



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The clergy and seminarians at Mater Dei Seminary wish all of you a Blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year!

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we are reminded of the unique relationship between Our Divine Savior and His holy Mother Mary. The early Christian writers, the Fathers of the Church, recognized the wonderful parallel between the fall of man by Adam with the cooperation of Eve and our redemption by Jesus Christ with the cooperation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Adam, as the head of the human race, brought about the fall of man; nevertheless, it was with the cooperation of Eve. And this cooperation was not merely a material cooperation (to present the forbidden fruit to Adam); it was indeed a formal cooperation as she consented to and willed the disobedience of Adam. In like manner, Jesus Christ alone is the Redeemer. He, the God-Man (the Word made Flesh), alone redeemed mankind by His death on the Cross. As Man He suffered and as God He made

infinite satisfaction. His holy Mother cooperated in this redemption by Christ not merely materially by her Divine Maternity but also formally by her humble fiat. She consented to the Incarnation and to the Redemption of her Divine Son. There is an excellent treatise on this matter in the book *Ipse Ipsa: Ipse, Ipsa, Ipsum: Which?* by Richard F. Quigley, LL.B. which expounds the



Proto-Evangelium [Genesis 3:15 “I will put enmities between thee (Satan) and the woman (Mary), between thy seed and her seed (Christ), and she shall crush thy head.”]:

One obvious objection of Protestants to the Catholic phrase “Co-Redemptress,” would be that it denies the office of our dear Lord as Sole Redeemer. But this difficulty arises from their forgetting that there are two different kinds of co-operation; and that where the co-operation

takes place by counsel, by instigation, by intercession, or by a consent without which the work could not be accomplished, the work still remains exclusively performed by its immediate agent. Thus it was Adam’s sin which exclusively wrought man’s fall; and yet

Eve actively co-operated in that fall, because she incited Adam to do that which exclusively caused it. Moreover Eve's co-operation was formal and not merely material, because she knew she was exciting him to what involved man's ruin. In a parallel manner, Christ, our Redeemer, alone wrought man's whole Redemption; and yet Mary as truly and as formally co-operated in man's redemption as Eve in man's fall. She co-operated, of course, in one sense by the circumstance of becoming His Mother. But, if this were all, it could not be said that she is the Co-operatrix of Redemption or Co-Redemptress, except in a purely material sense. At the solemn moment of the Annunciation, man's redemption depended on the alternative, whether she would or would not give her consent. And the consent which she gave was not merely to the being Mother of God—that would have been simply an unparalleled exaltation and dignity—but she consented to His work of redemption, to undergo all that unspeakable suffering and anguish which were involved in her Son dying for the sins of the world.

Father Newman points out that the Fathers, from the very first, speak of her "as an intelligent, responsible cause of Our Lord's taking flesh"; "her faith and obedience being accessories to the Incarnation, and gaining it as her reward." And Father Newman continues: "They (the Fathers) declare that she co-operated in our salvation, not merely by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon her body, but by specific holy acts, the effect of the Holy Ghost upon her soul; that, as Eve forfeited

privileges by sin, so Mary earned privileges by the fruits of grace; that as Eve was a cause of ruin to all, Mary was a cause of salvation to all; that, as Eve made room for Adam's fall, so Mary made room for Our Lord's reparation of it; and thus, whereas the free gift was not as the offence, but much greater, it follows that, as Eve co-operated in effecting a great evil, Mary co-operated in effecting a much greater good."

It is for this reason that the Fathers of the Church refer to the Blessed Virgin Mary as the new Eve. Among the earliest writings on this matter is St. Justin, martyr (163 AD):

To explain, when Eve was a virgin and incorrupt, and when she had conceived the word from the serpent, she gave birth to disobedience and death. Mary, the Virgin, contrariwise, when she had received faith and joy, gave this answer to the Angel Gabriel (who brought the glad news, namely, that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One who would be born of her would be the Son of God): "Be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1, 38). Of her He was born... Through whom [Christ] God deposed the serpent and the angel and men who have become like him.

Let us admire the wisdom of God in the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Redemption of mankind by the cooperation of Our Lady, which paralleled the fall of mankind by Adam with the cooperation of Eve! With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

Guadalupe, What Her Eyes Say by Francis Anson

The Mystery of the Virgin of Guadalupe, published at the end of 1982, is probably one of the most exhaustive ones published in Spanish. Its author, writer and journalist Juan Jose Benitez, gathers a series of interesting testimonies by personally interviewing the protagonists of the different discoveries. The truth is that these interviews are very interesting from beginning to end, but we will only reproduce the testimonies of two experts.

The first is the one of Dr. Graue. We chose Dr. Graue because he has been the most competent eye pathologist, if not one of the best, in America; he had repeatedly declared himself an unbeliever of “these strange stories of a bearded man in the eyes of the image.” He told Benitez himself that “around that time a movement to canonize the visionary of Tepeyac rose in Mexico... And although my friends kept on insisting. I rejected once and again the proposal to analyze the cloth. I felt sorry to disappoint them...”; and because Dr. Graue ended up talking to the image on the ayate.

Through the first questions of the interview, the distinguished ophthalmologist tells Benitez in great detail the precautions he took from the scientific, technical, and even practical points of view to guarantee the exactness of his investigation. His first study session was devoted to analyze the whole cloth, verifying its preservation and “after looking once and again at the ayate for an hour, I could not understand how a painter could have done such a painting on that coarse cloth. If you come close to the tilma as I did, you will notice that there is no sizing. Frankly,

that amazed me.”

Benitez, perhaps wondering that an ophthalmologist took time to study the ayate and “the painting,” interrupted, “Didn’t you feel the temptation to examine the eyes?”

“Yes. And I did it to check a point somebody had commented to me. I took the ophthalmoscope and flashed a beam of light inside the eye. And I got shocked: that eye had and still has depth. It looked like a living eye!”

“But that is unexplainable in a supposed painting...”

“Totally unexplainable.”

“Allow me to insist. Are you sure that a human bust appears in the eyes of the image?”

“Absolutely sure. I am not the only one who has seen it. In the right eye, occupying a space of about

four millimeters, you can clearly see the figure of a bearded man. This reflection is in the anterior surface of the cornea. A little beyond that, the same human bust is reflected in the anterior and posterior faces of the crystalline, exactly following the optical laws—more specifically, the so-called triple image of Samson-Purkinje. This phenomenon, I repeat is what gives depth to the eye.”

“How about the left eye?”

“I could see the same figure there, but with a slight deformation or focus. This detail is very meaningful, because, as I was telling you before, it fully conforms with the laws of optics. Undoubtedly, that person was a little farther away from the Virgin’s left eye.”



Outlines of Moral Theology

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

Vows

A vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God out of the virtue of religion, obliging one at least under pain of venial sin. To make a vow validly a person must have the intention of making it, must understand substantially what he is promising and what is the nature of a vow, and must be free to do so. A vow made under the influence of unjust and grave fear is invalid by Church law. However, fear coming from some intrinsic cause, such as the fear of hell arising from one's belief in this doctrine, does not invalidate a vow.

The matter of a vow must be something possible, good, and better than the opposite. Thus, a person could not vow to avoid even semi-deliberate venial sins, because that is impossible apart from a special privilege of divine grace. A person could not *per se* vow to get married, since to marry is not *per se* better than the opposite, but he could make such a vow in particular circumstances, when it would be better to marry—for example, to legitimate a child.

To vow to commit a sin is a sin; it is a mortal sin to make such a vow when what is vowed is a mortal sin, and very probably a mortal sin even though the thing that is vowed is only a venial sin. On the other hand, to vow something that is good, though not better than the opposite, is a venial sin.

A vow is public if it is accepted by the legitimate superiors of the Church in the name of the Church; otherwise it is private. A public vow is solemn or simple, according as the Church has determined for different religious institutes. By ecclesiastical law there are different effects for these. Thus, a simple vow of chastity renders marriage prohibited, but not invalid; a solemn vow is an invalidating impediment. A simple vow of poverty excludes only the disposition of property; a solemn vow excludes also the ownership.

The deliberate breaking of a vow is a sin against religion. It is a grave sin if the violation is considered grave matter, venial if the matter concerned was light. In the case of a private vow (not therefore the vows in a religious institute) a person can bind himself even to grave matter under light obligation.

If a person doubts whether or not he made a vow to perform an action, he may consider himself free from any obligation by vow to perform the act. A personal vow (e.g., to make a pilgrimage, to say a rosary every day) binds only the person himself; but a real vow (e.g., to give a sum of money to the Church) passes on to one's heirs.

The obligation of a vow can cease, in the first place, intrinsically, by a substantial change of circumstances, e.g., if a man who had made a vow to give \$10 to the Church every month became very poor, or if the reason for the vow passes away (e.g., if a girl made a vow to recite the rosary every day for the health of her father, the vow no longer holds if he dies).

The vow can also cease through an extrinsic cause. This can take place by annulment (*irritatio*). A direct annulment can be given by one who possesses dominative power over the will of the one who made the vow, such as a father over the vows of his children before the age of puberty or a religious superior (including local superiors and superioresses even of nonexempt communities) over the vows of subjects made after they came under this dominative power by religious profession. Of course, in the case of religious superiors, this power does not extend to the very vows of religion or to the vow to enter a stricter order. When a vow is annulled directly, it ceases permanently. The basis of this direct annulment is the fact that one under another's dominative authority is not supposed to make a vow except with the condition that the one with this authority accedes to it, since dominative authority extends over the will of the subject.

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