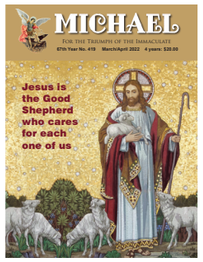


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Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for each one of us



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Senior English Editor
Alain Pilote

Assistant Editors
Yves and Anne-Marie Jacques,
Melvin Sickler, Helen Kmera

Headquarters
Canada: MICHAEL Journal
1101 Principale St., Rougemont QC, J0L 1M0
Tel.: (450) 469-2209, (514) 856-5714
Fax: (450) 469-2601
mail@michaeljournal.org

Representatives
USA: MICHAEL Journal
P.O. Box 86, South Deerfield, MA 01373
Tel.: (413) 397-3730
mail@michaeljournal.org

Poland: MICHAEL Journal
ul. Traugutta 107/5, 50-419 Wrocław
Tel.: (71) 343-6750
redakcja@michael.org.pl

South America: Revista SAN MIGUEL
Tel.: (2) 226 2361; (2) 099 70 78 79
Quito – Ecuador
info@revistasanmiguel.org

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MICHAEL

A journal of Catholic patriots for the Kingship of Christ and Mary in souls, in families and in nations

For social justice through Economic Democracy in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church through the vigilant actions of heads of families, and not through political parties

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Cover page: This is a digitally edited and modified version of a picture of a tomb showing Christ as the Good Shepherd at the central cemetery of Kufstein, middle of the 19th century. Source: http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.



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Letter from the Editor

A page of history has turned

Omicron is a term known to everyone. Presumed a variant of the original Covid-19 virus, we are told it is less virulent than the original but more contagious. This Omicron variant appeared at the door of our headquarters in Rougemont at the beginning of the year and hit all of us to different degrees. For most, the effects were limited to the symptoms of a severe flu, which required a week or two of rest, but three Pilgrims were hospitalized briefly and discharged.

Unfortunately, one Pilgrim fell in combat: our Director General, Marcel Lefebvre, was taken to the hospital on January 9th for acute respiratory problems and passed away three days later on January 12th, at the age of 75. The previous day, he had been in great shape (*see pages 4 and 5*). Marcel Lefebvre left his mark after 58 years of service as a full-time Pilgrim of St. Michael.



Louis Even and Marcel Lefebvre in 1967

His passing represents the turning of a page in the history of the Movement. One of his main achievements was bringing the good news of Economic Democracy to Africa, evidenced by the expressions of sympathy we received from all over the African continent, starting with Bishop Mathieu Madega from Gabon, who came to Rougemont four times to participate in Study Sessions on Economic Democracy (*see page 7*). Marcel and his brother Réjean (who died in October 2017, after serving 53 years as a full-time Pilgrim) were well known to all the Pilgrims of Saint Michael in Canada.

We thank God for having sent us an apostle like Marcel, and we ask Him to send us others. Marcel's warmth and enthusiasm were contagious. He was always working, whether on the door-to-door apostolate or on the phone. He understood and argued the principles of Economic Democracy convincingly (*see pages 10 to 13*).

We can say that the disciple, Marcel Lefebvre, learned well from the master, Louis Even. Mr. Lefebvre lived in Rougemont with our founder, Louis Even, from 1962 until Mr. Even's death in 1974. He admired him and even considered him worthy of sainthood (*see page 6*). The writings of Louis Even on the solution necessary to repair the broken financial system remain illuminating and relevant even today, and that is why we happily reproduce his essays in each issue of MICHAEL, including this one (*see pages 14 to 17*).

We are on earth only briefly. For Mr. Lefebvre, his time ended January 12th. His quick and sudden death surprised us and should provide us all an opportunity to reflect on what awaits us in the afterlife. While not knowing when death will come, we should prepare for it because as the the Gospel says death "will come life a thief". After our time on earth, we will bring neither money nor possessions with us. Only our good deeds and acts of charity toward our neighbours will follow (*see page 8*).

Regardless of life's trials we must not despair because God, for whom nothing is impossible, can use our sufferings for the greater good (*see page 32*). As Saint Paul wrote in his Letter to the Romans (8:28), "All things work together for good to them that love God." A striking proof of this is the life of Saint Josephine Bakhita, a religious sister from Africa captured as a slave in her youth (*see pages 25 to 29*). Jesus and His Mother never abandon us, as is shown in the Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Ukraine in 1987 (*see page 18*).

What the International Financiers fear most is personal initiative, since a person can accomplish much when he puts his mind to it. One need only think of Louis Even and Marcel Lefebvre. What would have been the result if they had said no to God's call to work for the triumph of truth and justice in the field of economic and social life? There would have been no MICHAEL Movement in Africa and no movement at all. Let's remember that the Movement was founded to educate the population and create a public opinion strong enough to ensure that politicians served the people and not the financiers. Good reading! ❖

Alain Pilote
Editor

A Tribute to Marcel Lefebvre and Livain Daigle



Marcel Lefebvre
April 4, 1946 – Jan. 12, 2022

Marcel Lefebvre, Director General of the Pilgrims of St. Michael, passed away on January 12, 2022, just three days after he was hospitalized for acute respiratory problems. We were all taken by surprise as Mr. Lefebvre was in top form the day before, speaking with our friends in Canada and Africa, and taking care of day-to-day affairs.

In the days before his death, Mr. Lefebvre had been arranging the funeral of Pilgrim of Saint Michael Livain Daigle, who passed on January 4, 2022 at the age of 89.

A native of Acadieville, New Brunswick, Llvain Daigle devoted his entire life to the apostolate, especially in the great city of Montreal. Since 2009, he had lived at our headquarters in Rougemont, Quebec. Two years ago, Mr. Daigle was transferred to a seniors' residence in the neighbouring town of Saint-Cesaire, where he died.

Since there were now two funerals to prepare, Msgr. Claude Lamoureux, Vicar General of the diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe (to which Rougemont belongs) offered that the two funerals be celebrated at the same time at the Cathedral by the bishop of the diocese, Most Rev. Christian Rodembourg. This honour was in recognition of the Pilgrims of Saint Michael's long history in the diocese. (The head office of MICHAEL moved from Montreal to Rougemont in 1962.) Further kindness was extended by broadcasting the funeral Mass on the diocesan website.



The sudden passing of Marcel Lefebvre took us by surprise



Livain Daigle
Oct. 5, 1932 – Jan. 4, 2022

The funeral Mass was celebrated on Feb. 2, 2022, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord at the Temple. Here is a tribute to the deceased men made during the funeral by Marcelle Caya, a Director on the Board of the Pilgrims of St. Michael:



Marcelle Caya

by Marcelle Caya

I offer these tributes to Marcel and Livain as messages of thanksgiving.

It is quite easy to talk to you about Marcel Lefebvre. We all knew him well, and anyone would be able to pay a tribute to him if asked. We have received many such tributes. Here is one from Denis Forget in Ottawa, Canada: "A pleasant person, this great Director made us feel like a brother or a sister. His warm welcome, contagious smile and laughter, his big open arms and his handshake, so straight and strong, are memorable."

For Livain Daigle, it is more difficult because he was a quiet and self-effacing man. Let us first read and meditate on what Saint Peter tells us in his 1st Letter (4:10-11):

"Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these varied graces of God, put it at the service of others. If anyone is a speaker, let it be as the words of God; if anyone serves, let it be as in strength granted by God; so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen."

Let us give thanks to God for the gift of words He gave Marcel and for the gift of service He gave to Livain. Let us thank God for the grace of their baptisms. We also thank God for their families who transmitted to them the faith.



In the center, Most Rev. Christian Rodembourg, Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe, with seven priests, presides over the funeral of Marcel Lefebvre and Livain Daigle at the Cathedral of Saint-Hyacinthe, on February 2, 2022

Thank you Marcel, thank you Livain, for having been good stewards of God's grace by walking in the footsteps of Louis Even to seek a more just and Christian society. For the encounter with Louis Even, we give thanks to God.

Marcel told us that he often accompanied his father to Social Credit meetings in Montreal when he was young. He joined the MICHAEL movement full-time when he was just 16 years old. Thank you, Marcel, for your 58 years of service and dedication.

Thank you Livain for your 52 years of service and your collaboration with Louis Even in this great movement.

We all knew Marcel's enthusiasm: he was convinced and convincing. Who among us has not received from his hand a CD of Louis Even's lectures accompanied by booklets such as "Who are the True Rulers of the World" and others?

Livain tirelessly distributed leaflets and made himself available for family visits to solicit subscriptions to MICHAEL and its French language counterpart, Vers Demain.

Marcel Lefebvre traveled all over Quebec and French-speaking Canada for meetings and visits to families. He was a champion of subscribing others to Vers Demain, often by organizing teams to distribute our educational materials. Livain was always part of these efforts.

Marcel went to Mexico and to Europe several times. In December 2008, he went to the Ivory Coast in Africa upon the invitation of Father Patrice Savadogo. This trip captured his heart and mind for the people of Africa. He visited other African countries and communicated daily with his contacts on the continent. Thank you, Mr. Lefebvre, for such dedicated work.

Livain was of Acadian origin and had lived in Montreal most of his life. His apostolic work was in Montreal, where each day, with a satchel of flyers, he traveled the streets and distributed our materials. He knew all the city bus routes and Metro stations. Livain joined our headquarters in Rougemont in 2009 and was always ready to work in the print shop and elsewhere. Thank you Mr. Daigle for your dedication.

How well God does things! Today we honour two of our brothers: one, the most enthusiastic and most talkative, and the other, the most self-effaced and silent.

The Pilgrims of Saint Michael would like to sincerely thank Bishop Rodembourg for presiding over the funeral of these two apostles.

We also thank Msgr. Lamoureux and the other priests present for their much appreciated support.

Thank you also to all the Pilgrims of Saint Michael and to the family, also to all the Pilgrims who followed this funeral Mass online.

Blessed Virgin Mary, bless your children and our two brothers, who have prayed the daily Rosary so many times.

Today, on this World Day for Consecrated Life, we hand over our two brothers who have consecrated their lives to God; we hand them over to Divine Mercy. May they rest in peace. ❖

Marcelle Caya
Pilgrim of St. Michael

Marcel Lefebvre, a great apostle of justice

We have received testimonies from all over the world following the death of Marcel Lefebvre that speak of the man's personal attributes, and especially highlight his great love for the people of Africa. His deepest wish was that the principles of Economic Democracy would animate the nations of Africa.

This testimony, one of many, is from Mr. and Mrs. Jean-Marie Gagnon from the small village of St-Odilon de Beauce, Quebec. Since 1975, the Gagnon's have been close friends and collaborators, and knew Mr. Lefebvre well.



Mr. & Mrs. Jean-Marie Gagnon

The family of the Pilgrims of St. Michael around the world is mourning the passing of the Director General of MICHAEL, Mr. Marcel Lefebvre, who left us for a better world on January 12, 2022 at the age of 75.

He went to join those who inspired him and who gave themselves totally to the cause of Economic Democracy: Louis Even, Gilberte Côté Mercier and Gérard Mercier – the latter nicknamed "the fireball". Marcel was also a ball of fire and an ardent worker until the very end. Unfortunately, we were not at his bedside during his brief hospitalization, but it would not surprise us to learn that he was subscribing hospital staff to the MICHAEL and Vers Demain magazines in his final days!

Mr. Lefebvre joined the movement full-time in 1963 and, since that day, he never failed in his vocation (with a capital V!) as a propagator of the truth. He was the defender of rights and freedoms through his animated and fiery talks on the Social Credit financial proposals. Genuine Social Credit – not the Chinese version – as Mr. Louis Even explained, would allow each person on earth to exercise their first right, that of having access to food. This right surpassed all others according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Social Credit, via its National Dividend to all, would apply this principle of the Church and elegantly solve the problems of poverty.

Mr. Lefebvre shone with the light of the movement which drove him. Anyone who knew Marcel would attest to this fact. He took every opportunity to distribute our flyers, MP3 recordings, and magazines. He was fascinated by Economic Democracy and never failed to enter debate on the topic. We have no hesitation to say he was thinking only of Economic Democracy. The misery of others did not leave him indifferent. What an extraordinary and holy way to radiate the charity of Christ!

We cannot ignore the great love that Marcel had for the people of Africa. He traveled to several regions to spread the light of Social Credit. Africans, so receptive to the great cause of Economic Democracy, knew how to win his heart. His first visit was to the Ivory Coast in December 2008 for a period of three months. He had been invited by Father Patrice Savadogo, and since that visit had never left them in spirit.

Marcel organized Study Sessions at our headquarters in Rougemont, Canada, so that others could strengthen their understanding of Economic Democracy. We can safely say that he put all his energy and his generous apostle's heart into the task.

Dear people of Africa, we know that from heaven he will continue to assist you so that you may continue to work for the establishment and propagation of Economic Democracy in your countries. Like him, never give up. It is so important to save our peoples from the global swindle of International High Finance. It is Mammon, personified by these crooked financiers, who control the world by appropriating for private ownership the natural resources that belong to all.

What a tireless apostle was Mr. Lefebvre! Daily, he spent hours on the phone spreading news of the movement, and made all listeners enthusiastic. We can affirm that he never rested and that he never hid under a bushel the light received from Louis Even, whom he so admired. He confided to us his desire to work for the beatification of this great man of genius, Louis Even, whom he considered a saint.

We mourn a brother, a great apostle, a confidante and a sincere friend. With unshakeable faith and unwavering courage, let us honour his memory by continuing to walk in his footsteps, assured of his presence at our side. He overflowed with generosity and was always available to us. It will not be less in heaven, because everything is deified and sanctified in Christ.

Our sincere condolences are extended to his family, and a special acknowledgement to his sister Jacqueline, who assisted Marcel in his last moments. Marcel, like all the full-time Pilgrims of Saint Michael, was consecrated a slave of Mary, which is to say he totally gave himself to the Blessed Virgin. Let's sing together this hymn to Mary:

On this day, O beautiful Mother,
On this day we give thee our love.
Near thee, Madonna, fondly we hover,
Trusting thy gentle care to prove. ❖

Jocelyne and Jean-Marie Gagnon

From a photo taken in 1965, from left to right: Marcel's parents, Léonidas Lefebvre and Régina Guay, Marcel, and two of his brothers, Gérald and Réjean, who were also full-time pilgrims (Gérald for 22 years, and Réjean for 53 years until his death on October 19, 2017, at the age of 69)



"With determination, you followed in the footsteps of Louis Even"

Marcel Lefebvre was appreciated by the many people from Africa whom he had met. One, Most Rev. Mathieu Madega, Bishop of Gabon, attended four of our Study Sessions on Economic Democracy in Rougemont, Quebec. Here is his tribute following Mr. Lefebrve's passing.



Bishop Mathieu Madega

Beloved Marcel Lefebvre, valiant fighter for Social Credit, we will miss your smile, even as you remain present in our hearts. Although you are now on the other side, we still feel you among us, thanks to the "communion of saints" declared in the Apostle's Creed. So, Ave Maria, stand for the struggle with the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel!

Louis Even, strong in his Catholic faith, discovered Social Credit, or Economic Democracy, thanks to Scottish engineer, Clifford Hugh Douglas. It is a true solution to the problem of 'poverty amidst plenty'.

Relying on the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the popes of the Church, Mr. Even, despite difficulties and roadblocks, engaged in the noble fight for Economic Democracy under the protection of the Virgin Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel.

Marcel Lefebvre, in turn, followed in the footsteps of Louis Even with determination, dedication, enthusiasm, great joy, firm hope, charity and admirable pugnacity. He used these qualities to advance new horizons. Like a good rugby player with the ball in hand, he rushed into the fray. Bravo, Marcel Lefebvre!

May God help the surviving Pilgrims to continue Marcel's fight with prayer and concrete commitment. Praise be to God who has showered you with blessings for a noble cause, Economic Democracy.

Marcel Lefebvre, you are now partaking in the wedding banquet of the Lamb. Please greet all the Pilgrims of Saint Michael who are already in heaven, especially Louis Even, Mrs. Côté-Mercier and your brother, Réjean. On the last day, freed from the debt-money system, we will join you and be 'through Him, with Him and in Him' in eternal peace and light alongside the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael the Archangel and all the saints. ❖

+ Bishop Mathieu Madega

(See also on page 22 the testimony of Bishop Joseph Mbatia of Kenya.)

Saint Joseph, patron of a good death

The unexpected passing of our director, Marcel Lefebvre, is an opportunity for all of us to ponder the issue of dying and what follows death. Death is the end of the physical body and the passing of the immortal soul to the supernatural world. Just as Christ rose from the dead, faith teaches us that at the Last Judgment, all will be resurrected and assigned to either eternal bliss in Paradise or eternal unhappiness in hell, according to one's deeds.

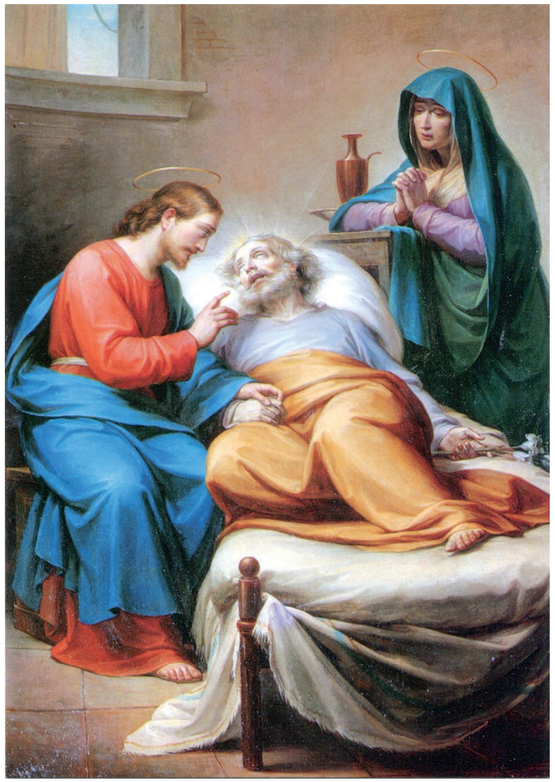
The question is not if we will die, but when. This applies to everyone, without exception. And it can happen unexpectedly, without being prepared for it. The important thing is to know that after death, we bring with us neither money nor material possessions, but only our good deeds, our acts of charity towards our neighbour. This is what Pope Francis recalled during his audience on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, which focused on the theme: Saint Joseph, patron of a good death.

***by* Pope Francis**

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning! In last week's catechesis, once again inspired by the figure of St. Joseph, we reflected on the meaning of the communion of saints. Starting precisely from this, today I would like to explore the special devotion Christian people have always had for St. Joseph as the patron of a happy death; a devotion that arose from the thought that Joseph had died, comforted by the presence of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus, before he left the house of Nazareth. There is no historical data, but since we no longer see Joseph in public life, it is believed that he died in Nazareth and that Jesus and Mary accompanied him up to his death.

A century ago, Pope Benedict XV wrote: "Through Joseph we go directly to Mary, and through Mary to the origin of all holiness, who is Jesus." Both Joseph and Mary help us to go to Jesus. Encouraging pious practices in honour of St. Joseph, Benedict recommended one in particular, and it went like this: "Since he is deservedly considered to be the most effective protector of the dying, having expired in the presence of Jesus and Mary, it will be the concern of the sacred Pastors to inculcate and encourage... those pious associations that have been established to implore Joseph on behalf of the dying, such as 'Of the Good Death', the 'Transit of Saint Joseph' and 'For the Dying'." (cf. Motu proprio: *Bonum Sane*, July 25, 1920).

Dear brothers and sisters, perhaps some people think that this language and this theme are only a legacy of the past, but in reality, our relationship with death is never about the past — it is always present. Speaking about himself a few days ago, Pope Benedict said that he "is before the dark door of death". It is good to thank Pope Benedict, who at 95, has the clarity [of mind] to tell us this. "I am before the obscurity of death, at the dark door of death." It is good advice that he has given us.



Saint Joseph dying, surrounded by Jesus and Mary

The so-called "wellness" culture tries to remove the reality of death, but the coronavirus pandemic has brought it back into focus in a dramatic way. It was terrible: death was everywhere, and many brothers and sisters lost loved ones without being able to be near them, and this made death even harder to accept and process. A nurse told me that a grandmother with Covid was dying, and she said to her, "I would like to say goodbye to my family, before I leave". And the nurse bravely took out her mobile phone and put her in touch with them. The tenderness of that farewell…

Nevertheless, we try in every way to banish the thought of our finite existence, thus deluding ourselves that we can remove its power and dispel fear. But Christian faith is not a way to exorcise the fear of death; rather, it helps us to face it. Sooner or later, we will all pass through that door.

The true light that illuminates the mystery of death comes from the Resurrection of Christ. This is the light. And St. Paul writes: "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15: 12-14). There is one certainty: Christ is resurrected, Christ is risen, Christ is alive among us. And this is the light that awaits us behind that dark door of death.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is only through faith in resurrection that we can face the abyss of death without being overwhelmed by fear. Not only that, we can restore a positive role to death. Indeed, thinking about death, and enlightened by the mystery of Christ, we are helped to look at all of life through fresh eyes. I have never seen a moving truck behind a hearse! Behind a hearse: I have never seen one. We will go alone, with nothing in the pockets of our shroud: nothing. Because a shroud has no pockets. (…)

It makes no sense to accumulate if one day we will die. What we must accumulate is charity and the ability to share, the ability not to remain indifferent when faced with the needs of others. Otherwise, what is the point of arguing with a brother or sister, with a friend, with a relative, or with a brother or sister in faith, if then one day we will die? What is the point in being angry, in getting angry with others? Before death, many issues are put into perspective. It is good to die reconciled, without grudges and without regrets! I would like to say one truth: we are all on our way toward that door, all of us.

The Gospel tells us that death comes like a thief. This is what Jesus tells us: it arrives like a thief, and however much we try to keep its arrival under control, perhaps even planning our own death, it remains an event that we must reckon with, and before which we must also make choices.

Two considerations stand for us Christians. The first is that we cannot avoid death, and precisely for this reason, after having done everything that is humanly possible to cure the sick, it is immoral to engage in overzealous treatment (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2278). That phrase of the faithful people of God, of the simple people: "Let him die in peace", "help him to die in peace": such wisdom!

The second consideration instead concerns the quality of death itself, the quality of pain, of suffering. Indeed, we must be grateful for all the help that medicine is striving to give, so that through so-called palliative care, every person who is preparing to live the last stretch of their life can do so in the most humane way possible. However, we must be careful not to confuse this help with unacceptable drifts toward killing. We must accompany people toward death but not provoke death or facilitate any form of suicide.

Remember that the right to care and treatment for all must always be prioritized so that the weakest, particularly the elderly and the sick, are never rejected. Life is a right, not death, which must be welcomed, not administered. And this ethical principle concerns everyone, not just Christians or believers.

I would like to underline a real social problem: "planning" — I don't know if it is the right word — but accelerating the death of the elderly. Very often we see in a certain social class that the elderly, since they do not have means, are given fewer medicines than they need, and this is inhumane. This is not helping them; it is driving them towards an earlier death. This is neither humane nor Christian.

The elderly should be cared for as a treasure of humanity: they are our wisdom. Even if they do not speak, or if they do not make sense, they are still the symbol of human wisdom. They are those who went before us and have left us many beautiful things, many memories, much wisdom. Please, do not isolate the elderly, do not accelerate the death of the elderly. To caress an elderly person has the same hope as caressing a child, because the beginning of life and the end are always a mystery, a mystery that should be respected, accompanied, cared for, loved.

May St. Joseph help us to live the mystery of death in the best possible way. For a Christian, a good death is an experience of the mercy of God that comes close to us, even in that last moment of our life. Even in the Hail Mary, we ask Our Lady to be close to us "at the hour of our death". Precisely for this reason, I would like to conclude this catechesis by praying together to Our Lady for the dying, for those who are experiencing this moment of passage through this dark door, and for the relatives who are experiencing bereavement. Let us pray together: Hail Mary… ❖

Pope Francis

Make sure MICHAEL moves with you

If you have recently moved, or are about to, please send your new address in order to save us postage, being undeliverable magazines are returned to us and we are required to pay extra costs. Thank you.

A huge problem for humanity: The scandal of poverty amidst plenty

Since 2006, on the first day of each of our Study Sessions on Economic Democracy (based on the book by Alain Pilote), Marcel Lefebvre gave an introductory lecture. Here is the text of Mr. Lefebvre's remarks from August 2011.

***by* Marcel Lefebvre**



Marcel Lefebvre gives a diploma to a Study Week participant

What we are going to talk about today and during the course of the week is how to resolve a major problem for humanity: the scandal of poverty amidst plenty.

If there were no abundance, but a scarcity of goods, we would have no choice but to share what is scarce. But now, instead, in times of plenty, we distribute the materials of death and destruction, and restrict what is essential for human beings' wellbeing. In 1934, when Louis Even discovered the propositions of Clifford Hugh Douglas, a Scottish engineer, he said "This is a light on my path, all the world must know about this." He found this light in a small book entitled *From Debt to Prosperity* by J. Crate Larkin. Louis Even had seen for himself the cause of the economic crisis. In 1934, there was intense poverty and misery in Montreal, even though there was an abundance of products. Missing was the 'permit' to buy goods, money.

Mr. Even knew the Social Doctrine of the Church but there were no models of social and economic life for their application. Louis Even was searching for a model and, providentially, he found this little book by Larkin.

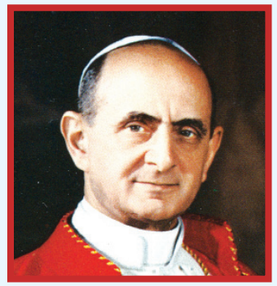
He dedicated the last 40 years of his life to make this light known. In 1937, he left a good job, because he believed that weekends and evenings after work gave him insufficient time to make the teachings known. Providence intervened and he threw himself into an impressive adventure: to bring a light to the principal cause of poverty in the world.

We have distributed millions of copies in several languages of a document in which St. John Paul II states: "It is urgent to put an end to the scandal of poverty in the world! The most urgent reform is to correct the financial system." We could add that the problem is found in the financial system and that the media is careful not to point this out.

In 1931, in his encyclical letter, *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI denounced those who control the money and credit of nations. "They distribute it in such a way that they hold the life-blood of the economic organism in their hands." He added that governments are stripped of their sovereign role and have become slaves of the powerful financiers. Those who control money also control the media and the education of professional economists to maintain the financial system as it is.

Populorum Progressio

Paul VI wrote in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in 1967 about the "calamitous system that is accompanying capitalism." This does not mean that we should throw out capitalism. It is not because of private property or free enterprise that we have this economic problem. Free enterprise furnishes products in abundance,and even super-abundance, but the financial system that accompanies the system of capitalist production is not at all at the service of production.



Saint Paul VI

Nations can produce in abundance but if there are people who decide to turn off the faucet [of money], the money disappears and nations will suffer from its lack. Money is not the true wealth of a country. The riches include things like bread; it is consumable goods. Pope John Paul II accused the "calamitous" system of being a "structure of sin." Because of this "calamitous system," nations owe millions of dollars.

Erase the debts of the countries

In 1980, 75 bishops from Latin America gathered to protest against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank who had lent them $80 billion for development purposes. After 10 years, these countries had paid $418 billion in interest payments, more than 5 times the amount received! And they still owe their debt to this day. It is not without good reason that Pope John Paul II demanded to erase the debts of the countries in the Jubilee Year, 2000. Erase the debts of all the countries! There is no other solution. In order to pay the debt, nations pay interest on their debts and their people work to export goods outside the country. They cannot even profit from their own production.

The nations suffer

I went to the Congo, and they told me: "There are businessmen here who have not received their salary for the last 10 months!" Why? Because the government decided to send all that they could grab to the IMF and the World Bank to pay the interest on a debt that they have already paid many times over! It is impossible for a country to develop its potential in this kind of system.



In Canada, we have an institution called the Bank of Canada. A question regarding the banks and commerce was asked of the first governor of the Bank of Canada, Graham Tower, during a session with the Parliamentary Commission in 1935. The question was: "Will you tell me why a government with the power to create money should give that power away to a private monopoly, and then borrow that which Parliament can create itself, with interest, to the point of national bankruptcy?" He replied: "Now, if Parliament wants to change the form of operating the banking system, that is certainly within the power of Parliament." The laws of Canada say that the power to create its own money and regulate its value belongs to the central, or federal, government.

But since then nothing has changed. Our current Prime Minister [Stephen Harper in 2011] still borrows from private banks which have a monopoly on the creation of money. As they have borrowed $39 billion from this monopoly for the services to different departments and to the population, the Canadian debt has now reached $562 billion since 2002. $562 billion of this debt was in order to obtain services worth $39 billion. This is truly a perverse system!

St. Louis, the King of France, said: "The first duty of a king is to create his own money in order to facilitate the exchange of goods among his subjects." What government makes its own money today? None!

A handful of individuals have usurped the power to create money. In the United States, it was on December 23, 1913 that the privilege to create money was ceded to private monopolies. A small number of men voted in the law of the Federal Reserve, a private organization that has since that date controlled the monopoly of the creation of money.

We are presently living in a financial crisis; this does not come from God. God still sends the sun and the rain. Production is in sufficient quantity to feed humanity but a small number of individuals have their hand on the faucet of money, and they close it in times of peace. What is curious about this is that in times of war, the faucet is opened and there is money in abundance. This system does not come from God! So, when a financial crisis occurs, people lose their jobs, goods and homes.

The financial crisis in the United States

Millions of American families lost their homes and President George Bush did not have a dime with which to come to their aid. On the other hand, just before leaving the White House, he was able to find $700 billion in order to come to the assistance of the 'poor bankers'. It was unimaginable that the bankers should suffer! Yet, families were left in the street. No problem, but throw the banks into the street? No, it is not possible! And where did President Bush find the $700 billion to come to the assistance of the banks? From the Federal Reserve Bank!

Is the Federal Reserve Bank in charge of all the American people? Is it the bank of the United States? Not at all! It is the private bankers of the Federal Reserve who loaned $700 billion to President Bush but they lent it, not in bills, but in numbers entered into a computer! Numbers typed into a computer ▶



"By creating money out of NOTHING, banks become the owners of EVERYTHING!"

Cardinal Bernard Agre



owned by the Federal Reserve Bank brought billions of dollars to life. The bankers who write these figures make themselves the owners of them. They then oblige the population to pay interest on top of what they "create" from nothing.

It is the poor who have lost their homes and possessions who have an unfair obligation to pay interest on the $700 billion lent by banks on top of the interest owing on the $15,000 billion of the federal debt.

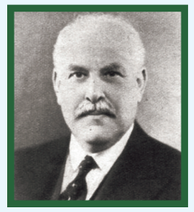
An unbreakable wall

We were struck by a talk given by Cardinal Bernard Agre in Rome, in 2004. While he was a member of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, the Cardinal spoke about the banks as an unbreakable wall that was destroying Africa. He said that with interest charges at 17% to 20% the countries of Africa could not develop.

He was right! We invited Cardinal Agre to come to our Week of Study on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church and its application. He quickly accepted and came in June, 2008. The second day of the course, he reflected: "If I have understood well what you have just revealed, it is that the private banks create money out of nothing and become the proprietors of everything!" The Cardinal understood well.

Mayer Amschell Rothschild said, "Let me control and issue the currency of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." In the 1700's, in the five greatest capitals of Europe he placed his five sons at the head of each country's private bank. This system has spread throughout the entire planet and every country is under its domination.

Banking was conceived in iniquity

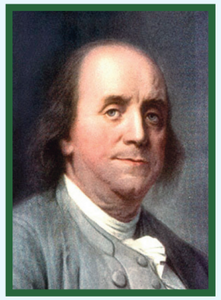


Josiah Stamp

In 1940, Sir Josiah Stamp, who was governor of the Bank of England, stated: "Banking was conceived in iniquity and born in sin." The bankers own the earth, he said. Words from a banker, this is indeed astonishing! We are not speaking here of the small bankers on street corners, but the International Bankers, people at the level of Rockefeller, Rothschild and others. They are not the majority.

"Take the earth away from them," said Sir Josiah Stamp, "but leave them the power to create money and control credit, and with the flick of a pen, they will create enough money to buy it back again."

Prosperity in New England



Benjamin Franklin

So this is the problem that we are going to study in-depth during this Week of Study. We will now quote a person who made a mark in history, Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States who was born in Boston in 1706. In 1750, he was governor of Pennsylvania, in what is called New England. He stated: "It is Impossible to find a happier or more prosperous population on all the surface of the globe!" The English authorities asked: "What is your secret?" England was then passing through a very difficult time, a crisis. There was unemployment, bankruptcies, and prisons were full. However, the colonies were developing and flourishing.

Benjamin Franklin replied: "That is simple. In the Colonies we issue our own money. It is called Colonial Scrip. We issue it in proper proportion to make the products pass easily from the producers to the consumers."

The goal of production is consumption. The farmer does not cultivate his fields to destroy them afterwards. He cultivates so that his produce can be consumed. The role of money should always be to facilitate the exchange of products but when it becomes a means of control and domination, it does not have the same effect.

Franklin continued: "In this manner, creating for ourselves our own paper money, we control its purchasing power, and we have no interest to pay to anyone." This was the secret to prosperity in New England during those years.

Just to give our readers an example of what happened in Canada when this country ceded the power to create their own money to private banks: after borrowing $38 billion for services to the population, the debt reached $562 billion because of the annual accumulation of compound interest. There were years that Canada paid $42 billion in interest after obtaining a loan of $39 billion. This is a good business for the bankers, is it not? It is the most prosperous enterprise that exists today.

When the bankers learned Benjamin Franklin's formula, they intervened and passed a law forbidding the Colonies from creating their own money. They obliged the colonies to borrow money from the Bank of England, which was a private bank and not the bank of the king. After one year, the situation was reversed and the colonies were in crisis, a misery just as great as in England because now they had the same financial system. This is where we see how a system at the service of society permits the development of the country; in contrast ,the system at the service of a small group of profiteers drags the country into slavery.

Africa is exploited by the bankers

People told us, when we were working in Africa, that they were celebrating the 50th anniversary of their independence. But what exactly do they mean by independence? Those who colonized the countries were thrown out. Through monetary procedures, they were replaced by colonists who do not even live in Africa but reside outside the country. When the IMF and the World Bank create $1 billion for a country, they demand huge amounts of interest on the loan. Cardinal Agre told us: "In Africa, we often have 20% interest on the loans." The problem is then that the billions of dollars of interest do not exist and cannot be paid because the interest payments were never created!

Cardinal Agre saw the reality of the situation. He told us when we were in Abidjan with him: "When I left your house, you filled my suitcases with literature. I left it with the President of the National Assembly in the Ivory Coast. A little while later, we met by accident. The President came to me and said: 'Your Eminence, it is a true bomb that you put into my hands the other day! We must discuss this in greater detail at a later date'."

The technique of the financial system: divide and conquer

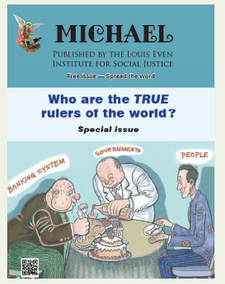
The procedure, the technique of this nefarious system, is to divide the countries and world in order to gain complete control. Here, we arrange that the French and the English fight; in the United States, it was white against black; in Ireland, Catholic against Protestant. In certain countries of Africa, the different tribal ethnicities are fighting against each other. While we are busy fighting, the bankers are taking all the natural resources, destroying populations and countries. Today, there is total control over all of humanity.

Here we wish to speak about the fable, Salvation Island (also known as *The Money Myth Exploded*), written by Louis Even. This story helps us understand the banking system. Mr. Even had a gift to help the people understand, explaining the subject to them in a simple way. He knew how to give his audience, his students, a clear and effective teaching. *The Money Myth Exploded* helps us to see the situation of each one of our countries.

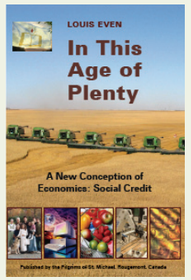
We invite you to read and deepen your understanding of the financial system by reading these books: S*ocial Credit explained in 14 lessons*, a study prepared by Alain Pilote, the book *In this Age of Plenty*, by Louis Even and the book F*rom Debt to Prosperity* by J. Crate Larkin. ❖

Marcel Lefebvre

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RENDER TO CAESAR WHAT IS CAESAR'S AND TO GOD WHAT IS GOD'S



At this time of the year when income tax returns are due, some will complain that the tax burden has become higher and higher. People will be told "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's...". The biblical passage is used to mollify the public but the far-reaching meaning of the Gospel passage is not presented. They imply that no matter what the State (Caesar) requires in payment for taxes, we must comply without complaint.

In the following article written in 1960, Louis Even sheds light on the true meaning of this Gospel passage, which actually puts a limit on Caesar's demands, and thus opens up unsuspected possibilities.

***by* Louis Even**

The Pharisees, anxious to entrap Jesus in His words, sent their followers to Him, along with the Herodians who were supporters of Rome, to pose the question: **"Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?"** (Matthew 22:17)

In those days, the "tribute" was different from the income tax paid by citizens today. The tribute implied subjugation: it was an obligation exacted by the conqueror upon the vanquished, as Rome had conquered Palestine by force.

Our Lord answered by first exposing the trap prepared by the Pharisees: **"Hypocrites, why do you thus put Me to the test?"** He then asked them to show Him the coin of tribute, on which was engraved the image of Caesar. Then he said to them: "**Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."**

A curtailed quote

Usually, those who quote this line of the Gospel do it to stress the duty to pay taxes. And they do so with much eloquence. Most of the time, they quote the first part of the text only — that which concerns Caesar. The latter part, concerning God, is usually passed over in silence, because these speakers are so preoccupied with the importance of Caesar today.

Even when people quote the first part, they seldom draw attention to the limitative nature of the words "what is Caesar's". We say "limitative", because Caesar does not own everything. But apparently, if one listened to the "tax preachers", one should give to Caesar all that he demands. Caesar usually has a hearty appetite, caring little whether there are things that are due to those he robs via taxation.

You understand that Caesar means the government, or more precisely, governments, since there are as many Caesars as there are levels in the political structure of a nation. In Canada, there are municipal Caesars, provincial Caesars, and a federal Caesar. And before long, to top it all off, perhaps we will also be afflicted with a supranational Caesar with universal jurisdiction.

The result of this hierarchy of Caesars, stretching higher and higher, has been the extraction of larger and larger "tributes". The ears of these Caesars have become more and more distant from the voices of the people, while their sticky fingers reach down into every strata of society, taking much of our incomes and squeezing all they can from every economic transaction.

But does something belong to Caesar simply because he demands it?

Limits to Caesar's power

In a speech delivered in the House of Commons on July 6, 1960, during the debate on the Canadian Bill of Rights, Noel Dorion, the MP for Bellechasse, Quebec (a few months after he became a minister in the Conservative cabinet) quoted the reply of Jesus to the Herodians. However, Mr. Dorion did not use it in favour of taxes. On the contrary, the topic debated in Ottawa that day was human rights, and not the rights of Caesar. Mr. Dorion rightly remarked:

"It is Christ who really set forth the first charter of human rights, summing it up in these succinct words which, after two thousand years, are still timely: Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Mr. Dorion did not elaborate further on this statement. But considering the subject of the debate, he certainly meant that man, the human person, belongs to God, and not to Caesar; that Caesar does not have the right to encroach upon what belongs to God; that Caesar must respect the dignity, freedom, and the rights of each and every citizen. This includes the right to life and to those conditions which will permit the full development of the person. The rights of Caesar are limited by the fundamental rights of the human person.

The human person before Caesar

Dorion saw in the words of Our Lord a limitation to the power of Caesar, instead of a justification for any kind of tax. This is because he quoted it in full: "Render, therefore, to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

To Caesar what is Caesar's — no more than that; and, everything does not belong to Caesar.

It is precisely to protect the citizens from the all-powerful state, to make Caesar the guardian of the rights of individuals — at least in principle — that, on August 4, 1960, the Canadian Parliament unanimously voted to adopt a Bill of Rights, however incomplete it was.

In presenting this bill, on July 1, 1960, Prime Minister Diefenbaker himself stressed its purpose: "To keep and safeguard the freedom of the individual from the governments, even the all-powerful ones. Why? Because the individual, the human person, is sovereign before Caesar. Diefenbaker knew it, and he said: **"The sacred right of the individual consecrates him sovereign in his relationship with the state."**

Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical letter, *Divini Redemptoris*: **"The human person ought to be put in the first rank of earthly realities."** In the first rank, therefore before any other institution, before any Caesar.

Pope Pius XII wrote in his letter to the chairman of France's social works on July 14, 1946:

"It is the human person that God put at the top of the visible universe, making him, in economics and politics as well, the measure of all things."

Caesar's share

Still, one must render to Caesar what is Caesar's. Render to him not all that he wants or can seize, but only what belongs to him.

So, what belongs to Caesar? We think it can be defined as follows: what is necessary to carry out his functions.

This definition seems to be implicitly accepted by Caesar himself, by the government, since the government says to those who complain about the burden of taxes: "The more services people demand, the more means the government needs to provide these services."

This is true. But in order to carry out his proper functions, Caesar must not have recourse to means that prevent people and families from carrying out their particular functions.

Besides, in order to increase his importance, Caesar is always tempted to take over functions that normally belong to families, and not to the state. Moreover, the citizens would not need the help of Caesar so much if Caesar first removed the obstacle that only he can remove: the artificial obstacle created by a financial system that is not in keeping with the huge physical possibilities that could satisfy the basic material needs of every individual and family in our country.

Because Caesar does not correct this situation, Caesar goes beyond his proper role and accumulates new functions, using them as a pretext for levying new taxes — sometimes ruinous ones — on citizens and families. Caesar thus becomes the tool of a financial dictatorship that he should destroy, and the oppressor of citizens and families that he should protect.

The life of the individual does not belong to Caesar, but to God. Life is something that belongs only to God, something that not even the individual can suppress or shorten deliberately. But when Caesar puts individuals in conditions that shorten their lives, then Caesar takes what does not belong to him; he takes what belongs to God.

The human person and the family are a creation of God, and Caesar must not destroy nor undermine this fact. He must, on the contrary, protect against whoever wants to encroach upon their integrity and rights.

To deprive a family of its home because it cannot pay the property taxes is to act against the family and against God. Caesar does not have that right.

How many other infringements on the rights and belongings of individuals and families could be mentioned!

▶

Before Caesar's needs

But Caesar has indeed some functions to carry out that cannot be entrusted to individuals. There are some services and goods that can only be obtained from Caesar — for example, an army to defend the country in the event of war, a police force to keep order against those who disturb it, the building of roads, bridge,s and a public means of communication between various towns in our country. Caesar must have the means to provide the population with these services.

Certainly, but what does Caesar need to provide these services? The state needs human and material resources. It needs manpower.

Caesar needs one part of the productive capacity of our country. In a democratic system, it is up to the elected representatives of the people to determine what part of the country's capacity to produce should be used for the needs of Caesar.

If one thinks in terms of realities, one must admit that there is no difficulty whatsoever in giving Caesar one part of the country's productive capacity, while leaving at the disposal of private needs a capacity to produce that can easily meet all the normal needs of the citizens.



Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21)

Let us use the verb "to tax" in the sense of "making rigorous demands on." One can say then that private and public needs tax or make demands upon the productive capacity of a nation. When I demand a pair of shoes, I tax the capacity to produce shoes. When the provincial Caesar has a kilometre of road built, it taxes the capacity to build roads for the length of one kilometre. Yet, with today's ample productive capacity, the construction of roads does not hinder the production of shoes.

It is only when one stops considering the situation in terms of realities, and instead expresses oneself in terms of money, that difficulties arise. Taxes then take on another appearance and "make rigorous demands" on wallets. If Caesar takes $60 from my income as a contribution to his road, then he deprives me of the equivalent of a pair of shoes, so that he may build his road. Why is that, since our country's productive capacity can supply the road without depriving me of a pair of shoes? Why? Because the money system falsifies the facts.

— "But Caesar must pay his employees, he must pay for the materials he uses," some will say.

— Certainly. But, when all is said and done, what does Caesar do when he pays an engineer $400, for example? He allows this engineer to buy $400 worth of goods or services to make demands on the productive capacity of our country for the value of $400. So, in order to meet the needs of the engineer, is it necessary to deprive me of the right to buy a pair of shoes? Cannot our country's capacity to produce meet the needs of the engineer without reducing the production of shoes?

That is the whole point: as long as the productive capacity of the country has not been exhausted, there is absolutely no need to tax the private sector in order to finance the public sector.

The productive capacity of our country is far from being exhausted, since today's problem is precisely that of finding jobs for people and machinery.

If the means of payment constitute a problem, it is because they do not correspond to the capacity of production. The 'tickets' (money) that allow us to draw on the productive capacity of our country are smaller in amount than the capacity to produce.

This shortage of 'tickets' is an unjustifiable situation, especially when today's money system is basically a system of figures, a bookkeeping system. If the monetary bookkeeping does not correspond to the production capacity, it is neither the fault of the producers nor of those who need what is produced.

It is the controllers of the money and financial credit who ration money in spite of an unused productive capacity that is waiting to be used.

The citizens alone cannot correct this falsification of realities by the financial system. But Caesar can! Since Caesar is the government, since he is charged with taking care of the common good, he can — and must — order the controllers of the financial system to put their system in tune with reality.

As long as Caesar refuses to make this correction, he makes himself the servant, the tool of the financial dictatorship; he gives up his sovereign function and the taxes he demands, because of this financial falsehood, are actually not owed to him. "Modern taxation is legalized robbery," said Clifford Hugh Douglas. Caesar has no right to rob, even if the function is made legal.

Something does not belong to Caesar simply because he demands it. The rights of Caesar are limited by the prior rights of the human person. The human person belongs to God.

Nobody denies Caesar the right to tax the productive capacity of our country for public needs — at least, as long as the part he takes leaves enough to meet the demand of private needs. There again, it is the job of the governments to see that this happens.

Private and public debts are the best proof that the productive capacity of a country is only partially used. The population cannot collectively pay, and consume, all that is produced.

Mammon – financial dictatorship

This debt that represents created goods, plus the sum of the privations caused by no production due to the lack of money, represent the sacrifices required by the financial dictatorship, or in other words, by Mammon.

Mammon is not a legitimate Caesar. We must render nothing to Mammon, because nothing belongs to him. Mammon is an intruder, a usurper, thief and tyrant.

Mammon has become the supreme sovereign above Caesar, above the most powerful Caesars in the world. Caesar has become the instrument of Mammon, a mere tax collector for Mammon.

If Caesar needs one part of the productive capacity of our country to carry out his function, he also must be watched by the population; he must be reprimanded when, instead of being an institution at the service of the common good, he lets himself become the servant and lackey of financial tyranny, Mammon.

Today's great disorder spreads like a cancer in spite of the fantastic progress in production which should have freed men from material worries. Everything is connected with money as though money were a reality. The disorder lies in the fact that a cabal of private individuals have been allowed to regulate the conditions of the issue of money, not as accountants of reality but for their own profits, to strengthen their despotic power over all economic life.

Money created with production

There is another occasion that is quoted less often than the coin of the tribute, where Jesus had to deal with taxes. This time, it was not about a tribute to the conqueror, but the didrachma — a tax established by the Jews themselves for the maintenance of the Temple (Matthew 17:24-26). Those who collected this tax came to Saint Peter and said: "Does your Master (Jesus) not pay the didrachma?" Jesus said to Peter: "Go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. And opening its mouth, you will find a stater. Take that and give it to them for Me and for you."

This time, money was created with production. The government cannot do miracles, but it can easily establish a monetary system in which money is based upon production, that is in keeping with production. In other words, it must put a figure on the productive capacity of a country and align the means of payment with that figure to finance both the public and private sectors. It would be more in keeping with the common good than to leave the control of money and credit to the arbitrary will of the high priests of Mammon.

Pope Pius XI wrote that the controllers of money and credit have become the masters of our lives, and that no one dares breathe against their will.

Caesar has become a mere lackey of Mammon. We will not bow to Mammon's control of Caesar. The State, controlled by greedy financial tyrants, has no moral authority to deprive individuals and families of their due or bend to the greedy dictates of tyrants.

Mammon's dictatorship is the enemy of God, of Caesar, of the human person created by God, and of the entire family established by God.

Social Crediters, the Pilgrims of St. Michael, work to free men from this dictatorship. At the same time, they work to free Caesar from his subjection to Mammon. Social Crediters are in the vanguard of those who want to give to the human person, created in the image of God, what is his, to render to the family, established by God, what belongs to it, and to render to God what is God's. ❖

Louis Even

Given the present tensions between Russia and Ukraine, we would like to bring to light a series of apparitions of Our Lady that took place in Ukraine over 350 years ago, again in 1914, and more recently in 1987. The prophetic words of Our Blessed Mother seem to give a great relevance to the situation we are presently witnessing and are, at the same time, a strong critical call for us to not only pay attention, but to pray, praying in particular the Rosary as Our Lady asks. — Anne Marie Jacques

HRUSHIV, UKRAINE, 1987

In 1914, on the 12th of May, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to 22 people who were working in the fields close to the local church of the Holy Trinity in Hrushiv, Ukraine. This was only two weeks before the beginning of World War II. These were Our Lady's words to the 22 witnesses on that day.

"There will be a war. Russia will become a godless country. Ukraine, as a nation, will suffer terribly for 80 years – and will have to live through the world wars, but it will be free afterwards."

Our Lady's prediction was extremely close, for Ukraine had its declaration of independence ratified in Kiev on August 24, 1991, some 77 years after Blessed Mary's prediction in 1914!

On his program, *Mary Live*, Dr. Mark Miravalle pointed out that this appearance of Mary in Hushriv would appear to happen *"in anticipation of the Fatima apparitions where Our Lady gave a message with a very similar concept, a prediction of Russia becoming godless and spreading her errors throughout the world."* She came to Hushriv on May 12, 1914 and then to Fatima on May 13, 1917 with the same fundamental message.

This was not the first time that the Blessed Mother came to the people of Hrushiv. More than 350 years earlier the people of Hrushiv had planted a weeping willow tree at this very same site to commemorate another apparition of the Blessed Mother. A spring suddenly welled up from beneath that tree, and during the severe cholera epidemic of 1855, the Virgin instructed the residents to *"clear and reclaim the ancient spring"* and to have a Mass said at that spot. It was afterwards reported that from that day forward not a single resident died from cholera.




Crowds at the church of the Holy Trinity in Hrushiv where Our Lady appeared

On April 26, 1987, 73 years after the apparition of 1914, and exactly one year after the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster — the greatest nuclear disaster in human history that took place in northern Ukraine — a bright light described as an *"impressive silver dazzle"* covered the dome of the church of the Holy Trinity and the surrounding area. From within this light the Virgin Mary appeared, hovering above the cupola of the church and holding in her arms the Child Jesus.

A television crew present at the apparition were able to record part of this light phenomenon. Dr. Miravalle recounted, *"In fact a Soviet supported media, with the direction of the* KGB*, were called in to make a mockery of this event. When they filmed the event, they saw no image, no light, no images of Our Lady. When that documentary, if you can call it that, was shown on live Soviet television, everyone saw Our Lady! Everyone saw the image of light and saw the image of the Woman with the Child in the light! Obviously, there were no reruns of that while the Soviet Union continued!"*

This appearance of Our Lady was first seen by 12-year old Marina Kizyn, who immediately called her mother, and a few neighbors who also witnessed her appearance. The news spread and soon hundreds, and then thousands came from all over. The apparitions continued every day until August 15 of that year.


12 year old Marina Kizyn

It was estimated that a total of 500,000 people had seen her by the time the apparitions ended with crowds reaching as many as 45,000 to 70,000 people in a single day. Though there were people of many different nations, speaking many languages, they all reported hearing Our Lady in their native tongues. Many others, hundreds of thousands, reported they heard the words of Our Lady, as though she spoke to them in their hearts — all of this happened over that period of about four months.

Priests came and offered Holy Mass in front of the church, sometimes up to 10 Holy Masses per day. These priests risked a great deal, as the Catholic Church had been underground for more than four decades under Soviet rule. It wasn't until December 1989, during Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's liberalization, that the Church was finally allowed to function officially again.

But neither the Soviet militia nor the *KGB* could manage the huge crowds that gathered daily, for even the *KGB* agents were said to have seen the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Our Lady gave a very important and urgent message for the world. But first she spoke with great love to the people of Ukraine:

"I have come on purpose to thank the Ukrainian people because you have suffered most for the Church of Christ in the last 70 years. I have come to comfort you and to tell you that your suffering will soon come to an end. Ukraine will become an independent state.

"Do not forget those who have died in the Chernobyl disaster. Chernobyl is a reminder and a sign for the whole world.

"Forgive your enemies. Through you and the blood of martyrs will come the conversion of Russia. Repent and love one another."

Then Our Lady gave this sobering message for the world:

"The times are coming which have been foretold as being those in the end times. See the desolation which surrounds the world, the sin, the sloth, the genocide. Pray for Russia. Oppression and wars continue to occupy the minds and hearts of many people. Russia, despite everything, continues to deny my Son. Russia rejects real life and continues to live in darkness. If there is not a return to Christianity in Russia, there will be a Third World War; the whole world will face ruin.

"Teach the children to pray. Teach them to live in truth, and live yourselves in truth. Say the Rosary. It is the weapon against Satan. He fears the Rosary. Recite the Rosary at any gathering of people.

"I have come to comfort you and to tell you that your suffering will end soon. I shall protect you for the glory and the future of God's kingdom on earth, which will last for a thousand years. The Kingdom of Heaven and Earth is close at hand. It will come only through penance and the repentance of sins.

"This wicked world is feasting on depravity and impurity. Many lies are proclaimed against the Truth. The innocent are condemned. Many come as false messiahs and false prophets. Be diligent. Be on your guard.

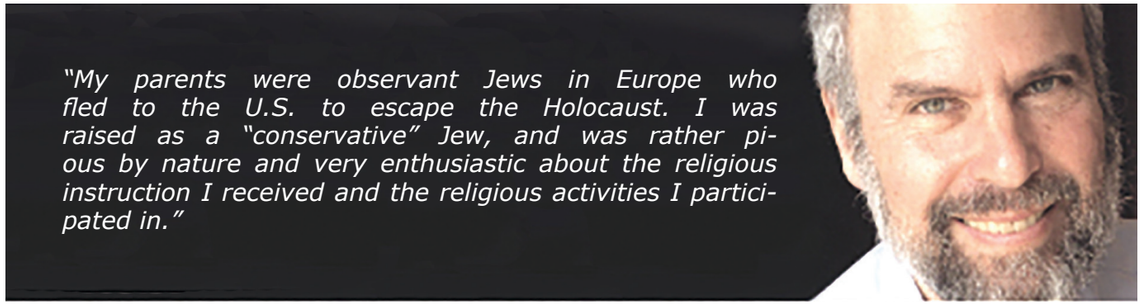
"Happy are they whose lives are blameless and who walk in fear of the Lord.

"My children, all of you are dear to me and please my heart. I make no distinction of race or religion. You here in Ukraine have received knowledge of the One, True, Apostolic Church. You have been shown the door to Heaven. You must follow this path, even though it may be painful.

"The Eternal God is calling you. This is why I have been sent to you. You in Ukraine were the first nation to be entrusted to me. Throughout your long persecution, you have not lost faith, hope, or love. I always pray for you, my dear children, wherever you are." (In fact, the ruler Yaroslav the Wise, dedicated Ukraine to the Most Holy Mother of God in the year 1037 — this was the first of all of Europe, and most likely of the whole world, to do so.) ✞

Messages taken from: http://www.divinemysteries.info/our-lady-of-the-ukraine-hrushiv-ukraine-1914-and-1987/

Roy Schoeman's Conversion Story



ROY SCHOEMAN

I went to my synagogue's after-school Jewish religious education program ("Hebrew School") all the way through grammer and high school. By high school it was the main focus of my identity and activities, even though by that point there were only about a half-dozen of us who had continued in the program. I was very close to my rabbi and to several of the seminarians who were my Hebrew school teachers. As Providence had it, my hometown rabbi was Arthur Hertzberg. One of the highest-profile rabbis in the U.S., he was president of the American Jewish Congress, advisor to several presidents, and wrote a number of best-selling books on Judaism and Jewish history. My favorite Hebrew school teacher, with whom I was particularly close, also became a very prominent rabbi who later headed the largest Jewish rabbinical seminary in the U.S..

Growing up I was unusually devout and passionate about God and Judaism, although the suburban conservative context I was in did not really support a life of piety, faith and prayer. In my senior year of high school I met a very charismatic "mystic" Hasidic Rabbi (Shlomo Carlebach) who used to go around the country giving "concerts" which were really prayer meetings over which he would preside, playing guitar and leading Hasidic worship songs, interspersed with religious story-telling and teaching. He had a large following among Jewish hippies and college students. I fell in with him, and spent the following summer traveling with him in Israel in his entourage. I wanted to live my life for God and with God, and while in Israel I considered abandoning my plans to go to M.I.T. in order to stay in Israel studying at one of the Jerusalem yeshivas (which are schools where young men devote their time to prayer and religious study, the closest thing Judaism has to religious life). But I was turned off by a certain sterility and coldness which I saw in them, and which did not speak of real intimacy with God.

So I returned to the U.S. and started at M.I.T. I felt very lost, because anything which did not have God at its center seemed to have no point or meaning, yet there was nothing I could "do" which did have God at its center. The former Hebrew school teacher with whom I was close had also by then moved to Boston, where he started a kind of counter-culture, hippie-oriented Jewish seminary/commune. During my first few weeks at M.I.T. I considered dropping out, but he encouraged me to stay, and I did, spending much of my free time at his seminary/commune.

Although I tried to maintain my religious orientation, there was a fatal flaw in it which soon led me astray. I had no understanding of the relationship between religion and morality, particularly sexual morality. So my religiosity soon became mixed up in the drug and "free love" culture which was rampant, and soon degenerated into the immoral, vague hippie "spirituality" of the time. My thirst for God became, for a long while, sated by the false consolations and delusional spirituality of that environment.

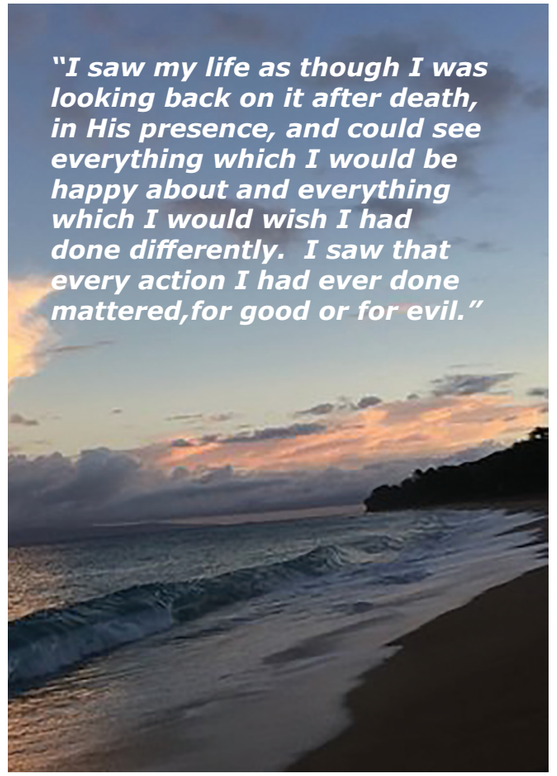
For the next fifteen years, I lived my life in a tremendous inner tension. I had a yearning for transcendent meaning, and a refusal to let go of that yearning for more than short periods, but had no knowledge of what that yearning was truly for, and hence no sense of a direction to go in. Because a conventional engineer's life in the U.S. had no "meaning", I moved to Denmark, because I sensed, in the deeper relationship which Danes had with life and family, a greater spiritual meaning, but once there it was obviously not my real life, so I returned. For a few years after my return, while working as a programmer, I lived for rock-climbing, with the excitement and sense of danger and accomplishment which it produced, providing an anesthetic for my thirst for meaning. In 1978 I went back to school, to Harvard Business School for an M.B.A., but the momentary feelings of success which that produced did not assuage my desperation for real meaning for long. Anything which I tried, whether a career switch or a romantic relationship, only produced a momentary illusion of purpose which soon faded, leaving me with the desperate sense that there must be something more. That is why I never settled in to a career, or married.

At Harvard Business School, I did extraordinarily well, winning most of the available awards in my class, and graduating among the top few with "High Distinction". Shortly after graduation I was invited to join the faculty, and did so, teaching the core marketing course in the M.B.A. program. Yet even the success of being a Harvard Business School professor, and a very popular one at that, at thirty years of age, did not assuage my sense of pointlessness. I loved the teaching and the students but did not find much interest in the subject matter itself. After teaching, Harvard offered to support me (very generously) while I completed a doctorate so that I could qualify for tenure, but once into my dissertation, my lack of genuine interest caught up with me, and I went back to consulting.

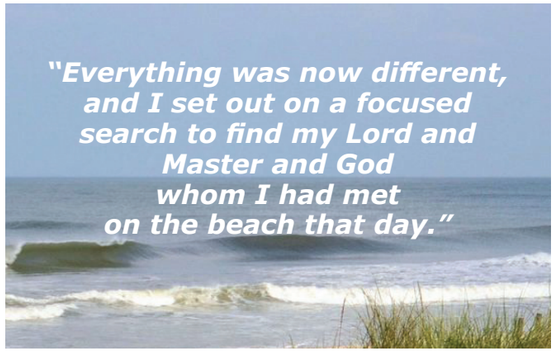
It was around this time that I got involved with my last "false consolation", my last false direction to provide meaning to my life. As a child, I had been an enthusiastic downhill skier, but I gave it up when I went to college. I now took it up again with a vengeance, supporting myself with consulting while spending most of every winter skiing in the Alps. I became very good, and my skiing companions in the Alps were all professional skiers, "circuit" skiers, Olympic hopefuls, etc. For a few years I lived for skiing, finding enough consolation in the physical excitement, the speed, the aesthetics, the sense of accomplishment, the camaraderie, to dull the thirst for meaning in my life.

Of course God was using everything in my life to bring me to Him, and it would soon bear fruit. It was when I was in the spectacular natural beauty of the Alps that I became aware of the existence of God for the first time since college. I remember the scene: I was high up on the mountain, still well above tree line, shortly after sunset, with the sky glowing a soft red and the snow and granite glowing blue in the twilight. My heart opened with gratitude, and I knew that such beauty had been created by God. It is worth noting that the area of Austria which I was in was still deeply and piously Catholic, with beautiful crucifixes everywhere, both inside the houses, hotels and restaurants and also along the roads and even trails. Even in the ski town, the church was packed for Sunday Mass. (In fact, in the bed-and-breakfast where I was staying, a carved wooden crucifix with corpus hung over my bed. Every evening when I returned to the room, I would remove it and place it in a drawer; I had no desire to sleep under a cross! And the following day, I would find it had been rehung over the bed, without comment, by the devout, elderly woman in whose home I was staying).

After a few years of living for skiing, that too began to pale, and I became more and more despondent.



The only relief I could find was spending time alone in nature, trying to recapture a hint of the consolation which I had felt in the Alps. During the spring of 1987, I took a few days off from work and went to Cape Cod to spend time in the nature there. I was walking in the early morning, in the woods just back from the beach, when God intervened, dramatically and distinctly, into my life to pull me back and put me onto the right path. As I was walking, lost in my thoughts, I found myself in the immediate presence of God. It is as though I "fell into Heaven." Everything changed from one moment to the next, but in such a smooth and subtle way that I was not aware of any discontinuity. I felt myself in the immediate presence of God. I was aware of His infinite exaltedness, and of His infinite and personal love for me. I saw my life as though I was looking back on it after death, in His presence, and could see everything which I would be happy about and everything which I would wish I had done differently. I saw that every action I had ever done mattered, for good or for evil. I saw that everything which had ever happened in my life had been perfectly designed for my own good from the infinitely wise and loving hand of God, not only including but especially those things which I, at the time, thought had been the greatest catastrophes. I saw that my two greatest regrets when I died would be every moment which I had wasted not doing anything of value in the eyes of God, and all of the time ▶



and energy which I had wasted worrying about not being loved, when every moment of my existence I was bathed in an infinite sea of love, although unaware of it. I saw that the meaning and purpose of my life was to worship and serve my Lord and Master, in whose presence I found myself. I wanted to know His name, so that I could worship Him properly, so that I could follow "His" religion. I remember silently praying "Tell me your name. I don't mind if You're Apollo, and I have to become a Roman pagan. I don't mind if You're Krishna, and I have to become a Hindu. I don't mind if You're Buddha, and I have to become a Buddhist. As long as You're not Christ, and I have to become a Christian!" (Jewish readers might be able to identify with this deep-rooted aversion to Christianity, based on the mistaken belief that it was the "enemy" which lay behind two thousand years of persecution of the Jews.)

Not surprisingly, He did not tell me His name. Obviously, I wasn't ready to hear it; my resistance at the time was still too great. But I knew, from that moment on, the meaning and purpose and goal of my life; and that sense has not faded or wavered, although the immediate state of perception did.

When I got back home, everything was different. I remember calling my mother and telling her "*Mom, I have good news! It's all true! You don't ever die...*" only to be met with a sort of stony silence. It had never occurred to me that she might not believe me; after all, I knew from my own direct experience! Although I went back to my consulting, everything was now different, and I set out on a focused search to find my Lord and Master and God whom I had met on the beach that day.

Because I interpreted the experience as a "*mystical*" one, I initially looked towards mysticism, which led me to a lot of blind alleys. Prior to my experience, I had not had any interest at all in mysticism or any of the New Age religions or meditative practices or occultism, and those are what I first came across. I spent a number of months looking in that, essentially Hindu although disguised, direction.

Yet every night before going to sleep, I would say a short prayer to know the name of my Lord and Master and God whom I had met on the beach. A year to the day after the initial experience, I went to sleep after saying that prayer, and felt as though I was woken by a gentle hand on my shoulder, and escorted to a room where I was left alone with the most beautiful young woman I could imagine. I knew without being told that she was the Blessed Virgin Mary. I felt entirely awake (and my memory is as though I had been awake), although I was dreaming. I remember my first reaction, standing there awed by her presence and grandeur, was wishing I knew at least the Hail Mary so that I could honor her! She offered to answer any questions I had. I remember thinking about what to ask, asking the questions, and her answers. After speaking to me a while longer, the audience was ended. When I woke the next morning, I was hopelessly in love with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I knew that the God I had met on the beach was Christ, and that all I wanted was to be as much of, and as good a, Christian as possible. I still did not know anything about Christianity, nor the difference between the Catholic Church and any of the hundreds of Protestant denominations. It took me another two years or so to find my way to the Catholic Church, guided by my love and reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I will just touch briefly on some of the milestones which led me to the Catholic Church. After the dream of Mary, I started going to a local Protestant Church, but left when I asked the pastor about Mary, and he made a disparaging remark. I started hanging around Marian shrines, particularly a shrine of Our Lady of La Salette which was in Ipswich, Mass., about 40 minutes from my house. On a winter ski trip to the Alps, I decided to visit the real La Salette apparition site (in the French Alps), and ended up spending the rest of the "ski" trip there, in deep prayer. Someone I met there recommended that I make a visit to a Carthusian monastery, and I ended up doing so, spending a week there, on a kind of solitary "come and see", although I was still Jewish! There I became aware, for the first time, how the Catholic Church was itself an outgrowth of Judaism. It was unavoidably obvious, given how the monks spent many hours a day chanting the Old Testament psalms, with their continual references to Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, the Jewish Patriarchs, and the Jewish people, visibly identifying with the "Israel" of the psalms (that is, the Jews). A small illustration: One day when I was working alone in the fields, an elderly monk came out to speak with me. He approached and shyly asked, "Tell us, if you don't mind. We couldn't help noticing that you do not receive Communion, so you must not be Catholic. What then are you?" When I replied "Jewish", he grinned and with a deep sigh said "That's a relief! We were afraid you were Protestant!". At the time I had no understanding at all of the difference between Protestants and Catholics; they were just meaningless words to me describing Christians. Yet I was deeply struck by the fact that in some mysterious way this monk identified with Jews as opposed to Protestants. I later realized that in his eyes, Jews were "elder brothers in the Faith" who had not yet received the grace to recognize the Messiahship of Jesus, whereas Protestants had once had, but then rejected, the fullness of the truth.



This image reminds me particularly of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary in my dream. — Roy Schoeman

During that week, I grew to feel Mary's central, penetrating presence in the Catholic Church. I also started to be deeply distressed at being unable to receive Communion. It was my desire to receive Communion which, more than anything else, drew me to the baptismal font. I had sought out a Jewish priest, Father Raphael Simon, (referred to me by the Carthusian Prior) for baptism. He was a former (Jewish) University of Chicago Philosophy professor and New York City psychiatrist, who became a Trappist monk. (His conversion story is published under the title *The Glory of Thy People.*) When I first met with him, he asked me why I wanted to be baptised. Since I knew that I couldn't truthfully say (at the time) that it was because I believed in all of Catholic doctrine, I angrily blurted out "Because I want to receive Communion and otherwise you won't let me!" I thought he would throw me out on my ear, but instead he nodded sagely and said "Ah, that's the Holy Spirit at work..."

So in early 1992, I was baptized and confirmed (by a different priest, as it turned out), just in time for another more extended stay at the Carthusian monastery, to discern whether that was my vocation. It wasn't (although the Prior continued for many years to be my spiritual director), but the fanaticism which characterized my pre-conversion life has served me well, now that I have found the true direction for my life.

Although I have no religious or priestly vocation, there is (please God) nothing in my life which is not for Him and around Him. In a number of small ways, I am active in the Church, with daily Mass and prayer being at the center of my life, writing, teaching or speaking whenever asked, producing and hosting a Catholic TV talk show. I have just completed a book on the role of Judaism in salvation history, *Salvation is from the Jews*, which was published by Ignatius Press. It should give Christians a deeper understanding of Judaism as the religion which God created to bring about the incarnation of God as man, as well as the religion into which He incarnated. To Jews it should reveal the full glory and importance of Judaism, a glory which can only be recognized in the light of the truths of the Catholic Faith. My hope is that by illuminating Judaism with a deeper meaning and significance than Jews see from within their own faith, their pride in being Jewish will draw them towards, rather than away from, the Catholic Church.

I will never know, this side of Heaven, whose prayers and sacrifices purchased the graces for my entirely unsought after and undeserved conversion,

Condolences from Africa

Here is another message of condolence received from Right Rev. Joseph Mbatia, Bishop of the diocese of Nyahuru, Kenya who attended the Week of Study on Economic Democracy in Rougemont on two occasions.



I received the news with much regret of the passing of Mr. Marcel Lefebvre, Director of the Pilgrims of St. Michael. His zeal and dedication were unparalleled. We commit him to the loving mercy of the good Lord. May the good work he performed, standing with the less fortunate, earn him the opportunity to behold the face of God. We do not lose our loved ones when they die, rather we believe they are received by God in his eternal bliss. So, Mr. Lefebvre, we have not lost you! You have gone to be with your Father whom you so diligently served.

May the words of St. Paul in 1 Thess. 4:13-14 console his family, "We do not want you to be unaware brothers about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with Him those who have fallen asleep". May his soul rest in eternal peace. ❖

+ Bishop Joseph Mbatia

entirely unsought after and undeserved conversion, but I can only thank them profoundly, and exhort others, too, to pray for the conversion of the Jews; that the people to whom Jesus first made Himself known may come into the truth and into the fullness of their relationship to Him in the Catholic Church. How tragic that we, to whom God first revealed Himself as Man, should be among the last to recognize Him! In the words of the Postulatum from the First Vatican Council, signed by the Fathers of the Council and endorsed by Pope Pius IX (but never formally promulgated due to the Council's premature termination upon the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War):

"*The undersigned Fathers of the Council humbly yet urgently beseechingly pray that the Holy Ecumenical Council of the Vatican deign to come to the aid of the unfortunate nation of Israel with an entirely paternal invitation; that is, that it express the wish that, finally exhausted by a wait no less futile than long, the Israelites hasten to recognize the Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ, truly promised to Abraham and announced by Moses; thus completing and crowning, not changing, the Mosaic religion.*

"…the undersigned Fathers have the very firm confidence that the holy Council will have compassion on the Israelites, because they are always very dear to God on account of their fathers, and because it is from them that the Christ was born according to the flesh…

"Would that they then speedily acclaim the Christ, saying 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord!

"Would that they hurl themselves into the arms of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, even now their sister according to the flesh, who wishes likewise to be their mother according to grace as she is ours!"

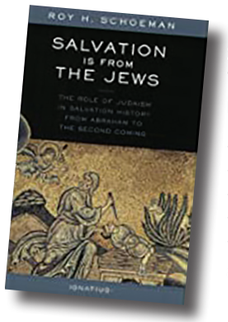
Our Lady, Mary of Zion, pray for us!



February 7, 2022 interview with Roy Shoeman, discussing his conversion story, on *Maria Vision USA TV*: *Hearts of the Holy Family* Program, with host Yves Jacques.

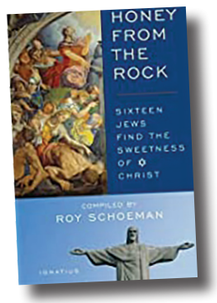
"*Roy Schoeman's Conversion Story*." is reprinted from *Christ to the World* (July-August 2002): 253-260.

Roy Schoeman's two best-selling books
published by Ignatius Press —



Salvation is from the Jews: The Role of Judaism in Salvation History.

The Messianic prophecies in Jewish scripture;
The anti-Christian roots of Nazi anti-Semitism;
The links between Nazism and Arab anti-Semitism;
The theological insights of major Jewish converts;
The role of the Jews in the Second Coming,
and more...



Honey from the Rock: Sixteen Jews Find the Sweetness of Christ.

Sixteen people whose common link was that they all had a profound longing for God that gave them no peace until they found God Himself in the Catholic Church. Converts including Edith Stein, Alphonse Ratisbonne, Karl Stern, Rabbi Zolli and others who are less well known, but who all have powerful stories of life-changing spiritual transformations.



About the author: Roy Shoeman received a thorough Jewish education, followed by a Bachelor of Science degree from MIT, and an M.B.A. magna cum laude from Harvard Business School, where he then joined the faculty as a professor of marketing. While a Jewish Marketing Professor at Harvard Business School, he received two supernatural experiences—one of Christ and one of the Blessed Virgin Mary—that resulted in his unanticipated and enthusiastic conversion to Catholicism. Now he writes, speaks, and teaches on Catholic theology, focusing on the relationship between Judaism and the Catholic Church. He taught theology at Ave Maria University and Holy Apostles College and Seminary, hosts a weekly Catholic radio show on Radio Maria, has a daily internet livestream, and appears frequently on EWTN television and radio shows, including "EWTN Live", "The Journey Home", "Bookmark", and "Women of Grace", and gives talks, missions, and retreats throughout the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and South and Central America. For more info, please visit his website: *https://salvationisfromthejews.com*

Saint Josephine Bakhita
"The lucky one"

"All things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28), said Saint Paul. God always watches over us, and in His great goodness is able to use the trials of life to lead us to Him. What we might consider a misfortune becomes a grace through the eyes of faith. This is what happened in the life of Saint Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947), an African slave who would become a nun in Italy.

Her captors nicknamed her "Bakhita", which means "the lucky one", and despite all the suffering she endured during her life, she declared that she had been truly lucky because all the events of her life had ultimately led her to Christ. Once she became a nun, she even declared: "If I met the slave traffickers who kidnapped me, and even those who tortured me, I would kneel down and kiss their hands. If what happened to me had not happened, how would I have become a Christian and a nun?" We are pleased to reproduce the August 2009 letter from the Saint-Joseph de Clairval Abbey, which tells the life of this great saint.



***by* Dom Antoine Marie OSB**

Two Sudanese girls, ages seven and twelve, overflowing with life and joy, were walking through the fields playing. Nature, the future—everything smiled on them in this springtime of their lives. Nothing signaled a tragic event. Stopping to gather herbs for cooking, they suddenly noticed two men coming toward them. One of them spoke to the older girl and asked her, as a favor, to let the younger girl go into the forest to look for a parcel that had been left behind. The little girl, in her innocence, did as she was asked and left for the forest with the two men. When they reached the woods, she realized that there was no parcel.

The two men drew near and threatened her, one with a knife, the other with a revolver. "If you scream, you're dead! Come, follow us." Terrified, the little girl tried to scream, but was unable. Later, the kidnappers asked her name. Petrified with fear, she was unable to answer. "Okay, we'll call you Bakhita (meaning 'lucky one'), because you really are lucky." T**o the men, it was ironic to call the girl's misfortune "luck". But in the eyes of God, Who guides all events for the good of the elect, it was truly an undreamed of stroke of fortune for Bakhita**.

Bakhita was born in Sudan around 1869, into a family of eight children who belonged to the Nubian Dagiu tribe. She spent her early years in Olgossa, a little village in Darfur, close to Mount Agilerei. She was still very young when her eldest sister was kidnapped by slave traders, never to return. It was now Bakhita's turn to be dragged for long days on a forced march over a difficult path with others who, like her, were to be sold as slaves. She would be bought and sold five times in the markets of El-Obeid and Khartoum. She would serve several masters over a dozen years, amidst unspeakable sufferings. One particularly cruel master beat Bakhita bloody daily. Another forced her to be tattooed in a way used only for slaves. It consisted of tracing designs with a razor blade on her breasts ▶

and belly. The open wounds were then stuffed with salt to keep them from closing and healing. As a result of this ill treatment, she bore 144 scars for the rest of her life.

Within me

In spite of the ill treatment, Bakhita was loyal to her masters. She never helped herself to what belonged to them, even when she was starving. She strove to faithfully carry out all the orders she received, no matter how difficult and disagreeable they were. Later, when she was asked if she acted this way to obey God, she replied, "I did not yet know God. I acted that way because I felt within me that it was the way one should act."



Bakhita obeyed her conscience illumined by the natural law inscribed in the heart of every human being: "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience", the Second Vatican Council explains. "Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths" (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 16).

Several months after the tattooing, her master, an officer in the Turkish army, had to return to his country. Unable to bring his slaves with him, he decided to sell them. Providentially, Bakhita was bought in 1883 by Callisto Legnani, the Italian Consul in Khartoum. She would later recount, "The new master was rather good and he took a liking to me. I had no more reprimands, blows, or punishments, so that I was hesitant to believe such peace and tranquility were possible." For the first time since the day of her kidnapping, Bakhita did not fear the whip—she was even treated graciously and cordially. In the Consul's house, she knew serenity, affection, and moments of joy, even if they were still clouded by her longing for her family, lost to her forever.

In 1885, political events forced the Consul to return to Italy. Wishing to remain in his service, Bakhita was allowed to follow him. When the diplomat arrived in Genoa, a friend shared with him his pregnant wife's wish to have a servant to help her. The Consul agreed to the request, and Bakhita entered a new family, the Michieli's. When the child, a daughter, was born, Bakhita was put in charge of raising her; later, both were entrusted to the hands of the Daughters of Charity, known as the Canossian Sisters, in their institute for catechumens in Venice.

At that time, a friend presented Bakhita with a silver crucifix. As he gave it to her, he respectfully kissed it, explaining that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that He had died for us. Bakhita did not grasp the full significance of these words—nevertheless, at the Sisters, she learned to know God, Whom she had felt in her heart since her childhood. One day she would write, "Seeing the sun, the moon, and the stars, I said to myself: 'Who, then, is the Master of these beautiful things?' And I felt a great desire to see Him, know Him, and honor Him."

A completely different "Paron"

In his encyclical on Christian hope, *Spe salvi*, issued November 30, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI referred to Bakhita's spiritual path: "After the terrifying 'masters' who had owned her to that point, Bakhita came to know a totally different kind of 'master'—in Venetian dialect, which she was now learning, she used the name 'Paron' for the living God, the God of Jesus Christ. Up to that time she had known only masters who despised and maltreated her, or at best considered her a useful slave. Now, however, she heard that there is a 'Paron' above all masters, the Lord of all lords, and that this Lord is good, goodness in person. She came to know that this Lord even knew her, that He had created her—that He actually loved her.

"She too was loved, and by none other than the supreme 'Paron', before Whom all other masters are themselves no more than lowly servants. She was known and loved and she was awaited. What is more, this Master had Himself accepted the destiny of being flogged and now He was waiting for her 'at the Father's right hand'. Now she had 'hope'— no longer simply the modest hope of finding masters who would be less cruel, but the great hope: 'I am definitively loved, and whatever happens to me—I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good.' Through the knowledge of this hope, she was 'redeemed', no longer a slave, but a free child of God" (no. 3).



Bakhita followed the stages of the catechumenate. At this time, Mrs. Michieli, about to follow her husband who had to return to Africa, decided to take her servant back to Africa. On the basis of the freedom guaranteed to her by Italian law, Bakhita declared she would not return to her country—she wished to remain with the Canossian Sisters to complete her Christian formation with them. "I cannot return to Africa," she said, "because if I did, it would mean abandoning my faith in God. I love my mistress and her child very much, but I cannot lose God. So I have decided to stay here."

On January 9, 1890, Bakhita received, at the hands of the Patriarch of Venice, the sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—and took the Christian name Josephine. According to a witness who was at the celebratory meal that followed, Bakhita was transfigured. "She spoke little, but happiness radiated from all her gestures, all her words." Afterwards, Bakhita was often seen kissing the baptismal font, saying, "Here I became a child of God!"

From day to day there grew in her an immense gratitude to God, Who had never stopped holding her by the hand to lead her to Himself. She experienced the truth of Saint Paul's words: "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28). A superficial analysis of events cannot explain Bakhita's destiny—only faith enables it to make sense.

As Benedict XVI said, "It is not the elemental spirits of the universe, the laws of matter, which ultimately govern the world and mankind, but a personal God governs the stars, that is, the universe; it is not the laws of matter and of evolution that have the final say, but reason, will, love—a Person… Life is not a simple product of laws and the randomness of matter, but within everything and at the same time above everything, there is a personal will, there is a Spirit who in Jesus has revealed Himself as Love" (*Spe salvi*, no. 5).

Entirely God's

After her baptism, Bakhita continued her formation in the faith, and soon heard the Lord's voice calling her to consecrate herself entirely to Him. On December 7, 1893, she was received into the Canossian Sisters' novitiate. On December 8, 1896, she made her first profession of vows, under the name Sister Josephine, consecrating herself to the One Whom she familiarly called "My Master."

According to custom, before being allowed to make her profession, to confirm that she was freely committing herself, she was questioned by the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Sarto — the future Pope Saint Pius X. After hearing her, the prelate told her with a beautiful smile: "Make your vows with no fear. Jesus loves you. Love Him and serve Him always as you have till now."

Several years later, an Italian student asked Bakhita what she would have done if she encountered by chance the men who had kidnapped her. She answered without hesitation: "If I met the slave traders who kidnapped me, and even those who tortured me, I would kneel down and kiss their hands. If what happened to me had not taken place, how would I have become a Christian and a nun?" Far from harboring feelings of hatred toward her tormentors, Bakhita made every effort to forgive them. Like Our Lord on the Cross, she prayed for them, for "they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34).

One day, when someone alluded to her abusers, she said, "I feel pity for them. They undoubtedly did not know of the anguish they caused me. They were the masters, and I was the slave. Just as for us, it is natural to do good, for them it is natural

▶ to do what they did to me. They did it out of habit, not out of malice."

This woman's astonishing attitude witnesses to the loving presence of God in a world that is all too often unjust. During a visit to Gorée Island, off the coast of Dakar, Senegal on February 22, 1992, Pope John Paul II recalled the millions of Africans deported into slavery in the Americas:

"For an entire period of the African continent's history, black men, women and children were brought onto this narrow patch of land, snatched from their homes, separated from their loved ones, to be sold here as commodities… They were victims of a shameful trade, in which people who were baptized, but not living their faith, participated. How can we forget the tremendous suffering inflicted on populations deported from the African continent, with no regard for the most basic human rights? How can we forget the human lives annihilated by slavery? This sin committed by man against man, this sin committed by man against God, must be confessed in complete truth and humility. How long the road the human family must travel before its members learn to see and respect one another as images of God, so as to love one another as sons and daughters of the same heavenly Father!"

Still today

But such crimes are not only a thing of the past. Even in our days, slavery in various forms is a wound on society. The Second Vatican Council asserted, "Whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 27).

In 1902, Sister Josephine was sent to Schio, in northern Italy, where she took on various responsibilities—cooking, laundry, sewing and serving as porter. As a cook, she was attentive to everyone, especially the sick, for whom she prepared the most appetizing meals—she desired to love and to serve out of love for Christ. As the porter, she gave particular care to children, whom she loved to bless affectionately, placing her hand on them. With her kind voice, "the Little Black Mother", as she was called, became close to the children, welcoming to



the poor and suffering, and encouraging to all those who knocked at the convent door. Faithfully seeking God in the humble tasks of everyday life, she had the heart of an apostle.

On the occasion of her religious profession, she wrote this prayer: "Beloved Lord, how good You are! May I fly to Africa and proclaim aloud Your goodness toward me to all my people. How many souls would hear my voice and turn to You! Lord, grant that they might also know You and love You!"

Pope Benedict XVI pointed out this missionary spirit: "She made several journeys around Italy in order to promote the missions; the liberation that she had received through her encounter with the God of Jesus Christ, she felt she had to extend; it had to be handed on to others, to the greatest possible number of people. The hope born in her, which had 'redeemed' her, she could not keep to herself; this hope had to reach many, to reach everybody" (*Spe salvi*, no. 3).

The true poor

In 1935, her Superior asked her to go to several of the congregation's convents to witness to the other sisters the marvels God had done for her. Naturally shy and profoundly humble, she was not enthusiastic about this project, but accepted it in a spirit of obedience. And grace did not fail her. Her message consisted of encouraging her sisters to holiness, to gratitude for all the blessings they had received, and to pray for all the souls who had not yet had the joy of knowing Jesus Christ.

After hearing her testimony, listeners sometimes expressed their condolences to her. She explained, "People often say to me, 'My poor woman! My poor woman!' I am not poor, because I belong to the Master and I live in His house. The 'poor' are those who are not completely His." From 1936 to 1938, Mother Josephine performed the duties of porter in the novitiate in Milan, where she had the opportunity to edify novices and their families. For those who found it difficult to see their daughters leave for a distant land, she found words of comfort: "How many Africans would accept the faith if they had missionaries to preach to them the name of Jesus Christ, His love for us, His redeeming Sacrifice for souls!"

In 1943, the community and the people of Schio celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Mother Josephine's profession. Shortly thereafter, her health declined and she was confined to a wheelchair. One day she replied to a prelate who asked her what she was doing sitting in her wheelchair: "What am I doing? Exactly the same thing as you—the Will of God." Another time, the doctor quoted to her the passage from the Song of Songs (1:4): "*Nigra sum, sed formosa*" and explained its meaning to her: "My skin may well be black, but my soul is beautiful and dazzling." Mother Josephine replied, "Oh, if only Our Lord could think that of me when I meet Him!"

She yearned for this meeting. "When you love someone very much, you have a great desire to be with him. Why then be afraid of death? Death leads us to God." And to those who suggested to her that even so, God's Judgment was something to be feared: "Do now what you will want to have done then. It is we ourselves who prepare our own judgment."

This unshakable confidence helped her to endure the sufferings of her last days. In her agony, she relived her terrible years of slavery, and several times begged the nurse at her bedside: "Loosen the chains a little… they are hurting me!" However, at the end, the Blessed Virgin came to permanently deliver her from all pain. The dying woman's last words — "Our Lady! Our Lady!" — as well as her smile as she died, was a witness to her encounter with the Mother of God. On February 8, 1947, in the convent in Schio, the community surrounded her with prayer; a crowd quickly came to see the "Little Black Mother" one last time, and asked her to extend her protection over them from her place in Heaven.

Something essential

On October 1, 2000, Mother Josephine Bakhita was canonized by St. John Paul II. In 2007, Benedict XVI proposed her as an example of hope in his encyclical letter, *Spe salvi*. This encyclical also contains a remark worthy of particular attention:

"I would like to add here another brief comment with some relevance for everyday living. There used to be a form of devotion—perhaps less practiced today but quite widespread not long ago—that included the idea of 'offering up' the minor daily hardships that continually strike at us like irritating 'jabs', thereby giving them meaning.

"Of course, there were some exaggerations and perhaps unhealthy applications of this devotion, but we need to ask ourselves whether there may not, after all, have been something essential and helpful contained within it. What does it mean to offer something up? Those who did so were convinced that they could insert these little annoyances into Christ's great 'compassion' so that they somehow became part of the treasury of compassion so greatly needed by the human race. In this way, even the small inconveniences of daily life could acquire meaning and contribute to the economy of good and of human love. Maybe we should consider whether it might be judicious to revive this practice ourselves" (no. 40).

In the light of this suggestion of the Holy Father, we can move forward on the path of life, guided by Mary, the Star of Hope. ❖

Dom Antoine Marie osb

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Famous quotes

"Gravity can explain the motion of planets, but it cannot explain who set them in motion." — *Isaac Newton*

"We all know that light travels faster than sound," he remarked. "That's why certain people appear bright until you hear them speak." — *Albert Einstein*

"Never argue with stupid people. They will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience." — *Mark Twain*

"Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." — *Abraham Lincoln*

"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier." — *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

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St. Joseph, Patron Saint of the Universal Church

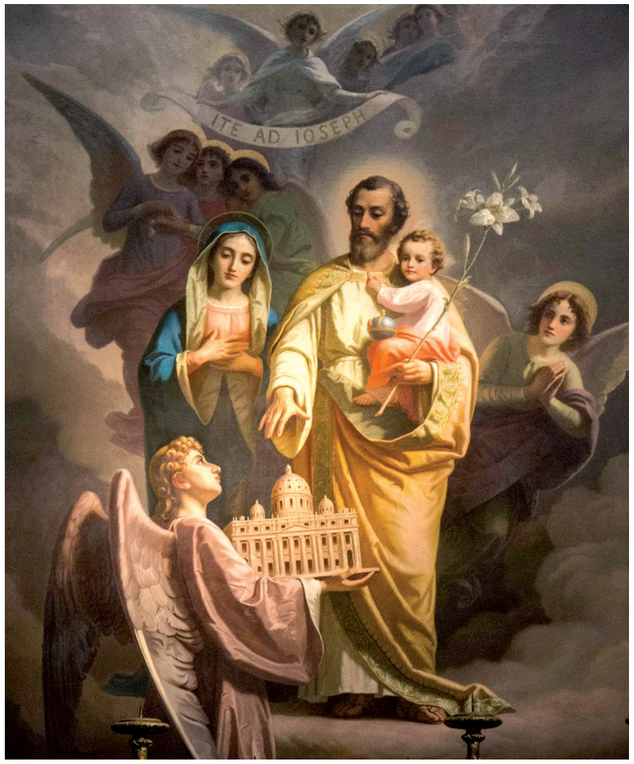
We cannot speak enough of the greatness of St. Joseph and of his special role in the Church and the history of salvation. The month of March is dedicated to him. Here is another address by the Holy Father given on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, explaining in a brilliant way why St. Joseph is the Patron Saint of the Universal Church.

***by* Pope Francis**

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning! Today we conclude the cycle of catecheses on the figure of St. Joseph. These catecheses are complementary to the Apostolic Letter *Patris corde*, written on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Catholic Church by Blessed Pius IX. But what does this title mean? What does it mean that St. Joseph is "Patron of the Church"? I would like to reflect on this today with you.

In this case, too, the Gospels provide us with the most correct key to interpretation. In fact, at the end of every story in which Joseph is the protagonist, the Gospel notes that he takes the Child and His mother with him and does what God has ordered him to do (cf. Mt 1:24; 2:14,21). **Thus, the fact that Joseph's task is to protect Jesus and Mary stands out. He is their principal guardian: "Indeed, Jesus and Mary His Mother are the most precious treasure of our faith" (Apostolic letter *Patris corde*, 5). And this treasure is safeguarded by St. Joseph.**

In the plan of salvation, the Son cannot be separated from the Mother, from the one who "advanced in the pilgrimage of faith and faithfully preserved her union with her Son, even to the Cross" (*Lumen Gentium*, 58), as the Second Vatican Council reminds us.



Saint Joseph Patron of the Church by Giuseppe Rollini, 1893, Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome

Jesus, Mary and Joseph are in a sense the primordial nucleus of the Church. Jesus is Man and God; Mary, the first disciple and the mother; and Joseph, the guardian. And we too: "We should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping" (*Patris corde*, 5).

Here there is a very beautiful trace of the Christian vocation: to safeguard. To safeguard life, to safeguard human development, to safeguard the human mind, to safeguard the human heart, to safeguard human work. The Christian — we could say — is like St. Joseph: he must safeguard. To be a Christian is not only to receive the faith, to confess the faith, but to safeguard life, one's own life, the life of others, the life of the Church.



The task of Joseph is to protect Jesus and Mary, who are the most precious treasure of our faith. — Pope Francis

The Son of the Most High came into the world in a condition of great weakness: Jesus was born like this, weak, weak. He wanted to be defended, protected, cared for. God trusted Joseph, as did Mary, who found in him the bridegroom who loved and respected her and always took care of her and the Child. "In this sense, St. Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history, even as Mary's motherhood is reflected in the motherhood of the Church. In his continued protection of the Church, Joseph continues to protect the Child and His mother, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love the Child and His mother" (ibid.).

This Child is the One who will say: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me" (Mt 25:40). Therefore, every person who is hungry and thirsty, every stranger, every migrant, every person without clothes, every sick person, every prisoner is the Child whom Joseph looks after. And we are invited to safeguard these people, these our brothers and sisters, as Joseph did. That is why he is invoked as protector of all the needy, the exiled, the afflicted, and even the dying (*see page 8*). And we too must learn from Joseph to safeguard these goods: to love the Child and His mother; to love the sacraments and the people of God; to love the poor and our parish. Each of these realities is always the Child and His mother (cf. *Patris corde*, 5).

We must safeguard, because with this we safeguard Jesus, as Joseph did…This is a good question: when I have a problem with someone, do I try to look after them, or do I immediately condemn them, spit on them, destroy them? We must safeguard, always safeguard!

Dear brothers and sisters, I encourage you to ask for the intercession of St. Joseph precisely at the most difficult times in the life of you and of your communities. Where our mistakes become a scandal, let us ask St. Joseph to give us the courage to speak the truth, ask for forgiveness, and humbly begin again. Where persecution prevents the Gospel from being proclaimed, let us ask St. Joseph for the strength and patience to endure abuse and suffering for the sake of the Gospel. Where material and human resources are scarce and make us experience poverty, especially when we are called to serve the last, the defenseless, the orphans, the sick, the rejected of society, let us pray to St. Joseph to be Providence for us. How many saints have turned to him! How many people in the history of the Church have found in him a patron, a guardian, a father!

Let us imitate their example, and for this reason, we pray today. Let us pray, all together, to St. Joseph with the prayer that I have placed at the conclusion of the Letter Patris corde, entrusting to him our intentions and, in a special way, the Church that suffers and is in trial. And now, you have in your hands in various languages — in four, I think — the prayer; and I think that it will also be on the screen. So together, each one in their own language, let us pray to St. Joseph.

Hail, guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted His only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself to be a father,
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen. ❖

Pope Francis









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Never despair — The story of the priest who thought he had failed

The parish priest of a small town arrived at the church to offer an evening Mass, but time passed and the town folk did not come. However, after 15 minutes, three children entered. After 20 minutes, another two young people entered. The priest began the Mass with five people in attendance. Over the course of Mass, a couple came in who sat on the rear bench of the church.



When the priest preached and explained the Gospel, a slovenly person came into the Church with a rope in his hands. Disappointed, and not understanding the cause of the weak involvement of the faithful, the priest nevertheless celebrated Mass with love and preached with enthusiasm and zeal.

On his way home after Mass, he was robbed and beaten by two thieves who took the folder containing his Bible and other valued belongings. Arriving at the rectory and after bandaging his wounds, the priest described his day as "The saddest day of my life, a failure of my ministry, and the most unfruitful day of my career. But, never mind, I do everything with God and for Him."

Five years later, the priest decided to share this story with the parishioners at church. When he was finished, a couple in the parish stopped him and said, "Father, the couple in the story that sat at the back was us. We were on the brink of separation because of several problems and disagreements in our home. That night we decided to divorce, but first we agreed to come to church one last time as a couple and then each one would follow their path. Meanwhile, we left the thought of divorce aside after listening to your homily that night. As a consequence, today we are here with our home and family restored."

As the couple spoke, one of the most successful entrepreneurs who helped in the livelihood of that church saluted, asking to speak and said "Father, I am the person who came in half-dirty holding a rope. I was on the verge of bankruptcy, lost in drugs, my wife and children had left our home on account of my behavior. That night I tried to kill myself but the rope broke, so I went out to buy another one. On my way, I saw the church open and decided to come in, even though I was very dirty and had the rope in my hands. That night, your homily pierced my heart and I walked out of the church a changed person. Today I'm off drugs, my family came home, and I became the most successful businessman in town."

At the gate of the sacristy entrance, the Deacon shouted, "Father, I was one of those thieves who stole your belongings. The other one died that same night while we were doing a second robbery. In his briefcase, there was a Bible. When I would awaken in the morning, I would read from it. After all this reading, I decided to apply it to my life and participate in this church."

The priest was shocked, and started crying along with the faithful. The night which he had regarded as a night of failure, had indeed been very productive.

The moral of the story? Exercise your calling with dedication and zeal. Give it your best every day because you are an instrument of good for someone's life. In the worst days of your life, you can still be a blessing to someone else. God can use the "bad circumstances" of a life to produce the best for others. ❖