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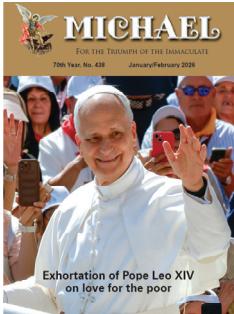
FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE

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**Exhortation of Pope Leo XIV
on love for the poor**



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MICHAEL

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

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

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Letter from the Editor

God entrusts us with a mission

Saint John Henry Newman, whom Leo XIV has just declared a Doctor of the Church (see page 24), wrote: **"God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission."**

Leo XIV, addressing young Americans (see page 30), quoted this prayer of Saint Augustine: **"Lord, give me the grace to do what You ask and then ask whatever You want."**

Saint Alberto Hurtado, a Chilean Jesuit priest (see Vers Demain, October–November–December 2023), stated: **"Jesus tells us: 'I have need of you... I do not force you, but I need you realize My plans of love. If you do not come, a work will remain undone, that only you, you alone, can realize."**

If every human being has received from God different gifts for a mission, a specific vocation, all these vocations converge toward a single goal: to be witnesses, instruments of God's love, so that "His Kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Church teaches us that this love of God must be reflected and made concrete in our love for the poor, as Pope Leo XIV explains in his recent apostolic exhortation (see page 11). If the Church speaks of a preferential option, of a special love for the poor, it is simply because Jesus Himself identifies with the poor when He tells us, in chapter 25 of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: **"I was hungry and you gave me food... Whenever you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."**

In that same exhortation, the Pope insists on the urgency of addressing the structural causes of poverty: "Structures of injustice must be recognized and dismantled by the power of good, through a change of mindsets, but also, with the help of sci-

ence and technology, through the development of effective policies for the transformation of society."

One particularly effective way to put an end to poverty is the solution of Economic Democracy, conceived by the Scottish engineer Clifford Hugh Douglas. It was of this solution that Louis Even said: "It is a light on my path; everyone must know about it," which led him to found Vers Demain in order to facilitate its dissemination.

Douglas and Louis Even explained the flaw in the current monetary system—money created in the form of debt and the chronic lack of purchasing power (see page 8). They also provided a solution, first recalling that the true purpose of the economy is to bring goods and needs together, and that money must reflect reality and serve as simple accounting (see page 4).

Changing the rules of the current financial system is obviously a difficult task, but it is not impossible, since these financial regulations are not divine laws but human laws. They were created and enacted by human beings and can therefore also be changed by human beings.

God's grace is certainly necessary for this task—"immense, but necessary," in the words of Saint John Paul II. And three means, three particularly effective weapons, are offered to us in this struggle for justice: the Rosary, humility, and consecration to Mary (see page 20).

MICHAEL brings a message of hope and of financial liberation for the peoples of the earth. By becoming messengers of this good news of economic justice, we become "pilgrims of hope". The Second Vatican Council reminded us that the mission of the lay faithful is to make the world conform to the Gospel. So, happy reading, and every success in your mission ! ♦

Alain Pilote, Editor

The end of economics: goods must meet the needs of individuals

Since 2006, a study session is organized twice a year in Rougemont on Economic Democracy (or social credit), seen in the light of the social doctrine of the Church. This teaching is given by Alain Pilote, who used the writings of Louis Even to make a summary of the financial proposals of C.H. Douglas in a few lessons.

The lessons of these sessions are reproduced in the book "Economic Democracy seen in the light of the Social Doctrine of the Church", which can be ordered from our office, and is also available on our website. Here are excerpts from the first lesson:

by Alain Pilote

Ends and means

When one speaks of economics, one must first distinguish between ends and means. Furthermore, means are to be subordinated to ends and not the opposite.

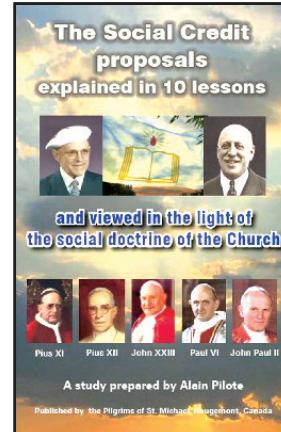
However, in the running of public affairs, means are often mistaken for the end. And we find ourselves amazed by the resulting chaos. According to you, what is the end of economics:

- A. To create jobs?**
- B. To reach a favourable balance of trade?**
- C. To distribute money to people?**
- D. To make the goods that people need?**

The correct answer is D. Yet, for most politicians, the end of economics is to create jobs. But jobs are just one means to make products, the objective sought, the true end of economics. Today, thanks to the heritage of progress, goods can be made with less and less labour, leaving people with more leisure time to invest in other activities such as taking care of their families or accomplishing other social duties.

Besides, what would be the point in continuing to make a given good when human needs for this good have been satisfied? This would lead to a useless waste of natural resources. And if we insist on full employment, what will become of those who cannot be employed in the production system: the handicapped, the elderly, the children, the housewives—should they all starve to death? Not all human beings are producers but all are consumers.

With respect to B: If you submit the following expression to a reality check you will see that a favourable balance of trade, where you export to other countries more products than you import from them, means that you will end up with fewer products in your country and therefore be poorer in real wealth.



Many may be tempted to answer C, for it seems obvious that money is a necessity of life in a modern society unless you be self sufficient in all things—which is the exception in today's society, with its division of labour where one person is the baker, another the carpenter and so on, each one accomplishing a specific task and producing specific goods.

Money is a means of acquiring products made by others. Take note: It is a means, not an end! First, goods have to be made and put up for sale on the market. If there are no products for sale, money would be worthless and of no use. What would be the purpose of having a million dollars if you end up at the North Pole or in the Sahara Desert with no products to buy with your million dollars?



Now, compare this situation to that of a man, without a penny, but who lives on an island that has all the water and food he needs to live comfortably. Of the two, who is the richer?

Let it be said once more, and later explained, that money is not wealth but a means to obtain real wealth, i.e products.

Let us not mistake ends for means. The same can be said of systems. Systems were invented and established to serve man, not man created to serve systems. Therefore if a system is harmful to man, must we allow the multitudes to suffer for the system, or should we alter the system so that it will serve the multitudes?

Since money was established to facilitate production and distribution, do we have to limit production

and distribution to money or do we need to relate money to production and distribution?

From whence we see that the mistaking of ends for means and means for ends, and that subordinating ends to means is a gross and widespread error that causes much disorder.

The end of economics

The word economy is derived from two Greek roots: *oikia*, house; *nomos*, rule. Economy is thus concerned with the good administration of a home, with the orderly use of its possessions.

We may define domestic economy as good management of domestic affairs, and political economy as good management of the affairs of the larger communal home, the nation.

But why "good management"? When can the management of the affairs of the small or large home, the family or the nation, be called good? When it reaches its end.

A thing is good when it attains the results for which it was instituted.

Man engages in different activities and pursues different ends, in different orders, in different domains.

There are, for example, man's moral activities, which concern his progress towards his final end. Cultural activities influence the development of his intellect, the ornamentation of his mind, the formation of his character. In partaking in the general good of society, man engages in social activities.

Economic activities deal with temporal wealth. In his economic activities, man seeks to satisfy his temporal needs.

The goal, the end of economic activities, is therefore the use of earthly goods to satisfy man's temporal needs. And economics reaches its end when it places earthly goods at the service of human needs.

Man's temporal needs are those which accompany him from the cradle to the grave. Some of which are essential, others which are not as vital.

Hunger, thirst, bad weather, weariness, illness, ignorance, create for man the need to eat, to drink, to clothe himself, to find shelter so as to warm or cool himself, to rest, to take care of his health and to educate himself: All of the above are needs.

Food, drink, clothing, shelter, wood, coal, water, bed, medications, a teachers' lessons, books : Each a good to satisfy a particular need.

To allow goods to satisfy needs — this is the goal, the end of economic life.

If it does this, economic life reaches its end. If it does not do this or if it does it poorly or only partially, economic life fails to reach its end or reaches it only imperfectly.

In everyday language, it could be said that economics reaches its end when it is sufficiently well regulated for food to enter the hungry stomach, for clothes to cover the body, for shoes to cover naked feet, for a good fire to warm the house in winter, for the sick to receive the doctor's visit, for the meeting of teachers and students.

Morality and economics

Although economics is responsible for the sole satisfaction of man's temporal needs, the importance of sound economic practices has been stressed, time and time again, by those in charge of souls. Saint Thomas Aquinas reminds us that a minimum of temporal goods are normally required to foster the practice of virtue. We have both a body and a soul, both material and spiritual needs.



The present financial system is not the exact reflection of reality.

As the saying goes: "Words are wasted on a starving man." Missionaries in poor countries know this. They must first feed the hungry before preaching the Good Word. Man needs a minimum of material goods to accomplish his short pilgrimage on earth and to save his soul. A money shortage can cause inhuman and catastrophic situations.

This led Pope Benedict XV to write: **"It is on the economic field that the salvation of souls is at risk."**

And Pius XI: **"It may be said with all truth that nowadays the conditions of social and economic life are such that vast multitudes of men can only with great difficulty pay attention to that one thing necessary, namely their eternal salvation."** (Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, May 15, 1931.)

In the same Encyclical, Pope Pius XI summarizes the social and very human end of the economic order:

"Only will the economic and social organism be soundly established and attain its end when it se-

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► cures for all and each those goods which the wealth and resources of nature, technical achievement, and the social organization of economic affairs can give.”

A truly human economy is social: it must satisfy ALL men. It must allow all men, ALL and EACH, to give their orders to the production of goods—at least until their basic needs are satisfied, for as long as the productive system is capable of answering these orders. i.e until it has reached its capacity.

The policy of a philosophy

Social Credit is not an utopia, but it is based on a proper understanding of reality, on the proper relationship between man and the society in which he lives. In Clifford Hugh Douglas' words: “Social Credit is the policy of a philosophy.”

A policy is the actions we take to attain a goal, and this policy is based on a conception of reality, that is, upon a philosophy.

Social Credit proclaims a philosophy that exists since men have lived in society, but which is totally ignored in practice, more so now than ever.

As old as society itself, and therefore as old as mankind, this philosophy is the philosophy of association. Or as the Church's social teaching would put it: the philosophy of the common good.

The philosophy of association is therefore: The association of all the associates for the benefit of all of the associates, of each associate. Social Credit is the philosophy of association applied to society as a whole, to the province, to the nation. Society exists for the benefit of all of its members, for each and every one.

Social Credit is the doctrine of society for the benefit of all citizens. This is why Social Credit is, by definition, the opposite of any monopoly, whether it be economic, political, for prestige, or for brutal force.

The aim of Social Credit is to “bind back to reality” or “express in practical terms” in today's world, and specially the world of politics and economics, those beliefs about the nature of God, of man and of the universe which constitute the Christian Faith as handed down to us by our ancestors, and not this new version, altered and perverted to suit modern politics or economics.

God's laws and human laws

Men live in society, in a world submitted to God's laws: the laws of nature (the physical laws of creation), and the moral laws, given by God and inscribed in our hearts (the Ten Commandments). The acceptance and knowledge of these laws implies recognizing the consequences of violating them.

**God, grant me the
SERENITY to accept the
things I cannot change,
the COURAGE to change
the things I can, and
the WISDOM to know
the difference.**

Money is a man-made system, not a system created by God: It then can be changed by man.

To accept Natural Law is to recognize an inescapable reality: That all people, individually or collectively, are subject to Natural Law. Every event that occurs in the physical realm is proof of the existence of physical laws that regulate the universe. For example, if a man jumps out of an airplane, he does not break the law of gravity... he only proves its existence. This observation applies to all laws.

These laws of nature, created by God, may not be abrogated by man; they cannot be disobeyed. We cannot avoid the sanctions that accrue from their violation.

The chains individuals have forged for themselves (agreements, associations, man-made laws) are optional, whereas Natural Law and its consequences are inescapable.

Money is a man-made system, not a system created by God or nature: it can then be changed by man. The equilibrium that exists between all living things, the environment, cannot be broken without consequences. If we make products without respecting the environment, if we pollute the planet and waste the resources given to us by God, we have to suffer the consequences.

Social Credit: the confidence that binds society together

In his book entitled *What is Social Credit?*, Geoffrey Dobbs wrote: “The social credit (without capital letters) is the name of something which exists in all societies but which never had a name before because it was taken for granted. We become aware of it only as we lose it.

“‘Credit’ is another word for ‘faith’ or ‘confidence’, so we can also call it the faith or confidence which binds any society together — the mutual trust or belief in each other without which fear is substituted for trust as the ‘cement’ of society... Though no society can exist without some social credit, it is at its maximum where the Christian religion is practiced, and at its minimum where it is denied and derided.

"The social credit is thus a result, or practical expression, of real Christianity in society, one of its most recognisable fruits; and it is the aim and policy of social creditors to increase it, and to strive to prevent its decrease. There are innumerable commonplace examples of it which we take for granted every day of our lives. How can we live in any sort of peace or comfort if we cannot trust our neighbours? How could we use the roads if we could not trust others to observe the rules of the road? (And what happens when they don't!)

"What would be the use of growing anything in gardens, farms, or nurseries if other people would grab it? How could any economic activity go forward — whether producing, selling, or buying — if people cannot, in general, rely upon honesty and fair dealing? And what happens when the concept of the Christian marriage, and the Christian family and upbringing, is abandoned? We see, do we not? — that Christianity is something real with desperately vital practical consequences, and by no means a mere set of opinions which are 'optional' for those to whom they happen to appeal."

In Paragraph 32 of his Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate*, published in 2009, Pope Benedict XVI used the words "social capital" to describe this confidence that binds together all the members of society: "Social capital, that is to say, the network of the relationships of trust, dependability, and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence... This calls for a new and deeper



Geoffrey Dobbs

reflection on the meaning of economics and of its finalities."

One could add that without this respect of the social credit, of the laws ruling society, any life in society would become impossible, even though you put a police officer on every street corner, since you could not trust anybody.

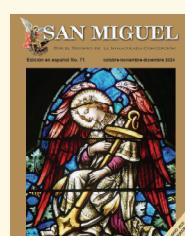
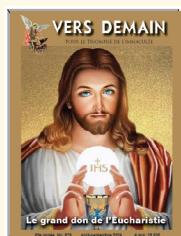
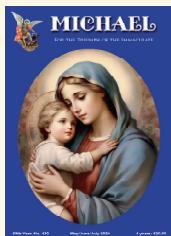
Social discredit

Mr. Dobbs continues: "Just as there are social creditors, conscious and unconscious, trying to build up the social credit (the confidence that we can live together in society and benefit from it), so there are others — social discreditors — trying to destroy it and break it down, at present with all too much success. The conscious ones include the Communists and other revolutionaries, who quite openly seek to smash all the links of trust and confidence which enable our society to function until the Day of the Revolution dawns... But it is the unconscious social discreditors who are responsible, in the West, for the present success of the conscious ones....

"So now at last I have come to the question of money, which is what some people think that Social Credit is all about; but it isn't! Social Credit is an attempt to apply Christianity in social affairs; but if money stands in the way, then we, and every Christian, must concern ourselves with the nature of money, and just why it stands in the way, as it surely does.

"There is a dire need for more people to look deeply into the operation of our monetary system, though that is not everyone's job. But when the consequences are so desperate, everyone can at least grasp the outline of what is wrong, and could be put right, which will enable them to act accordingly..." ♦

Alain Pilote



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From parable to reality



In the previous issue of MICHAEL, readers were able to read the parable of The Money Myth Exploded (five castaways on an island), by Louis Even, which explains how money is created in the form of debt, generating unpayable debts and other economic difficulties. The following article draws a connection between this parable and the reality of our countries today, which are struggling with the same debt-money system, causing the same problems experienced on the island of the castaways, but to an even more severe degree. Mr. Even clearly explains the problem and also presents the solution: Economic Democracy, developed by the Scottish engineer Clifford Hugh Douglas.

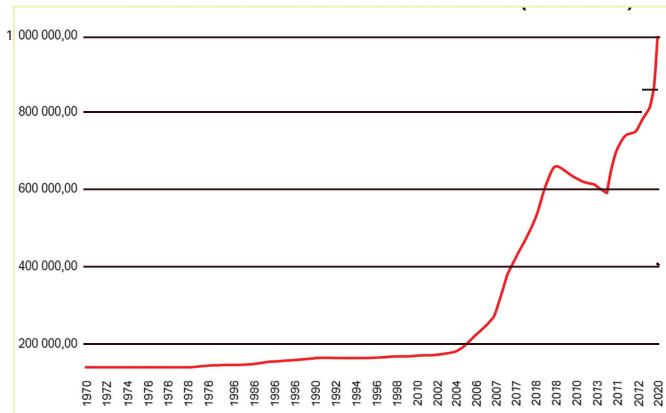
by Louis Even

A debt-money system

The debt-money system that Oliver, the banker, established on the island made the little community sink into financial debt at the rate at which the island developed and enriched itself through the work of its inhabitants. The exact same thing goes on in our civilized countries. Does it not?

Canada is certainly richer today, in real wealth, than it was 50 years ago, 100 years ago, or in the pioneers' days. Yet compare today's national debt, i.e. the total of all public debts owed in Canada today, to what the total was 50 years ago, 100 years ago or three centuries ago!

Net federal debt in millions of dollars (1970-2020)



Editor's note: Canada's debt rose from \$24 billion in 1975 to \$1,445 billion in November 2025. If the Canadian government was able to reduce its debt between 1997 and 2007, it was because it generated budget surpluses by cutting spending—essentially

transfers to the provinces—thereby forcing them to incur greater debt in order to maintain services to citizens. However, the total debt of public administrations (federal, provincial, and municipal) can only continue to rise; indeed, when the debts of the provinces and territories are included, Canada's total debt climbs to approximately \$2,200 billion.

When this debt is compared to the size of the Canadian economy, it represents 106% of GDP (gross domestic product), placing Canada in the category of countries as heavily indebted as the United States of America (\$38,000 billion, or 119% of GDP) and France (3,345 billion, or 115% of GDP).

Yet it is the Canadian people who have created this enrichment by their labor and know-how. Why then should they be kept in debt for what has resulted from their work?

For example, consider the schools, the municipal aqueducts, the bridges, the roads and other public works. Who builds them? The country's builders. Who supplies the materials they need? The country's manufacturers. And how can these people be employed at public works? It is because there are other workers who produce food, clothing, shoes, or who supply the services and materials required by the builders and manufacturers.

Thus it is the Canadian population as a whole, by its different kinds of work that produces all this wealth. If goods are brought in from other countries, it is in exchange for products that we have made here.

But what do we see instead? Everywhere, citizens are being taxed to pay for schools, hospitals, bridges, roads and other public works. The population is collectively made to pay for what it has produced collectively by its own efforts.

More than double the price

But there is worse: The population is made to pay more than the cost of what it has produced. Its own production, an increase in real wealth, becomes a debt to which interests are added. With time, the interests add up and can equal or even exceed the amount of the debt imposed by the system. At times, the people are made to pay double, triple the price for a production it has itself made.

On top of the public debts, there are industrial debts, also loaded with interests. These compel the manufacturers and contractors to increase their prices beyond the cost of production, in order to reimburse the capital and the interests, so as to avoid bankruptcy.

Both public and industrial debts plus the added interests, must be paid by the people to the financial system. Public debts are paid for by taxes; industrial debts are paid for through prices. Prices go up while our pocketbooks are being flattened by taxes.

A tyrannical system

These and many other facts are indicative of a monetary system, a financial system that controls instead of being a servant; a system that keeps the population under its dominance — the way Oliver controlled the men on the Island before they rebelled.

And what happens when the money controllers refuse to lend, or when they add conditions that neither public bodies nor manufacturers can bear? At times, public bodies have to put off projects, no matter how urgent they may be. Manufacturers give up on plans for the development or production of goods that would have answered true needs. And this causes unemployment. And to save the unemployed from starvation, taxes must be levied on those who still own something, or on those who still earn a salary.

Can you imagine a greater tyranny, which evils can be felt by the whole population?

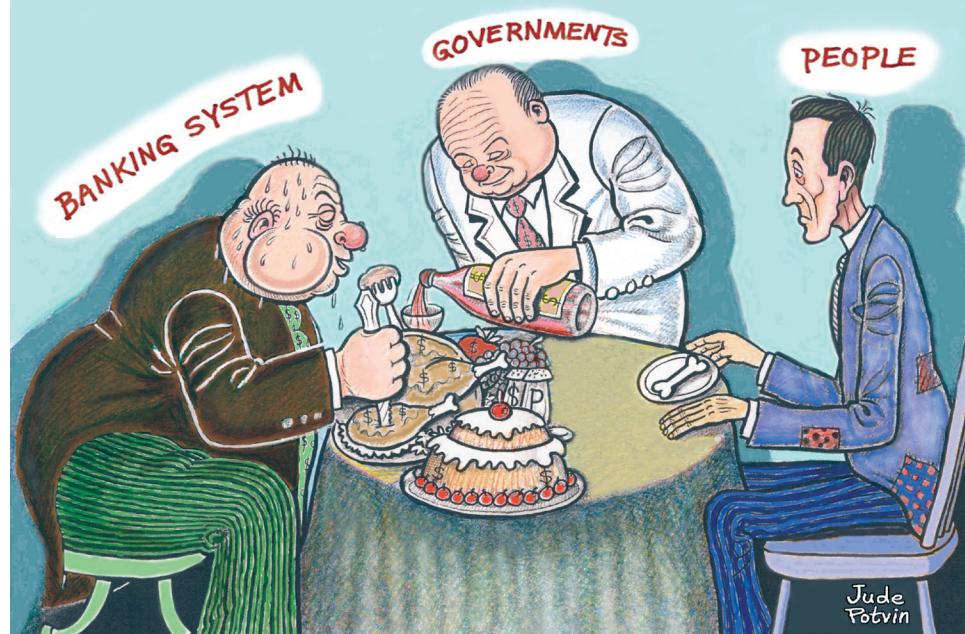
An obstacle to distribution

And there is more. Not satisfied with turning the production it finances into debts, or with paralyzing the part of production it refuses to finance, the monetary system is a poor financial instrument for the distribution of products.

Even though the stores and warehouses are full, and though there exists all that is needed for an even greater production, the distribution of available goods is rationed.

You can only obtain what you can pay for. In front of an abundant production, there should be an abundance of purchasing power in our wallets. Such is not the case. The system always adds more prices to the products than it delivers money into the pocketbooks of the people who need these products.

The capacity to pay is not equal to the capacity to produce. Finance does not reflect reality. Reality means having an abundance of goods that are easily made. Finance equates to money being



rationed and hard to obtain.

The present monetary system is truly a system that punishes when it ought to be a system that serves. This does not mean that we must do away with it, but changes must be made to it. This is what the principles of Social Credit are meant to do.

Money in keeping with reality

Oliver's money, on the island, would have had no value had there been no products on the island. Even if his barrel had really been full of gold, what could this gold have purchased on an island that had no products? Gold, dollar bills, or entries in Oliver's books could not have fed anyone if there had been no food. The same applies to clothing and to everything else.

But there were products on the island. These products came from natural resources and from the work of the small community. This real wealth, that which gave money its value, was the property of the island's inhabitants, and not the exclusive property of Oliver, the banker.

Oliver put them in debt for something that they owned. They understood this when they learned about Social Credit. They understood that all money, all financial credit is based on society's credit, and not upon the banker's operations. This money should have been theirs from the moment it was created; and should have been handed to them, divided amongst them, later to be used for their exchanges as products went from one person to another.

For them, the question of money became what it really is in essence: a matter of accounting.

The first thing required of accounting, is for it to be exact, that it be in keeping with what it is meant to express. Money must be in keeping with the production and with the destruction of wealth. It

- ▶ automated production, automated money; free production, free money.

Money for production

Money must be placed at the service of producers, as and when they need it in order to mobilize the means of production. This is possible, since it has already been done—overnight—once war was declared in 1939. The money that had been lacking everywhere for ten years suddenly appeared; and throughout the six years of war, there was no longer any shortage of money to finance all the production that was possible and required.

Money therefore can—and must—be placed at the service of both public and private production, with the same reliability with which it was placed at the service of wartime production. Everything that is physically possible to meet the legitimate needs of the population must be made financially possible.

This would put an end to the nightmares of public bodies. And it would put an end to unemployment and its hardships, as long as there remain things to be done to meet the public or private needs of the population.

A dividend to all

Social Credit moves that a periodical dividend be distributed to each and every person: An amount given each month to each individual, regardless of whether he is employed or not; the same way dividends are distributed to investors, even when they do not personally take part in any work.

It is widely recognized that a capitalist, someone who invests money in an enterprise, has the right to draw a benefit from his investment, an income which is called a dividend. Other individuals will set his capital to work, and they in turn are rewarded for doing so, through their salary. But the capitalist draws an income simply from his money being invested in the enterprise. If he also works there, he will then draw two incomes: a salary for his work, and a dividend for his capital.

Social Credit considers that all members of society are capitalists. Together they own a real capital that contributes considerably more to production than the investor's money-capital or the employees' labor.

What is this social capital made of?

What is this social capital made of? First, there are the country's natural resources that were not made by anyone. They are a gift from God to those who inhabit the country.

Then, there is the total of all the knowledge, the inventions and discoveries, the improvements made to production processes; the total of all the

progress acquired, accumulated, increased and passed on from one generation to the next. This is a common inheritance, earned by past generations, used and increased by our generation before it is passed on to the next generation. It is not anyone's exclusive property but a communal property "par excellence".

And this is by far the greatest factor in modern production. If the motive force derived from steam, electricity and oil—all inventions of the last three centuries—were taken away, what would be left of the total production, even if you were to increase the amount of labor and the number of hours worked by all of the country's workforce?

No doubt, producers are still needed to set to work this capital, and they are rewarded for doing so by their salaries. But this capital must earn dividends to its owners and therefore to all the citizens since they are all, equally, coheirs of past generations.

Since this social capital is the most important factor in modern production, the dividend should at least cover everyone's basic needs. And as the part of production due to mechanization and automation increases, while human work decreases, the part of production distributed by social dividends must increase.

This would at the same time be a means—well suited to the great productive capacities of modern society—of putting into practice the right of every human being to the use of material goods. A right that every person derives from the mere fact of his or her existence. A fundamental and inalienable right, recalled by Pope Pius XII in his historic radio message of June 1, 1941:

"The goods created by God were created for all people and must be made available to all, according to the principles of justice and charity. Every human being, as a rational creature, possesses by nature the fundamental right to make use of the material goods of the earth... Such an individual right can in no way be suppressed, not even by the exercise of other certain and recognized rights over material goods."

A dividend for each and every person: this is indeed the most radiant economic and social formula ever proposed to a world whose problem is no longer production, but the distribution of goods.

Many people, in several countries, see in Economic Democracy, or Douglas's Social Credit, the most complete proposal ever put forward to serve a modern economy of abundance and to place production at the service of all. ♦

Louis Even

The current monetary system must be corrected. This is what Economic Democracy would do

Apostolic Exhortation Dilexi te on love of the poor

On October 9, 2025, the Vatican made public the apostolic exhortation *Dilexi te* (I Have Loved You, Revelation 3:9) on love for the poor, the first major document of Pope Leo XIV. The drafting of this document had begun during the final months of the pontificate of Pope Francis, following his encyclical letter *Dilexit nos* (He Has Loved Us) on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the very beginning of this new exhortation, Leo XIV writes:

"I am happy to make this document my own — adding some reflections — and to issue it at the beginning of my own pontificate, since I share the desire of my beloved predecessor that all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ's love and his summons to care for the poor."

It was love for the poor that motivated Louis Even to undertake his great work for the financial liberation of peoples. For example, Abbé Édouard Lavergne, founding pastor of the parish of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Quebec City in 1924, who later became a fervent advocate of Douglas's Economic Democracy (or Social Credit), said to Louis Even: **"What I appreciate about Social Credit is that its application, with a dividend for all, would above all, do good to the poor."**

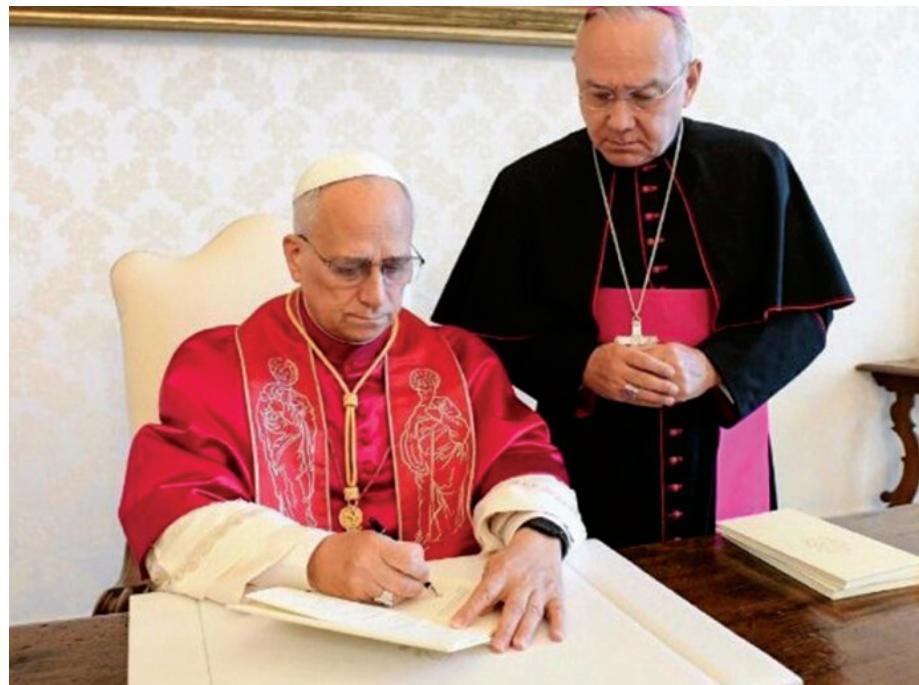
This is indeed true. One may also quote these words of Saint Paul VI, taken from his 1967 encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio* (on the development of peoples) which clearly reflect the purpose of MICHAEL, when he wrote about the person **"who is motivated, more than anyone else, who pits his intelligence against the problems of poverty, trying to uncover the causes, and looking for effective ways of combatting and overcoming them."**

Here, then, are extensive excerpts from this apostolic exhortation, which deserves to be meditated upon by all friends of the cause of MICHAEL:

by Leo XIV

The cry of the poor

The condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church. On the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and, therefore,



*On October 4, 2025, on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope Leo XIV signed *Dilexi te* in the presence of Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, Substitute at the Secretariat of State of the Vatican.*

the suffering of Christ Himself. At the same time, we should perhaps speak more correctly of the many faces of the poor and of poverty, since it is a multi-faceted phenomenon. **In fact, there are many forms of poverty:** the poverty of those who lack material means of subsistence, the poverty of those who are socially marginalized and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities, moral and spiritual poverty, cultural poverty, the poverty of those who find themselves in a condition of personal or social weakness or fragility, the poverty of those who have no rights, no space, no freedom.

In this sense, it can be said that the commitment to the poor, and to removing the social and structural causes of poverty, has gained importance in recent decades, but it remains insufficient. This is also the case because our societies often favor criteria for orienting life and politics that are marked by numerous inequalities. As a result, the old forms of poverty that we have become aware of, and are trying to combat, are being joined by new ones, sometimes more subtle and dangerous.

A concrete commitment to the poor must also be accompanied by a change in mentality that can

► have an impact at the cultural level. In fact, the illusion of happiness derived from a comfortable life pushes many people towards a vision of life centered on the accumulation of wealth and social success at all costs, even at the expense of others and by taking advantage of unjust social ideals and political-economic systems that favor the strongest.

Thus, in a world where the poor are increasingly numerous, we paradoxically see the growth of a wealthy elite, living in a bubble of comfort and luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people. This means that a culture still persists — sometimes well disguised — that discards others without even realizing it and tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings.

We must not let our guard down when it comes to poverty. We should be particularly concerned about the serious conditions in which many people find themselves due to lack of food and water. In wealthy countries too, the growing numbers of the poor are equally a source of concern. In Europe, more and more families find themselves unable to make it to the end of the month. In general, we are witnessing an increase in different kinds of poverty, which is no longer a single, uniform reality but now involves multiple forms of economic and social impoverishment, reflecting the spread of inequality, even in largely affluent contexts.

Looking beyond the data — which is sometimes “interpreted” to convince us that the situation of the poor is not so serious — the overall reality is quite evident: “Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human de-

velopment. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that ‘new forms of poverty are emerging... looking beyond specific situations and contexts, however, a 1984 document of the European Community declared that “the poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member States in which they live.” Yet, if we acknowledge that all human beings have the same dignity, independent of their place of birth, the immense differences existing between countries and regions must not be ignored.

The poor are not there by chance or by blind and cruel fate. Nor, for most of them, is poverty a choice. Yet, there are those who still presume to make this claim, thus revealing their own blindness and cruelty. Of course, among the poor there are also those who do not want to work, perhaps because their ancestors, who worked all their lives, died poor. However, there are so many others — men and women — who nonetheless work from dawn to dusk, perhaps collecting scraps or the like, even though they know that their hard work will only help them to scrape by, but never really improve their lives. Nor can it be said that most of the poor are such because they do not “deserve” otherwise, as maintained by that specious view of meritocracy that sees only the successful as “deserving.”

The Fathers of the Church and the poor

Among the Eastern Fathers, perhaps the most ardent preacher on social justice was Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople from the late 300s to the early 400s. In his homilies, he ex-

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom My Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome... I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did it to Me”. (Matthew 25:34-36)





horted the faithful to recognize Christ in the needy: **"Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not allow it to be despised in its members, that is, in the poor, who have no clothes to cover themselves. Do not honor Christ's body here in church with silk fabrics, while outside you neglect it when it suffers from cold and nakedness..."** [The body of Christ on the altar] does not need cloaks, but pure souls; while the one outside needs much care. Let us therefore learn to think of and honor Christ as He wishes. For the most pleasing honor we can give to the one we want to venerate is that of doing what He Himself desires, not what we devise... So you too, give Him the honor He has commanded, and let the poor benefit from your riches. God does not need golden vessels, but golden souls."

For Augustine, the poor are not just people to be helped, but the sacramental presence of the Lord. The Doctor of Grace saw caring for the poor as concrete proof of the sincerity of faith. Anyone who says they love God and has no compassion for the needy is lying (cf. 1 Jn 4:20). Commenting on Jesus' encounter with the rich young man and the "treasure in heaven" reserved for those who give their possessions to the poor (cf. Mt 19:21), Augustine puts the following words in the Lord's mouth: **"I received the earth, I will give heaven; I received temporal goods, I will give back eternal goods; I received bread, I will give life..."**

The recent teaching of the Church

The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, building on the teachings of the Church Fathers, forcefully reaffirms the universal destination of earthly goods and the social function of property that derives from it. The Constitution states that

Does this mean that the less gifted are not human beings? Or that the weak do not have the same dignity as ourselves? Are those born with fewer opportunities of lesser value as human beings? Should they limit themselves merely to surviving?

"God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity...

In their use of things people should regard the external goods they lawfully possess as not just their own but common to others as well, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as themselves. Therefore, everyone has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's goods for themselves and their family... Persons in extreme necessity are entitled to take what they need from the riches of others... By its nature, private property has a social dimension that is based on the law of the common destination of earthly goods. Whenever the social aspect is forgotten, ownership can often become the object of greed and a source of serious disorder." (Paragraphs 69 and 71.) This conviction was reiterated by Saint Paul VI in his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. There we read that no one can feel authorized to "appropriate surplus goods solely for his [or her] own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life." (Paragraph 23)

With Saint John Paul II, the Church's preferential relationship with the poor was consolidated, particularly from a doctrinal standpoint. His teaching saw in the option for the poor a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness." In his Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he went on to say: "Today, furthermore, given the worldwide dimension which the social question has assumed, this love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. It is impossible not to take account of the existence of these realities. **To ignore them would mean becoming like the 'rich man' who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate** (cf. Lk 16:19-31)." ▶

► Amid the multiple crises that marked the beginning of the third millennium, the teaching of Benedict XVI took a more distinctly political turn. Hence, in the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, he affirms that “the more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them.” He observed, moreover, that **“hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional.** What is missing, in other words, is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs, and also capable of addressing the primary needs and necessities ensuing from genuine food crises, whether due to natural causes or political irresponsibility, nationally and internationally.”

We must continue, then, to denounce the “dictatorship of an economy that kills,” and to recognize that “while the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. **This imbalance is the result of ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. Consequently, they reject the right of states, charged with vigilance for the common good, to exercise any form of control. A new tyranny is being born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules.**” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, Nov. 24, 2013). There is no shortage of theories attempting to justify the present state of affairs or to explain that economic thinking requires us to wait for invisible market forces to resolve everything. Nevertheless, the dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow, and the extreme poverty of all those to whom this dignity is denied should constantly weigh upon our consciences.

In his Encyclical *Dilexit Nos* (about the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Pope Francis reminded us that social sin consolidates a “structure of sin” within society, and is frequently “part of a dominant mindset that considers normal or reasonable what is merely selfishness and indifference. This then gives rise to social alienation.” It then becomes normal to ignore the poor and live as if they do not exist. It then likewise seems reasonable to organize the economy in such a way that sacrifices are demanded of the masses in order to serve the needs of the powerful. Meanwhile, the poor are promised only a few “drops” that trickle down, until the next global crisis brings things back to where they were. A genuine form of alienation is present when we limit ourselves to theoretical excuses instead of seeking to resolve the concrete problems of those who suffer.

Saint John Paul II had already observed that, “a society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer the gift of self and to establish solidarity between people.” (Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, 1991, Paragraph 41)

It is urgent to address the structural causes of poverty.

We need to be increasingly committed to resolving the structural causes of poverty. This is a pressing need that “cannot be delayed, not only for the pragmatic reason of its urgency for the good order of society, but because society needs to be cured of a sickness which is weakening and frustrating it, and which can only lead to new crises. Welfare projects, which meet certain urgent needs, should be considered merely provisional responses.” (Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 202) I can only state once more that inequality “is the root of social ills.” (*Ibid*)

As it is, “the current model, with its emphasis on success and self-reliance, does not appear to favor an investment in efforts to help the slow, the weak or the less talented to find opportunities in life.” (*Ibid*, 209) The same questions keep coming back to us. **Does this mean that the less gifted are not human beings? Or that the weak do not have the same dignity as ourselves? Are those born with fewer opportunities of lesser value as human beings? Should they limit themselves merely to surviving?**

The worth of our societies, and our own future, depends on the answers we give to these questions. Either we regain our moral and spiritual dignity, or we fall into a cesspool. Unless we stop and take this matter seriously, we will continue, openly or surreptitiously, “to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption.” (Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 50)

All the members of the People of God have a duty to make their voices heard, albeit in different ways, in order to point out and denounce such structural issues, even at the cost of appearing foolish or naïve. Unjust structures need to be recognized and eradicated by the force of good, by changing mindsets but also, with the help of science and technology, by developing effective policies for societal change. It must never be forgotten that the Gospel message has to do not only with an individual’s personal relationship with the Lord, but also with something greater: “the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that He reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity,

Unjust structures need to be recognized and eradicated by the force of good, by changing mindsets but also, with the help of science and technology, by developing effective policies for societal change.



justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. We are seeking God's Kingdom."

Indeed, caring for the poor is part of the Church's great tradition, a beacon as it were of evangelical light to illumine the hearts and guide the decisions of Christians in every age. That is why we must feel bound to invite everyone to share in the light and life born of recognizing Christ in the faces of the suffering and those in need. Love for the poor is an essential element of the history of God's dealings with us; it rises up from the heart of the Church as a constant appeal to the hearts of the faithful, both individually and in our communities.

As the Body of Christ, the Church experiences the lives of the poor as her very "flesh", for theirs is a privileged place within the pilgrim people of God. Consequently, love for the poor — whatever the form their poverty may take — is the evangelical hallmark of a Church faithful to the heart of God. Indeed, one of the priorities of every movement of renewal within the Church has always been a preferential concern for the poor. In this sense, her work with the poor differs in its inspiration and method from the work carried out by any other humanitarian organization.

At times, Christian movements or groups have arisen which show little or no interest in the common good of society and, in particular, the protection and advancement of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged members. **Yet we must never forget that religion, especially the Christian religion, cannot be limited to the private sphere, as if believers had no business making their voice heard with regard to problems affecting civil society and issues of concern to its members.** (*Evangelii gaudium*, 182-183)

Indeed, "any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative

concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk." (*Ibid*, 207)

Almsgiving today

I would like to close by saying something about almsgiving, which nowadays is not looked upon favorably even among believers... Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions. Remaining in the realm of ideas and theories, while failing to give them expression through frequent and practical acts of charity, will eventually cause even our most cherished hopes and aspirations to weaken and fade away.

For this very reason, we Christians must not abandon almsgiving. It can be done in different ways, and surely more effectively, but it must continue to be done. It is always better at least to do something rather than nothing. Whatever form it may take, almsgiving will touch and soften our hardened hearts. It will not solve the problem of world poverty, yet it must still be carried out, with intelligence, diligence and social responsibility. For our part, we need to give alms as a way of reaching out and touching the suffering flesh of the poor.

Through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support, the poor will come to realize that Jesus' words are addressed personally to each of them: "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9).

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on October 4, the Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi, in the year 2025, the first of my Pontificate. ♦

LEO PP. XIV



Why a Feast of Christ the King?

“To fight the plague of anti-clericalism,” said Pius XI

Exactly 100 years ago, the Feast of Christ the King was instituted in the Catholic Church by Pope Pius XI through His encyclical letter *Quas Primas*, dated December 11, 1925. Originally, this feast was celebrated on the last Sunday of October (that is, the Sunday preceding All Saints’ Day). Since the liturgical reform of 1969, Catholics celebrate it on the final Sunday of the liturgical year, toward the end of November, under the title of “Christ the King of the Universe.”

To understand the meaning of this feast at a time when states claim radical secularism and even anti-clericalism, one must reread Pope Pius XI’s encyclical. What follows are substantial excerpts from it:

In the first Encyclical Letter which we addressed at the beginning of Our Pontificate to the Bishops of the universal Church (*Ubi Arcano*, December 23, 1922), we referred to the chief causes of the difficulties under which mankind was laboring. And we remember saying that these manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law out of their lives; that these had no place either in private affairs or in politics: and we said further, that as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations. Men must look for the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ; and that we promised to do as far as lay in our power. In the Kingdom of Christ, that is, it seemed to us that peace could not be more effectually restored nor fixed upon a firmer basis than through the restoration of the Empire of Our Lord.

We were led in the meantime to indulge the hope of a brighter future at the sight of a more widespread and keener interest showed in Christ and His Church, the one Source of Salvation, a sign that men who had formerly spurned the rule of our Redeemer and had exiled themselves from His kingdom were preparing, and even hastening, to return to the duty of obedience.

It has long been a common custom to give to Christ the metaphorical title of “King”, because of the high degree of perfection whereby he excels all creatures... But if we ponder this matter more deeply, we cannot but see that the title and the power of King belongs to Christ as man in the strict and proper sense too. For it is only as man that he may be said to have received from the Father power and glory and a kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14), since the Word of God, as consubstantial with the Father, has all things in common with Him, and therefore has necessarily supreme and absolute dominion over all things created.

Moreover, Christ Himself speaks of His own kingly authority: in His last discourse, speaking of the rewards and punishments that will be the eternal lot of the just and the damned; in His reply to the Roman magistrate, who asked Him publicly whether He were a king or not; after His resurrection, when giving to His Apostles the mission of teaching and baptizing all nations, He took the opportunity to call Himself king (Matthew 25:31-40), confirming the title publicly (John 18:37), and solemnly proclaimed that all power was given Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). These words can only be taken to indi-

“He (Jesus) must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires, and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone.” – Pius XI



cate the greatness of His power, the infinite extent of His kingdom.

A spiritual kingdom

This kingdom is spiritual and is concerned with spiritual things. That this is so the above quotations from Scripture amply prove, and Christ by His own action confirms it. On many occasions, when the Jews and even the Apostles wrongly supposed that the Messiah would restore the liberties and the kingdom of Israel, He repelled and denied such a suggestion. When the populace thronged around Him in admiration and would have acclaimed Him King, He shrank from the honor and sought safety in flight. Before the Roman magistrate He declared that His kingdom was not of this world. The gospels present this kingdom as one which men prepare to enter by penance, and cannot actually enter except by faith and by baptism, which, though an external rite, signifies and produces an interior regeneration.

This kingdom is opposed to none other than to that of Satan and to the power of darkness. It demands of its subjects a spirit of detachment from riches and earthly things, and a spirit of gentleness. They must hunger and thirst after justice, and more than this, they must deny themselves and carry the cross. Christ as our Redeemer purchased the Church at the price of His own blood; as priest He offered Himself, and continues to offer Himself as a victim for our sins. Is it not evident, then, that His kingly dignity partakes in a manner of both these offices?

It would be a grave error, on the other hand, to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since, by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power. Nevertheless, during His life on earth, He refrained from the exercise of such authority, and although He Himself disdained to possess or to care for earthly goods, He did not, nor does He today, interfere with those who possess them.

Thus the empire of our Redeemer embraces all men... Nor is there any difference in this matter between the individual and the family or the State; for all men, whether collectively or individually, are under the dominion of Christ. In Him is the salvation

of the individual, in Him is the salvation of society. “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 3:12).

He is the author of happiness and true prosperity for every man and for every nation. “For a nation is happy when its citizens are happy. What else is a nation but a number of men living in concord?” (St. Augustine) If, therefore, the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of their countries, they will not neglect the public duty of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ.

The plague of anti-clericalism

If we ordain that the whole Catholic world shall revere Christ as King, we shall minister to the need of the present day, and at the same time provide an excellent remedy for the plague which now infects society. We refer to the plague of anti-clericalism, its errors and impious activities.

THis evil spirit, as you are well aware, venerable brethren, has not come into being in one day; it has long lurked beneath the surface. The empire of Christ over all nations was rejected. The right which the Church has from Christ Himself, to teach mankind, to make laws, to govern peoples in all that pertains to their eternal salvation, that right was denied. Then gradually the religion of Christ came to be likened to false religions and to be placed ignominiously on the same level with them. It was then put under the power of the state and tolerated more or less at the whim of princes and rulers. Some men went even further, and wished to set up, in the place of God’s religion, a natural religion consisting in some instinctive affection of the heart. There were even some nations who thought they could dispense with God, and that their religion should consist in impiety and the neglect of God.

The rebellion of individuals and states against the authority of Christ has produced deplorable consequences. We lamented these in the encyclical *Ubi Arcano*; we lament them today: the seeds of discord sown far and wide; those bitter enmities and rivalries between nations, which still hinder so much the

► cause of peace; that insatiable greed which is so often hidden under a pretense of public spirit and patriotism, and gives rise to so many private quarrels; a blind and immoderate selfishness, making men seek nothing but their own comfort and advantage, and measure everything by these; no peace in the home, because men have forgotten or neglect their duty; the unity and stability of the family undermined; society, in a word, shaken to its foundations and on the way to ruin.

If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by His precious blood, are by a new right subjected to His dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from His empire.

He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God.

He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to Him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, as instruments of justice unto God. If all these truths are presented to the faithful for their consideration, they will prove a powerful incentive to perfection. ♦

Pius XI

Secularity or secularism?

It is important to clearly distinguish between these two terms. Secularity means that the State has no official religion, but that it neither prohibits nor combats religions. The State allows people to live their faith and to express it freely. Secularism, on the other hand, is hostile to all forms of religion and seeks to prohibit any expression or manifestation of religion in public, in schools, and elsewhere.

When we speak of the separation of Church and State, we are referring to the sound distinction between the political sphere and the religious sphere—something that has not always been easy to achieve throughout history. In France, for example, the Revolution of 1789 prohibited any influence of the Catholic religion: this was the period of The Terror, during which priests were even forced, under penalty of death, to swear an oath of obedience to the State rather than to the Pope in Rome. A few years later, Emperor Bonaparte, recognizing that religion was nevertheless necessary for the stability of the State, restored relations with the Church of Rome through the Concordat of 1801. Despite this, an anti-clerical spirit continued to prevail among a large segment of the French political class, and in 1905 Parliament passed the Law on the Separation of Churches and the State.

In 2005, on the occasion of the centenary of this law, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote a Letter to the Bishops of France. Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, then President of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of France, summarized the Pope's letter as follows:

“John Paul II distinguishes between secularity and secularism. The latter is an attitude hostile to all religion, which it views as a humiliation of reason and a source of violence and intolerance... In

contrast to secularism, it is important to clearly define the correct understanding of the principle of secularity, ‘which also belongs,’ the Holy Father says, ‘to the social doctrine of the Church.’ It expresses the non-confessional nature of the State and the proper autonomy of both the State and the Church. The State does not interfere in the internal life of the Church, and likewise the Church does not normally intervene in the functioning of the State and public authorities, except when respect for the foundational principles of our social life is at stake. This autonomy does not mean mutual ignorance, but dialogue.”

In his apostolic exhortation on the Church in the Middle East (September 14, 2012, no. 29), Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “A healthy secularity... frees religion from the encumbrance of politics, and allows politics to be enriched by the contribution of religion, while maintaining the necessary distance, clear distinction and indispensable collaboration between the two spheres. No society can develop in a healthy way without embodying a spirit of mutual respect between politics and religion, avoiding the constant temptation either to merge the two or to set them at odds... Both spheres should be marked by a kind of unity in distinction, inasmuch as both are called, while remaining distinct, to cooperate harmoniously in the service of the common good. This kind of healthy secularity ensures that political activity does not manipulate religion, while the practice of religion remains free from a politics of self-interest which at times is barely compatible with, if not downright contrary to, religious belief. For this reason, a healthy secularity, embodying unity in distinction, is necessary and even vital for both spheres.” ♦



In Quebec and Canada: Two bills that undermine freedom of religion



Under the pretext of secularity, what is in fact being applied in Quebec and in Canada today is secularism, through two bills that directly threaten freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Unlike secularity—which means that the State has no official religion but does not prohibit or combat religions—the governments are implementing a policy of secularism that is hostile to all forms of religion and seeks to prohibit any expression or manifestation of religion in public, in schools, and elsewhere. These two bills must be firmly rejected.

The Canadian bill

Let us begin with the Canadian bill. On the website of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, one can read the following press release dated December 4, 2025, entitled “Proposed Restrictions on Religious Freedom – Bill C-9”:

“The Liberal government has reached an agreement with the Bloc Québécois concerning an amendment to eliminate the religious exemption clause from Canada’s hate speech legislation in Section 319 (3) (b) of the Criminal Code. This initiative is intended to garner support for Bill C-9, titled ‘An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime, and access to religious or cultural places).’ The current provision in the Criminal Code slated for removal states: “(3) No person shall be convicted of an offence under subsection (2) [...] (b) if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text.”

“Given all that could be at stake if the amendment passes, the Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has sent an open letter to the Prime Minister, with other government officials in carbon copy.”

Here are excerpts from this letter, signed by Bishop Pierre Goudreault, Bishop of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“The removal of this provision (the religious exemption clause) risks creating uncertainty for faith communities, clergy, educators, and others who may fear that the expression of traditional moral or doctrinal teachings could be misinterpreted as hate speech and could subject the speaker to proceedings that threaten imprisonment of up to two years...

“For these reasons, we respectfully urge the

Government of Canada: To ensure Bill C-9 does not remove the religious-text defence from the Criminal Code... We believe it is possible to achieve the shared objective of promoting a society free from genuine hatred while also upholding the constitutional rights of millions of Canadians who draw moral and spiritual guidance from their faith traditions.”

The Quebec bill

Let us now turn to the Quebec bill. On the website of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec, one can read a statement dated November 25, 2025, entitled “Secularity – Quebec’s Catholic Bishops Concerned by the Elements Made Public.” Here are some excerpts:

“It is with deep concern that the Catholic bishops of Quebec have learned, through the news media, of certain elements of Bill 9 on state secularity, which is to be tabled on November 27. We are astonished to see that the government is proposing a radical infringement of the rights and freedoms of the Quebec population.

“If the measures disclosed to date are confirmed in the bill, the government would be undermining not only freedom of religion, but also freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association. In our view, the government has not demonstrated the necessity of legislating in this manner.

“Secularity concerns the State and its direct representatives, not the interactions between individuals and groups which together form society. Religious and spiritual experience constitutes one of the fundamental dimensions of human life and must be able to be lived without fear of reprisal in our democratic society.”

In summary, the Catholic bishops of Quebec criticize the bill on secularity for restricting citizens’ religious expression in public and educational spaces; for example by prohibiting any religious manifestation in public places.

All citizens of Quebec and Canada are urged to contact their elected representatives to express their opposition to these liberty-restricting bills, which are unworthy of a free country and more characteristic of totalitarian states. ♦

Alain Pilote

Three powerful weapons against evil

The Pilgrims of Saint Michael are apostles and fighters. Every Christian is a fighter; the Catechism of the Catholic Church says so: "We still have to fight... Baptism does not free anyone from all the weaknesses of nature... the inclination to sin remains so that the baptized may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life..."

To wage the good fight, Heaven has given us three powerful weapons:

- The Rosary
- Humility
- Consecration to Mary



First weapon: the Rosary

(From the Revelations given to Barbara Klossow-MICHAEL, 1982-84)

- The Rosary is the weapon of good against evil.
- The Rosary is the condition for victory.
- Each mystery of the Rosary has its own power; the fifteen mysteries together form an army drawn up for battle.
- The saints who prayed the Rosary felt united as a powerful army against hell and for the salvation of souls.
- The Rosary is the bond that unites you to Heaven.
- The Rosary is the means of achieving the unity of nations.
- Do not be surprised by the resistance to the Rosary; the devil and the world fight against it... It is hated by those who hate the Blessed Virgin.
- Where the Rosary is found, there is persecution, but there is also victory.

- The Rosary is not a burden; it is a gift from Heaven, an inexhaustible treasure.

- The Rosary requires fidelity and perseverance; do not be stingy with the time you devote to it.

Second weapon: humility

(From the book "To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons" by Father Gobbi)

- Satan deceived humanity through pride.
- Return to humility, to the trust of little ones... My triumph is the triumph of the little ones.
- Pride is conquered by humility.
- I am preparing those whom I will make ever smaller, so that they may be filled with the light and love of God.
- One day, their small voice will have the roar of a hurricane; it will resound throughout the world with the powerful cry: "Who is like God!" This will be the definitive defeat of the proud... It will be My triumph and that of My little children.

Third weapon: Consecration to Mary

(From the book "Treatise on True Devotion" by Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort)

- Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is necessary for all people in order to attain salvation... It is a necessity, especially in the latter times.
- Mary must be fearsome to the devil, especially in these last persecutions which will increase daily until the reign of the Antichrist.
- It was through Mary that the salvation of the world began; it is through Mary that it must be completed.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman... She will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel..." Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort cites this passage from the Apocalypse of Saint John and writes that Satan will lie in wait for her heel, that is, her humble servants, her poor little children, humble before all like the heel, rich in graces and supported by divine help, who, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, will crush the head of the devil and bring about the triumph of Jesus Christ.

With the grace of the Holy Spirit, through this practice of true devotion, they will reach a safe harbour despite storms and pirates.

Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort describes the apostles of the latter times as burning fires spreading divine love everywhere, sharp arrows in the hand of Mary to pierce her enemies, children of Levi devoted to God's service, purified by great tribulations, bearing the gold of love, the incense of prayer, and the myrrh of mortification.



Barbara Klossowna

They will be true apostles of the latter times, whom the Lord will give word and strength to work wonders. They will go without gold or silver, with pure intention for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, wherever the Holy Spirit calls them.

But when and how will this happen? God alone knows. It is for us to pray, to sigh, and to wait.

Who is Barbara Klossowna?

Barbara Klossowna was born on June 23, 1902, in Brzeziny, in the Diocese of Warsaw, Poland. A Polish woman endowed with remarkable talents, she obtained her secondary school diploma at the age of 15 and later earned degrees in literature, fine arts, and music.

Barbara's life was marked by immense suffering:

- 1914–1918, the First World War: Like all other Poles, Barbara suffered greatly from hunger.
- 1920, the war against the Bolsheviks: Barbara became a nurse and cared for wounded soldiers; contact with soldiers suffering from tuberculosis severely damaged her health.
- 1929: Barbara was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the spine. This illness confined her to a bed of suffering for seventeen years. The treatments only worsened her condition, and the doctors eventually declared that nothing more could be done for her.

One of the doctors said to her mother: "When your daughter's condition worsens, give her this injection, because the tuberculosis has spread to the meninges and her suffering will be unbearable." What he was proposing was euthanasia. Barbara's mother refused and prayed to Sister Faustina for her daughter's healing. Barbara was told that she had only three days left to live, but the days passed and she was still alive. Then, with great effort, Barbara began to expel clots of blood and pus. The doctor, astonished, wondered

how such clots could come from the brain. The tuberculosis was cured. However, Barbara was still unable to walk because of her extreme weakness.

- 1944: the uprising in Poland.

The Polish people were fighting for their freedom. A terrible bombardment began; the inhabitants had to take refuge underground, but Barbara was unable to move. She wrote: "Mother was kneeling beside my bed. We were waiting for death. The shells were flying over our heads, and fragments were falling onto my pillows." By a miracle, a young Polish man arrived and carried her to a shelter.

Afterwards, Barbara and her mother were sent by the Germans to a concentration camp.

End of the Second World War: The Soviets arrived in Poland. New bloody battles followed against the retreating German forces.

Barbara walks

Barbara was convinced that she had been saved for the glorification of Divine Mercy and through the intercession of Sister Faustina. "That too weak, sick women could come out unharmed from this hell, while so many young people full of strength perished," Barbara said, "It is Divine Mercy that saved us."

On August 15, 1946, her entire family was gathered in the dining room. Barbara was in bed, as she still could not walk. Her niece, a 14-year-old girl, entered her room and began to shout: "Aunt Basia is walking!"

Healed through Divine Mercy and the intercession of Sister Faustina, Barbara submitted the account of her healing to the Archdiocese of Warsaw, along with all the medical testimonies.

In 1951, the Queen of Heaven chose this chosen soul as an instrument to transmit to the world her beautiful revelations on the Rosary.

Pilgrims of Saint Michael, apostles of the Rosary, let us continue to fight the good fight and never forget our three powerful weapons: the Rosary, humility, and Consecration to Mary. ♡

Lise Rodrigue-Fournier

Pilgrims of St. Michael: pilgrims of hope, like the morning light

On November 30, 2025, Father Pierre Claver Nzeyimana (*picture*), parish priest of Rougemont (as well as of four parishes forming the Marieville pastoral unit in the Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe), came to our monthly gathering at the House of the Immaculate in Rougemont to give a talk. Here are excerpts from this conference:



Welcoming as the first gesture of hope

Dear Pilgrims of St. Michael, brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a profound joy to be among you today, on the first Sunday of the Advent season 2025, at the heart of this place marked by spiritual commitment, prayer, social action, and reflection. You truly bear your name well: pilgrims. What does this term "pilgrims" evoke? May I also call you "pilgrims of hope"?

It is certain that this theme, "pilgrims of hope," which we wish to explore today, evokes people who are on the move. It therefore invites us to reflect on what it means to walk in today's world—a world marked by economic, social, ecological, and spiritual crises. This leads us to consider hope, from the outset, as a way of being, an attitude, almost a "form of life," to use an expression dear to phenomenology. Hope then becomes our way of inhabiting the world, of experiencing it, of being aware that we are not alone on life's journey but that we are "beings-with-others."

And in order to understand this "form of hope," I propose that we allow ourselves to be guided by the philosophy of certain phenomenologists whose works enable us to weave a fruitful dialogue with the social teaching of the Catholic Church. For there exists a profound convergence between these thinkers and the Church's social doctrine. All affirm that the human being, in order to become truly himself or herself, must learn to perceive the world as a "promise," a "gift," or, to use Christian language, as a gift from God that calls for response, responsibility, and communion.

Phenomenology, in its essence, is not a complicated philosophy. It begins with a very simple gesture: learning to see — to see what appears, to see what is given, to see what reveals itself, to see differently. Thus, before thinking, before analyzing, before

acting, phenomenology first asks us to welcome. And welcoming is precisely the first gesture of hope.

Hope, then, can be understood as a phenomenon that precedes us and is given to us. It must be welcomed in the time and space in which we find ourselves, in and with the world that is ours.

Our world as a presence that calls for a response

In *The Poetic*, Dufrenne affirms that the world is not only what presents itself, but what offers itself — what calls for a response. This idea is fundamental. It means that the world is never neutral. It is filled with meaning, possibilities, appeals, and promises.

For Dufrenne, the human being is not merely an observer or a spectator, but an actor — one who responds to the coming of the world. And in one way or another, to "respond" is to "hope".

This is why, in the mind of the Catholic Church, hope is understood as a virtue — a dynamic virtue, a driving force. It is a movement of desire oriented toward service, a kind of engine of transformation and propulsion. Hope becomes a way of inhabiting reality, of responding to the needs that our world constantly places before us. (...)

Hope as an opening toward others

Paul Ricoeur defines hope as an openness to a future that is not merely the continuation of the present (*History and Truth*, p. 123). In other words, hope is not naïveté. It is the capacity to believe in newness, in the possibility of what seems impossible, despite appearances.

Hope opens time; it prevents the present from closing in on itself. When the world seems blocked, closed off, without a way forward, hope opens a path.

This is precisely what you live, dear Pilgrims of Saint Michael: your spiritual journey is not a mere ritual; it is a gesture of openness that refuses to allow history to close in on itself. Your mission is a concrete sign that hope can become social action, education, shared work, and commitment within the community. You are turned toward those in need. You are concerned for their future. And you work to help build a better future for them by protecting their human dignity, which is threatened by various contemporary political and social systems. The face of the other speaks to you, challenges you, calls you, and sets you on the path of responsibility and commitment.

In short, in a world marked by loneliness, social fragmentation, and economic tensions, being pilgrims of hope becomes an indispensable witness and a real necessity in order to heal the situation of so many people whose very existence is being trampled upon. For to be pilgrims of hope is to take responsibility for one another, with the certainty that the modern world, whatever it may be, can never destroy hope.

Thus, being pilgrims of hope does not mean living in a nostalgic way or indulging in illusion. On the contrary, it means being able to read crisis as a kairos—a timely moment of grace in which renewal can emerge. It is precisely in times of crisis that a renewed sense of responsibility should arise. For crisis is not only a lack; it is also an ethical invitation, a call to protect the other. The world cries out for help, and the human person hastens to respond.

Justice as a horizon of hope

Justice is not first and foremost an institution. It is a hope for recognition. To be recognized is to be perceived not as an object, but as a subject worthy of respect. In the spirit of the Church's social teaching, all hope must be grounded in the dignity of the human person.

To be pilgrims of hope in our world is to bear witness to a humanity that recognizes itself, respects itself, and rises again. For believers, this implies concrete commitments: an economy at the service of the human person; the defence of the poorest; welcoming the stranger; protecting families; rejecting violence; and working for the common good.

The other then ceases to be a threat and becomes a brother or sister to be loved and served, in the peace that should characterize us as children of the same Father. We open ourselves to the other and encounter their presence within our own presence. And they, in turn, rejoice in making the same experience with us.

Thus, being pilgrims of hope, in this perspective, means: learning to allow ourselves to be touched; accepting to be disturbed; renouncing the temptation to withdraw; becoming responsible for our neighbour; and accepting that responsibility for the other must always come before any decision we make.

The Pilgrims of St. Michael: an incarnate hope

In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council tells us: "It is the duty of the entire People of God to scrutinize the signs of the times" (§4). This expression—"signs of the times"—is strikingly phenomenological. It means that the world is not merely a collection of facts; it is a text, a phenomenon, a

call to interpretation.

Thus, being pilgrims of hope today involves three fundamental attitudes:

a) Seeing: the Church asks us to "open our eyes," not to allow ourselves to be blinded by confusion or fear.

b) Discerning: phenomenology teaches us to distinguish what is essential from what is accidental, the call from illusion.

c) Acting: the Church's social doctrine constantly reminds us that we cannot hope without transforming the world—without working for justice, solidarity, and peace. Pope Francis affirms in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "Hope is never passive. It is combative" (no. 86).

The Pilgrims of Saint Michael, inspired by the social, economic, and spiritual intuition of Louis Even, are a concrete response to this call of a world that keeps modernizing while destroying itself. Your tradition insists on the dignity of every person; respect for the family; economic justice; community solidarity; the sovereignty of peoples; the importance of education and formation; and the defence of the most vulnerable.

Thus, to be pilgrims of hope, within your missionary vocation, always means: walking together; restoring confidence to those who doubt; defending justice and peace; protecting the poor and creation; refusing fatalism; believing that another world is possible; and bearing witness to light in the midst of the darkness that confronts us.

Dear pilgrims, you bear a name that says what is essential: you are on a journey—journeying with your brothers and sisters, journeying with the Church, journeying with those who suffer, journeying for a more just world, journeying toward the Kingdom, journeying in the Light, and above all journeying with Christ, who is our way, our truth, and our life. May this conference not be merely a word heard, but a word received, a word lived, a word set in motion. And may we together truly become pilgrims of hope—for our Church, for our society, and for the whole world. ♦

Father Pierre Claver Nzeyimana

Next monthly meetings

**House of the Immaculate
1101, rue Principale, Rougemont, QC**

March 22, April 26

Saint John Henry Newman New Doctor of the Church

On November 1, 2025, during a Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on the occasion of the Jubilee of the world of education, Pope Leo XIV proclaimed Saint John Henry Newman (1801–1890)—an Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism and later became a cardinal—the 38th Doctor of the Church, as well as co-patron of Catholic education, together with Saint Thomas Aquinas. In his homily, Leo XIV stated:

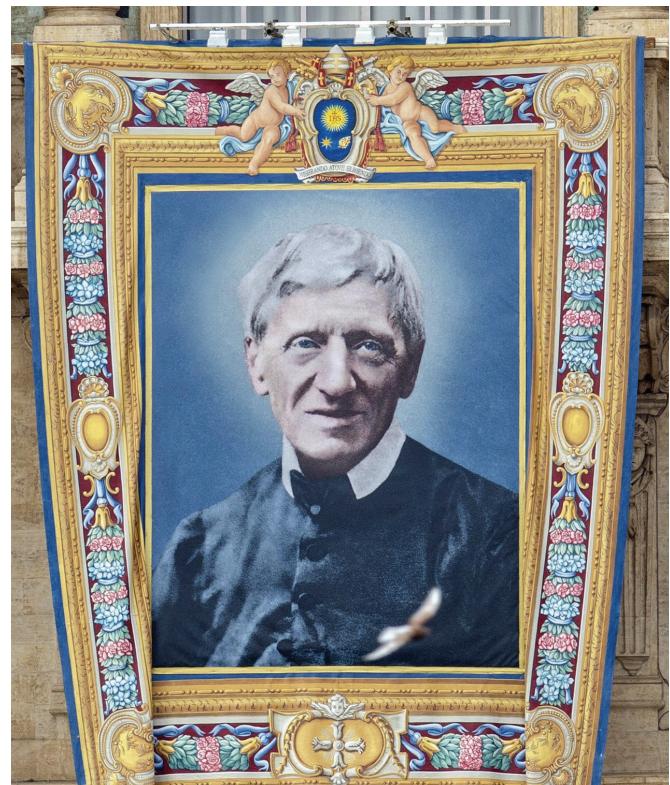
"The lasting legacy of Saint John Henry Newman includes some very significant contributions to the theory and practice of education. He wrote, "God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission—I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next" (Meditations and Devotions, III, I, 2). In these words, we find beautifully expressed the mystery of the dignity of every human person, and also the variety of gifts distributed by God.

"Life shines brightly, not because we are rich, beautiful or powerful. Instead, it shines when we discover within ourselves the truth that we are called by God, have a vocation, have a mission, that our lives serve something greater than ourselves. Every single creature has a role to play. The contribution that each person can make is uniquely valuable, and the task of educational communities is to encourage and cherish that contribution."

Here is a summary of the life of Saint John Henry Newman, as published in the November 2002 spiritual letter of Saint-Joseph de Clairval Abbey in France (www.clairval.com):

by Dom Antoine-Marie, O.S.B.

An American Presbyterian minister who had converted to Catholicism in 1990 once heard someone complain, "You became Catholic for the money." "No, not for the money," he replied, "but I did it for the riches!" Another minister who converted shortly thereafter clarified this thought: "We converts have been made so rich. We have been given wealth beyond our wildest dreams!... The anguish endured is not worth comparing to the riches gained—the Holy Eucharist, the Pope, the Magisterium, the sacraments, Mary, the saints—the splendor of Christ mirrored in His Church. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (Ph. 3:8)." Over the course of history, there have been many who, though born outside the true Church of Christ, have succeeded, with the help of grace, in finding the way of full truth. John Henry Newman occupies an eminent position among them.



Portrait of John Henry Newman displayed on St. Peter's Basilica during the Mass of November 1, 2025

Born on February 21, 1801, young John Henry, son of a London banker, received from his mother, who was of French Protestant stock, a religious education with a distinctly Calvinist slant. Full of prejudice against Catholicism, he firmly believed that the Pope was the Antichrist. However, at the age of fifteen, as he was beginning his studies in high school in Ealing, close to London, a considerable change of opinion took place in his mind, thanks to a light from on high. "I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured." In addition, he was seized by a thought at odds with his Protestantism—he felt called by God to live in celibacy. This is why, pushing aside all thoughts of marriage, he resolved to remain single and to enter the service of the Anglican Church.

First vicar of Christ

A precocious student, he was admitted to the University of Oxford at the age of sixteen. Fascinated by what he read, curious about all kinds of fields of knowledge, he enjoyed studying history, Eastern lan-

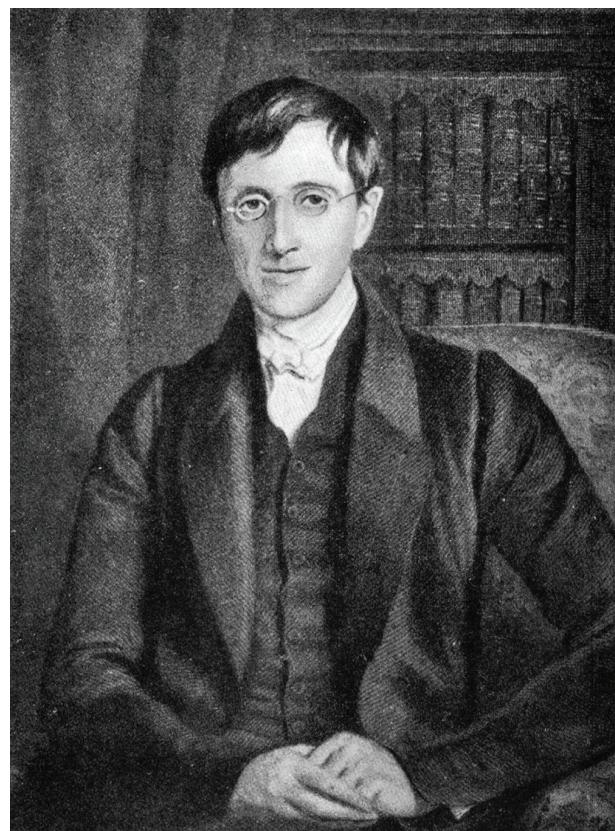
guages, poetry, and mathematics. A great lover of music, he loved to relax by playing the violin. He was open-minded, and devoted himself to everything with equal zeal. It was at this time that he began to love to be absorbed in meditation on invisible realities, and ardently sought to do good and to know the truth. "The interior drama that marked the long life of John Henry Newman was centered around the question of holiness and union with Christ. **His most heartfelt desire was to know and to fulfill the will of God**" (John Paul II, speech for the centenary of J.H. Newman's death, in 1990).

This aspiration took shape over the course of his life in a great docility in following the voice of his conscience. "Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise... [Conscience] is a messenger of Him, Who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ" (Letter quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, CCC, 1778).

Indeed, in the depths of his conscience, man discovers the presence of a law that he did not give himself, but which he is constrained to obey. This voice urges him to love, to do good and to avoid evil. However, conscience must be informed and educated throughout one's life by the light of the Word of God, but also by "carefully [attending] to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. For the Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth" (Second Vatican Council, Declaration *Dignitatis humanae*, 14).

In 1820, the young student earned his Bachelor of Arts, and, two years later, was named a fellow (a distinction conferred on the elite of graduates of each college) at Oriel College, Oxford, which automatically gave him entrée into the most refined circles in that venerable institution. In 1828, he was given a post there as "tutor," in which he was responsible for teaching both literature and moral education to students. Mixing with the other fellows, the young Newman was under the influence of the ideas of his day—excessive confidence in the world and in human liberty, unbridled and without regard to law. He wrote, "The truth is, I was beginning to prefer intellectual excellence to moral; I was drifting in the direction of liberalism." Under the positive influence of a friend, Hurrel Froude, Newman freed himself from this deadly course. Ordained a deacon of the Anglican Church in 1824, he soon became vicar of Saint Clement's Church in Oxford, while waiting to become the parish priest at Saint Mary's, the university church, of which he was given charge in 1828.

The church he belonged to was at that time in the midst of a crisis. After approximately three cen-



Newman as a young student

turies of persecuting Catholicism, the official religion of England was undisputed but henceforth languishing and lifeless. The clergy, driven by purely human views, was concerned with amassing ecclesiastical benefices, and did not worry itself with giving spiritual direction or exercising apostolic action. Worship no longer held wonder or dignity. The Anglican Church seemed to be not so much the guardian of the religious faith that forced itself upon reason and enlightened the conscience as an establishment closely linked with the government, from which it received political privileges and considerable wealth.

A passion for antiquity

As he freed himself of worldly ideas, Newman felt developing in himself a great attraction for the Fathers of the Church, these ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries who, through their holiness and the orthodoxy of their doctrine, are special witnesses of Holy Tradition. Already at the age of fifteen, he had become acquainted with the Fathers of the Church through Joseph Milner's work, *History of the Church of Christ*. This book made him fascinated in Christian antiquity. Now the seed sown in adolescence grew in his soul, and he aimed to read the Fathers *in extenso*, in the original text.

In the years that followed, he built up an impressive library of patristic works. But John Henry Newman was also fascinated with Holy Scripture. In fact, he wrote to his sister, Harriett: "If you have leisure ►

► time on Sunday, learn portions of Scripture by heart. The benefit seems to me incalculable. It imbues the mind with good and holy thoughts. It is a resource in solitude, on a journey, and in a sleepless night." Reading the Bible assiduously prepared him for a better knowledge of the Church. Indeed, in keeping with the remark by Saint Augustine, "the Prophets spoke more plainly and openly of the Church than of Christ, foreseeing that on this a much greater number may err and be deceived than on the mystery of the Incarnation" (*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, on article IX, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church").

In 1830, Mr. Hugh Rose of Cambridge, looking for collaborators for an Ecclesiastical Library, suggested to Newman that he write a history of the first Councils. To carry out this work, John Henry carefully studied the Fathers of the Church of Alexandria, particularly Saint Athanasius and Origenes. He came away from this study with the conviction that Providence, through the intervention of Angels, directed events and peoples, Jewish and pagan, towards the full Revelation of the truth in Jesus Christ. It was only at the end of 1833 that the fruit of this study would be published under the title *Arians of the Fourth Century*.

Sounding the alarm

In July 1833, Newman had just returned from a vacation in southern Europe when the clergyman John Keble delivered a speech subsequently published under the descriptive title *National Apostasy*. This speech, denouncing the critical condition the Anglican Church was in, roused the consciences of Anglicans concerned about the true Christian identity of their Church. It remained in Newman's mind as the dawn of the religious movement known in history as the "Oxford Movement."

From its beginning, Newman voiced his agreement with the leaders of the Movement and contributed to the publication of "Tracts for the Times," documents several pages long, unsigned and with no exact goal other than to sound the alarm on the danger the Anglican Church was facing. The tracts quickly gained considerable circulation. In the Anglican clergy, which until then was unaware of the situation, these novel and unexpected ideas generated a sort of shock. All were moved.

If, in Newman's eyes, the doctrinal position of Anglicanism seemed unassailable, its moral deteri-

oration seemed to him to be linked to its abandonment of patristic Tradition. As a result of his contact with the Fathers, he hoped for a rejuvenation of his Church. Convinced that the doctrine of the Church of England rested fundamentally on the Fathers, he thought that a return to the Fathers was synonymous with a return to the Anglican theologians of the sixteenth century.

Newman was in favor of a *via media*, an intermediary position between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, in which he maintained against the first the authority of Tradition and the first Fathers, and rejected in the second some doctrines that seemed to him to be innovations that had appeared over the course of the centuries. On the other hand, he considered the Anglican Church to be a branch of the Catholic Church, the two other branches being the Greek Church and the Roman Church.

But in 1839, while studying the history of the Monophysites (fifth-century heretics who insisted that Jesus Christ had only one nature), he became aware of the impossibility of supporting Anglicanism. He was thunderstruck—it was completely unexpected. "It was difficult to make out how the Eutychians or Monophysites were heretics, unless Protestants and Anglicans were heretics also; difficult to find arguments against the Tridentine Fathers, which did not tell against the Fathers of Chalcedon; difficult to condemn the Popes of the sixteenth century, without condemning

the Popes of the fifth. The drama of religion, and the combat of truth and error, were ever one and the same. The principles and proceedings of the Church now were those of the Church then; the principles and proceedings of heretics then, were those of Protestants now. I found it so—almost fearfully."

A shattered theory

Bishop Wiseman, an English prelate who would become a cardinal and archbishop of Westminster in 1850, published at this time an article on the Donatists, a group of African Christians who, in the fourth century, revolted against the universal Church and insisted that they alone had upheld the truth. In this article, Bishop Wiseman compared the Donatists to the Anglicans. A friend pointed out to Newman a phrase of Saint Augustine's included in the article—*Securus iudicat orbis terrarum*, which can be translated as



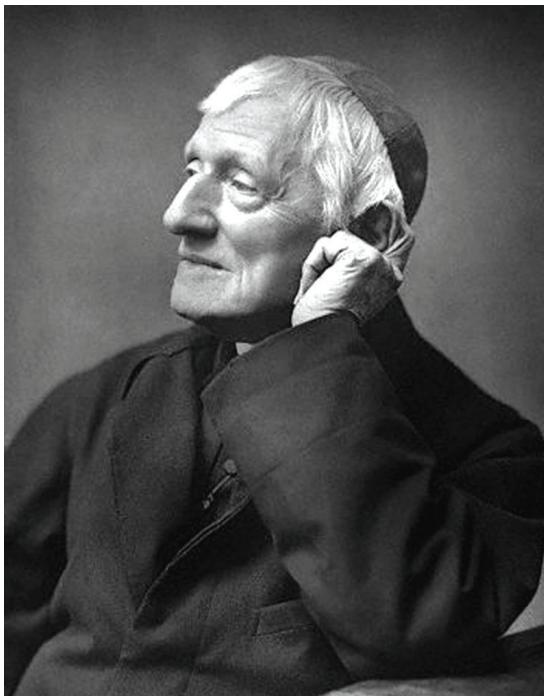
John Henry Newman in 1854

The judgment of the universal Church is certain. "He repeated these words again and again, and, when he was gone, they kept ringing in my ears. Securus iudicat orbis terrarum; they were words which went beyond the occasion of the Donatists; they applied to that of the Monophysites. They gave a cogency to the article which had escaped me at first. They decided ecclesiastical questions on a simpler rule than that of Antiquity...

What a light was hereby thrown upon every controversy in the Church! Not that, at a given moment, the multitude may not falter in their judgment—not that, in the Arian hurricane, countless Episcopal Sees did not bend before its fury and fall off from St. Athanasius—not that the crowd of Oriental Bishops did not need to be sustained during the contest by the voice and the eye of St. Leo; but that the deliberate judgment, in which the whole Church at length rests and acquiesces, is an infallible prescription and a final sentence against such portions of it as protest and secede...

"A mere sentence, the words of St. Augustine struck me with a power which I never had felt from any words before... By those great words of the ancient Father, the theory of the *via media* was absolutely pulverised." The *via media* appeared to him from then on to be the heretical way, the way that the Gospel of Saint John denounces, by which the thieves and marauders attempt to enter Christ's sheepfold, as opposed to the royal gate, which allows one to enter in complete dignity (Jn. 10:1-2).

Nevertheless, Newman did not yet give up his defense of Anglicanism. Although he recognized that the Anglican Church had neither the unity nor the universality of Christ's Church, he wanted to make every effort to prove that she at least had the other notes of the true Church. He consequently drew up the "Tract 90," in which he tried to demonstrate that the 39 articles promulgated by Queen Elizabeth in 1571, articles that serve as the basis of the Anglican faith, were compatible with Catholic principles. But this document sparked a crisis. The heads of the university and a majority of the Anglican bishops violently condemned him and considered all the supporters of the Tract suspect. It was a terrible blow to Newman—he saw it as proof that his Church neither could nor wanted to assimilate the Catholic elements that he was striving to introduce into it.



What would the Fathers do?

In 1841, his position within Anglicanism had become so difficult that he saw himself obliged to entrust the responsibility of parish priest of Saint Mary's to his assistant priest. In the confusion of his broken heart, he withdrew with several followers to Littlemore, a hamlet close to Oxford, where he gathered his thoughts and started again from scratch on his studies on the claims of the Anglican Church. He especially felt the need to seek, in prayer and mortification, the grace needed to resolve the problem that was tormenting him. Aware of often being mistaken, he wondered if he was wrong again this time. The struggle was difficult and slow. In his honesty of soul, he wrote to his parishioners in Littlemore: "Remember such a one in time to come, though you hear him not, and pray for him, that in all things he may know God's will, and at all times he may be ready to fulfill it."

Life in Littlemore was poor and austere—strict fasts, monastic silence, recitation of the canonical offices in accordance with the Catholic liturgy, meditation, weekly confession, frequent Communion. Scarcely had he moved in before he started to translate the works of Saint Athanasius. "I had determined to put aside all controversy, and I set myself down to my translation of St. Athanasius... I saw clearly, that in the history of Arianism, the pure Arians were the Protestants, the semi-Arians were the Anglicans, and that Rome was what it is now. The truth lay, not with the *via media*, but in what was called 'the extreme party.' " His constant concern was to know what the Fathers would do in his situation. This led him to a place he had never thought of going to.

In his retreat, another thought occurred to Newman—were not these "new dogmas," that the Anglicans blamed the Roman Church of having made up, actually an homogenous development of the apostolic faith? He thus undertook to write his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. This study allowed him to overcome the last obstacle that held him back from the Roman Church. This Church had, in fact, invented nothing. She had only drawn from the deposit of Revelation more and more precise doctrines, but always with the same meaning.

On October 6, 1845, he suddenly broke off his work, then, two days later, had an Italian Catholic monk, Father Dominic, come to Littlemore. Scarcely ►

► had he arrived than Newman prostrated himself at his feet and asked him to hear his confession. After a night of prayers, Newman, with two followers, made his profession of the Catholic faith and received Baptism conditionally. From then on, "through the gift of God's mercy they [belonged] to that Church which Christ founded and which is governed by the successors of Peter and the other Apostles, who are the depositaries of the original Apostolic tradition, living and intact, which is the permanent heritage of doctrine and holiness of that same Church" (Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, June 24, 1973).

Although one may feel legitimate joy about belonging to the Catholic Church, it should not make us proud; rather we should humbly give thanks. Indeed, "all the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged" (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 14).

The "chiefest friend"

Although Newman's "secession" had been anticipated, it had a tremendous effect on the Anglican world. It is estimated that over three hundred conversions took place immediately after his, and the movement continued for decades afterward. Newman had to bear a considerable sacrifice by leaving what had been his life up till that point and adapting to a Catholic environment which he did not spontaneously blend into. Ordained a priest in Rome in 1847, he returned to England to establish an Oratory community in Birmingham. From 1851 to 1858, he worked on founding a Catholic university in Dublin.

After being criticized by a biased author, he wrote in 1864 his *Apologia pro vita sua*, an autobiography whose lucidity of style and sincerity of convictions earned him renewed favor and fame. Until his death in 1890, Newman tirelessly devoted himself to service of the Catholic Church. As a token of recognition of so much work undertaken with faithfulness and love, Pope Leo XIII made him a cardinal in 1881. At the end of his long life, Cardinal Newman could write in complete honesty: "My desire hath been to have Truth for my chiefest friend, and no enemy but error."

The Church is the work of Jesus Christ, "a work

through which He continues, is reflected, and through which He is always present in the world. She is His spouse, to whom He has offered Himself completely. He has chosen her for Himself, He established her and constantly keeps her alive. He also has given His life so that she might live... Brothers, let us keep in mind this truth: Jesus Christ loved the Church... If God loved the Church to the point of sacrificing His very life, this shows that she is also worthy of our love" (John Paul II, homily given in Costa Rica, March 3, 1983).

Saint Augustine could write this succinct phrase: "To the degree that one loves the Church, one possesses the Holy Spirit." Perhaps this contains one of the most valuable lessons from the life of Cardinal Newman. His writings cast a very clear light on love of the Church inasmuch as she is God's continual outpouring of love for mankind in every stage of history. The Cardinal had true supernatural vision, capable of perceiving all the weaknesses existing in the human fabric of the Church, but likewise a solid perception of the mystery hidden beyond our human view.

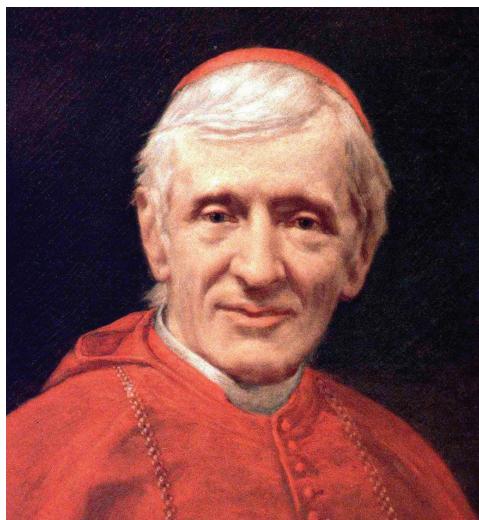
We can make our own the ardent prayer to Jesus Christ that spontaneously burst forth from his heart: "Let me never for an instant forget that Thou hast established on earth a kingdom of Thy own, that

the Church is Thy work, Thy establishment, Thy instrument; that we are under Thy rule, Thy laws and Thy eye—that when the Church speaks Thou dost speak. Let not familiarity with this wonderful truth lead me to be insensible to it—let not the weakness of Thy human representatives lead me to forget that it is Thou who dost speak and act through them." ♦

Dom Antoine-Marie, OSB

The liturgical feast of Saint John Henry Newman is celebrated on October 9, which corresponds to the day on which Newman was officially received into the Catholic Church in 1845. (August 11, 1890—the date of his death at the age of 89—is already occupied on the liturgical calendar by the feast of Saint Clare of Assisi. The Church therefore chose October 9 as the liturgical date to honour Newman.) He was beatified by Benedict XVI on September 19, 2010, and canonized by Pope Francis on October 13, 2019.

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John Henry Newman was created a cardinal on May 12, 1879, by Leo XIII.

The book to read to truly understand Leo XIV



Aboard the plane taking him back to Rome after his trip to Lebanon on December 2, 2025, Leo XIV revealed to journalists the book that has illuminated his spiritual journey for many years. *The Practice of the Presence of God*, written by the French Carmelite Brother Lawrence

of the Resurrection, and published in 1692, proposes a path accessible to everyone: living each moment in awareness of God's presence, whether in the kitchen or before the altar.

A French religious on the Pope's bedside table

On December 2, 2025, as he was flying back to Rome from Beirut, Lebanon, Leo XIV spent nearly thirty minutes in conversation with the 82 journalists aboard the plane. When asked a personal question—"Which book should one read to understand who Robert Francis Prevost really is?"—the Pope answered without hesitation: *The Practice of the Presence of God*, written by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, a 17th-century French Carmelite friar declared a Servant of God.

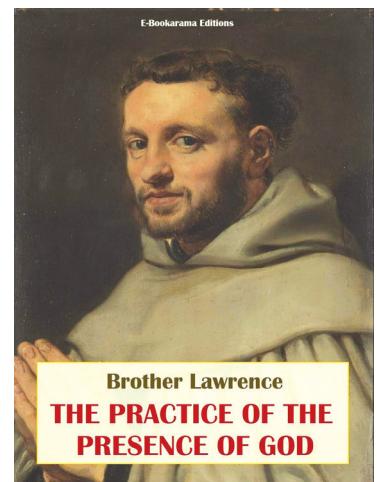
"This has been my spirituality for many years," he confided, referring to this work, which describes a way of "simply giving one's life to God by letting Him guide us." "I trust in God and I share this message with everyone," he added, recalling the "challenges" he has faced in his life, "having lived in Peru during years of terrorism, and having been called to the priesthood in places where I never thought I would be called."

Born in 1614 in Hériménil, Lorraine, Brother Lawrence came to a deep conviction of God's existence during his adolescence. The sight of a bare tree in winter, followed by the vision of that same tree blossoming in spring, awakened in him a powerful love for God. His real name was Nicolas Herman. He first enlisted as a soldier in the troops of the Duke of Lorraine, who was then at war with France. Seriously wounded, he left the military at the age of twenty-one and tried the eremitical life.

Finding no lasting peace there, he became a servant in Paris before entering, at age twenty-six, as a lay brother at the Discalced Carmelite convent on rue de Vaugirard. Under the name Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, he first worked as a cook and later as a cobbler.

The secret of Brother Lawrence

Even during his lifetime, Brother Lawrence was known as a great man of prayer, a mystic. What was the secret that continues to inspire Leo XIV daily? The first ten years of his religious life were marked by severe trials. He constantly recalled the sins of his youth and even wondered whether he might be damned.



Brother Lawrence
THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Struggling with meditation during prayer, he began, during his work, to look upon God as a friend—an intimately present being. The result was immediate. "I found myself suddenly changed," he wrote. "My soul, which until then had always been troubled, felt a deep interior peace, as if it were at its centre and in a place of rest." These words appear in his correspondence published in *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

Through this profound experience, the brother-cook discovered the secret of contemplation. One does not need to abandon one's work or state in life to find God. As he explains: "Our sanctification does not depend on changing our works, but on doing for God what we ordinarily do for ourselves." And he adds famously: "I turn my little omelette for the love of God..."

Brother Lawrence emphasizes that within the depth of daily work, a true mystical path opens up—one that allows for a great unity of life and a full experience of union with God. This begins with a continual exercise of love, doing everything for the love of God. "We should not grow weary of doing little things for the love of God, who looks not at the greatness of the work, but at the love with which it is done." It continues by learning to live every moment in God's presence.

A path open to everyone

Long forgotten in France, Brother Lawrence's spirituality has captivated many Christians, particularly in the United States. Certain themes can be found in the writings of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity, even though they likely never read him. The path discovered by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection is accessible to everyone—and the Pope, like him, urges us to follow it. ♦

Hortense Leger

This text is a translation of the following article in French: <https://fr.aleteia.org/2025/12/03/le-livre-a-lire-pour-vraiment-savoir-qui-est-leon-xiv/>

Leo XIV answers questions from young Americans

On November 21, 2025, as part of the plenary session of the U.S. National Catholic Youth Conference, Pope Leo XIV addressed more than 15,000 young people aged 14 to 18 via live videoconference. The participants, coming from youth movements across all U.S. states, were gathered at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana.

For 45 minutes, the Holy Father answered questions from six young people on topics ranging from the sacraments and mental health to artificial intelligence and the future of the Church. Here are three of those questions, followed by Leo XIV's response:

How should we respond to technology?

Chris: Holy Father, good morning. My name is Chris Pantelakis, and I am from the Archdiocese of Las Vegas, Nevada. I often find myself sitting on my phone endlessly scrolling. I've also noticed that everybody around me is the same or has a very similar problem. Many adults have told me that technology is great with moderation. So my question for you is: **How do you suggest we balance all these great tools — social media, smartphones, tablets and any other devices — while also making faith connections outside of technology?**

Pope Leo: Thanks, Chris, for your question. It's a really important one. Technology can really help us in many ways, including helping us live our Christian faith. It lets us stay connected with people who are far away, as today, when we can see and hear each other even though we're thousands of miles apart. It also gives us amazing tools for prayer, for reading the Bible, for learning more about what we believe.

And it allows us to share the Gospel with people we may never meet in person. But even with all that, technology can never replace real in-person relationships. **Simple things — a hug, a handshake, a smile, all those things — are essential to being human and to have those things in a real way, not through a screen like we're speaking this morning.**

As Catholics, we often pray together, remembering Jesus' promise that when two or more gather in His name, He is with them. The early Church experienced powerful moments of Jesus' presence when they prayed together. Watching Mass online can be helpful, especially when someone is sick or elderly or cannot attend in person.

But actually being there, taking part in the Eucharist is so important for our prayer, for our sense of community. It's essential for our relationship with God and with each other. There's nothing that can replace true human presence, being with one another. So, while technology certainly can connect us, it's not the same as being physically present. We need to use it wisely without letting it overshadow our relationships.

There's a saint who was recently canonized who I'm sure all of you have heard of, St. Carlo [Acutis]. He's a great example. Carlo was skilled with computers, and he used that talent. He used it to help people grow in their faith. He also spent time in prayer in Eucharistic adoration. He taught others, and, very importantly, he served the poor.

He even set time limits for himself, allowing only a certain amount of time each week for leisure on his electronic devices. Because of this discipline, he found a healthy balance and kept his priorities clear. My friends, I encourage you to follow the example of Carlo Acutis. Be intentional with your screen time. Make sure technology serves your life and not the other way around.

Should we use artificial intelligence (AI)?

Micah: Good morning, Holy Father. My name is Micah Alcisto, and I'm from the Diocese of Honolulu in Hawaii. Often times, many of us, including myself, can rely on using AI or ChatGPT to assist in finding solutions in things, such as our schoolwork, like writing a good essay or walking us through a math problem or answering a history question — and really using AI as a tool or a resource to find solutions and an answer to a problem that we may have in our mind. So, Holy Father, **what do you think we should be cautious of when embracing this new technology?**

Pope Leo: Well, that's really an important question; I'm really glad you asked it. As you all know, probably better than I do, AI is becoming one of the defining features of our time. Recently, there was a conference here in Rome focused on protecting children and teenagers in today's digital world.

I encouraged the participants to work together to create policies that will keep you safe, keep all of us safe from the risks that come with AI. But I also reminded them, and I take this opportunity to remind all of you, that safety is not only about rules. It's about education, and it's about personal responsibility. Filters and guidelines can help you, but they cannot make choices for you. Only you can do that.

These years of your life are meant to help you grow into mature adults. Spiritually, this means deepening your friendship with God and becoming more like Him. Intellectually, it means learning to think clearly, to think critically, to examine reality, and to search for truth, beauty and goodness.

It also means strengthening your will with God's grace so you can freely choose what helps you grow, avoid what harms you. Every tool we're given, including AI, should support that journey, not weaken it. Using AI responsibly means using it in ways that help you grow, never in ways that distract you from your dignity or your call to holiness. In your education, make the most of this time.

AI can process information quickly, but it cannot replace human intelligence. And don't ask it to do your homework for you. It cannot offer real wisdom. It misses a very important human element: AI will not judge between what is truly right and wrong. And it won't stand in wonder, in authentic wonder before the beauty of God's creation.



So be prudent; be wise; be careful that your use of AI does not limit your true human growth. Use it in such a way that if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think, how to create, how to act on your own, how to form authentic friendships. **Remember, AI can never replace that unique gift that you are to the world.**

The future of the Church

The presenter, Katie Prejean McGrady, ended with this question: ***We just want to ask what's bringing you hope right now, and what's your hope for the future of this Church, and how can we help you?***

Pope Leo: Well, thank you very much. It's a really good question. I think it's important to repeat that young people are part of the Church's present and also the hope for the future of the Church.

We look to you, I look to you, not to someone else, to help shape the Church in the years ahead. And that is something to be excited about. Maybe you should all give yourselves a round of applause because I want to say thanks to all of you. Now is the time to dream big, to be open to what God can do through your lives. Being young often comes with the desire to do something meaningful, something that makes a real difference.

Many of you are ready to be generous, to help those you love, to work for something greater than yourselves. That is why it is not true that life is only about doing what feels good to yourself, that makes you feel comfortable, as some people claim. Sure,

comfort can be nice, but as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, we weren't made for comfort. We were made for greatness.

We were made for God Himself. Deep down, we long for truth, for beauty and goodness, because we were created for them. And this Treasure we seek has a name: Jesus, who wants to be found by you, wants to be known by you. One of my own personal heroes, one of my favorite saints is St. Augustine of Hippo. He learned this as a young man.

He searched everywhere for happiness. But nothing satisfied him until he opened his heart to God. That is why he wrote, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." Augustine discovered that his desire for greatness was really a desire for a relationship with Jesus Christ.

His friendship with Jesus is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. It's not only for saints or not only for priests or religious sisters and brothers. It's for everyone. This was the experience of the first disciples of Jesus. They were ordinary people who spent time with the Lord. They listened to Him. They experienced His love.

They discovered that being part of the Church meant following Jesus, living what He taught and continuing His mission. So when we think about the Church's future, the first thing we must do is deepen our own friendship with Jesus. This means personal conversion, letting God transform our hearts so we can follow Christ more closely. St. Augustine said it well.

If you want to change the world, begin by letting God change you. Part of being Jesus' disciples is being authentic. Young people have a strong sense for authenticity. You can tell when someone is genuine or fake. Don't lose that instinct. Do not settle for a shallow version of faith. Seek the real friendship that Jesus offers you. Listen to Him in prayer and let Him shape your life.

When you do this, you carry His presence into the world with joy, hope, with creativity. Authentic witnesses of the Gospel can help heal and unite humanity. Jesus also calls His disciples to be peacemakers, people who build bridges instead of walls, people who value dialogue and unity instead of division. Please be careful not to use political categories to speak about faith, to speak about the Church. The Church doesn't belong to any political party. Rather, she helps form your conscience.

The Church helps form your conscience so you can think and act with wisdom and love. As you grow closer to Jesus, do not fear what He might ask of you. If He challenges you to make changes in your life, it's always because He wants to give you greater joy, greater freedom. God is never outdone in generosity.

So St. Augustine prayed, "Lord, give me the grace to do what You ask and then ask whatever You want." Augustine knew his own weakness, but he also knew

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► **Augustine knew His own weakness, but he also knew that God strengthens those who open their hearts to Him. As your Catholic identity strengthens, your appreciation for the many different vocations in the Church will deepen.**

Many of you are called to marriage, to family life. The world needs holy families who pass on the faith and show God's love in daily life. If you think you may be called to marriage, pray for a spouse who will help you grow in holiness, help you grow in your faith. Some of you may be called to the priesthood, to serve God's people through the word, the sacraments.

If you feel that tug in your heart, don't ignore it. Bring it to Jesus. Speak with a priest you trust. Others may be called to consecrated religious life, to be witnesses of a joyful life completely given to God. If you sense this call, that gentle tug, do not be afraid. Ask the Lord to guide you, to show you His plan.

Dear friends, as you discern your vocation, trust Jesus. He knows how to lead you to true happiness. If you open your heart, you will hear Him calling you to holiness. As Pope Benedict XVI once said, Jesus takes nothing away and He gives you everything. When we give ourselves to Him, we receive far more than we could ever imagine.

Your vocation is always connected to the greater mission of the Church, which exists to share the Gospel with the whole world. Jesus sent His disciples to prepare the way for Him to preach, to heal, and to

bring His mercy to others. After His resurrection, he sent the apostles to bring His grace to the entire world.

That mission is yours as well. What greater gift can you offer the world than the gift of eternal life in Christ? What greater cause could you dedicate your life to than the Gospel? The world needs missionaries. It needs you to share the light and the joy that you have found in Jesus. So to those attending the conference in Indianapolis, know that I am praying for you.

I hope everything you have experienced during the conference inspires you to love Jesus and to love the Church more deeply and that you bring that love home to your families, your friends, schools and parishes. To those of you who are with us online, this invitation is for you as well.

You too are called to be missionary disciples wherever you are. The Lord invites all of you to share the Good News — the Good News that Jesus died for our sins, rose again, and is alive today, offering us His love and friendship. So, my dear friends, thank you for your questions. Thank you for listening today.

I see great hope and promise in you, and I trust that the Lord is at work in your lives. May He continue to bless you, continue to guide you and strengthen you as you seek to serve Him in the Church and in every person He places in your path. ♣

Leo XIV

source: <https://www.ncregister.com/news/pope-leo-speaks-to-youth-ewtn-digital-encounter>