

September, 2015

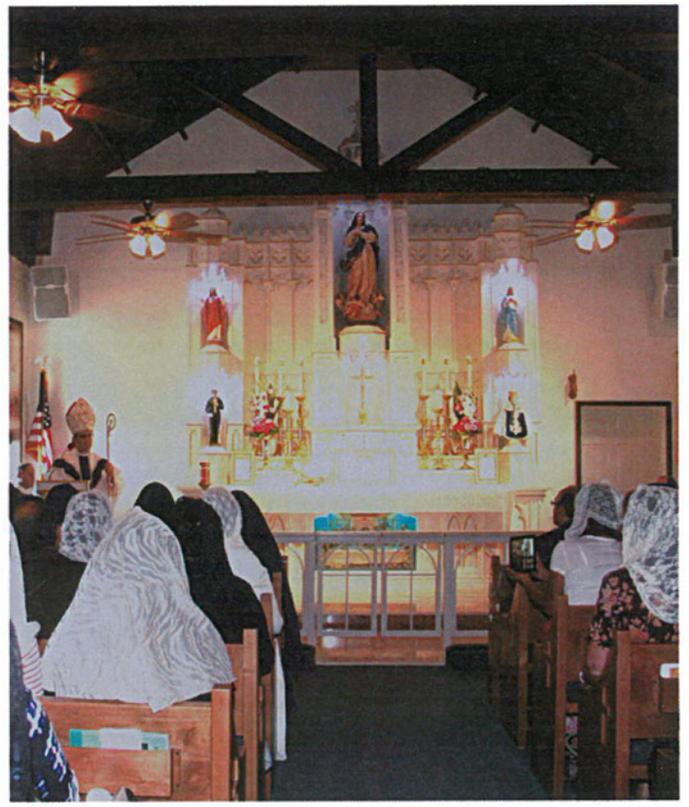


Adsum

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



Mater Dei Seminary begins its 26th year of classes with a Pontifical High Mass on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary



The Blessing of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Rosamond, California



THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN

EXCERPTS FROM A COMMENTARY BY REV. E. SYLVESTER BERRY, 1921

"In the forgoing chapter (12) St. John outlines the history of the Church from the coming of Antichrist until the end of the world . . . In this chapter he shows us the true nature of the conflict. It shall be a war unto death between the Church and the powers of darkness in a final effort to destroy the Church and thus prevent the universal reign of Christ on earth.

"Satan will first attempt to destroy the power of the Papacy and bring about the downfall of the Church through heresies, schisms and persecutions that must surely follow . . . he will raise up Antichrist and his prophet to lead the faithful into error and destroy those who remain steadfast . . . the Church, the faithful spouse of Jesus Christ, is represented as a woman clothed in the glory of divine grace . . .

" . . . In this passage there is an evident allusion to some particular son of the Church whose power and influence shall be such that Satan will seek his destruction at any cost. This person can be none other than the Pope to be elected in those days. The Papacy will be attacked by all the powers of hell. In consequence the Church will suffer great trials and afflictions in securing a successor upon the throne of Peter.

"The words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians may be a reference to the Papacy as the obstacle to the coming of Antichrist: "You know what withholdeth, that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity already worketh; only that he who now holdeth, do hold until he be taken out of the way. And then that wicked one shall be revealed."

" . . . St. John . . . sees in heaven a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns . . . The dragon is Satan red with the blood of martyrs, which he will cause to flow. The meaning of the seven heads and ten horns must be sought in the description of the beast that represents Antichrist where they symbolize kings or worldly powers. (*II Thessalonians 2:6-7*) . . . Satan's attacks against the Church will be organized and carried out by the governments and ruling powers of those days.

"With the beast of Antichrist only the horns have diadems as symbols of royalty or governing power. The heads are branded with names of blasphemy. (*Apocalypse, 13:1*) Hence they symbolize the sins and errors that will afflict the Church . . . in this final struggle to prevent the universal reign of Christ all forms of sin and error will be marshaled against the Church . . . all errors which have afflicted the Church may be summed up in these seven: Judaism, paganism, Arianism, Mohammedanism, Protestantism, rationalism, and atheism.

"The dragon is seen in heaven which is here a symbol of the church, the kingdom of heaven on earth. This indicates that the first troubles of those days will be inaugu-

rated within the Church by apostate bishops, priests, and peoples . . . the stars dragged down by the tail of the dragon.

" . . . The dragon stands before the woman, ready to devour the child that is brought forth. In other words, **the powers of hell seek by all means to destroy the Pope elected in those days.**

" . . . It is now the hour for the powers of darkness. The new-born Son of the Church is taken 'to God and to His throne.' **Scarcely has the newly elected Pope been enthroned when he is snatched away** by martyrdom. The 'mystery of iniquity' gradually developing through the centuries, cannot be fully consummated while the power of the Papacy endures, but now he that 'withholdeth is taken out of the way.' During the interregnum 'that wicked one shall be revealed' in his fury against the Church.

"It is a matter of history that **the most disastrous periods for the Church were times when the Papal throne was vacant, or when anti-popes contended with the legitimate head of the Church. Thus also shall it be in those evil days to come.**

"The Church deprived of her chief pastor must seek sanctuary in solitude there to be guided by God Himself during those trying days . . . In those days the Church shall . . . find refuge and consolation in faithful souls, especially in the seclusion of the religious life.

"Our Divine Savior has a representative on earth in the person of the Pope upon whom He has conferred full powers to teach and govern. Likewise, **Antichrist will have his representative in the false prophet who will be endowed with the plenitude of satanic powers to deceive the nations.**

"As indicated by the resemblance to a lamb, **the prophet will probably set himself up in Rome as a sort of antipope during the vacancy of the Papal throne . . .**

"The 'abomination of desolation' has been wrought in many Catholic churches by heretics and apostates who have broken altars, scattered the relics of martyrs and desecrated the Blessed Sacrament. At the time of the French Revolution a lewd woman was seated upon the altar of the cathedral in Paris and worshipped as the goddess of reason. **Such things but faintly foreshadow the abominations that will desecrate churches in those sorrowful days** when Antichrist will seat himself at the altar to be adored as God.

" . . . **Antichrist and his prophet will introduce ceremonies to imitate the Sacraments of the Church. In fact there will be a complete organization - a church of Satan set up in opposition to the Church of Christ.** Satan will assume the part of God the Father: Antichrist will be honored as Savior, and **his prophet will usurp the role of Pope. Their ceremonies will counterfeit the Sacraments. . .**"

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

CONFESSION OF THEFT

Question: Has a confessor the right to demand of a penitent who has confessed the sin of theft that he tell how much money was stolen?

Answer: *Per se* such a penitent satisfies his obligation if he merely informs the confessor whether the amount taken was of a grave or light matter. In the supposition that the sum which was stolen sufficed to constitute grave matter, the magnitude of the sum would constitute only an aggravating circumstance. In other words, whether one stole \$1000 or \$100,000, he could simply confess: "I committed a mortal sin of theft." In practice, however, the confessor is usually justified in asking the amount involved, when one confesses that he was guilty of theft—first, that he may determine whether or not the sin was objectively grave; second, that he may be enabled to direct the penitent in the matter of restitution.

DISPOSITIONS OF PENITENT

Question: May a confessor absolve a penitent who states that he is sure he is going to fall into mortal sin again?

Answer: Some theologians teach that even one who is certain that he will sin gravely in future may have the purpose of amendment required for the reception of sacramental absolution. For, they argue, the purpose of amendment is an act of the *will* based on the penitent's *present* dispositions; the certainty of a relapse into sin is an act of the *intellect*, judging that at some *future* time there will be a change of dispositions (cf. Noldin, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, III, 261). However, although this view seems theoretically correct, in practice a subjective conviction that one is going to sin gravely in the future would seem to cast very grave doubt on the firmness of the purpose of amendment, so that a confessor would not be justified in absolving a penitent with such a conviction (excluding, of course, extraordinary circumstances, such as danger of death). Such is the solution given by St. Alphonsus (*Theologia Moralis*, LVI, n. 451).

However, the confessor should remember that the firm purpose of amendment is not incompatible with a reasonable fear, or even probable judgment, of future fall into grave sin. In fact, it not infrequently happens that those who say they are sure they are going to relapse really mean that they fear this will happen. In such a case the confessor should encourage the penitent with the assurance that God's grace will not fail him in time of temptation and impart absolution.

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