

March/April 2009

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MAGAZINE



HOLY WEEK
in Seville

Father Thomas de Saint-Laurent



The Book of CONFIDENCE

To the guilty soul, crushed by the weight of sin, Jesus would say, "Confidence, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

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ady, who touched the hem of His garments in the firm belief that she would be cured. He said, "Confidence, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." When the Apostles saw Him one night walking on Lake Gennesareth they trembled with fear. He calmed them with these reassuring words, "Have confidence, it is I, fear ye not." And on the eve of His Passion, at the Last Supper, knowing the infinite fruits of His sacrifice, He comforted the Apostles with these words of triumph, "Have confidence, I have overcome the world."

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FORGOTTEN TRUTHS

Openness to the Will of God Is More Important than Good Health*

BY SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI

The Venerable Father Avila once wrote to a sick priest,

Friend, do not trouble yourself with the thought of what you might be doing if you were well, but be content to remain ill as long as God so wills. If what you seek is to do the will of God, what difference does it make if you are well or sick?

This is why Saint Francis de Sales said that God is better served in suffering than in good works.

There is a story of a sick man who was devoted to Saint Thomas of Canterbury and who went to the saint's tomb to obtain a cure. He returned home cured but then said to himself, "What use is it being well if my illness was of greater help in bringing about my salvation?" With this thought in mind, he returned to the saint's tomb and interceded with the saint to ask God to send him whatever would be

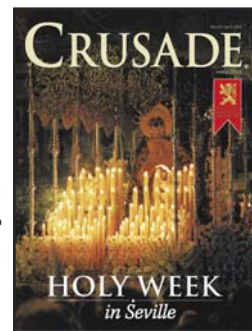
more effective in helping him toward his eternal salvation. Thereafter, he fell sick again and was totally at peace, confident that God was bringing about what was best for him.

Similarly, Surius tells us of a blind man who received his sight through the intercession of the saintly Bishop Bedasto. Afterward, the cured man prayed that he would become blind again if sight were not good for his soul. After his prayer he became blind again. Hence, when we are ill, the best thing to do is to seek neither sickness nor health, but to abandon ourselves to God's will so that He may do with us as He wills. ■

*St. Alfonso Maria de' Liguori, *Selected Writings* (Paulist Press, New York, 1999), 83-84.

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Lighted tapers make a float of *Our Lady of the Candles* glow during the Holy Week processions in Seville, Spain.

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CRUSADE

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The American TFP

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) was founded in 1973 to confront the profound crisis shaking the modern world. 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



Military Servicemen Worry About Obama

Military Times found that 60 percent of servicemen are pessimistic or uncertain about Barack Obama as their commander-in-chief. Obama's pledge to overturn the "don't ask, don't tell" policy ranked among the top three reasons for this concern. Fourteen percent of servicemen even said they will leave their military careers after serving their obligatory tours of duty if Obama allows homosexuals to join and openly serve in the military.



International Pro-Family Efforts

On December 28, 2008, six archbishops, twenty-two bishops, over three hundred priests and hundreds of thousands of lay people attended a rally in Madrid, Spain, to promote traditional family values. Spain's ruling Socialist party has angered its predominantly Catholic population by lifting abortion and divorce restrictions, and legalizing homosexual "marriages." The rally began with an appeal from Pope Benedict XVI for Spain to protect the family. The archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco Varela, celebrated Mass and added, "The future of humanity depends on the family, the Christian family."

Muslims Searching for the Truth

Italy's most prominent Muslim, Magdi Allam, has converted to Catholicism. His story echoes millions of similar conversions by Muslims to either Christianity or Catholicism throughout the world. According to Townhall.com and Aljazeera.net, 8,100,000 Muslims in Africa, France, Malaysia, Russia and Turkey become Christians annually.

Adult Stem-Cell Breakthrough

Claudia Castillo, a 30-year-old mother of two, has been saved by adult stem cells that helped reconstruct her trachea. This ethical and innovative procedure avoided the conventional procedure of removing her left lung. Moreover, Mrs. Castillo had the healthy trachea after *only four days* without the need for immunosuppressants, and walked out of the hospital in ten days—an amazing feat that could end the debate in favor of using adult stem cells instead of using

embryonic stem cells. Anthony Hollander, Arthritis Research Campaign Professor of Rheumatology and Tissue Engineering, and Martin Birchall, Professor of Surgery, reported, "this successful treatment manifestly demonstrates the potential of adult stem cells to save lives" and "we believe this success has proved that we are on the verge of a new age in surgical care."



The Moon Is Younger than Evolutionists Thought

The Institute for Creation Research found scientific evidence that the moon is too young for the presumed evolutionary age of 4.5 billion years. The moon's recession from Earth at the rate of over one inch per year could not have been happening for more than one billion years. Furthermore, if the moon were as old as evolution dictates, it would be thick with dust from meteoritic bombardment, and at the rate ultraviolet light and X-rays are breaking down the moon's surface, there should be over several miles of dust in places. However, our moon only has a thin layer of dust that is measurable in inches.

Americans Want Restrictions on Abortion

According to a Harris survey, forty-nine percent of Americans either want abortion completely illegal or at least restricted to cases where the mother is a rape or incest victim or in danger of death. The survey also found that a vast majority of Americans support all the abortion limits that have been enacted by Congress or state legislators, the new parental involvement laws, a ban on tax-funded abortions and all partial-birth abortions.



Traditional Family Values Needed

According to a U.K. *Telegraph* report, the lack of basic speech abilities in young children is more prevalent than dyslexia or autism. The report blames the decline of traditional family meal-times and the long workdays of both parents. As a result, children are increasingly interacting more with their television and video games instead of with their friends or parents, causing children, in extreme cases, to forget their names. ■



ONLY IN
AMERICA

True Valor Is Priceless

BY NORMAN J. FULKERSON

When Michael Monsoor jumped on a grenade to save the lives of three Navy SEALs in September 2006, the nation was left speechless. The Medal of Honor was presented to his grieving parents during a White House reception as a mournful audience looked on. There was a man in the room that day who might have seemed like just another soldier, if it were not for the peculiar spring in his step.

His name is Master Sergeant William “Spanky” Gibson. He had just flown in from overseas and had a very good reason for being present at the ceremony. He lost his left leg during a firefight in Iraq six months before, and Michael Monsoor, who provided cover from a rooftop overlook, contributed to saving his life. There could hardly be anyone more worthy of that sacrifice than William Gibson. Like Petty Officer Monsoor, he is a tribute to the American soldier and his story deserves to be told.

Idealistic Youth

William Gibson acquired the nickname “Spanky” in boot camp. Although it had nothing to do with his likeness to the round-faced kid in *The Little Rascals* series, he does radiate much of the innocent charm of that little boy.

By the time “Spanky” was five, his father, William Gibson Sr., said he knew exactly what he wanted to be in life.

“When I grow up,” he said, “I am going to be just like grandpa.”

His grandfather, Peterson Parrott, a 30-year Marine, visited

his impressionable grandson on a stopover while transferring from the east coast to the west coast. When Spanky saw his grandfather in uniform with all his decorations, he was fascinated. During his stay, Mr. Parrott kept his medals on a high shelf out of reach of the idealistic youth but made him a promise.

“When you grow tall enough to reach those medals,” Mr. Parrott said, “you can have them.”

By the time he grew tall enough, he

had already joined the Marines and was well on his way to earning his own medals for bravery.

“[A soldier is] all he ever wanted to be,” said his father.

Firefight in Ramadi

Shortly after joining the Marine Corps, Mr. Gibson earned the rank of Gunnery Sergeant. In May 2006, he was leading a four-man team through the streets of Ramadi, Iraq, on a foot patrol. They were searching for the notorious Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the most dangerous city on earth. Alongside him was an Iraqi soldier; a man Sgt. Gibson helped train.

Suddenly they came under fire from a sniper in a nearby house. The Iraqi soldier was shot in the knee and incapacitated. With total disregard for his own safety, Sgt. Gibson ran to his rescue when a .30-caliber round ripped through his left kneecap, destroying the joint and severing his femoral artery.

The identical nature of the injuries, coming from a trained enemy marksman, might have been an intentional plan to increase the confusion of an already violent firefight. If they thought Sgt. Gibson would just lie there screaming in pain, before being finished off later, they were sorely mistaken.

Master Sgt. William “Spanky” Gibson displays his prosthetic leg while saluting in front of the American flag on Camp Fallujah.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo



Left: Master Sgt. William Gibson learning to walk with his prosthetic leg with his wife Chaney behind him. **Above and right:** Dog-sledding and skiing shortly after his remarkably fast recovery.

“Gunny” Gibson, as his men often called him, never missed a beat. Thinking that his knee had only given out, he attempted to stand before realizing the severity of his injury. Not allowing this to deter him, he simply rolled over and began returning fire. If not for the immediate assistance given to him by a SEAL corpsman, he would have bled to death on the battlefield. As he was dragged from the scene he continued to lay down suppressive fire despite the pain and massive blood loss.

“When Can I Return to Iraq?”

Sgt. Gibson was eventually flown back to the United States, and waiting for him at the airport was Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee. Without a trace of self-pity, Sgt. Gibson asked the commandant, “What will this do to my career?”

The commandant assured him that it would affect his career only to the degree that he allowed it to. This was a veritable invitation for Sgt. Gibson to fight as hard toward full rehabilitation as he fought on the streets of Ramadi. The fight began when he was encouraged to get out of the Marine Corps. Undeterred by the suggestion, Sgt. Gibson called the commandant directly and found the support he needed to remain.

What Sgt. Gibson faced later is truly inspiring. The lower part of his left leg

had been amputated overseas before he arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. In spite of the seriousness of his injury, he mystified those around him with the inquiry, “When can I return to Iraq?” Those witnessing such determination were shocked, considering he might lose the rest of his leg. They were wondering how he would adjust to a life with a prosthetic while Sgt. Gibson was think-

Sgt. Gibson ended up losing the rest of his leg, but he never lost his will to fight.

ing about fighting a war with one.

“I would beg the surgeons every time they would come in,” he said with a smile, “to cut it off, close me up and get me out of here.”¹ He knew that “out of here” meant one step closer to his goal of returning to combat with or without the remaining part of his left leg.

The surgeons were unsuccessful. Sgt. Gibson ended up losing the rest of his leg, but he never lost his will to fight. “It isn’t growing back” he was quoted as saying, “so let’s start recovering.”²

As unbelievable as this might be, Sgt. Gibson’s attitude toward a long recovery was even more so.

“What is the shortest time of anyone recovering from such an injury,” his wife Chaney remembered him asking the doctors. He was told that the quickest anyone made it through rehabilitation was thirteen months, but some were as long as eighteen to twenty-four months.

“I am not doing that,” was Sgt. Gibson’s defiant response.

Escape From Alcatraz

He then began an astonishing rehabilitation program. Two months after his injury, he stopped taking all his medicine including that for pain, so as to be clear-headed and focused. Shortly after that, he began taking his first steps on a new prosthetic leg with the help of crutches. Three months later, he participated in the Marine Corps Marathon on a hand bicycle, and then it was on to skiing and later ice climbing.

It wasn’t long before he tackled something that even a man with two legs would hesitate attempting and that was the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon. This would turn out to be the break he needed to return to Iraq.

The Triathlon is a yearly event in which swimmers are dropped on Alcatraz. The first part of the Triathlon entails swimming to shore in freezing cold, shark-infested waters. Sgt. Gibson made the swim with only one leg and came in among the top ten.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo



Cpl. Sean P. McGinty

Above left: With daughter Lauren after receiving the Purple Heart at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Md. **Above middle:** Master Sgt. Gibson was the first full-leg amputee to return to duty in a combat zone. **Above right:** Mission accomplished, Master Sgt. Gibson awaits his home-bound aircraft.

When he reached the shore, he was greeted by First Marine Expeditionary Force Commanding General James Mattis.

“What can I do for you Marine?” Gen. Mattis asked the winded but determined soldier.

“I want to be redeployed,” said Sgt. Gibson.

“You can come with me in January,” Gen. Mattis said, “or a later flight, which would you prefer?”

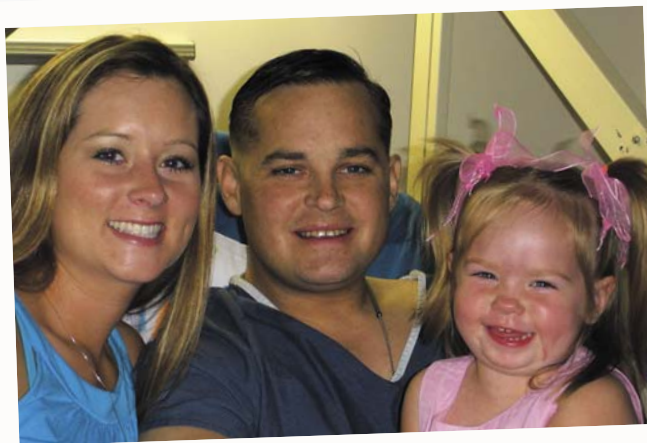
Sgt. Gibson chose the first flight out, and after making the trip in January 2008 with Gen. Mattis, he has become the first full-leg amputee ever to return to duty in a combat zone.

“I Have Just Done My Job”

Although what he has done is extraordinary, his mother says her son wouldn’t agree.

“He doesn’t feel like he has done anything special,” she says. When a writer approached the family with the idea of writing a book about Sgt. Gibson, his mother says his attitude remained the same. “Why would anyone want to read about me,” he argues, “I have just done my job.”

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Sgt. Gibson is his refusal to allow the amputation to depress him. This, no doubt, is a character trait he inherited



Courtesy Photo

Master Sgt. William Gibson with his wife Chaney and daughter Lauren at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Md.

from his father, a Vietnam War veteran who suffered a broken back in combat. When doctors told William Gibson Sr. that he would never walk again, he proved them wrong. “You never say can’t,” Mr. Gibson said. “It might be difficult, but you can do it.”

The only moment of sadness for Sgt. Gibson came with the thought of having to leave the battlefield after his injury.

Mrs. Gibson described her husband as someone who leads by example. “He would never put one of his Marines out there alone to get hurt,” she said. “He felt like he had to protect them.”

At the time he was wounded, Sgt. Gibson was a veteran 35-year-old Marine,

fighting alongside much younger Marines who were seeing their first action. He believed strongly in leading his men in battle, not pushing them from behind. It was for this reason that he was disappointed at having to leave “his boys” alone in battle while he was evacuated.

He would go on to say that if given the chance to change anything that happened that day, he wouldn’t. “Better me,”

he said, “than one of my men.”

* * *

Master Sgt. William “Spanky” Gibson is safely back home now, and while his return to battle might have earned him a place in the history books, his example has earned him a place in the heart of every patriotic American. He represents all the best our country has to offer, and it is nice to know that the sniper bullet that cost him a leg didn’t touch his honor. Bullets after all can be purchased, but true valor is priceless. ■

Notes:

1. Soldiers’ Angels Germany, <http://soldiersangelsgermany.blogspot.com/2008/04/mike-monsoor-and-spanky-gibson.html>.

2. Jennifer Griffin and Catherine Donaldson-Evans, “Iraq War Marine With Amputated Leg Back on Active Duty,” Feb. 29, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,333534,00.html>.



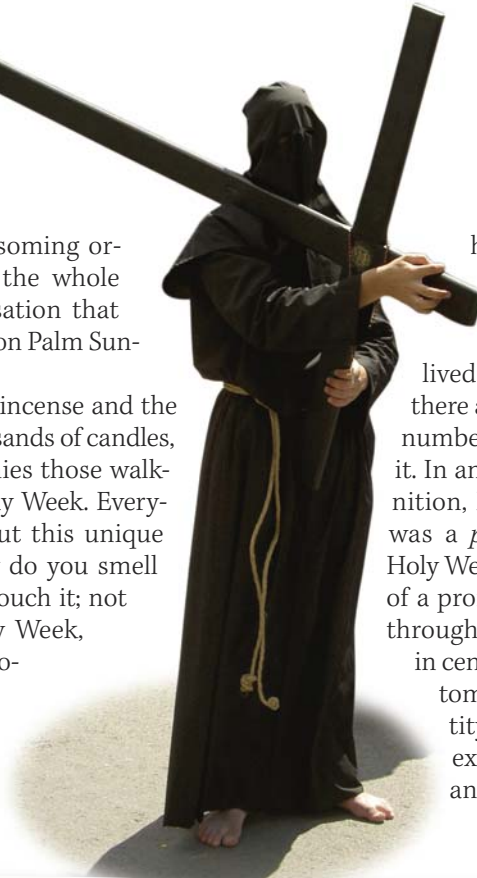
COVER
STORY

Holy Week in

BY BENOIT BEMELMANS

The sweet aroma of blossoming orange trees permeating the whole town was the first sensation that struck me as I arrived in Seville on Palm Sunday for Holy Week of 2008.

Mingling with the clouds of incense and the smell of burning wax from thousands of candles, this citrus fragrance accompanies those walking with the processions of Holy Week. Everyone in Spain will tell you about this unique olfactory experience. Not only do you smell Holy Week in Seville, but you touch it; not only do you contemplate Holy Week, but you also pray, cry and sing. Poetry is in the blossoming inner courtyards, in the iron grills and in the chapels exposing the insignia of the brother-



hoods and the richly adorned procession floats.

They say Holy Week is celebrated outwardly but lived inwardly in the soul, and that there are as many Holy Weeks as the number of people who participate in it. In an attempt at a theoretical definition, Eduardo del Rey Tirado, who was a *pregonero*¹ in 1999, said that Holy Week in Seville, “is the expression of a profound religiosity, transmitted through generations, and manifested in centuries-old customs. These customs are rooted in the very identity of the people of Andalucia expressed through artistic forms and devotion.”

Above: One of many penitents walking through the streets of Seville on Good Friday. **Right:** The float of the Most Holy Christ of Sed (The Thirsty Christ), sculpted by Luis Alvarez Duarte (1970) advances in the avenue amid the crowd.



All photos in this article courtesy of Benoit Bemelmans.

Seville

The penitents dressed in sharp pointed hoods, and escorting the floats are called the “Nazarenes.”

The role of the Nazarene is to participate in the Passion of Jesus Christ as another Christ.



A Unique Form of Sacralizing Temporal Life

In Spain, the Holy Week processions are meant as a public act of faith in opposition to the errors of Protestantism. Since the 16th century, the brotherhoods took over the streets, carrying statues and doing penance to proclaim their Catholic Faith and to give everyone a palpable lesson on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the sorrow of Our Blessed Mother as Co-Redemptrix. They believed that such acts were more eloquent and effective than a thousand sermons.

The penitents dressed in sharp pointed hoods, and escorting the floats are called the “Nazarenes.” The role of the Nazarene is to participate in the Passion of Jesus Christ as another Christ.

The brotherhoods and guilds not only take care of the statues and organize the processions, but also

live an authentic spirituality, as well as sustain and develop popular religiosity and important works of charity. They also play a cultural role by maintaining their archives, which they defend with equal zeal as true objects of art. They hold lectures about their spirituality, organize symposia about faith and culture, and have meetings emphasizing a taste for beauty as a unique form of sacralizing life in the temporal sphere.

Virgin of the Angels, sculpted by an unknown artist between the 13th and 14th centuries, carried by the Brotherhood of Los Negritos.

The City Goes on Procession

Walking on the streets, you cross Nazarenes and penitents going to church to join their processions. Some are fully dressed in black, with a penitential rope tied over the tunic; others are in white with hoods of different colors. Many are barefoot or wearing sandals. Since more than 50 brotherhoods go on procession

Women wearing the traditional mantilla and dressed in mourning, make devotional visits to the statues accompanied by their husbands. The number of women who dress traditionally during Holy Week is growing remarkably.





Above: Float of Our Lord of Sorrows and the Cyrenean.
Right: The Christ of Foundation, by Andrés Ocampo in 1622, carried by the Brotherhood of Los Negritos.
Below: A penitent walks the streets of Seville.



during Holy Week, the movement is constant.

The public and martial bands gather in front of the church from which the procession will depart. The door opens and the Guiding Cross comes out, "leading an impressive cortege of austerity and faith." Behind, among the first groups of Nazarenos, come the *senatus*, a sign with the initials "SPQR," recalling the power of Rome under which Our Lord died. Then come several hundred Nazarenos with various floats, each with its own leader. In between floats some Nazarenos carry their book of rules solemnly accompanied by an honor guard bearing flags and signs such as, *In Cruce est vita, Salus et Resurrectio nostra* ("In the Cross is our life, Salvation and Resurrection"). They also carry the standard of the brotherhood.

The heavy and richly adorned float of Christ moves ahead, carried by about forty *costaleros*.² The *costaleros*, hidden by a row of curtains around the lower part of the float, each shoulders 120-132 pounds. In the past, this work was done by paid stevedores, but since the end of the 1970s, members of the brotherhoods decided to take this practice upon themselves at no charge.

In front of the float, the leader, dressed in black, directs the procession with brief and quick commands while the *costaleros* behind the curtains blindly carry

the float. A second team of *costaleros* follows closely by, already wearing the *costal* and dressed in blue jackets with the brotherhood's shield of arms, ready to replace the other *costaleros*.

The band strikes impressive chords while the clarions cut through the silence as the float advances among the throng, slowly turning into the street and then picking up speed and moving forward to thundering applause.

Honoring the Virgin Co-Redemptrix

Now a very particular standard emerges, the *Simpecado* ("Without sin"), which bears the inscription *Sine Labe Concepta* ("Conceived Without Sin"). This banner marks a vow, which the brotherhoods made many centuries before the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was even proclaimed, and announces that the float of the Virgin is coming out.

In addition to the beautiful statues accompanying the float of Jesus Christ, devotion to the Virgin Co-Redemptrix generated this real marvel that is the strikingly harmonious procession of the Palio. At the same time it is an altar, a throne, a "song of filigrane, light and flowers" and a "cradle to soothe one's sorrow," since with the beauty of the Palio procession, Sevillians want to console the Blessed Mother and accompany her through all the moments of the Passion.

Touching the train of her long royal mantle, a small group of anonymous devotees fulfill

The float of the Virgin of Grace and Hope.



promises by walking at her side throughout the entire procession.

Rich cloths hang from the balconies of the houses, and everyone is dressed in their best. Children throw petals to the float and to the Virgin. Suddenly, a solitary song pierces the air like the anguished cry from a suffering heart. It's the *Saeta*. As the floats pass, an onlooker, sometimes from a balcony, sometimes from the sidewalk, breaks forth into song joining his or her pain to that of Jesus or His Holy Mother. The Spaniards say that the first *Saeta* was a sigh of the Mother of Jesus at the foot of the Cross.

Holy Week in Seville is a riveting, soul searching, unforgettable spiritual experience. ■

Note:

1. The *pregón* is the solemn announcement of the imminent arrival of Holy Week. It is held the Sunday preceding Palm Sunday at *Teatro de la Maestranza* in the presence of all the city's authorities and personalities. It is an event of great literary richness, surrounded with solemnity and etiquette.

2. Name derived from *costal*, a rolled-up cloth that helps protect the back of the person's neck and shoulders from the weight.

FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE . . .

In the early hours of the morning of Holy Friday, a night when no one in Seville goes to sleep, the streets are so crowded that at times you cannot even walk. Accompanying Our Lord, Who is under arrest and Whose Passion has begun, the brotherhoods come out in procession with their statues. This night alone, more than 10,000 Nazarenes and penitents parade. The public attending these processions numbers in the hundreds of thousands.

But is everything edifying and pious? Would it be possible for a great modern city of today, with all its youths on the streets, to think only about prayer and devotion? Not really. Nor is it possible to avoid some grotesque scenes. Yet, when confronted with one, I was also touched by the sublime.

Squeezed against the front door of a house I had just passed by, amid the reverent multitude, was the statue of *Christ of the Great Power*, with His tunic moving rhythmically with His painful and hesitating steps. On the bridge upon the Guadalquivir River, with a sharp cold wind rising from the river and the long and sharp-pointed hoods outlining the night of Seville illuminated with a full moon, I had also followed the float of *The Lord of the Three Falls*, when the float of *The Virgin of Hope of Triana* was still far away. At that point I had crossed a group of people who were drunk. Then, at the entrance to the bridge, I passed three teenagers who, feeling uninhibited within the crowd, were taking illicit drugs. Later on, under the arches along Encarnación

Square, even as the Brotherhood of the Gypsies passed in procession, bars were teeming with people singing profane songs, couples embracing and a drunkard sitting on the ground throwing up.

As I felt pain in my feet and feeling tired after so many hours walking and waiting, a doubt suddenly came to me: Was the custom of holding processions worth it? Would it not be better for all those people to be at home sleeping? Was the price to be paid for some to do such pious exercises not too high, as so many others only thought about having fun, and did not know how to have fun without sinning? And what was I doing in that street just before five in the morning?

At that point, slowly turning the corner, *The Christ of the Gypsies* appeared. There was complete silence. Everyone looked at Him. The drunkard stood up unsteadily. Drums and clarions exploded into a funeral march that made the air vibrate. With the peculiar gait, the procession slowly advanced toward the multitude.

There came Jesus, with His immense Cross, His immense Sorrow, His immense Love.

Today once again, God made Man passed amid all of us poor sinners thronging in the street, suffering His Passion to save us. He was already moving away when a thunderous applause erupted.

Then I could no longer see anything. I was sobbing . . .



RELIGION

The Way of the Cross

BY PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA

Opening Prayer

O Sorrowful Mother, in these times wherein the immense majority of men flee from the sacrifice inherent to the perfect fulfillment of all the commandments and counsels of thy Divine Son, obtain for all those who meditate on this Way of the Cross the necessary strength for each to carry his cross to the heights of Calvary.



FIRST STATION *Jesus is Condemned to Death*

- V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
- R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

The judge who committed the most monstrous professional crime in all history was not impelled to do so by the excitement of any burning passion. Nor was he blinded by ideological hatred, by craving for new riches or by the desire to please some great potentate. He was moved to condemn the Just One by fear—fear of losing his position for apparent lack of zeal for the prerogatives of Caesar; fear of causing himself political complications by having displeased the Jewish mob; and the instinctive fear of saying “no,” of doing the opposite of what has been asked of one, of facing the crowd with attitudes and opinions different from those that prevail there.

For a long time, O Lord, Thou didst fix him with that look which in one instant worked the salvation of Peter. It was a look through which one could see Thy supreme moral perfection, Thine infinite innocence. But he condemned Thee anyway.

O Lord, how many times have I imitated Pilate! How many times, out of am-

bition for personal advancement, have I permitted orthodoxy to be persecuted in my presence without saying a word. How many times have I stood by with my arms crossed at the fight and martyrdom of those who defend the Church! I did not have the courage to give them even a word of support because of an abominable slothfulness to face those who surrounded me, to say “no” to those around me, for fear of being “different from the others.” As if Thou hadst created me, Lord, not to imitate Thee, but to slavishly imitate my companions.

In that painful moment of condemnation, Thou didst suffer for all cowards, for all weaklings, for all the lukewarm . . . for me, Lord.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy. By the fortitude Thou didst show me in braving unpopularity and facing the sentence of the Roman magistrate, cure the weakness of my soul.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



SECOND STATION *Jesus Carries the Cross*

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Thus began, my adorable Lord, Thy walk to the place of immolation. It was not the wish of the Heavenly Father that Thou shouldst die by one fulminating

blow. In Thy Passion, Thou hadst to teach us not only to die, but to face death. Facing it with serenity, with neither hesitation nor weakness, walking toward it, even with the resolute pace of a warrior advancing to combat—behold the admirable lesson Thou givest me.

In the face of pain, my God, how great is my cowardice. Sometimes I hesitate before taking up my cross; sometimes I shrink back, neglecting an obligation. Finally I accept it, but so irksomely, so halfheartedly, that I seem to hate the burden that Thy will has placed on my shoulders.

How often, on other occasions, do I close my eyes in order not to see the pain. I voluntarily blind myself with stupid optimism because I have not the courage to face the trial. And so I lie to myself: It is not true that the renunciation of a certain pleasure is an obligation for me in order not to fall into sin; it is not true that I must overcome a certain habit that favors my most deep-rooted passions; it is not true that I must abandon a certain group, a friendship that undermines and ruins my whole spiritual life. No, none of this is not true at all . . . I close my eyes, and I cast aside my cross.

My Jesus, pardon me so much sloth. By the wound that the Cross opened in Thy shoulder, cure, O Father of Mercies, the horrible wound I have opened in my soul through entire years lived in interior dissipation and self-indulgence!

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



THIRD STATION
Jesus Falls the First Time

- V.** We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

What then, Lord? Was it not justifiable for Thee to abandon Thy cross? By carrying it until all Thy strength was exhausted, until the insupportable weight of the wood hurled Thee to the ground, hadst Thou not clearly proved that it was impossible for Thee to continue? Thine obligation was fulfilled. Let the angels of heaven carry Thy cross for Thee now. Thou hast suffered in full measure all that was possible. What more wouldst Thou have to give?

Nevertheless, by acting in another way, Thou didst give my cowardice a sublime lesson. With Thy strength exhausted, Thou didst not renounce the burden but askest for yet more strength to carry the Cross once again. And Thou didst obtain it.

The life of a Christian is difficult today. To be obligated to struggle unremittingly against oneself in order to keep the Commandments seems to be an extravagant exception in a world that flaunts the joy of life in licentiousness and opulence. Heavy on our shoulders weighs the cross of fidelity to Thy Law, O Lord. At times, we seem to be out of breath.

In these moments of trial, we rationalize. We have already done all that we can. After all, a man's strength is so limited! God will take this into account. Come, let us drop the cross here by the roadside and sink cozily into a life of pleasure. Ah, many are the crosses abandoned alongside our ways, perhaps along my tracks!

Grant me, Jesus, the grace to continue to embrace my cross, even when I collapse under its weight. Grant me the grace to rise up again whenever I grow faint. Grant me, Lord, the supreme grace of never departing from the way by which I must reach the height of my own Calvary.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

- V.** Have mercy on us, Lord.
R. Have mercy on us.
V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God,

rest in peace.

R. Amen.



FOURTH STATION
Jesus Meets His Mother

- V.** We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Who, my Lady, seeing thee shed such tears would dare to ask thee why thou weepst? Neither the Earth, nor the sea, nor all the heavens can serve as a term of comparison to thy sorrow. Grant me, my Mother, at least a little of that sorrow. Grant me the grace to weep for Jesus with tears of sincere and profound compunction. Thou didst suffer in union with Jesus. Grant me the grace to suffer as He and thou didst suffer.

Thy greatest sorrow arose not from contemplating the inexpressible bodily sufferings of thy Divine Son. What are bodily evils in comparison with those of the spirit? If Jesus had suffered all of those torments while having at His side compassionate hearts! If His Sacred Heart had not been wounded enormously more by the most senseless, unjust, and blatant hatred than by the weight of the Cross and the brutalities that wounded His Body! Rather, He was assailed by the tumultuous manifestations of hatred and ingratitude of those whom He had loved: Two steps away was a leper whom He had healed; a little farther, a blind man whom He had restored sight; farther along, a tormented soul whom He had restored peace. All of them called for His death; all of them hated Him; all of them insulted Him. These caused Jesus immensely more suffering than did the inexpressible pains that weighed upon His Body.

Yet, there was worse. There was the worst of evils. There was sin: avowed sin, obtrusive sin, atrocious sin. If all those acts of ingratitude had been committed against the best of men but by some absurdity had not offended God . . . but they were committed against the God made man, and thus they constituted a supreme sin against all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This was the greatest evil of the injustice and the ingratitude.

This evil lies not so much in the offense against the rights of a benefactor but in the offense against God. Amidst so many and such great causes of sorrow, what caused Thee the most suffering, my Divine Redeemer, and thee, Blessed Mother, was certainly sin.

And I? Am I mindful of my sins? Do I remember, for example, my first sin, or my most recent sin? What of the hour when I committed it, of the place, of the persons who surrounded me, the motives which led me to sin? If I had thought of the magnitude of the offense that a sin causes Thee, would I have dared to disobey Thee, my Lord?

O my Mother, by the sorrow of that holy meeting, obtain for me the grace to have always before my eyes Jesus suffering and wounded, exactly as thou seest Him in this step of the Passion.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

- V.** Have mercy on us, Lord.
R. Have mercy on us.
V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
R. Amen.



FIFTH STATION
Jesus is Helped by the Cyrenean to Carry the Cross

- V.** We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Who was Simon? What is known of him, except that he was of Cyrene? And what do most men know of Cyrene other than it was the land of Simon? Both the city and the man emerged from obscurity and entered into glory, the most exalted glory, sacred glory, at a moment when the thoughts of the Cyrenean were far from all this.

He was walking carelessly along the road. He was thinking only about those petty problems and petty interests that make up the trivial lives of the majority of men. But Thou, Lord, didst cross his path with Thy wounds, Thy Cross, Thy immense sorrow. Simon had to take a position in regard to Thee. The soldiers forced him to carry the Cross with Thee. He could carry it with bad humor, indifferent to Thee, trying to please the peo-

ple by means of some new way of increasing the torments Thou didst suffer in soul and body; or he could carry it with love, with compassion, scorning the mob, trying to relieve Thy suffering, taking some of it on himself so that Thou wouldst suffer a little less. The Cyrenean preferred to suffer with Thee. For this reason his name has been repeated with love, with gratitude, with holy envy, for two thousand years, by all men of faith, all over the face of the earth, and so it will continue until the end of time.

Thou hast passed also along my path, my Jesus. Thou didst pass when Thou called me out of the darkness of paganism and into the bosom of Thy Church through Holy Baptism, Thou didst pass also when my parents taught me to pray. Thou didst pass again when in the Catechism class I began to open my soul to the true doctrine, Catholic and orthodox. Thou didst pass in my first Confession, in my First Communion, in all of the moments when I vacillated and Thou didst help me, in all of the moments when I fell and Thou didst pick me up, in all the moments when I asked and Thou didst hear me.

And I, Lord? Even now Thou passest by me in this exercise of the Way of the Cross. And what do I do when Thou passest by me?

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

One would say at first glance that never was there a greater reward in all of history. Indeed, what king ever held in his hands a cloth more precious than that veil? What general, a more august banner? What gesture of courage and dedication was rewarded with a more extraordinary favor?

But there is a grace that is more valuable than having the Holy Face of the Savior stamped on a veil. The representation of the Divine Face was made on the veil as in a painting. In the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, His Face is reflected as in a mirror.

In her institutions, in her doctrine, in her laws, in her unity, in her universality, in her unsurpassable catholicity, the Church is a true mirror in which our Divine Savior is reflected.

And we, all of us, have the grace of belonging to the Church, of being living stones of the Church! How we ought to give thanks for this favor! Let us not forget, however, that noblesse oblige. Belonging to the Church is a very great and very demanding thing. We must think as the Church thinks, have the mind of the Church, proceed as the Church wishes in all the circumstances of our lives. This supposes a real Catholic sense, an authentic and complete purity of customs, and a profound and sincere piety. In other words it supposes the sacrifice of an entire lifetime.

And what is the reward? *Christianus alter Christus*. I will be in an eminent way a reproduction of Christ Himself. The likeness of Christ, vivid and sacred, will be imprinted on my own soul.

Ah, Lord, if the grace granted to Veronica is great, how much greater is the favor that Thou dost promise me!

I ask of Thee strength and resoluteness so that I may obtain this favor by being faithful in every trial.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Second Time

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

To fall, to be stretched out flat on the ground, to be at the feet of all in order to publicly manifest that now Thou hast no

more strength; to these humiliations Thou didst choose to subject Thyself, Lord, as a lesson for me. No one felt sorrow for Thee. Rather, they redoubled their insults and abuses. All the while, Thy grace sought in vain in the interior of those hardened hearts for a movement of pity.

Even at that moment, Thou didst desire to continue Thy Passion for the salvation of men. What men? All men, including those who were doing everything possible to increase Thy suffering.

And so, Lord, I must continue my apostolate, even when all my works have tumbled to the ground, even when all have joined together to attack me, even when the ingratitude and perversity of those to whom I have wished to do good have turned against me.

I will not be so weak as to change my path to please them. My ways can be only Thy ways, the ways of orthodoxy, of purity, of austerity. Following Thy ways I shall suffer for them. With my imperfect sorrows united to Thy perfect sorrow, Thine infinitely precious sorrow, I shall continue to do good for them so that they may save themselves, or so that the rejected graces may accumulate over them like burning coals clamoring for punishment. Thus Thou didst with the nation that committed the deicide and so also wilt Thou do with those who will reject Thee until the end of time.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Consoles the Daughters of Jerusalem

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

There were at that time good souls, who, realizing the enormity of the sin being committed, feared the divine justice.

Am I not witness to a certain sin like that? Is it not true that today Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Church are dis-

obeyed, abandoned, betrayed? Is it not true that the laws, institutions, morals, and ways of the people are more and more hostile to Jesus Christ? Is it not true that Our Lady spoke at Fatima, pointing out all of these sins and asking for penance?

But where is that penance? How many are there who really see these sins and who try to point them out, denounce them, fight them, dispute every inch of their progress, raise up against them a whole crusade of ideas, of acts, of force if it be necessary? And how many are capable of unfurling the standard of absolute and flawless orthodoxy in the very places where impiety or false piety struts? How many are they who live in union with the Church during this moment that is tragic as the Passion was tragic, this crucial moment of history when all mankind is choosing to be for Christ or against Christ?

Oh, my God, how many myopic ones there are who prefer neither to see nor to foresee the reality that lies plainly before their eyes! How much false peacefulness, how much trifling well-being, how many petty routine pleasures! How many tasty dishes of pottage to be eaten!

Grant us, Jesus, the grace not to be of that number. Grant us the grace to follow Thy counsel, that is, to weep for ourselves and for our own. Give us not just a few sterile tears, but grant us a flood of tears, which, poured out at Thy feet and made fertile by Thee, may become for us forgiveness, strength for the apostolate, for the fight and for acts of intrepidity.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Thou art now, my Lord, more tired, more drained, more wounded, more

bloodless than ever. What awaits Thee? Hast Thou reached the end? No. Precisely the worst is yet to come. The most atrocious crime is still to be perpetrated. The worst sorrows still must be suffered. Thou art on the ground a third time but, nonetheless, all that is behind Thee is no more than a preface. And, behold, Thou once again movest that Body that is but one wound. The seemingly impossible is being achieved, once more Thou slowly riseth to Thy feet, even though every movement increases Thy pain. There Thou art, Lord, standing once again . . . with Thy Cross. Thou didst know how to find new strength, new energy, and Thou didst continue. Three falls, three equal lessons in perseverance, each more poignant and more expressive than the last.

Why so much insistence? Because our cowardice is insistent. We resolve to take up our crosses, but cowardice always comes charging back. So that cowardice might find no pretext in our weakness, Thou didst desire to repeat the lesson three times Thyself.

Yes, it is true: our weakness cannot serve us as a pretext. Grace, which God never refuses, can do that which mere natural strength would never be able to do.

God wishes to be served to the last breath, to the exhaustion of the last drop of strength, and He multiplies our capacities for suffering and doing so that our dedication may reach the extreme limit of the unforeseeable, the improbable, the miraculous. "The measure of the love of God is to love Him without measure," said Saint Francis de Sales. The measure of fighting for God consists in fighting without measure, it may be said.

But, I, how quickly I tire! In my works of apostolate the least sacrifice holds me back, the least effort terrifies me, the slightest combat puts me to flight. I like the apostolate, it is true. The apostolate I like is one entirely in accordance with my likings and fancies, to which I give myself when I wish, as I wish, and because I wish. After that I consider I have done a great almsdeed for God.

But God is not satisfied with this. For the Church He wants my whole life, He wants organization, He wants sagacity, He wants intrepidity, He wants the in-

nocence of the dove and the cunning of the serpent, the sweetness of the sheep and the irresistible and overwhelming wrath of the lion. If it be necessary to sacrifice my career, friendship, family ties, petty vanities and inveterate habits, to serve Our Lord, I must do so. For this step of the Passion teaches me that we must give everything to God, absolutely everything, and after having given everything we ought to give our very lives as well.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Everything, yes absolutely everything. We must suffer even shame for the love of God and for the Salvation of souls.

The proof of this: He who is Purity par excellence was stripped, and the impure mocked Him in His purity. Our Lord endured these jests of impurity.

Does it not appear insignificant for Him—having already endured so many torments—to endure these jests as well? But this lesson, like the others, was necessary for us. Because of the scorn of a maidservant, Saint Peter denied Our Lord. How many men have forsaken Our Lord for fear of ridicule! If men go to war and face gunfire and death to avoid being mocked as cowards, is it not perfectly true that certain men fear laughter more than anything?

The Divine Master faced ridicule. He taught us that nothing is ridiculous when it is in the line of virtue and goodness.

Teach me, Lord, to reflect in myself the majesty of Thy countenance and the strength of Thy perseverance when the wicked wish to use the arm of ridicule against me.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

Thou hast passed also along my path, my Jesus. Thou didst pass when Thou called me out of the darkness of paganism and into the bosom of Thy Church through Holy Baptism, Thou didst pass also when my parents taught me to pray.

- V. Have mercy on us, Lord.
- R. Have mercy on us.
- V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
- R. Amen.



ELEVENTH STATION
Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

- V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
- R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

For Thee, my Lord, impiety chose the worst of final torments. The worst, yes, because it is that which causes one to die slowly, that which produces the greatest sufferings, and that which, being reserved for the most abject criminals, was the most infamous. Everything was prepared by hell to make Thee suffer in body and soul. Does this immense hatred not have some lesson for me? Woe betide me—who never will understand it sufficiently—if I do not become holy.

Between Thee and the devil, between good and evil, between truth and error, there is a profound, irreconcilable, eternal hatred. Darkness hates the light, the children of darkness hate the children of light; the fight between the two sides will endure until the consummation of the ages, and there will never be peace between the race of the Woman and the race of the Serpent.

In order to understand the immeasurable extension and immensity of this hatred, it is necessary to contemplate all that it dared to do. There is the Son of God, transformed, in the words of Scripture, into a leper in whom nothing is sound; a being who writhes like a worm under the effect of the pain; detested, abandoned, nailed to a cross between two common thieves. The Son of God: what grandeur—infinite, unimaginable, absolute—is contained in those words! Behold, in spite of all, what hatred has dared to do against the Son of God!

The whole history of the world, the whole history of the Church is nothing but this inexorable struggle between those who are of God and those who are of the devil, between those who are of the Virgin and those who are of the Serpent. It is a struggle in which there are not merely mistakes of the intellect nor only weakness in the angelic and human hosts that follow Satan, but also malice—deliberate, culpable, sinful malice.

Behold that which needs to be said, commented on, remembered, emphasized, proclaimed, and once more remembered at the foot of the Cross. For we are such, and liberalism has disfigured us to such a point that we are always inclined to forget this truth absolutely inseparable from the contemplation of the Passion.

Well did the Virgin of Virgins, the Mother of Sorrows, know this, she who participated in the Passion along with her Son. Well did the Virgin Apostle know this, he who at the foot of the Cross received Mary as his Mother, thus receiving the greatest legacy ever given a man to receive because there are certain truths which God has reserved for the pure and which He denies to the impure.

My Mother, in the moment in which even the good thief merited forgiveness, I ask that Jesus forgive me for all the blindness with which I have considered all the works of darkness being plotted around me.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

- V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

- R. Have mercy on us.
- V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
- R. Amen.



TWELFTH STATION
Jesus Dies on the Cross

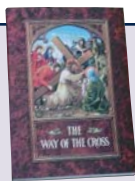
- V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
- R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Finally the apex of all pains is reached. It is a summit so high that it is lost in the clouds of mystery. The physical pains having reached their limits, the moral sufferings having attained their zenith, a mysterious torment must be the climax of such an inexpressible pain, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” In a certain mysterious way, the Word Incarnate Himself was afflicted by that spiritual torture of abandonment in which the soul receives no consolations from God. Such was this torment that He of Whom the Evangelists record not a single word of pain uttered that piercing cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

Yes, why? Why did this happen if He was Innocence itself? This terrible abandonment was followed by death and the perturbation of all of nature. The sun was darkened. The sky lost its splendor. The earth quaked. The veil of the temple was rent in two. Desolation covered the whole universe.

Why? To redeem man. To destroy sin. To open the gates of heaven. The height of suffering was the height of victory. Death was put to death. The purified earth was like a great field that had been cleared so that the Church might be built on it.

All of this, then, was to save, to save men, to save this man who I am. My salvation was purchased at such a price. I will spare myself no sacrifice to secure that precious salvation. By the Water and the Blood that came forth from Thy Divine Side, by the Wound of Thy Heart, by



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the sorrows of Mary Most Holy, grant me O Jesus, the strength to detach myself from the persons and things that can separate me from Thee. Today they die, nailed to the Cross, all the friendships, all the affections, all the ambitions, all the delights that have separated me from Thee.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

The repose of the sepulcher awaits Thee, Lord. In the shadows of death, Thou dost open heaven to the just in limbo, while on earth around Thy Mother, a few faithful ones gather to give Thee funeral honors. In the silence of those moments, there is the first glimmer of an aborning hope. Those first acts of homage being offered to Thee mark the inauguration of a series of acts of love by redeemed mankind that will continue until the end of time.

It is a scene of sorrow and desolation, yet of great peace as well. It is a scene wherein something of the triumph is presaged in the ineffable cares with which Thy Divine Body is treated.

Yes, those pious souls condole with one another, but there is something about them that makes one foresee in Thee the glorious Victor.

May I also, Lord, in the great desolations of the Church, be always faithful; may I be present in the saddest hours, unshakably preserving the certainty that Thy Spouse will triumph by the fidelity of the good because Thy protection assists Her.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.



FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Sepulcher

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

The stone is rolled into place. Everything seems to have ended. But, it is the moment when everything begins. It is the regrouping of the Apostles. It is the rebirth of dedication, of hope. Easter draws near.

At the same time, the hatred of Thine enemies surrounds the sepulcher, Mary Most Holy and the Apostles. But they do not fear. In a little while the dawn of the Resurrection will break.

Let me not fear either, Lord Jesus, not fear when everything seems irremediably lost, not fear when all the power on earth appears to be in the hands of Thine enemies. Let me not fear because I am at the feet of Our Lady where the true followers of Thy Church always regroup, for new victories.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

V. Have mercy on us, Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen. ■



About the Author . . .

Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

Born in 1908, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was the founder of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, and the inspirer of twenty-five other sister organizations around the world.

A brilliant scholar, writer, university professor and lawyer, Professor Corrêa de Oliveira was above all a great Catholic leader whose only ambition was to defend Christian civilization against its systematic destruction. He dedicated his life to the service of the Church in the temporal sphere, fighting particularly against the errors of Communism, socialism and the resulting Cultural Revolution.

He felt a special calling to work for the sanctification of families and temporal society, and had a special ability to spot the subliminal evil influences of today's culture. By the time of his death in 1995, he had produced a wealth of written meditations, articles and books, thereby sharing with us his unique gift and insight.



COMMENTARY

Blazing Trails with Class

BY FRANCIS J. SLOBODNIK

There is a common perception, owing to Hollywood films, that the early settlers of the western half of the United States were predominantly coarse and crude-mannered people. Certainly, those elements existed, but that is only a part of reality.

A Steamboat Tells a Story

In Kansas City, Missouri, there is a museum that tells a different story. The museum is called the *Arabia* Steamboat Museum. The story of the steamboat tells us a lot about ordinary mid-nineteenth century life west of the Mississippi.

The *Arabia* traveled up and down the Missouri River from St. Louis, Missouri, to various locations west and north, delivering passengers as well as supplies for merchants.

In 1856, the steamboat struck a log sank the boat and its cargo. Fortunately, no lives were lost. The river frequently changed its course over the many years and, as a result, the riverboat ended up buried approximately forty-five feet in a farm field.

In 1987, three family members and a friend

searched, discovered and recovered *Arabia's* lost cargo. They opened up a museum and restoration center, which operates to this day without receiving any taxpayer funding.

Cargo Reveals Appreciation for Beauty

Besides the valuable objects themselves, what is very impressive is the cargo from the *Arabia* offers a snapshot of 1850's life. One of the cities visited by the *Arabia* was Sioux City, Iowa. Sioux City only had its first steamboat visit in June 1856, so the ports that the *Arabia* sailed into could certainly be described as frontier.

What does the snapshot tell us about frontier life during that time? One of the things it tells us is

that the people who lived then had an appreciation and admiration for beauty despite the difficult living conditions of the day. Besides tools, guns, boots, ordinary household items and clothing, the *Arabia* also carried English Wedgewood china and silver as well as Parisian china and perfume.

In those days, ordinary items had a good measure of beauty as well. Handsaws were ornately shaped and engraved in attractive designs. Gunpowder flasks were made of brass and were also engraved. Doorknobs, house keys and latches were crafted from brass, bronze and wrought iron, and these were designed beautifully. Ordinary glass bottles had unique shapes and designs. Even buttons were full of color and beauty.

Modern Man's Decadence

The degradation of our present world is very appar-

In 1987, three family members and a friend searched, discovered and recovered Arabia's lost cargo.



All photos in this article courtesy of Francis J. Slobodnik.

The collection of fine china from the wreckage of the *Arabia* shows that the pioneers appreciated and brought beautiful things to the frontier.



Fine European dishware salvaged from the *Arabia*.

Objects of beauty have a certain link between man and God, for God is eternal beauty and goodness.

link between man and God, for God is eternal beauty and goodness. When people recognize this truth, even unconsciously, they seek to be surrounded with material goods that will remind them of that truth. Beautiful objects encourage men to reflect on that beauty and goodness, which has God as its final end. Today, our sad society has turned its back on God's beauty and goodness, and has rejected the very idea of God's legitimate reign over the universe and His very existence. Such a society will, as a result, also reject material goods that might remind them of God and goodness.

When a certain measure of beauty and goodness exists in souls, they will naturally desire to have their lives surrounded with material goods that are harmonious with that goodness and beauty. Conversely, when the souls of men become dark and ugly because of the habitual and unrepentant descent to the depths of sin and vice, they will seek to be surrounded with objects that harmonize with their state of soul.

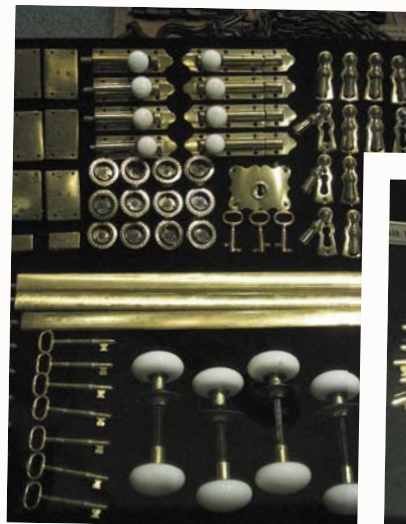
Some of the ordinary objects found in the *Arabia* can, in their own small way, remind us that one of the ways that we can combat the darkness and ugliness that surrounds us today is by filling our lives with goodness and beauty as men and women once did. ■

ent when one observes the glaring contradiction between the items that surrounded the men of the 1850s and the men of today. Today, much of what we use in our daily lives, bought in stores looking like factories, is meant to be disposable and ephemeral.

Today, items such as china, silver and wrought iron are increasingly difficult to find. Judging by *Arabia's* cargo, such items were common for that time.

In the nineteenth century, Christian civilization still had a measurable if diminished effect on the ways of being of the men and women of that time. Today, in a society that does not bat an eye to abortion on demand, euthanasia or homosexual "marriage," we get an idea to what extent Christian civilization has been rejected.

Beautiful Things Help Bring Us Closer to God
Objects of beauty have a certain



Far left: Even such common tools such as handsaws had ornate designs.
Middle and left: Brass locks and keys and porcelain door knobs: solid, well-crafted hardware for pioneer homes.





INTERVIEW

Homosexual 'Marriage' Is Not a Live-and-Let-Live Matter

An Interview with Bishop Salvatore Cordileone

Shortly after the passage of pro-traditional marriage Proposition 8 in California in November 2008, Crusade's associate editor Michael Drake interviewed Bishop Salvatore Cordileone. Serving as auxiliary bishop of his native San Diego, Calif., Bishop Cordileone is also a member of the episcopal advisory board for the Institute for Religious Life.

Crusade: If homosexual "marriage" were implemented, how will it affect the Church, Church-affiliated organizations and other non-profit organizations?

Bishop Salvatore Cordileone: It's not a matter of live and let live. Actually, that is the situation that exists, according to their idea of tolerance regarding domestic partnership laws. There are two ideas of marriage on the table that are exclusive in our society. We are struggling over which one is to prevail for they cannot co-exist.

One idea is the way it has always been understood in every human society since the beginning of civilization, that is, a life-long union of a man and a woman in mutual lasting fidelity for the procreation and the upbringing of children, and the mutual good of the spouses. Society has an interest in it because for it to flourish, citizens have to be virtuous. Children learn virtue primarily in their families, secondarily in their educational and faith communities. That is the idea of marriage, how it has always been. That is why it has a special status in law. There is no other relationship that has the same status as marriage. There are other types of beautiful human relationships such as the relationship of friendship, between parents and children and between a pastor and his flock.

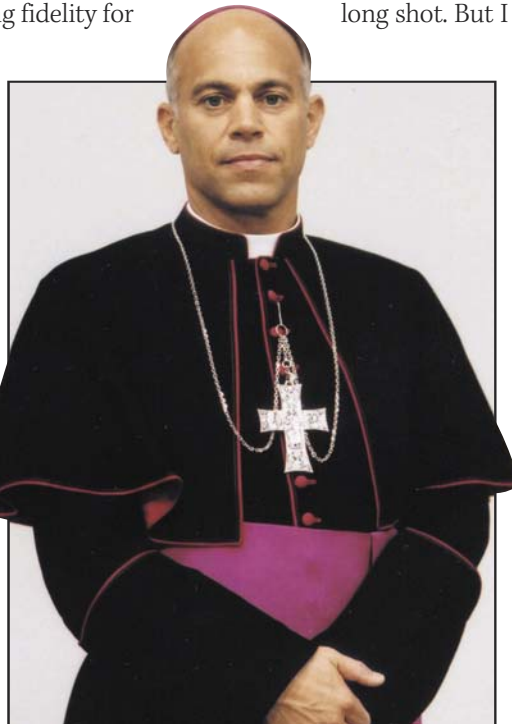
Those are all beautiful, lofty human relationships. But marriage is different from everything else.

The other idea of marriage is that it can be whatever way you want to define it, and therefore there is no moral difference between so-called homosexual "marriages" and heterosexual marriages, and anyone who thinks differently is a bigot and you will be treated like one.

Crusade: Do you foresee any type of a gag rule or prohibition on speaking Church teaching and preaching; opposing homosexual "marriages" from the pulpit or otherwise?

Bishop Cordileone: It would seem to be a long shot. But I would not consider it impossible, because it has already happened in Sweden. A Lutheran pastor was arrested there and sentenced to jail for preaching from the pulpit about it. At least one bishop in Canada was forced to take a pastoral letter about the sanctity of marriage off the diocesan Web site. There will be "hate speech" laws used against us. Can they get as far as the pulpit? I would not say that it is certain, but it is possible.

Crusade: Is there a direct link between the efforts to promote contraception and efforts to promote sterile homosexual relationships?



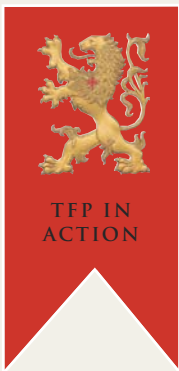
Bishop Cordileone: There are certainly philosophical links. Those of us who have studied this know that the beginning of the erosion on this subject was the contraceptive mentality, divorcing procreation from the conjugal act. Sex is reduced to something only for pleasure. I even read that recently in some newspapers explicitly stating that. One, in particular, was criticizing the Mormons, since they don't believe in contraception either. This columnist simply could not believe that anyone would look at sex other than for recreation. If it is done purely for recreation, there are no limits. Anything that gives pleasure is "legitimate."

Crusade: A little bit about the backlash, the violence we are seeing being perpetrated on those who support traditional marriage. Should there be a response to that? How do we respond to it?

Bishop Cordileone: There should be a response to the hatred and violence. There is much to say about it. It is a concern as to what the other side



really wants. They are the side that is preaching about tolerance, but they are the most intolerant when they don't get their way. They speak about this "taking away of a fundamental right," but how can a created right that never existed before be fundamental? ■



Marching with Confidence Against Abortion

BY JOHN HORVAT II

If anyone thought that the recent electoral setbacks had dampened the spirit of the pro-life movement, they had only to go to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22, 2009 and they would have seen people marching upon the capital. Adversity only seems to have stiffened their resolve as many as 300,000 pro-life Americans were out in full force to send the message that the pro-life movement is here to stay.

A Queen Visits

For the first time in the march's history, the original International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima was present. It is fitting that in the midst of the pro-abortion storm, Our Lady would be with those who are devoted to her, and her symbolic presence added a note of hope for divine assistance. Four TFP members, wearing the TFP ceremonial

habit, served as honor guards for the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue.

Massive Turnout

The 300,000 marchers that headed to Capitol Hill could not fail to impress. The event, so ably organized by March for Life President Nellie Gray, also brought together a veritable who's who in pro-life America with cardinals, bishops, senators, congressmen and other notables addressing the crowd.

The American TFP was present with a contingent of over 120 members and supporters who carried banners and eighteen-foot TFP standards, and distributed this year's TFP statement, *A Call to Confidence: Going Beyond the Humanly Possible in Our Fight Against Abortion* (see pages 22-23 to read the statement).

The entire student body of the TFP-staffed St. Louis de Montfort Academy of Herndon, Pa., was also present. The American TFP also hosted contingents from Germany (SOS Lieben), France

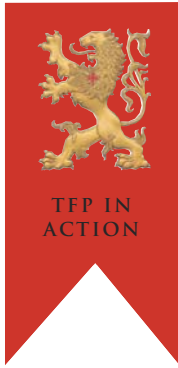
(Droit de Naitre) and Italy (Voglio Vivere). As in past marches, the TFP's Holy Choirs of Angels Marching Band played a selection of patriotic hymns and American marches.

Protest All Over the Country

The March for Life in Washington, D.C. was not an isolated event but rather the largest of many similar events held nationwide to protest the sad and tragic anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. One such protest was the Fifth Annual Walk for Life West Coast that gathered over 30,000 participants on January 24, 2009.

Confident Action Will Triumph

Over the years, the pro-life movement has organized, protested and prayed. It has challenged the unpopular pro-abortion movement and put it on the defensive. What is needed now is confident public action to finish the task at hand. Together, we can make this happen! ■



A Call to Confidence

Going Beyond the Humanly Possible in Our Fight Against Abortion

BY JOHN HORVAT II

On this 36th annual March for Life, the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is proud to stand together with legions of Americans nationwide who brave the elements to give public witness to their opposition to abortion.

Our movement has done much to fight this evil. Looking to our past, it would seem that we have done everything humanly possible to oppose the slaughter of innocents that has so scourged our nation since the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision first imposed abortion on demand upon the American people in 1973.

We have organized. Our movement has united Americans from every walk of life. Our activists have used every peaceful and legal resource available to us to make the other side retreat. We have met the pro-abortion forces in every field and proven ourselves as a vibrant force that refuses to be silenced.

Joining hundreds of thousands of pro-life Americans each year, the American TFP participates in the March for Life.



The number of young families and youth at the March this year was particularly touching.

We have protested. Our movement has taken to the streets making our voices heard in front of abortion clinics, public squares and capitol buildings all over the country. Our protests have seen scores of abortion clinics shut down and thousands of babies saved. Our message is proclaimed on radio waves, Web sites, billboards, license plates and truck panels. Young and old voices join in giving public witness and continuity to our repudiation of this disgraceful shame of our age.

We have prayed. Our most important actions are the

prayers that rise up to heaven imploring God's aid in this vast fight. It is the force of our supplications and Rosaries that have proven so successful in closing clinics and changing hearts. It is in these ardent supplications that we have found strength beyond our own—a supernatural strength that so confounds our adversaries.

We Must Confide

However, the situation has now changed dramatically. Today, the pro-life movement faces new and grave challenges that might seem insurmountable. We are tempted to cry out that we have done the "humanly possible." We are tempted to think that there is no way to oppose such overwhelming opposition. Many ask, "What can be done?"

We answer that we must hope beyond all hope; we must confide.

Confidence is defined as a fortified hope. It is an extraordinary and heroic hope that does not bear hesitation or admit the slightest doubt. It rests upon an enormous faith in God and His Providence. This can be seen in the words of the psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1).



In face of the struggles we have ahead, we are called to carry on this cultural battle with an unshakable confidence. Indeed, the more human help becomes improbable, the more certain becomes Divine intervention. In the midst of adversity, the confident soul calmly prays all the more ardently in the darkness of the trial hoping in silence for the hour of God.

A Call to Confident Action

With noble determination, we have carried our cause ahead and achieved impressive victories. *However, now is not the time to give up the fight or diminish our activity.*

On the contrary, we must intensify our efforts but unite them with great confidence, keeping in mind that we look to God alone for the efficacy of our actions. To make it clear that God is the cause of our good actions, it is often from the depths of trials that God grants great victories.

To quote Saint Ignatius of Loyola,

Trust in God, acting nevertheless as if the success of every action depended entirely on you and not at all in God. But employing your efforts to attain this good result, do not count on them, but proceed as if everything were done by God alone and nothing by you.

Reasons for Confidence

Indeed, in our struggle against abortion, we have every reason to practice such confidence. Our very faith demands it of us. We can confide in God's power since everything is subject to His sovereign domain. There is no power on earth that can keep Him from helping and protecting us.

We can confide in His goodness since Our Lord's compassion for men is without bounds. He naturally wants to relieve our affliction. His Heart is consumed with an infinite charity that loses no opportunity to aid those who confide in Him.

Above all, we can look to His Holy Mother to whom He refuses nothing. This power and goodness would direct us to God and the Blessed Mother with holy audacity, asking Them to secure the final victory. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself assured us, "[a]sk, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7).



TFP members in their ceremonial habit were privileged to carry the miraculous International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima in this year's March for Life.

Beyond the Humanly Possible

Such promises should inspire us to go beyond the "humanly possible" and have no doubt that we will see Divine intervention in this great cultural battle. Confident prayer obtains everything. It is with the spirit of confident prayer that we must continue our struggle against abortion. Too often we have confided in the promises of politicians who have failed to fulfill their promises. Now is the time when we must confide all the more in Providence.

Let us publicly manifest this confidence in events like the March for Life. As an act of public confidence, the

American TFP was proud to help coordinate 3,500 Public Square Rosary Rallies on October 11, 2008. Tens of thousands of Catholics gathered in public places nationwide recognizing the failure of men to solve so many problems, and confiding in Our Lady's promises at Fatima for solutions to put an end to abortion and so many other moral evils.

We are confident that all our pleas are not in vain. God has taken us this far. We are confident that He will complete His work if we only do our part. We must redouble our efforts and prayers since the final victory is assured in the words of the Savior who declared on the eve of His death, "Confidence! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

TFP Director C. Preston Noell distributes "A Call to Confidence" fliers.





DEFYING GRAVITY

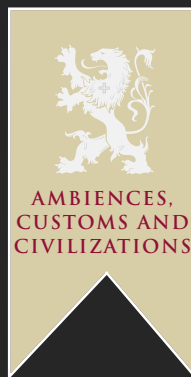
Radiant with the spirit of victory, a Spanish horseman accomplishes one of the most beautiful and expressive manifestations of human courage—the strength to dare and to advance.

There is an undeniable beauty in contemplating a man who sails over the uncertainties of the seas toward a distant destination. Likewise, we cannot deny the beauty of this rider who “flies” through the air under circumstances far superior to any pilot—he is not flying a machine, but rather a living being, whose vitality he governs with superiority. Admirable is the force with which the horse, at his command, manages to conquer gravity and raise itself in the air.

The rider exercises such a psychological dominion over the horse that his courage is reflected in the horse. It is one courage, one élan, one flight!

The manner in which the light illuminates the horse emphasizes the strength and the muscularity of its body and transforms it into a type of living aircraft that cleaves the air.

The movement of the rider’s bandanna adds the perfec-



AMBIENCES,
CUSTOMS AND
CIVILIZATIONS

tion of poetry to the scene. The wind lifts the bandanna with an ease that gives flight to the horse and rider. In this bandanna, there is something of the imponderable palpitation of the victory and glory attained by the rider in his complete mastery of the situation.

Similarly, there is beauty in the horse’s mane flowing in the wind like a sculpted flame, yet full of movement. The horse’s gaze seems to devour the danger; and its mouth consumes the peril. Nevertheless, advancing confidently under its rider’s dominion, even its front hooves suggest an elegant repose. It displays a spirited equilibrium, perfect flexibility and loyal

obedience.

We are in the presence, properly speaking, of a beautiful expression of authentic human heroism, which does not consist so much in the power of destroying but in confronting danger. The pragmatic and risk-adverse man of our days has almost completely lost this notion. What a splendid lesson and example is this scene for us! ■