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A Blessed Christmas to all of Our Benefactors and Readers
My dear Catholic people,

On December 8th, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the ordination of Father Joseph Selway. It is he who, virtually singlehandedly, undertook the establishment of our church and school in Florida in 2003, and who has continued to operate these two entities with dogged devotion and care. He teaches many courses every day in the school. He also founded the Sisters of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the formation of whom has required and still does require a great deal of intensive attention. He has furthermore founded a school at Our Lady of the Sun in El Mirage, Arizona, which continues to function nicely under the direction of Fr. Federico Palma, who is the pastor there. Four of our Sisters teach there, and four others teach in Brooksville, Florida. Father Selway oversees with great attention the activities at Our Lady of the Sun, and flies there once a month from Florida to make sure that all things are proceeding well. He also runs the sodality for the youth of our parish, and the Third Order of Saint Dominic for those who wish to practice a more fervent spiritual life. Finally, he is the spiritual director of the seminarians at Most Holy Trinity Seminary.

We ask for God’s blessing upon his many undertakings, and look forward, God willing, to many more years of his priesthood in which, we pray, he will exercise the same zeal for souls and for the edification of the Church which he has shown thus far.

During this Christmas season, our thoughts naturally turn to God’s abiding presence among us. He is our Emmanuel, which means God with us.

In the Old Testament, God manifested His presence among men, and in particular among the Hebrews, by extraordinary events, that is, by miracles and prophecies. The Old Testament is loaded with the narrations of these events. The symbol of the presence of God among His people in the Old Testament was the Ark of the Covenant, essentially a sacred box in which were kept the stone tablets of the Law received on Mount Sinai, the manna which fell from heaven in the desert, and the rod of Aaron, which had been used for many prodigies. This sacred Ark was enshrined in the Temple by Solomon in a place called the Holy of Holies. It was a symbol of God’s presence because it was a symbol of His miracles, particularly those which brought about the liberation of the Hebrews from the oppressing Egyptians.

With the birth of Christ, however, all would change. The presence of God would now no longer be manifested by a mere symbol, as it was in the Holy of Holies in the Temple, but would be accomplished through the real presence of God Himself incarnate, that is, made flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

While it is true that the miracles continued to exist in the early Church, they served not as persistent reminders of God’s abiding presence, but as motives of credibility for the Catholic Faith itself, so that the whole world would know that the religion of Christ was in fact the one, true religion of the one and true God. As time progressed, however, the number and frequency of these miracles diminished a great deal. St. Gregory the Great (540-604) makes mention of this fact. The reason for this lessening of miracles is that the Church itself became a motive of credibility for the entire world. Her marvellous life, one of the sanctification of souls, of the purity and consistency of supernatural doctrine, of the sublimity of her dogmas, of the rectitude of her moral code, and of the riches of her sacred liturgy, became a lodestar of truth for all who were “of the truth.” Our Lord said to Pilate: “Those who are of the truth, hear My voice.”

This is not to say that miracles in the Church ceased. They were simply less frequent in in most cases less public. Miracles and fulfillment of prophecies continue to grace the Catholic Church as motives of its credibility. In very fact, the prophecy of Saint Paul made nearly two thousand years ago, that there would take place a great apostasy from the faith, is happening before our own eyes. Who would have said fifty years ago, in 1961, that the Catholic Church would be in this miserable state in 2011, and that the world would sink into the abyss of immorality and godlessness in which we live?

It is to say that what in fact draws most converts to the Catholic Church is not miracles about which they may read in books, but the ongoing supernatural and marvelous life of the Church. This life of the Church is so brilliant and attractive, that anyone under the influence of grace and with a clear mind and good heart is obliged to say: “Truly this is the Church of God.”

They see, for example, that Catholics — and only Catholics — hold marriage to be indissoluble, so much so that those estranged from their spouses must live out their lives in loneliness, out of respect for the sacredness of the marriage bond, which is an image of the bond between Christ and His Church. They see that the Church is intransigent on questions of natural morality, declaring abortion, artificial birth control, fornication, sodomy, stealing, lying, cheating, and all forms of impurity and injustice to be intrinsically evil. Under no circumstances can these acts be posited, and can be justified for no good end. They see that the Church proposes itself as the one, true Church, outside of which there is no salvation, and regards every religion outside of itself as a false religion, incapable of saving anyone. They see the absolute consistency of Catholic teaching down through the ages, and this despite the unworthiness, in some cases, of its prelates and clergy. They see the lives of the saints and other holy members of the Church, thereby perceiving the ability of the Church to sanctify and elevate humanity, if one should follow its rules. They experience the sacredness of the rites of the Church, the beauty of its churches, the sublime character of its chant and other sacred music.

All of these properties of the Catholic Church, so attractive to those seeking the truth, are given to her by her Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church is an extension of Our Lord’s Incarnation through time. This abiding presence of Christ is effected not only by His assistance to the Church’s hierarchy in its role of teaching, ruling and
sancifying the faithful, but also and even more importantly in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. This Real Presence makes possible the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, through which the faithful may participate in the most sacred and important act of human history, the Crucifixion of Christ on the Cross, which was not only payment for our sin and the source of all grace, but also an everlasting testimony of the love of the Sacred Heart for sinners.

From Bethlehem, therefore, springs this new and constant presence of God among His people, the members of the Roman Catholic Church. He accomplishes this presence through the holy priesthood, itself also an extension of the Incarnation. A priest, merely by his ordination, receives the power to make Christ present really, truly, and substantially in the Blessed Sacrament. If the priest follows the rules of the Catholic Church for the sanctification of the clergy, this power in his soul becomes as clear as the noonday sun in the eyes of those who have supernatural faith. By his personal sanctity, coupled to this ineffable power in his soul from ordination, the holy priest is able to manifest to all this marvelous life of the Church, and attract thousands of souls to Almighty God. One can still feel the effect of great priests from the past: Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Pius V, Saint Dominic, the North American Martyrs.

It is by the priesthood that the marvelous life of the Church is preserved, and is a shining light of her glory throughout the world. For from the ranks of priests comes the hierarchy which has consistently preserved Catholic doctrine down to the present age. It is by the words of priests that Christ is made present on the altar, and from the hands of priests that we receive Him into our bodies and souls. It is from priests that we hear this precious truth of the Catholic Church. It is priests who have founded religious orders which have done so much good in leading souls to heaven. It is priests who sit for long hours in the confessional to absolve the consciences of the faithful, thereby lifting a burden from them which would be otherwise eternally crushing. It is priests who bring us Jesus Christ on our deathbeds, the Holy Viaticum, and who send us on our way to God with confidence and peace through the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

In a word, God is with us in the New Testament by the action of His priests, no longer sacrificing animals as in the Old Testament, but the true Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. They no longer offer incense to God as He is present in the Ark of the Covenant, but to the Real Presence of the Incarnate God in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

We must add to this presence of God among His people the person and activity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although she is not a priest, her power of intercession exceeds that of created priests, having as she does a direct channel of love to the Supreme High Priest and Head of the Catholic Church, Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the common teaching that all graces are distributed through her, just as all sin was distributed through Eve.

The Church which I am describing here, however, is the true Catholic Church. It should not be confused with the Novus Ordo religion. This is a new religion, essentially Modernism, which ecclesiastical thugs and hijackers are attempting to substitute for Catholicism. They have been very successful, indeed, in inserting this new religion into virtually all of the buildings and institutions which belong to the Catholic Church. They have not, however, killed Catholicism.

In all of the once Catholic institutions, the Novus Ordo religion has killed all of the marvelous life of the Church which I have described. Gone is the sacredness of the Church’s liturgy. Gone is the unity of faith, the Church’s consistency in adhering to the same doctrine in all times and circumstances. Gone is the indissolubility of marriage, the diocesan annulment tribunal having become a Las Vegas divorce court. Gone is the Church’s insistence that it is the one true faith, outside of which there is no salvation. Gone is the Church’s strength in holding to strict norms of morality according to God’s laws found both in the natural law and laws which He has revealed. Gone is the beauty of her churches. Gone is the Blessed Sacrament from her altars.

The Novus Ordo seminaries are virtually empty, and those still in them are Modernists. The religious orders are decimated, and those left do not observe the rules of their founders. Virtually gone are Catholic schools, since the brothers and nuns who selflessly manned them are also gone. What is left of Catholic schools are institutions Catholic in name only, loaded as they are with heresy and immorality.

In fifty years the magnificent edifice of the Roman Catholic Church, the Star of Bethlehem leading all, whether schismatics, heretics, or even atheists, to belief in the one, true God, has been reduced to ashes in all of her known institutions, and is surviving in the souls of a handful in each city, leading a virtually catacomb-like existence.

Addressing those who had fled from the churches in which Arianism prevailed, St. Athanasius wrote: “You are the ones who are happy; you who remain within the Church by your faith, who hold firmly to the foundations of the Faith which has come down to you from Apostolic Tradition. And if an execrable jealousy has tried to shake it on a number of occasions, it has not succeeded. They [the Arians] are the ones who have broken away from it in the present crisis. No one, ever, will prevail against your faith, beloved brothers. And we believe that God will give us our churches back some day. Thus, the more violently they try to occupy the places of worship, the more they separate themselves from the Church. They claim that they represent the Church; but in reality, they are the ones who are expelling themselves from it and going astray. Even if Catholics faithful to Tradition are reduced to a handful, they are the ones who are the true Church of Jesus Christ.”
While God’s decree of providence, permitting all of this apostasy and destruction, is mysterious to us, what is equally mysterious is the grace which He has given to many to resist this violence against our Faith, and to provide for the means of preserving all of the essentials of Catholicism. We may term this the traditional movement. I have seen it grow from practically nothing in the 1960s, when we were considered insane and “rigid,” to a worldwide opposition to the effects of Vatican II. Certainly there are various levels of opposition, some stronger, some weaker, but nonetheless the clamor to restore the Catholic Church to its former order and glory is growing day by day.

On the other hand, the Novus Ordo religion continues to sink slowly just like the Titanic. The Archdiocese of Detroit, for instance, just announced that it would close forty-eight of its 270 parishes. Although many of these closings are due to demographic changes in the city of Detroit, the shuttering of many of these churches is the result of consolidations of suburban parishes, hitherto exempt from closings. The reason? Not enough priests. There are 290 priests to service 270 parishes. Such figures are catastrophic, when one considers (1) that many of these parishes are very large, containing as many as five thousand families; (2) that most of these priests are elderly, and ready for either retirement, reduced service, or the grave.

The young people of the Novus Ordo show little interest in the new religion. They show up for weddings, and afterwards are generally not seen again. Those young people among them who are pious, however, are attracted to the traditional movement in one form or other. In other words, the new religion is a flop, and is currently being supported by an antique clergy administering to an antique laity. Even the “seminarians” of the Novus Ordo are not always young men in cassocks, the image which is commonly associated with the word seminarian, but in many cases are older men, retiring in their fifties from various walks of life. Many of their “new priests,” therefore, will give short and limited service, especially as they develop arthritis and other ailments of the elderly. Financially they will become a burden upon the diocese, since their productivity as priests will not even come close to the cost of their care in old age.

Benedict XVI, conscious of this general disintegration of what was once Catholicism, declared on October 16th of this year that 2012 will be a “year of faith.” When will it start? In October 2012. Why October? Because October 11, 2012 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Benedict writes: “Whereas in the past it was possible to recognize a unitary cultural matrix [a unified Catholic culture] broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swaths of society, because of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people.”

An adequate translation would be: “Everywhere there is devastation, disintegration, and decomposition of what was once Catholicism in nations in which it once flourished. For some reason, the faith and Catholic culture which was intact at the death of Pope Pius XII is nowhere to be found.”

The solution? More Vatican II! These Modernists are so proudful that they cannot even bear the thought that Vatican II is responsible for the fifty years of demolition. This Council was, by analogy, a “dirty bomb” for the Church, spreading the deadly radioactivity of Modernism everywhere. Ratzinger, however, sees it as the source of renewed faith and spiritual vigor.

Whenever a priest repudiates the faith, he becomes nearly incapable of returning to it. It is indeed the sin against the Holy Ghost, since it is to reject the truth known as truth. It is a sin which is not forgiven, not because of a failure of God’s mercy, but because of the “perfection” of the sin. The priest, in other words, has been raised to such heights by grace, that his sin against the faith is so deliberate, so “perfect,” that return to the faith becomes virtually impossible for him. He has no excuse of either ignorance or weakness.

This is the case in these old Modernists like Ratzinger. He was born in 1927 into a pious Catholic setting in Bavaria. He was raised as a Catholic and became imbued with pre-Vatican II Catholicism in all its glory. At a certain point, probably after the war when the avant-garde theology was in full bloom, he passed over to Modernism, which is a poison in the mind which kills off all dogma, even the possibility of dogma. In so doing, he became the “perfect” heretic.

This spirit of heresy can be very clearly detected in his early writings during the 1950s and 1960s. He has learned to be more cautious in his expressions recently, more cagey, but nonetheless the heresy can be clearly discerned.

I believe that Ratzinger and those like him are virtually incapable of returning to Catholicism. They are incapable of looking around at the devastation in the Church and realizing that it is they and their awful council which have done this work of destruction of Catholic Faith and culture. Only the restoration of Roman Catholicism to the Vatican buildings will make his “year of faith” a success.

God is still with us because in His providence He did not permit the contagion of Modernism to penetrate every Catholic soul, nor did He permit those who resisted Modernism to be without truly Catholic bishops and priests, as well as the true Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament. Just as the Christ Child was preserved from the sword of Herod’s soldiers, so we, by the grace of God, have been preserved from these slayers of souls, and like the Christ Child, have fled from our churches, but like Him will return to our rightful places after the Herod of Modernism has died.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn
Rector