



# THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 13

November 2018

## Friendship vs Ideals

Dear Parishioners,

Were the poor souls of Purgatory to send us a message, I think it plausible that they would chose to remind us of an elementary truth upon which the happiness and authenticity of our faith depends.

Catholicism is not about morals only. It teaches them, holds them as absolutes, and warns that we will be judged on account of them, but its first concern lies elsewhere.

Christianity is first and foremost about Christ. It announces Christ to the world and strives to bring the world in contact with the charm of His divine Person.

The originality of Christianity is its emphasis on the fulfilment of the one great commandment of love of God and neighbour. Whereas other religions are built around codes of ascetical practice, Christianity revolves around the knowledge and the love of Christ and the fulfilment of His will. Christ is the unifying element of our religion. It is by the triumph of His grace that human beings of different language, culture and social condition are kept in the oneness of religious faith without the imposition of any strict obligation of uniformity in external ascetical practices.

Although Christianity does contain ritual and ceremony in which we offer sacrifice and prayer to God, even these vary in shade, colour and expression. Christianity is free of mere formality. It is not confined to a specific place, culture or language. It is spread throughout the entire world because it does not impose fixed customs and conventions, specific to a particular people or race. This is why it is the only religion that has spread to the four corners of the earth.

The sacred Person of Christ is the driving force of our Faith. Through baptism we are incorporated into Him. We enter into a relationship with Him that dictates forevermore our conduct. He becomes not only our model, but our very life, and we live no longer for ourselves, but for Him, in Him and by Him. In fact, we no longer live, but die to ourselves so that He may live in us. We become other Christs.

Too often we treat our Faith as a sort of ideology

to which we adhere. We rally to Christ's banner and declare ourselves His disciples, but we miss the point of His calling. He invites us not to fight for Him, not to defend Him, not even to agree with Him (these come in due course), but to surrender ourselves to Him, to become Him, and to allow Him to act through us.

Christianity is therefore first and foremost about our intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It is about Himself and myself. It is about a personal exchange between the soul and its Maker and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In a world that has caved in to immorality of the worse kind to the point of promoting it and practicing it openly, we should be on our guard not to wage a war on morality alone. It is an essential part of our combat, but it is dependent on something of greater importance. Without Jesus Christ as the mainstay of our lives, without a constant effort to better know Him and love Him as He has revealed Himself in Scripture and in Tradition, we are at risk of becoming like Pharisees who rated practice over belief. Yet, it is not practice that defines belief, but belief that defines practice. Morals are based on faith, and faith on truth, and truth on Jesus Christ.

Puritanism is the practice of morals over and above the practice of faith. It is a harsh and hard, and contains little or no reference to Christ except when He threatens or condemns. It is a religion based on fear of punishment. It is comprised of set formulae and rigid precepts. Its reference to Christianity is only incidental. Islam is also puritanical.

The Catholic Faith prefers to centre its attention on Jesus Christ. It tells His story, dwells constantly on His loving solicitude for the poor and needy, recalls His teaching and bids us to enter into a loving relationship with Him. The more we become intimate with Him, the more we understand Him, the more we sacrifice for Him. Fidelity to the Faith thus becomes not a burden but a joy, one that radiates to the point of making our Faith contagious. May God grant us such grace.

*Father John Brucciani, Pastor*

# The Undoing of Trust

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While western society has long abandoned its Catholic trappings, it retains a commitment—however tenuous—to features of the Church’s moral tradition. As of yet, for instance, we live in a culture that esteems honesty: uttering a lie still stings the conscience of the common man. He might lie because of weakness, by succumbing to the temptations of a shortsighted pragmatism; nevertheless, he acknowledges the ideal of honesty. We must not take for granted this cultural attitude, for it too can erode. And erode it shall if we do not rediscover the innate perversity of dishonesty.

Simply put, a lie is a voluntary assertion, whether by words or actions, contrary to intellectual conviction (Prümmer, *Handbook of Moral Theology*). Shocking as it sounds, Christian ethics has always insisted that a lie is intrinsically evil, so no reason whatsoever can justify its use. Though evasions can be justified under certain conditions, a lie—however small—goes against the very purpose of language “which is given to man to reveal what is in his mind” (Prümmer).

It must be understood, “intrinsically evil” does not necessarily mean “gravely sinful”. In general practice, lying is venially sinful, a deviation from the virtue of truthfulness; it becomes gravely sinful if contrary to the deeper obligations of justice and religion. That said, indulging in “white lies” *can* gradually morph into something much darker.

Because of the temporary advantage wrought by lying, the liar becomes psychologically dependent on its convenience. Under this spell, he more easily distorts truths he finds inopportune. Once accustomed to deceiving his neighbour, the sociopath moves to deceive what remains of his conscience. Finally, he smothers any reality that would dare contradict his whims and ends his days in a delusional prison of his own making.

The more the above scenario describes the common man, the more is society threatened, for “[t]he common good of society consists first of all in the sharing of truth among its members. Without trust that our fellows will tell us the truth, we cannot live securely with them or enter in common action with them, nor obtain the truth they possess.” (Ashley, *Living the Truth in Love*)

Man is born into the world for truth but can only discover so much by himself; consequently, his pursuit of truth is a communal pursuit. In actual fact, most of the content man claims to “know” is not knowledge but belief. Properly speaking, man has knowledge only when he comes to conclusions based on facts and principles that he has personally “seen” and, if required, based on a chain of reasoning that he has walked through himself (Rizzi, *The Science Before Science*). Belief, instead, is trusting the word of another.

Quantifying the little we pretend to *know* is mortifying indeed, but the exercise helps liberate us from the illusions of individualism. Our primary access to truth is trusting the word of others. And if society at large lose this anchor of honesty, the truth will drift away from everyone.

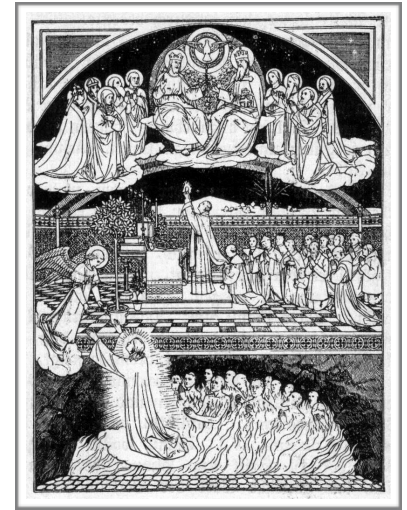
To illustrate, witness the sex-obsessed society around us. Thoroughly lustful people come to dismiss the very possibility of continence, both for themselves and others; everyone they know, after all, is just as deviant as themselves. These perverts ridicule the common sense expectation that one waits until marriage and scorn the idea of consecrated celibacy.

Now imagine a society wherein the common man lies without remorse; he looks his listeners square in the eyes and utters untruths without the slightest grimace. Distrust would run rampant. The inexplicable man of honesty would be a strange figure amidst this stalemated transmission of truth.

Even if our society veer towards this dystopia, we Catholics must do our all to remain honest. Honesty, even in the slightest matters, helps lay the groundwork for the spread of the Gospel. This cannot be underestimated: fostering within ourselves an undying commitment to truth bears witness to Catholics and non-Catholics alike of the Author of truth “Who can neither deceive nor be deceived”. Truth Himself empowers us, and in a culture of lies, He shall make of us a faithful subculture handing down the deposit we have received.

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# Prayer for the dead, a custom of long standing



Whilst still of this earth, the living faithful are able to entertain supernatural relationships with the deceased faithful whose souls are in purgatory. We are able to help these souls by means of our intercession before God, not only through prayer, but also by obtaining indulgences, giving alms and performing other works of piety, but most of all by offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for them.

The Second General Council of Lyon (1274) and the Council of Florence in its *Decretum pro Graecis* of 1439, defined that "the suffrages of the living faithful, in particular the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, alms and other works of piety which the faithful, in accordance with the institutions of the Church, customarily offer for one another, serve to ease the suffering of souls in purgatory".

Against the Protestants, the Council of Trent defined that purgatory does exist and that "the souls who are detained there are rescued by the prayers of the faithful, especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the altar".

In the Bible, the 2nd Book of the Maccabees (XII, 42-46) shows that in the last centuries of Judaism there was already a conviction that those who had died in sin could be helped through prayer and expiatory sacrifices. The Church received this belief from the Synagogue, and included it in its apostolic teaching.

Speaking of the day of Judgment, Saint Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, wishes God's mercy to his faithful auxiliary and helper Onésiphorus, recently deceased: "May the Lord grant him to find mercy with the Lord on that day" (II Tim., I, 18).

There is abundant evidence of the Church's custom in praying for and encouraging prayers for the faithful departed. Among the literary monuments of antiquity, the *Acta Pauli et Theclae* (apocryphal writing from the end of the 2nd century) attest to the Christian custom of praying for the dead: the late Falconilla asks for the Theclae's prayers. « And behold, the daughter of Trifina, who was dead, appeared to her mother and said: Mother, let the young woman Thecla be reputed by you as your daughter in my place, and ask her to pray for me, that I may be translated to a state of the just. » Thecla then makes this prayer: « O Lord God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High, grant that her daughter Falconilla may live forever. »

At the beginning of the 3rd century, Tertullian recommended not only prayer for the deceased, but also the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice on the anniversary of their death, in his works: *De monogamia* 10, *De corona militis* 3 and *De exhortatione castitatis* 11.

In the 4th century, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem mentions, in his description of the Mass, prayer for all the dead after the Consecration and attributes to it the effect of reconciling the deceased with God (*Mystagogical Catechesis*, V, 9). Finally, Saint John Chrysostom, in his *Homily on the Epistle to Philemon* (III, 4) and Saint Augustine, in his *Enchiridion* and in a sermon, attest that the deceased can also be helped by alms. However, Saint Augustine, in his *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* (I, 3) and in the *Confessions* (IX, 11-13) points out that prayers do not relieve all the deceased, but only those who have lived in such a way that prayers can be useful to them after death.

Finally, inscriptions on ancient Christian tombs from the 2nd and 3rd centuries frequently contain requests for prayers for the dead, or a prayer for peace, refreshment and life in God or in Christ. The inscription of Abercius of Hierapolis (before 216) kept at the Lateran Museum thus reads: « May your brother in faith who reads these lines say a prayer for Abercius. »

Our prayers for the poor souls act in such a way that the propitiatory value of our good works is offered to God in place of the temporal punishments due to the sins for which the poor souls have yet to atone. Our prayers obtain the total or partial remission of their judiciary sentence. While painful reparation for sin creates a right to God's justice, prayer looks to His mercy.

We are able to relieve the poor souls thanks to the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ through grace and charity. Hence the state of grace is a prerequisite for the vicarious efficacy of our good works which we wish to offer for the Holy Souls. The most effective of all the prayers remains the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the funeral prayers addressed to God in the name of the Church. ❧

**WEEKLY CONFESSIONS**

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

**BENEDICTION & ROSARY**

Sunday 18:00

**CHAPEL CLEANING - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**

**PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO HELP CLEAN FROM TIME TO TIME. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME PERSONS WHO DO IT, AND THEY NEED HELP. GOD'S HOUSE IS WORTH OUR BEST EFFORTS.**

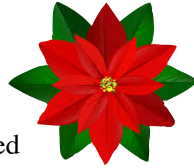
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**Memorial Poinsettias  
Christmastide**

If you wish to place around the altar poinsettias in memory of a loved one, please fill out and hand in the forms (soon available) before December 15. The January newsletter will list the names of those remembered. Holy Mass will be offered for them and for their benefactors on January 1st, Feast of the Circumcision and Octave Day of Christmas. Poinsettias (for the sanctuary and church): £10 a pot.

**FAST DAYS FOR SSPX 3RD ORDER MEMBERS**

- Oct. 31 - Vigil of All Saints
- Dec. 7 - Vigil of Immaculate Conception

**A plenary indulgence for the poor souls** in purgatory may be obtained each day from Nov. 1-8. Plenary indulgence means the complete remission of the debt due to sin. To obtain a plenary indulgence for the holy souls, one must:

1. Between Nov. 1-8 : visit a cemetery and pray for the poor souls.
2. Receive communion on the day of the visit.
3. Go to confession 8 days before or after.
4. Offer the Our Father, Hail Mary and Apostles' creed for the Pope's intentions.
5. Have no attachment to sin, even venial. Partial indulgences obtained otherwise.

**Liturgical Calendar November 2018****Masses**

	Liturgical Calendar November 2018	Masses
1	All Saints (Holyday)	7:15 /9:00 / 19:00 (sung)
2	All Souls (1st Friday, no Holy Hour)	7:15 /18:15 / 19:00 (sung)
3	Saturday of our Lady (1st Saturday)	7:30 / 12:00
4	24th Sunday after Pentecost	7:30 Low
	<i>Resumed Fourth Sunday after Epiphany</i>	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
5	Feria	8:00
6	Feria	7:15
7	Feria	7:15
8	Feria	7:15
9	Dedication of Archbasilica St. John Lateran	7:15
10	St. Andrew Avellino, Confessor	7:30 / 12:00
11	25th Sunday after Pentecost	7:30 Low
	Memorial Sunday	9:00 Sung
	<i>Laying of the Wreath, Burghclere, 17:15 depart</i>	18:00 Benediction
12	St. Martin I, Pope & Martyr	7:15
13	St. Didacus, Confessor	7:15
14	St. Josaphat, Bishop & Martyr	7:15
15	St. Albert the Great, Bp, Conf. Doc.	7:15
16	St. Edmund of Canterbury (patron of diocese)	7:15
17	St. Gregory the Wonderworker, Bp, Conf.	7:30 / 12:00
18	26th Sunday after Pentecost	7:30 Low
	<i>6th after Epiphany</i>	9:00 Low
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
19	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow	7:15
20	St. Felix of Valois, Confessor	7:15
21	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	7:15
22	St. Cecilia, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
23	St. Clement I, Pope & Martyr	7:15
24	St. John of the Cross, Confessor & Doctor	7:30 / 12:00
25	Last Sunday after Pentecost	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
26	St. Sylvester, Abbot	7:15
27	Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal	7:15
28	Ferial	7:15
29	Ferial	7:15
30	St. Andrew, Apostle	7:15

**November Poor Souls Envelops**

These are available at the back of the Church. **Write the names of your deceased inside the envelop and place it in the collection basket or mail box at the back of the church.**

All envelops will be placed on the Church altar and remembered at each mass during the month of November in the *Memento pro defunctis*. No stipend is required for this act of charity.

If you wish to include an offering, these will help towards the District Seminary Fund.