



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

All of us are familiar with the Gospel narrative of the Three Holy Magi (Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior) who recognized the birth of our Divine Savior by the appearance of a star and who followed that heavenly body all the way to Bethlehem. We may also know that their relics are enshrined in the German cathedral of Cologne. Yet, how many of us never consider the wonderful virtues that the Holy Magi, who were not among the Chosen People of the Old Testament, manifested to us by their cooperation with the grace of God.

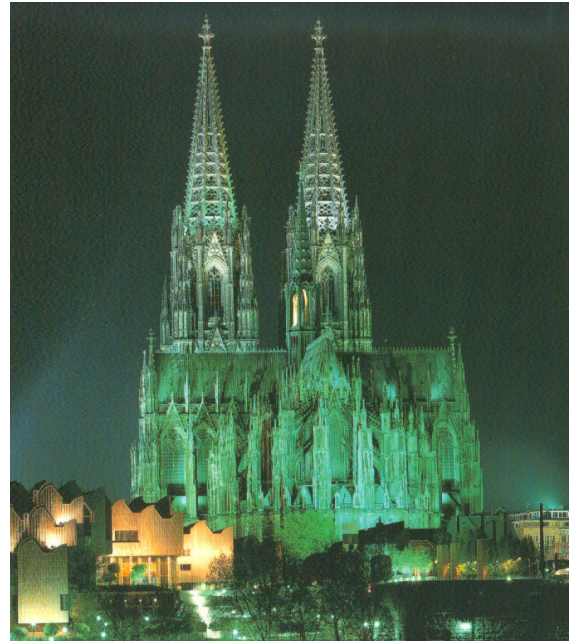
First of all, let us consider the Magi's conformity to the Divine Will. When they saw in the appearance of the star, they recognized it as a revelation from God.

By prayer and study, they understood that the long-awaited Messiah had been born and they responded by leaving aside all their temporal pursuits to find the Messiah and to offer Him precious gifts.

There can be no doubt that they encountered many inconveniences on their journey, but the greatest difficulty,



The Relics of the Three Magi



Cologne Cathedral

perhaps, was the disappearance of the star as they reached Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they persevered in the quest and sought advice from King Herod, who in turn questioned the chief priests and the scribes of the people as to the birthplace of the Messiah from Sacred Scriptures. Here we can only wonder why the leaders of the Temple and the people of Jerusalem did not join the Magi on their final journey to Bethlehem. The Gospel makes no reference that anyone else accompanied the Magi. So, despite the indifference of so many of God's Chosen People, the Magi persevered in their endeavor and were rewarded by finding the Divine Infant King.

What a strong faith they must have had to recognize, in the midst of the poverty of the dwelling, the Child, Whom the Prophet Isaias called, "Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, Father of the World to come, the Prince of Peace."

The gifts which the Holy Magi offered the Christ Child were unique and appropriate: gold for the King, frankincense for the true God, and myrrh for His burial.

May we, in imitation of the Three Holy Kings, cooperate with the grace of God, put aside our temporal affairs when necessary to pursue the Divine Will, and most importantly persevere in the practice of our Catholic Faith in the midst of so much moral and religious indifference.

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

Occursus Domini

by a seminarian

“At that time, when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the Law of Moses, they took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.” (Luke 2:22)

The feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a special day for Catholics, and is ranked as a Double of the 2nd Class in the Latin Church. In ancient times, it was also called the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple—*Occursus Domini*—which means the meeting of Our Lord and His Mother with Simeon and Anna. It is now also called Candlemas, or “Mass of the Candles,” because of the blessing of candles which takes place on this day. These titles provide us with many reflections for this February 2nd.

In the Old Testament, according to the Law of Moses, a mother who had given birth to a male child was considered unclean for seven days, and for thirty-three days was to remain “in the blood of her purification.” At the conclusion of the forty days the mother was to “...bring to the temple a lamb for a holocaust and a young pigeon or turtle dove for sin.” Those who could not offer a lamb, were to offer two turtle doves or pigeons. The priest then prayed for her and she was cleansed.

The Blessed Virgin was not subject to this law, for she was not in need of purification. As St. Bernard said, “Nothing was impure in her conception; nothing was impure in her birth; there was nothing to be cleansed.” Yet she complied with the law and gave us a beautiful example of obedience and humility. Mary likewise showed her obedience in bringing the Child Jesus to the Temple. God had commanded that the Jews offer to Him their first-born sons in gratitude for the deliverance of their first-born from the destroying angel of Egypt. Afterwards, the children were to be redeemed with certain gifts.

When the Child Jesus was presented in the Temple by His holy Mother, the holy prophet, Simeon, recognized Him as the Messiah. He called the Child Jesus “... a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel.” It is in commemoration of these words that the blessing of candles and the procession are held on this day.

Candles are a symbol of Christ, the God-Man. Based on the concept of the virginity of worker bees, beeswax is considered as typifying the flesh of Christ, born of a Virgin, which explains the Church’s insis-

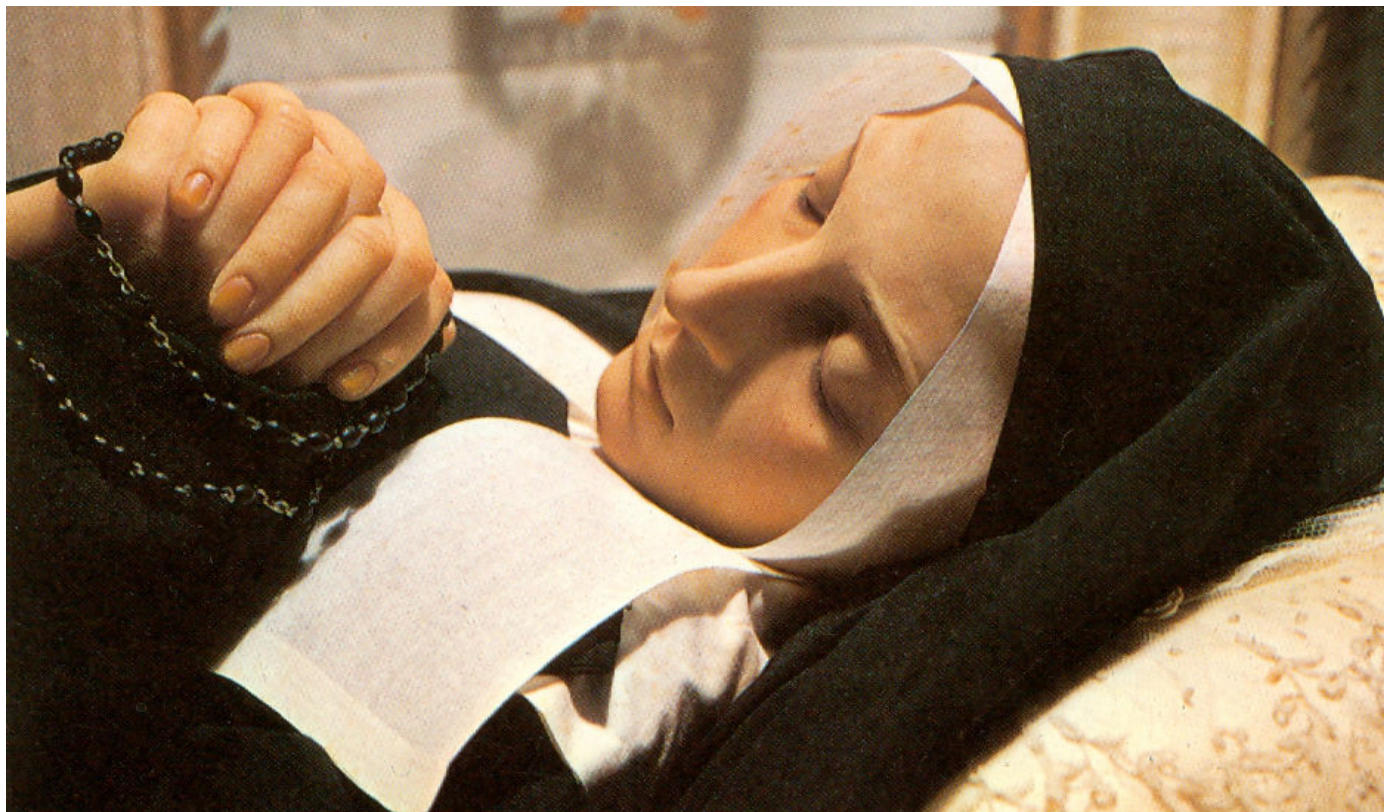
tence on its use during liturgical functions. As one the fathers of the Church once wrote, “The wax, being spotless, represents Christ’s most spotless Body; the wick enclosed in it is an image of His Soul, while the glowing flame typifies the Divine Nature united with the human in one Divine Person.” We also know that, during the Easter season, the Paschal candle especially represents Christ, the Light of the world.

As we celebrate the feast of the Purification, let us remember that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and our Divine Light. Let us also remember the wonderful example of humility and obedience that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, gives us, and say with St. Bernard, “Truly, O happy Virgin, thou wast not in need of purification, but thou wouldst pass as a woman among women, as thy Son also passed for a Child among children.”



*Bro. Thomas Marie, CMRI
(Formerly Adam Lawrence)
begins his novitiate*

A Contemporary Miracle



The incorrupt body of St. Bernadette Soubirous in Nevers, France

As wonderful as the account of Our Lady's apparitions at Lourdes, France, and the many miracles wrought at the grotto are, there is another stupendous phenomenon which is just as miraculous in the city of Nevers, France. It is the incorrupt body of St. Bernadette Soubirous, to whom Our Lady appeared. It is truly remarkable that, after a short life of 35 years which ended in 1879, her frail body would remain incorrupt to our present day—a favor given to few saints.

In the long history of Christianity, we find that God has preserved over a hundred saints from the ravishes of the grave, some for a great number of centuries. King David testifies that the death of each saint is very precious in the sight of the Lord. Some, despite very adverse circumstances, remain incorrupt and fresh, with an inexplicable aroma surrounding them. How wonderful it is to be able to visit in our own times the tombs of these incorruptibles and to personally witness this supernatural phenomenon.

As we honor St. Bernadette in the coming month of February, let us not forget that her prerogative of incorruption is shared by other notable saints:

St. Cecilia (Died 177)
St. Agatha (D. 251)
St. Edward the Confessor (D. 1066)
St. Isidore the Farmer (D. 1172)
St. Albert the Great (D. 1280)
St. Margaret of Cortona (D. 1297)
St. Frances of Rome (D. 1440)
St. Rita of Cascia (D. 1457)
St. Francis Xavier (D. 1552)
St. Stanislaus Kostka (D. 1568)
St. Teresa of Avila (D. 1582)
St. Charles Borromeo (D. 1584)
St. Philip Neri (D. 1595)
St. Germain Cousin (D. 1601)
St. Rose of Lima (D. 1617)
St. Francis de Sales (D. 1622)
St. Jane Frances de Chantal (D. 1641)
St. Vincent de Paul (D. 1660)
St. John Marie Vianney (D. 1859)
St. Catherine Laboure (D. 1876)

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

The Occult Reception of the Sacraments

Question: In the case of a couple who are known (at least to some) to be living in an invalid marriage, but who are observing complete chastity and have a justifying reason for this brother-sister cohabitation (particularly if there are children), it is stated by some authors that they may be permitted to receive the sacraments, but in a church in which they are not known. On what grounds is it forbidden to them to receive the sacraments publicly in their own parish church?

Answer: Those authors who propose the practice mentioned by our questioner argue that by abstaining from the reception of the sacraments in a place where they are known and receiving them occultly in some other place the couple are avoiding the scandal that would be given if the couple were seen regularly at the confessional and the altar-rail — the scandal being the impression they would thus give that the Church is tolerating a concubinage.

I am not convinced of the validity of this argument. It must be remembered that the chief scandal that the couple in question is giving comes from the fact that they are living together, though not married to each other. This scandal is given by their very cohabitation, even though they are actually living as brother and sister, since such cohabitation has the appearance of evil (*species mali*), which is sufficient to constitute active scandal. Their primary obligation is to diminish or to remove this scandal, and this is not done by the *occult* reception of the sacraments. On the contrary, it seems to me, a most effective means for removing this scandal is provided if the couple are seen receiving the sacraments *publicly* in their own parish church. If they do this, most Catholics will conclude that they are no longer living in sin—that the marriage has been validated or that they are living chastely as brother and sister. We should bear in mind that Catholics are now becoming aware of the brother-sister cohabitation, so that they do not find it difficult to believe that this arrangement exists in a particular situation. It is true, some might be cynical, and express uncharitable suspicions even when they see the couple receiving the sacraments, but I believe that such persons are in the minority, and that most Catholics would take it for granted that the couple are now living as good Christians and would no longer regard their cohabitation as a source of scandal.

An Invalidly-Married Teacher

Question: One of the instructors in a Catholic girls' school (the athletic director) is a Catholic woman who has been divorced from her lawful husband and has subsequently contracted a civil marriage. Should she be allowed to retain her post?

Answer : I cannot see how such a person can be retained as an instructor in a Catholic school—at least, if her marital status is publicly known. For, to permit a woman involved in so sinful a situation to remain in a post of responsibility, in which her example will surely have some influence on the pupils, is necessarily a source of grave scandal. The pupils are likely to receive the impression that it is a very minor fault for a married woman to obtain a divorce and to attempt another marriage—and this impression may have a bad effect on the lives of some of them in future years. Perhaps a slight change in the way of proposing this case will confirm this solution. Suppose that the woman was one who had simply deserted her husband (without obtaining any civil divorce) and was living in open concubinage with a man. Would the Catholic school then employ her as an instructor? I am sure that the authorities of every Catholic school would refuse to employ such a woman. Yet, in the eyes of God and of the Catholic Church the woman described in the question is substantially in the same situation as the other. The fact that she has had a civil divorce and a civil marriage does not alter the fact that she is living in open concubinage.

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