

Men of Saint Michael

“Iron sharpens iron, as one man sharpens another”

Proverbs 27:17.



Newsletter



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Lent and the Shadow of the Cross

There is a legend of the Shadow of the Cross. Jesus is about ten years old. He is returning to His mother, perhaps from an errand. It is near evening, and the sun is sinking, casting long shadows on the ground. As Jesus approaches, He opens wide His arms, waiting for His mother to enfold Him in her embrace. Mary's eyes are lit with joy, but it is an anxious joy, a sad joy, for on the ground in the shadow cast by her Son's arms and body, she sees the cross. Mary, the dearest of all God's creatures, lived in the shadow of the cross. It could not be otherwise, since she was so closely related to Him who came to save the world by the cross.

The Bible tells us little about Mary's life; it was a hidden existence. Yet, what little we read of Mary in the Scriptures is in some way or other connected with the cross. When Jesus was born, Mary had the sorrow of a young mother who could not provide a warm, comfortable home for her Child. When the Holy Family fled to Egypt, Mary was in continual fear of the enemies of her Babe. Days of grief were Mary's when for three days she sought Him sorrowing. Her supreme day of sorrow came as she stood by the cross of her Jesus. Mary was always in the shadow of the cross because she was always so near to Jesus. Those who like her, wish to walk with our Lord must also walk in the shadow of the cross. He has told us that unless we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily, we cannot be His disciples. Our cross is not a wooden one. There are no iron nails to pierce the hands and feet. There is no crown of thorns to make the brow throb with agony. There is no lance to open one's heart. Our cross comes in a different way. Does not the sickness or death of a loved one pierce the heart like a lance? Worry, work, weariness crush our souls to the ground as our Redeemer's soul was crushed in the garden. Christ was often lonely because His friends did not understand Him. Are we not often lonely because friends and relatives are ungrateful, forgetful of favors, sometimes even mean? Christ was tempted. We are tempted. Whether we choose or not, we must walk in the shadow of the cross. Every human being has his hour of agony. The pity of it is that so few really understand where the shadow comes from. We Catholics understand, for when we see the shadow of suffering and death and trouble falling around us, we look up to the tree that casts the shadow, the tree of the Cross. On it, we see our beloved Savior, who explains it all to us.

Jesus fasted forty days. On March 9, we begin our forty days of penance. We do want to be real followers of Christ. We are going to take up some little, voluntary penance as our part in this season of Lent. We are going to abstain from this or that in order to make ourselves just a little bit more like Christ, who fasted for forty days. You would be surprised at the large number of followers of the mortified Christ, even in the bustling world of today. Seldom do you see their penances. Still more seldom do you hear about them. These people do not parade their piety. They love Christ sincerely. Out of love and gratitude for what He has done for them, they are willing

to make sacrifices. They do not look for excuses. Rather, they seek ways in which they can imitate the suffering Christ. I mention this because there are some who think that nobody does penance these days. They falsely reason that because Mother Church has lightened some of her regulations, there is no longer need or place for penance. Mortification is still a mark of the true follower, of the Master. You might ask, "How can I lead a life of self-denial?" I answer, "By living a good Christian life." Does that mean I must scourge myself, Live on bread and water, say long prayers, go without sleep and other comforts? Not at all. We can lead a good Christian life in the following way: First, deny yourself what is forbidden by God and the Church of God. Secondly, do conscientiously what God and His Church command. The commandments tell us exactly what God wants and what God does not want. The best penance is to keep His laws exactly. Over and above this, the real Christian will do things which are difficult but not of strict obligation. He will do without things to which he has a right; he will adopt some practice that requires an effort. Indeed, doing the little tasks of every day is the kind of self-denial Christ wants. It is carrying your cross and following Jesus. Daily duties become delightfully easy if one does his or her best, as Christ would have it. There, brothers and sisters, is your shadow of the cross. Do not be afraid. Walk in that shadow, at least during Lent. For where the shadow is, we find the cross. On that cross hangs One who is watching every act and whose suffering is lightened because He sees that He is not altogether alone. The shadow of the cross points to Good Friday and Calvary. However, after Good Friday comes Easter, an earthly and eternal Easter of joy.

The Lenten Season

Questions & Answers about Lent

Catholics all over the world are getting ready to prepare for Lent. However, questions often arise that might confuse us. Here are some answers to questions you may have asked.

What is Ash Wednesday and why do we put ashes on our heads? Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011 is the official start of Lent season. It is customary to fast on this day and abstain from all flesh meat. We use the sacramental of ashes as symbolism of penance. This is a time to reflect on our sinful nature. The ashes that are used are from the burnt palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday that have been blessed.

What is Lent? Lent was originally instituted by Pope St Gregory the Great, in the year 590. It is the 40-day period before Easter (excluding Sundays) that we observe for preparation for the Paschal Triduum, (which means the three days of Passover). We spend this period in prayer and fasting to recognize our sinful conditions. It is a reflection to the mystery of Jesus spending 40 days in the dessert without eating and being tempted by Satan. It is a time of prayer and self-sacrifice. The period of 40 days is recognized as the biblical number for a period of cleansing. This is a good time for Catholics to make confessions and to give alms. Remember it is better to ADD prayer and good deeds to our lives instead of giving up something such as candy.

What is Palm Sunday and what do palm branches signify? Palm Sunday is the 6th and last Sunday of Lent. It is the start of Holy week. Palm branches have been recognized by all nations throughout history as emblems of victory over enemies. Christians use them as symbols of victory over the flesh. When Jesus rode humbly into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, men women and children lined the road with palm branches and waved them shouting "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

What is Good Friday? Good Friday is the day that the church recognizes as the anniversary of our Lord Jesus Christ being sacrificed at Calvary for the salvation of our sins. We fast and abstain from flesh meat on this day as well.

What is Holy Saturday? Holy Saturday is the vigil of Easter Sunday. It is a day of joy as well as sadness. It is the close of Lent season and penance and the beginning of rejoicing.

What is Easter? Easter is the principal feast day of the ecclesiastical year. We celebrate the day as the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas is celebrated only in preparation for this glorious day. Remember, on Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ as a man. On Easter, we celebrate his resurrection and divinity.

Why do we fast? Fasting is required by all baptized Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 who are in good health and able to do so. We are obligated to fast and abstain on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is our sacrifice to God for repentance for our sins and a small reminder of the sacrifice that our Lord gave to us. . How do we fast? You fast by only eating one normal meal (not a seven-course feast!) per day. You may eat two light snacks at different times of the day depending on the individual to maintain strength. You cannot eat between meals except for liquids. This should be done without any outward sign of grievance or sorrow. Prayer should be used as your "supplement".

What does it mean when we are asked to "abstain?" During Lent to abstain means not to eat any flesh meat. We abstain on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as well as ALL Fridays of Lent. Meatloaf, hamburgers, pot roast, chicken, pork chops, lamb, etc. are all flesh meat. You may however eat fish on these days. This is to be observed by all who are 14 years of age and older.

Holy Water Fonts and Lent. While the holy water fonts are emptied from the Mass of the Lord's Supper until they are refilled with water blessed at the Easter Vigil, they should not be emptied prior to Holy Thursday. The following letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments rejects this practice. Note the strong bias (reason 1) against inventing practices not called for in the liturgical law. Forcibly rejected is the argument used by some to justify their abuses that "It is not forbidden, so I can do it." In reality, no one may do in that liturgy that which is not prescribed by the Church, specifically the Apostolic See, who alone has authority over it (SC 22, canon 838).

The venerable Bede relates that it was revealed to Drithelm, a great servant of God, that the souls of those who spend their whole lives in the state of mortal sin, and are converted only on their deathbed, are doomed to suffer the pains of purgatory to the day of the last judgment.

Who are excused from fasting on Fridays?

Let us first explain the difference between fasting and abstinence. Fasting obliges one to control one's appetite for food by eating only one full meal a day. Abstinence, commands one to abstain from fresh-meat on certain days.

From the Code of Canon Law ©1983:

Days of Penance Can. 1249 The divine law binds all the Christian faithful to do penance each in his or her own way. In order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance of penance, however, penitential days are prescribed on which the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence, according to the norm of the following canons.

Can. 1250 The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.

Can. 1251 Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Can. 1252 The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their sixtieth year. Pastors of souls and parents are to ensure that even those who by reason of their age are not bound by the law of fasting and abstinence, are taught the true meaning of penance.

Can. 1253 The conference of bishops can determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast. Many who would be bound to fast are excused by virtue of a dispensation. Dispensations from fasting may be obtained from any good reason from the bishop, or the pastor, or some other priest have ordinary, quasi-ordinary, or delegated jurisdiction. In ability to fast may be physical or moral. It excuses the sick, convalescents, pregnant and nursing women, all who are in delicate health, the poor who cannot obtain enough food at any time to eat a full meal, as well as those who are obliged to perform hard bodily labor, or severe mental work, such as teaching; also, physicians, judges, and those whom fasting would hinder in the performance of pious and charitable works. The Church imposes fasting and abstinence as a means of furthering good works, and therefore does not wish this law to stand in the way of anything that is better or more necessary. Nevertheless, unless a person is clearly exempt from the fast, it is advisable that he consult his pastor or confessor and lay the case before him and get either a declaration of exemption or a dispensation. The priest may but is ordinarily not obliged to substitute some other good work, such as alms, prayers, Stations of the Cross.

A Sermon on Grandeur and Dress

During the Lenten season, St. Francis de Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, came to the church attached to a monastery of Capuchin friars within his diocese. He happened to arrive just at sermon time. The preacher had taken ostentation in dress as the theme of his sermon and was vehemently criticizing prelates and church dignitaries, who instead of setting an example of humility wore splendid garments and drove about in grand carriages. When the sermon ended, the bishop went into the sacristy and had the preacher summoned. The monk was startled and a little frightened when he saw the bishop standing before him. As soon as they were alone together, St. Francis said, "Reverend Father, your discourse contained much that was edifying. It may also be true that we who are in authority in the Church are guilty of sins from which the inmates of the cloister are exempt. Nevertheless, I consider it highly unwise to say such things as you did on this subject from the pulpit, to the common people. Moreover, I wish to call attention to the fact that for many reasons it is a matter of necessity that the princes of the Church should keep up an appearance befitting their rank. Besides, you never know what might be hidden beneath a silken robe." So saying, St. Francis unbuttoned the upper part of his purple cassock and let the monk see that he wore a ragged hair shirt next to his skin. "I show you this," he added, "that you may learn that humility is quite compatible with the rich dress of one's office. From henceforth see that you are less harsh in your judgment and more prudent in your speech."

March 19, 2011 Feast Day of Saint Joseph, Patron of the Church

On Devotion to Saint Joseph

The special motives for which St. Joseph has been proclaimed Patron of the Church, and from which the Church looks for singular benefit from his patronage and protection, are that Joseph was the spouse of Mary and that he was reputed the Father of Jesus Christ. From these sources have sprung his dignity, his holiness, his glory. In truth, the dignity of the Mother of God is so lofty that naught created can rank above it. However, as Joseph has

been united to the Blessed Virgin by the ties of marriage, it may not be doubted that he approached nearer than any to the eminent dignity by which the Mother of God surpasses so nobly all created natures. For marriage is the most intimate of all unions which from its essence imparts a community of gifts between those that by it are joined together. Thus, in giving Joseph the Blessed Virgin as spouse, God appointed him to be not only her life's companion, the witness of her maidenhood, the protector of her honor, but also, by virtue of the conjugal tie, a participator in her sublime dignity. In addition, Joseph shines among all mankind by the most august dignity, since by divine will, he was the guardian of the Son of God and reputed as His father among men. Hence it came about that the Word of God was humbly subject to Joseph, that He obeyed him, and that He rendered to him all those offices that children are bound to render to their parents. From this two-fold dignity flowed the obligation which nature lays upon the head of families, so that Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the divine house whose chief he was.

Moreover, during the whole course of his life he fulfilled those charges and those duties. He set himself to protect with a mighty love and a daily solicitude his spouse and the Divine Infant; regularly by his work he earned what was necessary for the one and the other for nourishment and clothing; he guarded from death the Child threatened by a monarch's jealousy, and found for Him a refuge; in the miseries of the journey and in the bitterness of exile he was ever the companion, the assistance, and the upholder of the Virgin and of Jesus. Now the divine house which Joseph ruled with the authority of a father, contained within its limits the scarce-born Church. From the same fact that the most holy Virgin is the mother of Jesus Christ is she the mother of all Christians whom she bore on Mount Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redemption; Jesus Christ is, in a manner, the first-born of Christians, who by the adoption and Redemption are his brothers. And for such reasons the Blessed Patriarch looks upon the multitude of Christians who make up the Church as confided specially to his trust--this limitless family spread over the earth, over which, because he is the spouse of Mary and the Father of Jesus Christ he holds, as it were, a paternal authority. It is, then, natural and worthy that as the Blessed Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family at Nazareth and girt it about with his protection, he should now cover with the cloak of his heavenly patronage and defend the Church of Jesus Christ. (*Quamquam Am Pluries*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, On Devotion to Saint Joseph, promulgated on August 15, 1889. 3).

The feast of the foster-father of Jesus, known as Dia de San Giuseppe, is widely observed in Italy as a day of feasting and sharing with the poor, of whom he is the patron saint. Villages prepare a "table of St. Joseph" by contributing money, candles, flowers, or food. Then they invite three guests of honor—representing Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—to join in their feast, as well as others representing the 12 Apostles. They also invite the orphans, widows, beggars, and poor people of the village to eat with them. The food is blessed by the village priest and by the child chosen to represent Jesus; then it is passed from one person to the next. The Feast of St. Joseph is celebrated by Italians in the United States and in other countries as well.

In Valencia, Spain, it is a weeklong festival called Fallas de San Jose (Bonfires of St. Joseph). It has its roots in medieval times when, on St. Joseph's Eve, the carpenters' guild made a huge bonfire out of the wood shavings that had accumulated over the winter to honor the carpenter patron saint, St. Joseph. This act marked the end of winter and was the last night on which candles and amps would have to be lighted. In fact, the carpenters often burned the parot, or wooden candelabrum, in front of their shops.

March 19 and October 23

San Juan Capistrano was the name of a mission built on the Pacific Coast by Father Junipero Serra in 1777. Even after the buildings collapsed in an earthquake 35 years later, thousands of swallows continued to nest in the ruins of the church. Local people noticed that the swallows tended to fly south on October 23, the death anniversary of St. John of Capistrano, and returned on March 19, ST. JOSEPH'S DAY.

Marriage of the Virgin

There is an ancient tradition that when the time came for the Virgin Mary to be betrothed her guardians ordered lots to be drawn, so that God himself might choose a worthy spouse for the ward of the Temple. The order was that the candidates for Mary's hand should each place a branch of an almond tree overnight in the Temple. When morning came and all were assembled at the appointed place, it was found that the smooth branch of Joseph, son of Jacob, had blossomed into a beautiful flower and leaf. This sign was held by all as a testimony of Joseph's worthiness.

Beginning in 1940, the sentimental love song "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" (words and music by Leon René) was recorded by a variety of artists. This brought attention to the event and media attention further made it known. A Swallow Festival is held each year at the mission in San Juan Capistrano near Los Angeles, California, around the time of the birds' return. Also known as the Fiesta de las Golondrinas, it features what is billed as the largest nonmotorized parade in the country. In addition to the Swallow Festival, the Mission hosts various cultural and historic events throughout the year.

The following list is offered as a suggestion for increasing one's personal devotion to St. Joseph, by Father Rene Schatteman, a priest of Opus Dei.

On each day of the month of March, one could consider St. Joseph... 1. Foster Father of Jesus, the Son of God, help me to give my life, as you did, in the service of God. 2. Spouse of Mary, the Mother of God, inspire in me the desire to draw closer to Mary, my Mother. 3. Patron of the universal Church, obtain for me the grace to be a loyal son/daughter of my mother, the Church. 4. Patron of workers, teach me to sanctify my ordinary daily tasks, my work. 5. Patron of a happy death, may I know how to live each day as if it were to be my last. 6. Patron of the home, bless all the families in the world, make Christian homes bright and cheerful. 7. Master and Teacher of the interior life, help me to grow daily in awareness of the presence of God. 8. Master and Teacher of personal prayer, help me to learn the ways of sincere, deep and pious prayer. 9. Master and Teacher of the sanctification of work, show me how to convert my work into an offering to God for the salvation of souls. 10. Most humble, teach me to be like you: meek and humble of heart, relying on God for everything. 11. Most responsible, may I know how to put greater effort into everything. 12. Most loyal, may I know how to be ever loyal to God, the Church, my family and country. 13. Most faithful in the fulfillment of God's will, help me to say "fiat" (be it done) to all that God asks of me. 14. Most serene in the face of contradictions and hardships, obtain for me the grace I need to accept my daily cross. 15. Most patient in trials, help me to fight against anger and to be patient. 16. Most obedient to the divine Will, help me to know the Will of God and to carry it out promptly. 17. Most just, teach me to live not only justice but also charity in all my dealings with others. 18. Most docile instrument of the Holy Spirit, make me ever more receptive to his inspirations. 19. Most faithful, help me to fulfill my commitment of love for God, the Church and all souls. 20. Model of fortitude, obtain for me the strength of character I need to be patient and persevering. 21. Model of all who love Jesus and Mary, may I learn to perform all my actions out of the purest love for Jesus and Mary. 22. Model of perfection in little things, may I seek to please my Father God in each thing I do. 23. Ardent lover of Jesus and Mary, may I always be with the three of you. 24. Fervent lover of the whole of creation, help me to love what is good in the world. 25. Fervent lover of God's glory, make me zealous for the glory of God. 26. Fervent lover of things temporal and eternal, teach me to use with moderation the things of this world so that I might obtain eternal goods. 27. Generous cooperator in God's plan of Redemption, help me to work to make the fruits of Christ's Redemption superabundant. 28. Attentive to serving God in all things big and small, help me to see the value of hidden and silent sacrifice. 29. Totally dedicated to pleasing God in every moment, help me to sanctify the duty of each moment. 30. Constant in good works, help me to persevere and to lay the last stones in my work. 31. Father to all who call upon you, heed my requests.

"On Christians as Citizens"

A Modest Man

Modesty for men is about Character and how we relate and interact with others. A modest man may feel embarrassed, since he does not seek praise in what he does, but acts with others in mind.

A man's modesty should be that of a genuine desire to please God in everything he does. In the words of St. Ignatius,

"...to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not heed the wounds, to toil and not seek for rest, to labor and not ask for reward, save that of knowing I am doing Your will."

A truly modest man sees as nonsense the wealth-and-status-seeking ambitions of those who do not realize that there is more to life than these things. He seeks his strength and power in God.

A modest man is not afraid to be a servant, putting the other person first for the glory of God. In a very special way he always shows a great respect for women.

And above all, the modest man looks for guidance from St. Joseph, the steadfast, chaste and faithful spouse of Our Lady.

-Anthony Landreneau, MJ

Anti-Catholic propaganda

On January 10, 1890, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical, which dealt with the responsibility of Catholics to publicly live their faith, and to respond to anti-Catholic propaganda.

"St. Thomas maintains: "Each one is under obligation to show forth his faith, either to instruct and encourage others of the faithful, or to repel the attacks of unbelievers." "To recoil before an enemy, or to keep silence when from all sides such clamors are raised against truth, is the part of a man either devoid of character or who entertains doubt as to the truth of what he professes to believe. In both cases, such mode of behaving is base and is insulting to God, and both are incompatible with the salvation of mankind. This kind of conduct is profitable only to the enemies of the faith, for nothing emboldens the wicked so greatly as the lack of courage on the part of the good. Moreover, want of vigor on the part of Christians is so much the more blameworthy, as not seldom little would be needed on their part to bring to naught false charges and refute erroneous opinions, and by always exerting themselves more strenuously they might reckon upon being successful. After all, no one can be prevented from putting forth that strength of soul, which is the characteristic of true Christians, and very frequently by such display of courage our enemies lose heart and their designs are thwarted. Christians are, moreover, born for combat, whereof the greater the vehemence, the more assured, God aiding, the triumph: "Have confidence; I have overcome the world."(13) Nor is there any ground for alleging that Jesus Christ, the Guardian and Champion of the Church, needs not in any manner the help of men. Power certainly is not wanting to Him, but in His loving kindness He would assign to us a share in obtaining and applying the fruits of salvation procured through His grace." (*Sapientiae Christianae*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, On Christians as Citizens, 1890, #14)

Anti-Catholic Prejudice

Martin J. Scott, S.J.

The word prejudice comes from two Latin words—*pre-*, which means before, and *judicium*, which means judgment. Prejudice, therefore, means judgment passed on something before sufficient data has been obtained on it. Most people who have prejudices lose them when they inform themselves better on the objects of their prejudices.

It is well known among scholars that men who have had strong prejudice against the Catholic Church have become her admirers infrequently were adherents and champions after examining her history and teachings.

The Catholic Church is the oldest corporate organization in the world. She is the only universal Church. She is the Light of the world. In the course of centuries, she has had to do battle against evil measures and evil men. She has never compromised on Christ's teaching and morality. Consequently, she has frequently had evil men and evil forces arrayed against her.

The Catholic Church is at war with the world. The war between the church and the world will never end. Consequently, propaganda and one form or another will always be active against the Catholic Church. The Church and the world can never come to terms. They are as opposed as day and night. Light and darkness cannot exist together. Christ preached a kingdom not of this world; the world declares that there is no spiritual kingdom. Christ stands for eternal life; the world lives for the present only. Between the two, therefore, there is bound to be antagonism. This explains the hatred of the world for the Church of Christ. And it explains its propaganda and misrepresentation with regard to the Church.

The world is prejudiced against the Church because it sees her in a false light, will not try to see her correctly, does not want to see her correctly. In our day the prejudice of the world takes the form of either hatred or indifference. Of the two, indifference is the worst. You can combat hatred, but indifference usually refuses dialogue.

Today prejudice is shown around the world with those in power doing everything possible to destroy belief in Christianity. It is shown by indifference in our own country, where many people are so little concerned about religion that they are not interested enough in it to care, one way or another, what people believe or if and how they worship.

There is another prejudice harder to understand, namely that of non-Catholic Christians, or, as they are sometimes called, the Evangelical Churches. It is sad to say, but true, that at times the prejudices of Protestants or Evangelicals is greater and more intense than that of the world at large. This is due to the fact that they are contenders for what the Catholic Church holds that she alone possesses, namely, the true religion of Jesus Christ. There would be little or no antagonism between Catholics and Protestants if the Catholic Church would drop her claim to being the sole true religion of Christianity. There is virtually no antagonism between the various Evangelical Churches. There may be differences of Creed and various forms of worship, but since they all proclaim that one religion as good as another, they are mutually tolerant of one another, and whatever rivalry may exist among them is of a friendly kind. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and the hundreds of other evangelical bodies extend to one another the hand of fellowship.

No matter what their differences, they form a solid front against the Catholic Church. This is due mainly to two reasons. First, if the Catholic Church is right, they are wrong. And secondly, in order to make the Catholic Church wrong they are prepared to support whatever discredits her.

Let us take up these two points. Nobody wants to admit he is wrong. But if a Protestant admits that the Catholic religion is right, he condemns himself. An Episcopalian may admit that a Presbyterian is right without surrendering his own position. That is why all the Protestant sects harmonize and fraternize, more or less. But an Episcopalian can not admit that the Catholic Church is right and yet remain an Episcopalian. One excludes the other.

The basis of the Protestant position is that one religion is as good as another. This is the outcome of the doctrine of private judgment. If the judgment of one person impelled him to be a Baptist, that of another may cause him to be a Methodist. Of course, such procedure is a logical, for it comes to the same thing as saying that truth and falsehood are equally right.

For example, if the Episcopalian creed is true, the Presbyterian cannot be true, for the simple reason that one of firms with the other denies. The Episcopalians hold that the Episcopate at is essential to the Church of Christ. The Presbyterians deny this. Both cannot be right, since what one affirms the other denies. Truth may be with one but not with both at the same time. One or the other must, therefore, be false. To say, therefore that one religion is as good as another is to maintain that a lie is good as the truth.

Incidentally this demonstrates the false basis on which the evangelical churches rest. We see today the logical outcome of this principle by the trend of Protestantism toward modernism, which is only another name for Rationalism or the rejection of revealed religion.

Modernists are logical and consistent at all events. Following their doctrine of private judgment, it has led them to reject virtually everything that Protestantism proclaimed in the beginning. The Bible was to take the place of God's living Church. The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible was the constitution of the Reformers. It did not matter that the Bible proclaimed one thing to one person, and it's contradiction to another. In their enthusiasm over discovering what they supposed to be a new religion, wherein everyone was to be Pope, they overlooked what their Modernists descendants are forced to look at face-to-face, and in consequence of which they discard the religion of their forefathers.

One religion cannot be as good as another, for the simple reason that a lie cannot be as good as truth. That is as evident as water is wet. But because the various Evangelical Churches close their eyes to a contradiction in religion, which they could not tolerate in other matters, they live on together in harmony. They call this broad mindedness. It is broad. Very broad; as broad as saying that two and two make five.

Protestants, therefore, are mutually liberal and considerate because their position is weak. One cannot afford to declare the other wrong because to do so would be to pronounce condemnation on themselves. Hence their enemy, their antagonism to that Church built upon a rock, which proclaims that every creed different from hers is wrong. And this brings us to the second point of our consideration.

It was necessary for the reformers to discredit the Catholic Church. Unless they could show that she was false they themselves could not be true. Unless they could show that she had erred there was no justification for their establishing a new religion. Now Christ had said that His Church would never err. He did not say that members of His Church would not sin or err. In fact, he foretold sin and scandal, even in high places. He established the Sacrament of Penance for sinners in His Church. Christ guaranteed His Church against error, but not its members against sin or error.

The first little Church of Christ with Jesus as Pastor and the twelve as members had its sin and scandal. Judas was a thief and traitor, Peter was weak and denied his Lord. The first Council of the Church, a few years after the resurrection, was held, among other things to remedy abuses. There will always be abuses in the church of Christ. Men, not angels, are its ministers. The proof of the divinity of the Catholic Church is that in spite of the

weaknesses of some of its members and rulers it exists in the world today. Unless it were divinely guided and sustained it would have perished long ago from storms without and weakness within.

Protestantism, with all the support from state and all of its concessions to human nature, and all its esthetic appeal, or lack of it, is now, after a few centuries, splintering and crumbling. But the Church built upon the rock is, after 20 centuries, firmer than ever. It is the one Church in the world that is universal, the only one that speaks with the authority of Christ and the only one that even claims to be unerring.

Consequently, to return to our argument, the reformers had to discredit the Catholic Church to gain credit for their own. This is not the place to go into details. I content myself with saying that those who in the beginning broke away from the Church, which alone was founded by Christ, employed every means possible to blacken and the Bride of Christ. And as proof of this let it suffice to say that scholarship gone back to original sources declare that, since the Reformation, history was poisoned at its source, with the result that later generations have been nourished by lies. This accounts for the dreadful prejudice the Protestants against the Catholic Church.

I have met many non-Catholics who have told me of their firm belief in charges so damnable against Catholic teaching and practice, but if I were in their place, I should hate the Church worse than they. Some of the best scholars and the highest type of manhood among Protestants have become Catholics as a result of searching for accusations against the Catholic Church. Their investigations led them to enter the very Church, which they set out to assail. That ought to be a convincing argument.

Protestant prejudice is due mainly to the falsehoods which have deluged the Protestant mind.

Let me conclude with a statement of a man who for 40 years fought the Catholic Church and sought in every way to discredit and destroy her, but who, eventually seeing the Church as she is, not as she is caricatured, embraced her, and became her defender. This statement is from the celebrated John L. Stoddard, who for 25 years was the foremost lecturer in the English-speaking world.

“When I am asked what I have found within the Catholic Church superior to all that Protestantism gave me, I find that language is inadequate to express it. One thinks of the familiar metaphor of a stained-glass window in the vast cathedral. Seen from without by day, this seems to be an unintelligible mass of dusky glass. Viewed from within, however, it reveals a beautiful design, where sacred story glows resplendently in form and color. So it is with the Church of Rome. One must enter it to understand its sanctity and charm.

“When I reflect upon the Church's long, unbroken continuity, extending back to the very days of the Apostles; when I recall her grand, inspiring traditions, her blessed sacraments, her immemorial language, her changeless creed, her noble ritual, her stately ceremonies, her priceless works of art, her wondrous unity of doctrine, her apostolic authority, her splendid role of saints and martyrs reaching up like Jacob's ladder, and uniting earth and heaven; when I reflect upon the intercession for us of those saints and martyrs, enhanced by the petitions of the blessed Mother of our Lord; and at last not least, when I consider the abiding presence of the Savior on her altars;—I feel that this One, Holy, Apostolic Church has given me certainty for doubt, order for confusion, sunlight for darkness, and substance for shadow. It is the Bread of life, and the Wine of the soul, instead of the unsatisfying husks; the father's welcome, with the ring and the robe, instead of the weary exile in the wilderness of doubt. It is true, the prodigal must retrace the homeward road, and even into the doorway of the mission on his knees; but, within, what a recompense!

“Favored are those who from their childhood up are nurtured in the Catholic Church, and to whom all her comforts, aids, and sacraments have come no less freely than the air and sunshine.

“I have sometimes wondered whether such favorite Catholics ever know the rapture of the homeless waif, to whom the splendors of his father's house are suddenly revealed; the consolation of the mariner who storm tossed vessel finally attains the sheltered port; the gratitude of the lonely wanderer, long-lost in cold and darkness, who shares at last, however undeservedly, the warmth and light of God's great spiritual home!”

Catholics are so accustomed to the wonderful benefits of their faith, but they fail to realize its value and glory. Like children brought up in the palace of the King they take everything as a matter of course. We should set a high value on our religion, and for its sake endure generously and cheerfully the prejudice and hatred with which our inheritance is confronted. (Used with permission).

Evangelization Tip

St. Charles Borromeo once said to his priests, "Be sure you first preach by the way you live." St. Francis of Assisi once said to his brothers, "Preach always and sometimes use words." Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, of Denver presented a marvelous speech to the Synod of Bishops for America, which took place in Rome. I would like to quote a few sentences from this lecture: "The nature of being a "good pastor" is what I want to focus on today. We preach best, and teach best, by our personal example. Anything which enables us to do that -- as bishops -- is good. Anything which prevents us from doing that, is not. Each one of us wants to minister to God's people more fruitfully in the new millennium. But I believe this requires us to change -- as individuals and as bishops.”

We need, first of all, to become simple again. By that I mean, Gospel simple. Jesus loved simplicity because it allowed Him to immerse Himself in the essential things of His Father's business. I believe we are in danger of losing that Christ-like focus as bishops. Our hemisphere has become a culture of noise, confusion and complication. We are a distracted people, both North and South, and we are now also a distracted Church. We have plans and committees and projects and staffs. All these things are important in their proper place. But at the end of the day, are we apostles . . . or are we executives? And what do our people really need: managers . . . or pastors? Today, throughout our hemisphere, many of our people have found consumer capitalism to be much more appealing than the Gospel. Capitalism is a machine that works. It gets results. This is important, because as our economies and cultures interlock, consumerism and the practical atheism it breeds are now common problems throughout our hemisphere. Yet the hunger for God persists in every human heart, even when it's buried under consumer goods. And too often, we are not feeding that hunger as effectively as the fundamentalists and other evangelical Christians. I understand the frustration of my Latin American brothers very well when they talk about the invasion of aggressive religious sects into their countries. I face many of the same pastoral problems in northern Colorado. Hundreds of my own people leave the Catholic faith every year to join these fundamentalist groups. The Church throughout our hemisphere needs to recover her original spiritual fire, which these groups now so successfully copy. We need to lead people back to the fullness of Jesus Christ, which can only be found in sacramental community and especially in the Eucharist. But how can we accomplish that? If we really want conversion, community and solidarity for the Church, we need to seek those things first within and among ourselves as brothers. Jesus Christ alone is the way to eternal life. Let us never be ashamed of His name, or apologize for the message we preach and teach, because it is true for all persons in all times. We should shout that out, not leave it to others in sects which are not blessed with the full truth we find in our Catholic faith. Brothers, as bishops, our task is to share that gift with others, to preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 Tm, 4:2). As Paul told Timothy, we must "do the work of the evangelist." We are evangelizers first. That is our paramount purpose." End quote. Bishop Chaput was addressing his brother bishops, but he could have been speaking to each of us. In order to be evangelists for Christ we must first be disciples of Christ.

“Actions Speak Louder than Words”

St. Anthony of Padua, the thirteenth century doctor of the Church, stated that when it comes to teaching the Catholic faith, “Actions speak louder than words.” St. Anthony was especially aware of the importance of the act of kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament when teaching the doctrine of the Real Presence because God endorsed this act of adoration by means of a miracle, which St. Anthony and others witnessed. Martin Herbert recalls this miracle in a special 1994 Eucharistic Adoration issue of the *Immaculata* published by the Franciscan Friars of Marytown in Kenosha Wisconsin. Martin Herbert tells the story as follows: A certain heretic by the name of Bononillo was unmoved by the persuasive reasoning of the Saint (Anthony). He was as stubborn as the mule standing beside him in denying the Real Presence. Eyeing the mule, Anthony made an offer to Bononillo. He asked him whether he would give up his heresy if the mule were to bow down and adore its Creator present in the Blessed Sacrament. The heretic answered he would, provided he could lay down certain conditions: for two days the mule was not to be fed, and on the third day it was to be led into the public square. On one side of the square would be placed a tempting pile of fresh feed, on the opposite side Anthony could stand with what Bononillo contemptuously called the “body of Christ.” Anthony agreed, but in all humility made one condition. If the animal did not kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, his sins alone were to be blamed. The day arrived for this strange contest and the square was crowded with people. When the derisive Bononillo arrived with his half-starved mule, he was fully confident that his mule had sense and appetite enough to go after the feed. However, he was wrong. Anthony had implored his Lord in the intervening two days for the soul of this heretic. God did not let his faithful servant down. When turned loose, the mule without the least hesitation advanced toward Anthony and knelt in an attitude of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. With much emotion and contrition, the heretic too fell on his knees and gave up his heresy.
