

## SS. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Mission

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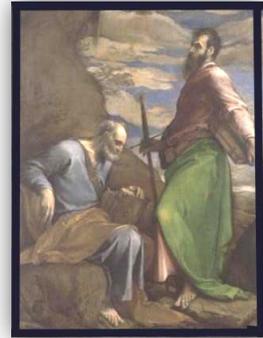
To Restore and Defend Our Ecclesiastical Traditions of the Latin Rite to the  
Diocese of Harrisburg

## SS. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Chapel

129 South Beaver Street, York PA 17401

“...this missal is hereafter to be followed absolutely, without any scruple of conscience or fear of incurring any penalty, judgment or censure, and may freely and lawfully be used... **Accordingly, no one whatsoever is permitted to infringe or rashly contravene this notice of Our permission, statute, ordinance, command, precept, grant, direction, will, decree and prohibition. Should any person venture to do so, let him understand he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.**”

Pope St. Pius V, Papal Bull, *QUO PRIMUM*, Tridentine codification of the “received and approved” immemorial Roman rite of Mass



### First Sunday of Lent St. Peter's Chair at Antioch St. Paul, Apostle February 22, 2026

Originally the forty days of penance were counted from this Sunday. The liturgical gathering of the “station” takes place today, as it was since the fourth century, at St. John Lateran, which is the patriarchal basilica of the Bishops of Rome. At its first consecration, it was dedicated to “Saint Savior,” a name which calls to mind the Redemption accomplished by our Blessed Lord.

Immediately after His baptism, our Lord began to prepare for His public life by a fast of forty days in the mountainous desert which stretches between Jericho and the mountains of Judea. It was there that He was tempted by Satan, who wished to discover whether the son of Mary was in reality the Son of God (Gospel).

As in the case of Adam, he addresses his first attack to the senses. Our Lord is hungry and the tempter suggests to Him that He should turn stones into bread. In the same way he tries, during these forty days, to make us give up our fasting and mortifications. This is the concupiscence of the flesh.

The devil had promised our first parent that they should be as God. Now he takes our Lord to the pinnacle of the Temple and tries to induce Him to let Himself be carried by the angels through the air amidst the applause of the crowds below. Satan tempts us by pride, which is opposed to the spirit of prayer and meditation of God's word. This is the pride of life.

Finally, just as he had promised Adam a knowledge which like that of God Himself, should enable him to know all things, so Satan assures Jesus that he will make Him ruler over all created things if He will fall at his feet and worship him. In the same way the devil seeks to attach us to temporal goods, when we ought, by alms and works of charity, to be doing good to our neighbor. This is the concupiscence of the eyes or avarice

Since the sword of the Spirit is the word of God, our Lord made use of the ninetieth psalm against Satan, and this is the theme of the whole Mass and is found again and again in the office of the day. “His truth shall cover thee with a shield,” says the psalmist. This psalm is, therefore, the ideal psalm for Lent as a special time of warfare against the devil. Again, the eleventh verse, “He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,” recurs in Vespers like a refrain during the whole season. We find the entire psalm in the Tract, which reminds us of the old custom of singing psalms during certain parts of the Mass. Some of its verses make up the Introit with its verse, the Gradual, the Communion and the Offertory, which last was formerly composed, in today's mass, of three verses instead of one, following the order of the threefold temptation as recorded in the Gospel.

Side by side with this psalm the Epistle, certainly dating from the time of St. Leo, sounds one of the characteristic notes of Lent. There St. Paul borrows a text of Isaias: “In an accepted time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee.” “Behold,” says the apostle, “now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation” (Epistle and first nocturn). On this St. Leo comments: “Although there is no season of the year which is not rich in divine gifts and in which we by God's grace do not find immediate access to His mercy; nevertheless at this time when the return of the day on which we are redeemed summons us to fulfill all the duties of Christian piety, the souls

of Christians must be stirred with more zeal for spiritual progress, and possessed of a very great confidence in almighty God. In this manner, with pure souls and bodies, shall we celebrate this mystery of the Lord's Passion, sublime beyond all others. True, we ought always to be in the divine presence, just as much as on the Easter feast. But because this spiritual vigor is the possession of only a few, while, on the one hand, the weakness of the flesh leads to any very severe observance being relaxed, and on the other, the varied occupations of this life share and divide our interests, it necessarily happens that the dust of the world soils the hearts even of religious themselves. This divine institution has been planned with great profit to our salvation in a manner that the exercise of these forty days may help us to regain the purity of our souls, making up, in a way, for the faults of the rest of the year, by fasting and pious deeds. However, we must be careful to give no one the least cause of complaint or scandal, so that our general behavior may not be inconsistent with our fasting and penance, for it is useless to reduce the nourishment of the body unless the soul departs from sin" (Second nocturn).

In this "acceptable time" and in these "days of salvation" let us purify ourselves with the Church (Collect), "in fastings, in chastity," by zeal in hearing and meditating on the word of God and by charity unfeigned (Epistle).

#### **INTROIT:**

*Ps. 90.* He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him, and glorify him; I will fill him with length of days.

*Ps.* He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. Glory be, etc. He shall call, etc.

#### **COLLECT:**

O God, who dost every year purify Thy Church by the fast of forty days, grant unto this Thy family that what things they strive to obtain at Thy hand by abstinence, they may turn to profit by good works. Through our Lord, etc.

O God, who together with the keys of the kingdom of heaven didst bestow on Thy blessed Apostle Peter the pontifical power of binding and loosing, grant that by the aid of his intercession we may be released from the bonds of our sins. Who liveth and reigneth, etc.

O God, who by the preaching of the blessed Apostle Paul hast taught the multitude of the Gentiles, grant that we, who celebrate his memory, may also enjoy his patronage with Thee. Through our Lord, etc.

#### **EPISTLE: 2 Cor. 6, 1-10**

Brethren, We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith: In an accepted time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation. Giving no offense to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left: by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet known: as dying, and behold we live: as chastised and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing and possessing all things.

**EXPLANATION** The Church very appropriately reads on this day this epistle of St. Paul, in which he exhorts the Christians to make use of the time of grace. A special time of grace is Lent, in which everything invites to conversion and penance, a time, therefore, in which God is ready to make rich bestowal of His graces. St. Anselm says, those do not use the grace who do not cooperate. Let us, therefore, follow St. Paul's exhortation, and earnestly practice those virtues he places before us, and especially those of temperance, patience, chastity, liberality, love of God and of our neighbor. Let us arm ourselves with the arms of justice at the right and the left, that is, let us strive to be humble in prosperity and in adversity, confident of God's help. Let us never be led from the path of virtue, by mockery, contempt, nor by persecution, torments, or death.

#### **GRADUAL:**

*Ps. 90.* God hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

#### **TRACT:**

*Ps. 90.* He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. He shall say unto the Lord, thou art my upholder, and my refuge: my God, in him will I hope. For he hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters, and from the sharp word. He will overshadow thee with his shoulders; and under his wings shall thou hope. His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night; of the arrow that flieth by day; of the business that walketh in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. For he hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon. Because he hath hoped in me, I will deliver him: I will protect him, because he hath known my name. He shall cry to me, and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation. I will deliver him, and will glorify him: I will fill him with length of days: and I will show him my salvation.

#### **GOSPEL: Matt. 4, 1-11**

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry. And the tempter coming said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written: Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down. For it is written: That He hath given His Angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot

against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone Satan! for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him. And behold Angels came, and ministered to Him.

### **INSTRUCTION:**

**I.** Christ went into the desert by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to prepare by fasting and prayer, for His mission, and to endure the temptations of Satan, that, as St. Paul says, He might be one tempted in all things such as we are, without sin, and so become for us a High-priest who knew how to have compassion on our infirmities (Heb. 4, 15), and to show us by His own example, how we should, armed with the word of God, as with a sword, overcome the tempter (Eph. 6, 17). – Let us, therefore, courageously follow Christ to the combat against all temptations, with His assistance it will not be hard to conquer them. He has certainly taught us to overcome the hardest ones: the lust of the eyes, of the flesh, and the pride of life, and if we overcome these, it will be easy to conquer the rest.

**II.** If Christ, the only Son of God, permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan, even to be taken up on a high mountain, and to the pinnacle of the temple, it should not appear strange to us, that we are assailed by many temptations, or that we should find in the lives of so many saints that the evil spirit tormented them by various images of terror and vexation. This we find in the history of the pious Job, where we also find at the same time, that the evil spirit cannot harm a hair of our head without God's permission.

**III.** From the coming of the angels to minister to Christ, after He had conquered Satan, we see that all who bravely resist temptations, will enjoy the assistance and consolations of the heavenly spirits.

### **OFFERTORY:**

*Ps. 90.* The Lord will overshadow thee with his shoulders; and under his wings thou shalt trust: his truth shall compass thee with a shield

### **SECRET:**

We offer solemn sacrifice at the opening of Lent, imploring Thee, O Lord, that along with the restriction of fleshly feasting, we may also restrain our minds from guilty pleasures. Through our Lord, etc.

May the prayers and offerings of Thy Church, we ask, O Lord, find favor with Thee through the intercession of the blessed Apostle Peter, that what we do to celebrate his glory may avail for our pardon. Through our Lord, etc.

Hallow, O Lord, the gifts of Thy people through the prayers of Paul Thine Apostle: that as they are pleasing to Thee as Thine own institution, so they may become yet more pleasing through his patronage and intercession.. Through our Lord, etc.

### **PREFACE FOR LENT:**

It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God; Who by this bodily fast, dost curb our vices, dost lift up our minds and bestow on us strength and rewards; through Christ our Lord. Through whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations worship it, the Powers stand in awe. The Heavens and the heavenly hosts together with the blessed Seraphim in triumphant chorus unite to celebrate it. Together with these we entreat Thee that Thou mayest bid our voices also to be admitted while we say with lowly praise: Holy, Holy, Holy etc.

### **COMMUNION:**

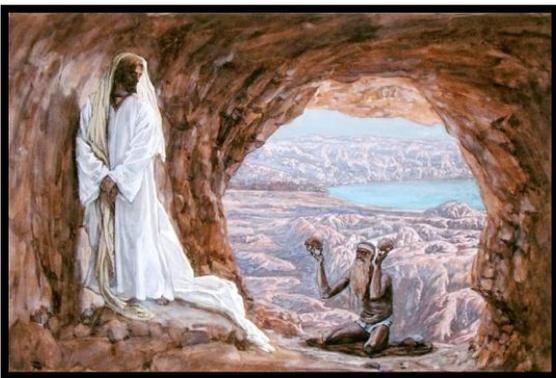
*Ps. 90.* The Lord will overshadow thee with his shoulders, and under his wings thou shalt trust: his truth shall compass thee with a shield.

### **POSTCOMMUNION:**

May we be restored, O Lord, by partaking of Thy holy Sacrament: may it purify us from vices, and give us our part in the mystery of salvation. Through our Lord, etc.

May sacrificial offering gladden us, O Lord, that as we proclaim Thee wonderful in Thine Apostle Peter, we may receive through him the fullness of Thy pardon. Through our Lord, etc.

Sanctified by this saving mystery, we ask, O Lord, that we may never lack the prayers of him whom Thou hast given us to be our patron and guide. Through our Lord, etc.



**Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.**

**In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. Ecclesiasticus 7:40**

**PROPER OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

Date	Day	Feast	Rank	Color	F/A	Time
22	Sun	1st Sunday of Lent St. Peter's Chair at Antioch St. Paul, Ap	sd	V		Mass 9:00 AM; Confessions 8:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM; For the Mission members
23	Mon	St. Peter Damian, BpCD <i>Vigil of St. Matthias</i>	sd	W	F	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
24	Tue	St. Matthias, Ap		R	F	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
25	Wed	Ferial Day <b>Ember Day</b>		V	F	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
26	Thu	Ferial Day <i>St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent</i>		V	F	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
27	Fri	St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, C <i>Lance &amp; Nails of DNJC</i> <b>Ember Day</b>	d	W	F/A	Mass 8:30 AM & 6:00 PM; Rosary of Reparation 5:00 PM; Stations of the Cross 5:30 PM
28	Sat	Ferial Day <b>Ember Day</b>		V	F	Mass 9:00 AM; Confessions 8:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM
29	Sun	2nd Sunday of Lent	sd	V		Mass 9:00 AM; Confessions 8:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM; For the Mission members

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ss. Peter & Paul Chapel is open to its members at any time of the day or night for visits to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

It is certain that He died as to sense, spiritually, during His life, besides dying naturally, at His death. For in life He had not where to lay His head, and at His death, this was even truer... Wherefore, as it seems to me, any spirituality that would fain walk in sweetness and with ease, and flees from the imitation of Christ, is worthless. St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*

We have three enemies to fight against; our soul has three dangers; for, as the beloved disciple says, all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life! By the concupiscence of the flesh, is meant the love of sensual things, which covets whatever is agreeable to the flesh, and, when not curbed, draws the soul into unlawful pleasures. Concupiscence of the eyes expresses the love of the goods of this world, such as riches, and possessions; these dazzle the eye, and then seduce the heart. Pride of life is that confidence in ourselves, which leads us to be vain and presumptuous, and makes us forget that all we have, our life and every good gift, we have from God. Every one of our sins comes from one of these three sources; every one of our temptations aims at making us accept the concupiscence of the flesh, or the concupiscence of the eyes, or the pride of life. Our Saviour, who would be our model in all things, deigned to subject Himself to these three temptations. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, First Sunday of Lent

It is not fitting to be a delicate member of a Head Crowned with thorns and crucified, nor the unmortified bride of a suffering Spouse. St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi

**INSTRUCTION ON TEMPTATION**

*To be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4, 1).*

*What is a temptation?*

A temptation is either a trial for instruction and exercise in virtue, or a deception and incitement to sin. In the first sense, God tempts man; in the second, he is tempted by the devil, the world or bad people, and the flesh, by evil thoughts, feelings, words, or work.

*By what are we principally tempted?*

By our own evil concupiscence and inclination to sin which adhere to us through original sin, (Jam. 1, 14), on account of which it is said, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit (Gal. 5, 17).

*Does the devil also tempt us?*

He does, and is therefore called, in this day's gospel, the tempter. St. Peter teaches us this, having himself experienced it: Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring-lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5, 8). Not all temptations are to be

ascribed to the devil, however, they often come from our own corrupt nature, our own incautiousness, or looseness of our senses, by which we expose ourselves to the danger of falling into sin.

***How does the devil tempt us to sin?***

In a twofold manner: He incites the concupiscence of man to those sins to which he sees him inclined, and then seeks to blind and confuse his imagination, so that he neither reflects, nor properly sees the temporal injury, disgrace, and derision, nor the shamefulness of sin and its eternal punishment. Thus the devil seduced Eve, our first mother, and thus he tempted Christ, with whom he could not, of course, succeed, for He was incapable of sin. He tempts bad people to persecute us, or to try us by their wicked vanities, as he did by the friends of Job.

***Can the devil force us to evil?***

He cannot; "for as a chained dog," says St. Augustine, "can bite none but those who go near him, so the devil cannot harm with his temptations those who do not consent to them. Like the dog he can bark at you, but cannot bite you against your will." Not by force but by persuasion Satan strives to injure, he does not force our consent, but entreats it. Seek, therefore, to subdue your passions and your senses, especially your eyes, and you will either remain free from all temptations, or easily overcome them.

***Does God also tempt us?***

God does indeed tempt us, but not to sin, as St. James expressly teaches (Jam. 1, 13). God either Himself proves us by sufferings and adversities, or He permits the temptations of the devil or evil-minded people to give us opportunity to practise the virtues of love, patience, obedience, etc. Thus He said to the Jews through Moses: The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart, and with all your soul, or no (Deut. 13, 3).

***Does God permit us to be tempted by man also?***

He does, and for the same reasons. Thus He permitted the chaste Joseph to be tempted by Putiphar's wife (Gen. 39, 7); Job by his wife and his friends (Job 2, 9). But He never permits us to be tempted beyond our strength, but gives us always sufficient grace to overcome and even to derive benefit from the temptation (I Cor. 10, 13).

***Are temptations pernicious and bad?***

No; they are useful and necessary, rather. "Hard is the fight," St. Bernard writes, "but meritorious, for although it is accompanied by suffering, it is followed by the crown" (Apoc. 3, 12); and Origen says (Libr. Num.), "As meat becomes corrupt without salt, so does the soul without temptations." Temptations, then, are only injurious when consent is given, and we suffer ourselves to be overcome by them.

***When do we consent to temptations?***

When we knowingly and willingly decide to do the evil to which we are tempted; as long as we resist we commit no sin.

***What are the best means of overcoming temptations?***

Humility; for thus answered St. Anthony, when he saw the whole earth covered with snares, and was asked "Who will escape?" "The humble;" he who knows his own frailty, distrusts himself, and relies only on God who resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble (Dan. 4, 6); the fervent invocation of the Mother of God, of our holy guardian angels and patron saints; the pronouncing of the holy name of Jesus, making the sign of the cross, sprinkling holy water; the remembrance of the presence of God who knows our most secret thoughts, and before whom we are indeed ashamed to think or do that which would cause us shame in the presence of an honorable person; frequent meditation on death, hell, and eternal joys; fleeing from all those persons by whom, and places in which we are generally tempted; fervent prayers, especially ejaculations, as: "Lord, save me, lest I perish! Lord, hasten to help me!" finally, the sincere acknowledgment of our temptations at the tribunal of penance, which is a remedy especially recommended by pious spiritual teachers.

***PRAYER*** O Lord Jesus! who spent forty days in the desert without food or drink, and didst permit Thy self to be tempted by the evil spirit, give me, I beseech Thee by that holy fast, the grace to combat, during this holy season of Lent, under Thy protection, against intemperance, and to resist the suggestions of Satan that I may win the crown of eternal life. Amen

**The Church of Christ, animated by the same Divine Spirit of truth which inspired the holy Apostle Paul, has at all times regulated her conduct according to the model set before her in his words and example," . . . contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints." (Jude 1, 3); her continual care is ". . . to keep that which is committed to thy trust" pure and undefiled, "avoiding all profane novelties of words . . ." (1 Tim. 6, 20); that the sacred words of God, ". . . I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth . . . from henceforth and for ever" (Isa. 59, 21). She therefore knows not what it is to temporize in religion, in order to please men, not to adulterate the Gospel of Christ to humor them; she declares the sacred truths revealed by Jesus Christ in their original simplicity, without seeking to adorn them with the persuasive words of human wisdom, much less to disguise them in a garb not their own... If ever there was a time when this conduct of the Church was necessary, the present age seems particularly to demand it. At present the gates of Hell seem opened, and infidelity of every kind stalks lawless on the earth; the sacred truths of religion are reviled and denied, the Gospel adulterated by countless contradictory interpretations; its original simplicity disfigured by loftiness of speech and the persuasive words of human wisdom. A thousand condescensions and compliances are permitted in the unchangeable doctrines of Faith and the pure maxims of morality and "the narrow way that leads to life" converted into "the broad road that leads to destruction." Bishop George Hay of Scotland [1729-1811], *The Sincere Christian***

**Curiosity is another vice from which the mind must be free. If we indulge in vain, frivolous, or sinful dreams, our minds will become incapable of choosing the proper mortification of our disorderly affections. All earthly things, except those absolutely necessary, must die through our complete disregard for them, even though they are not wrong in themselves. We must control our minds and not permit them to wander aimlessly about. Our minds must become insensible to mundane projects, to gossip, to the feverish search for news. Our indifference to the affairs of this world must give them a dream-like quality.**

**Dom Lorenzo Scupoli, *The Spiritual Combat***

**A tremendous mystery certainly, and one never sufficiently meditated, that the salvation of many souls *depends* on the prayers and voluntary mortifications offered for this end, by the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and on the collaboration of both pastor and the faithful. Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis***

## THE GREAT COMBAT

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

**PRESENCE OF GOD** - O Jesus, I withdraw in spirit with You into the desert; teach me how to fight the triple concupiscence of the flesh, pride, and avarice.

### MEDITATION:

I. On this day, which is the real beginning of Lent, the Church invites us to the great combat, the struggle against sin which will bring us to the Easter resurrection. Our model is Jesus, who although exempt from the incitements of concupiscence, willed to be tempted by the devil for us, in order to have "compassion on our infirmities" (*Heb 4, 15*).

After forty days of rigorous fast, while He is feeling the pangs of hunger, Jesus is tempted by Satan to change stones into bread. No one can undertake a serious program of penance or mortification without feeling its discomforts; but that is the time to resist the insinuating voices which invite us to condescend to the demands of nature; that is the time to reply with Jesus, "not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (*Mt 4, 1-2*). Man's life is far more dependent on the will of God than on material food. If we are convinced of this truth, we shall have the courage to submit to privations, trusting in divine Providence for our sustenance.

Jesus was next tempted to pride. "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down . . . and in their hands the angels shall bear thee up." Such a miracle would have aroused the admiration and enthusiasm of the people, but Jesus knew that His Father had chosen an entirely different way for Him-the way of humiliations rather than of triumphs, the way of the Cross and of death. Because He had no desire to escape from this way, He resolutely rejected the suggestion to pride. The best means of conquering temptations to pride and vanity is to choose exactly what humiliates us and makes us appear little in the eyes of others.

The devil returns to the attack and tempts Jesus to avarice: "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." But Jesus replies, "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve!" He whose heart is firmly anchored in God will never let it be drawn away from His service by an attraction for, or envy of, earthly things. But if this strong adherence to God is weakened or lost, the temptations to avarice will often succeed in making even those stray who have a special vocation to be "serving God alone."

2. Jesus was tempted because He willed it. We, however, are tempted without willing it, and often against our will. The temptation of Jesus was wholly exterior, for it found no echo within Him; on the contrary, our nature, wounded by the triple concupiscence of the flesh, of pride, and of avarice, is not only an easy prey for the assaults of the devil, but is itself the source of many temptations. It is impossible for us to live without temptations; our virtue does not consist in being exempt from them but in being able to overcome them. It is a struggle which none can escape; God even wishes this struggle to be the price of eternal life. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life" (*Jas 1, 12*).

Let us learn from Jesus how to conduct ourselves in temptations. Primarily, He teaches us to have a great confidence in God. Jesus would not satisfy His hunger, nor impress men by means of a brilliant miracle, nor accept kingdoms and wealth because, in a spirit of perfect filial confidence, He had entrusted everything to the Father's care- His life, His mission, and His glory. Those who will fully trust in God and who rely on His divine Providence, will not be easily enticed by the vain flattery of the devil, the world, or the flesh, because they know that only God can give true blessings and real happiness.

We should extend the practice of this confidence to the moment of temptation. If God permits us to be tempted, He does not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength, and, accompanying every temptation, there is always a special actual grace sufficient to overcome it. Therefore, instead of being disturbed by the violence of the struggle, let us use faithfully the grace God always gives and turn to Him in humble, confident prayer.

### COLLOQUY:

"Lord God, our Father, Life by which all live, without which everything would be as dead, do not abandon me to evil thoughts and to pride; take away from me all concupiscence and do not give me as prey to an irreverent and foolish spirit; but take possession of my heart, that I may always think of You.... Help me now, my Redeemer, I beseech You, so that I will not fall before my enemies, caught in the snares which they set for my feet to abase my soul; but save me, strength of my salvation, that I may not become a laughing-stock to Your enemies who hate You. Rise, O Lord, my God, my strength, and Your enemies will be dispersed; those who hate You will flee before Your face.

"As wax melts in the fire, so do sinners vanish before Your face. I shall hide myself in You, and rejoice with Your children satiated with all Your good things. - And You, O Lord God, Father of orphans, protecting Mother, spread your wings, that under them we may take refuge from our enemies" (*St. Augustine*).

I entrust myself to You, my God and Savior! I wish, particularly in times of struggle, to take refuge in You with redoubled confidence, for "You are my defense and will deliver me from the nets of the fowler and from all misfortune. You will cover me with Your wigs and I shall be safe. Your fidelity will surround me like a shield, and I shall fear neither the terrors of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the plague that roams in darkness, nor the attacks of the noonday devil. You are my hope, Lord; You are my refuge, O Most High! You have commanded Your angels to watch over all my paths, and they will bear me in their hands lest my feet strike against a stone" (*cf. Ps 90, 3-12*).

**"I... fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church" (Col. 1, 24). This is another motive which has urged the saints to generous corporal mortification. Nothing is lacking in the Passion of Christ; He Himself said on the Cross, "all is consummated" (Jn. 19, 30). All was accomplished in Him, our Head, but it must now be accomplished in us, His members. Jesus wills to continue His Passion in us so that we may be associated with Him in the work of redemption; He wills to make us His collaborators in the most sublime of His works, the salvation of souls. Jesus, who could have accomplished His work alone, willed to need us in order to apply the infinite merits of His Passion to many souls. Mortification, and even physical suffering, is therefore a requirement of a life of union with Christ; the more generous the soul is, the more it will participate intimately in the interior life and apostolic work of Jesus. Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy***

**"Remember that you have only one soul; that you have only one death to die... then there will be many things about which you care nothing." St. Teresa of Avila**

The shades of darkness have much overrun almost every epoch, but their obscuring of ours is almost beyond description. The furious persecutions, schisms and heresies in the history of the Church have surely been out passed – it is evident to anyone who soundly reflects – by a philosophical method insinuating and masking itself by every sort of guile. To destroy from top to bottom the religion established by God and ruin traditional standards and moral customs, the new ideas are daily spread among the masses by perverted and depraved men, in reality feeblest among others, but deluding themselves they are strongest.  
Cardinal Chiaramonti of Imola, the future Pope Pius VII, in his first pastoral letter to the clergy of Imola

We must not be too apt to flatter ourselves that we possess any special virtue. Our chastity may be the result of a want of opportunities or temptations: and in like manner our patience may proceed from a phlegmatic temperament, or be dictated by worldly, and not by Christian, wisdom. This can be said of many other virtues in which we are liable to make the same mistake.

We must study this doctrine well, that the true Christian virtues are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1, 13); that is, that they are not the work either of the desires, passions or reason of man, but proceed from God as their first principle, and return to God as their last end. This knowledge is necessary for us, so that we may not imagine ourselves to be virtuous when we are not, nor think ourselves better than others when we see them falling into some sin.

We should ever learn lessons of humility from the faults of others, and say: If I had found myself in like circumstances, and had had the same temptation, perhaps I should have done worse. If God does not permit great temptations to assail me, it is because He knows my weakness and that I should succumb to them; with eyes of compassion He sees what I am, "a weak man" (Wis. 9, 5). And if I do not fall into sin, it is not by my own virtue, but by God's grace. Let me therefore abide in humility, and it is to my advantage, because if in my pride I count myself greater than others, God will abandon me and suffer me to fall, and will humble me through those very things for which I wish to exalt myself. Listen to the advice of St. Augustine: "I make bold to say that it is profitable for the proud to fall, in order that they may be humbled in that for which they have exalted themselves" (Serm. liii, *de Verb. Dom.*). Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo, *Humility of Heart*

Fallen and corrupt man has not been made for the truth, nor the truth for him. Since man's prevarication, God has placed between truth and human reason an unconquerable and imperishable repugnance. Truth, by its very nature, claims supremacy, and cannot consent to solicit obedience as a favor; while, since he rebelled against God, man insists upon being governed by his own will, and refuses to receive any yoke imposed upon him without his consent. Therefore, when truth is presented to him, he immediately denies it, and in so doing asserts his own absolute sovereignty. If he cannot deny it, he combats it, and in so doing strives to assert his own supremacy. If he conquers truth, he crucifies it; if he is conquered by it, he flies, and by flight he believes that he escapes from servitude; and in crucifying truth, he believes that he crucifies his tyrant. There is, on the contrary, a secret and close affinity between human reason and absurdity. Sin has united them by the bonds of an indissoluble alliance. Absurdity triumphs over man, precisely because it possesses no right anterior and superior to human reason; man accepts it precisely on that account, because, having no right, it makes no pretensions. His will accepts it, because it is the child of his understanding; and his reason delights in it, because it is its own offspring, its own creation, and the living testimony of its creative power. In the act of its creation man resembles, God, and he calls himself God; and if he is God after the manner of God, all the rest is but of little consequence to him. What matters it that the other be the God of truth, if he himself be the God of absurdity?

Don Juan Donoso Cortes, *Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism*

The observance of Lent is the very badge of the Christian warfare. By it we prove ourselves not to be enemies of the cross of Christ. By it we avert the scourges of divine justice. By it we gain strength against the princes of darkness, for it shields us with heavenly help. Should mankind grow remiss in their observance of Lent, it would be a detriment to God's glory, a disgrace to the Catholic religion, and a danger to Christian souls. Neither can it be doubted that such negligence would become the source of misery to the world, of public calamity, and of private woe. Benedict XIV, *Non Ambigimus*, June 10, 1745

### Story From the First History on the Life of St. Gregory the Great

The *Vita Beatissimi Papae Gregorii Magni Antiquissima*, the earliest history of St. Gregory the Great, the Apostle to the Anglo-Saxons, was written by a monk in the latter part of the 7th century at Whitby, the great abbey founded in 656 on the north-east coast of England (which is now in ruins from the Protestant reformation). The manuscript was discovered in a Swiss monastery, the Benedictine Abbey of St Gall, and translated by the renowned English medievalist, Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet, OSB. The history relates that as St. Gregory was walking through Trajan's Forum, he was moved with pity for the poor pagan emperor, (who had died during the Parthian campaign in 117 A.D. and his cremated remains returned to Rome and eventually placed below Trajan's column that still stands today), because of a story of how the emperor had personally addressed the pleading of a poor widow and obtained justice for her and her orphaned children. The history relates how at the prayer of St. Gregory, the emperor was raised from the dead so that he could receive the sacrament of Baptism and thus obtained eternal salvation. The history was an important source for St. Bede's *History of the English Church and People* and was also incorporated in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Purgatorio X*.

"The Holy Synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and if one draws nigh unto God, contrite and penitent, He will be appeased by the offering thereof, and, granting the grace and gift of penitence, will forgive even heinous crimes and sins."  
Council of Trent

O Jesus, from this moment I wish to employ all my powers in accepting all the circumstances and pains of my death; from this moment I desire to accept death in the place, hour, and manner in which it may please You to send it. I know very well that I must suffer and be ground by the teeth of tribulations, sorrows, privations, desolations, and sufferings in order to become bread worthy to serve at Your celestial banquet, O Christ, on the day of the general resurrection. I well know that if the grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and die, it brings forth no fruit; therefore, with all my heart, I accept the annihilation of death in order to become a new man, no longer mortal and corruptible, but immortal and glorious. St. Francis De Sales

Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them. Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima

To this end, it would be a very good thing to read each day on your knees, either in Latin or in English, a chapter of the life of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, so as to learn the life Jesus led, and, through the consideration of His acts, His virtues, and His words, to become familiar with the rules and maxims upon which He based His conduct, and upon which He wishes you to base yours. Christian prudence consists in renouncing the maxims of the world, in calling upon the spirit of Christ to enlighten you, to guide you by His maxims, and to lead you in accordance with His truths, His actions and His virtues. This is what is meant by basing one's conduct upon the spirit of faith. St. John Eudes, *The Four Foundations of Sanctity*

This story by St. Bonaventure in his *Life of St. Francis* is in point: On a certain occasion when the Saint was suffering extraordinary physical pain, one of his religious meaning to sympathize with him, said in his simplicity: "My Father, pray God that He treat you a little more gently, for His hand seems heavy upon you just now." Hearing this, St. Francis strongly resented the unhappy remark of his well-meaning brother, saying: "My good brother, did I not know that what you have just said was spoken in all simplicity, without realizing the implication of your words, I should never see you again because of your rashness in passing judgment on the dispositions of Divine providence." Whereupon, weak and wasted as he was by his illness, he got out of bed, knelt down, kissed the floor and prayed thus: "Lord, I thank Thee for the sufferings Thou art sending me. Send me more, if it be Thy good pleasure. My pleasure is that You afflict me and spare me not, for the fulfillment of Thy holy will is the greatest consolation of my life." St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, *Uniformity with God's Will*

As we have already seen, this present life is a time of trial. We are being tested. If we live well, if we live according to the will of God, our human acts will merit for us the reward of the vision of God. But the fact is that we face the possibilities of success or failure, of triumph or defeat. In either case, the outcome of the trial is determined by our own free choice. We can choose God and happiness or we can reject God and choose unhappiness. The point to remember is that we can make the choice only in this present life. After death we cannot change our minds. As we die, so shall we live after death. IF we die seeking God, we shall find God. IF we die rejecting God, then we shall lose God for all eternity. After death each man faces his own particular judgment. As St. Paul has said, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. 9, 27)  
Rev. Walter Farrell, *My Way of Life*, Pocket Edition of St. Thomas

The children of the Church have a right to feel a special interest in every solemnity that is kept in memory of St. Peter. The father's feast is a feast for the whole family; for to him it owes its very life. If there be but one fold, it is because there is but one Shepherd. Let us, then, honour Peter's divine prerogative, to which Christianity owes its preservation; and let us often reflect upon the obligations we are under to the apostolic see. On the feast of the chair at Rome, we saw how faith is taught, and maintained, and propagated by the mother-Church, which has inherited the promises made to Peter. Today, let us consider the apostolic see as the sole source of the legitimate power, whereby mankind is ruled and governed in all that concerns eternal salvation. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, St. Peter's Chair at Antioch

Love Mary!... She is loveable, faithful, constant. She will never let herself be outdone in love, but will ever remain supreme. If you are in danger, she will hasten to free you. If you are troubled, she will console you. If you are sick, she will bring you relief. If you are in need, she will help you. She does not look to see what kind of person you have been. She simply comes to a heart that wants to love her. She comes quickly and opens her merciful heart to you, embraces you and consoles and serves you. She will even be at hand to accompany you on the trip to eternity. St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows to his brother

"Perfection does not exist in doing great things, but rather, in obeying even the smallest points of the rule and in fulfilling one's duties well.... Fidelity in little things must be the basic rule in striving for holiness.... do not bestow your love on the world."  
St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows

Blessed are they whose names are written in the Book of Life! If yours is there, why are you sad, O my soul, and why are you troubled? Trust in God, to whom I shall still confess my sins and whose mercies I shall proclaim. I shall compose a canticle of praise for Him and shall not cease to send up my sighs toward my Savior and my God... Do not abandon me, O Lord! I hope in You, and my hope will not be confounded. Give me the grace to serve You always and dispose of me as You wish.  
St. Teresa of Avila

Having confidence in you, O Mother of God, I shall be saved;  
being under your protection, I shall fear nothing;  
With your help I shall give battle to my enemies and put them to flight;  
for devotion to you is an arm of salvation.  
St. Peter Damien

**St. Matthias becomes an Apostle while Bishop Judas goes to his "own place"**

In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren, said: Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus: Who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: so that the same field was called in their tongue, Haceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms: Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to dwell therein. And his bishopric let another take. Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us: Beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And praying, they said: Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place. And they gave them lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

**Hermeneutics of Continuity/Discontinuity – Benedict XVI defends the novelty of Religious Liberty on the grounds that the "State" cannot know the Truth. Pope St. Pius X disagrees.**

The Christian faith demanded freedom of religious belief and freedom of religious practice in worship, without thereby violating the law of the State in its internal ordering; Christians prayed for the emperor, but did not worship him. To this extent, it can be said that Christianity, at its birth, brought the principle of religious freedom into the world..... Yet the interpretation of this right to freedom in the context of modern thought was not easy, since it could seem as if the modern version of religious freedom presupposed the inaccessibility of the truth to man and so, perforce, shifted religion into the sphere of the subjective. In truth, the pluralistic approach to religious freedom adopted by the Council is often defended, as we have seen, by the implication that the truth is in some sense inaccessible, not so much to man, per se, but to the State, and this has most certainly contributed toward shifting "religion into the sphere of the subjective." Benedict XVI, on Vatican II

That the State must be separated from the Church is a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error. Based, as it is, on the principle that the State must not recognize any religious cult, it is in the first place guilty of a great injustice to God; for the Creator of man is also the Founder of human societies, and preserves their existence as He preserves our own. We owe Him, therefore, not only a private cult, but a public and social worship to honor Him. Besides, this thesis is an obvious negation of the supernatural order. Pope St. Pius X, *Vehementer Nos*

He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36)..... **And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life. And this life is in his Son.** He that hath the Son, hath life. He that hath not the Son, hath not life. **These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5: 11-13).**

**Do penance:** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.[.....] Ye brood of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance.**[.....] For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you in the water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire.

St. John the Baptist

Note: **Do penance** (*Paenitentiam agite*). Which word, according to the use of the scriptures and the holy fathers, does not only signify repentance and amendment of life, but also punishing past sins by fasting, and such like penitential exercises. Make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication, for the conversion of sinners. Angel of Fatima to the three children

"My daughter, I see more Pharisees among Christians than there were around Pilate." St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent

Never act with a view to pleasing the world. Let us have the strength to bear criticisms and the disapproval of the world. Let us have no human respect. Provided that God is pleased, what does the rest matter? Cardinal R. Merry del Val

"Don't ask me to give in to this body of mine. I can't afford it. Between me and my body there must be a struggle until death." St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent

Do not offend the Lord our God any more, for He is already too much offended!.... You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace..... My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God. Blessed Virgin Mary, to the children at Fatima

### **Whatever "inward voice" the Protestant Evangelicals hear, it is not the voice of the Holy Spirit**

Jesus mentions the evidence for the Holy Spirit, when he says (to Nicodemus), and you hear its voice: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 94:8). St. John Chrysostom objects to this and says that this cannot pertain to the Holy Spirit (but only to his hearing the "wind"). For the Lord was speaking to Nicodemus, who was still an unbeliever, and thus not fit to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We may answer to this, with St. Augustine, that there is a twofold voice of the Holy Spirit. One is that by which he speaks inwardly in man's heart; and only believers and the saints hear this voice, about which the Psalm (84:9) says: "I will hear what the Lord God says within me." The other voice is that by which the Holy Spirit speaks in the Scriptures or through those who preach, according to Matthew (10:20): "For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit who is speaking through you." And this voice is heard by unbelievers and sinners. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*

First, like roosters, preachers strive against darkness to account approaching light. Second, they awaken the sluggish. Just as cocks' understanding penetrates the darkness, so should the knowledge of teachers. Also, Gregory states that cocks are louder in the darkness and more gentle as dawn approaches, and he says that this is a metaphor for how preachers should treat people—those who are in darkness receive harsher messages, while those who are approaching spiritual enlightenment should hear the "subtlest mysteries."

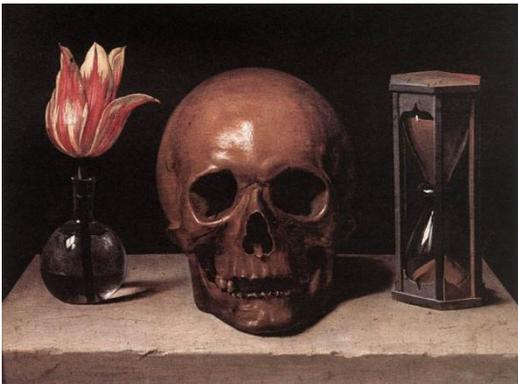
Kevin K. Birth, quoting St. Gregory the Great comparing Preaches to the Cockcrow, *The Regular Sound of the Cock: Context-Dependent Time Reckoning in the Middle Ages*

They knew the capacity of innovators in the art of deception. In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, the innovators sought to hide the subtleties of their tortuous maneuvers by the use of seemingly innocuous words<sup>7</sup> such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the most gentle manner. Once the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith that is necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by subtle errors to their eternal damnation. This manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious, regardless of the circumstances under which it is used. For very good reasons it can never be tolerated in a synod of which the principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity and excluding all danger of error. Moreover, if all this is sinful, it cannot be excused in the way that one sees it being done, under the erroneous pretext that the seemingly shocking affirmations in one place are further developed along orthodox lines in other places, and even in yet other places corrected; as if allowing for the possibility of either affirming or denying the statement, or of leaving it up to the personal inclinations of the individual – such has always been the fraudulent and daring method used by innovators to establish error. It allows for both the possibility of promoting error and of excusing it.

POPE PIUS VI, *AUCTOREM FIDEI*, 1794, censoring 85 propositions from the condemned Council of Pistoia

## **If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, not necessary for salvation, ANATHEMA SIT. Council of Trent, Canon 5, On the Sacrament of Baptism**

### **St. Martin restores a Catechumen to Life**



AS Hilarius had already gone away, so Martin followed in his footsteps; and having been most joyously welcomed by him, he established for himself a monastery not far from the town. At this time a certain catechumen joined him, being desirous of becoming instructed in the doctrines and habits of the most holy man. But, after the lapse only of a few days, the catechumen, seized with a languor, began to suffer from a violent fever. It so happened that Martin had then left home, and having remained away three days, he found on his return that life had departed from the catechumen; and so suddenly had death occurred, that he had left this world without receiving baptism. The body being laid out in public was being honored by the last sad offices on the part of the mourning brethren, when Martin hurries up to them with tears and lamentations. But then laying hold; as it were, of the Holy Spirit, with the whole powers of his mind, he orders the others to quit the cell in which the body was lying; and bolting the door, he stretches himself at full length on the dead limbs of the

departed brother. Having given himself for some time to earnest prayer, and perceiving by means of the Spirit of God that power was present, he then rose up for a little, and gazing on the countenance of the deceased, he waited without misgiving for the result of his prayer and of the mercy of the Lord. And scarcely had the space of two hours elapsed, when he saw the dead man begin to move a little in all his members, and to tremble with his eyes opened for the practice of sight. Then indeed, turning to the Lord with a loud voice and giving thanks, he filled the cell with his ejaculations. Hearing the noise, those who had been standing at the door immediately rush

inside. And truly a marvelous spectacle met them, for they beheld the man alive whom they had formerly left dead. Thus being restored to life, and having immediately obtained baptism, he lived for many years afterwards; and he was the first who offered himself to us both as a subject that had experienced the virtues of Martin, and as a witness to their existence. The same man was wont to relate that, when he left the body, he was brought before the tribunal of the Judge, and being assigned to gloomy regions and vulgar crowds, he received a severe sentence. Then, however, he added, it was suggested by two angels of the Judge that he was the man for whom Martin was praying; and that, on this account, he was ordered to be led back by the same angels, and given up to Martin, and restored to his former life. From this time forward, the name of the sainted man became illustrious, so that, as being reckoned holy by all, he was also deemed powerful and truly apostolical.

SULPITIUS SEVERUS, ON THE LIFE OF ST. MARTIN (note: Sulpitius Severus was a contemporary of St. Martin of Tours, knew the Saint and obtained his information on the life of St. Martin entirely from primary and reliable sources.)

**Shall He find faith—perfect faith, that is; faith formed by certain confidence (fiducia) and charity.** “This,” says S. Augustine (tract xxxvi), “is scarcely found on earth, for the Church of the faithful is full of imperfect faith, and is, as it were, half dead.” For only a perfect faith strengthens a man to pray always, and to overcome all tribulations bravely. Christ Himself explains it so in Matthew (24:12), saying, Because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold. But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.

This will happen more especially at the end of the world, before the coming of Christ to judgment, when men shall eat and drink and give themselves over to pleasure and think not of the judgment, as Christ said, (Luke 17:26 ff). Thus Bede says that when Christ appears, the number of the elect shall be very small, indeed, at that time many will not have the orthodox faith. For there shall arise false christs and prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect (Matthew 24:24) And as S. Peter says in his second epistle (3:3-4), In the last days there shall come deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying: Where is his promise or his coming? That is, they will deny that Christ is coming to judgment, even when His coming is near at hand; and they give their reason: For since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. As if they had said, “Nature has made the world: the same Nature continues to guide the world along the same course, and always will continue it. Therefore, there is no God to put an end to it: no Deity who will judge our works, and punish them.”

Fr. Cornelius a Lapide on St. Luke’s Gospel 18:8 which states: “But yet the Son of man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?” Amazingly, Lapide’s commentary draws a direct link between the rise of uniformitarian naturalism and 2 Peter 3.

## Is church unity worth a Latin Mass?



Religion News Service | Thomas Reese | February 6, 2026

"Paris is well worth a Mass" was reportedly the attitude of King Henry IV when he was trying to secure the French throne. As a result, he converted from Protestantism to Catholicism in 1593.

Today, the Eucharist, which is supposed to be the sacrament of unity, is too often a battlefield between Catholics who support the Traditional Latin Mass and those who want to see it disappear. Both sides need to ask themselves

whether the fight is worth something more important than Paris: the unity of the church.

You must be my age to remember before the Second Vatican Council, when the liturgy was entirely in Latin in Catholic churches, except in those using Eastern Rite liturgies, where it was often in Greek. In Rome, it had been changed from Greek into Latin in the third and fourth centuries so the common people could understand it — a pragmatic decision, not a theological one.

When I was young, we took it for granted that the Mass was in Latin. It was something that made us different from Protestants. We could go to the same Mass anywhere in the world. The Scripture readings were in Latin, although on Sunday the priest would reread the Gospel in English before giving his sermon. Otherwise, unless you had a translation, you had no idea what the readings were.

The Eucharistic prayer was the priest's prayer, which he said with his back to us. The altar boy would ring the bells to notify us when the priest raised the host and chalice for us to adore. The bell also rang to call us to Communion.

Other than that, the priest did his thing and the congregation passively watched or prayed in silence.

In high school from 1958 to 1962, I had a St. Joseph's Missal with Latin on one side of the page and English on the other so that I could follow what the priest was praying when I went to daily Mass, but that was not the norm. My parents had prayerbooks they read during Mass that had no connection to what the priest was doing. Others in the church silently said their rosaries during Mass.

And prior to the 20th century, Communion was infrequent. My parents were among the first children allowed to go to Communion.

**Those who want to bring back the Tridentine liturgy, if they want to be truly traditional, should go to Communion less frequently and not allow their children to go to Communion. Otherwise they are accepting early 20th-century innovations.**

Although I entered the Jesuits prior to the Second Vatican Council and went through a very traditional novitiate, I did not find the liturgical changes difficult to accept. **Our conservative novice master taught us a course on the history of the Mass using Josef A. Jungmann's "Mass of the Roman Rite," which was published in English in 1951. It taught us that the Mass was always changing throughout history.**

**The transition was also made easier by our traditional novitiate's emphasis on obedience. If the church decided to change the liturgy, we were to accept it without question. To do otherwise would be disobedient.**



The Jesuits in charge of formation were no help during the transition. They were clueless about what was happening. The classics professors argued about how we should pronounce "Amen" in English. The first time our superior said the Eucharistic prayer in English, he got as far as the institutional narrative and switched to "Hoc est enim corpus meum." The next day, he was able to do it all in English.

Some of my classmates had problems with the transition. Before ordination in 1973, one confessed that it just wasn't the same because in the old church, after ordination, he would be allowed to touch the consecrated bread for the first time. Now anyone could receive Communion in the hand. It was as if part of his priesthood had been taken away.

But for the most part, the liturgical changes were accepted and implemented with excitement and joy. They were the most visible reforms of Vatican II. And after a bit of confusion, they were accepted overwhelmingly by Catholics in the pews.

But there were two groups of holdouts.

First, there were those who found the change difficult because they were used to the old ways and the reforms were not well explained. Popes Paul VI and John Paul II wanted to deal with these people with pastoral sensitivity and patience, but the popes made clear that eventually, the old Mass was to fade away.

The other group of holdouts was more problematic. They objected to the new liturgy in principle and felt it was blasphemous. In truth, these ideologues objected to all the reforms of the council, not just liturgy. They were divisive and contentious.

Some of these dissenters were led into schism by French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, despite all the Vatican's efforts to appease him. To undermine Lefebvre and win back schismatics to the church, the Vatican permitted more frequent celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass. This strategy was partially successful, as exemplified by Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, which celebrates the old Mass but is in unity with the pope.

But there was an unanticipated side effect: Some who grew up after Vatican II began to attend these Latin Masses. Most were not ideologues, but pious, theologically unsophisticated Catholics who were attracted by the ritual and mysterious ceremony that allowed them to focus on adoration and private prayer without the distraction of communal participation.

It is a mistake for liturgical reformers to lump this third group in with the ideologues who reject Vatican II. These are good, devout people who want to come closer to Jesus and find spiritual nourishment in the old liturgy. Their existence is a result of our failure to better explain the reforms and to make the new liturgy more appealing to them. We should have encouraged them to go to Benediction and explained how it is different from Mass.

Pope Benedict XVI erred in taking away the local bishop's control over the Latin Mass and allowing any priest to celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass anywhere, any time. Pope Francis erred in seeing only the ideologues and not the pious Catholics who liked the old Mass.

Now, poor Pope Leo XIV must figure out how to deal with this mess in a pastoral way that does not empower the ideologues and affirms that the Traditional Latin Mass must eventually fade away. This is why he gets the big bucks.

Leo should keep in place the Francis mandate that seminarians are to be trained and ordained for the reformed liturgy. If they prefer the old Mass, they should not be ordained.

On the other hand, Francis' ban on the Latin Mass in parishes could have more flexibility. It might make sense to return the authority over this to diocesan bishops, although some may prefer to blame the Vatican for not allowing it. And yet, this is exactly the kind of issue that should be handled in a synodal fashion at the local level. And diocesan bishops can more easily determine whether those asking for the Latin Mass are pious Catholics or ideologues, and respond accordingly.

In any case, I would keep some limits on the availability of the Latin Mass. It should be banned on major feasts like Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and holy days, so that the entire community can gather for and take part in these feasts. And, the Latin Mass should not be available every Sunday. Everyone should experience the new liturgy on a regular basis, at least once a month, especially families with children. If one totally rejects the reformed liturgy, then one is out of step with the church.

Meanwhile, Leo should relaunch liturgical reform. The 1998 English translation of the Roman missal by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy should be permitted. Individual prefaces should be written for each Sunday in the A, B and C cycles of Scripture readings. New Eucharistic prayers that are more scriptural should be written.

Henry IV compromised his faith to win Paris. Catholics of all stripes should be able to compromise on the liturgy to maintain the unity of the church. We must respect and love one another, despite our liturgical differences. And everyone should know that we are Christians by our love, not know that we are Catholics by our fights.

**COMMENT:** Thomas Reese, S.J., the author of this editorial, is a progressive liberal Jesuit who is about 81 years of age. His entire religious life directly tied to liberal causes. For example, he is involved with the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at the Jesuit Santa Clara University which holds as a first principle the Vatican II humanistic philosophy of the dignity of the human person which ends up in defending abortion rights. He is also the former editor-in-chief from 1998 to 2005 of the Jesuit magazine *America*. The Jesuit order he is a member of during his religious life has become largely a homosexual collective.

His recounting of his liturgical formation is interesting. He was formed by his Jesuit novice master at the beginning of Vatican II. His novice master, using Josef Jungmann, S. J. as his authority, is credited for his liturgical views. Jungmann was a professor of pastoral theology in Austria who wrote the two-volume *The Mass of the Roman Rite, Its Origin and Development*. He held that the primary purpose of the liturgy from the beginning of the Church was pastoral. He was active in the liturgical reform with Rev. Annibale Bugnini from the beginning of the liturgical commission in 1948. He envisioned a *Novus Ordo* Mass with a primary pastoral purpose. He was largely a self-instructed liturgical "expert" who functioned as a *peritus* at Vatican II and the major contributor to its Constitution on the Liturgy. Jungmann's idea of a pastoral liturgy was to return to the liturgical practices around the 4th to the 6th century. Over the last 40 years beginning in the 1980s, there has been a tremendous amount of liturgical academic research and publications as well as the reprinting of liturgical works. The upshot of this is that Jungmann was exposed as a fraud selective picking and choosing anecdotal historical elements that served his ideology and not the Catholic faith or true liturgical development. One example, he wrote that the ancient Roman rite was offered *versus populum* and not *ad orientem*. When real liturgical scholars

demonstrated his error he argued that *versus populum* may not be what was done but should be done now for pastoral reasons. Msgr. Klaus Gamber made it clear in his work on the Roman rite that this practice can be traced to Luther and the Protestant reformation and nowhere before. Jungmann was an ecumenical ideologue and not ashamed to publish lies if they helped his cause. An ideology is a man conceived intellectual system pertaining to some specific form of thought and/or action based upon human presuppositions that are held to be faith alone, that is, they cannot be demonstrated or proved. A Catholic is not an ideologue because his presuppositions rest upon divine authority. Reese, like the former Jesuit pope, holds traditional Catholics as ideologues while it is Reese himself, like Francis/Bergoglio, who is tied to a hopeless, losing, antiquated, boring ideology. Francis/Bergoglio is the only one who ever tried to identify the "traditional" ideology as a form of the Pelagian heresy. That was so stupid it merited no intellectual exposition by anyone. Liberals like Reese effectively deny original sin. They are faced with the reality of a fallen human nature and thus constantly spend themselves on determining its causes and proposing their remedies. Since their diagnosis excludes the need for divine redemption and salvation, it is always wrong and their remedies always fail. Yet the liberal never repents his folly. The failures are always attributed to others who did not implement the plan with sufficient rigor, for sufficient time, and with sufficient purity. They never take responsibility for the ruin they cause in countless lives. Reese is a shining example of this. He has been a Catholic religious with the Jesuits from the beginning of Vatican II Council and standing in the worst collapse in Catholic faith and morals in the shortest period of time recommends a "relaunch" (of the) liturgical reform." This idiot will soon follow Francis/Bergoglio to his eternal judgment. At that judgment the fruits of Vatican II and the Novus Ordo service will condemn him because it is by these fruits that he is known. He will plead to the just Judge that he was only being "obedient" and since, as Francis/Bergoglio said, "time greater than space", he just did not have enough time to see things going wrong? He will be told, 'No, space is greater than time', for you, "time" is over and your "space" is awaiting and prepared for you and it is not with the blessed.

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## Letter from Father Pagliarani to Cardinal Fernández

February 19, 2026

Source: FSSPX News

Response of the General Council of the Society of Saint Pius X to the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Menzingen, 18 February 2026

Ash Wednesday

Most Reverend Eminence,

First of all, I thank you for receiving me on 12 February, and for making public the content of our meeting, which promotes perfect transparency in communication.

I can only welcome the opening of a doctrinal discussion, as signalled today by the Holy See, for the simple reason that I myself proposed it exactly seven years ago, in a letter dated 17 January 2019. At that time, the Dicastery did not truly express interest in such a discussion, on the grounds—presented orally—that a doctrinal agreement between the Holy See and the Society of Saint Pius X was impossible.

For the Society's part, a doctrinal discussion has always been—and remains—desirable and useful. Indeed, even if we do not reach an agreement, fraternal exchanges allow us to better know one another, to refine and deepen our own arguments, and to better understand the spirit and intentions behind our interlocutor's positions—especially their genuine love for the Truth, for souls, and for the Church. This holds true, at all times, for both parties.

This was precisely my intention in 2019, when I suggested a discussion during a calm and peaceful time, without the pressure or threat of possible excommunication, which would have undermined free dialogue—as is, unfortunately, the situation today.

That said, while I certainly rejoice at a new opening of dialogue and the positive response to my proposal of 2019, I cannot accept the perspective and objectives in the name of which the Dicastery offers to resume dialogue in the present situation, nor indeed the postponement of the date of 1 July.

I respectfully present to you the reasons for this, to which I will add some supplementary considerations.

1. We both know in advance that we cannot agree doctrinally, particularly regarding the fundamental orientations adopted since the Second Vatican Council. This disagreement, for the Society's part, does not stem from a mere difference of opinion, but from a genuine case of conscience, arising from what has proven to be a rupture with the Tradition of the Church. This complex knot has unfortunately become even more inextricable with the doctrinal and pastoral developments of recent pontificates.

I therefore do not see how a joint process of dialogue could end in determining together what would constitute "the minimum requirements for full communion with the Catholic Church", since—as you yourself have recalled with frankness—the texts of the Council cannot be corrected, nor can the legitimacy of the liturgical reform be challenged.

2. This dialogue is supposed to clarify the interpretation of the Second Vatican Council. But this interpretation is already clearly given in the post-Conciliar period and in the successive documents of the Holy See. The Second Vatican Council is not a set of texts open to free interpretation: It has been received, developed, and applied for sixty years by successive popes, according to precise doctrinal and pastoral orientations.

This official reading is expressed, for example, in major texts such as *Redemptor hominis*, *Ut unum sint*, *Evangelii gaudium*, or *Amoris lætitia*. It is also evident in the liturgical reform, understood in the light of the principles reaffirmed in *Traditionis custodes*. All these documents show that the doctrinal and pastoral framework within which the Holy See intends to situate any discussion has already been firmly established.

3. One cannot ignore the context of the dialogue proposed today. We have been waiting for seven years for a favourable response to the proposal of doctrinal discussion made in 2019. More recently, we have written twice to the Holy Father: first to request an audience, then to clearly and respectfully explain our needs and the real-life situation of the Society.

Yet, after a long silence, it is only when episcopal consecrations are mentioned that an offer to resume dialogue is made, which thus seems dilatory and conditional. Indeed, the hand extended to open the dialogue is unfortunately accompanied by another hand already poised to impose sanctions. There is talk of breaking communion, of schism, and of “serious consequences”.

Moreover, this threat is now public, creating pressure that is hardly compatible with a genuine desire for fraternal exchanges and constructive dialogue.

4. Furthermore, to us it does not seem possible to enter into a dialogue to define what the minimum requirements for ecclesial communion might be, simply because this task does not belong to us. Throughout the centuries, the criteria for belonging to the Church have been established and defined by the Magisterium. What must be believed in order to be Catholic has always been taught with authority, in constant fidelity to Tradition.

Thus, we do not see how these criteria could be the subject of joint discernment through dialogue, nor how they could be re-evaluated today so as not to correspond to what the Tradition of the Church has always taught—and which we desire to observe faithfully in our place.

5. Finally, if a dialogue is envisaged with the aim of producing a doctrinal statement that the Society could accept regarding the Second Vatican Council, we cannot ignore the historical precedents of efforts made in this direction. I draw your attention to the most recent: the Holy See and the Society had a long course of dialogue, beginning in 2009, particularly intense for two years, then pursued more sporadically until 6 June 2017. Throughout these years, we sought to achieve what the Dicastery now proposes.

Yet, everything ultimately ended in a drastic manner, with the unilateral decision of Cardinal Müller, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who, in June 2017, solemnly established, in his own way, “the minimum requirements for full communion with the Catholic Church”, explicitly including the entire Council and the post-Conciliar period. This shows that, if one persists in a doctrinal dialogue that is too forced and lacks sufficient serenity, in the long term, instead of achieving a satisfactory result, one only worsens the situation.

Thus, in the shared recognition that we cannot find agreement on doctrine, it seems to me that the only point on which we can agree is that of charity toward souls and toward the Church.

As a cardinal and bishop, you are above all a pastor: allow me to address you in this capacity. The Society is an objective reality: it exists. That is why, over the years, the Sovereign Pontiffs have taken note of this existence and, through concrete and significant acts, have recognised the value of the good it can accomplish, despite its canonical situation. That is also why we are speaking today.

This same Society asks you only to be allowed to continue to do this same good for the souls to whom it administers the holy Sacraments. It asks nothing else of you—no privileges, nor even canonical regularisation, which, in the current state of affairs, is impracticable due to doctrinal divergences. The Society cannot abandon souls. The need for the sacraments is a concrete, short-term need for the survival of Tradition, in service to the Holy Catholic Church.

We can agree on one point: neither of us wishes to reopen wounds. I will not repeat here all that we have already expressed in the letter addressed to Pope Leo XIV, of which you have direct knowledge. I only emphasise that, in the present situation, the only truly viable path is that of charity.

Over the last decade, Pope Francis and yourself have abundantly advocated “listening” and understanding of non-standard, complex, exceptional, and particular situations. You have also wished for a use of law that is always pastoral, flexible, and reasonable, without pretending to resolve everything through legal automatism and pre-established frameworks. At this moment, the Society asks of you nothing more than this—and above all it does not ask it for itself: it asks it for these souls, for whom, as already promised to the Holy Father, it has no other intention than to make true children of the Roman Church.

Finally, there is another point on which we also agree, and which should encourage us: the time separating us from 1 July is one of prayer. It is a moment when we implore from Heaven a special grace and, from the Holy See, understanding. I pray for you in particular to the Holy Ghost and—do not take this as a provocation—His Most Holy Spouse, the Mediatrix of all Graces.

I wish to thank you sincerely for the attention you have given me, and for the interest you will kindly take in the present matter.

Please accept, Most Reverend Eminence, the expression of my most sincere greetings and of my devotion in the Lord.

Davide Pagliarani, Superior General

+ Alfonso de Galarreta, First Assistant General

Christian Bouchacourt, Second Assistant General

+ Bernard Fellay, First Counsellor General, Former Superior General

Franz Schmidberger, Second Counsellor General, Former Superior General

**COMMENT:** Among Protestants there are a few doctrinal positions that unite them all: They without exception profess that God did not establish His Church with the divine attributes of infallibility, indefectibility and authority. Beyond this level of agreement Protestants differ radically from one another in doctrine, worship, and morality. The Protestant *modus vivendi* then is to respect the errors of each other since none claim the attribute of infallibility regarding truth in belief and practice. Christ's Church is altogether different. The Church speaks with authority the truth of God's revelation and of this truth will not be compromised one iota. The Novus Ordo Church like all Protestants seeks an accommodation with the world and its lies. The only thing they hate with one voice is the Catholic Church because it does not. G.K. Chesterton said, 'The Catholic Church is intolerant in principle because she believes; she tolerant in practice because she loves. The world is tolerant in principle because it does not believe; it is intolerant in practice because it does not love.' The Novus Ordo Church, like the Protestants, is of the world that Jesus Christ said, "I pray not for the world" (John 17:9). It is complete folly to beg from the Novus Ordites a tolerance in belief based upon a charity in practice because without faith, these is, and never can be, charity. The dialogue with the SSPX began in 1997 and will go on as long as the SSPX stands upon opinion and not on God's revealed truth.