



Adsum

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

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In imitation of the Good Shepherd, many of our priests are pastors of multiple churches and Mass centers, and this requires a remarkable amount of traveling throughout the Midwest each Sunday and holyday of obligation. As the feasts of Christmas and the Circumcision this year fell on Saturdays, there was a double duty for our priests. Fr. Sandquist offers Masses at St. Theresa's (O'Neill, Nebraska) and St. Mary's (Rockville, Nebraska), which entails approximately 8 hours of driving; Fr. Sellner travels up to Immaculate Conception (Sartell, Minnesota) to offer 3 Masses and then to Springfield, Minnesota, for a 4th Mass, which takes about 14 hours of driving; Fr. Borja covers 2 Mass centers in Oklahoma, with 16 hours of drive time; and I offer 2 Masses in Omaha followed by a 3rd Mass in Topeka, Kansas, which takes about 6 hours. In addition to the weekend travels, we maintain full time classes at the seminary and academy. What motivates the clergy to



Fr. Sandquist blesses gold, frankincense and myrrh in honor of the three Holy Magi

burn the candle at both ends is the salvation of souls. As Pope Pius XII once remarked in an address to the students of Canon Law in Rome: "Salus animarum—suprema lex."

What is accomplished today is nothing different or new from what missionaries did in times past. The famous Jesuit missionaries traveled amazing distances by horseback, canoe, and by foot to bring the true Faith to the native American Indians. The names of Fr. Pierre De Smet, Fr. Nicholas Point, Fr. Anthony Ravalli, and Fr. Joseph Cataldo are truly inspirations for all of our priests.

It is indeed quite amusing when some well intentioned lay people offer me words of wisdom: "Bishop, we need more priests!" Who knows that better than our priests? Our Lord Himself told us this nearly 2000 years ago: "The harvest is indeed great but the laborers are few!" What solution does Our Lord give us? "Pray the Lord of the harvest that He sends laborers." Thank you again for your prayers and support of the seminary to provide for our future laborers in Our Lord's vineyard.

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



Fr. Borja, as deacon, chants the Gospel for the Feast of the Epiphany

Guadalupe, What Her Eyes Say another excerpt from the book by Francis Anson

The other interview we have chosen is the one Benitez made with Dr. Kuri, an influential surgeon and specialist in internal medicine. Besides his valuable opinion, Dr. Kuri gives data on certain physical aspects of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Dr. Kuri confirms what he already knew through the testimony of other doctors: "However incredible it seems, these eyes are alive!"

Then Benitez gives him a series of arguments destined to make him think whether it may have been an error or mistake.

The internist answers, "No. There have been many doctors who have examined the eyes, and all agree: they have brilliance. It is not a smudge, as it would happen with a simple painting; one can see the hollow... And this can be seen very well through the ophthalmoscope. It looks three dimensional!"

Once he got this answer, Benitez continues with his interview, referring to the report submitted by Dr. Kuri himself after his investigation of the image on the ayate. "In your report, you talk about the direction of the gaze of the Virgin..."

"Yes, the eyes are directed toward something or somebody slightly below and a little toward the right of the Lady."

"Then, do you think that the Virgin was taller than the bearded personage that is reflected in her eyes?"

"Maybe. Or perhaps the Lady was suspended in the air at that moment and, consequently, was a little more elevated than that person."

"Do you think that the bearded man had to be about 30 to 40 centimeters away from the face of the

Lady?"

"Yes. According to the reflections of Purkinje-Samson, the Virgin must have been looking to one side."

"Do you think there is a logical or rational explanation for this presence of a human bust in the eyes?"

"No, there is none. At least for the moment. From the point of view of science, we do not know how this image was reflected in the corneas. Perhaps medical science in the future can clarify the mystery."



"You have observed the eyes of the image in great detail. Did you find any defect in them?"

"Physiologically, they are perfect. And this is also unusual."

"Why?"

"If it were a simple human painting, no matter how good an artist the painter may

have been, he would have never achieved the anatomical and microscopic perfection of these eyes. Besides, we go back to the same question: what painter could have known in 1531 the optical phenomenon of the triple image of Purkinje-Samson?"

"What other details could never have been painted or falsified?"

"For example, the blackness of the eyes. When one lights them with the ophthalmoscope, they acquire depth and brilliancy. As I mentioned before, they seem alive... For example, the equidistance between the reflections seen in the eyes is so perfect that one has the feeling of looking at living human eyes."

"You are an expert in womb surgery. Since I

initiated this research, several doctors and experts have hinted at the possibility that the Virgin was pregnant at the moment of the mysterious impression of her image in the tilma of Juan Diego. What do you think of this hypothesis?"

"I've also heard of it. They even have said that she could have been three months pregnant."

"And do you agree?"

"It is very difficult to know. We can see a slight fullness under the girdle, but..."

"And since we are talking about anatomy, have you observed any anomaly in the body of the Virgin?"

"Although the image appears on an ayate and, therefore, we ignore her real dimensions, at a glance it looks perfect."

"Do these features correspond to a girl or a young lady, as it has been said?"

"Yes, that is very clear. She may be between 14 and 15 years old."

"Is any illness noticeable when you studied the face or the hands?"

"No, her complexion is perfect."

"Doctor, do you think she is a beautiful young lady?"

"Very beautiful. I assure you that viewing her at close range and without the protective crystal makes a big difference."

"What did you feel when you saw her? What did

you experience the first time you had her so close?"

Perhaps because the answer Dr. Kuri was about to give seemed to him not very scientific, he felt obliged to explicitly say something that Benitez knew perfectly well—that is, when a scientist investigates, he has to set aside his beliefs of prejudices, no matter what they may be... "but despite that, I was greatly

moved. If you knew what peace, what tenderness, what sweetness that face inspires...!"

"Have you ever seen a face equal or similar to that of the Virgin of Guadalupe?"

"Never. In my long professional life, I've had the chance to see thousands of human beings of all classes and conditions, but I have never seen a face as delicate and as expressive as hers."

"And in photographs or paintings?"

"Much less."

"Talking about paintings. If all this is true, and if the image was mysteriously

formed or printed in the tilma of Juan Diego, is it possible that we are facing the first and only 'self-portrait' of the Virgin Mary?"

"I am convinced it is so. When one is conscious and knowledgeable of these marvels, the logical thing is to think that this face belongs to Mary—Mary as a girl or a young lady."



The tilma enshrined above the main altar of the old basilica in Mexico City

Outlines of Moral Theology

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

WILLS

A will is a contract of donation, whereby a person determines who shall receive his property after his death. The right to make a will is found basically in the natural law, though the details have to be made by positive legislation. All countries have laws for the making of wills—e.g., the number of witnesses, the age of the person who can make a will, etc.

It is a disputed question among theologians whether or not a will devoid of the formalities prescribed by law is valid. Since each side is probable, one may use either opinion to his advantage, though not in respect to the same will. Accordingly, the natural heir (e.g., the wife or son of the deceased) may refuse to pay legacies found in a will devoid of some formality (e.g., signed by only one witness), even though he knew the deceased really wished these legacies to be paid; but, on the other hand, one who has got possession of a legacy from a will devoid of the formalities may keep it until the dying man says: “I want you to have my watch after my death,” the friend may take possession after the man’s death, even though the written will contains nothing about such a gift. On the other hand, the heir may sue for the recovery of the watch. However, there is an exception—in the case of pious legacies—which are to be given, even if they are expressed by the deceased in a will devoid of the legal formalities—e.g., by mere word of mouth—provided the heir is sure this was the will of the deceased.

Religious and priests should follow exactly the prescriptions of Canon Law as to the making of wills, and be sure that all the prescriptions required by the particular State are fulfilled.

LOANS & INTEREST

If an article that is borrowed perishes without any fault on the part of the one who borrowed it, the borrower has no obligation in conscience to repay unless such an obligation is included in the contract. However, ordinarily this is included in the contract, especially if the article is of any great value; and the lender could ordinarily get recompense agreed on (e.g., the high hat borrowed by A from B to attend a party, which is ruined by a bottle thrown by one of the guests).

Much controversy has been centered about the matter of interest-taking, and the Church has been charged with changing its doctrine in this matter. The truth is this: when a person lends money, he has no right to any more than the original sum, if we consider only the money itself. For money is a mere medium of exchange, and if he demands more than he lent, there is an inequality established. He gets more than he himself originally possessed, and there is no intrinsic reason for this.

However, there can be—and today there generally are—extrinsic title for interest. Such are the temporary loss of the chance on the part of the lender to use his money, or the danger that it may not be returned. On this account, a person is not blamed by the Church nowadays if he demands interest within the limit of civil law. Indeed, as far back as the Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) the Church approved of “Mounts of Piety” which were bands for lending people money, and in return they paid a sum over and above the loan for the support of these places of business.

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