



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

With the November elections now behind us, there are many serious problems which face our country and give us reason to pray for the conversion of our nation. The real solution is to be found not in men but in God.

Many Americans are concerned about the future of our economy and this, with reason, as our national debt is now 16 trillion dollars. There is also the overhaul of our health system and its incremental takeover by the federal government. As bad as these fiscal problems are, they pale in comparison to the moral issues that cry to heaven for vengeance: the murder of unborn infants, the legalization of same-sex “marriages” and doctor assisted suicide.

How can we expect God to bless America when so many offend Him so wantonly and live as if there were no judgment after death, no heaven or hell?

The solution to these problems is in the simple message which the Mother of God gave 95 years ago at Fatima when she told Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco that she had come “to ask mankind to amend; it must cease offending God who is already so much offended.” Our Lady of Fatima lamented that “so many souls go to hell because there is no one to pray and sacrifice for them.” This is indeed the greatest tragedy of our times—souls going to hell. If the Virgin Mary spoke of this loss of souls in 1917, how much greater should that concern be today?

Our Blessed Mother warned that “more souls go to hell for sins of the flesh than for any other reason” and “many styles and fashions will be introduced that will gravely offend my Divine Son.” Once again, if this were true in the years following 1917, what must be the situation in the world today in 2012? With the advancement of technology, immorality has become so accessible. How many youth at an early age lose

their innocence through the television, videos, music, and the internet! In numerous public schools, besides the lack of proper moral guidance, homosexuality is promoted as a legitimate alternate lifestyle. How quickly these “educators” forget the Divine punishment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrha for this unnatural sin. “Woe to those who give scandal to these little ones...”

When we look at the world today we can ask ourselves, what a mess this world is in today and how did it come to this. It goes back to the spiritual and cultural revolution which took place in the 1960s. With reason did the Mother of God tell Lucia to reveal the third secret of Fatima in 1960, for then it would be better understood. But what was the reason that motivated John XXIII (Roncalli) to prevent its revelation and at the same time to convoke the Second Vatican Council? The 1960s not only initiated a cultural revolution in society but far more importantly issued in the Great Apostasy from the Catholic Church by means of this false ecumenical council.

It should be no surprise to any of us that the world is in such disarray when we consider that mankind has not amended as Our Lady asked for at Fatima. And the solution to the problems which face the world is not to be found in politicians and politics, for it is foremost a spiritual problem that exists in our society.

Let us not think that the message of Our Lady of Fatima has become obsolete. On the contrary, it is more relevant today than ever before. As members of Christ’s one true Church, we must pray and sacrifice as never before for the conversion of poor sinners. We must be faithful to the daily recitation of the Rosary and constantly work at a sincere amendment of life.

In these most difficult times let us never cease to have recourse to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as our safe refuge.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

The Dignity and Virginitv of the Mother of God

(Excerpts from Fr. Francisco Suarez, S.J., 1592)

Not infrequently, Protestants have criticized Catholics for their love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Well do we know that our devotion to her is firmly established in Sacred Scripture, especially in the Gospel of St. Luke when the angel Gabriel declared: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women," and also when the Blessed Virgin prophesied, "For behold henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

However, Protestants often will leave no stone unturned to attack our Catholic Faith in this area and have attempted to deny the perpetual virginitv of the Blessed Virgin.

The great Jesuit theologian, Franciscus Suarez, in his treatise De Mysteriis Vitae Christi, written in 1592, gives us a solid defense against such heresy.

I - *The heretics maintain that after the birth of Christ, the Blessed Virgin conceived other sons by Joseph.*

I maintain that the Blessed Virgin preserved her virginitv perpetually and never knew man. This is an article of Faith. It is proved, first of all, by a single text from the Old Testament, Ezechiel (44:2): "This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it." This passage, by a metaphor, it is true, refers literally to the Most Holy Virgin. So testifies Jerome in commenting on this passage. Moreover, this is the view of other Fathers who employ the text to establish the truth of this mystery; namely, Jerome himself, Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, John Damascene, and others. Furthermore, this interpretation fully squares both with the sense and context of the quotation. For that gate, it is stated, will forever remain closed "because the Lord . . . hath entered in by it." For this reason the phrase is added: "And it shall be shut for the prince." (Ezechiel 44:2-3)—that is, in His honor and reverence. Our doctrine is confirmed by the words of the Virgin: "How shall this be done since I know not man . . ." (Luke 1:34). They manifest an intention of perpetual virginitv as we shall consider at greater length in the next disputation.

Not a few of the Fathers advance the argument that Christ hanging on the cross entrusted His Mother to John with the words "Behold thy Mother" (John 19:27); and John in turn to His Mother with: "Behold thy son" (John 19:26). Both from the fact and words themselves we can clearly conclude that she had no other sons by Joseph. Otherwise it seems she would have been commended to them rather than to John. Consequently, Christ spoke in the singular number: "Behold thy son"

(John 19:26)—that is: Behold him whom you should have in place of your only Son. This argument can be found in Ambrose, Epiphanius, and Jerome.

Second, this truth is especially found in tradition, in the consent and definition of the Church. For in the Councils the Mother of God is frequently called "ever Virgin immaculate." Thus in the Second and Third Councils of Constantinople are found the words "the virginitv of Mary, inviolate before, in, and after childbirth." The same doctrine is found in the Second Council of Nicea, the Council of the Lateran under Pope Martin I, the Decretal Letter of Pope Siricius and the Roman Synod, and in the Letter of Ambrose and the Council of Milan.

This tradition is confirmed, as Augustine points out, by the fact that in the universal Church the name "Virgin," stated absolutely, is customarily used as a proper name of the Mother of God. Thus Epiphanius says, "Who in any age ever dared pronounce the name of Mary, and upon being questioned did not at once add the word 'Virgin'? For from her very names, the marks of her virtue shine forth." Indeed this is the way she is referred to in the Apostles' Creed: "born of the Virgin Mary." And this is the way the Fathers so often speak at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. So, too, speak Athanasius, Hilary, Maximum, and of set purpose Jerome in his letter to Eustochius wherein he beautifully discourses on the modesty and chastity of the Virgin.

II - *How can Christ be said to have had brothers if His Mother always remained a Virgin?*

I maintain that these brothers of the Lord were not the sons of the Blessed Virgin, and this position is not only held with the certitude of faith and tradition but

also can be proved from the Gospels. The first part of the assertion is established by the preceding section where it was proved that the Mother of God forever remained a virgin. The latter part of the proposition is proved by the fact that from the Gospels one can establish that those called "brothers" had another mother than the Virgin.

This is proved as follows. In John (19:25) we read that there were by the cross three women; the Mother of the Lord, her sister Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. Matthew (27:56), however, and Mark (15:40) enumerate Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee or "Salome", as Mark says. But it seems certain that the mother of James and Joseph (who in other places are called "brothers of the Lord") was not the Mother of God.

First, wherever the Mother of God is mentioned with the other women, she is listed first in accord with her dignity as in John (19:25), or at all events, in the last place and uniquely marked off from the others as in Acts (1:14): "with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus." Second, this is confirmed by the fact that Matthew (28:1) when describing the resurrection of Christ says: "And in the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Here it is evident that this other Mary was the one whom Matthew (27:56) had called "Mary the mother of James and Joseph" and about whom he had added the verse: "And there was there Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre" (Matthew 27:61). This is even more clearly inferred from Mark (16:1) and Luke (24:10). Therefore, that "Mary the mother of James" (Mark 15:47) was not the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, argumentation establishes this conclusion. For, of the two Marys, Mary of Magdalen is more prominently mentioned. She is described as having a more fervent faith and charity and enjoying the privilege granted by Christ of seeing Him before the others on the day of the Resurrection. This is clear from Mark (16). But if Mary of James had been the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalen would not have been preferred in any of these ways.



A third argument, moreover, is the fact that it is unbelievable that the Blessed Virgin would have been one of the women who with such anxiety went to anoint the dead body of Christ on the day of the Resurrection. For (as can be gathered from the very fact of their going and the Gospel account) although those women acted in a holy way, nevertheless, they had an imperfect faith and labored under great ignorance concerning the mysteries of Christ. Furthermore, according to Luke (24:11), the news

related by this Mary of Joseph and the other women seemed nonsense to the Apostles. But who can believe the Apostles would have been so senseless as not to have shown her greater faith and respect if she had been the Mother of the Lord. Thus Bernard in treating of the Passion of the Lord says the Mother of God was not preoccupied with the dead body of the Lord, for she had a most firm faith in His resurrection and had been taught and instructed in all the mysteries by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it seems to be the common belief of the Church that the Blessed Virgin awaited at home the glorious arrival of her Son, and there merited to enjoy the sight of Him before anyone else.

The fourth argument is the good point Thomas makes here in the third article in answer to the sixth objection: that the Gospel gives the Blessed Virgin no further identifying name except that derived from her Son. For she is addressed as "the mother of Jesus," or "of whom Jesus was born." Thus Luke, who in his Gospel (24:10) names the other Mary "Mary of James," in the Acts (1:14) calls "Mary, the mother of Jesus." For this reason Ignatius addresses her as "Mary of Jesus" since this was her greatest dignity. Why, then, without any mention of Christ should she be called the "mother of James and Joseph," if the same person were "the mother of Jesus"?

Fifth and finally this is the teaching of the Fathers: Jerome, Bede, Thomas, and Euthymius who call the opposite opinion "absurd."

The plain conclusion of the foregoing is the one to which I have been moving; namely, that James and Joseph were not sons of the Blessed Virgin but of the other Mary.

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

The Purpose of Amendment

Question: I have heard this procedure suggested to confessors for the treatment of a penitent strongly addicted to some bad habit: Do not require him to have the purpose of giving up the habit permanently. Tell him to limit himself to the purpose of abstaining from it for one week only, and then demand a promise that he will return to confession in a week. May this procedure be lawfully followed by a confessor?

Answer: In order that a person may receive the sacrament of Penance fruitfully, he must have the purpose of not sinning (at least mortally) again — in the words of the Council of Trent, *propositum non peccandi de caetero* (purpose of not sinning in future). This means that he must here and now have the will to endure all evils rather than again commit a mortal sin. It does not mean that he must be certain that he will not in future change his mind and sin again. On the contrary, he may regard it at least as probable that this will happen. But, as far as his present dispositions are concerned, it is necessary that he have the firm purpose to give up mortal sin forever (*de caetero*), and not merely for a limited time. Hence, if a penitent has the purpose of giving up mortal sin for a week only, he lacks one of the requirements for a fruitful confession. This is very evident, of course, if his intention beyond the limited period is a positive intention of committing sin again. But even if he is neutral in his purpose regarding his future life subsequent to the limited time he lays down for himself — that is, even if he has neither the purpose of sinning or of not sinning — he is indisposed. He must have a positive resolution of giving up mortal sin forever.

The confessor may indeed — once he has sufficient assurance that the penitent has the requisite purpose *non peccandi de caetero* (not sinning again) — recommend that he concentrate his efforts on avoiding the repetition of the bad habit for a week, without concerning himself explicitly with the weeks and years ahead, but trusting in God's help. However, this is a very different attitude from the definite purpose of avoiding sin for a single week.

Imposing a Perpetual Penance

Question: May a perpetual penance be imposed — for example, the recitation of the rosary every day for the rest of the penitent's lifetime?

Answer: Theoretically, a confessor may impose a penance that will bind the penitent permanently — for example, to abstain from smoking the rest of his life. But, according to St. Alphonsus, in practice such penances are very imprudent and should never be imposed. One reason is the fact that the penitent is likely to neglect such a penance with the passing of time and thus be guilty of sin.

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