

December, 2007



# Adsum

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## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In the liturgy for the Season of Advent, Holy Mother the Church presents to us the prophecies of the Old Testament which foretold the Coming of Our Divine Savior.

Many of us are familiar with some of them. The two prophecies of Isaias, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel," (Is 7:14) and "For a Child is born to us and a Son is given to us . . . and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty. . ." (Is. 9:6) are frequently heard when Handel's Messiah is sung.

However, with a thorough research of the Old Testament, we can find a vast number of prophecies which were perfectly fulfilled by Our Divine Lord. The prophet Micheas identified Bethlehem as the place of the birth of the Promised Messias (Mich. 5:2). The Prophet Aggeus comforted the Israelites upon the return from captivity as they began to rebuild their temple (which would not be as large and beautiful as the Temple of Solomon) and foretold that the Messias would visit this second temple and fill it with glory (Agg. 2:8-10).

Furthermore, the time of the coming of the Messias was also prophesied. In the book of Genesis, Jacob blessed his sons before his death, and said to Juda that the sceptre would not be taken from him until the advent of the Messias. From that time, the tribe of Juda was the leading tribe. King David and his successors were of the tribe of Juda; Zorobabel, who brought the Jews back from captivity was of that tribe; and when the Jews regained their liberty, it was under the rule of the Maccabees, who also belonged to the tribe of Juda. It was not until 39 BC that the Jewish monarchs were deprived of their sovereignty and Herod the Great, a foreigner and a pagan, was raised to the throne by the Romans. It was this same Herod who was alarmed by the arrival of the Magi seeking the new-born King of the Jews.

A more detailed prophesy was made by Daniel (605-530 BC) who foretold that from the rebuilding of Jerusalem (453 BC) until the public appearance of the Messias, there will be sixty-nine weeks of years (483 Years). This comes out to be 30 AD, the exact time of the public life of Our Lord.

At the time of the Messias' birth, a new star was to appear (Numbers 24:17); He was to be adored by kings from distant lands (Psalm 71:10); and many children were to be put to death at the time of His birth (Jeremias 31:15 / Genesis 25:19).

These are just a few of the many prophecies about the advent of the Messias and it is a great source of consolation for us to see the perfect fulfillment by Jesus Christ.

So clearly did Our Lord fulfill all these Old Testament prophecies that St. Augustine wrote:

"Today, if the Jews are dispersed through all nations and lands, that is due to God's design; so that if the idols, altars, sacred groves and temples are all destroyed all over the earth and the sacrifices forbidden, it could still be seen from the Jewish books that all this was prophesied long ago; and although the prophecies, fulfilled in the Christian religion, may be read also in our own holy books, no one can accuse us of having composed them ourselves after the event." (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. IV, cap. xxxiv)

And St Thomas reiterated the same point:

"The books of the Jews are witnesses everywhere for Christ and His Church, for when the heathen read them in the Jewish books, they could not imagine that the prophecies concerning Christ had been fabricated by the Christian preachers." (*In Epist. ad Rom.*, cap, xi, lect. 2).

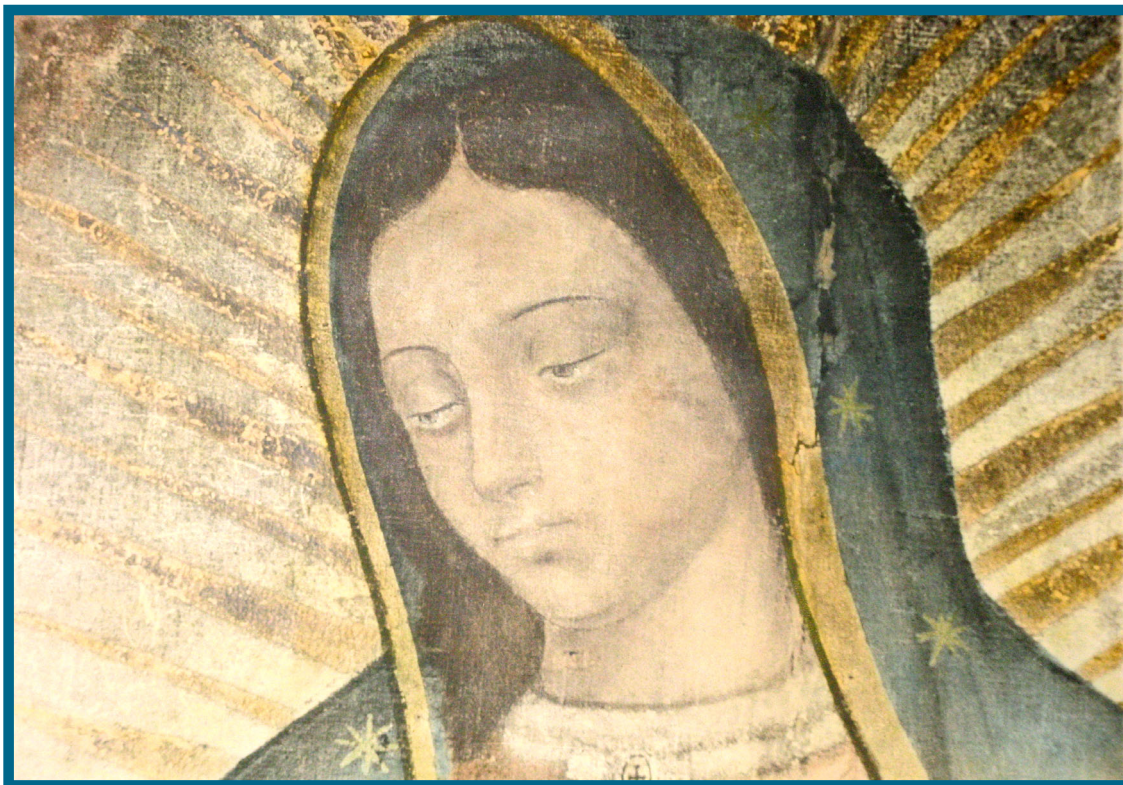
And why is this so important for us today? One reason is that it aids us in our fight against modernism. Pope St Pius X in his Oath Against Modernism reminded us that miracles and prophecies are the surest signs of the divine origin of the Christian religion, and that these same proofs are well adapted to the understanding of all eras and all men, even of these times.

This is the precise problem with the Conciliar Church of Vatican II in its ecumenical endeavors with the Jews. We especially find in the teachings of Benedict XVI (erroneously hailed as a conservative and traditionalist). In his book "*God and the World*," Cardinal Ratzinger wrote:

"It is of course possible to read the Old Testament so that it is not directed toward Christ; it does not point quite unequivocally to Christ. And if Jews cannot see the promises as being fulfilled in Him, this is not just ill will on their part, but genuinely because of the obscurity of the texts and the tension in the relationship between these texts and figure of Jesus . . . There are perfectly good reasons, then, for denying that the Old Testament refers to Christ and for saying: No, that is not what He said."

What blasphemy! According to Ratzinger, divine revelation is obscure and there are perfectly good reasons for denying that the Old Testament refers to Christ! What he is saying in reality is that God has failed inasmuch as the divinely inspired prophecies aren't sufficiently clear enough. This is the reason that Pope St. Pius X, knowing this evil tenet of modernism, explicitly stated in the Oath Against Modernism that miracles and prophecies are the surest signs of the divine origin of the Christian religion, and that they are well adapted to all eras and all men.





*Actual photograph of the tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe*

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During the Advent season, we also celebrate two special feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The first is the Immaculate Conception (the Patroness of the United States) which was solemnly defined a dogma by Pope Pius IX in 1854. The second feast is Our Lady of Guadalupe proclaimed by the Pope the Patroness of Americas.

As we prepare spiritually for the Nativity of Our Lord, let us be mindful to cultivate the virtue of humility—the virtue so uniquely pleasing to God. Over and over again, we see how important is this virtue from Sacred Scripture and the history of the Church. First and foremost, Our Divine Savior exhorted us to learn from Him because He was “meek and humble of heart.” He was born in a humble stable and He humbled Himself becoming “*obedient unto the death of the Cross.*”

Next, we admire the profound humility of His Blessed Mother. When the Angel Gabriel announced that She was to be the Mother of God, the Mother of the Promised Messiah, Mary’s humble response was “*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.*” And again, at the time of the Virgin Mary’s visitation to her cousin, St. Elizabeth, Mary broke forth with her canticle of praise to God, “*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior . . . for He Who is mighty hath done great things to me.*”

And following the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX, when Our Lady appeared at Lourdes and exclaimed, “*I am the Immaculate Conception,*” she chose to appear to the humble peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous. And later at Fatima, Our Lady appeared to simple shepherd children — Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia.

There is a pattern here, God chooses the humble and the simple of the world to confound the proud. This is so apparent in the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego — a simple peasant Indian.

Of all the people of Mexico, who were more qualified, more talented, more intellectually gifted, Our Lady chose Juan Diego with the mission to go to Bishop Zumarraga and request that a church be built on the barren place called Tepeyac.

If we would make a worthy preparation during this Advent season, let us especially learn the importance and the necessity of the virtue of humility. Almighty God rewarded the simple shepherds of Bethlehem and called them to be among the first adorers of His Divine Son. May we become humble and simple as little children for such is the kingdom of God!

Wishing you a most blessed Christmas and grace-filled New Year,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

# *More Answers to Today's Moral Questions*

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

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## **The Transfer of a Clergy Book**

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**Question:** Is it lawful for a clergyman to allow another to use his railroad clergy book to purchase a ticket at reduced rates?

**Answer:** It would certainly be a violation of justice for a clergyman or religious to lend his railroad clergy book to a person who would have no claim to the reduced rates, such as a lay person. However, if the other party is a clergyman, presumably possessing the qualifications required by the railroad company for the privilege of a clergy book, a distinction must be made. If the other person has not actually received a clergy book of his own by filling out the prescribed form and paying the stipulated fee, there would be injustice in the transfer. For the recipient has not fulfilled the conditions for a contract with the railroad entitling him to the reduced fare. An exception to this rule would occur if the proper officials of the railroad, knowing the circumstances, explicitly authorized the transfer, as they might do in individual cases out

of courtesy and for the promotion of good will. If the other clergyman actually has a clergy book but is seeking the loan of another because he does not have his own book with him at present, it would seem probable that there is no violation of commutative justice in the transfer, though it is contrary to the regulations of the railroad. Of course, if a railroad official agrees to the arrangement, there is no difficulty; but, apart from this case, the procedure is reprehensible. For even though it would seem that it is not opposed to commutative justice, it is surely inconsistent with the perfect honesty that is expected of a clergyman or religious. A priest should never embarrass a brother priest by asking for the loan of his clergy book. On the other hand, the one to whom such a request is made should not hesitate to refuse.

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## **The Disappearance of Library Books**

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**Question:** Would you please say something in your columns about the custom of taking books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., from the shelves of institutional libraries without having a proper record made and without subsequently returning them?

**Answer:** This request was made by the head librarian in a large Catholic university. His request is based on the appalling fact that much material in the form of books and pamphlets and periodicals is constantly disappearing from the shelves without any record being made and is never returned. What makes the matter worse is the strong indication that many of those who take this material are priests or seminarians or religious.

Of course, objectively a sin of theft is committed. Doubtless, many of those who commit such depredations are not guilty subjectively in the beginning. They intend to return the material "in a day or two." But time passes on, and the books or periodicals or pamphlets remain on the borrowers' shelves for weeks or months or years. Perhaps after a long time he argues that the material must have been replaced in the meantime, or he convinces himself that the library has a large number of copies and one will not be missed. It is very difficult to excuse from sin one who rationalizes in this way. He has acquired something to which he has no title, even if it has not

much value and can easily be replaced. And frequently is cannot easily be replaced. The book may no longer be for sale; or it may be a book that can now be bought only at a high price. It may be one volume of a set, and its theft renders the whole set practically useless. A professor may have to change his course content and his examinations because this book is no longer available for reference. It must be very evident that the purloining of even one book may constitute sufficient matter for a grave sin against justice, not to speak of charity, because of the inconvenience and hardship the "borrowing" may cause others.

All those who make use of the services of a library should be most exact in complying with the rules determining the borrowing of a book. Priests, seminarians, and religious especially should be most careful never to cause the library officials any trouble in this connection. They should make it a matter of conscience to let the custodian know if they take out a book, and should return it promptly within the stipulated time.

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