

MANCIPIA

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Br. André Marie,
M.I.C.M., Prior
just a brother,” which was half an effort at humility and half out of humor.

PRIOR'S COLUMN JUST A BROTHER

It is often the case that when one of the brothers meets someone new, a variety of questions arise concerning exactly *what* we are. “What’s a brother?” “Are you a priest?” “What do brothers do?” “Why be a brother?” I cultivated the habit of telling people who asked if I was a priest, “No, I’m

That one ought to have a sense of humor in such situations is well illustrated by Brother Franciscus Willett, C.S.C., in his 1952 essay of two pages, “So You’re a Brother, Father.” While I am never one to shun good humor, my goal in these lines is to answer some of the above questions quite seriously.

Theologically considered, the priesthood and the religious life are two distinct realities. The former is an office in the Church, in which one is constituted by the Sacrament of Holy Orders, for the purpose of teaching, governing, and sanctifying others. This he carries out primarily by offering the Sacrifice of the Mass, confecting the sacraments, and preaching. The religious life is the radical living of one’s Baptismal grace by voluntarily adding to the commandments the vowed observance of the evangelical counsels according to a rule and under the authority of a superior. The evangelical counsels are commonly listed as poverty, chastity, and obedience, but are enumerated differently in the more ancient forms of religious profession. All Christians are called upon to live lives of holiness in the Church militant and glory in the Church triumphant. Over and above, but at the service of, this common or “universal vocation” of all the faithful to sanctity are the priestly vocation and the state in life of the religious. Considered in this light, the priesthood is an office primarily for the sanctification of others, while the religious life is a state in life primarily for the sanctification of the individual religious. Saint Thomas calls the religious life a “state of perfection,” by which he means that the religious is one who tends to the perfection of Christian charity “through binding himself in perpetuity and with a certain solemnity to those things that pertain to perfection.”

Of course, a priest can be a religious as well. In this case, he has both the state of perfection of religious life and the priestly office of sanctifying others.

Historically considered, we might take two different approaches to the religious brother. One is to do what the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and its Wikipedia spinoff do in their respective entries under “Lay Brother,” namely, to begin at a fairly arbitrary date in Medieval times when French Benedictine monastic communities began to bring the non-

ordained into the monastery to perform tasks deemed not fit for the ordained monks, who spent many long hours in choir every day chanting the Divine Office. From this skewed perspective, the non-ordained male religious appears to be a later development crafted for the purely ancillary purpose of helping the priest-monks. It then makes sense that he is viewed as a sort of “priest helper” wherever he appears on the stage in later religious life. But that is not what he is essentially, even if, at times, that is what he does.

The second historical approach is to go back to the dawn of religious life, which I shall briefly do.

In its earliest manifestations, the religious life was only rarely united to the priesthood. Saint Pachomius (ca. 292-348), widely recognized as the founder of cenobitic¹ monasticism, was not a priest. Neither did he admit his monks to Holy Orders, though he would accept an ordained man into the monastery as a monk, in which case he was employed in priestly ministrations, but remained under the obedience of his abbot, just as all the other monks did. Also non-ordained was the “Father of All Monks” himself, Saint Anthony the Abbot — who is also called “Anthony the Great,” and whose temptations are so grotesquely celebrated in art.

In the West, monasticism can trace itself back to Saint Martin, Bishop of Tours in Gaul (316-397). A bishop, and therefore a priest, Saint Martin was clearly ordained. But the man considered the “Father of all Western Monks” is Saint Benedict of Nursia (480-543), who, like most Eastern monastic patriarchs, was not a priest, yet he was an abbot, *i.e.*, the “father” of his monks. In his *Rule*, Saint Benedict makes it clear that the honor of the priesthood makes no difference to the monk’s seniority in the monastery, which is determined rather by his date of profession. The great Patriarch also admonishes priests not to exalt themselves above their fellow monks on account of their priestly order.

One can see by the use of the word “abbot” (meaning “father”) with the non-ordained, as well as the title “Father of ... Monks” to describe Saints Anthony and Benedict, that there is a certain spiritual patriarchy within the religious life that is independent of Holy Orders. Traditionally, not all “spiritual fathers” were priests. This is true in Eastern as well as Western Christendom, as will be further shown below.

In the era of the Crusades, a phenomenon developed that strikes the modern man as curious. I refer to the military orders. Their origin lies in the certainly non-military beginnings of the Order of Hospitallers, whose function was ministering to the corporal needs of pilgrims to the Holy Land. While one would not be wrong to associate their name with our modern English notion of “Hospital,” it would be better to broaden the concept to include the related words “hospitality” and “hostel” if one wants a better

picture of what a Hospitaller did. The Order, recognized by Pope Paschal II in 1113, was founded by Blessed Gerard Thom, a religious who was not a cleric. When, later, the Order (already made up mostly of knights) began to engage in armed combat in the Crusades, it still retained its Hospitaller charism. Because of this additional duty and the various headquarters the Order has had over the years, it is now known as the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta. Its current Grand Master, the Englishman, Fra' Matthew Festing, is a Knight, a Prince, and a solemnly professed religious Brother. The priest chaplains of the Order did not take governing positions within it. They offered Mass and assisted the knight-brothers with their sacramental ministrations.



The Knights of Malta give us the canonized Brother, Saint Hugh of Genoa, as well as several beatified brothers and even some female saints (the Order also had nuns; and no, they did not take up arms!).

The mendicant movement that flourished in the thirteenth century gave us the five “great” Orders of friars (along with various lesser ones): the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites,² Servites, and Augustinians. All five have religious brothers in addition to priests. Of the two largest, the Franciscans were mobile, begging monks, while the Dominicans, also highly mobile, were a mendicant version of the canons regular — a form of religious life that was by nature clerical.³ (They were, early on, known as the “Preaching Canons.”) For all that, one of the Dominicans’ most popular saints is the lay brother, Saint Martin de Porres, whose friend and brother Dominican, Saint John Massias (or Macías), shared that status. While Saint Dominic and his Order of Preachers were primarily clerical, Saint Francis’ Order was not. Only at the will of Pope Innocent III did the Poverello himself accept diaconal ordination, and, like Saint Ephrem, the Doctor of the Church, the great Founder did not go beyond that order. Most of Saint Francis’ brethren were not ordained, although the Order of Friars Minor did admit Priests in his lifetime. Saints Pascal Baylon, Benedict the Moor, and Felix of Cantalice are among the numerous Franciscan brothers who have been canonized. Another Franciscan lay brother, Saint Didacus of Alcalá (Spanish: *San Diego*), has a city named after him somewhere.

Yet another notable mendicant lay brother is the Portuguese general-turned-Carmelite, Saint Nuno de Santa Maria Álvares Pereira.

Saint Francis of Paola (1416-1507) founder of the Minims, was also a religious brother, never having received Holy Orders. His Order, inspired by the Franciscans, was also mendicant, though founded considerably after the era of the founding of the great mendicant orders.

In later forms of religious life, accommodation is made for non-ordained members of institutes that are primarily clerical in character. So, in the era of the Catholic Reformation,

we have numerous congregations of clerics regular, like the Jesuits, Theatines, Piarists, etc., who admitted (and still admit) non-clerical religious brothers to work in the congregation’s apostolate. Numerous Jesuit lay brothers have been canonized. Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez was the brother porter who put the idea into his fellow Jesuit, the priest, Saint Peter Claver, to minister to the spiritual needs of the negro slaves in Colombia. Saint James Kisai, one of the martyrs of Nagasaki, was a Japanese Jesuit lay brother. Another Japanese martyr, from a later era of persecution, was the Jesuit lay brother, Blessed Leonard Kimura.

Later religious congregations of all sorts, based upon whatever earlier model of religious life (or *sui generis*), generally make provision for the non-clerical brother to live and work in community alongside the priests. The Passionists and Redemptorists come to mind. Blessed Isidore of Saint Joseph and four of the Martyrs of Daimiel, Spain, were Passionist lay brothers. The Founder of the Redemptorists, Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, saw one of his own spiritual sons, the lay brother, Saint Gerard Majella, predecease him.

“Therefore every scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven, is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old” (Matt. 13:52). The most notable examples of such “scribes” in Church history are our great religious founders. They take out of the treasure of the Church the “old things” of the consecrated life, with “new things” superadded to meet the needs of the times. Some of these founders were “re-founders,” like Saint Bernard of Clairveaux, Armand-Jean de Rancé, and Dom Prosper Guéranger, who recovered ancient traditions and

revivified them. The most ancient forms of religious life have not left us, as the Trappists, Carthusians, and many monks of the East show us.

In virtually all these foundations and revivals the brother has had his place. In some institutes, his is the *only* place. Take, for instance, the Christian Brothers. They were the vanguard of a new type of religious institute: the French Teaching Brother. Though founded by a priest, Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (to use the proper name), admits no priests among its members. (Yes, they

are “just brothers” in more than one sense!) Responding to the social needs of the day in France, Saint John founded a congregation of men specifically for the task of teaching. They have an impressive list of canonized and beatified brethren, eight of whom, the Saintly Martyrs of Turon, shed their blood for Our Lord during the Spanish Civil War. (Their ninth companion was a Passionist priest.)

The French Christian Brothers, just mentioned, are not to be confused with the Irish Christian Brothers, founded by the Irish businessman-turned-brother, Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice. The United States have many schools run by both congregations.

Many different congregations followed the trail blazed by the Christian Brothers. The Holy Cross Brothers, another group of teaching brothers, are a distinct society within the Holy Cross Congregation, which also includes priests. The founder was Blessed Basil Moreau (a priest), and one of its most famous members was Father Patrick Peyton, the famous “Rosary Priest.” To date, their only canonized saint is “just a brother” — Saint André Bessette, the patron saint of your humble servant.

A similar society of teaching brothers within a larger congregation that also includes priests would be the Marists, who are, like the above, of French origin. These are not to be confused with the Marianists, also French, founded by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. The Marianists are a single society of both priests and brothers.

In Eastern Christian monasticism — both Catholic and Orthodox — the “monk” is generally a non-ordained man. If an Eastern monastic is ordained to the priesthood, he is generally called a hieromonk. Within the Russian tradition

of spirituality, the starets (literally, “elder,” or spiritual father) need not be a priest. (Dostoevsky fans will recognize “Father Zosima” from *The Brothers Karamazov* as a starets.)



Wikipedia provides a partial list of Religious Brothers who have been proclaimed saints to whom we might add Saint Rafael Arnáiz Barón, a little-known Spanish Trappist who died at age 27 in April 1938.

He has never been declared venerable, but probably canonizable is an American Trappist from Gethsemane Abbey, Kentucky, Brother Mary Joachim (John Green

Hanning, 1849-1908). Brother Joachim was immortalized in the delightful book by Father Raymond, O.S.C.O., *The Man Who Got Even With God*. Would that he were better remembered than that other monk of Gethsemane Abbey, the tragic Thomas Merton!

Of all the questions I raised at the beginning of this piece, the one I have not specifically addressed is “Why be a brother?” The real answer might come to us from choirs of haloed brethren, including those canonized and beatified brothers mentioned in this article:

“Why indeed be ‘just a brother’? *Because it works!*” ■

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1. Cenobitic refers to those monks who live in common as distinguished from anchorites or hermits, whose corresponding adjective is “eremitic” or “hermitic(al).” The word “monk” means “alone,” “one,” or “solitary,” but came fairly early on to include those living the common life, so Saint Augustine said that the oneness of the monk is that he is one with his brethren in the monastery.

2. The Carmelites do trace their origins to the Old-Testament solitaries on Mount Carmel, but after they came to the West during the Crusades, they were organized as mendicant friars.

3. It has been argued, and I think with some merit, that the “canonical” form of religious life, as it is known, has inserted itself into Western monasticism so much so that the “lay brother” became the exception rather than the norm in Benedictine monasteries.



Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M.,
Prioress

CONVENT CORNER

LIFE IS CHANGED, BUT NOT TAKEN AWAY

Dear Reader, please allow me to ramble a bit.

It is a lovely, uneventful day, as you are surfing life's freeway at a smooth 65 mph — your mind on various thoughts. Rounding a beautiful curve, WHAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Life changes. Yes, in an instant, life changes.

And so, Dear Reader, I listened again to the telephone message.

Of course we believe the Faith! But, in exceptionally trying situations, a person realizes just how lacking his faith is. Or perhaps, I should just speak for myself?

In an instant, phantoms of faith leap suddenly out of the fog of your thoughts and surround you like so many hostile soldiers — asserting themselves in menacing clarity. Yes, realities such as the shortness of life, death, sin, judgment, even heaven and hell. There is nowhere you can hide from their unsettling gaze.

The telephone message. The deeply distressed tone of that familiar voice made me wonder when I would wake up.

You have heard of people “having their life pass before them” just before they have a near mortal collision... There is a similar phenomenon that can occur, even from a telephone message.

Pancreatic cancer. Dad left a message saying that Mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Yes, a person can find himself searching the depths of his convictions as they have been woven into every moment of his life — to the very beginning of his beginning — to his mother's womb.

She has one to three months to live. That is what the doctors said.

“Exitum” ... What lies on the other side — through the door of death — where my parent is going. Life changes.

Push it a little, if you dare. Peek through that crack. Not darkness, but light. Blinding light.

And, in that light: persons. Persons with hearts. Human hearts. If not yet bodily, yet awaiting the reunion with their loving hearts of real flesh. Yes, at the Resurrection. Persons we already know and love.

But there are three hearts beating with a sacred pulse of flesh even now. Jesus, Mary and Joseph! My Brother, my Mother and my Father! Oh Alpha and Omega — my Beginning and my End. My very existence nestles in the eternal embrace of Your Being, through Your Mother, under the protection of Your foster-father. You are there to welcome my mother into eternity...

Eternity. Another girl and a boy share my beginnings — if only a little delayed. Yes, a sister and a brother.

Miracles. Ask for a miracle! And so we did. And? Thanks to God who has given me a brother of depth and vision. His wisdom, wrung from a pained, loving heart, is worth sharing:

“To see what is visible, but believe the invisible. This is the essence of faith. I can't tell you why Mom is in such pain. Or why she is not getting relief from the things that are supposed to help her. But I do know Our Lady loves her, and is well aware of all the things, both seen and unseen, that must transpire before she is taken from this world. It is not our job to say when or what or how a miracle is defined. Our job is to remain faithful in the storm, to keep our eyes fixed on the Cross and on Salvation. The time to believe in miracles is not the day you find out you have cancer, but the day the doctor says he has nothing left to try. I have seen miracles before, and they were never manifested before all normal faith was exhausted, when all hope was lost, and when it seemed as if it was too late.

“And when a miracle comes, the question then becomes: what to do about it?

Will your life go back to normal? Or will you be a changed person, filled with the Holy Ghost and spreading the Gospel to save souls?

“So to anyone reading this, ask yourself if the miracle Our Lady keeps holding out for is not for Mom's ‘cure’, but for each of us, whose life she has touched, to cast aside our attachment to this world and instead live by faith, to give our lives to Our Lady's

service, and to be a miracle in someone else's life as well.”

Yes, life changes. In fact, life is changed, but not taken away*. And, may it be changed now for those of us who still want to pass through that door into eternity. ■

*From the Preface for a Requiem Mass

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Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM SOME DOUBTED

Holy scripture is replete with challenges. Many times in the Gospels Our Lord lays down commandments that are calling each of us to rise above nature and do the seemingly impossible: “Pray always,” “Be ye perfect,” “Love your

enemies,” or — the ultimate challenge when it comes to any human obstacles that would compete with the love of God, no matter how dear — “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). “Hate,” in this verse can be called hyperbolic, but as Monsignor Charles Pope explains most insightfully in one of his recent columns, the Hebrew tongue, especially in its use of the language of prophecy, rarely employed comparative adverbs but relied more on direct verbs. (“The Meanest Things Jesus Ever Said,” *Community in Mission*, Nov. 17) If this is correct then Our Lord in this last verse is commanding that His followers love Him *more* than parents, etc.; more even than their own lives.

This sacred use of provocative language would be a fascinating subject to explore some other time. However, it is not the theme of this brief article. Presently, I am concerned with certain facts related in the Gospels that are not challenges in themselves but challenges to my own understanding. They are mysteries to me, not mysteries of faith, but simply puzzles that leave me asking for an explanation. There are many such, but I am only presenting two here. And I have the great scripture scholar, Cornelius a Lapide, to help me.

“Some Doubted”

“And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing him they adored: *but some doubted*. And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt 28:16-20, my italic). (Some commentators think that these words of commission were actually delivered later to those gathered for His ascension from Mount Olivet in Jerusalem. This is a controverted point.)

A Lapide notes that Saint Matthew omits the appearances of the Resurrected Christ to the eleven in Jerusalem and, after relating the appearance of the angel and then Our Lord Himself to the holy women at the tomb, he takes his

readers directly to Galilee. Reading the Gospel accounts of Our Lord’s appearances to Mary Magdalene and the other women and the words of the angel to them at the tomb, I wondered why Jesus and His angel told the women to tell the Apostles that He would meet them in Galilee when He was about to appear to them in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. (As we know from Saint John’s Gospel, Jesus did manifest

How are we to understand this “doubt” among some of these disciples as Saint Matthew makes note of it?

Himself some time later, before His ascension, to a few of the Apostles fishing on the Sea of Galilee, which I will refer to in a moment.) A Lapide explains that the apparition in Galilee, which the Savior had previously announced, would be a “public event,” on a mountain, before a large crowd of five hundred disciples. This apparition, with its evangelical commandment, as we read it in Matthew, was also related by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:6.

How are we to understand this “doubt” among some of these disciples as Saint Matthew makes note of it?

Let us see what our exegete a Lapide says:

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted.’ Not of the eleven Apostles, but of the other disciples. For all the Apostles had now been confirmed by so many visions and proofs, that they did not doubt that Christ had risen. Or if any one prefers to refer this expression to the Apostles, it must be understood as meaning, they had before doubted, but were not now in doubt.

“Moreover, Christ appeared in the same form as He had when He was alive, so that He was recognized by the Apostles as the same and not another. Whereupon He veiled His brightness, for the weak eyes of mortal men would not have been able to bear it. S. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, 22, c. 19) says, ‘We must believe that the brightness which Christ’s body had when He rose was veiled from the eyes of the disciples.’”

So, we must understand this “doubt” as coming from some of the five hundred, enough for Saint Matthew to take note of it. Those who doubted had not seen the Resurrected Christ until this apparition. But Jesus appeared on this mountain with His glory veiled, lest they be overcome by such a luminous theophany. Perhaps they wondered, notwithstanding the testimony of the Apostles, whether this man was indeed the same Jesus whom they had known in His mortal life. We do not know. We live by faith: “blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed” (John 20:29).

“Follow Me”

Jesus, risen from the dead, said to Saint Peter as He took him aside privately on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: “Follow Me.”

This is the second verse that arrests my curiosity at the moment:

“Amen, amen I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should *glorify* God. And when he had said this, he saith to him: Follow me. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee?’ Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me” (John 21:18-22, my italic).

Notice that in this passage the Lord says to Saint Peter twice, “Follow Me.” As with his calling from the very beginning while mending his fisherman’s net on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said to Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, “Follow Me” and He would make them fishers of men. And, again later, when Peter remonstrated with His Master to forgo His passion, Jesus scolded him severely, “Get Behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men” (Matt. 16:23). Satan is a Hebrew word meaning “adversary.” In this instance Peter was acting as an adversary to the Will of God. “Get behind Me;” that is to say, “Follow Me.” So now, at the end, after asking Peter thrice if he loved Him, Jesus says to the fisherman, “Follow Me.” Follow Me, the Good Shepherd, as My Vicar.

There are ten occasions in the Gospels when Our Lord commands His disciples to follow Him. We follow Him by believing in Him and obeying His commandments and walking in His light, bearing the crosses He gives us: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16:24).



A Lapidé:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not,’ i.e., by thy natural will of sense, or feeling. For by the rational will Peter desired this [martyrdom] above all things. S. Chrysostom says, Christ predicts his martyrdom, showing him in what way and how much he ought to love Christ and His sheep, even unto His cross.’

“Admirably says S. Augustine, ‘That denier and lover, puffed up by presumption, cast down

by denial, purified by tears, approved by confession, crowned by enduring, found such an end, that he died for perfect love of Christ’s name, with Whom in his perverse precipitance he had promised to die. Made strong by His resurrection, he does what in his weakness he had rashly promised. And now he fears not the destruction of this life, because the Lord having arisen, had shown him the pattern of another life.’”

Citing certain Fathers, A Lapidé makes note that Peter was chosen by Christ to imitate Him in his death. Our Lord, being the Lamb of God and the Good Shepherd, willed that he who would “Feed the sheep” after Him, in his office as Vicar of Christ, should be like Him in being nailed to a cross. This martyrdom of Saint Peter would, Jesus said, “glorify God.” And that by his blood and by his humility. So comments a Lapidé: “Such was Peter, who when as a disciple of Christ he was brought to the cross, asked that he might be crucified upside down. He feared not the suffering, but he shrunk from equality with the Lord’s cross, manifesting unto all men the power of his marvellous humility, and preserving amidst his torments the discipline of the mystery (of the cross).

“*Follow Me,*” that as I have gone before thee to the cross, so do thou follow Me to the same. And let not the cross seem to thee too hard to undergo for Me, for I first endured it for thee. For thee and for the rest of the faithful I went before to it, and smoothed the way. For it behooves thee to



follow Me, as well in thy life and pastoral office, as in death and the cross, that thou shouldest lay down thy life for the sheep, and be a guide to the rest of the faithful to the cross and martyrdom.”

‘To follow the Saviour is to partake of salvation: to follow the light is to partake of light; now they who are in the light do not themselves illuminate the light, but [they] are enlightened by it.’

With this summons to follow Him, Jesus manifests His affection for Peter. An affection that He manifested from the very beginning when, upon meeting Peter at the introduction of his brother, Andrew, Jesus looked at him and said: “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter” (John 1:42). Twice Our Lord addressed Peter by way of respect for his father Jona. It would be like a close friend addressing me as “Brian, son of Austin.” Those who are close to a mentor whom they love, show their gratitude to their teacher by following him. And, likewise, a teacher displays his affection for a disciple by encouraging such a one to follow him. So,

here, in this exquisite passage, the Risen Master takes Peter aside with the words “Follow Me.” Did Peter hear secret words that illumined his soul at this divine beckoning? Words that, like those heard by Saint Paul in the third heaven, are beyond human expression? I like to think so.

A Lapidé also aptly quotes Saint Irenæus, “To follow the Saviour is to partake of salvation: to follow the light is to partake of light; now they who are in the light do not themselves illuminate the light, but [they] are enlightened by it.”

Remember that Peter, at the Last Supper, leaning not on Christ but on himself, protested his loyalty to the Lord, going so far as to say that he would die with Him and “for Him”: “Why cannot I follow thee now?” he said, “I will lay down my life for thee” (John 13:37). Jesus had just said to him prior, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow hereafter.” Yes, “hereafter,” but not now, “for the cock shall not crow, till thou deny me thrice (vs.38).

There we have it. A mysterious summons issued privately, apart from the other Apostles, and so intimately to Peter, to “feed the sheep,” “to follow Christ” that he might *lead* the whole Church to Christ. ■

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RECONQUEST

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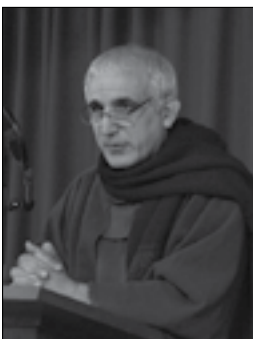
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PREFECT'S COLUMN

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR NEW AMERICAN PRESIDENT



Brother John Marie Vianney,
M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

the U.S. government and, by extension, to you and your administration.

I congratulate you on your hard-fought election. Further, I commend you on many of the positions you have expressed throughout the campaign, and into your transition period. Your attitudes about appointing pro-life justices to the Supreme Court, protecting the citizens by strengthening the borders of our country, reducing taxes, supporting our military and police in an effort to restore law and order — are encouraging. Your manner of speaking about the size of government echoes a Catholic principle called subsidiarity. That principle tells us to leave to local government what can be done by local government; to leave at the city level what can be done at that level, to permit the state to handle things better handled at that level and to use regional structures to perform duties that are best handled at that level.

It is clear to all that you love your country and are grateful for the sacrifices men in uniform have made, even with their lives, to keep our nation free.

Your popular campaign motto, to “Make America Great Again” commits you to maintaining loyalty to the Constitution, both personally and, certainly, in your coming appointments to executive offices and to the judiciary. You have the chance to help make America great in the higher sense of defending what is morally just, at home and abroad, and supporting the law of God above all else, as we have it given to us in the Ten Commandments. I believe that the best way that you can

Dear Mr. President:
When this is published in our little periodical, the *Mancipia*, you will have been sworn in as President of the United States. This will not be a very long letter, certainly not as long as the nine-page harangue the North Korean president recently sent to

achieve good things for America is by doing what is good for yourself. To aid you in your office, you would benefit immensely by becoming a Catholic and nourishing your soul and body with the sacraments God has given His Church through Jesus Christ. Doing this, you will be walking personally on the path of salvation and, by your good example, helping many others to do the same.

“I put in your loving hands my government with all its workers and citizens who are under my responsibility... [asking God]... to protect our country with a special protection.”

By way of introduction, I am the Prefect of the Third Order of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We are a Catholic religious order that has its own rally cry. Yours is to “Make America Great Again,” ours is to “Make America Catholic.” We have the common goal of making the country better. Our two-fold crusade is to convert America to the one true Faith, outside of which there is no salvation, and to defend all the dogmas of the Faith.

Another new President who won in the 2016 elections, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski of Peru, on October 27, 2016, consecrated his country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The purposes of the consecration included, in his own words to, “make an act of consecration of myself, my family and the Republic of Peru, to the love and protection of Almighty God through the intercession of the Sacred



Our Lady of Fatima

Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” What better protection could a President ask for his people? As a Catholic, you, Mr. Trump, could imitate his example.

That event in Lima was attended by high-ranking business and political leaders of Peru, including the President of the Congress, Luz Salgado, who also requested the protection of God in his speech, "I put in your loving hands my government with all its workers and citizens who are under my responsibility... [asking God]... to protect our country with a special protection."

I do not know if President Kuczynski was among the heads of state who have called to congratulate you. If not, when you eventually do speak with him, here is a fact that ties him to our country: Kuczynski went into exile to the United States in 1969 due to political persecution at home. I do not know where he resided in our country, but his father also suffered a similar but far worse exile. Kuczynski's father was a German Jewish immigrant, a physician, who fled Germany in 1933 to escape Nazism.

It will not be easy to make the conversion I am suggesting; but, Mr. Trump, you are no stranger in confronting challenges. This is your challenge of faith. God's grace will fortify you in accepting it. You have built up a real estate/business empire. You have become a man of means. But all that material wealth will be of naught in the final reckoning. "For what doth it profit a man," Jesus said, "if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16, verse 26)

We are made in the image and likeness of God. This likeness to God is chiefly in the soul, which is a spirit and will live forever. The two spiritual powers of the soul are intellect (understanding) and free will. The soul is therefore more valuable than the body which will someday die. The purpose or end of man is simple, we learned it as children: God created me that I might know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and then be happy with Him forever in heaven.

Finally, there is what may be an uncanny arrangement of events taking place in the very year you will take your place as the 45th President of the country. In 1917, one hundred years ago, the greatest and most largely viewed modern miracle took place near a town called Fatima in Portugal. This was an event that was impossible to pass off as anything but miraculous. In fact, the Portuguese newspapers of the time, many anti-Catholic, testified that at least 70,000 people witnessed what has come to be called,

The Miracle of the Sun.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared six times to three shepherd children near the town of Fatima, Portugal, between May 13 and October 13, 1917. Coming at a time when Christendom and practically the whole world was torn asunder by war and bloody violence, She promised that Heaven would grant peace to all the world if Her requests for prayer, reparation, and consecration were heard and obeyed.

"If My requests are granted...there will be peace."

Our Lady of Fatima explained to the children that war is a punishment for sin and warned that God would further chastise the world for its disobedience to His Will by means of war, hunger and the persecution of the Church, the Holy Father and the Catholic faithful. God's Mother prophesied that Russia would be God's chosen "instrument of chastisement," spreading the "errors" of atheism, materialism, statism, and anti-Christian social order across the earth, fomenting wars, annihilating nations, and persecuting the faithful everywhere.

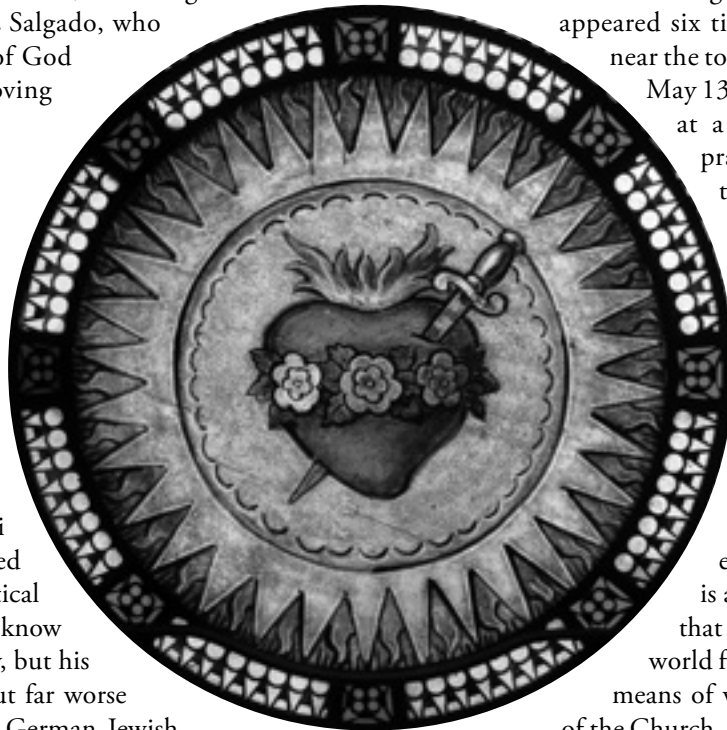
"If My requests are not granted, Russia will spread its errors throughout the world, raising up wars and persecutions against the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will suffer much and various nations will be annihilated."

To prevent this terrible chastisement at the hands of Russia and to convert "that poor nation," Our Lady requested the solemn public Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart by the Pope and all the Catholic bishops of the world.

The heart of Our Lady's Message to the world is contained in what has come to be called the "Secret" which She confided to the three child seers in July 1917. The Secret actually consists of three parts, the first two of which have been publicly revealed. The last part of the Secret (often called the Third Secret) has not yet been made public in its totality.

You, Mr. President, will be in office during the 100th anniversary year of the Fatima apparitions and you are in my prayers daily.

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
 Brother John Marie Vianney, M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect ▪
Email Brother John Marie Vianne, at toprefect@catholicism.org





Mr. Brad Grinstead

GUEST COLUMN THOUGHTS FROM A HEADMASTER

When I first arrived on campus of the Immaculate Heart of Mary School in January of 2005, my intention was to hold a part time teaching position while investigating future options. Options that were going to be bigger. Options that were going to be better.

Options that were clearly going to make a much bigger difference than my teaching at this school was going to make. The Immaculate Heart of Mary School was a temporary stomping ground meant only to provide a small wage while exploring what I was really meant to do. I can say with all certainty that while teaching math and science to what was once a classroom full of strangers, God certainly did help me find my future options. They were all there right in front of me. My future options were the students of IHM.

The mission of the Immaculate Heart of Mary School is “to form students into loyal subjects of our Lord Jesus Christ the King and His Queen Mother, educating them as intelligent and virtuous members of the Church Militant, who will take their place in the Church Triumphant.” I had found my future. I had found my purpose. Together with my students I was going to try to form myself and my student body into loyal subjects of our Lord and His Queen Mother. Perhaps you might say that was a lofty goal for a twenty-five year-old kid fresh out of graduate school that had become Catholic only eight months prior. I say to you in return, go big or go home. Twelve school years have passed since my

fate was decided. Twelve years worth of students, twelve years worth of laughter and tears, and twelve years worth of painful growth for student and teacher alike. Have we mastered Heaven yet? I don't think so, but twelve years has certainly taught us a few good lessons in patience and perseverance, and together we have learned that God actually has a plan that doesn't always exactly match ours.

Most of the youth I've had the privilege to teach, and some to mentor, I have known since they were in the first grade. Over the years I have come to know them and they certainly have come to know me. They have come to know my strengths and my shortcomings, and I have come to know theirs. It is patience alone that has kept us united. It is patience alone that has gotten all of us this far.

I have had to practice quite a heroic patience in dealing with teenagers occasionally lacking verbal filters. I often wonder why there is no stop sign between the brain and the tongue of an adolescent. Is it removed on their thirteenth birthday as a rite of passage? Do their friends sneak them out of the house for this procedure to occur? I might never know the answer to this question, but I will never cease wondering. I, too, on occasion have shown behaviors that might require heroic patience on my students behalf. An unnamed individual once said, “Honey, I love you more than my coffee, but not before it.” The student body here at IHM have my undying love and support, but not before my coffee. They know how to act depending on where I am in my coffee consumption. I thank them for loving me through this slight imperfection.

Father Walter Elliot was an American priest and missionary during the late 1800's to early 1900's. He stated



that “perseverance is not a long race, it is many races one after another.” He must have taught school some time during his tenure, for nothing teaches that lesson better than trying to mold the youth of today into the saints of tomorrow. Even with a little more experience now under my belt than I had a while back, I still face each day one day at a time

“to form students into loyal subjects of our Lord Jesus Christ the King and His Queen Mother, educating them as intelligent and virtuous members of the Church Militant, who will take their place in the Church Triumphant.”

in the hopes that I can find strength for tomorrow. Even in the daily battles my students face, some battles larger than I have ever had to endure, we have had to put our minds together and remember as Thomas Buxton, nineteenth century English philanthropist and abolitionist, once stated that “with ordinary talent and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable.”¹

One of the most difficult lessons learned while serving as teacher, principal, and headmaster is that God’s plans do not always match our plans. In our personal and public lives, students and teachers alike, have each had dreams shattered, hopes crushed, and wishes carried out with the rubbish. St.

Ignatius of Loyola once said that “if God sends you many sufferings, it is a sign that he has great plans for you and certainly wants to make you a saint.” I wonder if it will take another twelve years for that lesson to really sink in.

Given time to reflect on the fact that each and every one of us is only given a finite amount of time to serve our fellowman and to earn our spot in Heaven, I can’t imagine a more fulfilling and productive way to spend my time on Earth. There isn’t another career path I see that could possibly be more eternally productive for me. I have come to know so much and I pray that God will allow me to serve and learn so much more.

I love this school: the students, the teachers, and the parents. IHM is a good school, but we can always do better. I tell myself this often so that I never become complacent. We should be striving to be the best for our students. While teaching in this school, I have always held the philosophy that we train students for the future. At first glance, you might think this is an obvious statement, but just think how many administrators and teachers have lost sight of what their job is really about. At IHM, our administrators and teachers have not lost sight of our job. We want our students to be the best Catholic mothers, fathers, religious, teachers, or professionals that they can be.

In short, we want them to be a good, fruitful part of society, and I am confident that they will be.

1. I am not pretending to be a fan of Thomas Buxton, I am merely using a quote from him. ▪

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Mr. Robert Wolfe

GUEST COLUMN LOCAL NEWS

My parents had no religious affiliation, but for a few years when I was in grade school, my mother sent me to the little Methodist Church on the corner. After those early years I had no contact with religion or God until I met my future wife, Marie, during my college

years. She came from a “strict Catholic” family, and gently urged me to get back to church, so I became involved in the Methodist Church in the small town of Oak Harbor, Ohio, where Marie and I lived. Shortly thereafter, the Methodist minister began urging me to go into a Methodist seminary, and Marie and her mother began praying the Rosary for my conversion.

When Marie and I began discussing marriage I decided to take instruction in the Catholic faith, but I did not decide to become Catholic. When I asked her father if I could marry his daughter, he said, “You have to be married in the Church.” Knowing very little about the Catholic faith at that time, I agreed because I assumed he was talking about the physical Catholic church building down the street from his house. But soon enough, I realized that’s not what he meant. He meant that I had to become Catholic or there would be

When I awoke the next the morning,
I had an unexplainable, compelling
urge to immediately go find a Catholic
priest, get baptized, and join the
Catholic Church.

no marriage, and he told Marie that if she married me as a non-Catholic, he would disown her. To make matters more complicated for me, Marie and her mother had arranged for a nuptial high Mass for the wedding, scheduled for August 13, 1955. At the time, a nuptial high Mass was only for two Catholics, and I had not decided to become Catholic. I remember once during that period, Marie’s mother was sitting beside me in the passenger seat of the old 1929 Model A Ford that I was driving back and forth to college at that time, and she was telling me with tears in her eyes how much she and Marie liked me, but her husband would not allow the wedding if I did not become Catholic.

In March 1955, I graduated from college and took a job with IBM in Kingston, New York, and by the beginning

of July I still had not decided to become Catholic. With the wedding less than a month away, I agonized over my dilemma. Late one night I knelt beside my bed, pleading with God to tell me what to do. I remember it like it was yesterday. The room had a single light bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling of the room. All of a sudden, I felt a strong electrical shock up and down my entire back, a shock as strong as if I had put my fingers into an empty lightbulb socket. I said to myself, “What the heck was that!?” Not receiving an answer, I went to sleep.

When I awoke the next the morning, I had an unexplainable, compelling urge to immediately go find a Catholic priest, get baptized, and join the Catholic Church. I went to two Catholic churches before I found a priest to arrange for my baptism and entry into the Church, which happened just a few weeks before the wedding. I began attending Mass and remember being struck by the majesty of what I saw and felt in the Mass. Of course, at that time, in 1955, it was the classic Roman Rite Latin Mass.

Marie and I were married with the traditional nuptial high Mass, and we raised five children. After thirty-five years with IBM, in 1990 I retired and Marie and I sold our home in Peekskill, New York, and moved to western Pennsylvania to get away from the big city environment. We moved to a predominantly Catholic area near a city called St. Mary’s, PA. We lived in a quaint little town named Force, an ex-coal mining town, present population 300, where we had a five minute walk to our little *Novus Ordo* Catholic Church. It seemed like a wonderful move to us, and it was for a while. But we soon found out otherwise, when, for example, we heard the pastor in St. Mary’s tell us in one of his homilies that there were more than twelve apostles, and some of them were women. We were in the diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, and found that the Bishop, Donald Troutman, was an extreme liberal. Things in our parish and the diocese got progressively worse over the years and in 1997 we began driving two hours to a traditional Mass north of Youngstown, Ohio, where we first met the Saint Benedict Center sisters from Ohio, although we did not know them well and did not become associated with them then.

In 1998, with great financial loss, we sold out and moved to the traditional Catholic parish of Saint Michaels, in Scranton, PA, run by priests of the Fraternity of St. Peter. We joined the choir there at St. Michael’s and, at a choir practice, we met a young lady from New Hampshire who was working and studying in Scranton. Her name was Joan Johnston and unbeknown to me at the time, she would play a huge part in my life a few years hence, namely, that Marie would die of cancer two years later and

Joan would become my wife. Also, while attending Mass there, Marie and I met John Wassmer, who had long been affiliated with Saint Benedict Center in Richmond, New Hampshire. Encouraged by John, in July, 1999, Marie and I moved to Saint Benedict Center in Richmond. One day we were surprised to see the young lady we had met in Scranton. Shortly thereafter, Joan entered the convent at Saint Benedict Center for a short time as a postulant, discerning with her prioress that religious life was not her vocation.

Marie and I first moved into an apartment in the house across the street from Doug and Kathy Bersaw on Tully Brook Road while a new house was being built for us by Arnie Filipi on old Troy Road in Fitzwilliam. But shortly after we moved into the new house, Marie was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had been miraculously cured of lymph node cancer 11 years earlier, but now she deteriorated rapidly. And in November 2000 she was on her deathbed in the hospital in Keene. Joan, with some of the SBC sisters, came to visit Marie in the hospital. When they arrived they were informed that Marie was in the intensive care unit and immediately came to her. I was there with my two children, Patrick and Christina. We prayed the entire Rosary and Marie died minutes later

with the sisters at her bedside singing the *In Paradisum*. She died with her brown scapular on, November 25, 2000. I later learned that the brothers and, our chaplain, Father Jarecki, were praying for her before the Blessed Sacrament at the moment of her death.

After Marie died I rented our new house and, at age 67, entered the monastery at Saint Benedict Center. In the months ahead, it became apparent that life in the monastery was more strenuous than my 67 years could handle, and I had to leave. As divine providence would have it, Joan left the convent shortly before that time.

Because both of us had been postulants at Saint Benedict Center, Joan and I occasionally had coffee together. One evening in February, 2002, we were sitting in my car having coffee at Dunkin' Donuts on West Street in Keene and I asked her how old she was. She said, "36... and a half." And I said, "Would you consider the vocation of marriage with me?" She said, "...Yes!" And we both laughed hysterically!! We were married in September and have been active members of the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center since then. ■

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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:

- Listen to Reconquest on internet radio: www.reconquest.net.
- The 2016 Conference is now available on our online store. For details, go to: store.catholicism.org
- Thank you to Gabriel Brockman for the photos pages 3&4.

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



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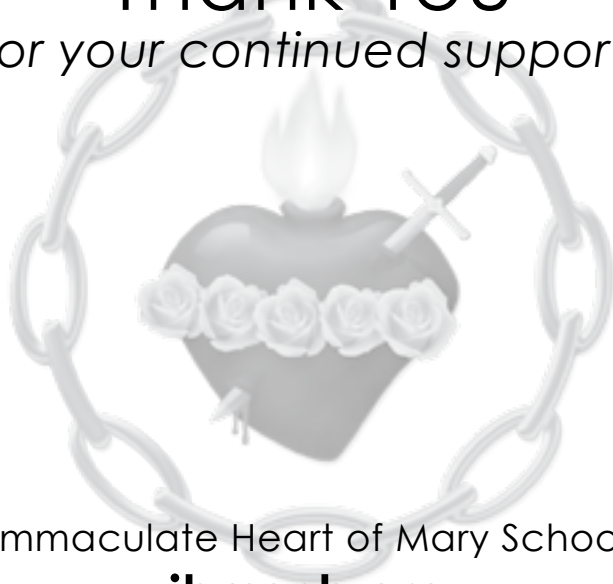
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