup>

Liberal news and entertainment media portray marijuana use favorably in movies, television shows, music and literature. Its availability and appearance of legality make it appear neither addictive nor harmful.

## Relaxation, Marijuana's Nirvana

The key to understanding marijuana use is its negative effect on the mind.

Marijuana has two active components: cannabidiol (CBD) and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the psychotropic element that causes relaxation and euphoria and results in the desired effect of a "high" or "buzz."

The state of relaxation caused by marijuana use is a particular type of relaxation fused with unusual characteristics. Users experience an altered perception of identity and time. Frequently, their eyes will lack focus, and their vision becomes hazy. The brain seems to shut down or disconnect. Users feel sedated and lack motivation. Their motor skills become impaired, and their reactions slow down. Many notice a loss of short-term memory. These are the "positive effects" of marijuana that weed users seek when getting high.

This "nirvana" turns marijuana use into a cultural experience that affects a person's perception of reality. In the context of the culture war, it helps explain why the left gives it such importance.

One effective way to fight drugs and other destructive substances is to help our society consider legitimate pleasures versus illegitimate ones. When Our Lord Jesus changed water into wine, He clearly endorsed the drink as legitimate in itself.

## A Manifesto Against Marijuana

If there is a manifesto against marijuana, it would be Josef Pieper's celebrated book, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. This German Catholic philosopher's book has been praised as one of the most important philosophical works of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

In his book, Pieper attacks the vice of acedia, which he sees as the opposite of leisure. Acedia is associated with sloth, restlessness, apathy and torpor. It is characterized as a negligence, carelessness and indifference to spiritual things.

Saint Thomas describes acedia as a state of "an oppressive sorrow, which, to wit, so weighs upon man's mind, that he wants to do nothing."<sup>6</sup> To escape the sorrows of reality, marijuana users sink into substance-induced acedia characterized by the flight from sorrow and the inactivity of soul, mind and body.

Pieper sees acedia as an idleness where the higher functions of the soul and the mind are inactive.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it makes leisure impossible since it contradicts the conditions needed for leisure to flourish.<sup>8</sup>

## The Excellence of Leisure

"Leisure," Pieper wrote, "is a mental and spiritual attitude." It is an Aristotelian notion linked to the medieval concept of the contemplative life.<sup>9</sup> In *Genesis*, Pieper pointed out that God ended each day by beholding his creation and declaring it to be good. On the seventh day, He beheld the entirety of His creation and judged it was "very good."

"In the same way," Pieper wrote, "man celebrates and gratefully accepts the reality of creation in leisure and the inner vision that accompanies it."<sup>10</sup> It is "a receptive attitude



of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion but also the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation.” For this reason, Saint Thomas Aquinas said that “It is necessary for the perfection of human society that there should be men who devote their lives to contemplation” (p. 22).

“There is a certain happiness in leisure,” Pieper continues, “that comes from the recognition of the mysteriousness of the universe and the recognition of our incapacity to understand it . . .” (p. 27). The soul and core of leisure is celebration, specifically divine worship. Even the ancients considered the act of worship (*cultus*) as the highest of all human activities. In the same way, Christendom considered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the highest expression of leisure, of intellectual and spiritual life.

In this sense, Pieper affirms that leisure is the foundation of Western and Christian culture. In this context, there are three ways marijuana use will lead to the destruction of Western and Christian culture and facilitate the formation of an anti-culture.

### **Marijuana Destroys the Image of God**

This induced idleness is an attack on human nature. Saint Thomas teaches that what distinguishes humanity from animals is the intellect’s capacity to reason.

The relaxation marijuana users experience is not conducive to reasoning. This mental inactivity obstructs all the mind’s operations from simple reflection to the highest contemplation so essential for leisure.

Recreational or one-time users should be wary. Willingly suspending that part of human nature made in the Creator’s image is a grave matter. To destroy this image, even if momentarily, instead of perfecting it, is an act of destruction of His image, akin to vandalizing a holy statue or desecrating a church altar. These things might eventually be repaired, but the acts should cause horror.

### **Marijuana Inhibits the Action of Grace**

The attack on Western and Christian culture does not stop on the natural plane. Because the intellect is impaired by marijuana use, it inhibits the action of grace and, therefore, the practice of virtue.

Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that man is made in the image of God in three ways. The first is by the intellect. The second is by the love and practice of virtue. The third is by glory.<sup>11</sup>

The state of leisure opens the soul to grace, which is rewarded with eternal glory. The more perfect a person’s nature is, the easier it is for grace to act. The inverse is true. It is more difficult for grace to act upon a corrupted or imperfect nature. Thus, it is more difficult for a person whose intellect and will have been addled by the use of marijuana to know and love God and cooperate with His grace.

### **Marijuana Promotes an Anti-culture**

Marijuana presents a third way of attacking culture.

In Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira’s book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, he warns of a Cultural Revolution of



the sixties. The author describes the effects of this Revolution as “the extinction of the old standards of individual reflection, volition, and sensibility.”<sup>12</sup> He foresees a growing “aversion to intellectual effort, notably to abstraction, theorization, and doctrinal thought . . .” It will be characterized by the “growing dislike for anything that is reasoned, structured, and systematized.” The culture favors “the atrophy of reason and the hypertrophy of the senses.”<sup>13</sup>

The use of marijuana favors this Cultural Revolution by its destructive effect upon reasoning and its rejection of true leisure. The resulting civilization will not be Western nor Christian. It will be a neo-pagan tribal society.

Thus, the danger of legalizing marijuana goes beyond the negative effects of THC that cause physical and psychological damage to its users. Marijuana also defaces God’s image in the soul, which has an impact on society and culture.

These reasons show why the left favors the legalization of marijuana. This drive has puzzled many people, even in conservative circles. It is past time to be fully aware of the physical, spiritual and cultural dangers marijuana poses to society. It is past time to mount a more forceful resistance. ■

A sign of the times and proof that marijuana use is seen as a viable alternative to facing reality by those who promote it.

#### **Notes:**

1. “Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act of 2019 or the MORE Act of 2019,” <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3884>.
2. Map of Marijuana Legality by State, <https://disa.com/map-of-marijuana-legality-by-state>.
3. Mary Emily O’Hara, NBC News, April 17, 2017, “New Poll Finds Majority of Americans Have Smoked Marijuana,” <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/new-poll-finds-majority-americans-have-smoked-pot-n747476>.
4. National Institute on Drug Abuse, “What is the Scope of Marijuana Use in the United States?” <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-scope-marijuana-use-in-united-states>.
5. Goodreads, <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/767958.Loisire>.
6. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Question 35, Article 1.
7. Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 23.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
11. *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 93, Art. 4.
12. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 158.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 160.



# VILLAGE POLITICIANS

BY THOMAS RYDER

**O**ur scene, a painting by German artist Wilhelm Leibl, depicts a group of village politicians in a rustic place, perhaps a bar. On first impression, one notices a man pouring over a newspaper, while four others listen and ponder what is being read.

The man to the far right is clearly intent on hearing every word, so as to share his opinion in the end. Meanwhile, hints of suspicion emanate from the man beside him, who leans upon a cane. His sturdy stature suggests his opinions are set in stone, yet he listens, silently daring the author to change his mind. The man in the middle is more cautious, and will give the topic the proper benefit of the doubt. The one who holds the newspaper appears to simply read to the best of his ability, wishing to hear what his colleagues have to say before forming an opinion of his own. By his head gear, he is perhaps a local farmer or baker. And finally, from his erect position, it is telling that the fifth man—by his apron, possibly a butcher or bartender—will definitely have an opinion by the end.

The painter has fully succeeded in capturing a scene from the past, but one which would frequently repeat itself in the Christian world where men were yet men of thought

and opinion, and life was all the better for it. The Aquinas principle of “see, judge and act” was part of everyday life.

Alas, a commonly observed scene of our modern times would instead portray a group of people, each immersed in his own individual smartphone screen. The “see, judge and act” principle does not really apply, because this process has been delegated to social media. Real communication between souls has been exchanged for a virtual “world,” devoid of meaningful conversation.

In Wilhelm Leibl’s painting, on the other hand, one may easily envision a lively hours-long conversation following the reading of the piece. Each unique personality would have engaged in the spirited discussion. Possibly, a heated debate would have ensued, with the moon reaching high in the black sky before these men returned home for their rest. In this way, every man thinks and reasons for himself and is not pressured to conform with a global network.

With politicians like these, dictatorship, mental manipulation and social experiments are impossible. When citizens stop thinking, analyzing and forming their own opinions, any aberration becomes possible. ■