



# Adsum

*Adsum* is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends and benefactors.

## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

As the joyful Christmas season comes to an end, it is appropriate for us to take this opportunity to thank all our benefactors for their many acts of kindness.

We wish to express a special “thank you” to Fr. Martin Stepanich, OFM, who so generously sent several loaves of Povitica Bread to help satisfy “the ferocious appetites” here at the seminary. For those who have never heard of “Povitica Bread,” it is a sweet bread of rolled doughs brushed with various fillings (poppy seed, cranberries, etc.). Although I have never previously heard of such bread, it is uniquely delicious! The priests, seminarians, religious Sisters and boarder students had no trouble consuming eight loaves in a few days. After so many Christmas donations of cookies, sweet breads, and pastries, the holy season of Lent appropriately comes early this year!

On January 6th, the feast of the Epiphany, two new seminarians arrived to begin their first year of Philosophy. Caleb Short (Denver, Colorado) came from St. Joseph’s Seminary in Rathdrum, Idaho, where he had spent two years; Chris Jeffries (Detroit, Michigan) came from St. Joseph’s parish in Wayne, Michigan, after a semester of college. Both young men have entered the seminary as religious.

During this month, we pray the Chair of Unity Octave prayers which are offered for the conversion of those who are not of the true faith. In this day of wide-spread indifferentism, these eight days of prayer remind us of the mission of the Church “to teach all nations” all things whatever Our Divine Lord has commanded and to convert the world to Christ and His true Church—the Catholic Church. As we all well know, this mission has been radically changed in the Conciliar Church in the name of false ecumenism. Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical letter *Mortalium Animos* which directly addressed this very issue. In this encyclical, the Pope taught that true ecumenism is the conversion of non-Catholics to the Catholic Faith. The Holy Father also condemned false ecumenism, which is based on religious indifferentism that all religions are more or less good and praiseworthy; it strives to achieve a false unity without conversion to the Catholic Faith.



This same false ecumenism condemned by Pope Pius XI is the very same promoted by the Conciliar Church of Vatican II. It would be well for our readers to re-read the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* to be reminded of the clear Papal teachings in this matter.

Please remember in your prayers Fr. Julian Gilchrist’s immigration issue. Father provides for the spiritual needs of our faithful in Western Colorado. He applied for permanent residence and filled out all the necessary paperwork, only to find out a year and a half later, that he needed to file an additional application. Because of this, the Department of Homeland Security has issued him a letter of intention to reject his petition for permanent residence. As of the writing of this newsletter, Fr. Gilchrist and I will meet with the Office of Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska to request

*continued next page*

# Occursus Domini

By a Seminarian

---

*“At that time, when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the Law of Moses, they took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.” (Luke 2:22)*

---

The feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a special day for Catholics, and is ranked as a Double of the Second Class in the Latin Church. In ancient time, it was also called the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple—*Occursus Domini*—which means the meeting of Our Lord and His Mother with Simeon and Anna. It is now also called Candlemas, or “Mass of the Candles,” because of the blessing of candles which takes place on this day. These titles provide us with many reflections for this February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

In the Old Testament, according to the Law of Moses, a mother who had given birth to a male child was considered unclean for seven days, and for thirty-three days was to remain “in the blood of her purification.” At the conclusion of the forty days the mother was to “. . . bring to the temple a lamb for a holocaust and a young pigeon or turtle dove for sin.” Those who could not offer a lamb, were to offer two turtle doves or pigeons. The priest then prayed for her and she was cleansed.

The Blessed Virgin was not subject to this law, for she was not in need of purification. As St. Bernard said, “Nothing was impure in her conception; nothing was impure in her birth; there was nothing to be cleansed.” Yet she complied with the law and gave us a beautiful example of obedience and humility. Mary likewise showed her obedience in bringing the Child Jesus to the Temple. God had commanded that the Jews offer to Him their first-born sons in gratitude for the deliverance of their first-born from the

destroying angel in Egypt. Afterwards, the children were to be redeemed with certain gifts.

When the Child Jesus was presented in the temple by His holy Mother, the holy prophet, Simeon, recognized Him as the Messias. He called the Child Jesus “. . . a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel.” It is in commemoration of these words that the blessing of candles and the procession are held on this day.

Candles are a symbol of Christ, the God-Man. Based on the concept of the virginity of worker bees, beeswax is considered as typifying the flesh of Christ, born of a Virgin, which explains the Church’s insistence on its use during liturgical functions. As one of the fathers of the Church once wrote, “The wax, being spotless, represents Christ’s most spotless Body; the wick enclosed in it is an image of His Soul, while the glowing flame typifies the Divine Nature united with the human in one Divine Person.” We also know that, during the Easter season, the Paschal candle especially represents Christ, the Light of the world.

As we celebrate the feast of the Purification, let us remember that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, and our Divine Light. Let us also remember the wonderful example of humility and obedience that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, gives us, and say with St. Bernard, “Truly, O happy Virgin, thou wast not in need of purification, but thou wouldst pass as a woman among women, as thy Son also passed for a Child among children.”

---

## LETTER continued

their intervention in this matter. God knows we need all the priests we have to maintain our many Mass centers.

Next week, our priests, both religious and secular, will meet for our bi-annual meeting. Our January meeting is held at Mount St. Michael and there will be many things for us to discuss. These meetings are an important means for us to maintain our unity which is so necessary in these times. A house divided cannot stand.

With the season of Lent just around the corner, and earlier than usual, I hope that all of you will grow in your love for our Crucified Savior and Our Sorrowful Mother.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



*Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!*



# A History of Today's Calendar

*By a Seminarian*

Most people in the world and perhaps many Catholics take for granted the calendar we follow; yet, how many know that the calendar we use today came into existence only during the 1500's by means of the Council of Trent?

We owe our calendar to Pope Gregory XIII, who promulgated this masterpiece of science and time during the last session of the Council.

The work of this calendar was not an easy undertaking. To grasp in a small way the tremendous task, we must understand our year.

The Year, or the Tropical Year, is the period of time in which the earth travels around the sun. The constellations in the night sky, or the zodiac, were used to determine how long this took. For example, when the position of the earth came back to the same zodiac sign, the New Year began. This was reckoned to be 365 days and some odd hours. Ancient astronomers used the equinoxes as easy references to govern this. However, it was a difficult task to find out the accurate amount of time that has passed since the previous year.

Julius Ceasar attempted to rectify this situation by implementing a system in which the year was calculated to be 365 days and 6 hours long. He had asked the assistance of the astronomers of Alexandria. It was determined then, that after every four years, in the fourth year an extra day would be added to make up for the extra time. He implemented this calendar in 46 B.C. The problem was that this calculation was inaccurate. The year is actually 11 minutes and 14 seconds shorter than what was figured. With the former calculation, by the fifth year, the new year would have begun 44 minutes and 52 seconds after the sun had actually passed the equinox. Thus, the extra day every four years was about 45 minutes too long. After about four centuries, the calendar would have been 3 days off. To make matters worse, Julius Caesar was murdered just two years after having implemented the new calendar and there also happened to be a misunderstanding about leap year. It was thought to occur every three years instead of four.

After the Julian reform, the vernal equinox was designated to be on the 25th of March. But at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) this was changed permanently to the 21st day of March which had great bearing on determining the feast of Easter.

Unfortunately, with a mistaken system of leap year occurring every three years, the order of things began to be disturbed. By the thirteenth century, the calendar was already seven days behind the Nicene calculation. By the sixteenth century, it was behind by ten days. This meant that the vernal equinox fell on the 11th of March, the autumnal equinox on the 11th of September, and the winter

and summer solstices were on the 11th of December and the 11th of June respectively.

These mistakes in the calendar were too obvious to be ignored. Many observers had tried to point them out and attempted to devise a way of correcting them, but to no avail. Finally, the dilemma was addressed at the Council of Trent. Pope Gregory XIII had consulted the most brilliant minds of their times (Lilius, Clavius, and Chacon) for devising the new calendar. First of all, the ten extra days were eliminated. [As a matter of fact, St. Teresa of Avila was in her last agony on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October; she died the next day on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October! This just happened to be at the time when the church decided to remove the ten extra days.] The Church also determined that it would omit three leap years from every four centuries, and thus eliminate the three superfluous days. Then it was determined that the centurion year, or the year that a new century started, would be a leap year only if the number of the year was divisible by four. So the calendar was made almost accurate. The year is still 26 seconds over the actual astronomical calculation, but with the present system, it will be about thirty-four more centuries before the calendar will be off a day, which will not occur until about the year 5300 A.D.

The New Calendar of the Church Year contained in the Roman Missal was promulgated along with this calendar of which we are speaking by the aforementioned Pope. We definitely should be grateful to our Holy Mother the Church for giving us such an accurate calendar.



*After classes, the seminarians enjoy some steep icy slopes for recreation.*

# Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

---

## Permission to Use Confessional Knowledge

---

**Question:** If a penitent has confessed a certain sin, and subsequently another person approaches the confessor and states that the penitent has given him permission to discuss the matter with the confessor, may this latter speak with the third part about the subject brought up in confession, with the assurance that he is not violating the grave obligation of the sacramental seal?

**Answer:** A person who has confessed a sin in the sacred tribunal of Penance may give the confessor the right to discuss this matter outside of confession, either with the penitent himself or with a third party. The extent of this discussion is limited to those topics which the penitent freely permits to be the subject of the conversation. (Cf. Cappello, *De Sacramentis* [Rome, 1938], II, n. 924). There is no intrinsic reason why this permission, relative to the discussion of the matter of confession with a third party, should not be communicated to the confessor from the penitent through this third party. Ordinarily, however, it would not be safe for a confessor to act on the statement of a third party to the

effect that the penitent has given permission to him to discuss confessional matter with the priest. Before this could be done the confessor would have to be sure that the permission was given freely; he would have to be certain of the extent to which he may proceed in the discussion of the sin or sins in question. Rarely could he have such certainty. The proper course for the priest to follow under ordinary circumstances when a third party informs him that a permission of this kind has been granted by a penitent is to state that the matter will not be discussed unless the penitent personally tells the confessor that he may speak and declares definitely with what topics the conversation may be concerned.

---

## A Spiritual Director's Obligation of Secrecy

---

**Question:** If the spiritual director of a seminarian finds out from the young man's own admission (made extrasacramentally to the director in his capacity as such) that the youth is utterly unworthy of advancement to Holy Orders, but despite that fact intends to seek admission to the Priesthood, is the director permitted, for the sake of the common good, to reveal the fact to the proper authorities?

**Answer:** The spiritual director is bound by a *secretum commissum*—not to reveal what is communicated to him by the seminarians in his capacity as their director. There are occasions in which a person is allowed to manifest even a committed secret, excepting the sins manifested in the sacrament of Penance, especially when the common good is at stake. However, the case described is not one of these occasions, because far greater harm would be done to the common good if a director could reveal what has been committed to him confidentially than would be prevented if he revealed the secret information given him by the unworthy aspirant to Holy Orders. If this were permissible, many clerics would hesitate to make a sincere manifestation of their spiritual difficulties to their director, with the result that their guidance would be greatly hampered, and many more unsuitable individuals might be admitted to the priesthood than would be admitted if the violation of the secret were forbidden.

Fr. Nicholas Gill, C.P., thus solves the problem in his doctoral dissertation:

It is true that an evil would be prevented by a word to the superior, but a revelation of such a matter is soon recognized or suspected by others, and sometimes the fact of disclosure becomes even generally known, with the result that the Spiritual Prefect would bring down oppro-

brium upon himself and his office, and the succeeding classes of religious students for many years would choose to keep their problems to themselves. As a consequence many would not receive the direction and the solution of spiritual difficulties which otherwise they would have received (*The Spiritual Prefect in Clerical Religious Houses of Study* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945], pp. 108-109).

Fr. Gill confirms his solution by a quotation from the Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* in which Pope Pius XI declares that confessors and spiritual directors of seminarians may not take any outward action to prevent an unworthy candidate from receiving Holy Orders "since that is severely forbidden them by their most delicate office itself, and often also by the inviolable sacramental seal."

It stands to reason that the spiritual director will do all in his power to persuade the young man to withdraw from the clerical state. A confessor, in the circumstances described, would be bound to refuse absolution. But such persuasion, in addition to fervent prayer, is the only means available, both to confessor and to director, to avert the harm that will probably come to the Church from the admission of an unworthy person to the ranks of the clergy.

---

**ADSUM**, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

**MATER DEI SEMINARY**  
7745 Military Avenue  
Omaha, NE 68134-3356