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DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Death has been much in the public consciousness over the last few months. The reasons for this are clear enough: the latest health problems of John Paul II, the cases here and in the United States concerning when medical care for the terminally or hopelessly ill may be cut off, the terrible reality of abortion.

There can be no argument about abortion for faithful Catholics: the "procedure" is the deliberate killing of a human being; thus murder; thus a mortal sin. The drama which this monstrosity exhibits, however, is no longer one of private sin and private repentance. Abortion is now an industry; worse, a "right". It is the clearest of the many signs which demonstrate the terrible truth: our "Christendom" is now truly dead, and cannot be revived in an historically recognizable form. Shipwreck seems certain for the West, and the only question now is what will replace it. The realities of modern Europe and America should give us pause before we blithely assume that what is coming will be friendly to the remnants of Christian culture which are here and there cultivated. The recent travails of the Catholic philosopher and politician Rocco Butiglione are a sufficient indication that not even "tolerance" will be our lot.

The question of the care of the dying is more complex, cases of outright euthanasia of course excepted. The lucid theologian who was Pope Pius XII laid down the parameters of reasonable thought on these matters as long ago as 1957: "Normally one is held to use only ordinary means - according to the circumstances of persons, places, times and culture - that is to say, means that do not involve any grave burden for oneself or another. A

stricter obligation would be too burdensome for most people and would render the attainment of the higher, more important good too difficult. Life, health, all temporal activities are in fact subordinated to spiritual ends."

It is this last observation of the pope we hope soon to be able to call "Blessed" which seems to be missing from much Catholic commentary on this issue today. Our life in this world is a prelude to eternity; is it not strangely anomalous, even faithless, to hold on so fiercely to our time-bound lives when we at the same time proclaim our belief in Christ's promise of eternal happiness after death?

Then there is the pope. He himself talks now of the witness which his dignified endurance of the indignities of his physical state gives to a world which worships, it so often seems, only youth and health. Those who talk of an impaired papacy are, curiously, often the same people who in a past by no means distant told us that the pope ruled too powerfully over us. This pope never did rule with any particular vigour; he seems rather to have seen his role as prophetic, and his prophecy now is of the value of suffering.

In this season of Easter the pope's role as suffering servant is doubly effective. He points to the only reason for his papacy, as also for our lives as Christians: the Resurrection. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor 15:14). St Paul's matter-of-factness is refreshing in an age which shies away from the obvious and looks for "spiritual meaning" even here where flesh and blood are most crucially real. Christ suffered in His flesh, His flesh it was that died, and His flesh it is that rose triumphant. Let us then triumph with Him, for that is His promise to us, fulfilled on the third day, and now renewed with perfect efficacy. Our "Alleluia" is humble, but our triumph, with Him, is proud.



"Archbishop Haas ordains Angel Alfaro Rivero"



"Bishop Bruskwitz, in cappa magna, begins the ceremony of dedication"

NEWS FROM WIGRATZBAD

On October 30, 2004, Archbishop Wolfgang Haas of Vaduz (Liechtenstein) made another welcome visit to Wigratzbad, to ordain Angel Alfaro Rivero, from Cadiz, to the diaconate for the Fraternity. The ordination took place during pontifical Low Mass, with chant from the seminary schola. We look forward to greeting the archbishop again on May 28 when he is due to return to confer the diaconate and subdiaconate on this year's candidates for major orders.

On December 8, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, High Mass of the feast was celebrated in the parish church at Lindau (on Lake Constance), by kind permission of the dean of Lindau, Father Ortwin Gebauer. When the community arrived back in Wigratzbad, Dean Gebauer blessed the Fraternity's new German district house, located across the village from the seminary.

Finally, on February 26, seven seminarians received the minor orders of porter and lector, and a further nine (eight of them students at Wigratzbad, and one studying in Rome) the orders of exorcist and acolyte, from Mgr Maximilian Ziegelbauer, retired auxiliary bishop in the diocese of Augsburg.

"A photo of the ordination to the diaconate can be seen on the front inside cover."

NEWS FROM DENTON

The Feast of St. Luke (October 18th) is a special day for members of the Priestly Fraternity, because it was on this day in 1988 that the Holy See officially erected the Fraternity as, to be precise, a "Clerical Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right". As we had only been founded some four months earlier, and as the ripening of a clerical society is normally allowed to go on for decades before the status of "Pontifical Right" is even contemplated, this short period must stand as a record in the Church's recent history. Ever since 1988 it has also been, and fittingly, the day on which members make or renew their requests for temporary or final incorporation in the Fraternity. This year thirteen seminarians received temporary incorporation, and Fr Calvin Goodwin, a former

Jesuit whom our Edinburgh community will remember from his month there last year, was permanently incorporated.

The ceremony was presided over by Fr Josef Bisig, formerly the Fraternity's Superior General and now Vice-Rector at Denton. He took the occasion to describe the events which led up to the founding of the Fraternity. He described with some verve the issues which led him and the other founders of the Fraternity to petition Rome to give a home to traditional priests and seminarians after the dramatic and tragic summer of 1988. The reception they got in Rome itself was a welcoming one, particularly from Cardinal Ratzinger and the Pope himself. It was thus natural that the founders should have seized the inspiration of the moment and named the newly fledged fraternity after the first pope. "Videre Petrum" indeed!

At the end of November a new priest was added to the Fraternity's ranks. Joseph Orłowski was ordained to the sacred priesthood in his home city of Vancouver, B.C. by its recently retired ordinary, Archbishop Adam Exner. A grand total of fourteen seminarians traveled north to Vancouver to assure the smooth running of the complicated ceremonies. The master of ceremonies throughout was Deacon Gregory Pendergraft, who will be remembered too for his time with Fr Goodwin in Edinburgh.

The final event worthy of record was very recent: last month Bishop Fabian Bruskowitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, in whose diocese the seminary is located, blessed the newest wing of the seminary in a ceremony filled with the requisite pomp and ceremony, as the photos we reproduce here amply demonstrate. The seminary is now nearly complete, although it still lacks the splendid seminary chapel, work on which will begin shortly.

IS MARY'S FAITH GREATER THAN HER MOTHERHOOD?

Our Lady prophesied in her *Magnificat* that all generations would call her blessed, but in what is she most blessed? St Luke, who put the *Magnificat* into writing, recounts an incident from Our Lord's preaching in which His Mother's prophecy began to be fulfilled. "As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked! But he said, Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (11:27-28) The

Church frequently reads this Gospel at Mass in honour of Our Lady. That should alert us to the fact that Our Lord's reply is not disobliging to His Mother, but points to her true greatness. Is she, then, more blessed as a faithful disciple than as the Mother of God? To answer the question we must turn to the Scriptures, Tradition and the comments of the Church Fathers, and interpret carefully what we find.

The divine maternity

The praise of the woman in the crowd, although a compliment to Our Lord's Mother, is above all a reflection on Jesus himself. "Happy mother, she cries, that bore such a son."¹ Here, already in action, is the axiom that what we say about Mary is a test of what we believe about Christ. Hence when the Council of Ephesus defined (in the year 431) that Our Lady is Mother of God (*theotŪkos*), this is really a confession that Jesus Christ is God. Mary is Mother of God, "not that the nature of the Word or His divinity took its origin from the holy Virgin; but the Word is said to have been born according to the flesh in that from her was born the holy body, animated with a rational soul, to which the Word is united in one Person".²

It is wrong, then, to object to the term Mother of God on the grounds that no human being can be the origin of a divine Person. The Council Fathers knew that very well, and that is not what they meant when they said Mother of God. What makes it possible, and necessary, to say Mother of God is the fact of Our Lord's Incarnation. The Word, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, took a human nature to himself. The divine nature and the human nature were henceforth united in the one Person of the Word made flesh. In His divine nature, the Word exists from all eternity: "born from the Father before all ages," as we sing in the Creed. His human nature He took to himself in time, at the moment of His conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

In generation, the one who generates communicates his nature to the one who is generated. In the Trinity, the Son is eternally generated (without beginning and without end) by the Father alone. In the Incarnation, He received His human nature from His Mother alone. When she conceived Him by the miraculous intervention of God, she became fully His parent: like every child in human generation, He took from His Mother a

bodily nature apt to receive, from God, a rational soul. The virginal character of His conception means that His human nature was communicated by His mother alone, not by father and mother as with the rest of men.

Mary's obedience of faith

St Bede sees in the Gospel text "Blessed is the womb that bore you" an affirmation of Our Lady's flesh-and-blood relationship to God the Son (*Liber 4, cap. 49 in Lucam 11*). Yet Our Lord seems to treat this blood relationship as inferior to discipleship: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Our Lady is pre-eminently one who hears and keeps the word of God, as the early chapters of Luke's Gospel make plain. At the Annunciation, Mary hears the divine message of the angel; not understanding how her future motherhood is to be reconciled with her intent to remain a virgin, she asks in simplicity how this is to be (1:34). Then, when God's will is made clear to her, she gives her entire consent. At the Visitation, her kinswoman Elizabeth declares her blessed because of her faith: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (1:45). Unlike Our Lord, whose human soul always possessed the vision of God, Our Lady, like us, walked not by sight but by faith: hence she is the highest model for our lives of faith.

After Our Lord's birth, divine revelations were made to others concerning the child: to the shepherds and to Simeon. Our Lady responded humbly, "marvelling at what was said about him" (2:33), she "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (2:19). After the painful lesson which her Son, at the age of twelve, gave her about His total consecration to His Father by remaining behind in the Temple for three days, she "did not understand" His account of himself (2:50), but she accepted it in faith.³ Again the evangelist tells us: "his mother kept all these things in her heart" (2:51). If anyone exemplifies what St Paul calls the obedience of faith (Rom 5:1), it is the Blessed Virgin. She who conceived and bore the Word in her womb was the most perfect hearer and keeper of God's word.

The heart of Mary's motherhood

Are we, then, to think that Mary's perfect discipleship was more excellent than her motherhood? A reading of the Church Fathers might incline us to this conclusion. For example, St Augustine: "Mary is more blessed in her perception of faith in Christ than in the conception of the flesh of Christ" (*De sancta virginitate*, 3). Or St John Chrysostom: "[Christ] was showing that

¹ R. Ginns OP, "St Luke", *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, New York etc: Nelson, 1953, p.955, n. 757g.

² St Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistola 2 ad Nestorium*.

³ cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 534.

[the fact of being His Mother] would have been of no profit to her, if she had not done all that is morally required” (*Homilia 45 in Matthaeum*). St Bede continues: “the same Mother of God is indeed blessed because of her temporal, ministerial role in the Incarnation of the Word, yet much more blessed because she remained forever His custodian in love”.

When we read these comments by the Fathers, we should be aware of an important nuance. Of course blood relationship to Christ, considered simply in itself, is inferior to the obedience of faith. The proof is the case of Our Lord’s relatives, those whom the Gospels call His brethren, who lacked faith in Him, at least before His Resurrection (cf. Jn 7:5). Hence Our Lord’s answer to the woman in the crowd, and to the person who tells Him that His Mother and brethren are asking for Him: “My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it” (Lk 8:19-21). However, it would be wrong to introduce a false opposition between Mary as mother and Mary as disciple, as if the divine maternity were something *merely* carnal. Man is by nature composed of body, the material part, and a rational soul, which is a spirit. Human motherhood, even on a purely natural level, involves a spiritual dimension which distinguishes it from the merely animal relation of parent to offspring. All the more does Our Lady’s motherhood engage her spiritually, and not merely in the order of nature but in the order of grace. Her maternity is not merely human, but divine, because her Son is a divine Person, God himself.⁴ Mary is full of grace, preserved from original sin and endowed with an abundance of sanctifying grace from the moment of her conception - and why? Precisely because she was created to be the Mother of God.

Once we have understood that Our Lady’s faith and love are integral to her motherhood, we can see that her divine maternity is indeed her greatest privilege. Her motherhood and her perfect discipleship cannot be separated: she became Mother of God as a consequence of the response of faith which she proffered from her Immaculate Heart. Hence St Augustine can say: “the one to whom Blessed Mary gave birth in believing, she conceived in believing” (*Sermo 215*). Our Lady’s faith and charity lay at the heart of her divine maternity.

The lessons of Christ’s reply

Why, then, does Our Lord emphasize the distinction between motherhood and discipleship? Several reasons explain His attitude. First, His hearers (like most of us) were all too ready to see things on

⁴cf. M-J Nicolas OP, *Th`eotokos: le mystère de Marie*, Tournai: Desclée, 1965, ch.2.

a purely natural level. Jesus wishes to raise their minds to the supernatural. Secondly, the Jews are warned that the fact of being akin to Christ according to the flesh is not enough for their salvation. They must be converted and believe in Him. St John the Baptist had already made essentially the same point when he said: “Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’, for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Mt 3:8-9).

This warning, addressed to the Israel of the Old Testament, is, by analogy, valid for Christians, too. By baptism we are marked as Christ’s, but we must conserve the grace of baptism (or the grace that we have recovered in the sacrament of penance) by lives of faith, hope and charity. Being a merely nominal Catholic is not the way to salvation. The maidens whose oil has run out cannot fill their flasks with the oil of others (cf. Mt 25:8-9). The last Council warned that if Christians fail to respond to the grace of Christ “in thought, word and deed, not only will they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged” (*Lumen Gentium* 14).

Finally, if Our Lord is discreet about the singular privileges of His Mother, the time had not yet come to act otherwise. In the Gospels, we find that Jesus is discreet about His own mystery: His divinity is veiled by His humanity, He effaces himself before His heavenly Father, whose mercy He has come to preach and to bestow. It was only when the Church, guided into the fullness of truth by the Holy Ghost, began to elucidate the mystery of Christ that she found herself compelled to define the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin. Mary is blessed because in hearing she believed, in believing she conceived the Word of God and, as Bede says, remained forever His custodian in love.

Brendan Gerard

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

After our Blessed Lord spoke the words “This is My Body ... This is the Chalice of My Blood...” over the bread and over the cup, these seemed to remain unchanged. But He who by His command cast out demons, calmed the seas and raised the dead does not send forth His word without effect. Though the appearances of bread and wine remained after Christ’s words of consecration, the bread had been changed into His Body and the wine into His Blood.

Long before our Savior's birth, the pagan Aristotle made the world aware of the distinction between substance and accidents. Substance, which is not in any way perceptible to the senses, is that which makes a thing to be what it is. Accidents, which are perceptible to the senses (e.g. color, taste, weight and shape) exist in a substance and not independently of a substance. Accidents can change without causing a change in the substance. A cow that is branded, for example, has changed only accidentally; it still remains a cow.

Whatever makes bread to be bread or wine to be wine is not something perceptible to the senses. When, therefore, Christ, who is the Truth as well as the Way and the Life, says: "This is My Body ... This is the Chalice of My Blood," His faithful, believing in the Word of God who cannot deceive them, understand that the whole substance of bread has been changed into the substance of our Lord's Body and the whole substance of wine has been changed into the substance of our Lord's Blood. This change, says the Council of Trent, has been properly called by the holy, Catholic Church transubstantiation. Since there is no longer the substance of bread and wine, the accidents which remain exist miraculously without adhering to any substance.

When He pronounced the words of consecration, changing bread and wine into His Body and Blood, Christ offered an unbloody sacrifice which anticipated the bloody sacrifice of the cross. Though the words of institution differ slightly in Matthew, Mark, Luke and I Corinthians, all of them indicate Christ's offering Himself to God for men.

In the Douay-Rheims, Matthew 26:26 and Mark 14:22 have the words "This is my body" for the consecration of the bread.

Luke 22:19 has "This is my body which is given for you" and I Corinthians 11:24 has "this is my body, which shall be delivered for you..."

The following are the words for the consecration of the chalice:

Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."

Mark 14:24: "This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many."

Luke 22:20: "This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you."

Corinthians 11:25: "This chalice is the new testament in my blood..."

The expressions "my blood of the new testament" and "the new testament in my blood" evoke Exodus 24:8 where Moses, sprinkling the altar and the people with the blood of sacrifice, says: "This is the

blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you..."

"Blood shed for remission of sins" recalls New Testament texts referring to the sacrifice of the cross. In Romans 3:25, for example, St. Paul writes: "...Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the shewing of his justice, for the remission of former sins..." In Ephesians 1:7 the Apostle to the Gentiles says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace..."

The clause "which is given for you" or "which shall be delivered for you" is redolent of sacrifice. In Ephesians 5:2, for example, St. Paul writes: "...Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."

In offering Himself mystically in an unbloody manner at the Last Supper, Christ anticipated His sacrifice on the cross. His offering at the Supper, which was done only once, is the exemplar of the sacrifice of the Mass which happens daily on our altars. Because Christ who offered Himself at the Supper was then mortal, that sacrifice was meritorious. Since Christ is no longer mortal, the sacrifice of the Mass applies the merits He has already won for us.

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LANGUAGE AND TRUTH

PART II

The movement which was known as the Higher Criticism represented a particularly serious - perhaps we should say, the most serious - attack on language, understood as the bearer of truth, because the movement had the temerity to call into question the integrity of the Bible. Knowing as we do by our faith that the author of the Bible is no other than God Himself, it would be no exaggeration to say that the whole approach of the movement amounted to an elaborate exercise in something very much like blasphemy. If modern intellectuals saw fit to show contempt for a divine author it is little wonder that, over the

course-of time, human authors, and the language in which they expressed their ideas, became the objects of an even more thoroughgoing contempt. And that is precisely what is happening today on a rather large scale. The name to be given to the contemporary general attack upon the integrity of language is *Deconstruction*. And Deconstruction can be taken for a more polite way of saying destruction.”

Deconstruction, which has been aptly described by Father Stanley Jaki as “the latest fad in intellectual self-extermination,” is for the most part the brainchild of academic intellectuals. Deconstruction is a narrow, self-serving, and crudely reductionistic form of critical analysis which is applied to many disciplines, but which to date has been operating principally within the field of literature, with that field having suffered much damage as a result. A poignant account of the havoc wreaked by Deconstruction within contemporary literary studies is provided us by Professor R.V. Young, in his book *At War With the Word*, which I highly recommend.

The main thrust of the destructive activity which is the heart of Deconstruction is directed against the authority of the author, and, more broadly, against the very purpose of language as the bearer of objective meaning and truth. Traditionally, the critic approached a book and its author in an attitude of respectful deference. He came to them first and foremost as a simple appreciator. The critic saw his task as the discernment, and then the explication, of the meaning the author intended to convey through the book he had written. The meaning the critic sought was objective, incorporated within the language of the text.

The Deconstructionist critic turns this traditional understanding of literary criticism topsy-turvy. The authoritative status of the author is cavalierly disregarded, and the meaning which the author may have intended to convey in his book is now seen as something of only incidental interest. Under the new dispensation created by Deconstruction, it is the critic of the book, not its author, who is to tell us what it really means. And the book itself, the literary text, effectively loses its status as a conveyor of objective truth. It becomes malleable clay in the ever active hands of the Deconstructionist critic, who gratuitously transforms it into a means for furthering his heavily ideological agenda.

If Deconstruction were no more than the latest in-house diversionary amusement of academic intellectuals, there would be no good reason for being especially concerned about it. But it is considerably more than that. Two points are worth considering here. First, academic intellectuals have

an immense albeit indirect influence upon society at large, for they have before them daily, in the form of the captive audience which is their students, the next generation of a society's leaders. Second, Deconstruction is not simply a new methodology for doing literary criticism; it is methodology which is inspired and driven by a philosophy which has become essentially nihilistic.

Deconstruction is one of the most recent, and particularly virulent, strains of philosophical idealism. Philosophical idealism is a philosophy which, as its name suggests, puts more value on ideas in the mind than on the things in the world of which ideas are the representations. In other words, it is basically subjective in its orientation and commitments, in contrast to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, which is pronouncedly objective in every respect. For St. Thomas, and for Scholastic philosophy in general, the thing in the world always takes precedence over the idea in the mind. Ideas are most certainly important, but as the means by which we come to know things, and not as ends in themselves.

The principal problem with any kind of philosophical idealism is to be found in its rooted subjectivism. If ideas take precedence over things, it follows necessarily that the subjective order, represented by the individual entertaining the ideas, is going to take precedence over the objective order. And what follows upon subjectivism, as surely as night follows day, is relativism, for ideas are intensely personal, and if I count ideas as more important than things, then my ideas become the standard for truth. And the same is the case with you, if you are committed to philosophical idealism.

With a situation like this, the objective status of truth is quickly lost sight of. Truth becomes relative to this or that person. Such relativism, if it becomes pervasive in any society, can never become a permanent state of affairs. Either the society recovers its sanity, and returns to health by recognizing the objective status of truth, or the society slowly but surely lapses into nihilism.

Not all forms of philosophical idealism necessarily descend into nihilism, but this is what has happened to Deconstruction. It is at war with the word, in Professor Young's telling phrase, because it rightly sees the word - i.e., language in general - as the bearer of truth, and it is the enemy of truth.

Deconstruction represents an abdication of the most serious responsibility of any genuine literary scholar: the dedicated attempt to understand the workings of the mind of another human person, as expressed in a text written by that person - certainly one of the most challenging tasks any of

us can take on, requiring much patience and perception. The Deconstructionist critic opts for the easy way out. He does not have to strain to determine objective meaning embodied in a text, because he is bent making a text mean only what he wants it to mean. The point is not to grasp the written thought of others, but to impose one's own thought upon what others have written. There are a variety of ways we can insult our fellow human beings, past and present, but this has to stand as among the more devious, and cowardly.

The damage which has been done, and continues to be done, by the phenomenon called Deconstruction is considerable. What should be our response to this? A young man once came to an old sage, complaining about the manifold abuses of language that abounded in the society in which they lived, and asked what could do about it. He was expecting to receive from the sage an elaborate response to his question. The sage simply told him "Speak the truth." "Is that all?" the young man said.

"That is everything," the sage responded.

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DEBUNKING THE DA VINCI CODE

Many Catholics have read and been either intrigued or scandalized by the international best seller by Dan Brown called *The Da Vinci Code*. The book is now being filmed and will certainly make a further big impact once that film is released. We thought that our readers should read something about the book's many historical and theological errors and distortions. The interview below, conducted with the two authors of a book published last year in the United States titled *Debunking the Da Vinci Code*, was published originally in the National Catholic Register.

Dan Brown writes about the Holy Grail and the Church's supposed attempts to suppress it. What is the real story?

Miesel: The Church has never said anything about the Holy Grail. Medieval legends of the Holy Grail began in the 12th century. The Grail only appears in literature, with its meaning tied to legitimate Christian belief in the holy Eucharist. Nobody ever went out to look for the Grail. It is well established that ideas of old pagan myths filtered into stories of the Holy Grail. The first place the Grail is ever mentioned is in the "Tale of the Grail", written by

Chretien de Troyes, a Frenchman in the 12th century. The idea of the Grail being the bloodline of Mary Magdalene and Jesus comes from occult books. The book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which came out in the 1980s, talks about this "great secret" of the Grail. It's based on false documents that were planted in the French National Library by Frenchmen Pierre Plantard and his collaborators in the 1950s. The documents showed a supposed genealogy of the descendants of Christ.

Brown says the Emperor Constantine was baptized on his deathbed and implies he was never a believer.

Olson: Constantine was baptized on his deathbed, but this was common at the time. There is a great deal of evidence that he was a believer in Christianity. He desired to go to the Jordan and get baptized there. He called together the Council of Nicaea in 325 to combat the Arian heresy. There was unity lacking in the Roman Empire. And Constantine did see Christianity as a unifying influence. But to say he was not a true believer is a very cynical statement that does not hold up to the evidence.

What about Brown's assertions that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene?

Miesel: This legend all began with a crooked priest in France in the 1890s. This priest made money by selling Masses. He renovated his church and built an expensive house. Eventually, his bishop made him quit as a priest. The village where he lived, however, wanted the house to be made into a tourist attraction. So in the 1950s, a restaurant owner said a secret parchment and Templar treasures had been found in or near the church. Plantard created this fake parchment. He had been a devout Catholic but went on to become a con man. The parchment supposedly supported the idea of a secret bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Brown says Constantine invented Jesus' divinity and that no one had ever believed this beforehand, not even Jesus' followers.

Olson: This is the biggest lie in the book. It goes directly to the heart of Christianity. If no one believed Jesus was divine, then why were Christians persecuted? Why were they willing to go to their deaths? Jesus' divinity is in the writings of all four Gospels, the writings of St. Paul and all the early Church Fathers in the first three centuries. In our book, we quote 12 Church Fathers - these were early theologians whose writings the Catholic and Orthodox Church look to as authoritative guides.

What about this Priory of Sion? Brown claims it is an ancient organization charged with protecting the tomb of Mary Magdalene.

Miesel: There never was a Priory of Sion organization that spanned a thousand years. In

1956, Pierre Plantard formed the Priory of Sion in France. The group's interest was in mystical and esoteric doctrines. He eventually built a myth of himself as the descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Then a supposed member of the priory committed suicide in 1992. Plantard was brought to testify in court, and under oath, he said he had made everything up. He died in 2000. Brown is a very deceptive writer. In fact, I can hardly find a single fact that is true in his book.

Who were the Knights Templar, and did the Church accuse them of heresy - as Brown asserts?

Miesel: The Knights Templar were basically monks who fought. They were founded in 1108 and designed to help the Crusades conflict in the Holy Land. The Knights became very popular, and many people joined them. At their peak, they never had more than 300 full-fledged knights in the Holy Land, but they did have thousands of members: chaplains, servants, workers, lay people.

How and why were they persecuted?

Miesel: In 1291, the Holy Land was retaken by the Muslims. The Knights went back to France where they had lots of property by this time - thousands of plots - which people had given to them. They operated what amounted to a chain of international banks. You could put money down in Paris in one of their centers and take it out in Rome. In 1307, King Philip IV of France decided he wanted their money. He had all of them arrested: about 1,500 to 2,000 people. The king said they were heretics. He did this on his own authority, not the Pope's. The Pope at this time was in Avignon and was very weak. He was told about this after the fact. The Knights were imprisoned, tortured and made to sign wild things: that they worshipped an idol called Baphomet, dishonored the crucifix and were homosexuals. About 100-200 of them would not admit to this and were burned at the stake. Pope Clement was horrified originally. But when he read their confession, he gave permission to investigate. Eventually, King Philip IV brought his soldiers to the Pope and put strong pressure on him to sign a decree in 1312 that suppressed the order. In 1314, the last two Templar Knights were burned at the stake.

What about all the assertions made against Opus Dei?

Olson: Brown uses Opus Dei to replace the old bogeyman in anti-Catholic literature, which used to be the Jesuits. Brown's language is laughable. It's not a religious order. There are no monks or sisters. He describes it as a church; it's not a church. It's a personal prelature. It is almost exclusively made up of lay people, and its goal is to promote the vocation of holiness in the world.

Brown says Leonardo da Vinci mocked the Church.

Miesel: Everything Brown tells you about

Leonardo da Vinci is wrong. Maybe he was a homosexual, but he was not flamboyant. In fact, he was quiet and reserved. In the Last Supper painting, da Vinci is illustrating St. John's Gospel. Mary Magdalene is not the person next to Jesus [as Brown asserts]. It is St. John, who is always depicted as young and effeminate. There is no evidence that da Vinci hated the Catholic Church. He died a believing Catholic. His last will specifically requests a Catholic funeral.

Brown says the Church, from the beginning, launched a smear campaign against Mary Magdalene.

Olson: This is ludicrous, especially when you see that the Gospel mentions her 12 times and she is the first witness to the Resurrection. In fact, during the entire medieval era, 400 to 1400 A.D., she was the most popular saint in the Western Church. Eventually Mary, the mother of Jesus, became more popular.

What disturbs you the most about The Da Vinci Code?

Miesel: That people are taking this as true. Why is this happening? Because people don't have real faith, and because Catholics have been so poorly catechized. They don't know how the Gospels were formed, what the early Church believed, that the divinity of Jesus was not an invention. Brown exploits ignorance. It doesn't occur to people to check stuff in their encyclopedias. They only look on the Internet and find all kinds of strange Web sites supporting this stuff. People like conspiracy theories. The Church scandals have made all of this easier to take in. It is a sad commentary that Christians and Catholics are reading this. It's a masterpiece that appeals to the weaknesses of our age.

Olson: The most disturbing thing is its success. People are spiritually gullible and put their brain on hold to embrace something that is anti-Catholic. This is a prejudice that's deeply engraved in American culture. *The Da Vinci Code* appeals to people who don't like religious authority. It promises special knowledge and says the Catholic Church is false. If Jesus isn't divine, he can't make any moral demands. The scandal is that Jesus is alive and that you have to decide for or against him.

For those with internet access, we recommend the site:

www.geocities.com/frcoultter/davincicode.html

WE ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT CARDINAL
DARIO CASTRILLON HOYOS WILL PERFORM
THE ORDINATIONS AT WIGRATZBAD ON JUNE
25, 2005

JUVENTUTEM

This year a group of young people who are attached to the traditional forms of liturgy will be attending the World Youth Day. It is the first time such a group has taken an official part in this event, though by no means the first time traditionally minded young people have attended the World Youth Day. The name of the group is "*Juventutem*", Latin for youth, a name taken from psalm 42 which the priest recites at the foot of the altar in the traditional Latin Mass – "I shall enter unto the altar of God, to the God who gives joy to my youth". Nowadays there is a cult of youth as if it were a value in itself. This is good neither for young people nor for society in general. That is why we have chosen a name which refers to the only genuine youth: the spiritual youth which flows from humble and confident familiarity with Divine Grace.

Juventutem hopes for two sorts of benefits from attendance at World Youth Day: First of all working together within *Juventutem* will provide the various religious communities who are attached to the traditional Latin Mass with an opportunity to know each other better, and thereby better serve Holy Mother Church. Also, the young people coming from over thirty countries will have an opportunity to meet each other and make friends and useful contacts. They will see that their attachment to Catholic Tradition is shared by many men and women of their own age who are often from very different backgrounds.

Second, *Juventutem* will help make those who love the traditional forms of worship of the Church better known to three sectors of the population coming from all over the world: the young, the clergy, and the media. Many of these people either hear about those attached to the traditional liturgy in unreliable reports and caricatures or even do not know them at all. If these people are allowed to see those attached to the traditional Latin Mass for what they are, with their wide variety of origins and cultures, as joyful people of good will, using the traditional rite and spirituality not to shut themselves off from the modern world but to help convert it and bring it to Our Lord, then many of the misconceptions about the wider traditionalist cause will have been dispelled.

A WEEK AT THE FOOT OF THE ALPS

In order to prepare spiritually for the World Youth Day and the Holy Father's visit, those who are officially part of the *Juventutem* group will be able

to spend five days in Bavaria (10th to 14th August) before going on to spend six days in Cologne. About 2,000 young people and about 60 priests and religious are expected. They will be based near the international seminary of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter in Wigratzbad, ten miles from magnificent Lake Constance, and three miles from both Austria and Switzerland. Pilgrims will camp along a small river in tents equipped with water, showers and everything else which German regulations require. The week will include visits to Neuschwanstein, Ludwig II of Bavaria's Wagnerian castle; Masses in a number of the beautiful baroque churches of the area (such as the colossal abbey church of Ottobeuron); walks in the Bavarian alps; and visits to towns on Lake Constance. Every day there will be the traditional Latin Mass and sung Gregorian Lauds or Vespers; doctrinal teaching in several languages by traditional clerics and theologians (the main theme being the seven sacraments); continuous Eucharistic adoration; and daily opportunities to meet priests for discussion and to receive the sacrament of Confession. In the evening there will be a period of recreation and meditation ending with sung Compline.

COLOGNE 15-21 AUGUST

On 15th August, the feast of the Assumption, those based in Bavaria will travel to Cologne, stopping on the way for a Pontifical High Mass for the Assumption. In Cologne there will be meetings with other groups taking part in the World Youth Day for meals, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and various activities in the evening, on top of the events organised centrally by the World Youth Day committee. There will be time to venerate the relics of the Three Kings enshrined at the Cathedral since the Middle Ages. The Holy Father will arrive in Cologne in the afternoon of Thursday 18th August, and the World Youth Day will close with the Papal Mass on Sunday 21st. Various bishops from around the world will visit the *Juventutem* group and give catechetical lectures. There will also be meetings with pro-life associations, an exhibition of sacred vestments and vessels, and commentaries on famous classical Christian paintings projected on large screens. Other activities are currently being planned. A professional choir will sing daily either during Mass or at Vespers or for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. They will sing various compositions from the classical repertoire (works by Palestrina, Mozart, Fauré, etc) as well as more recent Catholic music. There will also be frequent opportunities for amateurs to sing Gregorian chant and hymns, and polyphony according to circumstances. Those who wish will be able to attend special classes to be trained in choral singing.



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WHO SHOULD JOIN US?

So who should consider taking part in the *Juventutem* project? Certainly, those young people (in the 18-30 age bracket) who are already attached to the traditional Latin Mass. *Juventutem* is an excellent opportunity to make our love for Catholic Tradition better known, and to deepen our own understanding of the Church's liturgical, doctrinal and spiritual heritage. However, if you are not very familiar with the traditional liturgy, or if you don't know about it at all, you should feel most welcome to take part too, as the *Juventutem* project presents a wonderful opportunity to get to know the riches of the Church's traditions in friendly and relaxed surroundings. Also, those not in the first flush of youth should not feel excluded as they are invited to support the initiative by their prayers, by making it known to their children, brothers and sisters and friends, and by making contributions to the cost of the project, be it by sponsoring young persons to attend, or by contributing to the central costs (such as the hire of tents, coaches, and food and drink).

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO TAKE PART?

The costs of transport to Germany have yet to be finalised, but we anticipate the cost of taking part in the two weeks (Bavaria and Cologne) to be around £250, inclusive of all travel, food and lodging costs. The cost of taking part in the Cologne activities only should be around £180, again fully inclusive of travel, food and lodging costs. Given the number of low cost airlines operating out of London airports that offer flights to Germany, it may be possible to lower the cost of both options considerably.

Please visit www.juventutem.com for updates. Any and all questions should be sent by e-mail, marked for the attention of Gregory Flash and addressed to englandandwales@juventutem.com or by post to Gregory Flash, 36 Royal Avenue, London, SW3 4QF.

6 BELFORD PARK

Many of you will want to know how the restoration of the Fraternity's headquarters is progressing. So far around £8,000 has been raised, and around £6000 has been spent on repairing the roof (the largest expense by far, although luckily not so large as it might have been), and the garden walls, which were literally falling down in places. An estimate of nearly £6000 has been received for repair of the equally (and more seriously) neglected exterior stone work of the house itself. Our sincere thanks

to those who have helped so generously. Further contributions are needed and will be very gratefully received.



The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter is a registered charity (no. 1083419). Any and all donations should be made payable to "The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter" and sent to P.O. Box 26764, 58 Thornton Road, LONDON SW12 QZX using the PRE-PAID envelope provided. Please do not make cheques out in the name of an individual priest, nor to *Videre Petrum*.

Communications concerning this newsletter, which are always welcome, should be sent to the editor, Fr John Emerson, at 6 Belford Park, EDINBURGH EH4 3DP.

VIDERE PETRUM is the newsletter of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter (FSSP) in the British Isles. Its title recalls St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (I: 15-19) where Paul relates how he responded immediately to the Lord's call to become an apostle, yet after three years he came to Jerusalem "to see Peter" (in the Latin Vulgate, *videre Petrum*), thus exemplifying obedience to God and communion with the Vicar of Christ.