



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

This March issue of the *Adsum* is dedicated to St. Joseph, the foster father of Christ and the faithful spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. How many titles are addressed to St. Joseph as we invoke his powerful intercession! He is the Patron of the universal Church, of families, of the dying, of workers, and of vocations. And why is his intercession so great? There can be no doubt that after the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph lived in the closest proximity with Our Divine Lord. How many hours did Jesus labor with His foster father in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth! What a holy bond existed between Jesus and St. Joseph!

Let us especially invoke St. Joseph during this month of March for more vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. Both vocations call souls to live in an intimate union with Jesus Christ. The priest is another Christ and acts in the Person of Christ; the religious follows Our Divine Lord in the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The words of Christ to His first Apostles, "Come and I will make you fishers of men," have been addressed to the hearts of young men down through the centuries. His words, "If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me," are words that have inspired men and women to leave the world in order to live

for God alone.

This is indeed a great sacrifice! But what does Our Lord promise in return? "Everyone who has left father, mother, brother, sister, and land for My sake shall have a hundredfold in this life, and in the life to come eternal life."

Besides our secular seminarians here at Mater Dei Seminary in Nebraska and Iowa, two years ago, in order to provide more specialized formation for our religious seminarians, we established a religious seminary in northern Idaho (St. Louis Marie de Montfort Seminary) under the direction of Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI and Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI. And as our number of priests has so wonderfully grown, we have to hold our annual meetings in January with the CMRI religious priests and in July with our secular priests. Nevertheless, all of our priests, both religious and secular, work together and assist one another under my spiritual direction. May St. Joseph watch over all seminarians as they prepare to become "another Christ."

Early this month, Bishop Martin Davila from Mexico visited us. His Excellency was ordained a priest by Bishop Carmona and consecrated a bishop by me on May 11, 1999. This year will be His Excellency's 25th Anniversary of Episcopal Consecration. *Ad multos annos!*

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



A Masterpiece of Craftsmanship by a seminarian

In 1896, when the little Chapel of Our Lady of Light in Santa Fe was almost completed, the architect was murdered. Only then did the people realize that in the plans he had forgotten to include a staircase to the twenty-foot high choir loft. The Sisters of Loretto, for whom the chapel was built, consulted several architects, but all agreed that, since the chapel was so small (only 25 by 60 feet), it would not be possible to use it for group worship if stairs were put in. Faced with this sad situation, the sisters sought refuge in prayer and started a novena to St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters.

Just one day after this novena ended, an old man knocked at the door of the convent with a donkey that carried his tools and belongings. Without introducing himself, the old man said he had heard the nuns needed a staircase and that he would like to do the job. But how strange were the conditions under which he wanted to fulfill the task! He asked the sisters who showed him the choir loft that he was to be left alone. He even wanted to lock the chapel, since he didn't need anyone's help.

After three months had passed, he called Mother Magdalene to see his work. She was so amazed that she ran to get the other sisters. When they returned to the church together, they found it swept clean and the old man, his donkey and his tools were gone. The sisters tried to find him because he had not been paid for his work. They asked in the city if anyone had seen an old man with a donkey, and even offered a reward for information. But no one had ever seen him, neither three weeks before nor after. Thus, the

question as to who the old man really was will never be answered with certainty. However, if one just looks more closely at the stairs, one can't help but believe that there is something miraculous about them.

The most amazing thing about the staircase is the fact that it has no visible means of support, neither a center pole to wind around, nor a wall to cling to (the connections to the wall, as well as the railing, have been added afterwards for the sake of security). Also, there is no support from underneath, which spiral staircases usually require. In addition to that, it is to be noticed that the carpenter did not use a single nail or screw, but attached everything by means of wood dowels. The two stringers attached to the thirty-three steps are perfectly matching spirals, which is all the more difficult since the staircase makes two 360 degree turns. If we observe these two stringers a little closer, we can see that they are not just one bent piece of wood, but consist of several sections of wood spliced together. All this the carpenter did having only, according to Mother Magdalene's diary,



a couple of hammers, an ancient and unusual looking saw, a T-Square and a chisel.

The wood he used was hardwood, not native to New Mexico. But he didn't bring wood with him, nor did he buy it from the lumber supplier in Santa Fe. So, the question as to who this carpenter was can never be satisfactorily answered. The whole story, nevertheless, teaches us that fervent and confident prayer is answered, sometimes even in a very extraordinary way, like in the little chapel of Sante Fe.

Statement of Principle: CMRI and the Liturgy of Pope Pius XII

Vatican Council I infallibly taught:

“For the fathers of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, following closely in the footsteps of their predecessors made the solemn profession: ‘The first condition of salvation is to keep the norm of the true faith. For it is impossible that the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ Who said ‘Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church’ (Matt. 16:18) should not be verified. And these truths have been proved by the course of history, for in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept unsullied and its teachings kept holy.

“Indeed, it was this apostolic doctrine that all the Fathers held, and the holy orthodox Doctors renewed and followed. For they fully realized that this See of St. Peter always remains untainted by any error; according to the divine promise of Our Lord and Savior made to the prince of His disciples, ‘I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren.’ (Luke 22:32).”

The liturgy and liturgical laws are matters of the secondary object of the Church’s infallibility; Pope Pius XII, as a true pope, could not have promulgated a liturgy that was a danger to the faith. Furthermore, the Vatican Council also infallibly taught:

“We declare that the judgment of the Apostolic See, whose authority is unsurpassed, is not subject to review by anyone; nor is anyone allowed to pass judgment on its decisions.”

Therefore, since Pope Pius XII was a true pope, the liturgy promulgated by him is not subject to review by anyone nor is anyone allowed to pass judgment on the Pope’s decisions.

Besides the “Restored Holy Week” of Pope Pius XII, this same Roman Pontiff established for the universal Church the feast of St. Joseph the Worker (May 1) and the feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 31), and extended the Lenten fast on Holy Saturday to midnight.



Bishop Davila from Mexico visits seminarians

Fr. Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

HYPNOTISM IN DENTISTRY

Question: What is to be said of the practice, recently introduced by some dentists, of using hypnotism as a means of rendering the patients insensible to pain for the extraction of teeth, in preference to such standard anesthetics as novocaine and gas?

Answer: To accept hypnotism for general usage as an anesthetic in dentistry would seem to be contrary to Catholic moral principles. For hypnotism is to be considered as a means that should be limited to cases in which the ordinary means of anesthesia, such as gas and novocaine (in dental operations) cannot be used effectively; and such cases are exceptional. Hypnotism is likely to produce harmful psychiatric results, especially if a person is subjected to it a considerable number of times. Davis says: "In regard to the morality of hypnotism, it is certain that continued subjection to it is morally wrong, because it is harmful to the mental faculties... One may submit to hypnotic treatment for a grave reason, if suitable precautions against its abuse are taken, and if there is no superstition or scandal. The suitable precautions are that a trustworthy witness should be present during the treatment, and that the hypnotizer should be both skilled and morally unexceptionable" (*Moral and Pastoral Theology* [London, 1946], II, 18 f.). Noldin asserts that the use of hypnotism is *per se* illicit, and *per accidens* can become licit only when certain conditions are fulfilled, including the fact that no other more suitable means of producing the desired result is available (*Summa theologiae moralis* [Innsbruck, 1938], II, n. 749). It should be added that the use of hypnotism could have a bad effect on some of those who employ it, in that the consciousness of their power to dominate others might be a temptation to abuse their power. Hence, Catholic dentists should be admonished to abstain from the use of hypnotism as a general practice. In special cases, particularly when there is reason to fear that the use of a drug might be harmful to a patient, hypnotism could be used with the proper precautions.

On February 24, 1957, Pope Pius XII discussed the moral aspect of the use of hypnosis as an anesthetic. He stated: "There is no essential difference, from the moral standpoint, whether this result (reduced consciousness) is obtained by the administration of narcotics or by hypnosis—which can be called a psychic analgesic. But hypnosis, even considered exclusively in itself, is subject to certain rules. May We recall a brief reference We made to the medical use of hypnosis at the beginning of the address of January 8, 1956" (*The Pope Speaks*, Summer, 1957, p. 43). The reference in question was the statement that when hypnosis is used to mitigate the pains of childbirth, the result is "an emotional indifference toward the child, though some believe that this fact can be explained otherwise" (*The Pope Speaks*, Spring-Summer, 1956, p. 25).

Whether the words of the Sovereign Pontiff call for a mitigation of the doctrine proposed in the first paragraph (which was written several years previous to the Pope's utterance) is not fully evident. I still believe that hypnosis should be restricted to those cases in which drugs are not effective or safe. Fr. John Lynch, SJ, seems to take a more lenient view when he says: "When valid medical reasons can be adduced for hypnosis as an analgesic of choice, it is permitted, subject to those same precautions which must attend the administration of any anesthetic." But Fr. Lynch also stated: "Its indiscriminate use cannot be countenanced, especially at the hands of the professionally untrained" (*Linacre Quarterly*, Nov. 1957, p. 126).

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