

# Fraternité St Pie X – Society of St Pius X

## District du/of Canada

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### *“Ignorance of Things Divine”*

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

When asked about the fundamental cause of the evils affecting the contemporary world, St Pius X replied: “We are forced to agree with those who hold that the chief cause of the present indifference and, as it were, infirmity of soul, and the serious evils that result from it, is to be found above all in ignorance of things divine” (*Acerbo nimis*, 1905). Since this letter is written for our own people, I have to say that the statement of our Patron Saint applies far too well to our own flock. This is unfortunate and, as Lent begins, we should try correct this problem.

Faith is a gift of God, we are not born with it; it is given to us with baptism and it can be lost. Too many of our own parents have taken for granted that since they go to the Traditional Mass, all their children will necessarily follow. Sadly, this is not the case.

Many of our young people do lose the faith when they reach adulthood and/or get married. Many of our youth do not even know why they attend the Traditional Mass and not the New Mass, which their friends or relatives may attend. Some traditional Catholics have fallen into sedevacantism or have gone back to the Novus Ordo. Either of these positions can result from a false understanding of papal infallibility or an erroneous notion of the Church.

“Ignorance of Things Divine” is surely the chief cause of these sad cases. Which “things divine”, you may ask?

I would say, first, ignorance of prayer. Various prayers such as the morning offering, the Angelus, the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, and the rosary should be memorized by all Catholics. Many times in our confessionals, when the priest asks whether the penitent knows this or that classic prayer, the answer is: “No!” It was the practice of the daily act of contrition that was greatly instrumental in keeping alive the faith of the Hidden Christians of Japan for 220 years. (By the way, we are celebrating this March 17, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of these 10,000 Hidden Christians in Nagasaki. (More on this next month.)

Ignorance of the catechism is another great problem. How can we love what we do not know? We do know many souls who are truly enraptured with the beauty and riches of our Catholic Faith, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and the awesome mystery of the Holy Mass. But how many, on the other hand, just come to the Traditional Mass, “the most beautiful thing this side of Heaven”, without realizing that it is a gold mine of grace, open to any soul of good will! The sad result of this ignorance often leads our youth to seek ‘more exciting’ religious or political groups, such as communism.

David Hyde was the highest-level Western Communist ever to abandon the Communist Party and join the Catholic Church. In the 1960s, he warned a group of priests about the weakness and lack of dedication among young Catholics:

“A frighteningly high proportion of those who become the hard core of the communist party are baptized Catholics. This is an unpalatable fact, but we might as well swallow it at the start, making it

quite clear in our own minds that we are not dealing with different material. Very often the communists are training and using the material that you once had. Again, I am not theorizing. About one-third of the communist leaders of Britain are, I estimate, lapsed, fallen-away Catholics. Probably twenty-five percent of the Party membership in Britain are lapsed Catholics too. (...) The reason is that your fallen-away Catholic is, perhaps, the most spiritually hungry of all spiritually hungry people. He has a gap in his life which he is trying to fill, and the Communist Party sets out to fill it and sometimes does seem to fill it for quite a long time.

“I would say, beyond any shadow of doubt, one of the things which Communist Party members have in common is their idealism — their willingness to sacrifice, their zeal, their dedication, their devotion to their cause. The communists do succeed in using idealism enormously effectively.” (from *Dedication and leadership techniques*, 1962)

And they do this for atheistic communism? Our Lord had reason to say, “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light”! (Lk. 16: 8) How many are ignorant of the awesome mystery of Redemption, of a God made man dying for us! “He loved me and delivered Himself for me!” (Gal. 2: 20) “For why did Christ, when as yet we were weak, according to the time, die for the ungodly? For scarce for a just man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would dare to die. But God commendeth his charity towards us; because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us; much more therefore, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5: 6 - 9)

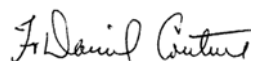
The third ignorance of divine things, appropriate for our consideration as we are about to start another Lent, is the ignorance of the need of penance. Remember that “unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish” (Lk. 13: 3). Penance is primarily interior – it is the sorrow for our sins. So, during this Lent, let us make a serious, well prepared, humble confession. Secondly, this sorrow then seeks to express itself exteriorly by all kinds of little or big sacrifices. The main areas where we can easily practice this Christian mortification are: food (quantity, quality, frequency – let us try to do some serious fasting as it is the tradition for this time of the year), sleep and other means of “bringing the body into subjection” (I Cor. 9: 27)

Another good mortification during Lent would certainly be to give up TV and all unnecessary use of the internet. One “chief cause of the present indifference and, as it were, infirmity of soul, and the serious evils that result from it”, is the invasion of the modern technologies in our lives and homes. Parents have to make a serious examination of conscience as they are responsible for all that comes into their own homes. Modern technologies have so much undermined parental authority that many parents have given up. Thank God, some do wake up, but they are too few!

As a beginning of a solution for this widespread ignorance, may I suggest more spiritual reading during this season of Lent? Have you read, for instance, any of these classics: *The Imitation of Christ*, *The Soul of the Apostolate*, *The Story of a Soul*, *True Devotion to Mary*, *The Confessions of St Augustine*, *Introduction to Devout Life*, *The Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, *the Catechism of the Council of Trent*, or the New Testament? If we don't read, sooner or later we will betray our Lord and His Church, since we will not know what is going on.

“Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6: 2)

Yours truly in the service of Jesus and Mary,



Fr. Daniel Couture  
District Superior

PS. Our seven graduating students of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in New Hamburg, Ontario are looking for sponsors to help them on a pilgrimage to Italy, around Easter. They each need about C\$2,000. Contact Fr. Sherry if you can help in part or in whole. [principalolmc@netflash.net](mailto:principalolmc@netflash.net)