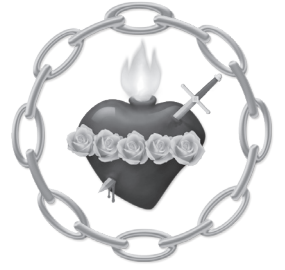


MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

January/February 2019



The Conversion of Saint Paul by Pieter Snayers



Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN

HAS DIVINE REVELATION CEASED?

There are two religious bodies calling themselves Christian that advance the notion of ongoing revelation. These are the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” a.k.a., the Mormons, and the “Religious Society of Friends,” a.k.a., the Quakers. The former organization holds that the president of the LDS is always a prophet who can receive revelations from God, such as the very convenient one that polygamy should end, which coincided with Utah’s effort to obtain statehood — a status it would not have gotten had its laws protected polygamy. The latter, a more democratic entity, has it that all those at their meetings may receive revelations at any moment. In both these sects, the notion of a permanently sealed “sacred deposit” is foreign.

What is the Catholic teaching?

It is clear. Public revelation ceased with the death of the last Apostle (Saint John), ca. AD 100. This means that the *depositum fidei*, the “deposit of the faith,” was complete at that time, nevermore to be added to with new articles of the Faith. It is entirely sealed.

The twenty-first “condemned and proscribed” point of Pope Saint Pius X’s *Lamentabile Sane* was the Modernist heresy that, “Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was not completed with the Apostles.” It’s always important, when reading such documents, to distinguish between what’s being taught and what’s being condemned. Here, we have a Modernist heresy being condemned. To render the statement as an affirmation, we may put it this way: “Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was completed with the Apostles.”

The First Vatican Council, in its Dogmatic Constitution, *Pastor Aeternus*, teaches us that,

“The Holy Ghost has not been promised to the successors of Peter that, under His revelation, they might make known a new doctrine, but in order that, with His assistance, they sacredly preserve and faithfully set forth the revelation transmitted by the Apostles, that is to say, the Deposit of the Faith.” [D.H. 3070]

Even the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) is quite clear on the point. We read there, under the explicit heading, “There will be no further Revelation,” that,

“The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and

no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” [footnote text: 28 *Dei Verbum* 4; cf. 1 Tim 6:14; Titus 2:13.]

Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.

Here, the CCC only affirms tradition.

The Bavarian theologian, Rev. Dr. Ludwig Ott (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pg. 7), explains the doctrine in a way that gives us a better appreciation of both the definitive character of Christian revelation and Our Lord’s passing on the Faith to us through His hand-picked Apostles, who consequently have a completely unique role in salvation history as teachers of the entire Church:

“**With Christ and the Apostles General Revelation Concluded.** Pope Pius X rejected the liberal Protestant and Modernistic doctrine of the evolution of religion through ‘New Revelations.’ Thus he condemned the proposition that: ‘The Revelation, which is the object of Catholic Faith, was not terminated with the Apostles.’” D 2021.

“The clear teaching of Holy Writ and Tradition is that after Christ, and the Apostles who proclaimed the message of Christ, no further revelation will be made. Christ was the fulfillment of the Law of the Old Testament (Mt. 5, 17; 2, 21 *et seq.*) and the absolute teacher of humanity (Mt. 23, 10: “One is your master, Christ”; cf. Mt. 28, 20). The Apostles saw in Christ: “the coming of the fullness of time” (Gal. 4,4) and regarded as their task, the preservation, integral and unfalsified, of the heritage of Faith entrusted to them by Christ (1 Tim. 6, 16; 6, 20; 2 Tim 1, 14; 2, 2; 3, 14). The Fathers indignantly repudiated the claim of the heretics to possess secret doctrines or new Revelations of the Holy Ghost. St. Irenaeus (*Adv. haer* III 1; IV 35, 8), and Tertullian (*De praesc.* 21) stress, against the Gnostics, that the full truth of revelation is contained in the doctrine of the Apostles which is preserved unfalsified through the uninterrupted succession of the bishops.”

If it constitutes a dogma of the Catholic religion that there are no new articles added to the Sacred Deposit after the Apostles died, it is no less true that the Church can (has, and — hopefully — will) get a clearer understanding of the contents of that Sacred Deposit. That is what the Popes and the Bishops of the Church have done for two millennia, employing their Solemn Magisterium, as well as their Ordinary

and Universal Magisterium. It is the Holy Ghost who assists them in this task.

Contrary to the Modernist contentions of “evolution of dogma” or “ongoing revelation,” we orthodox faithful adhere to a true, inherently conservative concept of “development of doctrine.” To call it “inherently conservative” is not to practice some form of partisan Church politics, either. To call it so is radically, fundamentally true, for “to conserve” is “to protect from loss or harm; preserve” (*American Heritage Dictionary*), and the task of the Magisterium is not only to explain and clarify the Sacred Deposit, but to conserve it as one conserves a great treasure, for such it is! The Fathers of Vatican I said that the Roman Pontiff has the promise of the Holy Ghost so that he might, “reverently guard and faithfully explain” (*custodirent et fideliter exponerent*) the Sacred Deposit handed down through the Apostles.

Let us continue to contrast the Modernist from the Catholic notion of doctrinal development.

The greatest pope of the twentieth century, Pope Saint Pius X, condemned the Modernist contention that “the formulas which we call dogma must be subject to these vicissitudes [i.e., those “of varying human conditions”], and are, therefore, liable to change. Thus the way is open to the intrinsic evolution of dogma.” He said this was part of “an immense structure of sophisms which ruin and wreck all religion” (*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*).

Earlier, Pope Leo XIII had condemned the Americanist

approach to dogma, which was similar to what the modernists would teach later, since both heresies were “progressivist” in nature: “certain topics of doctrine are passed over as of lesser importance, or are so softened that they do not retain the same sense as the Church has always held” (*Testem Benevolentiae*).

And before that, during the reign of Blessed Pius IX, Vatican I taught this:

“For the doctrine of the faith which God has revealed is put forward not as some philosophical discovery capable of being perfected by human intelligence, but as a divine deposit committed to the spouse of Christ to be faithfully protected and infallibly promulgated.

“Hence, too, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is ever to be maintained which has once been declared by Holy mother Church, and there must never be any abandonment of this sense under the pretext or in the name of a more profound understanding.

“May understanding, knowledge and wisdom increase as ages and centuries roll along, and greatly and vigorously flourish, in each and all, in the individual and the whole Church: but this only in its own proper kind, that is to say, in the same doctrine, the same sense, and the same understanding” (*Dei Filius*, the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith,” the last paragraph of which is from the *Commonitorium* of Saint Vincent of Lerins).



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Here, then, is the true Catholic notion of doctrinal development — it is a homogeneous development of doctrine which retains the sense of all the ancient dogmas, but adds to them greater clarity and understanding. Centuries of ecumenical councils and papal teachings have given us this. Dom Prosper Guéranger and other great Catholic theologians explain that this kind of orthodox doctrinal development takes place under the influence of the Holy Ghost and by the authoritative dogmatic interventions of the Church's Magisterium. This true doctrinal development will never contradict either tradition or what the Church has taught us from her highest levels. With the Church, we must all reject the heterogeneous development of doctrine, condemned by Pope St. Pius X as the "evolution of dogma."



Grasping these authentic notions relating to the preservation, elucidation, and transmission of Catholic doctrine, both on questions of dogmatic Faith and Christian morals, is absolutely essential in our day, when wicked or ignorant ecclesiastics seek to undermine the Sacred Deposit. Learning and treasuring these truths will help us to accomplish what Saint Jude exhorts the faithful to do in his canonical epistle: "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). If this seems like an impossible task in our day, we should take heart and recall that Saint Jude is, along with Saint Rita, the patron saint of the impossible! ■

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org

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Sister Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.

CONVENT CORNER

THM?

Do you have a cell phone, Dear Reader? Probably. So, why do you have it?

Well, I realize that you might actually have a “smart phone”, so you have access to the internet through it with its

many different services. Hmm. Well, only considering the texting and phone capabilities like my classic flip phone has, why do you have your phone, Dear Reader?

I have mine so that those I am responsible for can access me whenever I am off the monastery property. After a similar necessary function (“business”), I am guessing that most of you will answer that you have it in order to “keep in touch.” After all, there is at least one person in your life that you care about....

Time is such a slippery thing! As we leave home (or others leave our home) and pursue our special path in life, we can more and more feel the need to “keep in touch” with those whom we love. Why wait until we can see our loved ones in a few months when we can call more frequently? But why even wait until we can take time from our day’s duties to have a conversation when a quick text is possible?

Phone conversations can be too much of a time commitment for our full schedules, so we often opt for texting. Concise and inexpensive, it is a popular option!

So, Dear Reader, we have our phones in order to “keep in touch,” but we seem to have less and less time to do so. When we finally can send that text, is there anything really worth saying?

What if there were a way to spend less than 30 seconds during your busy day to keep in touch with each of your loved ones in a truly meaningful and valuable way? A way that actually helps your loved one in a significant way? A way that makes you wealthier each time you employ it?

Too good to be true, of course.... Unless, you are a

Catholic! So, let me share this little device that has so many and great benefits.

Well, you may be familiar with texting abbreviations such as LOL and TYL. In three letters, you can communicate a whole image, atmosphere or message. I will venture a guess that most of these would qualify as “the idle word” Our Lord warns of. However, Catholics should be on the lookout to turn all things to good; even internet slang. So, here is a Catholic texting abbreviation you should know: “THM?” The question mark is part of the abbreviation, so don’t leave it out!

The expansion of that abbreviation is a question: “Trade Hail Marys?” Perhaps you can already see the possibilities, Dear Reader!

When I have cell phone service (when I am on an errand), I will send the text, THM?, to my family members and close friends. As soon as I send it to, say, my father, I immediately pray a Hail Mary for him. Thus, my father gets prayers, I get graces and the Mother of God is honored — all in about 30 seconds. Then, I get the added delight of a response from him like, “Right away!”, or “Certainly!”, which means that he is praying for me, he is getting graces and the Mother of God is honored yet again. Another 30 seconds?

Saint Louis Marie de Montfort says in the Secret of the Rosary that each time we say a Hail Mary, we give to our Mother a heavenly rose. That is not a small thing! He goes on to explain that even if it is said in a hurried or distracted way, it is full of graces. So, don’t let scruples prevent you from praying lots of Hail Marys during the day!

Besides all these benefits, I get a chance to spend some genuine “quality time” with my father when I text him THM? (even though I spend less than a minute)! In eternity, we will see just how “quality” this time is!

So, Dear Reader, would you like to trade a Hail Mary with me? I am praying one now for all of you! ■

Email Sister Marie Thérèse, at convent@catholicism.org





Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM DEO GRATIAS

Thanksgiving holiday is coming up this week. And, although this issue of the *Mancipia* will not be in your mailbox until after Christmas, I decided to write about gratitude — to God first, and to all who are help-

ing us on our journey to heaven. I include those holy souls in Purgatory who can pray for us although not for themselves. In their state of purgation, the holy souls are filled with joy knowing that they are saved. They are, as we hope to be, full of gratitude to God who is cleansing them from every *scelerum macula* (trace of sin) so as to be worthy of sharing in His Beatitude forever.

It is a theme that is repeated throughout holy scripture. In the Old Testament thanksgiving to God, accompanied by joyful hymns and canticles, is part of the worship of God both in the Mosaic Law and before. It is *complementary* with sacrifice and libations and *complimentary* to God as praise. By thanksgiving we acknowledge our nothingness before our Creator who gives us all good things. Thus we read of sacrifice and thanksgiving in the Old Law: “Moreover loaves of leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanks, which is offered for peace offerings” (Leviticus 7:13). And we find the joining of sacrifice and thanksgiving in many other places in the Old Testament.

Josef Pieper puts it well in his book, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*:

“We have only to think for a moment how much the Christian understanding of life depends upon the existence of ‘Grace’; let us recall that the Holy Spirit of God is Himself called a ‘gift’ in a special sense; that the great teachers of Christianity say that the premise of God’s justice is his love; that everything gained and everything claimed follows upon something given, and comes after something gratuitous and unearned; that in the beginning there is always a gift.”

Therefore, as the Lord has told us to “pray always,” what better way of praying always than to “always and everywhere give [God] thanks and praise” as we pray with the priest in the Preface of the Holy Mass!

Saint Paul counsels the Colossians to be more grateful to God our Father for all things:

“But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection: And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body: and be ye thankful (Col. 3: 14-15).

Strengthened with all might, according to the power of his glory, in all patience and longsuffering with joy, Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light (Col. 1: 11-12).”

Likewise to the Corinthians to whom he writes in his First Epistle: “Thanks be to God, then, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

Thanksgiving is so essential to the sacrificial heart set upon pleasing God that it is expressed with much exaltation and even gusto during the Ordinary Prayers of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Beginning with the Gloria: “We give thee thanks for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.”

Then, after the *Sursum Corda*, with even more jubilation, the sung Preface. At High Mass a priest ought to make his best effort to shake the rafters with the *Sursum Corda*. I know one such priest who had been dubbed *Father Sursum Corda* for his glorious *Sursum Corda*:



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Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro. Dignum et justum est.

(Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is meet and just.)

Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere: Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeternae Deus.

(It is indeed fitting and right, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give thanks to Thee, Lord, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God.)

And, finally, at the end of the Mass the priest turns to the people and says: *Ite Missa Est* (Go, you are sent) to which the altar boys respond *Deo Gratias*. (The servers also say this at the end of the *Epistle*).

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is one of four aspects of the Holy Eucharist, the other three being: the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and the reception of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist at Communion. This is the subject of chapter four of Father Feeney's masterpiece, *Bread of Life*.

The principal meaning of Eucharist as an action is "giving thanks" to God. It is a Greek word employed in reference to God. We find the word first used in the New Testament in John's Gospel account of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. "And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks (*εὐχαριστήσας*), he distributed to them that were set down." (John 6:11) Then, we find it again in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper: "And taking bread, he gave thanks (*εὐχαριστήσας*), and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is my body" (Luke 22:19). Likewise with the wine, *iterum tibi gratias agere* (and again giving thanks) "he gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament" (Matthew 26:27-28).

By worthily receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion we are giving our best "thank you" to God. It is in the giving and receiving that the "great Gift" of the Eucharist is consum-

mated by assimilation of the Living God-Man within our body and soul. "Take this and eat of it all of you." What ingratitude not to accept the Gift of God! To call it what it is not! To deny access to the Visitor, our God, by holding that this Emmanuel is not present physically, but only symbolically in mere bread. We give thanks to human benefactors with more enthusiasm, do we not? Imagine refusing the gift of a friend under some pretense of "oh no, you shouldn't have!" This is not gratitude but an insult.

There are many holy men, too many to list here, who took the name "Deogratias" when they entered religion. Too, the Rule of Saint Benedict prescribes that the doorkeeper always salutes the visitor while he is knocking with a *Deo Gratias*.

One of the great saints who labored among the poor in Rome, Felix of Cantalice (1515-1557), a Capuchin friar, was called by all the people "Brother Deo Gratias" because that was his "Thank You" to them for the gifts they bestowed upon him for the poor.

The Catechism asks us: What are the four elements of prayer? Some list five. They are: adoration, supplication (petition), thanksgiving, intercession, and confession (satisfaction by penance). Therefore, let us pray well, and always and everywhere give thanks to God. Nor should we neglect to thank our parents every day and our benefactors. It is also a duty in justice. The best thing that we can do for those who are deceased, as you know, is to have Masses offered for the repose of their souls and/or at least keep them in our daily prayers. Not just in the month of November, which is dedicated to the holy souls, but every day.

A beautiful custom we inherited from the founders of Saint Benedict Center was to answer *Semper Deo Gratias et Mariae* (Thanks always be to God and to Mary) whenever anyone said "Thanks be to God" in our presence.

Deo Gratias! ■

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org

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Brother Francis, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN GRATITUDE

1. The state of grace is one of mutual gratitude between God and us. Indeed, God is excessively grateful to those who cooperate with His graces; He also is very much hurt by lack of gratitude — “Where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17)

2. Sadness is a mark of lack of gratitude. The saints are always radiant with joy — a reflection of their realization and appreciation of God's benefits.

3. The prayers of thanksgiving are especially recommended in Holy Scripture.
4. Our gratitude to God should include also those through whose means God deals with us, and guides our journey: our patron saints, our guardian angels, our superiors, as well as our companions *in via*.
5. The saints eagerly extended their gratitude to include even their persecutors. We must resist the enemies of God who hinder the cause of salvation; but we must thank God for our enemies as an opportunity to suffer persecution for His sake.
6. As long as we stand firm in our faith and persevere in the state of grace, there is no limit to the number of persons we must be grateful to, or the number of benefits and good things we must be grateful for.

The Eucharist

(Eucharist means “Good Thanks”)

1. It was when Jesus first hinted at the doctrine of the Eucharist that some of His own disciples walked with Him

no more. And Jesus let it be so; for rejection of the Eucharist entails rejection of the Faith. If the Word would become flesh, we cannot set limits to His desire.

2. The Eucharist is the Incarnation extended in space and time, multiplied without being divided, reaching out to all who would unite themselves to the Son of God, the Child of Mary.
3. It is the supreme object of the theological virtues. While we live this life of the senses we cannot believe in more; we cannot hope for more; we cannot love more, than our Savior and Redeemer under the guise of this Sacrament.
4. The Holy Eucharist is the golden key to the mystical meanings of Holy Scripture.
5. It opens for our understanding also the book of nature. Even ordinary things, like fruits and flowers, and ordinary processes like the communication of life and the sustaining of life, acquire a new value, a deeper meaning.
6. The Eucharist and Mary rise and fall together. To eucharistic Christianity, Mary is indispensable.
7. To heretics, Jesus is “the good master.” What master gives himself as food to his disciples?!
8. According to Saint Thomas, Jesus in the Eucharist hides His humanity as well as His divinity. It is to reappear alive in His saints.
9. All our faith, all our duties of divine service, all our treasures of grace, are now contained in this littlest of packages! Everything else of Catholic life proceeds from It, even unto art and architecture. ■





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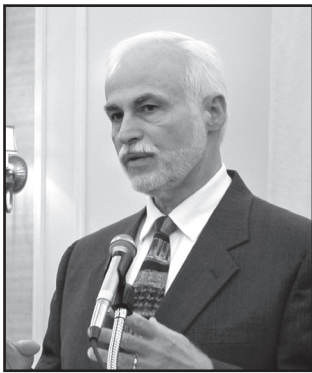
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Br. Lawrence, M.I.C.M., Tert.

GUEST COLUMN WHY PHILOSOPHY XII — WHY EPISTEMOLOGY?

In my early twenties I left the Catholic Church. I had become a skeptic, questioning everything, and an agnostic, professing that God, if He exists at all, is unknowable. Despite my loss of faith, the question of what is truth and how we can achieve

certainty in our ideas drove my interest in philosophy and eventually led me back to the Catholic Church. Our Lady's undeserved intervention helped me to find Brother Francis and the Saint Benedict Center, where I had my questions answered. After I had completed my journey through Brother Francis' first six philosophy courses, I was finally ready to tackle the questions of "what is truth?" and "how do we know?"

These two questions are not only my personal concern; they dominate most of modern philosophy. The majority of philosophers after Descartes have maintained that we cannot

know anything for certain or that truth is consistency between ideas or that truth cannot be known at all.

The study of Epistemology (which, along with Ontology, is part of General Metaphysics) teaches us that truth is the conformity between mind **and** reality. We study the different levels of truth until we reach the highest — ontological truth — in which all things must conform to the Mind of God in order to exist. When I could see that what I learned in Epistemology matched reality, I knew I had finally reached the goal to which I had aspired so many years before — how to know what is true — to possess the tools, or *criteria*, to assess truth and error. I was thrilled to consider how it is possible that the entire universe can become mine by the mystery of knowledge. Meditation on the process of how this happens by my intellectual grasping of the physical world as it is perceived by my senses was positively dizzying.

Epistemology has three axioms, three ideas, which are so fundamental that they cannot be proved but must simply be assumed. In this way it is like the study of geometry in which there are certain axioms that cannot be proved in themselves (such as "the whole is equal to the sum of its parts") but which stand behind and propel the various geometric demonstrations. The epistemological axioms are: 1) our own existence, 2) the principle of contradiction, and 3) the fact of knowledge. First, we know we exist. There is no way to prove it. Second, a thing cannot *be* and *not be* at the same time. To say otherwise would be a contradiction. Third, we know things outside of us and we simply must accept this as a fact. Knowledge is not an hypothesis or theory; it is fact. Even though these axioms cannot be proved as such, they perfectly match Common Sense.

Because our ideas have been thoroughly grounded in the previous six courses, we easily make the leap into the realm of the purely abstract. In the first course, Minor Logic, we learned the three acts of the mind: simple apprehension, judgment, and inference. We know that truth resides in judgment, where we determine "this is true" or "this is false." We studied the process of how ideas are formed and of reasoning itself. In short, we received the tools of good thought, which we would use throughout all of the remaining courses.

In Cosmology and Psychology we were able to use these tools and become comfortable with them by checking their validity with the real world around us. In Ethics, we took everything we had learned and applied it to the problem of good and evil, how to live in a manner befitting our human nature. We also developed a philosophical "platform" of ideas that we understood and could defend.

The first of two courses in the History of Philosophy studied how philosophy came to be and examined early Greek



thought in order to discover which of the ideas were found to match reality. In the second history course, we considered modern philosophers and engaged in a polemical consideration of how these philosophers went wrong and threw away their intellectual patrimony.

With this solid foundation, we were quite prepared to study the first of the two most abstract courses, Epistemology and Ontology, together referred to as “General Metaphysics.” Building on the ideas which were clarified in the first courses, Epistemology seems very familiar. In a sense, it is. We discover that Brother Francis, with his unique manner of teaching, has been introducing the truths of Epistemology throughout all of the earlier lectures.

In the process of our studies, we found that three great truths are upheld by the careful study of natural thought¹ under the guidance of a good teacher who is grounded in the truth. They are: 1) The reality of God, 2) the freedom of the will (Man is responsible for his acts), and 3) the immortality of



the soul. Epistemology is part of Natural Philosophy.

To answer the question, “Why Epistemology?” I refer the reader to Brother Francis. Epistemology is a necessary part of wisdom because, “It helps us keep away from unhealthy extremes on the left and on the right — between rash subjective judgments with false certainty and fanaticism on one side, [i.e.], with no rationality and no examination of the criteria of truth and, on the other side, an attitude of skepticism that would doubt everything on principle and never make a strong judgment. [...] In Epistemology we study knowing and the mystery implied in it. We’ll come back to this in Theology. The foundation of the great reality is to be found in God. It’s when we know the light of God in the Trinity [that] we will know why there is such a thing as truth.” ■

¹ Philosophy that studies nature and is not connected with any religion.

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GUEST COLUMN

CATHOLIC MEN! BURN THOSE PANTS! BY SAM ZAHAYKEVITZ

As I write this article I understand fully that most men will “get” this and most women won’t. That is because women cannot appreciate what goes through the mind of even good Catholic men on a daily basis. Yes, men and women are wired differently.

We can begin this topic by noting that it is in our nature to follow lines with our eyes even though we may do so unconsciously. We look down railroad tracks, roads and bridges all the time. It is something that happens all day. See that rope on the ground? Bet you can’t avoid looking where it leads even if only a few feet.

Artists wanting to draw the viewer’s attention to the main subject in a complex painting will often use lines to draw your focus to that subject. Engineers will use lines of a building to accentuate a certain attractive feature of the building and so on. So far, so good.

Unfortunately, fashion designers also use lines to draw our attention to certain parts of women’s bodies that men should definitely not be looking at. Pants on a woman lead the eye to those areas. As good Catholic men we are supposed to look away immediately from such things, yet this can at times be challenging even for the best of us. Our Lady of Fatima sorrowfully spoke about “certain fashions that will greatly offend God.” I have no doubt that women wearing pants (not to mention worse fashions that are more revealing) are included in Our Lady’s warning.

So here is how this works out for most people, even good Catholics. The wife or daughter wears pants in public. The lines of the pants bring people’s attention (ALL people not just men) to parts of the anatomy that should not be viewed. For the woman seeing this it typically is no big deal. For a man, being wired for procreation, we now have a problem. Now we have the proverbial fork in the road. A good man who tries to keep custody of his eyes is put in an



Many classic schools of painting perfected using lines to emphasize a main subject.

awkward situation but he does the right thing and looks away. *For all other men they don’t look away, especially if the pants are tight and the woman has a nice figure.* As a matter of fact many men will then begin to fantasize about the woman.

Seriously, men. Do you really want other men looking lustfully at your wife or daughter? Really?

The words and thoughts of many of you are already ringing in my ears.

“Well it is the men’s fault. They shouldn’t be looking there in the first place!”

While this may be true, you must take this a step further. We all know that “if a man looks lustfully at a woman he has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). I don’t know what theologians would say about this particular passage but it seems to me that the woman is *also sharing in the sin* to some degree or other. Our Lord did not just say *he* committed adultery but also mentioned *with her*.

Does some or even most of the blame for the man’s sin rest on your wife or daughter? You should be ready to answer now rather than at your particular judgment, don’t you think? I am only trying to bring the message to you. Regardless, do you really want your wife or daughter to be the occasion for an otherwise good man’s fall from grace? I think not.

Is this the end? No. If your wife or daughter is blamed in part for the other man’s sins, will they now, before God, point their finger at you for not exercising your authority to govern them in a godly way? I hope not.

I am writing this article to help my fellow Catholic men to be better fathers and husbands. I’ve always noticed that there seems to be a vast disparity

in how women dress while attending Mass and when they are out in public away from church.

This article is not intended to upset people but rather to point out the very good judgment of the Church's rules on modest dress, especially in regards to how women dress. Whenever we have a party at our farmhouse, we always ask all who come to wear "Center appropriate attire." We do practice what I am underscoring here.

So how will you as husbands and fathers handle this problem that I have just dumped into your lap? Actually it is quite easy if you have the courage to do so. First sit them down and tell them how much you love them. How much you want them to avoid sin. How you wish for them all the good that God wills for their lives. Okay, that was the easy part.

The next step is to be brutally honest with your loved ones in how most men's minds work when confronted with such sights. *Believe me they have no idea.* Ask them to imagine themselves in the market with all of these strange men looking lustfully at them. Ask them how they now feel. Do you really want to go in public knowing what many men will be thinking about when they see you in immodest pants?

You will have noticed that I have not distinguished between so-called "modest pants for women" and tight pants. The reason is that women should not be wearing pants at all. So-called "modest pants" (especially with younger women) easily become "immodest" once the door to inappropriate female clothing is opened. Every woman knows this is true. Modesty for a woman also requires that she be gracefully feminine in her female dignity. Shall I say royally feminine? Pants are not feminine, period.

At this point, if you have done your job even half way, they will shriek in horror over such thoughts. My guess is that if they are not blushing, you haven't yet finished your talk. Guard yourselves against all of this. Don't wear pants in public. Don't wear pants in private. Just don't wear pants!

So now we have our final problem. What are we as good Catholics to do with all these (hopefully) unwanted pants? We can't in good conscience sell or even give them away as that would only add to another family's problems. Well, as the title of this article says. Burn those pants!

I'd like to mention something that I think you will discover if and when you do get rid of those pants. In my mind several wonderful things could happen. The first is the obvious: Since we are making a good attempt to avoid sin and the near occasion of sin not only for ourselves but for others, God will reward us for our actions *both* in this life *and* the next. And, too, Our Lady of Fatima will keep our loved ones (especially our daughters who make this effort in modesty) under the protection of her mantle.

You may also find your relationships with your spouse and daughters are greatly enriched. They will see the wisdom in your decision and the motivation for your actions. It is out of love that you are doing this and they should clearly see that.

Another consequence of this might be that the extra graces God gives you for acting out of good-will will also manifest itself in areas that you may not have thought of. The daughters might get better husbands because they are now holding themselves to a higher standard. The wives may become better spouses who are more likely to conform to Saint Paul's regulations for wives, "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22) Other sins that have little to do with modesty will now be lessened. Quite frankly I don't see any downfalls to women dressing only in skirts and dresses.

I've had conversations with others regarding this topic and I've always said that women wearing pants is the canary in the coal mine. It is the indicator of other problems, or problems that are looming right around the corner. And if a woman says "I need to wear pants to do X" then maybe as a dignified woman she shouldn't be doing X! That should be left for the man. Working in the fields? Since when have women needed to wear trousers to do that?

Lastly, the women will have the dignity, honor and respect *that they deserve.* Dressed in a skirt they will be far more likely to have men open doors for them, give up seats, carry groceries etc., etc. Yes I know. Women are fully capable of opening their own doors and such, but this small act gives them the chance to be humble and yet dignified. On the man's side he has a chance to exercise charity. A win for both parties for sure.

Dressing modestly is a large factor in how a woman thinks of herself and how others perceive her. Good men *want* to marry a modest, humble but dignified women despite what you may think. They want a woman that they will be proud to bring home to meet their parents. Wearing skirts I believe is a big step in that direction.

Best of luck men. It may be hard but it is well worth it, believe me. ■

For further reading: *Dressing With Dignity* by Colleen Hammond available from our bookstore: store.catholicism.org

OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen.

Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, *Raccolta* No. 579).

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

Ex Cathedra: “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

Notes:

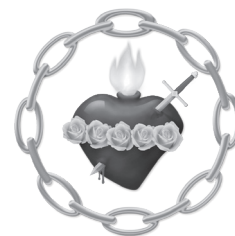
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Immaculate Heart of Mary School



Immaculate Heart of Mary School
ihmsnh.org
PO Box 627
Richmond, NH 03470
(603)239-6495
ihmschool@catholicism.org

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



Saint Benedict Center
Post Office Box 627
Richmond, NH 03470

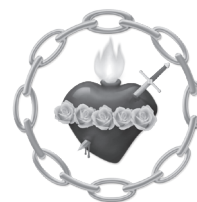
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