

THE ATHANASIAN

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Traditional Catholics of America, Inc.
Editor: Fr. Francis E. Fenton, STL

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Fifteen years after Vatican Council II . . .

Traditional Catholicism in the USA

— Fr. Francis E. Fenton

While the seeds of the current chaos in the Roman Catholic Church were planted long before, the bad fruit which they bore began to surface at Vatican Council II (1962 - 1965) and has inflicted incalculable harm upon the Church ever since that Council. Fifteen years have now passed since the termination of Vatican Council II on December 8, 1965, a period during which the Church, humanly speaking, has been reduced to a state of disarray surely without parallel in the Christian centuries. Indeed, so vast has been the destruction wrought that what is being passed off today as the Roman Catholic Church is not such in fact at all but rather a tragic travesty of it. And so, to distinguish that travesty from the One True Church, we refer to it as the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church - Conciliar because it may be said to have originated with Vatican Council II; Novus Ordo because its central act of "worship" is the abominable "new Mass" or Novus Ordo service. But whatever it is or is called, it assuredly is **not** the historic Roman Catholic Church.

To give even a partial listing of the desecrations and sacrileges and heresies and weird "goings on" which comprise the horror story of the fifteen years of the Conciliar Church is outside the scope of this article. It is, in any case, a story all too well and sadly known to traditional Roman Catholics, and so one which requires no rehashing here. I would simply note in passing what to me have been the biggest disappointments of the past fifteen tragic years of the Church in this country: (1) the bishops - not a single bishop in the USA has stood up for our traditional Roman Catholic Faith nor, for that matter, spoken out against the satanic evil of Communism - some (perhaps many) of them, I have no doubt, have lost the Faith - the best of them are "jellyfish", the worst are heretics, apostates, subversives; (2) the priests - of the approximately 60,000 priests in the USA at the conclusion of Vatican Council II, less than one quarter of one

percent of them has taken a public uncompromising stand on behalf of the Faith they swore to uphold until death when they were ordained - even the best of them in the Novus Ordo Church today will usually contend that, in remaining therein, they are being obedient to their bishop (the bishop himself likely being an heretic or worse) - what a convenient crutch that "obedience" bit has been for the spineless priest!

So much, then, for what were the major disappointments to me which followed upon the disaster known as Vatican Council II. If even one bishop in America and, say, even two or three percent of the priests had stood up wholeheartedly for the Faith during that period, the magnitude of those disappointments would surely have been significantly mitigated.

And now to the subject of this article: traditional Catholicism in the USA today, fifteen years after the conclusion of Vatican Council II. Before making any evaluation of it, what is meant by or who is a traditional Roman Catholic? A traditional Catholic is one who accepts the teaching of the traditional or true Roman Catholic Church in its entirety and who lives that teaching in his daily life as best he can in his particular circumstances. We say "in his particular circumstances" because some are in a more fortunate situation than others (those, for example, who have the true Mass in their area every Sunday) and so are enabled to live their Faith more fully.

History bears irrefutable witness to the fact that the living and professing and preserving of the Roman Catholic Faith has never been an easy task and has often called for and produced heroic sacrifice. And so it will always be. The sacrifices made (often above and beyond the call of duty) by so many individuals and families in recent years in their

noble endeavors to live the Faith despite the Conciliar Church are, in my opinion, one of the glories of the Mystical Body of Christ in this our day. Whether traditional Roman Catholics in this country will face in the years ahead the prospect of martyrdom for the Faith is presently a matter of speculation. But anyone who would today brush off the distinct possibility of this is being very unrealistic.

One of the difficulties in discussing traditional Catholicism lies in the fact that there are numerous individuals and groups who call themselves traditional Roman Catholics but who in fact are not such for one reason or another. The more obvious examples here would include those who are disciples of one or another of the current "Popes outside Rome", and those who are devotees of the various visionaries around the country and around the world. There is no arguing the point that such self-styled traditionalists reflect very poorly upon authentic traditional Catholicism - to say nothing of those "the Jews are the **real** enemy" individuals, a scattering of whom are to be almost invariably found in any fairly sizeable traditional group. And there are other more or less notorious groups or organizations who likewise label themselves traditional Roman Catholics but who have their own particular version or interpretation of traditional Catholicism. And, of course, there are those "traditional Catholics" who will attend the true Mass when it is available in their area but - if it is not, say, on a particular Sunday - will attend the Novus Ordo service in one or another Conciliar church, apparently seeing no inconsistency or contradiction in this.

That many sincere traditional Roman Catholics are confused by all of this is hardly surprising. Indeed, the preservation of one's sanity through it all may well be a significant accomplishment for many. I myself have heard of an occasional individual here or there who will not attend my Mass because I have failed to denounce the current occupant of the papal throne as an invalid Pope; and I have also heard of this or that person who will not attend my Mass because I have made critical comments from time to time about Pope John Paul III! Both of these occurrences, I hasten to say, have been very rare, but I consider them worth mentioning to point up further the confused situation in the traditionalist ranks.

An essential step in the attempts of the Church's enemies to destroy it was the destruction of Church discipline and its hierarchical structure of

authority. One need only observe the current chaos in the Conciliar Church to see how well that objective has been realized. But the consequences of this near-total breakdown in Church authority have been all too sadly obvious in the traditional Catholic movement as well. Entirely apart from those strange groups and organizations of self-styled traditional Catholics who are a blight on authentic traditional Catholicism, even among knowledgeable, rational, genuine Roman Catholics there is **so** much dissension, discord, strife - and seemingly interminable. While these latter, by the grace of God, retain the Faith and hold fast to tradition, yet unity beyond this - unity in secondary matters, if you will - just isn't there to any appreciable extent. And the primary reason for this is the breakdown in Church authority which began with and followed upon Vatican Council II. It has been observed that the Church upheaval of the past 15 years or so has had at least one good by-product, namely, it has motivated a number of Catholics to study their Faith and thereby better appreciate and live it. And so it has. Apart from this though, one would be hard-pressed to discover any other real good that has resulted from the "renewal" of the Church initiated by Pope John XXIII 18 years ago. That "renewal" has been a disaster, the destruction of legitimate Church authority being one of the many casualties.

Ever since the traditional Catholic movement began to take shape in this country in the middle 1960's, far and away the most difficult and disheartening task, in this writer's opinion, has been that of recruiting priests to the traditionalist cause. Of, say, 60,000 priests, as previously noted, who were serving in the Church in some capacity in the USA at the close of Vatican Council II in 1965, perhaps 100 of them (it's just about impossible to be completely accurate in this matter) have taken a **public** stand on behalf of the totality of the Faith in the 15 years since then. Again, that's less than one quarter of one percent!

There are thousands of priests in the Conciliar Church today who were ordained in the 40's and 50's and who therefore received essentially the same seminary training as I did (I was ordained in 1944). How can they in conscience remain a part of that Church? In view of what has happened to the Roman Catholic Church during and since Vatican Council II, is not the stand which I and other fully traditional priests have taken the only logical stand

that can be taken? All we're doing is teaching and preaching the same Faith which the Roman Catholic Church taught and preached for nearly 19½ centuries. If that Church was the One True Church throughout all those centuries, has it ceased to be such since Vatican Council II? If not, where is it to be found except among the truly traditional Catholic clergy and laity in this country and throughout the world? Whatever the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church is, it most assuredly is not Catholic - and there is now overwhelming proof of that. Surely the category of priests in that Conciliar Church to whom I refer know this as well as I do. Why, then, do they remain therein?

And how much more could be done in the work of preserving and propagating the true Faith if even a handful of these priests would at long last decide to stand up for traditional Catholicism and actively to serve the Church for which they were ordained! How much more too our TCA could accomplish in bringing the Mass and Sacraments to our chapels and Mass centers around the country if even **one** more truly traditional priest would come forward to assist us! As of this writing the prospect of that happening is not very bright. Consequently, unless and until we get more such help, it is unrealistic for us either to try to serve more frequently the twelve locations we presently have or, apart from one commitment made some time back, to add to our TCA Mass list. Since its founding nearly a year ago five priests have been associated or working with the TCA. In addition to myself, they are Father Placid White, OSB; Father Victor Mroz, OFM Conv.; Father George Musey; and Father Daniel Jones. Even though we have followed up on every lead we have received over the past year, we have been thus far unable to increase our ranks at all. (In your prayers please ask the good Lord to direct even just **one** more **real** priest our way. We sure could use him. Thank you!)

So, fifteen years (as of December 8, 1980) after Vatican Council II, what is the state of traditional Catholicism in the USA today? Well, in terms of numbers of traditional priests and religious and laity and chapels and Mass centers and schools, it's in very much better shape than it was fifteen years ago. And because the term, "traditional Catholicism," has become today an accurate synonym for the One True Church, we just **know** it's here to stay!

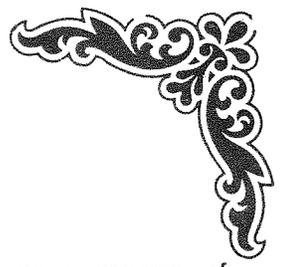
While Christ did say that He would be with the Church until the consummation of the world, He never said that it would always and everywhere flourish. Assuredly it is not flourishing at present in

the USA if mere numbers be our criterion of judgement. Indeed, for every traditional Roman Catholic there are several hundred Conciliar Church "Catholics". Unquestionably then, the Roman Catholic Church is, in terms of numbers, but a remnant of what it formerly was. And yet, ever striving to win converts to the Church and thereby to increase the number of the faithful - and every Catholic has that duty - we must not allow ourselves for one moment to be disheartened because our traditionalist ranks have not grown with the rapidity we might have expected. Perhaps, in view of the many odds against us, we should not have expected this in the first place. In any case, the indisputable fact is that traditional Catholicism is well established in America today and it **is** growing - not in any spectacular fashion, to be sure, but steadily and solidly nonetheless.

How exceedingly fortunate, then, are we traditional Roman Catholics and how very grateful we ought to be to Almighty God! Despite all that has happened to our beloved Church over the past fifteen years, we have retained the Faith in its purity and totality. We have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments and all of the other supernatural treasures of our God-given religion. We belong to the One True Church of the Son of God, the Mystical Body of Christ. Throughout the satanic ordeal to which the Church has been subjected in recent years - and there is no end in sight - we, by the grace of God, have kept the Faith and have remained Roman Catholics. May it be the ardent resolve of each and every one of us, by the same grace of God and come what may, to persevere in that Faith until death!

"As I sat musing, alone and melancholy
and without a friend,
There came a voice out of the gloom
saying:
'Cheer up, things might be worse.'
So I cheered up and, sure enough,
things got worse!"

pray the ROSARY
Daily!



The Athanasian

With this eighth issue of *The Athanasian* we conclude the first year of its publication. Having received so many kind and complimentary comments on it over the past year, we can safely say that it has been well received. For this we are indeed grateful. To publish a truly Roman Catholic newsletter, thoroughly traditional in every respect, is our objective - while striving to improve the quality and variety of its contents with each issue.

For whatever reason most publishers do not reveal the number of paid subscribers to their publications unless postal regulations require them to do so annually. Since *The Athanasian* is sent by first-class mail, it does not come under those regulations and so we do not have to publicize our circulation statistics. Not knowing of any good reason, however, for secrecy in this matter, we will here state what our newsletter circulation is. As of this writing (November 4, 1980) *The Athanasian* has exactly 1235 paid subscriptions. After one year of publication and in view of the inflexible Roman Catholic position we take, is this good or fair or poor in relation to other **thoroughly traditional** publications? I just don't know because those thoroughly traditional publications (there aren't many) don't make known their circulation figures. My own opinion is that, all things considered, our paid circulation is fair at this point.

Anyway, if *The Athanasian* is the very commendable newsletter so many of our subscribers have told us it is (and we have no reason to disagree!), it would be very nice indeed if we could substantially increase its circulation in the weeks and months ahead. Both because of the type of publication it is and because of the uncompromising stand we take, we have no illusions that the circulation of *The Athanasian* will ever be anything tremendous. But, if that circulation is to get any significant increase at all, that increase will have to come, perhaps nearly entirely, from the efforts of our present subscribers. As for advertising, we have already done so in several secular publications during this year, and with fairly good results. But that appears to be the extent of our advertising. Other publications - some traditional, others so-called traditional, others conservative, etc. - either don't carry ads or won't carry ours. And there are still others in which we would not care to advertise even though we might well get a satisfactory response. So, with

all these exceptions, what's left as a means of expanding the circulation of our newsletter? Almost exclusively, it seems, our subscribers.

The primary purpose of this article, then, is again to ask the recipients of *The Athanasian* to be salesmen (salespersons?) for it. Perhaps many of our subscribers might consider a year's subscription to this newsletter as an appropriate Christmas gift to some traditional, or potentially traditional, Catholic relative or friend. If so, we will start that gift subscription with the first 1981 issue of *The Athanasian* and, in addition, will send to the recipient a complimentary copy of a recent issue, enclosing with it, unless otherwise requested, a card notifying that person of the Christmas gift of *The Athanasian* for the coming year (eight issues).

So, the extent to which the circulation of our newsletter will be expanded apparently will depend pretty much upon the extent to which our subscribers promote it in one way or another. The printed word is a most effective means for the advancement of any cause. We think that *The Athanasian* is, or has the potential for being, a truly effective instrument for the promotion of the cause of traditional Catholicism. The assistance of our newsletter subscribers in this vital apostolate will be sincerely appreciated.

Subscription Envelope

Whenever one is enclosed with any particular issue of this newsletter, it means that the recipient's subscription is due for renewal. One may enter a new subscription at any time, of course, and will then receive the eight following newsletter issues.



Christ the King



Upon the divinity of Jesus Christ the Roman Catholic Church stands or falls. As Catholics, we are citizens of Christ's Kingdom on earth, which is the Church. We were enrolled as citizens of that Kingdom in the Sacrament of Baptism, obtaining the rights and privileges and incurring the duties and obligations consequent upon such citizenship. Of the many duties which this entails, one of the foremost is that of paying honor and worship to Jesus Christ our King. Perhaps never before has the performance of that duty been more imperative than it is in this our day.

We are Christians, that is to say, we are followers of Christ. We are Catholics, that is to say, we are, or are supposed to be, full-fledged, totally committed followers of Christ. This means, then, among many things, that our God-given Faith is the overriding, supreme, most vital concern of our lives and not something which we but halfheartedly live, with little or no firm, intelligent, ardent appreciation of its surpassing worth. Being a Catholic means that the desire to advance steadily in the knowledge and love and service of God is the paramount objective of our daily lives, an objective which we steadfastly refuse to permit to be overshadowed by worldly considerations - material security, social prestige, wealth, fame, power, whatever. Being a Catholic means that the preservation and the increase of divine grace in our souls, the doing of penance, and the frequent, devout reception of the Sacraments are matters of grave importance to us and not things which are all well and good for the saints, who, after all, **were** different. Were they? In only one sense, really. They had an intense love for God. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the world and suffer the loss of his soul?" Being a Catholic means that Christ is the King of our hearts and souls and that we are witnesses to Him and to His Church in the world and in the community in which we live. By our words and by our example we reflect upon our faith, for better or for worse. A famous American writer of a past age once said: "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say".

As Catholics we belong to the one organization on the face of the globe established by the Son of God for the eternal salvation of mankind. In that Church (I speak, of course, of the true, the real, the traditional Roman Catholic Church) the revealed

word of God is found in all its beauty; the moral law of God is preached in its entirety; sins are forgiven to the truly repentant in the Sacrament of Penance; the Body and Blood of Christ are received in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; the Sacrifice of the Cross is renewed daily in the unbloody Sacrifice of the true Mass. As Catholics we have the greatest thing in the world - the gift of Faith, membership in the one true Church of Christ - so tremendous a treasure indeed that, in the words of Pope Pius XII, "nothing more glorious, nothing nobler, nothing, surely, more ennobling can be imagined than to belong to the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church".

If, then, our Catholicism is so high and lofty a privilege, and the treasures of the Church so precious and priceless, it follows that the clear-cut duty of every Catholic worthy of the name is to live in accordance with the dignity befitting his membership in the Mystical Body of Christ and to reflect in his daily life the sublime Faith which he professes. "There is no better argument for the truth of Catholicism than a good Catholic." "True faith", wrote Saint Gregory the Great, "consists in this, that we do not contradict by our actions what we profess in words."

And so, unwavering loyalty to Christ is our bounden duty as worthy citizens of His Kingdom on earth. Any halfway measures on our part are but aiding and abetting the cause of the enemy, a truly satanic enemy relentlessly driving, and with frightening success, to banish Christ and Christianity from the very face of the earth! The battle being waged today is one whose stakes are nothing less than the souls of men, and it is a battle in which there is no room for straddlers. It's Christ against anti-Christ! Either we're with God or we're against Him! Such is the challenge before us! As Catholics let us meet that challenge squarely and uncompromisingly, conclusively proving thereby our undying loyalty to Him under whose glorious banner we are so privileged to serve, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, our Lord, our Saviour and our God!

The Conciliar Church and Marriage Annulments

— Fr. Francis E. Fenton

When a traditional Roman Catholic speaks or writes of the Roman Catholic Church these days, it is usually necessary or advisable to preface his remarks with the observation that he is referring to the One True Church and not to the Conciliar or Novus Ordo religion which persists in calling itself Roman Catholic. It is, of course, no more Roman Catholic than any of the hundreds of Protestant denominations around the country.

Now if I were asked to give what I consider to be one of the best single current examples of the fact that the religious establishment which we call the Conciliar Church is not the Roman Catholic Church, I would cite what its diocesan marriage tribunals are doing in the matter of marriage annulments. In the present context an annulment or a declaration of nullity is an official statement by a Church body that a particular marriage is null and void or, in other words, that, for one reason or another, it never was a true or valid marriage from the beginning. The Roman Catholic Church has always issued such declarations of nullity but they were relatively few and only granted after a most thorough and often lengthy investigation. When the Church traditionally made the official declaration that this or that marriage was an invalid one from the start, there could be no reasonable question of the fact of that invalidity.

In 1968, twelve years ago, of the many thousands of marriage cases involved, the Roman Catholic Church issued 442 declarations of nullity in this country. In 1978, the "new Catholic" or Conciliar Church in America issued over 25,000 such declarations, more than 50 times as many as were granted ten years before! In other words, thousands of marriages which the true Church would have declared, and would today declare, to be true and permanent marriages are being allegedly annulled by the Conciliar Church. And what is the basis for these so-called annulments being granted? Why, modern theology, psychology, the behavioral sciences. Because of the knowledge gained from these sciences, you see, it has been determined that innumerable supposedly valid marriages were never really such. It seems that we now have, in the words of one Conciliar Church writer, "a deeper insight into what is needed to make an indissoluble marriage". And so alleged marriage annulments are being dished out right and left by the "new Catholic" Church!

The significance of this is profound. What the Conciliar Church is saying in effect is that the Roman Catholic Church, not having had at its disposal the "enlightenment" of certain scientific discoveries and the benefits of the "new theology", has officially declared, in years past, that multitudes of marriages were valid and true and indissoluble unions which, according to the Novus Ordo Church, were not such. To put it bluntly, the Roman Catholic Church, until a dozen or so years ago, was responsible for countless couples living in prolonged fornication because that Church, in rejecting the vast majority of the appeals for declaration of nullity presented to it, was officially stating that these marriages were valid - when so many of them were, says the Conciliar Church, null and void from the moment the couple uttered their mutual consent at the marriage ceremony. In other words, because the true Church did not have at its disposal 20, 30, 40 years ago the scientific knowledge which the Conciliar Church now possesses, multitudes of marriages before a priest were actually not authentic marriages at all and would today be, and are being, declared null and void by the Conciliar Church.

I have no doubt whatsoever but that the post-Vatican II Conciliar Church is, by way of its diocesan marriage tribunals in this country and throughout the world, issuing declarations of nullity which are contrary to the law of God. A marriage between a validly baptized man and woman free to marry is the Sacrament of Matrimony, and the Roman Catholic Church teaches that, once consummated, no power on earth may break the bond of that marriage. But the Novus Ordo Church is attempting to do so, that is to say, it is violating not mere Church law but the Divine Law! No reason in the world (apart, of course, from the death of one of the parties), no authority in the world can break the bond of a sacramental, consummated marriage, and any declaration of nullity of such a marriage granted by the Conciliar Church is absolutely worthless, being contrary to the law of God!

And so we have one more proof that the Conciliar or Novus Ordo Church is not Catholic and that many of its bishops and priests have lost the Faith. How sad and distressing that millions upon millions of its members continue to live under the false

impression that they still belong to the true Church. But the true Church, the Roman Catholic Church - traditional Catholicism, if you will - always and everywhere upholds the moral law of God and, by its very nature, can never violate it nor allow its clergy to do so in its name. The fact that the Conciliar Church is violating Divine Law is surely incontestable evidence that, whatever it is, it is **not** the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church founded by the Son of God.

The True Mass in the Conciliar Church?

No adequately informed, fully traditional Roman Catholic priest or layman wants or will have any part of the Conciliar or "new Catholic" or Novus Ordo Church. No such Catholic, then, having the courage of his convictions, would support any effort to incorporate the traditional Latin Mass into the worship service of the Conciliar Church or to bring about the coexistence of the True Mass with the Novus Ordo service in that Church. Such incorporation or coexistence is simply inconceivable to any truly genuine traditional Roman Catholic.

Proceed With Honor

An honorable person is a person of integrity, of principle, of character - one who makes a genuine and sustained effort to live an upright and moral life both privately and in his dealings with his fellow men. He is a person of honesty and sincerity and, as such, he disdains hypocrisy and refuses to compromise on anything which to him is a matter of principle. However noble the objectives he seeks, he will not do evil to attain them, being firmly committed to the rule of morality that the end does not justify the means. He is industrious and conscientious in the performance of his daily tasks and strives always to do unto others as he would have them do unto him. That justice be done is a matter of vital concern to him but he is ever ready to temper that stern quality with kindness and charity whenever possible.

Communism is militant godlessness. To fight it is our moral duty. But, in all of our efforts to expose and oppose this satanic evil, let us ourselves always **proceed with honor**. Victory is our goal, yes, but not at any price. We must never sacrifice principle. We must never employ immoral means to achieve our objectives. To suffer defeat with honor is acceptable to God. Victory in dishonor is not.



"The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in a period of moral crisis, maintain their neutrality." (Dante)

THE ATHANASIAN

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— Fr. Francis E. Fenton, Editor

— Miss Ellen W. Soisson, Secretary

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OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHAPEL
2566 Sable Boulevard
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Masses at 9 & 11 a.m. (every Sunday)
Weekday Masses at 8:00 a.m.

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Four Seasons Motor Inn
2886 S. Circle Drive
I-25 and Harrison
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Dec. 28, Jan. 18

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