



The Catholic

# Servant

Vol. XVII, No. III, May 2011

*A Tool for Evangelization, Catechesis and Apologetics*

*I did not come to be served, but to serve. Matthew 20:28*

## Bringing the Faith into the home

### The craziness of motherhood, both earthly and Heavenly motherhood

By Dia Boyle



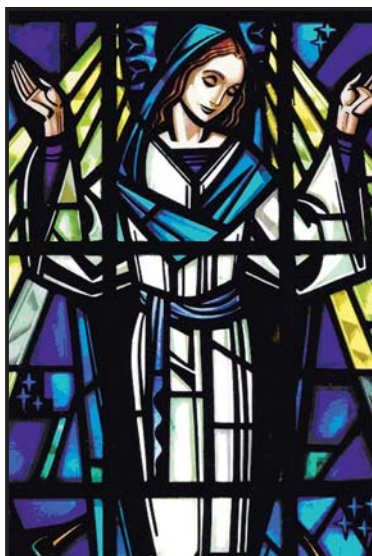
Boyle

I'll let you in on a little secret. We mothers are crazy about our kids. This isn't always obvious, even to the mothers in question, when our kids are little and underfoot. Oh, sure, we love them, we think they're cute as anything, we hurt when they hurt, and we are delighted when they are delighted. But when they're

underfoot, we are too busy being driven crazy by them to realize just how crazy about them we are. Let them grow up and move away, however, and all this is revealed.

We try to hide it. They go off to a week-long "sleep away" camp and we smile and tell ourselves how good it will be for them ... but inside we are screaming, "What have I done?" They go off to college and we're proud of how independent they've become, but when we are alone, we dissolve in tears wondering how they're doing, whether they're curled up in a fetal position under their dorm room desks. And then they go away for good. A job two thousand miles away. Marriage. Ordination. Adulthood. And we realize ... they are never coming home again, except as, gulp, house guests.

This is when the crazy really kicks in. We



During the month of May, Catholics honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the mother of Jesus and the mother of the Church.

want to know—sometimes desperately—what is going on in their lives. Not just how the job is going (as our husbands might inquire) or how they like their new home. We want to know what they're eating for breakfast. Which grocery store they're frequenting. What they think of their next door neighbor or their officemate. Are they going to Mass? Where? To Confession? Are they flossing? And even more importantly, what is going on in their heads, in their hearts? If we are smart (and most of us are) we will keep a lot of these questions to ourselves. But the fact remains: we want to know, because we're crazy about them.

Mary is the Mother of God, and Mary is our Mother. This isn't just a nice sentiment; it is a fact, spiritual and doctrinal, and it has consequences. Mary is our Mother, and she is crazy about us. More to the point, Mary is my Mother, and she is crazy about me; your Mother, crazy about you. She wants to know everything about us. It matters to her what we're fixing for supper, which route we took to work this morning, whether we decided to wear the black shoes or the taupe ones. It matters to her that we're feeling a little sad today, or that we're worried sick about one of the kids, or that we just won a little victory at work. And, just like we are towards our adult children, she is dying to help us with our difficulties. Dying to give us good advice. She knows (because

*Motherhood continued page 9*

## Part I

### Fr. John Anthony Hardon, S.J.: will he become a canonized saint?



Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

By David Hottinger

*[Editor's Note: This article is the first in a series promoting the Cause of the Canonization of Father John A. Hardon, S.J. (1914-2000), who was an American priest, theologian, and catechist.]*

They say the best way to learn about something is to teach it. For the first thirty-three years of his life, John Anthony Hardon learned the Catholic Faith; the last fifty-three years of his life, he taught it. For him, that old saying about teaching proved true. During his half-century teaching career, Fr. Hardon

Possible saint  
continued page 8

### Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse defends institution of marriage between a man and a woman



Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

By David Hottinger

*[Editor's Note: The following is an interview with Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, president and founder of the Ruth Institute, an organization that promotes among college students the idea of lifelong married love. Dr. Morse was in the Twin Cities earlier this month to speak to the Minnesota Legislature in support of the constitutional amendment defending natural marriage.]*

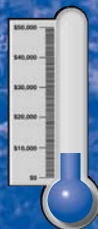
**"The Catholic Servant":** Since so many seem to have forgotten: what is marriage and what does it do for society?

Marriage  
continued page 10

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## Question and Answer

### Missing Mass on Sunday—is this really seriously sinful or not?

By Bishop John M. LeVoir



**Bishop  
LeVoir**

**Question:** I just don't see how missing Mass on a Sunday can be a mortal sin. That means I could go to Hell if I deliberately missed Mass without a good reason. How could a loving God do that?

**Answer:** If we desire to gain the proper information on which to base our decisions, we have to ask the right questions. So, the question about Mass attendance should not be: "Will I go to Hell if I miss one Mass through my own fault?" Rather, it should be: "What

should I do to be completely faithful to Christ and to His Church?" In other words, our Mass attendance and participation in the Mass should be based on our faith in Jesus Christ and our love for Him.

If we believe in Christ, we are going to want to do everything possible to express our faith in Him and our love for Him. The Sunday Eucharist does both of these things in a preeminent and mysterious manner. As we come together as a Christian community on Sunday to worship the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, we express our faith in the most profound way possible. We worship on the same day that Jesus rose from the dead and we fulfill the words of the Creed which state: "For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He

rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures."

Together with the priest and the entire Christian community, we unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and with Him, we offer everything to the Father in the Holy Spirit. Giving of ourselves in this way is an act of supernatural love. This love is expressed for Christ crucified and risen, Whose sacrifice of love is made present under the appearances of bread and wine. When we receive our Lord in Holy Communion, we express our desire to live in union with Christ forever. "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life..." (John 6:54)

The Letter to the Hebrews

states how important the Sunday Eucharist is for the one who professes faith in Jesus: "We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another..." (Hebrews 10:25) "St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did: 'On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place...' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1345)

As Christians, we should not look at Mass attendance as a negative exercise, as the original question implies. Rather, "Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eu-

charist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to His Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." (CCC, n. 2182)

*The Most Reverend John M. LeVoir is Bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota.*

*This article was funded by the St. Teresa of Avila Chair of Writing sponsored by an anonymous patron.*

### Sunday Mass obligation according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

2182 Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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## Scriptural background for the Sacraments: Part X

### In the early Church, households accepted Baptism at the hands of the Apostles

By Fr. John Paul Echert



Fr. Echert

We have examined selections from the book of the Acts of the Apostles that show that Baptism was not restricted to Jews alone but was early on extended to Samaritans and Gentiles. But what about infants and children; was Baptism restricted to adults alone? This is the erroneous view of some non-Catholic denominations that practice adult-only Baptism. Some would argue that there is no explicit command by the Lord or the Apostles to baptize children; we would argue that there is no command against such Baptisms. In fact there is more to

argue in favor of the Baptism of children than against it. Jesus Himself manifested His love for children and reprimanded the disciples for keeping children at a distance:

"Then children were brought to [Jesus] that He might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, 'Let the children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven.' And He laid His hands on them and went away." (Matthew 19:13-15)

Furthermore, as we demonstrated earlier in this series, the Old Testament practice of circumcision—administered eight days after birth by divine mandate—prefigured the New Testament Sacrament of Baptism. Saint Paul makes this connection explicit in his Epistle to the Colossians:

"See to it that no one makes

a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him, Who is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with Him in Baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2:8-12)

Finally, one of the strongest arguments favoring infant Baptism is the practice of entire households accepting Baptism at the hands of the Apostles. There are two instances of this recorded in the book of Acts; we can only wonder how many more of these occurred:

"We remained in this city [Philippi] some days; and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, ... a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us saying, 'If you have judged me

to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us." (Acts 16:12-15)

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's [chains] were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, 'Men, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God." (Acts 16:25-34)

In addition to these instances in Acts there is a comment made by Saint Paul in his

letter to the Colossians that makes reference to the Baptism of a household:

"I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me ... that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)" (I Cor. 1:10-16)

Against those who would argue that we do not have evidence that these households included children we should respond in kind: prove that these households were without children. It is more likely that there were children in these households, given that contraception and abortion were not commonly practiced by couples of this period.

As a final comment that is secondary to our focus upon the Baptism of children, it should be noted that in this selection from Colossians, Saint Paul was not downplaying the essential importance of Baptism itself but only an inordinate preoccupation on the part of some Christians upon the particular minister of the Sacrament. Baptism in Christ—and the Holy Trinity—is precisely what the Church, from the Apostolic Age to the present, properly offers to candidates of every age, whether infants or adults, so long as authentic Christian faith is present. In the case of infants, it is the faith of their parents that suffices, with assurance that they will raise their children in the Faith into which they have been baptized.

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Catechism on the Priesthood, St. John Vianney.



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# Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, there will be humor in seminaries

By John Sondag



Sondag

When the late Msgr. Gerald Baskfield went on vacation from The Saint Paul Seminary, where he was assigned as a professor, he told two seminarians who were going to paint his living quarters, "Now, if that phone rings, I don't want you to answer it!" "We won't," replied the seminarians.

"I mean, I don't want you to answer that phone under any circumstance," the priest re-emphasized.

"We won't," repeated the seminarians.

So Monsignor left, and after about an hour of painting, the phone rang about ten times. The seminarians looked at the phone and at one another, but they didn't pick up the receiver.

After 20 rings, the one seminarian said, "Maybe we should. Maybe it's an emergency."

"No! You heard what Monsignor said."

After 30 rings, "Don't you think we should?"

"No," said the other seminarian.

After 40 rings, "I can't stand it. I'm answering that thing!" He picked up the receiver, and the voice on the other end said, "Hey, you guys, I told you I didn't want you to answer that phone under any circumstances!"

I never met Msgr. Baskfield, but when I tell that story, I can even imitate his voice, because I heard that anecdote so many times when I was at the seminary in the 70s. I remember another seminary story that begs for imitation of the voice of the priest involved in it, because the voice helps to emphasize the point of the story. One of the great mimics of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis was Fr. Ed Whalen—not

Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine  
There's always laughter  
and good red wine,  
At least, I've always found it so,  
*Benedicamus Domino!*  
(By Hilaire Belloc)

to be confused with the famous journalist-priest, Fr. James Whalen at the University of St. Thomas. Fr. Ed Whalen would relate this incident about Msgr. Francis Gilligan, who had been a seminary professor, but he would mimic Monsignor's voice as he told it:

"On the first day of school one year, I was in Cretin Residence giving an opening lecture on discipline to the seminarians," said Msgr. Gilligan (imitated by Fr. Whelan). "And there was this bright, young lad named 'Ed Whalen,' who had just arrived that year, sitting in the front row, paying attention to every word, every syllable, I said and watching every gesture I made.

"I thought to myself, 'Now, there's a fine young student who's going to excel at the seminary. He'll do well here.' Little did I know that the only reason he was watching me so carefully was so he could take me off!"

Recently, I was talking to a priest who had attended The Saint Paul Seminary, and I referred to one of the seminary anecdotes, and he had never heard it. He said that the lore of the seminary had stopped in the 80s and 90s. I mentioned this to another person who attended the seminary in the 90s, and he re-affirmed the lack of lore.

This was unfortunate, not just because there is a lack of humor, which is bad enough, but seminary lore, as with any institution with lore, passes on the values and ideals of an institution. Yes, these stories show the humorous side of characters, but that's part of the value. Catholic institutions are run by weak human beings with the help of God's grace. And people who attend these institutions should never lose sight of that

divine quality.

With the seminary, however, probably something more tragic took place in the 80s and 90s. There was a fracture in the Church with the priesthood being questioned and thus the identity of priests was challenged. Unfortunately, whether this was consciously or unconsciously done, seminary lore was not passed on. This lore communicated ideas about priests that were inconsistent with ideas about the "new" priests; thus, the break in continuity.

The good news, however, is that throughout the country, young men are entering the priesthood who want a sense of their roots—they are looking for their heritage because they understand that the gift of priesthood can be traced back to the Apostles.

That's why stories about the priests who served the seminary for years are valuable for connecting seminarians with their heritage. They ground them in the sense that priests are drawn from the frail, weak human race and have some of the same foibles men had in years gone by.

One of the stories that I love to relate is about Msgr. Ellsworth Kneal, who taught canon law but fancied himself a mechanic. He was also a penny-pincher, so if he could save a nickel, he was thrilled. When the automatic garage door openers came on the market, Msgr. Kneal was not going to spend any hard-earned money for a gadget that he could put together himself.

So he took a photo-electric cell and put it in a container that could spot a flash outside a window of the priests' garages in the administration building of the seminary. When activated by the light, this cell would trigger a latch which held down the garage door. Monsignor attached a strong spring to the bottom of the door, so when the latch was released, the door would be pulled up by the spring.

Perfect, except for two problems: 1) It took someone as strong as an ox to

pull the door closed because the spring needed to be so tight to pull open the door, and 2) Monsignor forgot that every afternoon at 5:00 P.M. the sun set and the light from the sun would shine through the garage window and automatically trigger the photo-electric cell.

Of course, some stories might have been embellished and fabricated to make a point. For instance, there's the story of Fr. Francis Missia, who was brought from Europe by Archbishop John Ireland to teach music. Fr. Missia was a legend and a character. He was tall, overweight, straight-forward, accented in his speech, and loud, but he had a glorious bass voice that was strong and overpowering.

The story goes that when Fr. Missia died, St. Peter welcomed him into Heaven, and said, "Oh, Fr. Missia, we've been waiting for you for centuries to direct the heavenly choir. Just tell me how many voices you need, and we'll get them for you as soon as we can."

"Vell, now, I need 50,000 sopranos, 60,000 altos, and 40,000 tenors," replied Fr. Missia.

St. Peter wrote this down, paused, and said, "But, Fr. Missia, you don't have any basses. What about basses?"

Fr. Missia retorted, "Vell, now, for sure, I can handle that myself!"

So, the seminaries need lore—with plenty of humor. "Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, there's always laughter and good, red wine." May the lore transmit priestly values grounded in a humanity that is humble enough to chuckle at itself.

*John Sondag is Director of Religious Education at the Church of St. Helena in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and publisher of "The Catholic Servant."*

## 15 years and counting—God's destination is better than our dreams

By Fr. Michael Miller



Fr. Miller

We generally note anniversaries in multiples of five. I am not sure why we do; as every anniversary commemorates an equally important event in our life. Perhaps, in addition to being an easy method of calculation, it is our way of acknowledging that although "there is an appointed time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), God "has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done." (3:11) As we add year upon year we seem to participate more fully in the blessing of the Easter Candle, "Christ yesterday and today; the beginning and the end; Alpha and Omega; All time belongs to Him; and all the ages; to Him be glory

and power through every age forever. Amen."

As I celebrate my 15th anniversary of ordination on May 25, I realize the truth of something that I wrote almost 25 years ago: "Dedicated to Divine Providence. Only after having traveled Your road do we understand all the detours and turns. And at times it seemed we were surely going the wrong way. But we can only see where we are, and where we have been. You know where we ought to go, and You provide the way. And we will find Your destination is better than our dreams, if only we obey the signs."

At the time I wrote that I never could have dreamt that I would have learned the things I learned, met the people I met, and served the people I served at St. Joseph's in West St. Paul; the Churches of St. Peter and St. Joseph in Delano; and the Churches of St. Michael and St. Mary in Stillwater. It is true, "There is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters

or mother or father or children or lands for My sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more in this present age." (Mark 10:29-30) Commenting on this, Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the years I was discerning this call: "God is generous, and if we look at our lives with sincerity, then we can see that whatever we have given up He has truly repaid a hundred for one. He does not let Himself be overtaken by us in generosity. He does not wait for the next life to give us our reward, but He gives us the hundred-fold right now, even if this world does remain a world of persecutions, sorrows, and sufferings. St. Teresa of Avila has reduced this passage to the simple form, 'Already in this life God gives a hundred for one.' We have only to have the initial courage to be the first to give the 'one'" (*Journey to Easter*, pp. 179-180).

As I look back on these 15 years, I see more clearly that it does not all depend on me; it is

His Church, not mine—traveling through time in the lives of each of its members—and that "all time belongs to Him"; that I must be patient and remember "a bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not quench" (Isaiah, 42:3); and that, "it was not you who chose Me, it was I Who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain." (John 15:16) Finally, I see with more certainty that what I wrote 20 years ago in applying for the St. Paul Seminary is true: "I gave myself to God not knowing where He would take me, but trusting

Him, and hoping that I would serve Him well as a priest of His Church, bringing His grace and comfort to His people, and I have found that what I have received through God's providence is greater than all the dreams I have ever dreamt."

*Fr. Michael Miller is pastor of St. Michael's Church and St. Mary's Church in Stillwater, Minnesota.*

*This article was funded by the St. Thomas Aquinas Chair of Writing sponsored by an anonymous patron.*

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## Family Life

# Family and prayers welcome and bring comfort for a new Kuharski grandbaby!

By Mary Ann Kuharski



Kuharski

My daughter-in-law Quỳ is new to our family and new to America. Even after living through two Minnesota winters, she is still fascinated by snow and delighted when the ground is covered with white! She helps remind us of what we may not always appreciate!

Quỳ came from a strong Catholic family in Saigon, Vietnam (renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the war). In fact, one of her four brothers is a priest, and her uncle, whom they are very close to, was until recently the Archbishop of Hanoi.

Last year, Quỳ married our son Charlie (who was adopted by us from an orphanage in Vietnam when he was five and one-half years old). They have now made their home in Excelsior, Minnesota.

This year their hopes and prayers for a family were answered when Quỳ became pregnant. Charlie has been one of the "favorite" babysitters for his nieces and nephews and now, at last, he would become a daddy.

Also new to Quỳ was America's medical procedures and hospitals, something most Americans take for granted. (If you need hospitalization in Vietnam, you may wait for days in long lines just to get a room, and then must be pre-

pared to bring your own towels and bedding, and arrange for family or friends to provide your meals.)

When Quỳ became pregnant she and Charlie chose a Catholic family practice group for her medical care and a Catholic hospital to deliver their baby. It was reassuring to her.

Women have babies every day without complications, but in Quỳ's case, her labor and delivery did not go without problems. I was privileged to be at the hospital with Charlie and Quỳ during her labor. Initially, all seemed to be progressing well. After many hours, however, her physician called in a specialist, and after examination and consultation with Charlie and Quỳ, the decision was made for her to undergo a C-section delivery. By this time, Quỳ and Charlie were both more than a bit anxious and eager to "have it over."

Before wheeling Quỳ into the delivery room, the surgeon asked if they would like to pray together. I was waiting in the hall at the time, when Charlie rushed out and said, "Mom, come on in; we're going to pray before they take Quỳ!"

There we were, gathered around Quỳ's bedside, as the surgeon prayed, "Heavenly Father, we ask you to be with us now and to guide my hands during the surgery and keep them steady...." It was a tender and prayerful moment—reassuring to all of us!

"After the doctor prayed, I completely relaxed," Quỳ later said. "I knew God was in control and no longer felt worried

or scared."

Once Quỳ and baby were home, they e-mailed her mother and family in Vietnam to tell them of the new baby and the surgeon's prayer before delivery.

Not bad publicity for America in my mind!

My daughters Angie and Kari were the ones who had recommended the Catholic family practice group, as well as the hospital. Both had delivered their babies in the same setting.

"What could be better than to be at a Catholic hospital and be offered prayer and Holy Communion while you're recuperating?" Angie asked Quỳ.

This meant a thirty-mile drive, one way, for Charlie and Quỳ every time they made a doctor visit, or toured the hospital, yet today they are so happy they made that choice.

These newest grandbabies are God's reminders of His love. Baby Addie, who was born in January, is the third daughter for Angie and Adam, and resembles her big sister Gianna (age 5) who dreams of being a princess or a dancer, while her sister Lucie is an impish two and resembles her mother in looks and behavior. And now, our newest grandchild, a first for son Charlie and Quỳ.

So, who is this new little someone who joins the Kuharski clan? Her name is Isabella Marie and she weighed in at a bouncing six pounds, thirteen ounces, with beautiful features that blend her mother's Asian eyes and sweet lips and her father's darker complexion and

pug nose.

When the news went out over the Internet to friends and family, Charlie's brother Tony, who is in the military and recently returned to the States after suffering injuries in Iraq, yet is never without a quick retort, sent back this message: "Congrats, beautiful name, a half black, half Vietnamese baby with an Italian first name and a Polish last name; gotta love that. Be well. Tony"

We are so grateful for the expert pre-natal and hospital care our daughters and now daughter-in-law received from the physicians and staff at the Catholic hospitals. Undergoing a last-minute C-section after a day in labor was not easy; yet the simple prayer by the surgeon offered comfort and reassurance at just the right time.

Charlie and Quỳ's recent doctor and hospital experience was a fresh and up-close reminder of the great blessings we have as Catholics to choose our own physicians and health care facilities.

What a gift we have in dedicated Catholic nurses, doctors, and hospital staff. These are the people who will be on the

"front lines" in opposition to ObamaCare or any abortion mandates or end of life directives (Heaven forbid "death panels"). They deserve our gratitude, our support, and most especially our prayers. Thank you for helping assure the safe delivery of Baby Addie and Baby Isabella Marie!

Mary Ann Kuharski is a homemaker and mother of 13 (ages 20-40), six of whom came by adoption and are of mixed races, some with special needs. She is the author of *Raising Catholic Children and Parenting with Prayer* (OSV Press), and *Building a Legacy of Love* (Faith Publishing).



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# The translations of the Mass will be changing on the first Sunday of Advent

By John Sondag



**Christopher Carstens**

*[Editor's Note: Mr. Christopher Carstens, M.A., is the Director of Worship for the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and a visiting lecturer for the Liturgical Institute of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. He was recently in the Twin Cities giving a presentation on the new translation changes in the texts for the Sacred Liturgy which are scheduled for Advent, 2011. "The Catholic Servant" was able to interview Mr. Carstens about these upcoming changes.]*

**"The Catholic Servant":** First of all, why should we be concerned, or, better, how should we be concerned about the changes in the Sacred Liturgy which will be implemented in Advent, 2011, as opposed to just going through the routine of standing there doing what we're

supposed to be doing?

**Mr. Carstens:** I think if Catholics are going to take the time to come to Mass, they may as well know what's going on there: "Can I get something out of it?" as we say. And so the concern is, the opportunity is, to see the meaning in the words that we speak. And the liturgy's a whole complex of signs and symbols, but if we don't know their origins or meaning, then we don't benefit by it. So that's the opportunity that forces us to become re-engaged with the meaning of our Faith and of the Mass.

**"The Catholic Servant":** Do you see that the new changes are going to be helpful in giving us the opportunity to grow spiritually and deepen our understanding of the Church?

**Mr. Carstens:** Well, they have that potential. The meaning of the Mass is the same today as it will be a year from today. What the new translation gives us is a more direct access to the meaning that's there. What we would notice as changes in the translation are there because they more clearly say and more clearly express the meaning of the Mass.

Now, it's not magic of course. We need to do our own work to understand what it is that's being said. If you want to learn a foreign language, you have to go through the work of doing it. Now, this isn't an entirely foreign language, but there's a certain way that the Church speaks that's different from the way that most of us speak in the course of our lives. So part of what is required of us is, as we say, forming kind of a sacramental way of hearing and looking for the sources of the meaning in the different origins of the Church's language.

**"The Catholic Servant":** Why now? Why are we going through all of this now? Some people would say, we were doing just fine, so why upset the apple cart?

**Mr. Carstens:** Well, [there's] John Paul II in his famous line about do not be satisfied with mediocrity. I don't want to accuse anybody except for myself of being mediocre, but we can always do better. Until the coming of the Kingdom and the sanctification of the entire world, we can always be doing better. So, yes, we have been doing fine, but this

is an occasion for greater holiness, greater spirituality, for greater opportunity to encounter Christ through the Mass.

**"The Catholic Servant":** Weren't the old translations good?

**Mr. Carstens:** Yes. But, as we've said before, after 1,700 years of saying Mass in Latin, learning how to translate for the sake of liturgical purposes was not something that the Church was familiar with. And so it's taken 50 years with the word that John Paul uses: maturation. It's taken 50 years of pastoral practice, scholarship,

reflection, trial, error—all of these things—it's taken awhile for the Church to come to an understanding of how to translate adequately. And not just adequately, but beautifully, clearly, and precisely, the words of the Mass to convey the meaning. So this isn't a rejection. The third edition is not a rejection of the second edition: it was wrong, this is right. It's kind of a natural movement of the living organism, that with experience and time you get better.

**Translations of the Mass**  
*continued page 11*

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# Pope John Paul II Catholic Servant of the Third Millennium Award to be given posthumously to Dr. Raymond Bonnabeau

By John Sondag

This is a first. "The Catholic Servant" has never given is "Pope John Paul II Catholic Servant of the Third Millennium Award" posthumously to anyone, but this year it's appropriate that we honor the life of Raymond C. Bonnabeau, M.D., Ph.D., who died on February 26, 2011.

He was a man who lived out the values (of spreading, teaching, and defending the Faith) promoted by "The Catholic Servant." He knew his faith and he was not afraid to talk about his beliefs or to

help others live their faith.

He was a great supporter of the paper, not only with the gifts that he and his wife, Mary, gave the paper (they were sponsors of a chair of writing), but also by his talents. He would monthly take the feature picture of a stained glass window or religious statue for the front page.

Dr. Bonnabeau was a Knight of the Holy Sepulcher, a third order Franciscan, and a member of the Cathedral parish where he would serve Mass on Saturday evenings. He was also a frequent altar

server at the VA Hospital where he practiced medicine as a cardiologist.

On the natural level, he had worked his way up to the rank of a major general (that's two stars), and he was not only a cardiologist but also had a doctorate in surgery which enabled him to be a clinical professor.

The father of four children, Dr. Bonnabeau was married to his wife, Mary, who will receive the award on Tuesday, May 24, at "The Catholic Servant" Fundraising Dinner.



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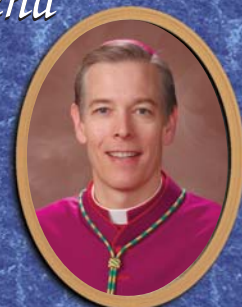
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As a way of reaching out to spread, explain, and defend the Catholic Faith, approximately 44,000 copies of *The Catholic Servant* are printed each month. Of that number, close to 26,000 copies are mailed free of charge to households and students. Approximately 200 are purchased through subscriptions, and the rest are distributed free of charge through parishes and various outlets. By participating in this fundraiser, you can help us with this important endeavor of evangelization, catechesis, and apologetics.



## Possible saint

*continued from page 1*

learned something about the Faith that made all the theology of his younger days so much straw in comparison. Teaching taught him something that is at once the greatest evidence of truth of the Catholic religion and, at the same time, the greatest obstacle to accepting it.

This paradox is best introduced by analogy. Imagine a self-help guru who starts his spiel by promising his energized audience, "Tell you what, guys, if you put this into practice and are faithful to my teaching, I guarantee ... (he pauses for effect) ... I guarantee you, that you'll suffer for it your entire life, and the more faithful you are to my words, the more you can expect to suffer!" Here the guru takes a drink of water. He clears his throat and continues, half his audience already out the door, the other half lined up to leave, "And you will be truly happy."

Such was the lesson Fr. John Hardon, S.J., learned about remaining faithful to the teachings of Christ. Such was the lesson he regularly passed on, in stark terms, to his audience. And the only explanation of why, with such a message, he had any audiences at all, is that those audiences found proof of both parts of that hard lesson in the very person who taught it to them.

Fr. Hardon came of age during something of a golden age in the life of the Catholic Church in America. It was a time when the Catholic school system was the envy of the world. Pews were packed. Archbishop Fulton Sheen was on the radio and television. At the time, there was nothing particularly remarkable about a young Jesuit of above-average intelligence named Hardon, just ordained in 1947. That was all soon to change.

The modern world has a hard time with religion, partly because religion doesn't allow you to change your mind nearly as often as the modern world would like. The modern world has a particularly hard time with the Catholic religion because Catholicism has been exceptionally "close-minded" in its resistance to something it calls "heresy," which to the modern world is something as innocent as changing your mind.

Over the centuries, heresy has played an interesting (you might say providential) role shaping Catholic doctrine. Like a statue cut out of stone, each attempt to modify the Faith of the Apostles has only served to better define the Image taking shape. That's not to say some large chunks of rock haven't been lopped off from the body of the Church in the process. Even so, geniuses like Augustine, Aquinas, and Bellarmine may never have risen as high as they did had they not been im-

pelled by their heretical adversaries.

Thanks to heresy, the Catholic theologians in the twentieth century possessed a more perfect understanding of their faith than did their predecessors. But while the statue representing the Catholic intellectual tradition stood more clearly defined in the twentieth century than ever before, it also stood amidst a great pile of rubble. In other words, there were a whole lot of bad ideas lying around by the beginning of the prior century.

The usual progression of violent video games is to battle a series of minions before advancing to the boss-guy. Violent video games and heresy follow a similar progression. In the twentieth century, these bad ideas cluttering the ground on which Catholic theology stood were lumped together into a boss-heresy that Fr. Hardon would identify as "all the heresies of the previous nineteen Christian centuries rolled into one." The name for this *franken-dox* was modernism.

Modernism, whatever it was, proved unlike other heresies the Catholic Church had combated. It seemed to be supported by cold hard scientific facts postulated by new theories like Relativity and Evolution. It resulted in a powerful combination. A number of Catholic theologians began to make concessions to modernism, and strains of the heresy began to subtly infect Catholic thought. Some diseases blossom quickly after infection, ravaging the victim and then subsiding. Modernism was more like a virus that lay dormant for years, quietly reproducing itself in the host body. In his Jesuit training days, Fr. Hardon discovered that this virus was reproducing itself in the very seminaries and schools of theology that were supposed to be training the Church's white blood cells. It would not be long before the Church began showing symptoms.

The devil got his decade in the 1960s. While Mother Church was shifting her weight in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, her enemies pounced on her. Parties within

the Church, seduced by modernist thought, seized on what they thought was the spirit of the Council, rather than the letter of the lengthy Latin documents it actually produced. In short, they changed a lot more things than the bishops intended, and changed them in ways the Pope would not have approved.

Those who did not live through those days are not the ones to be describing them. But the statistics tell some of the story. Vocations in the United States dropped by nearly ninety percent. Mass attendance plummeted. Hundreds of parishes and schools closed in the ensuing decades. Religious left their convents and vocations in droves. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of American Catholics would give up the Faith.

At the same time, confusion abounded among faithful Catholics about just what they believed. Folks didn't know if priests would soon be allowed to be married, women, or both. Literature appeared claiming the Church's position on moral issues like homosexuality, abortion, and contraception had been "relaxed." Adding to the confusion, individual bishops were making their own rules about these issues. Worse still, many Catholics had bought into the dogma of the day that said individuals had to "figure out for themselves" what was true and good, if anything. Conceivably, this sort of figuring has been the hobby of humans with leisure time in every age. The only difference was that now people thought they could come to different conclusions and still call themselves Catholic.

This was the turbulent sea on which Fr. John Hardon was asked to sail. He taught authentic, orthodox Catholic doctrine at a time when most people, Catholics included, were terribly confused, if not downright mistaken, or openly hostile, to what the Church actually taught. A student of history, Fr. Hardon knew that to compromise the Faith was to lose the Faith, if not immediately, then assuredly eventually. And to the dismay of many in his day, Fr. Hardon did not compro-

mise. At a time when many theologians would wink at realities like the existence of the devil and the Real Presence, Fr. Hardon was still using words like "heretical," "diabolical," and worse, "sinful."

But history had also taught Fr. Hardon that it had never been popular to practice orthodox Christian religion, let alone teach it. Moreover, he didn't have time for theologians who were too open-minded to believe in angels; he had work to do.

Fr. Hardon prayed for three hours a day and was ordered by his superiors to take seven hours of rest a night. The other fourteen hours were for Christ. Evidently, Christ asked him to spend every minute of them catechizing His sheep. Fr. Hardon lectured on every topic imaginable: from metaphysics to the practice of prayer, from comparative religion to the mystery of the Trinity. He lectured in every place conceivable: from Jesuit seminaries to secular universities, retreat centers to church basements. And he taught everyone God put in front of him, from a Missionary of Charity to a Muslim on an airplane. When he wasn't teaching, he was before the Blessed Sacrament writing books, letters, a catechism, and even a dictionary, or crisscrossing the globe founding institutes and apostolates to fill whatever need he saw, or at retreat centers giving conferences and hearing Confessions.

As much as Fr. Hardon taught the Faith, more so did he suffer for the Faith. He suffered in the body: from asthma and perpetual frailty throughout most his life; late in life from heart failure and loss of vision, hearing, and his voice; and he died of cancer. He also suffered in the spirit: he experienced the pain of a priest seeing so many irregularities in the Holy Mass; a theologian seeing so many errors abound in the Church; a catechist seeing so many leave the Faith without ever having understood it. And he suffered

at the hands of others: he lost a teaching appointment over abortion; he was banned from Jesuit seminaries for not approving of enneagrams; pastors would routinely leave his conferences out of their bulletins because the man was "divisive."

But don't feel too bad for him: this is a man who prayed for martyrdom at every Mass he offered. What should surprise us is not that this man suffered, but how happy he was to do it. In spite of all the crosses he bore, you would almost say he was *giddy* if you had the grace to meet him. It made one think that there must be some truth behind that common refrain of his: "the greatest joy we may experience in this life—and what a mystery this is," he would say, "the greatest joy we may experience here is to suffer lovingly for God. And that is not a pious platitude!"

In spite of his prayers, the red martyrdom of bodily death was not to be his, but rather that white martyrdom of daily witnessing to Christ and death to self. In recognition of his heroic witness and contributions teaching the Faith, Fr. Hardon's cause for canonization opened in 2005, just five years after his death. In support of that effort, "The Catholic Servant" is publishing a series of articles on his life in the issues that follow. The hope is to convince readers of his sanctity as much as it is to acquaint them with his many insights on living an authentic Catholic life in America today.

David Hottinger is a freelance writer from the Twin Cities who is attending the University of Minnesota Law School.

This article was funded by the St. Benedict Chair of Writing sponsored by an anonymous patron.



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## "I don't get anything out of Mass": a response that opens us to God's love

By Douglas G. Bushman



**Bushman**

Certainly the wrong response to the complaint about not getting anything out of Mass is to change the Mass. For one thing, the reasons why people think Mass is meaningless for them are multiple, and they change. One could be forever tweaking the liturgy in the futile attempt of making it more relevant. For another thing, for many people Mass is profoundly valuable, the very center of their life of faith. To change it would be a terrible betrayal of their faith. Finally, the Mass is not ours to alter. Even if some elements can be changed and have in fact been modified over the centuries, what is essential to the Mass is unchanging because it is Christ Who comes to encounter His Bride, the Church, in the Mass, and His love and the truth upon which it is established are unchanging.

What remains is for a transformation to take place in those who complain of getting little or nothing out of Mass. Certainly an integral catechesis is indispensable. Is there any real surprise that people would find God's language strange, foreign, incomprehensible, if they never think of Him, if they have not bothered to get to know Him, read the books about Him? All liturgy presupposes evangelization, conversion, faith, and adherence to God's will. (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.

1072 and 1098) That is a minimum condition for people to understand what is taking place when God speaks His language of love.

We need to understand what the grumbling about not getting anything out of Mass really means. It could be rephrased in this way: "I don't see any connection between what happens at Mass and how I live my daily life." People today as in every age have no time for irrelevancies. If the Mass does not correspond more transparently to the values by which they engage their freedom, make their choices, and claim their happiness, then it will certainly be irrelevant. It will not contribute in any way to their quest for a fully human life.

This shows that what is ultimately at stake is the very definition of what it means to be human and to live life with meaning and purpose. There is much evidence of futility and meaninglessness in our culture. Might it be time for men and women of faith, in the name of the New Evangelization, to help people discover that the root reason why they get little or nothing out of Mass is that they are getting little or nothing out of life? One cannot live aimlessly all week long and have any realistic hope of finding meaning at Mass.

Why is this? Because, as the *Catechism* teaches: "We pray as we live, because we live as we pray." (n. 2725) The Mass is prayer. It is above all the prayer of Christ to the Father. If a person lives with no thought about the Father or His Kingdom or His plan of love, it is to be expected that he would find the preoccupations of Jesus' heart

beyond comprehension. If people live as if God does not exist, indifference to His love revealed in Christ is readily understandable. Even for people with a smidgen of spirituality, who pray from time to time, prayer is often reduced to petitions. Much of the liturgy is prayer of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. If these modes of prayer are unfamiliar, it stands to reason that people will feel unconnected.

The sooner people realize that much work of evangelization, catechesis, and conversion needs to be done outside of the liturgy, as a prerequisite for the liturgy, the sooner the temptation to change the liturgy can be laid to rest. As the Dominican professor of theology, Father Simon Tugwell, wrote: "Liturgy is essentially something given, and in this it expresses a fundamental feature of all prayer. Its sublime lack of concern for our personal moods is a forcible reminder that when we come to God, it is not to force our moods or our interests on to Him, but to receive His interests and to let Him, in a sense, share His moods with us."

God loves us too much to cater to our dispositions. His love is more perfect than that cheap concern that is content simply to acknowledge another's current state in order to make him feel understood and accepted. God's desire is that we come to understand Him and His love, by which He encounters us in order to raise us to new heights. Readiness to be loved and transformed, which presupposes a judgment of the need for this love and transformation, is the prerequisite for a meaningful experience

of the liturgy. That is no facile accomplishment in a world confident of man's capacity to forge his own happiness and fulfillment. Without humility there is no prayer at all, and no entrance into the liturgy. This is why Mass begins with the Confeiteor.

One of the features of the modern world that affects people's dispositions with respect to God is that as never before man is able to satisfy his own desires: clothes tailored to conform to individual tastes; cars ordered with personalized colors; food ordered to comply with personal tastes; curricula structured to suit individual learning styles and interests. In a market-driven economy, consumers have learned that marketers are eager to identify personal preferences and cater to them.

God is not a marketer. He is Truth and Love. He is our Savior. Those who recognize their need for redemption possess the fundamental disposition to derive great benefit from the liturgy. They possess the humility that opens one's heart and freedom to God, Who "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)

Douglas G. Bushman, S.T.L., is Director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University.

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## Motherhood continued from page 1

she is wiser than we are) how we could take a shortcut through some of the suffering in life, if only we'd listen to her and take her advice. But, like a wise mother, she knows it is best to wait to give advice or offer help until she is asked. But, oh, is she ever yearning to be asked.

May is her month. Let's make her happy by spending some time telling her about our lives and asking for her help and advice and prayers. And just like any other mother, she

wouldn't mind a little affection now and then. She'd love to know her picture is hanging on our wall, she'd love for us to bring her flowers, and she'd love for us to whisper, "I love you."

Dia Boyle is a wife, freelance speaker, and writer from St. Paul, Minnesota.

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## Marriage

continued from page 1

**Dr. Morse:** Marriage is society's way of attaching mothers and fathers to children. Without that core purpose, we wouldn't need marriage. Life-long sexual monogamy would be useless.

Historically, everywhere and always, marriage has achieved this purpose through what's called the presumption of paternity: society assumes that any children born to a wife are children of her husband too. The combination of the presumption of paternity and the social norm of sexual exclusivity work in tandem to serve a legitimate public purpose. That purpose includes the interest of the child in having a mother and a father to care for the individual and the interests of the parents in having public acknowledgement of their parental rights and responsibilities.

Notice this is a *public* purpose. The other, private purposes of marriage—companionship, emotional support, sharing of finances, sexual exclusivity—all these together don't add up to public purpose. They certainly don't add up to tax benefits. Without its public purpose of connecting children to mothers and fathers, marriage is just a friendship. And what interest does the government have in recognizing a friendship?

**"The Catholic Servant":** Good question. So then what is at stake in the marriage debate?

**Dr. Morse:** Everything is at stake. If we lose on this, we lose everything. Because it connects children to their biological parents, marriage is at

the core of how society organizes itself. A redefinition of marriage will change the basis of how society organizes itself.

Same-sex couples are fundamentally different from couples of the opposite sex with respect to being able to procreate together. So in redefining marriage to include same-sex couples, these courts and legislatures have to completely write off the purpose of procreation. It's not that they say it's not the *primary* purpose of marriage; they say it's not even *one* of its purposes. If you take out that core meaning, there is nothing of the original institution left.

What's more, redefining marriage redefines parenthood. In a natural marriage, the children are nearly always with their biological parents, with adoption being the rare exception. But in a same-sex marriage, the child can never be with more than one of the biological parents. Rather than serve to keep children with their biological parents, same-sex marriage works to separate them.

If legal parenthood no longer tracks biological parenthood, the result will be that the government determines who is a parent and not biology. The presumption of paternity will be replaced by a presumption of *parenthood*, and the role of fatherhood, no longer essential, will be diminished.

Another effect of the redefinition of marriage will be on the place of religion in our so-

ciety. The idea that marriage is between one man and one woman is not the idiosyncratic belief of one religion. It's perhaps the one common belief of nearly all the world's religions. If marriage is redefined, it will marginalize the beliefs of a huge percentage of the population and institutionalize an essentially atheistic idea of marriage in its place. What we are left with is a nominally non-sectarian, sectarian and anti-religious institution.

**"The Catholic Servant":** Why is this issue coming to a head right now?

**Dr. Morse:** The Catholic Church's ancient teachings on marriage and sex are being proven correct all the time. Same sex marriage would never be an issue if not for the sexual revolution [the widespread rebellion, most notably occurring in the 1960s, against norms derives in large part from the Church's teaching on human sexuality]. While marriage had served to unify sex, childbearing, and marital love, the sexual revolution came and scattered all those parts. With the advent of artificial insemination, another thing the Church has been opposed to from the beginning, childbearing has become a private, individual activity. Now it is acceptable to have sex without being married and it's possible to have a child without ever having sex.

The sexual revolution hasn't made anyone happy. I think many young people are discov-

ering that now. But what it did do was help weaken the organic reality of marriage. Because childbearing and sex are no longer tied up in marriage, many people don't understand what marriage really is anymore. For them, it's become just a promise of sexual exclusivity and an emotional attachment, and that's why you see people arguing for same-sex marriage.

**"The Catholic Servant":** What can we say to our well-meaning neighbors, especially the youth, who see same-sex marriage as simply a civil rights issue?

**Dr. Morse:** People who see marriage as an individual right really don't understand what marriage is and what makes it unique. They think same-sex marriage is an idea without a downside. They think it's nobody's business if two people want to be married and so what if they are the same sex. But marriage isn't just a contract between two people. It's the basis of creating community. It's how we bring children into the world.

The most success I have changing people's minds is by showing them that there is a downside to redefining mar-

riage. It's more than just a matter of including or excluding certain people from calling themselves married; to redefine marriage to accommodate same-sex couples results in a new theory of parenthood. It's serious business. There are courts out there awarding parental rights to people who are not actually parents on a theory of "de facto parentage" dreamed up to accommodate same-sex couples. Judges who say that it's just a stereotype that a kid needs both a mother and a father are changing the law for everyone. It's going to change the very basis for acquiring parental rights and responsibilities. It won't be a biological basis anymore, but a legal one.

*Readers interested in learning more about the Ruth Institute and the importance of defending natural marriage are invited to check out the Institute's podcast page: [www.ruthinstitute.libsyn.com](http://www.ruthinstitute.libsyn.com).*

*This article was funded by the St. Bernadette of Soubirous Chair of Writing sponsored by Thomas and Barbara Janas.*

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## Translations of the Mass *continued from page 6*

**"The Catholic Servant":** Why did it take so long for the bishops to approve this new translation?

**Mr. Carstens:** Well, partly because it's a big book. It's a big important book that will be used by English-speaking Catholics all over the world. It's not just for a few people in a localized area. Again, this includes bishops' conferences—there are 11 of them in the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, all over the world—the Philippines to New Zealand to England to Canada. And so there are a lot of people involved. So that's one thing. It just takes a long time for a project this massive. Also, the care that needs to be a part of the project requires a certain amount of time.

**"The Catholic Servant":** We're at the point now where we are going to do this, and it's NOT a matter of preference for parishes, right?

**Mr. Carstens:** That's correct. The discussion the bishops had—some of us might be familiar with either watching it or reading the transcripts—that was perfectly suitable in that time. That was hard work that they had to do, and tough de-

bates they had to have about which words do this, do the job that they need to do. But that period is over. It's not a time of what should it say, what we'd like to say, what ought it to have said. They're going to say what the words say. So, our job is to help people understand what the Church means when she says, "I believe," when she says "and with your spirit."

**"The Catholic Servant":** For the person in the pew, are the changes going to be as substantial as for the priest who is praying the Eucharistic prayer?

**Mr. Carstens:** Well, in a sense that's no. I mean, everything the priest says will change. Maybe six or eight or ten things that the laity says will change. So, on the one hand, no. But on the other, we actively participate through listening. So just because the priest is saying it doesn't mean we're not paying attention and it's not going to be difficult for



us. We have to hear what he has to say, and we have to hear the meaning in his words. So, in that regard, it's equally as challenging for priest and people.

**"The Catholic Servant":** You said everything is going to change. It's not going to be the essence of the Mass; it's going to be the words of the Mass.

**Mr. Carstens:** That is correct. What's changing is the sacramental language. So, the words change to express more authentically and clearly the

unchanging meaning of the Mass. So, that's what's changing.

**"The Catholic Servant":** Finally, will there be changes eventually in the other sacraments?

**Mr. Carstens:** Sure. Every ritual book in the Church will be translated, sooner or later, according to these principles; so right, all of the sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, the book of blessings, funerals, all

will be re-translated.

*John Sondag is Director of Religious Education at the Church of St. Helena in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and publisher of "The Catholic Servant."*

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## A surprising book about the end of the world, but we know that the world ends

By Dale Ahlquist



**Ahlquist** I was quite swept up, along with my fellow evangelicals, with an almost obsessive interest in the end times. We, of course, believed we were living in the end times. I suppose, to some degree, every Christian who has ever lived has had reason to believe that, or at least reason to hope that Christ will come soon. But we also believed in "The Rapture," the idea that just before Christ returned, all the Christians would suddenly go "poof" and get a quick ticket out of here in order to avoid the coming persecution. Then the Anti-Christ, "the Beast," would rule the world for a while, and then, finally, Christ would come. The timing of the Rapture and duration of the Rule of the Anti-Christ and sequence of events before the Second Coming and the Final Judgment differed, depending on whether you were a pre-Millennialist, a mid-Tribber, a post-Tribber, and so on, based on how you interpreted the

Bible and strung together the writings of Daniel of Babylon, Paul of Tarsus, and John of Patmos.

Rapture-theology inspired the phenomenally successful "Left Behind" book series—demonstrating that the Tribulation of future Christians can be a pretty profitable venture for at least a few present Christians.

There is no "Rapture" in Catholic theology, but Evangelicals and Catholics have generally shared the belief that there will be an anti-Christ rising to power in the end times. However, Catholics never really seemed to get as worked up about it. In fact, I noticed that I completely lost interest in it after my conversion. A few years ago I read Michael O'Brien's *Father Elijah*, but it did not particularly capture my imagination. During Lent, however, I read another novel about the end times, and I thought it was excellent—not only well-crafted, but a profound and truly prophetic book.

The author's vision of the future does not seem far-fetched: rapid transit, rapid communication, densely populated cities that are bathed in artificial light. A particularly health conscious populace abhors discomfort. Suffering is solved quickly by official euthanasia. A godless humanism has rejected traditional religion

and morality. A highly socialized system moves quickly to a one-world government. The new leader comes from an obscure background but suddenly captures the world's stage though no one seems to know anything about him. He is praised with an emotional wave as a universal peacemaker and hailed as the savior of the world.

And yet with all the tolerance and understanding and peace and euphoria, there is still an excuse to openly persecute and even kill Catholics and do everything possible to destroy the Catholic Church. Though the new Humanitarians regret the recourse to violence, they are nonetheless thankful for the results.

G.K. Chesterton says, "Once abolish the god, and the government becomes god." We see this idea acted out in this apocalyptic novel. The Humanistic idea that man alone is sufficient breeds the idea that man is to be worshipped and will allow no other deity to be worshipped. The world may reject Christ, may reject His Vicar on earth, the Pope, but, as Chesterton says, "sooner or later it will try to supply the need of something like a Papacy; even if it tries to do it on its own account. That will be indeed an ironical situation. The modern world will have set up a new Anti-Pope, even if, as in Mon-

signor Benson's romance, the Anti-Pope has rather the character of an Antichrist."

Who's Monsignor Benson? Robert Hugh Benson, the author of the book to which I've been referring, and to which also Chesterton refers. It's called *The Lord of the World*, and it was written in 1907!

Robert Hugh Benson was the son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He converted to Catholicism in 1903, was ordained a Catholic priest, wrote 15 novels, and died in 1914 at the young age of 43.

Whether or not Monsignor Benson's picture of our future is accurate, the fact is his picture of our *present* is chillingly accurate.

The author apologizes for the sensational nature of the book, but he says he chose it as the best means by which to make his point: a picture of what the world would look like as "the necessary culmination of unimpeded subjectivity." In other words, relativism. But the term was not even yet known when Monsignor Benson wrote his book.

He certainly illustrates the words of the prophet Jeremiah who predicts the false comfort offered by those who say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. (Jer. 6:14) The Bible quite clearly promises that a time of testing will come. In

*The Lord of the World*, the author says that only the humble and the pure will stand the test for long. Sobering words, indeed.

It is interesting that even in secular film and literature, most visions of the future are dark. We generally see a world that has blown itself to bits, where civilization stands in ruins, and even the survivors are mere shells of human beings.

*The Lord of the World*, however dark, is actually a novel of great hope. It is well worth reading, and I give nothing away even if I tell you how the story ends, because every Catholic should already know the ending. There is a final stand-off between the Pope and the Anti-Pope, between Christ and the anti-Christ. The dramatic ending is nothing less than the end of the world.

Dale Ahlquist is President of the American Chesterton Society and host of the EWTN series "G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle of Common Sense."

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