The World Day of Peace this year is being celebrated in the shadow of the dramatic events of last September 11. On that day, a terrible crime was committed: in a few brief hours thousands of innocent people of many ethnic backgrounds were slaughtered. Since then, people throughout the world have felt a profound personal vulnerability and a new fear for the future.

Peace: the work of justice and love

I have often paused to reflect on the persistent question: how do we restore the moral and social order subjected to such horrific violence? My reasoned conviction, confirmed in turn by biblical revelation, is that the shattered order cannot be fully restored except by a response that combines justice with forgiveness. The pillars of true peace are justice and that form of love which is forgiveness.

But in the present circumstances, how can we speak of justice and forgiveness as the source and condition of peace? We can and we must, no matter how difficult this may be: a difficulty which often comes from thinking that justice and forgiveness are irreconcilable. But forgiveness is the opposite of resentment and revenge, not of justice. In fact, true peace is “the work of justice” (Ps 32:17). As the Second Vatican Council put it, peace is “the fruit of that right ordering of things with which the divine founder has invested human society and which must be actualized by man thirsting for an ever more perfect reign of justice” (Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, 78). For more than fifteen hundred years, the Catholic Church has repeated the teaching of Saint Augustine of Hippo on this point. He reminds us that the peace which can and must be built in this world is the peace of right order — tranquillitas ordinis, the tranquillity of order (cf. De Civitate Dei, 19,13).

True peace therefore is the fruit of justice, that moral virtue and legal guarantee which ensures full respect for rights and responsibilities, and the just distribution of benefits and burdens. But because human justice is always fragile and imperfect, subject as it is to the limitations and egoism of individuals and groups, it must include and, as it were, be completed by the forgiveness which heals and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations. This is true in circumstances great and small, at the personal level or on a wider, even international scale. Forgiveness is no way opposed to justice, as if to forgive meant to overlook the need to right the wrong done. It is rather the fullness of justice, leading to that tranquility of order which is much more than a fragile and temporary cessation of hostilities, involving as it does the deepest healing of the wounds which fester in human hearts. Justice and forgiveness are both essential to such healing.

The reality of terrorism

It is precisely peace born of justice and forgiveness that is under assault today by international terrorism. In recent years, especially since the end of the Cold War, terrorism has developed into a sophisticated network of political, economic and technical collusion which goes beyond national borders to embrace the whole world. Well-organized terrorist groups can count on huge financial resources and develop wide-ranging strategies, striking innocent people who have nothing to do with the aims pursued by the terrorists.

When terrorist organizations use their own followers as weapons to be launched against defenceless and unsuspecting people they show clearly the death-wish that feeds them. Terrorism springs from hatred, and it generates isolation, mistrust and closure. Violence is added to violence in a tragic sequence that exasperates successive generations, each one inheriting the hatred which divided those that went before. Terrorism is built on contempt for human life. For this reason, not only does it commit intolerable crimes, but because it resorts to terror as a political and military means it is itself a true crime against humanity.

John Paul II’s Message for World Day of Peace, January 1, 2002

Like Mary and Joseph, let us adore the Infant Jesus, the Prince of Peace, and let us ask Him to bring peace to our hearts, families, and nations.

(continued on page 2)
No peace without justice
(continued from page 1)

January-February 2002

Pope John Paul II

attitude radically opposed to belief in God. Terrorism exploits not just people, it exploits God: it ends by making him an idol to be used for one's own purposes.

Consequently, no religious leader can condone terrorism, and much less preach it. It is a profanation of religion to declare oneself a terrorist in the name of God, to do violence to others in his name. Terrorist violence is a contradiction of faith in God, the Creator of man, who cares for man and loves him. It is altogether contrary to faith in Christ the Lord, who taught his disciples to pray: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Mt 6:12).

The need for forgiveness

Forgiveness is not a proposal that can be immediately understood or easily accepted; in many ways it is a paradoxical message. Forgiveness in fact always involves an apparent short-term loss for a real long-term gain. Violence is the exact opposite: opting as it does for an apparent short-term gain, it involves a real and permanent loss. Forgiveness may seem like weakness, but it demands great spiritual strength and moral courage, both in granting it and in accepting it. It may seem in some way to diminish us, but in fact it leads us to a fuller and richer humanity, more radiant with the splendour of the Creator.

Reflecting on forgiveness, our minds turn naturally to certain situations of conflict which endlessly feed deep and divisive hatreds and a seemingly unstoppable sequence of personal and collective tragedies. I refer especially to what is happening in the Holy Land, that blessed place of God’s encounter with man, where Jesus, the Prince of Peace, lived, died and rose from the dead.

The present troubled international situation prompts a more intense call to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has now been going on for more than fifty years, with alternate phases of greater or lesser tension. The continuous recourse to acts of terror and war, which aggravate the situation and diminish hope on all sides, must finally give way to a negotiated solution. The rights and demands of each party can be taken into proper account and balanced in an equitable way, if and when there is a will to let justice and reconciliation prevail.

Prayer for peace

Prayer for peace is not an afterthought to the work of peace. It is of the very essence of building the peace of order, justice, and freedom. To pray for peace is to open the human heart to the inroads of God’s power to renew all things. With the life-giving force of his grace, God can create openings for peace where only obstacles and closures are appar-ent; he can strengthen and enlarge the solidarity of the human family in spite of our endless history of division and conflict. To pray for peace is to pray for justice, to ponder relations within and among nations and peoples. It is to pray for freedom, especially for the religious freedom that is a basic human and civil right of every individual. To pray for peace is to seek God’s forgiveness, and to implore the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us.

No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness: this is what in this Message I wish to say to believers and unbelievers alike, to all those who are concerned for the good of the human family and for its future.

No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness: this is what I wish to say to those responsible for the future of the human community, entreatiing them to be guided in their weighty and difficult decisions by the light of man’s true good, always with a view to the common good.

No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness: I shall not tire of repeating this warning to those who, for one reason or another, nourish feelings of hatred, a desire for revenge or the will to destroy.

On this World Day of Peace, may a more intense prayer rise from the hearts of all believers for the victims of terrorism, for their families so tragically stricken, for all the peoples who continue to suffer harm and to be culminated by terrorism and war. May the light of our prayer extend even to those who gravelessly offend God and man by these patetic acts, that they may look into their hearts, see the evil of what they do, abandon all violent intentions, and seek forgiveness. In these troubled times, may the whole human family find true and lasting peace, born of the marriage of justice and mercy.

John Paul II

MICHAEL

January-February, 2002

Contents

"Michael". January-February, 2002

Pages

No peace without justice. John Paul II
PAP REG. No. 99327

1-2

Our economic liberation through Social Credit. Louis Even
3 to 5

Another kind of terrorism. V. Canossano
6

Our Lady and Islam. A. Pilote/Fr. Cizik
7-8

Canada is rich. Gilberte Côté-Mercier
9-10

Our Movement is dead. V.Y. Poirier
10-11

The circulation of credit. Louis Even
11-12

Children schooled at home
12

No evil under the skin. M. Sickler
13

Maria Carmen, a victim soul
14

Beware of Harry Potter: M. Sickler
15

No to general absolution. Y. Poirier
16

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Our economic liberation through Social Credit

A few points from the lecture given by Louis Even

At the University of Montreal on April 21, 1953

Editor's note: As Pope John Paul II said, there can be no peace without justice. St. Thomas Aquinas defines justice as “to give to each person what is due to him.” Once applied, the Social Credit financial proposals will re-establish every man in his dignity as a human being created by God, co-heir of God’s unreserved progress and natural resources. The following lecture was given some time ago, but the principles it includes will never change.

A few useful remarks

It is obviously not possible from listening at a one- or two-hour lecture to grasp the full meaning, scope, and importance of the Social Credit proposals. They are indeed logical and strongly humane, but at the same time, so very different from the financial concepts which are widely and uncritically accepted.

Besides, as with any science, studying this subject requires at least a modicum of time and a great deal of application. It must be approached with an open mind, and not merely with the object of confirming a pre-existing prejudice.

It is not a good idea to isolate a singular principle of Social Credit, and apply it to the existing financial sphere. Nothing is more likely to give a false perspective.

For example, consider these Social Credit principles: everybody gets a regular dividend, untaxed; a reduction in prices, without loss to the producer; automatic financing of production, without inflation. All of this is obviously impossible if there is any pretence of achieving it without first making a major change in the issuance and cancellation of money, and in the monetary policy of the distribution of goods. For the fish that has always lived in water, the idea of flying in the air would have all the appearances of a utopia; but the bird sees this from a different angle.

The study of Social Credit is complicated by the fact that neither Social Credit itself, nor anything approaching it, has ever been put into practice, never mind even tried. It is not therefore a simple matter of explaining or interpreting a practical experience. It is rather a matter of investigating what is possible in an economic system that has not yet been applied, and of which there exists no example in history – an economic possibility which would have no limitations, except those of nature and of things.

To do a good investigation in such a case requires, in some way, a detachment from the isolated economic world which we know, and a rethinking of the primary notions of finance, of economics, and especially of economic philosophy. For Social Credit is a return to logic and to the integration of ends and means, terribly distorted by present-day economics.

Basic postulates

It is impossible to understand Social Credit, without first accepting certain principles, certain fundamental postulates, which pervade the entire Social Credit philosophy. They recur frequently throughout the Social Credit literature. Just to mention a few of them:

1. The earth and its resources were created for all mankind. For ALL, without exception. Therefore, each human being must be able to obtain a part of these resources, at least a part sufficient to meet the needs of his livelihood. To refuse him this much is to deny him the right to life. A system is humane or inhuman to the extent that it facilitates or hinders access of each person to these goods.

2. The means must be in accordance with the ends, and not vice versa. For example, the end of economic activity is the satisfaction of human needs. It is therefore to this end that the whole economic system must be directed, including its financial aspect.

3. There exists everywhere a jurisdiction of functions. The function of producing belongs to industry (manufacturing, agriculture, etc.). The function of sharing out and distributing the goods belongs to society itself. It is for society to establish a means of sharing out which best meets the goals of economic life, which upholds the ordained right of each person to the goods of the earth.

4. Modern production depends more on processes, techniques, resulting of inventions, applications of science, contributions from individuals, transmitted and perfected, from generation to generation, than on the individual efforts of those hired by production. This factor of production is a common heritage, a social capital, that is more and more productive, and which must thereby enrich everybody, each person being the co-owner of this factor of production. A salary, therefore, which is the reward for individual contribution, should not be the sole claim on the fruits of production.

5. As money is a claim on goods (any good or service offered), its volume can only be socially regulated. How can it be permitted for an individual or private institution (like the banks) to have the right to dictate what these claims will be worth? The total purchasing power must be in step with the total production that answers human needs, since this production exists expressly to satisfy needs.

6. Finance should neither be a system of government, nor a system of reward, nor of supervision; rather a matter of investigating what is possible, or interpreting a practical experience. It is not therefore a simple matter of explaining or inhuman to the extent that it facilitates or hinders access of each person to these goods.

7. The goal of a well-built financial system should be: a) to faithfully finance production that answers needs; b) to efficiently distribute the fruits of production.

It is difficult to repudiate any of these postulates, even if the fourth one (about what production consists of) sounds new and provokes controversy. However, the existing financial system incorporates none of these postulates.

The problem of our day: distribution

In 1918, William Lyon Mackenzie King, who was not yet leader of the Liberal Party of Canada (and future Governor General of the country), wrote a book entitled “Industry and Humanity”. In it, he says:

“It is no longer nature, but man, who is now master of the situation. The problem of unlimited production, and in unlimited volume, is already solved. The advance of human intelligence has realized that achievement. It can certainly equally be put up to human intelligence to solve the problem of distribution!”

That very same year, the Scottish engineer, Major C. H. Douglas, presented to the world the Social Credit formula exactly to equitably resolve the problem of distribution.

Douglas himself also argued that production, as such, no longer constituted a problem. He wrote:

“The economic system can be assimilated into a machine with the purpose of meeting the needs of humanity. The producing part of this machine is very efficient, but the distribution part is terribly inadequate.”

Major Douglas did not content himself with the hope that human intelligence would find a solution to the distribution problem: he offered the solution.

Neither Mackenzie King, during his long term as head of the Canadian Government, nor to date any other government charged with an uncontested sovereign power, saw it as opportune to accept Douglas’s solution. They preferred instead to suffer economic depressions, depending on wars to re-infuse blood into economic life, concerning themselves with affairs of State, or playing with fiscal policy, producing parsimonious budgetary allocations with conditions attached, accompanied by inquiries and frigid bureaucracy, carefully weighed and calculated to extirpate the source of production.

Douglas’s solution does not in any way enlist, confiscate, centralize, dictate nor hinder neither initiative nor private enterprise. It (continued on page 4)
Our economic liberation through Social Credit

(continued from page 3)

just touches on an instrument that is social by nature: the monetary instrument. Not to take away money from those who have it; not to dictate to those who receive money on what to spend it, but simply to ensure that the issuance, volume, and recall (cancellation) of money to a free production and free consumption of goods.

A simple accounting system

The modern money system lends itself particularly well to this purely financial order. If in centuries past, money was an intermediary, modern money is nothing but number symbols, and finance, a simple accounting.

In the same book already cited, Mackenzie King wrote, with much justice:

“Money is figures inscribed in registers, symbols and numbers imprinted on metal or paper.”

And it is the number symbols inscribed in registers, in bankers’ ledgers, in the credits of depositors and borrowers, which serve for 90 per cent of commercial transactions. This is done by simple credit transfers from one account to the other. This is written accounting, scriptural money.

As for bits of metal or paper rectangles, with numbers, symbols, or with pictures, those also are a sort of accounting, non-written, with the number symbols passing from one hand to another, rather than from one account to another. I debit myself with a dollar bill which I pass to my merchant, and my merchant duly credits himself. He obtains credit for it, the same as when he deposits it as a credit in his bank account.

Nobody looks at the intrinsic value of the paper bill nor of the silver or nickel pieces which they receive in exchange for goods, work, or services. It is the confidence which the production system gives in exchange for these number symbols which enables people to accept the paper and metal pieces without hesitation.

The absurdity of a lack of figures

If modern money consists of figures or digits, there is no reason for a lack of them with regard to a production capacity which exists but awaits orders as expressed by these figures.

In the post-war unemployment years, Mackenzie King would have been put to shame to say to unemployed people that the country lacked number symbols to allow needs to be supplied with goods, with the number symbols passing from one hand to another, rather than from one account to another. I debit myself with a dollar bill which I pass to my merchant, and my merchant duly credits himself. He obtains credit for it, the same as when he deposits it as a credit in his bank account.

Nobody looks at the intrinsic value of the paper bill nor of the silver or nickel pieces which they receive in exchange for goods, work, or services. It is the confidence which the production system gives in exchange for these number symbols which enables people to accept the paper and metal pieces without hesitation.

Mackenzie King

It is the least that a member of society, a shareholder, has the right to expect from the society of a country that has arms overflowing with goods.

If modern money consists in number symbols that represent real possibilities, it is inconceivable that public bodies should be obliged to relinquish perfectly feasible projects, for the sole reason that they lack number symbols!

Should we not be master of our own home, of our own country?

It is unthinkable, also, that as we stand before these rich natural resources, our hands should be tied, while the makers of foreign number symbols want to sign up our workforce to their own use and benefit, receiving in the process tributes of praise from our Government, and taking our riches away from them, extracted and transformed by our home workforce.

This brings us to one of the questions you asked: “How will Social Credit contribute to our economic liberation?”

Under a Social Credit regime, the purely financial problem simply does not exist, and certainly least of all for a community. Everything that is physically possible, would automatically become financially possible, just as fast as the decision was made to carry it out. Every new production would in effect be financed by a corresponding discharge of credit, and the credit thereby put into circulation would be recalled and cancelled only in step with the disappearance (by use, destruction, or consumption) of the wealth produced.

Not the least need would exist, then, for what is called “foreign capital”, not even for short-term capital, in the current sense of the term, to produce in the country what can be accomplished otherwise.

What perspective does that not open up to patriots indignant in seeing their rich country treated as an economic colony by master foreigners!

On this question of “capital”, just as on that of money, Mackenzie King was thoroughly well-informed. He wrote, in the same work cited:

“Money and credit are not in themselves capital. They are only capital by virtue of the right to possess them; they comprise a power of seizure, because they are exchangeable for foodstuffs and services.

To exploit our wealth through “foreign capital” is literally to invite foreign seizure of that same wealth.

Number symbols issued by our country itself, based on wealth achieved through the industry of our people with our own natural resources, would thoroughly well serve our economic growth. They would recompense the abundant work, and they would as well obtain for the workers the goods available from the other producers of the country.

The real capital is the natural resources given by God and the capacity to exploit them, which resides in the brains, industry, and acquired skills of the people. The rest is nothing but number symbols. These are the number symbols which must be made to conform to the real possibilities, and not the other way around.

This is why Major Douglas wrote, the same year as Mackenzie King, in 1918:

“Every new production must be financed not by the savings coming from the payment of past production, but by new credits. And these credits must only be withdrawn to the extent that there is consumption or depreciation of wealth.”

Douglas was not content with writing tracts and giving definitions: he was interested in practical applications. That is why his teachings are so dynamic. Put into practice, his principles would change the face of economics, without injuring anyone, except the exploiters who paralyse and indebted humanity through their dictatorial control of money and credit.

With an economy of “full income” instead of “full employment”, with the unhindered flow of goods in response to needs, with the necessary long-term guarantee that the productive system can respond, Social Credit would introduce into the world an element unknown until now: economic security for all.

It is economic security, not vast wealth, which truly constitutes temporal riches, because it is the spirit, freed from the incessant and wearying material cares of today and tomorrow, that freely leads us towards more essentially human values.

Freedom can only properly base itself in the satisfaction of want. Heroism is to prefer freedom above life’s necessities. It cannot be sustained by large numbers of people over a long period of time. On the other hand, enslavement to the gaining of possessions over and above one’s needs is a degrading form of materialism practiced by too many fawning lackeys seeking political patronage, an outlook clearly to be held in contempt by patriots who want to live in liberty and their brothers.

How to gain political freedom?

You ask if Social Credit brings with it an amount of political freedom. This implies the existence of political dictatorship: party...
The modern system of serfdom (that is), the salaried class, would not take long to pass into history.

The basic necessities of life guaranteed through a dividend to all, would make free men, as we shall shortly see. Free men are not the stuff of slaves or serfs. The entrepreneur would be quick to recognize the need to change his plan, and find himself some partners rather than hirelings. He would have competent and interested partners, and not employees who have to accept the offered conditions of the job, or face the perils of unemployment. The salaried class would rapidly give way to a partner class.

People thus economically liberated would not allow themselves to be politically enslaved. What dignity could be given to the man who has to accept the offered conditions of the job, or face the perils of starvation? The salaried class would rapidly give way to a partner class.

Archbishop Concessao

On October 5, 2001, Most Rev. Vincent Michael Concessao, Archbishop of Delhi, India, gave the following speech at the general Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in the Vatican (taken from the Oct. 31, 2001 issue of the Vatican weekly, L’Osservatore Romano).

A few days ago, we were all stunned when we saw on the television the destruction of the World Trade Center, and heard about the death of over five thousand innocent people. In some countries of the world today, it is a daily affair, and often a sign of despair stemming from helplessness.

There is another kind of subtle, hidden, little spoken of terrorism. I mean the terrorism of an unjust economic system which grinds to death thousands of people every day. According to a study on international debt published two years ago, eleven million children under the age of five die every year the world over mainly for lack of food and health care against preventable diseases.

With the present trend of globalization, the situation of the poor is getting worse. Small industries are closed down, depriving thousands of people of gainful employment; the state-spending on the basic requirements of the poor is reduced as part of the structural adjustment programme; the poor are getting further marginalized and driven to despair. They become easy victims to politicians and fundamentalists. Do we have a message of hope for them, not just in words but in concrete action programs?

The statistical situation of poverty in the third millennium is frightening. While nearly one billion of the people of the world are illiterate... nearly 1.3 billion people lack safe potable water, and about half of the world’s population is without access to adequate sanitation.

There is a frightening sentence in the Second Vatican Council (Gaudium et spes) from the Decree of Gatan: Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you are not feeding him, you are killing him. It is a case of murder by omission.

There is enough in the world today for all that people need, but not enough for their greed (Mahatma Gandhi). Should we not take a clear stand with and for the poor, and against the system in which they do not count? It will be part of our commitment to a culture of life and a civilization of love.

The unjust economic system

In the first week of January, 2002, a meeting took place in Delhi, India, organized by the Justice, Peace and Development Commission of the Indian Conference of Catholic Bishops, which was reported by Vatican Radio on January 9. In his speech, the Archbishop of Delhi, Most Rev. Vincent Concessao, developed on the subject he had mentioned at the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican last October, defining social injustice as the worst form of terrorism.

He stressed the fact that the terrorist attacks of September 11 made much ado in the world, but that one continued to keep silent on another type of terrorism that makes, every day, thousands of victims, and which does not seem worth the attention of governments.

Archbishop Concessao referred to the economic and financial mechanisms that rule the globe and which, according to the statistics, are more deadly than terrorism in its common interpretation. “We live in a state of scandalous social injustice,” he said, “and the tendency goes towards an aggravation of the situation. The Church must therefore fight for social justice, without which peace and harmony cannot exist.”

Most Rev. Vincent Michael Concessao
Mary and the Moslems

What is Islam?

Since the September 11 attacks, the attention of Westerners has been drawn to Islam, since we are being told that Osama Bin Laden committed these terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. While it is true that the vast majority of Moslems condemn violence and these terrorist attacks, a minority of extremist Moslems claim that it is “Allah” who ordered them to wage a holy war against “the infidel.”

What is the real face of Islam? Does it preach peace or war? Even if the word “Islam” itself can be defined as “to make peace”, “to surrender”, or “to submit” — it is a dark side of Islam which, although permitted only into practice by a small number of extremists, indeed advocates violence. Over the centuries, Moslems have engaged in tremendous conflicts with the Christians and Jews, and Christians are being persecuted and killed by Moslems in many countries today, like Indonesia and Sudan. Is there a way Christians and Moslems can co-exist together in peace?

Mohammed

Mohammed, the founder of the Islam faith, was born in Mecca, Arabia, in 575. An orphan raised by an uncle, he served as a camel caravanserai, and among them Allah, the god of the moon. Mohammed liked to talk to strangers, be they Jews or heretical Christians, and used to read their books.

Mohammed then invented a religion of his own — a mixture of his readings — and presented it to his wife and some of his relatives. Only one God, Allah (that is why Islam is represented by the crescent), but several prophets, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the last and greatest prophet of all, himself. According to his mission, Jesus was not God, but only a prophet, and did not die on the Cross, but was replaced by another person at the last moment.

The people of Mecca did not accept his religion, and he was forced to flee to Medina in 622, year one of the Moslem faith. There he won over a majority of people to his new religion, and came back to the “holy city” of Mecca with the title of “the great prophet of Allah”. He died in 632, leaving his brother-in-law and disciple the Koran (the holy book of the Moslems, divided into surahs), which promised a paradise of eternal sensual pleasures to all those who faithfully followed the Koran, especially to those who would spread Islam by all means — including the sword.

Historians agree to say that there is a big difference between Mohammed’s personality in Mecca and his personality after his migration to Medina. In Mecca, Mohammed was struggling to be accepted, so he tried to appeal to Christians and Jews with his teachings. Condemning violence, injustice, and neglect of the poor. However, when he moved to Medina, and his followers grew in strength and number, he no longer needed to please people of other faiths, and became a relentless warrior intent on spreading his religion by the sword.

In Surah 73:10, God tells Mohammed to be patient with his opponents, but later in Surah 2:256, God tells Mohammed not to impose Islam by force (“Let there be no compulsion in religion”); while in verse 193 God tells him to speak nicely to people of the Book (Christians and Jews), but in Surah 9:29 God tells him to fight them. To justify this sudden change in the Koran’s mood, from peaceful to militant, controversial to confrontational, Mohammed claimed that it was God who ordered it. It was God who agitated the peaceful verses, and replaced them by harsh ones.

To conquer countries with the sword became the password. The Moslems set out in 634 to conquer the world. Within a year, they had captured Syria and Damascus. Three years later, they captured Jerusalem. By 643, they conquered a territory half the size of Europe. In 711, they crossed the strait of Gibraltar, and rapidly conquered Spain and Portugal, and remained there for seven centuries. In 1571, at the naval Battle of Lepanto, the invasion of Europe by the Moslems was definitely stopped.

Our Lady of Fatima, in Portugal

It is extremely difficult for Christian missionaries to convert Moslems, because they think that their religion is the accomplishment of Christianity, because it came after... and of course also because the Koran teaches that any Moslem who converts to another faith must be killed. So those who do convert do it at the risk of their lives, and most of the time, must flee to Western countries.

In 1952, Catholic Archbishop Fulton Sheen devoted a chapter in his book, "The World’s First Love", entitled “Mary and the Moslems”. In it, he wrote that it is his firm belief that Moslems will eventually be converted in Christianization, because it was believed to be built over the spot where the Blessed Virgin Mary was born. Their great reverence to Our Lady subdued the Moslems from destroying Her birthplace.”

Spain

Spain as the Moslems swept through Spain in the 8th century, a great religious treasure was buried for safe-keeping in the earth, high in the Estremadura Mountains. It was a much venerated statue of Our Lady holding the Divine Child Jesus that was a gift of Pope Gregory the Great to Bishop Leander of Seville. After the overthrow of Moorish occupation, the image was uncovered in the year 1326, subsequent to a vision of Our Lady to a humble shepherd by the name of Gil. Our Lady’s visit especially from the Middle East, make so many pilgrimages to the shrine of Fatima in Portugal that Portuguese officials have expressed concern. The combination of an Islamic and Western Christian influence resulted in the Virgin Mary being declared ‘Saint of the Moslems.”

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Guada; River; Lupe; Wolf). The famous Catholic image in Spain has been known, since the 4th century, as the Islamic name of “Our Lady of Guadalupe.”

Mexico

In the fullness of time, we can be sure that Almighty God knew that the Islamic religion would pose a serious threat to Christianity. God knew that the Spanish invaders would face grave resistance in the ‘new world’ from the...
Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Mexico

“To Juan Diego and his fellow Aztecs, this revelation had great meaning, coupled with the miraculous image of Our Lady standing on top of a ‘crescent,’ the symbol of this evil serpent god. A tidal wave of conversions to Catholicism ensued. However, Bishop Zumarraga, who was from Spain, made what was no doubt a ‘heavenly mistake’ that one day may lead to the mass conversion of Moslems. To the Bishop’s Spanish ears, Our Lady’s Aztec name of ‘Te Quatlaxupe’ sounded just like the name of the revered Madonna from Spain with the Islamic name, ‘Guadalupé.’ Hence, the bishop named the Mexican Madonna ‘Our Lady of Guadalupe.’ It is interesting that the ‘crescent’ is also the symbol for Islam.

Battle of Lepanto

“The return of the mighty Turkish fleet was won by Catholic naval forces primarily from Spain, Venice, and Genoa under the command of Don Juan of Austria. It was the last battle at sea between ‘oared’ ships, which featured the most powerful navy in the world, a Moslem force with between 12,000 to 15,000 Christian slaves as rowers. Knowing that the Christian forces were at a distinct material disadvantage, the holy pontiff, St. Pope Pius V, ordered his fleet to sail for miles away at the Vatican, is said to have gotten up from a meeting, went over to a window, and exclaimed with supernatural radiance: ‘The Christian fleet is victorious!’ and shed tears of Thanksgiving to God. What you may not know is that one of three admirals commanding the Catholic forces at Lepanto was Andrea Doria. He carried a small copy of Mexico’s Our Lady of Guadalupe into battle. This image is now enshrined in the Church of San Stefano in Aveto, Italy.

“At Fatima, Our Lady taught us to pray the Rosary every day. However, according to the Assumption plan at Fatima and truly gave us hope for the world. Conversions were promised at Fatima: the conversion of sinners; the conversion of Russia, and world peace. Conversion of Islam. Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us!”

Father Czik

The first step towards conversion: to dress modestly

by Father Charles Mangan

Inarguably, the kinds of dress for both men and women have changed dramatically, especially in the past five decades. Much of today’s prevailing “high fashion” is meant to accentuate or expose particular body parts rather than to conceal them — the traditional reason for clothing.

Acknowledging that some styles in contemporary fashion have been deemed “immodest” or even “obscene” even a few years ago one must ask: are these ways of dressing still immmodest at the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium? Or, do changing values admit these various types of clothing?

To give an intelligible answer, one first must look at the norm which for centuries guided Christians in the manner of dress: the notion of modesty.

Modesty in the strict sense is the virtue that regulates one’s actions and exterior customs concerning sexual matters. Specifically, modesty guards the virtue of chastity, its “external protection” and controls one’s comportment so as to avoid unlawful sexual arousal in oneself or others. In this essay, we shall confine ourselves to the theme of modesty in dress.

“Many think modesty to be the humility of one who is not interested in self-promotion and fame. This is a different understanding from the one that is presented here).

Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Modesty is counted as one of the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit, as the perfection of the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory” are listed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church as charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity” (no. 1832).

To choose to dress modestly infers that one is deliberately avoiding by his dress to cause sexual excitement in himself or his neighbour. Hence, one who dresses modestly shuns clothes that are known or reasonably expected to effect sexual arousal in oneself or others.

Has the Church encouraged the practice of this virtue? Yes. Only a few of the stirring exhortations offered by some holy members of the Church are now presented. (We remember that these counsels apply to men as well as to women).

Saint Paul (c. 67), in his First Letter to Saint Timothy, wrote: “Women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in a seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befit women profess religion” (2:9-10).

Saint John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) spoke out against immorality in dress. “You carry your snare and spread your nets in all places. You al- lege that you never invited others to sin. You did not, indeed, by your words, but you have done so by your dress and your deportment and much more effectively than you could by your voice. When you have made another sin in his

Our Lady of Guadalupe

“Te Quatlaxupe” and meant “one who crushes the head of the stone serpent.”

Three admirals commanding the Catholic forces at Lepanto was not interested in self-promotion and fame. This is a different understanding from the one that is presented here).

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When Our Lord was upon earth, He told His apostles to go and teach all nations. In other words, He asked that we leave our comforts, leave our homes, and go and proclaim the good news of Christianity to the whole world.

The Pilgrims of Saint Michael go on the road constantly to proclaim the truth of Social Credit, working to put into application the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, and at the same time, working for the love of neighbor. Love of neighbor means that we must work for the good of all and strive for the salvation of souls.

The Rosary Crusade, the door-to-door apostolate of visiting the families to pray in the homes and to introduce them to the Work of "Michael", has been their major apostolate since 1968. It was in 1968 that the Blessed Virgin asked in an Apparition that we visit the families and do a crusade for Her Rosary. How many sacrifices the Pilgrims make doing this apostolate, going long hours in the heat, in the cold, in the rain, but what a joy it is to work with Heaven to save souls. And as St. James wrote in his Epistle (5:20): "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall have his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins."

Here is a meditation entitled "Zeal for souls" by Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D. in a book entitled "Divine Intimacy" which expresses so very well the teaching of the Church on this subject.

M. Sickler

Love of God, love of neighbor

According to the measure in which the love of God takes possession of our heart, it creates and nourishes in us an ever increasing love for our neighbor; this love, being supernatural, seeks only the supernatural good of our fellow men and thus becomes zeal for the salvation of souls.

If we have little love of God, we shall have little love for souls, and vice versa; if our zeal for souls is weak, this means our love of God is also weak. In fact, how could it be possible to love God sincerely without loving those who are His children, the object of His love, of His care, and of His zeal? Souls are, as it were, God's treasure; He has created them to His image and likeness by an act of love; and by an even greater act of love He has redeemed them with the Blood of His only-begotten Son. "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn 3, 16).

One who has penetrated the mystery of God's love for men cannot remain indifferent to their fate: by the light of faith, he has understood that all that God does in the world is for man's good and for his eternal happiness. He longs to have some share in this action, knowing that he can do nothing which will be more pleasing to God than to lend his humble collaboration for the salvation of those who are so dear to Him. This was always the ardent desire of the saints, a desire which impelled them to perform heroic acts of generosity to benefit even one soul. St. Teresa of Jesus writes: "This is an inclination given me by Our Lord; and I think He prizes one soul which, by His mercy and through our diligence and prayer, we may have gained for Him, more than all the other services we can render Him" (F.1).

It is true that the primary end of God's action is His own glory, but He who is infinitely good wills to obtain this glory especially through the salvation and the happiness of His creatures. In fact, nothing exalts His goodness, love, and mercy more than the work of saving souls. Therefore, to love God and His glory means to love souls; it means to work and sacrifice oneself for their salvation.

The source for zeal for souls

Zeal for souls finds its source in charity and in the contemplation of Christ crucified. His wounds, His Blood, the excruciating sufferings of His agony all tell us how much God values souls and how dearly He loves them. But this love is unrequited, and it seems that ungrateful men strive more and more to elude His action. It is this sad spectacle of all the ages which is renewed even today, as though men wished to insult Jesus and renew His Passion.

The world is on fire. Men try to condemn Christ once again, as it were, for they bring a thousand false witnesses against Him. They would raze His Church to the ground" (T.J. Way, 1). If Teresa of Jesus could speak these words in her century which was troubled by the Protestant heresy, how much more can we say it in ours, when the struggle against God and the Church has increased immeasurably, and has now spread over the entire world. Happy shall we be if we can say with the Saint: "It breaks my heart to see so many souls traveling to perdition. I would the evil were not so great I felt that I would have laid down a thousand lives to save a single one of all the souls that were being lost" (ibid). But it is not a question of merely formulating desires; we must work, act, and suffer for the salvation of our fellow men.

St. John Chrysostom affirms: "Nothing is colder than a Christian who does not care about the salvation of others." This coldness comes from a very languid charity. Let us kindle and revive our charity, and it will inflame us with zeal for the salvation of souls. Then our apostolate will no longer be merely a duty which is imposed from without, one which we are obliged to attend to because of the obligation of our state in life, but it will be an exigency of love, an interior flame of charity which burns spontaneous-

Devoting ourselves to the spiritual life does not mean shutting ourselves up in an ivory tower to enjoy God's consolations undisturbed, with no concern for the welfare of others. It means concentrating all our powers on seeking God, working for our own sanctification in order to please God, and thus acquiring a power of action and impetration capable of obtaining the salvation of many souls.

At our December 30 meeting in Rougemont, about thirty children dressed as characters from the Nativity scene.
Canada is rich in real wealth

by Gilberte Côté-Mercier

I will ask you this question: Is Canada rich? I don’t mean the budget of the Federal Government. I am not even talking about money. I am talking about the real wealth that we need to live: food, clothes, shelter, heating, medical care, etc.

Don’t we have all of that in Canada? Cannot Canada produce all of this type of wealth? Yes, Canada is a rich country; very rich indeed. It is actually one of the richest countries in the world. There is plenty of almost everything in Canada.

So we, Canadians, live in a rich, very rich country. It is we, Canadians, who are the owners of this very rich country. It is our country, since we are Canadians. Canada is our country. It is ours, and it is rich!

However, if we look at each one of us in particular, we realize that we are poor. There are even Canadians who are very poor, who live below the poverty line. To lack the necessities of life is to be poor. All the unemployed people lack the necessities of life. All the lower-income classes lack the necessities of life.

In a rich country like Canada, there are many, many Canadians who are very poor.

The Canadians are so poor that there are more tenants than owners, more hired people than entrepreneurs, more slaves than family homes. And the few owners and entrepreneurs who are left are debt ridden.

Yet, Canadians are the owners of Canada. Canada is rich, but the Canadians are poor. Why?

I will tell you why. Listen to this:

You, Canadians, are the ones who develop Canada. You, all of you, the heirs and workers of Canada.

As you develop the country, the Financiers get it into debt. How?

Well, as you work, the Bankers inscribe the wealth you produce in their ledgers. They inscribe this wealth as their own assets, and as your liabilities, even if you are the real owners of the nation.

All that is produced in Canada is inscribed in the banks’ ledgers as liabilities for the Canadians, and as assets for the Bankers.

You produce wealth, and thus you make Canada, your country, richer. This new wealth should be listed in the banks’ ledgers as your assets, since you are the ones who made it. However, it is the exact opposite that is taking place. The assets of our country have been listed by the banks in the liabilities column of the national accounts, but at the same time, the banks have also written down the assets of our country in the column of the liabilities of the banks. The banks have simply stolen all the assets of our country and inscribed them as their own assets, and as liabilities for our country. They have purposely used the wrong column for their own profit and to the detriment of our country. This is the greatest of all possible tricks and swindles.

The Banker lends money to you or to your boss to make products. When he lends money, the Banker says: “I create money. I am the owner of the money I create. I lend you this money so that you will produce real wealth. I get you into debt. This money I lend is my assets and your liabilities. This money is my credit and your debt. To be able to pay me back your loan with the interest, you will have to give me your products. This way, the real wealth you produce becomes mine. Do you realize how I become the owner of all the wealth of the nation, because I create money?”

This is simple, but false, bookkeeping. This is a robbery, a swindle. This is dishonest.

Your work, your wealth, should be inscribed by the financial system as your own credit, your own assets. Then Canadians would be rich. But today’s Bankers inscribe the wealth of the Canadians as their own assets, and get the Canadians into debt. This is why Canada is rich, and the Canadians are poor.

The Bankers begin by stealing our credit, and this way, they can steal our goods. This is a rip-off!

Moreover, the Bankers get dividends on this credit stolen from the Canadians.

The Social Crediters want to change this state of affairs, this way of counting wealth.

With Social Credit, dividends on real wealth will go to the citizens instead of to the Bankers.

Is Canada getting richer or poorer? It becomes richer in real wealth. This should translate into dividends to the sharehold- ers of the nation, namely, all the Canadian citizens.

This is the foundation for the Social Credit dividend.

This is a social dividend, given to every citizen, every member of society. Industrial dividends will continue to be given to industrialists, but the Social Credit dividend will be given to all, on top of industrial dividends.

Who will pay for this social dividend?

This social dividend will be financed by society. It will be issued by the Social Credit Office, just like the banking divi- dends are issued by the banks.

Where will we get the money to finance this dividend?

A dividend is money. Money is a matter of figures, numbers to count and buy real wealth. If there exists some real wealth, there must exist monetary figures to represent it.

If real wealth has increased in the country, there must be a corresponding increase in money, which is a dividend.

So where will they get the dividend? It is a figure that will represent the increase in wealth, in comparison with the previous year.

Let us suppose the real wealth of Canada has increased by one billion dollars. So we need an extra billion dollars in money to represent this new wealth. Where will we get this billion dollars? The Social Credit Office will create it.

How will this dividend be distributed to everyone? You Sir, Madam, and each member of your family, will have your own account at the Social Credit Office. For example, the first day of each month, you will receive a $800 dividend, based on the increase in production in our country. This money will be inscribed in your account, just like interest is inscribed in your bank account.

This is very simple. And what will happen next? Well, you will buy, if you will, the products that are offered for sale in stores.

Some will say that if such a dividend is given, the nation will go bankrupt!

Don’t worry. This dividend is issued (continued on page 10)
because there is new production to match it in Canada. So if everybody gets a $800 dividend every month, producers will be able to meet the demand for goods. Who could then go bankrupt? You buy, retailers sell, producers sell, people work. There is no sign of bankruptcy there.

And what about taxes? Taxes have nothing to do with the dividend. A dividend is new money to buy an increase in products. Taxes are the opposite of a dividend, since they reduce our purchasing power. We need more money to match the new production, not less money in our wallets.

Is Canada getting richer? Yes, so Canada yields dividends in products. Social Credit will issue dividends in dollars to represent these dividends in products.

"Where will they get the money" is a question that does not need to be asked when one knows that money is nothing but figures to represent real wealth.

Social Credit is simple and fantastic at the same time, as fantastic as today’s progress. We need the Social Credit proposals implemented immediately, because Social Credit will solve all of our financial problems, just as the automobile, radio, and airplanes solved our problems of transportation.

How can we obtain the implementation of Social Credit?

First, be convinced yourself that it is needed. Then, ask for its implementation. Ask your priests by writing to all kinds of petitions, letters, phone calls, delegations, visits, etc.

Does the “Michael” Movement organize all of these petitions?

The “Michael” Movement does not work like other movements. It presents petitions on behalf of all the population, but it requires the participation of each of its members.

It is the apostles of “Michael” who, with their pressures and work of education in the population, got the Canadian Government to give, in 1952, the old-age pension given to all, without means test nor inquiries. The Social Crediters were the only ones to call for this with no strings attached.

We must repeat our demands until they are fulfilled.

The “Michael” Journal explains the Social Credit system, and gives the methods to achieve it. Read the “Michael” Journal, which is the most interesting and useful publication of all. To read it, you must of course be subscribed. If you are not already subscribed, hasten to do so. It costs only $20.00 for four years. It amounts to only five dollars a year to be freed from High Finance. Ask all your friends and acquaintances to also subscribe to this fantastic journal. All become apostles of “Michael” by soliciting subscriptions. Our motto is to find new subscribers, to get every household to receive the “Michael” Journal. Help us to make the people Social Crediters by having them receive the “Michael” Journal.

Gilberte Côté-Mercier

Our Movement spreads throughout the world

Social Credit in Italy

Apostles across the world are joining the battle of “Michael”. Mr. Vitale Onorato from Italy went to hold a meeting in Sicily. There were 150 people. The Sicilians are very welcoming and very charitable. Mr. Onorato spoke to them about Social Credit, and he gave them “Michael” leaflets (in Italian) against globalization and about Social Credit. They were very interested. In his travels towards Sicily, Mr. Vitale distributed many leaflets along the way. He gave some in a church dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel.

Mr. Vitale Onorato takes advantage of meetings to distribute “Michael” leaflets. In one city, near Rome, during an imposing demonstration, Mr. Onorato and his team distributed 3,000 “Michael” leaflets. Our Roman apostle attended a protest against globalization in Germany. He took advantage of it to distribute, with his friends, “Michael” leaflets in German.

An economic student at the University of Berlin read with interest the leaflet on “The Money Myth Exploded” translated into German. He ordered 1,000 copies that he will distribute to the students at the university. “I knew there was something in economics that was not normal,” he said. Messrs. Frank Kretz and Charles Baldermann, from Alsace, France, who are fluent in German, contacted him and sent him the 1,000 leaflets.

Our Polish apostles in the U.S.A.

In October, our two Polish apostles, Jaruzs Lewicki and Jacek Morawa, went to make a tour of meetings in the United States among Polish groups. Meetings were organized by Polish priests: two meetings in Detroit, Michigan; one in Utica, New York; one of about one-hundred people in Hartford, Connecticut.

The two speakers also held excellent meetings in Philadelphia and in the states of New York and New Jersey. In New York City, they met a Polish priest who had come to our head office in Rougemont in the past to hear confessions. He said to them: “You are very nice people. You are doing a great job! You have a great apostolate: you spread the “Michael” Journal. I distributed 3,000 leaflets from the “Michael” Journal to spread the “Michael” Journal and become Pilgrims of Saint Michael. Brother Lisondra has ordered 4,000 leaflets from the “Michael” Journal. He will give some to the heads of different Catholic organizations.

Through Social Credit and the holy Rosary being intensely prayed in each home, we will conquer the social dilemma of poverty in our country. We will use the “Michael” Journal as a vehicle for education, information, like a journal that circulates to help build the Kingdom of the Immaculate and prepare the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Rosary for peace

Here are the words of Pope John Paul II given before the Angelus on St. Peter’s Square on October 21, 2001:

Last Sunday we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The whole month of October is dedicated to this beautiful prayer, which the Christian people love. On account of the present international situation, I have invited individual and communities to pray the Rosary for peace. I also renew this appeal today, underlining at the same time that the Rosary is the contemplation of Christ in His mysteries, in close union with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Contemporary spirituality feels the intense need, so to speak, to focus on the essential. Because of this, there is at present a promising rediscovery of the true nature of the Rosary, as a prayer that helps us to “stay in Christ’s company, to know Him better, as-similate His teaching, and live His Mysteries. And who, better than Mary, can accompany us in this journey of the mind and heart? This is why we repeat the Hail Mary, which “constitutes the warp on which the contemplation of the mysteries develops” (Apostol- ic Exhortation Mariae Cultus, 4).

May a constant prayer for peace rise in the Church with the praying of the Rosary, both by individuals or by communities, keeping our gaze fixed on Jesus Christ, our peace.
The circulation of financial credit

Money is loaned to the producers (industry) by the National Credit Office, for the production of new goods, which brings a flow of new goods with prices (left arrow). Since wages are not sufficient to buy all of available goods and services for sale, the National Credit Office fills the gap between the flow of purchasing power and the flow of total prices by issuing a monthly dividend to every citizen. Consumers and goods meet at the market place (retailer), and when a product is purchased (consumed), the money that had originally been loaned for producing this product returns to its source, the National Credit Office. At any moment, there is always equality between the total purchasing power available in the hands of the population, and the total prices of consumable goods for sale on the market.
The circulation (continued from page 11)

and not in their nature. Both are actually fi-
nancial credit issued from the same source. Moreover, production money changes into consumer money, when it is paid out by the producer in wages, salaries, industrial divi-
dends.

Today, virtually all consumer money has first been production money, since it is the production activities that distribute almost all purchasing power.

Under a Social Credit system, additional consumer money would come directly from the source without going through industry, in two ways:

A) As a compensation to the seller, for the general discount granted to the buyers, in ac-
cordance with the price adjustment;
B) As social dividends to all, which we will talk about (in the next issue of “Michael”).

This addition of purchasing power would allow consumers to pay for certain amounts which are included in prices, but which are not yet or no more in the consumers’ hands when goods are put on sale. It would be far more satisfying than to have to be in debt to some financial institutions.

Louis Even

No more mysteries in Fatima secret, Sister Lucia says

Sister Maria Lucia said that the contents of the secret of Fatima have been completely revealed by the Holy See, and that Russia has been consecrated to the Virgin Mary, as Our Lady requested. The sole survivor of the vision-
aries, who died in 1992, said that the Marian apparitions through the Vaticans’ statement Nov. 17 to Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The content of the meeting, held at her convent in Coimbra, Portugal, was pub-
lished on December 20 by the Vatican Press Of-

The text of the document states: “In recent months, emphasis was placed on the suspicion that the Holy See had not published the entire text of the third part of the secret, and some Fatimist movements have repeated the accusa-
tion that the Holy Father has yet to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” the doc-
ument continues. As a result, the Vatican note clarifies, it was considered necessary that Archbishop Bertone go personally “to clarify and obtain direct information from the vision-
ary.”

When the archbishop explained that there are doubts that part of the secret remains un-
known, Sister Lucia replied: “Everything has been published; there are no more secrets.” “If I had received new revelations, I would have communicated them to anyone, but I would have told them directly to the Holy Father,” the religious added.

The group then spoke about the statements of Nicholas Gruner, a Canadian priest suspend-
ed “a divina,” who is collecting signatures in-
sisting that the Pope finally consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and alleging that this has never been done. Sister Lucia told the Archbishop: “The Carmel Community has rejected the forms for the collection of signa-
tures. I have already said that the consecration requested by Our Lady was done in 1984, and it has been accepted in Heaven.”

When asked about personal life, the religious answered: “People should read my book [‘The Appeals of the Fatima Message’]; the advice and appeals that correspond to Our Lady’s wishes are there. Prayer and penance, with great faith in God’s power, will save the world.”

Julie Smyth

Children schooled at home have better social skills

The following article, written by Julie Smyth, was published in the October 15, 2001 issue of the Canadian daily “National Post”:

Children who are educated at home have better skills and achieve higher grades on standardized tests than students in private or public schools, according to a new report. Contrary to the popular belief that children educated at home are disadvantaged because of a lack of peers, the study by the Fraser In-
stitute shows that they are happier, better ad-
justed and more sociable than those at institu-
tional schools. The average child educated at home participates in a range of activities with other children outside the family and 98% are involved in two or more extracurricular activ-
ities such as field trips and music lessons per week, the report says.

Home-schooled children also regularly out-
perform other students on standardized tests. Children taught at home in Canada score, on average, at the 80th percentile in reading, at the 76th percentile in mathematics, and at the 79th percentile in languages, and at the 79th percentile. The report shows. Private and public students perform, on aver-
age, in the 60th percentile on mandatory tests in the same subjects.

In the United States, students educated at home also achieve the highest grades on standardized tests, and outperform other stu-
dents on college entrance exams, including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), according to the study.

Parents of home-schooled children in both countries are generally higher educated when compared to the national average.

They tend to be in two-parent families and have a higher-than-average number of children than the overall population.

Patrick Basham, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a conservative public policy group in Washington, and author of the report, said he was surprised to see such positive results linked to home schooling.

“People think these children are neurotic, unsocialized and can’t function in normal so-
ciety. But the opposite is true, I think the fact that children educated at home do better than private school students would also surprise people. It is not something that is widely de-
bated or studied,” he said.

Home-schooled children are still a tiny min-
ority in Canada, although an increasing number of parents are opting for this style of education. In 1979, 2,000 children were educated at home. By 1996, 17,500 students — 0.4% of total en-
rollment — were home schooled. The most re-
cent figures show the number has risen to 80,000 children. (In the U.S.A., the number is
close to one million.)

Parents educate their children at home for a variety of reasons, including the desire to im-
part a particular set of beliefs and values, an interest in higher academic performance, and a lack of discipline in public schools, says the report.

“Although parents home school their chil-
dren for myriad reasons, the principal stimu-
lation is dissatisfaction with public education,” said Claudia Hepburn, director of education policy at the Fraser Institute, a Vancouver-

based conservative think-thank.

Home schooling is legal throughout Can-
ada, but most provinces require parents to comply with provincial education legislation, which means they must provide satisfactory instruction. Alberta is the only province that funds home-based education.

None of the provinces requires that parents have teaching qualifications. However, having one parent who is a certified teacher has no significant effect on the achievement of stu-
dents educated at home, the research shows.

Gary Duthler, executive director of the Fed-
eration of Independent Schools in Canada, the association for non-public schools said chil-
dren educated at home likely do better and are more sociable because of the smaller student-
teacher ratio and the fact that students of all ages learn together.

“In institutional schools, there is social pressure for 10-year-old children to behave like other 10-year-olds, and they tend to not play with any older children at school.”

“In a home setting, that same pressure is not there, so it helps the children mature.”

Julie Smyth

A great “Siege of Jericho” in Rougemont

March 17-23, 2002

In our chapel of the House of the Immaculate

Seven days and six nights of adoration and
Rosaries in front of the Blessed Sacrament
exposed in the Monstrance

March 24: fourth-Sunday monthly meeting

All are invited to come for the days and nights that are convenient for them. They will be lodged without charge in our two houses. And they will be able to prepare their own meals in our dining room.

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A human implanted with microchips

Identification cards in the making

In back issues of “Michael”, we have published articles about the newly-proposed smart card that contains a microchip the size of a grain of rice in which the user is to record his bank account, and then debit and credit this bank account as he buys and sells. Of course, if this smart card gets lost, anyone who finds it could empty out this bank account. So it has been reported from various sources that the future may be a microchip underneath the skin — so it could not be lost!

Microchips embedded in a human

Microchips are getting smaller and smaller. The August 14, 1999 issue of the Saturday Sun of London reproduced this picture with this caption: “An ant carries a 1-mm microchip in its mandibles in a promotional photograph released by the Huddersfield University precision technology centre. The centre says it’s the first in Britain to calibrate measurements and instruments at 1/10,000th of a millimetre.”

Years ago, if anyone would speak about having a microchip inserted underneath the skin of people, they would have been regarded as being far out in left field, as it could not even be imagined as something so ridiculous at that could ever happen. But today, the technology does it exist, and it is being perfected all the time.

In fact, on September 16, 2001, only a few days after the terrorist attacks in the United States, Richard Seelig, a New Jersey surgeon who serves on the board of Owings Maryland-based Medical Advisory Systems, embedded under his skin tiny computer chips that can automatically transmit personal information to a scanner, a technology that his employer hopes will someday be widely used as a way to identify people. Each chip contains several paragraphs worth of data when scanned by a hand-held reader. The chip is coated with a substance that encourages the body to hold it in place.

Dr. Seelig, using a local anesthetic, used a syringe-like device to insert the chip under the skin of his forearm. He followed the same procedure to implant the chip on his artificial hip. After just over two weeks, all signs of the procedure were gone. “There is no deformity of the skin,” Seelig said. “I feel just the same as I did before. It was like nothing had happened.”

The VeriChip

For the last several years, Applied Digital Solutions from Palm Beach, Florida has made several articles about the newly-proposed smart card that contains a microchip the size of a grain of rice and which contains an identification number or other data, such as medical information and a person’s address and phone number. The chip is the same as the one Applied Digital’s subsidiary used in animals, but VeriChip can be used in humans who have a pacemaker, artificial heart valves, or orthopedic knee devices. If a patient would need help, a hospital could use a scanner to obtain information from the VeriChip.

Applied Digital has had a patent for the chips since 1999. The new technology would make Applied Digital the first company in the United States to sell microchips designed to be implanted in human beings. The company has already won a three-year trial contract with the state of California to supply a version of the product that would track parole prisoners in Los Angeles and alert authorities if they violated the terms of their parole by leaving a set area. The product is already being marketed in South America, while the company seeks approval in Europe from the Food and Drug Administration, which is expected to be given within the next 18 months.

A potential market for the chips would be potential kidney victims who could use these chips in combination with global-positioning devices. Society in general could use them in place of ATM or credit cards.

In five years, it is predicted that this new chip will be used in children, the elderly, prisoners, and by employers at facilities such as nuclear plants. Already airports are beginning to use similar micro-devices to improve security by tagging bags with more detailed instructions about how they are to be handled and screened. Automakers are installing the chips in keys to deter auto theft. Libraries are beginning to use the technology to track books. As Chris Hables Gray, an associate professor of computer science at the University of Great Falls in Montana, and author of “The Cyborg Citizen”, said: “I’d be shocked if within 10 years you couldn’t get a chip implanted that would unlock your house, start your car, and give you money.”

A national identification system

At present, U.S. state motor vehicle authorities are also working on a plan to create a national identification system for individuals that would link all driver databases and employ high-tech cards with a fingerprint, computer chip, and other micro-chip devices. The effect of this is reflected in the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, which would take several years to implement if approved by state and federal authorities, follows disclosures that some of the Sept. 11 hijackers used false identities or obtained driver’s licenses fraudulently.

Under the proposal, every state would continue to issue driver ID’s. But every license and non-driver identity card would contain the same information, and a similar set of security features to prevent tampering and fraud, association officials said. The new proposal would seek to make such changes mandatory.

Association leaders asserted that driver’s licenses “have to be the ‘de facto’ national identification card used by law enforcement, retailers, banks, and other establishments requiring proof of identification.”

A universal identification scheme

Now it has been announced that at a United Nations meeting held on Dec. 14, 2001, it was outlined that every person in the world would be fingerprinted and registered under a universal identification scheme to fight illegal immigration and people smuggling.

The plan was put forward by Pascal Smet, the head of Belgium’s independent asylum review board, at a roundtable meeting with ministers, including Australian Immigration Minster Philip Ruddock. Mr. Smet said the United European was already considering a Europe-wide system, using either fingerprints or eye scanning technologies, to identify citizens, and said the plan could be extended worldwide. “There are no technical problems. It is only a question of will and investment,” he said.

The other side of the coin

Although this new technology of the microchip and identification cards might seem to be a good thing for security purposes, we always have to consider other factors. Concerning the microchip, Thomas Murray, president of the Hastings Center, a bioethics research institute in New York, said: “We need to consider carefully the broader implications. Alongside the possible benefits, it has the potential to be misused by forces who do not have your interests at heart.” And civil libertarians, both conservative and liberal, believe that a card with a microchip would be used by Government authorities to track individuals without their permission.

There is no doubt that a national ID card would be a ticket to the loss of much of your personal freedom. The time is near, without a national identification card, you will not be able to travel, nor buy on credit, nor participate in tomorrow’s normal life. Police, as well as employers, will consider those who resist full disclosure of their financial, academic, medical, religious, social, and political affiliations to be suspect.

And there is another problem, which is of utmost importance for Americans. The microchip in the ID card, which will eventually be implanted under your skin, will have the “666” numbers in it, the “Mark of the Beast” that Saints in the Bible said that those who would receive this Mark or microchip, you will have to renounce Christ, and swear allegiance to the Antichrist. It will be very hard for many to resist this offer, because it will be very difficult to survive if you cannot buy nor sell. However, it is clear that he who wants to remain faithful to Christ will not accept the Mark. And all those that do will burn in hell forever.

So we must not allow ourselves to become misled when we hear about measures being promoted for tighter security. Yes, it is necessary to be adequate security — but not at the cost of our eternal salvation!

Melvin Sieckler

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Maria Carmen offered herself up as a victim for the conversion of the assassins of her father

by Dom Antoine-Marie, OSB

On January 16, 1996, Pope John Paul II declared “venerable” a person who lived in a heroic way the virtues of faith, hope, and charity) María del Carmen González-Valerio, who died at the age of 9 years and 4 months.

Confirmed at the age of two

María Carmen was born in Madrid, Spain, on March 14, 1930, the second of five children. She became seriously ill immediately after her birth, so she was baptized right away. The good Lord did not want to erase from her soul the original sin, and gift her with His grace and make her His child. Following unexpected circumstances, she is confirmed at the age of two, on April 16, 1932, thanks to an initiative of Most Rev. Tadeschini, the apostolic nuncio in Spain and a friend of the family. The Holy Spirit was anxious to give her the courage she would need later.

At the age of six, she makes her First Communion. The date was advanced upon her mother’s request, who will say later: “I was convinced then that Spain, and especially our family, would go through difficult times. One could not ignore the persecution brewing, and wanted María Carmen to make her First Communion before.”

In his Letter to children, dated Dec. 13, 1994, Pope John Paul II wrote: “How many children in the history of the Church has the Eucharist been a source of spiritual strength, sometimes even heroic strength!”

This is why Pope Pius X allowed and encouraged receiving Holy Communion as early as the age of reason. María Carmen enjoyed this favor, as her mother testified: “She really wanted María Carmen to make her First Communion.” Moreover, it is on the occasion of a Holy Communion that she will make her complete offering to God.

On August 15, 1936, Communist militiamen arrested her father, who said to his wife: “Our children are too young, they don’t understand. Tell them later that their father gave up his life for God and for Spain, so that our children may know the virtues and obligations of each day: obedience, mortification, class, study, Rosary, Mass, prayers, etc.”

Charity for the poor

María Carmen also excels in charity for the poor. When one of them rings at their door, she is not scared, she gives him all of her little savings, then says to the poor man: “Now, ring again so that mommey will give you something.” María Carmen’s piety showed at an early age. At the age of four or five, she likes to lead the recitation of the family Rosary, and recites by heart the litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Like Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, she made a “bead of practices”, on which she counts her acts of virtue. This way, she practises the “particular examination” of virtues and faults proposed by the soul of Loyola, a great Saint, who in the same spirit, she keeps a book of “acts”, to know the virtues and obligations of each day: obedience, mortification, class, study, Rosary, Communion, Mass, prayers, etc.

Maria Carmen likes to offer up her little sacrifices to the Heart of Jesus. Her religion teacher relates: “When I prepared the children for confession, I could see on her face her horror of sin, and her efforts to make a good act of contrition.” All of her acts, despite her young age, come from a deep source: her intimacy with God.

Victim soul for the conversion of sinners

Maria Carmen has her own secrets. In her book of “acts”, she wrote three times: “personal”. She often asks for her schoolbag a book of the diary in which she wrote those words that can be understood by her alone: “I gave myself to God in the parish of the Good Shepherd on April 6, 1939.” She also wrote: “They killed my poor father.” And, on one of the last pages: “Long live Spain! Long live Christ the King!” The same cry shouted by the martyrs of the Spanish Civil War. And also: “For daddy, May 7, 1939, personal.” She will say to her nurse: “My father died as a martyr. Poor mommey! And I am dying as a victim.”

Her Uncle Xavier explains: “Maria Carmen wanted the conversion of sinners, as shown by the fact that she offered up the sufferings of her illness and death to the Holy Heart of the Republic of the Personification of the religious persecution of which the assassins of her father were the instruments.” She asked her mother: “Will Azaña go to Heaven?” “If you make sacrifices and pray for him, yes, he will be saved.” María Carmen got the message. Sometimes, she said to her aunt: “Aunt Fifa, let us pray for your father and for all those who killed him.”

A striking conversion

On November 3, 1940, Azaña dies at Montauban. According to the “Michael” Journal of Théas who assisted him at his death, Azaña, despite his circle, received with lucidity the sacrament of Penance, as well as Extreme Unction and the Plenary Indulgence, quietly expiring in God’s love and in the hope of seeing Him one day. He ignored the fact that his path had crossed that of a nine-year-old girl who had prayed and suffered for him.

Not long after her offering of April 6, 1939, the agony of María Carmen began. She was confined to her bed. First, an ear infection appears, which then degenerates into blood poisoning. On May 27, she is transported by car to Madrid. She has an operation. As it is realized that her illness is going to be long, she is brought back home. Some days, she has more than twenty injections.

One ear is attacked by the disease, and she loses her second ear. This is why she stayed too long sleeping on her side. Her illness is then aggravated by a double phlebitis. Gangrenous wounds appear. She faints from pain when her Sheets are changed. The only name of Jesus helps her to endure everything, for nobody thinks about giving her painkillers. Her mother said to her: “Maria Carmen, ask the Christ Jesus to heal you from your wounds.” “No, mommey, I will not ask that; I want His Will to be done.” She often asks for people to read for her the prayer for the agonizing, and in thought, she is already more in Heaven than on earth.

“I die as a martyr”

Maria Carmen had foretold many times that she should die, then she died on April 16, 1932, thanks to an initiative made by Mount Carmel, her patron saint. But, when she learnt that her Aunt Sophia would get married on that day, she announced that she would die the next day. This is exactly what happened. On the 17th, around 1 p.m., she started praying again, and hear the angels sing. “I die as a martyr. Please, doctor, let me go now. Don’t you see that the Blessed Virgin has come with the angels to get me? To be to be a saint, I then say, with her hands joined together: “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul with you.” Those are her last words.

Then, slightly lifting herself up, as though to get something, she falls back on her pillow, and breathes her last, without agony, without her features tense with suffering. Having been disfigured by her illness, she recovers in death all of her beauty, and the amazement of all. Her circle, received with lucidity the sacrament of Penance, as well as Extreme Unction and the Plenary Indulgence, quietly expiring in God’s love and in the hope of seeing Him one day. He ignored the fact that his path had crossed that of a nine-year-old girl who had prayed and suffered for him.

Maria Carmen’s example puts before us a fruit of the grace of God, made fruitful by a good education. Let us ask Venerable María Carmen to intercede for families.

Dom Antoine-Marie, OSB
St. Joseph de Clairval Abbey

Page 14

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**Beware of Harry Potter! A sneaky way to promote the occult**

*by Melvin Sickler*

Who is Harry Potter?

Despite all the publicity he got, perhaps there are some of our readers who do not know who Harry Potter is. He is the hero of a series of books written by British author J.K. Rowling, for children. In fact, it is the all-time best-seller book for children — 100 million copies have been sold worldwide, which have been translated into 40 different languages. Moreover, a movie was made a few months ago about the first book of the series, and it made the top of the list at the box offices.

In volume one, entitled Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Philosopher’s Stone, we are introduced to the world of sorcery and to the boy who plays the pivotal role in the struggle between good and evil, as it is defined in the series. The story begins with the boy, whose parents, a witch and wizard, are destroyed by another wizard named Voldemort, the chief of all the wizards who have gone too far into the practice of the “Dark Arts — the evil side of sorcery”. Harry, rescued by witches and wizards who take him to a suburb of London to be raised by his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, Harry knows nothing about his background.

On his eleventh birthday, he begins to discover that he has some mysterious powers. He soon meets witches and wizards who have been the Dursleys with magic in order to obtain their permission for Harry to attend Hogwarts, a school of witchcraft and wizardry.

At Hogwarts castle, Harry meets the headmaster, Professor Dumbledore, who is also the unofficial chief of the “good wizards” in the world. The wizard world coexists with the world of the Muggles (the ordinary people who are not wizards), but it is enchanted so that ordinary humans are blinded to its existence.

**Truly satanic!**

The only teaching Harry gets at school is making magic potions, tricks of magic. They say good magic can be used for good, even though supernatural powers belong only to God.

In the book, Harry never prays. The only religious character is a fat little monk. He is one of the ghosts at the college in the story. The only time they mention a church is in the 4th volume in the scene of satanic sacrifice. Book after book becomes more and more immoral. From volume to volume, the adventurers of Potter become more and more terrifying and bloody.

Chapter 32 of the 4th volume is the most terrible of all. In that chapter, there is a black wizard who kills a schoolmate of Harry under his own eyes in the cemetery. Then during a satanic ritual, he raises from the dead Lord Voldemort, the one who killed the parents of Harry.

To do so, he throws into a big container of boiling water a kind of monstrous child, and add the bones of dead corpuses taken from graves, with some of the blood of Harry Potter, all the while pronouncing formulas that recall in a blasphemous way the words of the Eucharistic consecration. It only makes one wonder what will come out in the next book.

Each book of this series corresponds to a school year in the life of Harry Potter. So far, four books have been written, and there are three more to go.

To keep children obsessed with Potter

The first book of the series has approximately 300 pages, but the fourth book, Harry and the Goblet of Fire, has approximately 500 pages. It is impossible for a ten-year-old child to read it in a few weeks or even in a few months; it could take the whole year. But this is done on purpose to keep the minds of the children obsessed with Potter so they will think about him continuously.

Plaintly diabolical!

Rome has even spoken out against the Potter books. In early December of 2001, the Diocese of Rome’s official exorcist, Father Gabriele Amorth, warned parents against the Harry Potter book series. The priest, who is also the president of the International Association of Exorcists, said Satan is behind the works.

In an interview with the Italian INSA news agency, Father Amorth said, “Behind Harry Potter hides the signature of the king of darkness, the devil.” The exorcist, with his decades of experience in directly combating evil, explained that J.K. Rowling’s books contain innumerable positive references to magic, “the satanic art”. He noted that the books attempt to make a false distinction between black and white magic, when in fact, the distinction “does not exist, because magic is always a turn to the devil.”

In another interview, which was published in papers across Europe, Father Amorth described the world of witchcraft and wizardry, which exists in Rowling’s works, noting that they suggest that rules can be contravened, and that lying is justified when they are done to do good.

The Potter series might look innocent enough! And yet, never has the occult come in such a desirable form, and never has it come in such a massive fashion. It does not take an expert to see that the story of Potter exploits witchcraft, and that the books about him contain the names of actual demons. Witchcraft is presented as exciting and powerful. Witches are portrayed as friendly, positive, supportive, and good. One former witch — now a pastor — described the Potter series as “witchcraft mass” written at a surprising level of sophistication.

To orient yourself in the direction of the occult, and to expose them to such forces in the name of fun, is very dangerous. Already, the Pagan Federation in England receives an average of 100 inquiries a month from young people who want to become witches — an unprecedented phenomenon which is attributed in part to the Potter books.

Parents: Wake up!

Rowlings’ stories create the impression that some of us could learn to handle occult powers and wield them for good. This is a grave error, for of all intentions magical powers cannot transform an objective evil into a good.

No Christian family should allow their children to read the Potter books. Parents must be warned that this is not the church’s opinion. In the enchanting world of Harry Potter is playing with a fire from hell. A set of books which glamorizes and normalizes occult activity is as deadly to the soul as sexual sin, if not more so! Children must be taught that the practice of magic is a prohibited phenomenon which is attributed in part to the Potter books.

Parents need to pray daily for the spiritual protection of their families. They need to ask God for the extraordinary gifts of wisdom and discernment. They must know what their children are reading. The parents must encourage their children to model after the saints whom we know are now in Heaven. For what is our life on earth all about but to work our way to the Kingdom of God? By exposing their children to witchcraft and the occult will just not bring one on the right road!

Parents, take on your responsibilities of protecting the innocent. If you are not familiar with the occult, known to those around you the evils present — an unprecedented phenomenon which is attributed in part to the Potter books.

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The Pope insists on individual confession: Celebrations with general absolution are forbidden

Pope John Paul II recently asked all the Bishops in the world to put an end, in parishes, to penitential celebrations with general absolution, and to make parishioners rediscover the importance of the Sacrament of Penance, through individual confession. For example, Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, of Montreal, Canada, sent, on Oct. 22, 2001, a letter to all the priests of his Diocese about this request of the Holy Father. Here are some excerpts:

“The faculty of absolving collectively penitents during Advent and Lent has therefore been withdrawn. The aim of this letter is to inform you officially about this decision. It is important for us to stand by the universal Church by respecting, as faithfully as possible, the norms established for this issue. The work begun to help the faithful of our Diocese rediscover the richness of the Sacrament of Penance must therefore continue.”

Another Canadian Bishop, from the Maritimes, wrote to his faithful: “When we made our Ad Limina visit to Rome in September, two Congregations were very clear about General Absolution. Either we brought it to an end or we would receive detailed orders telling us how to do it. Faced with these alternatives, there is no choice... The truth is that there is a much larger problem. We need a massive education on the Sacrament of Confessions and all its elements. Among the things to teach are the following: "That Jesus gave to the Church the power to forgive sins, and that this power is exercised by the priest in the Sacrament of Confession. Do all Catholics understand and believe this? "That to be forgiven our sins, there must be sorrow and a sincere plan and desire to change. Therefore, for example, people living in sinful relationships have to end them, before they can make an honest and valid confession. Do all Catholics know and believe this?" Several Bishops have abided by the request of the Pope and asked their priests to put an end to this practice of general absolution, but unfortunately, many priests do not want to obey to the orders of their Bishops. Let us pray for these recalcitrant priests so they will humbly change. Therefore, for example, people living in sinful relationships have to end them, before they can make an honest and valid confession.

The Sacrament of Penance is not an invention of man. It is Our Lord Himself who instituted it when He said to His Apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). This power to forgive sins has been given by Our Lord to His Apostles and all of their successors, the Bishops and the priests.

In his Letter to the priests for Holy Thursday 2001, Pope John Paul II recalled the importance of the Sacrament of Penance: “We need to declare with firmness and conviction that the Sacrament of Penance is the ordinary means of obtaining pardon and the remission of grave sins committed after Baptism. We ought to celebrate the Sacrament in the best possible way, according to the forms laid down by liturgical law, so that it may lose none of its character as the celebration of God’s mercy.”

The Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship

In October, 1989, Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estevez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, spoke about the Sacrament of Penance and "general absolutions" at the Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops, gathered in the Vatican:

“The constant teaching of the Church affirms that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is composed, like travail, of pain for sins committed, the resolution to sin no longer, the integral confession of sins to the priests, and his absolution. The Church’s doctrine and norms admit cases of grave impossibility of integral confession of the remnants of sins and other well-determined cases, the priest can absolve penitents without prior integral confession of sins, as long as penitents desire to do this for the sake of the possibility of salvation.

In many parishes, “general absolutions” have led the vast majority of parishioners to abandon individual confession. This is wrong, as Cardinal Medina Estevez points out:

“It is necessary to emphasize that individual and integral confession of sins is the ordinary way to celebrate this sacrament, and that ‘general absolutions’ are an absolutely exceptional form, for occasions when it is impossible to have recourse to the ordinary form.”

General absolutions can be given only in extraordinary circumstances, like a sinking ship: a priest on board, seeing the impossibility of hearing the individual confession of all the people on the boat before it sinks, asks them to examine their consciences, sincerely regret their sins, and he gives them general absolution. If there are people among them who survive the tragedy, they must still go to a priest for individual confession to have their mortal sins forgiven. Otherwise, the general absolution they received is invalid. Cardinal Medina Estevez continues:

“One must keep in mind that refusing integral individual confession after receiving general absolution can only be to the detriment of all priests know what has been sacrificed to the ministry of the confessional, but the example of Blessed Padre Pio, whose shrine is the best example of the influx of pilgrims, demonstrates how fruitful that ministry of sacramental mercy is.”

Alas! How many Catholics today no longer go to the confessional! For marriages and funerals, you see them go to receive Holy Communion, although many of them do not practice their Faith, or are not in the state of grace. Someone who has committed a mortal sin, even if he regrets it, must go and confess to a priest before receiving Holy Communion: “But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:28-29).

The integrity of the Sacrament

On March 20, 2000, Cardinal Medina Estevez wrote a Circular Letter concerning the integrity of the Sacrament of Penance. Here are some excerpts:

“The divine constitution of the Sacrament of Penance requires each penitent to confess to a priest all mortal sins, as well as any specifying moral circumstances that he remembers after a diligent examination of conscience. For this reason the Code of Canon Law states clearly that ‘individual and integral confession and absolution are the sole ordained way by which a member of the faithful who is conscious of mortal sin is reconciled with God and with the Church. Physical or moral impossibility alone excuses from the obligation of confessing, except in cases of the danger of imminent death and other well-determined cases, the priest may absolve penitents without prior integral confession of sins, as long as penitents desire to do this for the sake of the possibility of salvation.’

In giving consideration to the authentic discipline of the Church concerning ‘general absolution’, the recent intercardinal meeting of the Roman Curia with a representation of Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Australia noted that: ‘...communal celebrations of the sacrament in which penitents are invited to present a written list of sins to the priest confessor. It should be noted that ‘a sufficient necessity is not yet arrived to consider communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance, to be eliminated’.

“The teaching of the Church is reflected in precise terms in the requirements of the Code of Canon Law (cf. esp. canons 959-964). In particular it is clear that: ‘A sufficient necessity is not yet arrived to consider communal celebrations of the sacrament in which penitents are invited to present a written list of sins to the priest confessor. It should be noted that ‘a sufficient necessity is not yet arrived to consider communal celebrations of the sacrament in which penitents are invited to present a written list of sins to the priest confessor. It should be noted that ‘a sufficient necessity is not yet arrived to consider communal celebrations of the sacrament in which penitents are invited to present a written list of sins to the priest confessor. It should be noted that ‘a sufficient necessity is not yet arrived to consider communal celebrations of the sacrament in which penitents are invited to present a written list of sins to the priest confessor. It should be noted that ‘a sufficient necessity is not yet arrived solutio, and ‘general absolutions’ at the time of penitential celebrations with general absolution, is to be eliminated.”

In his Letter to the priests for Holy Thursday 2001, Pope John Paul II recalled the importance of the Sacrament of Penance, and of receiving worthily the Holy Eucharist, where Our Lord is really present with His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him... He that eateth that bread, shall live for ever” (John 6:57-59).

Yvette Poirier

Page 16

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